

Believers honor God through their submission to Him and good works as priests

1 Peter 2: ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a **holy priesthood**, to offer up **spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God** through Jesus Christ. Hebrew 13:15-18a¹⁵ Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. ¹⁶ And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. ¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account... ¹⁸ Pray... and Romans 12:1-2 HCSB ¹ Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God "

I. IN CULTURE 1 Peter 2: ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles^a, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation^b. [story of All 6600 Martyred for Jesus in 286 A.D page 3]

[Gentiles^a -all unbelievers in Jesus Christ today. day of visitation^b - either the day of salvation or the rapture for a believer.]

What does it mean for me to live "as aliens and strangers" (v. 11) in this world?

II. TOWARD OFFICIALS AND LEADERS ¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. ¹⁵ For such is the **will of God** that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. ¹⁶ Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. [40 Martyrs A.D. 360 page 4; what if they someday cut off the pension & healthcare payments of all who refuse to accept their humanist doctrine?]

Do I have a hard time honoring our political leaders? If so, how can I honor our leaders even if I don't agree with them or they ask for something outside God's will?

III. THROUGH YOUR WORK ¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. ¹⁹ For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

Slavery in Paul's day was very different than slavery in the US centuries later, but it was challenging nonetheless. What kinds of hardships might a slave have endured in Paul's day?

IV. THROUGH CHRIST WHO SET THE EXAMPLE

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²¹ For **you** have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for **you**, leaving **you** an example for **you** to follow in His steps, ²² WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; ²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ and He Himself bore **our** sins in His body on the cross, so that **we** might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds **you** were healed. ²⁵ For **you** were continually straying like sheep, but now **you** have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of **your** souls.

- How can I practically imitate the actions of Christ as seen in this passage? In what ways can I put my trust in the steadfastness of God above the ever-changing tides of our world's agenda [vv. 21-24]?
- How does my identity as a found sheep [v. 25] motivate me to obey the Lord's commands [vv. 11-20]?

Summary/Application:

1. I was born again as a new person when I accepted Christ as my savior!
2. God exchanged His eternal wrath for my sins for "the righteousness of God in Him."
3. I am a priest of God who "offers up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ."
4. Follow the example of Christ who "WHO COMMITTED NO SIN", but suffered without complaint on the cross. Instead "...Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do...."" [Luke 23:34]
5. Memorize **1 Peter 2**: ¹² Keep your **behavior** excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may **because of your good deeds**, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.
6. Pray for our county and the upcoming election claiming the promise for "My people" in:
2 Chronicles 7: ¹⁴ and **My people** who are called by **My name** humble themselves and pray and seek **My face**^c and turn from their wicked ways, then **I** will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

[seek **My face**^c- this means for My people to seek the presence of God currently in the life of every believer.]

7. Every believer in Jesus Christ needs to be aware of the Humanist Doctrine which is in opposition to the revelation of God in the Bible. See the next page.

Humanist Manifesto is the title of three manifestos laying out a Humanist/naturalistic/evolution worldview. They are the original Humanist Manifesto 1933, the Humanist Manifesto II (1973), and Humanism and Its Aspirations (2003, a.k.a. Humanist Manifesto III). Here are excerpts from #2. Traditional moral codes and newer irrational cults both fail to meet the pressing needs of today and tomorrow. False "theologies of hope" and messianic ideologies, substituting new dogmas for old, cannot cope with existing world realities. They separate rather than unite peoples. Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the "ghost in the machine" and the "separable soul." Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a social and cultural context. There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. We continue to exist in our progeny and in the way that our lives have influenced others in our culture.

1 1933 http://americanhumanist.org/humanism/humanist_manifesto_i

2 1973 http://americanhumanist.org/Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II

3 2003 http://americanhumanist.org/humanism/humanist_manifesto_iii

The Roman Theban Legion

- All 6600 Martyred for Jesus in 286 A.D.

The Theban Legion passed through the Alps into Gaul, under the command of Mauritius, Candidus, and Exuperis, their worthy commanders, and at length joined the emperor. About this time, Maximian ordered a general sacrifice, at which the whole army was to assist; and likewise he commanded that they should take the oath of allegiance and swear, at the same time, to assist in the extirpation of Christianity in Gaul. Alarmed at these orders, each individual of the Theban Legion absolutely refused either to sacrifice or take the oaths prescribed.

This so greatly enraged Maximian, that he ordered the legion to be decimated, that is, 600 men be selected from the rest, and put to the sword. The names of the soldiers were written on papers and placed in the caps of the centurions, for 600 were destined to perish as examples. These embraced their comrades, who encouraged them and even envied their fate. The plain soon flowed with the blood of the martyrs. The survivors persisted in declaring themselves Christians, and the butchery began again; the blood of another 600 reddened the waters of the Rhone.

This second severity made no more impression than the first had done; the soldiers preserved their fortitude and their principles, but by the advice of their officers they drew up a loyal remonstrance to the emperor. This, it might have been presumed, would have softened the emperor, but it had a contrary effect: for, enraged at their perseverance and unanimity, he commanded that the whole legion should be put to death, which was accordingly executed by the other troops, who cut them to pieces with their swords, September 22, 286. The Maximian period is known as the Sixth Primitive Persecution in Fox's Book of Martyrs. During this persecution, raised by Maximian, numberless Christians were slain without trial, and buried indiscriminately in heaps, sometimes fifty or sixty being cast into a pit together, without the least decency. See Fox's Book of Martyrs [here](#).

For 40 Martyrs of Sevaste A.D. 360 see page 4

40 Martyrs of Sevaste A.D. 360

The place: Sevaste, in present-day Turkey.? Governor Agricola spoke mildly but firmly. He had good and strong warriors before him. He needed them. They must be brought into line. "I am told you refuse to offer the sacrifice ordered by Emperor Licinius." One of the soldiers answered on behalf of the rest. "We will not sacrifice. To do so is to betray our holy faith." "But what about your comrades? Consider--you alone of Caesar's troops defy him! Think of the disgrace you bring upon your legion. How can you do it?"

"To disgrace the name of our Lord Jesus Christ is more terrible still." "Chain them in my dungeons!" roared Agricola. "We'll see what Lysias has to say about this."

Lysias, commander of the 12th Legion, was in no gentle mood when the forty Christian soldiers were hauled before him a few days later. His ride from Antioch to Sevaste had been tedious and cold. "You will obey me," he said sternly, "or pay a sharp penalty."

The men answered him with respectful defiance, just as they had Agricola. Lysias had not become a commander by coddling traitors, and he did not intend to begin now. He motioned to Agricola.

Agricola came beside Lysias. As judge, he must make these unbending men conform. But how? Just then, a frigid gale blew across the frozen pond below and stabbed into his cheeks. It gave him an idea. "Take them down to the pond," he ordered. Turning to the soldiers he added, "You will stand naked on the ice until you agree to sacrifice to the gods."

Agricola could hardly believe what his eyes saw next. The rebels began stripping off their own clothes and running toward the pond in the freezing March air. "We are soldiers of the Lord and fear no hardship," shouted one. "What is our death but entrance into eternal life?"

Sing It, Brothers!

Striking up a song, the men marched onto the frozen pond. Baffled, Agricola posted guards around them. He squinted into the falling sun. Surely the bitter cold of evening would change their minds....

The sun sank behind the hills. Then upon the night air could be heard a prayer: "Lord, there are forty of us engaged in this battle; grant that forty may be crowned and not one be missing from this sacred number."

Babbling, one of the forty crawled toward them from the ice. One of the guards without delay, shucked off his clothes and ran onto the ice. The martyrs would be forty again!

When the sun rose, Agricola was told that the forty were dead. "Well, get the bodies off the ice," he commanded. "Burn them. And dump the ashes in the river."