

Title: **THREE GREAT WONDERS**

Text: John 1:29

Subject: *Three Wonders Revealed in Holy Scripture*

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Tape # Z-76b

Readings: *Rex Bartley and James Jordan*

Introduction:

There are certain, specific things revealed in the Scriptures that we are called upon to *behold* as matters of unquestionable truth, to *behold* with confident faith, reverent wonder, deep gratitude, and exulting praise. Let's look at three of these wonders of Divine Revelation.

BEHOLD THE LAMB **JOHN 1:29**

The first wonder I want us to mediate upon tonight is **THE WONDER OF THE LAMB**. — The first great wonder revealed in this Book is the wonder of the Lamb—The wonder of redemption through the sacrifice of the Lamb (Gen. 3 and 4—The First Sacrifice—Abel's Sacrifice)

Our blessed Savior is constantly referred to and typified in the Book of God as the Lamb of God. But the first time he is specifically called "The Lamb of God" is here in John 1:29.

(John 1:29) "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

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Now watch this, John specifically identifies the Messiah, the Christ, as the Lamb of God and directs his disciples to follow the Lamb.

(John 1:30-37) "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. (31) And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. (32) And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. (33) And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. (34) And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. (35) Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; (36) And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! (37) And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” I am calling upon you to behold the Lamb of God as the sin-atonement sacrifice of God himself, who bore our sins, and bore them away forever, in his own body on the tree.

- Christ is presented to us as the Lamb.
- He is the Lamb of God.
- He is the Lamb who is God.
- He has taken away all the sins of all his people scattered through all the world.

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I call upon you who are yet under the wrath of God to “Behold the Lamb of God.” — Some of you are yet without Christ, lost, under the wrath of God. The weight of your guilt and sin is crushing your soul. The terror of God’s wrath is driving you mad. You simply cannot go on like you are. You feel that you are sinking into hell, and there is nothing you can do about it. You are as helpless as you are miserable and wretched. I call you now, like that very first Baptist preacher called on his hearers, to “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*” Look to Christ, like the Jews looked to the brazen serpent in the wilderness, and be saved (Isaiah 45:22).

(Isaiah 45:22) "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is none else.*"

My message is the same to you who are born of God, to you who are already heirs of eternal life. — Whatever your soul’s trouble is, whatever your need is, whatever your heart craves, whatever your present condition is, this is what you need to do this hour—“*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*”

- Behold the Lamb of God, and worship!
- Behold the Lamb of God, and wonder!
- Behold the Lamb of God, and be ravished with his mercy, love, and grace!
- Behold the Lamb of God, and find inspiration for your soul’s devotion to him!
- Behold the Lamb of God, and be broken over your sin and indifference!

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(Zechariah 12:10) "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn."

- Behold the Lamb of God, and be revived, renewed, and refreshed in him!
- Behold the Lamb of God and follow him. God's saints are described as followers of the Lamb (Rev. 14:4).

(Revelation 14:4) "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

- Behold the Lamb of God in all the Scriptures as he is prophesied, typified (Ex. 12), identified (John 1:29), crucified (Isa. 53), and glorified (Rev. 5).

The first great wonder revealed in this Book is the wonder of the Lamb. How I thank God for that Lamb who was slain at Calvary, slain from the foundation of the world, and for that Book of Life of the Lamb, in which our names were written by the finger of God from eternity! What a wonder!

BEHOLD THE SORROW
LAMENTATIONS 1:12

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The second wonder revealed in this Book, revealed as the constant theme of this Book, is **THE SUFFERINGS, SORROWS, AND DEATH OF CHRIST AS THE LAMB OF GOD.** — Let's hear the Lamb of God himself, as he speaks in **Lamentations 1:12**, and calls for us to behold with reverence his sufferings and sorrows as our Substitute. *“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.”*

Do you see the Son of God hanging upon the cursed tree, suffering all the horrid ignominy and terror of God's unmitigated wrath? In his body, in his heart, and in his very soul, the Son of God was filled with sorrow, suffering the hell of God's wrath for us!

Yonder, amazing sight I see!
Th' incarnate Son of God
Expiring on th' accursed tree,
And weltering in His blood.

Behold, a purple torrent run
Down from His hands and head,
The crimson tide puts out the sun;
His groans awake the dead.

The trembling earth, the darkened sky,
Proclaim the truth aloud;
And with th' amazed centurion,
cry “This is the Son of God!”

So great, so vast a sacrifice

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May well my hope revive:
If God's own Son thus bleeds and dies,
The sinner sure may live.

Oh that these cords of love divine
Might draw me, Lord, to Thee!
Thou hast my heart, it shall be Thine!
Thine it shall ever be!

Samuel Stennett

The enormous load of human guilt
Was on my Savior laid;
With woes as with a garment,
He For sinners was arrayed.

And in the horrid pangs of death,
He wept, He prayed for me;
Loved and embraced my guilty soul
When nailed to the tree.

Oh love amazing! love beyond
The reach of human tongue;
Love which shall be the subject of
An everlasting song.

William Williams

“Behold, and see,” our Savior says, “if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.”

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What was the source of his sorrow?—It was that, he says, “*Wherewith the Lord God hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*” (See Isaiah 53:9-10.)

(Isaiah 53:9-10) "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. (10) Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand."

What was the cause of his sorrow?—The holy, immaculate, spotless, sinless Son of God was made to be sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21).

(2 Corinthians 5:21) "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Why did he endure such sorrow?—He endured all the agony of our hell that he might redeem and save his people, “*that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*” The sorrow he experienced was our sorrow. The hell he endured was our hell. The death he died was our death (Isa. 53:4-6).

(Isaiah 53:4-6) "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. (5) But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (6) All we

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like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

What is the result of his sorrow, suffering, and death as our Substitute?—The everlasting salvation of our souls!

- Redemption
- Pardon
- Righteousness
- Acceptance
- All the Glory of Heaven

BEHOLD THE LOVE

1 JOHN 3:1

Here is the third wonder revealed in the Book of God that I want us to meditate upon for just a few minutes—**THE WONDER OF GOD'S LOVE** revealed to us in the Lamb. It is in consideration of all these things that the apostle John calls upon us to behold, with deep gratitude and joy and exulting confidence and praise, the love of God for his elect in Christ. "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*" (1 John 3:1).

When I began preparing this message, I had planned to preach to you from the last few verses of John 17 on the love of God. But I was simply taken up with these great wonders of God's love and got no further than 1 John 3:1. The Lord willing, we will look at

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the passage in John 17 soon. Let me wrap this message up by showing you a little of what is revealed here in 1 John 3:1.

(1 John 3:1) "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

First, John would have us behold with wonder the love of God bestowed upon us. — We rejoice to know that "*God is love!*" Love is an attribute of his holy Being without which he would not be God. We know that God is love because his love is revealed and made known by his deeds. Love is active. It is never dormant. Like fire, it must break out. It cannot be contained. It is known only when it is experienced, not by words, but by deeds. We know the love of God is that love that "*passeth knowledge.*" Yet, God's love is revealed and made known by these six deeds of indescribable love.

The first act of God's love was OUR ELECTION IN CHRIST (Deut. 7:7-8).

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 "The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye *were* the fewest of all people: (8) But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

Election is not a hard doctrine. It is a delightful doctrine. Were it not for God's electing love toward sinners, there would be no

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salvation (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13). We would never have come to know and love Christ, had he not first loved us (John 15:16; 1 John 4:19).

The second act of God's love was **OUR REDEMPTION BY CHRIST** (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:16; 4:9-10). "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends!*"

This was compassion like a God,
That when our Savior knew -
The price of pardon was his blood,
His love he ne'er withdrew!

Romans 5:8 "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

1 John 3:16 "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren."

1 John 4:9-10 "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins."

Because he loved us, the Son of God assumed our nature, assumed our sin, assumed our guilt and died under the wrath of God as our Substitute, to put away our sins. "*The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me!*"

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The third act by which God reveals his love to sinners is **HIS EFFECTUAL, SAVING GRACE** (Jer. 31:3). — Those whom the triune God loved, the Father chose to save. Those whom the Father chose to save, the Son redeemed. And those whom the Son redeemed, the Holy Spirit will effectually call, by his irresistible grace, to life and faith in Christ. “*Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto thee*” (Psa. 65:4).

The love of God is revealed fourthly in **THE ABSOLUTE PRESERVATION OF HIS ELECT IN A STATE OF GRACE** (Rom. 8:39).

Romans 8:39 "Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

John 10:28 "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand."

Can you imagine one who is loved of God falling from a state of grace, perishing and suffering the wrath of God forever in hell? Why, such a notion is worse than nonsense, it is blasphemy! **The love of God is...**

- Without cause!
- Without beginning!
- Without condition!
- Without change!
- Without end!
- It is free!
- It is discriminating!

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- It is indestructible!
- It is everlasting!

Fifthly, God's love for his elect is seen in OUR SAVIOR'S TENDER, PROVIDENTIAL CARE FOR US (John 11:35-36).

John 11:35-36 "Jesus wept. (36) Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!"

Our God and Savior really is touched with the feeling of our infirmities! We really are the apple of his eye! — But there is one act of love that goes beyond election, redemption, effectual calling, preservation, and providential care. Great and marvelous as those things are, there is one act of God that goes beyond them all.

If the climax of God's love is our redemption by Christ, the apex of God's love is OUR ADOPTION INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD (1 John 3:1).

1 John 3:1-3 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (3) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

- By birth, we are all sons of Adam, fallen, depraved and spiritually dead (Rom. 5:12).

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- By our deeds, we show ourselves to be children of the devil, sinful, deceitful, and wicked (John 8:44).
- By nature, we are all children of wrath (Eph. 1:3).
- By grace, we who believe are the sons of God!

“Sons we are through God’s election,
Who in Jesus Christ believe;
By eternal destination,
Sovereign grace we here receive!

Every fallen soul, by sinning,
Merits everlasting pain;
But Thy love, without beginning,
Has restored Thy sons again.

Pause, my soul, adore and wonder!
Ask, ‘Oh why such love to me?’
Grace hath put me in the number
Of the Savior’s family!”

Election is the great fountain of grace. Redemption is the greatest mystery of grace. And **Adoption Is The Greatest Privilege Of Grace**. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”

Why has God adopted us into his family? — No reason can be found in all the Bible for God’s adoption of sinners into his family except his sovereign love (Eph. 1:4-5).

Ephesians 1:3-6 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in

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heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him **in love**: (5) **Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,** (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

Adoption is experienced and known in time; but it began in eternity. We were not adopted into the family of God when he gave us his Spirit, but when he chose us and accepted us in the Beloved. He gives us his Spirit in regenerating grace, not to make us son of God, but because we are the sons of God!

Galatians 4:1-7 "Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; (2) But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. (3) Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: (4) But **when the fulness of the time was come**, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, (5) To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (6) And **because ye are sons**, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (7) Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

The only distinction between the children of God and the children of wrath is the distinguishing love and grace of God (1 Cor. 4:7). And this distinction was made by God in eternity.

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1 Corinthians 4:7 "For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it?*"

Illustration: Johnny's #60!

By what power do sinners become the sons of God? — Were it not for the perversions of religious tradition, this question would be redundant. Man, by nature, is enmity against God. He cannot become one of the sons of God because he chooses to be!

- The preacher has no power to make men the sons of God.
- The church has no power to make men the sons of God.
- You certainly do not have the power to make yourself a child of God! (Rom. 9:16).
- The only power that can translate a sinner from the family of nature into the family of grace (Jer. 3:19) is the power of God.

Jeremiah 3:19 "But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me."

Adoption is God's work! You cannot become a child of God but by the choice, power, and grace of God!

What is the method of God's adoption? — We must never suggest, imply, or imagine that God must do anything, or that he must do anything in a specific way. God is totally free and

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sovereign. He can do whatever he is pleased to do. And he can do it however he is pleased to do it. But God does reveal in his Word his method of grace in adoption (John 1:12-13).

John 1:12-13 "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

NOTE: If we would understand the doctrine of this text, it must be read backwards. Here John tells us three things about God's method of grace in adoption.

First, God drops the life of grace into a person's soul (v. 13). "*Born of God!*" The new birth is God's work.

NOTE: Here God's adoption differs from civil adoption. He gives his sons his nature! This gracious gift of God is altogether the work of his free and sovereign grace in Christ.

- Grace has nothing to do with pedigree - *Blood.*"
- Grace does not come by the will of friends and relatives - "*The will of the flesh.*"
- Grace does not come by your own will - "*The will of men.*"
- "*But of God!*" His purpose of predestination - His power.

As soon as God drops life into the soul, the regenerate sinner receives Christ, believing on his name. — To believe on his name, "*The Lord Jesus Christ,*" is to receive Christ as my...

- My Lord!

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- My Redeemer!
- My Savior!
- My Righteousness!

And as soon as you trust Christ, God gives you the right, the power, the authority, the privilege of being his child. — This power, authority, and right of sonship is the assurance of sonship conferred upon believing sinners by the Holy Spirit. That person who trusts Christ alone as Savior and Lord knows that he has the right in Christ to speak to God almighty as his heavenly Father.

NOTE: If any of you think you are the sons of God who have not yet believed on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is a lie - Sonship, Adoption is bestowed upon faith -

- Not Feeling!
- Not Conviction!
- Not Conversion!
- Not Repentance!

Why are the children of God so misunderstood and misrepresented by the people of this world?—“*Therefore the world knoweth us not.*” — If you are born of God, if you trust the Lord Jesus Christ, if you live in this world as a child of God, the men and women of the world will never be able to know you. You will be misunderstood and misrepresented.

- Your Doctrine.
- Your Devotion.
- Your Desires.

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The reason for this misunderstanding is quite simple – Because we are the sons of God—“*Therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*”

What are the blessed privileges of adoption? — I have already told you that the greatest privilege of grace is adoption. Now let me show you that that statement is true. Being the sons of God, ours is a blessedness beyond comparison.

We have an assured interest in God’s infinite, everlasting love (John 17:23-26).

John 17:23-26 "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (24) Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (25) O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. (26) And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

1. **We have the Spirit of God** (Rom. 8:14-16; Gal. 4:6). — God the Holy Spirit has been given to us, bequeathed and bestowed upon us by Christ our Lord.

Galatians 4:6 "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

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Romans 8:14-16 "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (15) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"

- To Teach Us.
- To Guide Us.
- To Seal Us.

2. **We have been brought into the discipline of our Father's house** (Heb. 12:5-11).

Hebrews 12:5-11 "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: (6) For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. (7) If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (8) But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (9) Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? (10) For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. (11) Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

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The Father's chastening rod is a blessing of grace by which our heavenly Father...

- Proves Our Faith.
- Strengthens Our Faith.
- Purifies Our Faith.
- Weans Us From The World.

3. **We are assured of our perfect conformity to the image of Christ** (Rom. 8:29).

Romans 8:29 "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

4. **And our adoption into the family of God makes us the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.** — Our inheritance is an inheritance of grace! An inheritance of pure, free grace in Christ!

- We were predestinated to it (Eph. 1:11).
- Christ has purchased it and claimed it for us (Eph. 1:14; Heb. 6:20).
- Grace has made us worthy of it (Col. 3:12).
- It shall be glorious (Rev. 7:16-17).

Revelation 7:16-17 "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. (17) For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

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I really cannot tell you what the blessing of being an heir of God shall be. Only eternity can do that. But I can tell you this—It beats being an heir of hell! I know. I've been both.

Application: If you come to Christ, you shall be an heir of God; you are a child of God! May God make you to do as Mary did long ago, to choose that good part that shall never be taken away from you!

- Believe on Christ!
- Confess Christ!
- Live for Christ!
- Live with Christ forever!

AMEN!