

The Holiest Thing in all of Scotland and Those Who Made a Vow Registered in Heaven

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 September 2008

Preacher: Alistair Beaton

[0 : 00] Okay, well I'll repeat that last sentence, but what I was saying was that throughout Scotland and mostly the southwest of Scotland, on the moors and sometimes in the open fields, open air meetings are held from time to time around the many monuments that have been erected to the memory of hundreds of Christian men and women that were brutally murdered.

And thousands of others who were tortured, fined and deported, resulting in the devastation of their families and the communities from which they came. And all of this took place over a 50 year period, ending almost 320 years ago.

And that might seem a long time to those of us gathered here this morning, but in terms of church history, it's not that long ago really. And I can remember very clearly my grandmother who was born back in the 1880s and I'm sure she would remember people that were maybe born at the end of the 1700s.

So if we extrapolate that, really it's not very long ago in terms of human history. The belief of these people that we're talking about today was that no man, be they king or pope, should have power over the practice of their faith.

At the end of the struggle it was left to just a handful of men to bring back the Presbyterian form of worship and church government as a national church in Scotland.

[1 : 38] So I'm not here today to promote the Presbyterian form of government, but this is just purely a historical record. I've never been a member of the Church of Scotland, although my sister is a missionary with the Church of Scotland in Kyrgyzstan.

The principles those involved were fighting for were those of the Reformation, which had taken place in Scotland around 1560. Presbyterians at that time rejected many of the old doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, including the heinous and false doctrine of supposedly obtaining God's forgiveness through the buying of indulgences.

And it was claimed that in Scotland the Roman Catholic Church was the most corrupt in Europe in this regard. Patrick Hamilton, who had studied in Paris and met Martin Luther, brought the Protestant or Reformed faith to his native Scotland.

And for this he was burnt at the stake in front of San Salvador's Church in the university town of St. Andrew. It was a town so named because the relics of St. Andrew, the disciple of the Lord Jesus, were believed to be buried there.

Today St. Andrew's is better known as the home of golf. And if any of you are golfers, I'm sure you'd enjoy playing golf there. And that has been done for the last several hundred years.

[3 : 15] This martyrdom made a profound impression on the Scots. However, not until a secondary former by the name of George Wishart was burnt at the stake by Cardinal Beaton in St. Andrew's 18 years later, where the seeds have changed so on.

Cardinal Beaton, so my father informs me, was an ancestor of mine. I don't really like to admit to that, but he was a very evil person.

And he eventually was hanged from the window. And I had a picture of that there this morning, but unfortunately can't get the projector to work.

However, Cardinal Beaton was hanged by Wishart's followers in St. Andrew's.

George Wishart was also the first teacher of Greek at Montrose Academy. That's the school I attended as a young person. A close follower of George Wishart was an ex-Roman Catholic priest by the name of John Knox.

[4 : 29] He's probably better known to some of you here. He was greatly influenced by John Calvin. And Knox became a powerful preacher. And actually struck fear, or the fear of God, into all he came in contact with, including Mary, Queen of Scots, who was the monarch at that time.

Knox was forced to flee Scotland. And even served as a slave on a French galley ship for a period of time. On his return to Scotland, he was instrumental in having the Reformed faith ratified by Parliament as the state religion in 1560.

So a question that we might have this morning, is it God's plan for us to have a state religion? And as Anglicans, that could be a controversial type of question, I guess.

Superintendents, or that's the name they gave to bishops back then in Scotland, were abolished in Scotland under the Presbyterian system in 1581.

That was about 21 years after Parliament ratified the Presbyterian Church as the National Church in Scotland.

[5 : 50] But for more than a century to come, the new religion was under threat. Opposition to this new order came mostly from the king, but also from many of the nobility.

And this opposition was based on two factors. One, the monarchs believed in the divine right of kings, which gave them supreme authority over both temporal and spiritual matters, as far as their subjects were concerned.

And today in England, we still have, in the House of Lords, as far as I know. I know that Tony Blair, the previous Prime Minister in England, was trying to change this.

But I believe we still have a number of Lords spiritual, who are bishops, and who automatically have seats in the House of Lords. And of course, democracy in these days was not, or did not exist, as it does today.

The government of Scotland was made up of four estates. The king, the bishops, who were mostly political appointees of the king. The nobility and the burgesses.

[7 : 06] The burgesses were the crafts people or the business people in the various towns and villages throughout Scotland. Since Presbyterianism does not recognize bishops as a separate office from that of an elder.

Each parish church being governed by a group of elders. Kirk elders, that's what they call the church in Scotland. It's called a Kirk. The minister is actually just a teaching elder.

He's equal to all the other elders within the group. And that group of elders is known as the Kirk Session. This new arrangement meant that the king lost significant influence in the running of the country.

Because up to that time, bishops were appointed by the king. And they would do, basically, his bidding. The form faith had taken hold in England during the reign of Henry VIII.

And was consolidated in the subsequent reign of Queen Elizabeth I. However, only a partial reformation took place in the Church of England.

[8 : 22] This could be argued. I don't see Dr. Parker here today. But hopefully I'm off the hook here. But they retained the prelacy and the Episcopal system as we know it at St. John's.

So that's quite a different system of church government to the Presbyterian system. Queen Elizabeth was the last of the Tudor monarchs.

A dynasty that had gone back several hundred years. And the Crown of England, as she didn't have any children, should have passed to her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots.

Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. But at that time, Queen Elizabeth had been holding Mary as a prisoner.

And in 1587, Queen Elizabeth I executed Mary Queen of Scots for treason.

[9 : 27] I won't go into the history of it because it's not really relevant to our talk today. Mary Queen of Scots had been raised in France as a Catholic. However, her son James VI of Scotland was raised a Protestant.

And on the death of Elizabeth I, he became James I of Great Britain. That was in 1603.

He had already served a number of years as King James VI of Scotland. This is the same King James as we refer to.

Some people think he actually wrote the Bible, but that's not true. But he authorized the Bible that's in common use today, the authorized version, or the King James version of the Bible.

During the reign of James I, some attempts to have the church in Scotland adopt the Episcopal system were made, including, once again, the appointment of bishops or superintendents.

[10:38] The Scots vehemently protested. Bishops had previously, had been previously restored under what was known as the Black Arts of 1584.

A good name for bishops, I guess. But abolished under the Golden Act of 1592. But in 1618, James I of Great Britain succeeded in persuading the General Assembly.

Although the Church of Scotland operated on the basis of local churches, they got together at these General Assemblies that were held in Edinburgh.

But in this case, they met in Perth, another city in central Scotland. And they were forced to accept certain articles that the King had sort of pressed upon them.

But the Presbyterians claimed this smacked of Catholicism. When James died in 1625, and his son Charles I took over, it became increasingly obvious that he wanted, as an absentee king, he wasn't living in Scotland at the time, he was living in London, but he wanted to have more political Scotland.

[11:59] And to do this, he wanted, of course, the bishops to be reinstated. Bishops that he could rely upon to do his bidding.

One of the first changes made in the Scottish Church was the introduction of the prayer book. There were several revisions to this prayer book before it was finally introduced.

And no one in Scotland had been consulted. As to the prayer book itself, the prayer book was the work of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

His name was Laud. And it was considered to be more Catholic than the English edition. And just interestingly, Laud's Liturgy, as it was called, later became the basis of the Episcopal prayer book in the United States of America.

It's used today. Laud's Liturgy was introduced at a service in St. Giles High Kirk on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh. This is the main street that runs from Edinburgh Castle.

[13:11] I don't know if too many of you have been to Edinburgh, but the castle is up on a hill. The Royal Mile is the main street that runs down to Holyrood Palace.

Probably at least a mile long, that street. And St. Giles is a church about a third of the way down the Royal Mile. On the first reading of this new service by the Dean of St. Giles, a kale seller, by the name of Jenny Geddes, threw her stool at the Dean, and interrupted the service by shouting, How dare you read Mass in my lug?

May the devil give you bellyache. And just to translate that, she was asking the Dean, How dare you read the Mass in my ear?

May the devil give you a stomachache. A tumult started and the service was abandoned. And this, the reading of the prayer book, has never been repeated at St. Giles up to this day.

The clergy were pelted by the mob as they left the church. Of course, the king ordered every minister to use the new book, or face banishment to the colonies.

[14:40] If Dr. Packer was here today, I know that I've enjoyed his lectures on the prayer book, and the value of it, as well as the construction of it. But I don't know if at any time he would have resorted to what happened at Brecon Cathedral.

Brecon Cathedral is in the diocese that I come from, on the east coast of Scotland. Because when the bishop read from Lord's Prayer Book, he had to have a pistol in each hand, a loaded pistol, aimed at the congregation.

As news of this event at St. Giles spread throughout Scotland, hundreds of Scots travelled to Edinburgh to petition through the King's Privy Council to have the prayer book withdrawn. The protesters formed four committees, representing the nobility, the gentry, the clergy, and the burgesses.

And this was all done under the leadership of a young advocate by the name of Archdebel Johnson, and also a church minister from a little town called Lucas, which is very close to St. Andrews.

His name was Alexander Henderson. Now they drew up a document which ended with an oath of allegiance, both to the King and God's true religion, which they, of course, claimed was the Presbyterian system of church government.

[16:25] So on the 20th of February, February 1638, in Greyfriars Church, that's another church very close, to St. Giles, the National Covenant was adopted, and the original copy was signed by 4,500 people over a three-day period.

Now unfortunately, I even went to the little museum in Edinburgh where this document is displayed there, and I think they get around 8,000 people a year coming to view this document.

It's written on a deerskin. We'll just talk about it in a few minutes, but a further 60,000 signed copies of the original.

And the first person to sign this document was someone by the name of John Graham. He was the Marcus of Montrose, the town that I come from. And he represented the nobility.

The document itself is long and rambling, and it consists of three sections. A restatement of the negative confessions of 1581, which denounced Catholic practices.

[17 : 47] A catalogue of the Acts of Parliament condemning popery, and affirming Presbyterianism. And finally, a north by which those who signed this document bound themselves to defend the king in God's true religion.

So this document is the one that's been described as the holiest thing in all of Scotland. It's unfortunate that I can't show you a picture of it.

As I said, it's displayed at Huntley Museum, near to the place where it was originally written and signed. It's written on a 45-inch, square-inch piece of deerskin.

45 inches by 45 inches approximately. And some of the signatories were so enthusiastic that it is claimed that they signed a national covenant in their own blood.

This has never been proven. But there was no doubting their commitment. One John Cunningham added the extra words after his name, Till Death, meaning Till Death.

[19 : 06] Another added a heart shape to the end of his name. As I say, several thousand visitors each year come from all over the world to see this document.

Because enshrined in this document are all the great presence of religious liberty that we enjoy today. Not only in Scotland, but in many other parts of the world.

Some claim it was a revolutionary document. But this is not true. Because in the heart of the document are the key words in obedience to the command of God.

Perhaps that is revolutionary in this day and age. in obedience to the command of God. Obedience to God was the objective to be implemented in the life and the work of the Church of Scotland.

It also stated we believe with our hearts, confess with our mouths, subscribe with our hands, and constantly confirm before God and the whole world. This is the only true Christian faith and religion.

[20 : 16] we agree and resolve all the days of our life constantly to adhere. And this word adhere is sort of key word when we're talking about these people and the memorials to these people.

Because on all the monuments it says they adhered to the covenant. But the word is used in the document that says they constantly adhered unto and defend the aforesaid religion and to labor by all lawful means to recover the purity and the liberty of the Gospel.

Copies of the document were taken throughout Scotland to be signed in the various churches.

Thousands did sign these copies. And after it was read out in the churches the effect of it was that the people broke down.

Broke down in repentance. As they realized how far they had departed from the standards set by the reformers. Many rededicated themselves to the principles and the truths rediscovered at the time of the reformation.

And a religious revival broke out in many parts of Scotland. This was mostly in the south in the southwest of Scotland. The covenanters became more bold in their demands insisting that Parliament and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland be free from royal interference.

[21 : 49] Charles I obviously had to react. He's an absentee king with what happened to be a very weak army and a civil war was breaking out in England at around the same time.

And he was also having troubles in Ireland. And although he marched to the city of Berwick which is with his army which is on the border of Scotland and England he ended up negotiating with the Scots and this we call it the Battle of the Bishops the First Battle of the Bishops ended without bloodshed.

The outcome of this was that Scotland regained its Presbyterianism for at least a short period. In 1642 civil war broke out in England between the king and the Protestant Parliament which made the Scots fearful of what the outcome might be.

It was decided to take sides with the Protestant Parliament. An agreement was signed in 1643 called the Solemn League and Covenant in which it was agreed that both England and Ireland would adopt the Presbyterian system of church government after defeating the king's forces.

However, the English parliamentarians reneged on this agreement and then the Covenanters themselves changed tack persuading the captive now captive king Charles the First to accept

conditionally the Solemn League and Covenant and this agreement that they made in 1647 was known as the engagement and it split the ranks of the Covenanters and actually brought retribution from the English.

[23 : 52] Because during Charles I's imprisonment, Oliver Cromwell, he was the Lord Protector of England and the English Commonwealth as it was first known existed from 1651 to 1653 and then the Protectorate itself was from 1653 to 1660.

When Oliver Cromwell executed Charles I in 1649 the Scots felt betrayed. Remember, they swore an allegiance to the king.

He was a Scot from a Scottish dynasty, the Stuart dynasty.

But of course they didn't recognize the king as the head of the church. Only Christ could hold that office and certainly no man be he, as I say, king or pope. But there was this national loyalty to Charles Edward Stuart being a Scottish king.

At the restoration of the monarchy, the Scots supported Charles II after Cromwell died. His son tried to take over but he was a weak leader.

[25 : 22] So Charles II, the son of Charles I, was crowned king. And he initially gave his support and actually signed the national covenant and the solemn league and covenant before he was crowned in Perth.

He was crowned in Perth before he was accepted as the king of course of Great Britain. However it became quite obvious that Charles II was an unreliable ally and essentially a dishonest person who despite his previous acceptance of the covenants almost immediately declared the national covenant and the solemn league and covenant high treason.

This was done in the Recessory Act as it was called which repealed that it stroke all the acts of the covenanting parliament. He arrested anyone that protested and a new law was passed requiring anyone as to do so to swear allegiance to the king as both the head of the church and the head of the government and these hated bishops were once again imposed on the Scottish church.

During this time the Royal Mile this long high street I was referring to earlier that runs from Edinburgh Castle down to Holyrood the two places on that street that would become very familiar to the covenanters and I would say if it was possible for someone to come back from that time to the Royal Mile today they would certainly instantly recognize this street.

It doesn't change much in the last 350 years. There's two places there that would be instantly recognizable to them and these are the toll booths that was a prison at the time and the market cross where many covenanters were put to death.

[27 : 33] Also nearby just off the Royal Mile is the grass market where hundreds more were publicly hanged. And the first to die after Charles II came to the throne of Great Britain was the Marcus of Argyle who at the king's coronation in Scotland had put the crown.

He was the one that actually put the crown on the king's head. But the king worried that the Marcus of Argyle was a positive supporter of the Presbyterian cause was arrested and tried.

Of course the justice system in these days is quite different to what it is today than the legal system. These did exist but very different to our times.

They tried to make the charges against the Marcus of Argyle stick but they were finding great difficulty in doing so. The trial went on for some time. But just about the time they were going to release the Marcus of Argyle a knock came to the door in the courtroom and these were letters of a carrier bringing these letters from London which linked Argyle to the English Parliament during the Civil War.

The Marcus of Argyle was marched to the Maiden. That was the name they gave to the guillotine in the market cross. There he told those that were present, I placed the crown of Scotland upon the king's head.

[29 : 06] Now he hastens me to a better crown than his own. And the Marcus spoke a few affectionate words to his friends and placed his head on the block.

And this pattern was the sort of pattern for many hundreds of Christians that were to follow the Marcus of Argyle.

Another law was passed requiring Scotland's ministers to swear allegiance to the king as head of the church. Over a five day period over one third of the ministers sacrificed their calling rather than agreeing to the king having jurisdiction over their faith and the church to which they belonged.

With nowhere to turn but with the support of some of their parishioners they took to the fields and to the moorlands mostly in the southwest of Scotland as I said where they held illegal open air church services which were later called conventicles.

To counter this movement dragoons were sent out by the government under the command of Sir James Turner for the purpose of stopping these meetings. The preachers became wanted men and were forced to arm themselves.

[30 : 28] Sometimes thousands would gather to celebrate the Lord's Supper and on occasions there were skirmishes and even battles fought with the government troops.

Covenanters were accused of rebellion and later of treason. This was much later of course when they published what's known as the Sinker Declaration in 1680 which disowned the king.

He having broken his undertaking to support the covenanters but in the impunitive action was taken against anyone refusing to swear allegiance to the king.

Sir James Turner was given the task of collecting large fines some of which he kept for himself.

One record shows that Turner collected well over a million pounds that's a lot of money back in these days from the generally poor working people who were covenanters.

Meetings and threats to women and children were common. Men were shot and killed in front of their families and many were put in prison in very unsanitary conditions for months or years without trial.

[31 : 48] And there was little redress for the covenanters in the justice system of the day. A cynical historian once said every vulture in Scotland had a nesting place in the halls of justice.

nobility were not averse to using the legal system to plunder the goods and lands of the covenanters. Although the covenanting men had to suffer as well as their families they counted it as a privilege to do so for the cause of Christ.

So these covenanters were probably equivalent just to give you an idea equivalent to the Puritans in England. As many as ten covenanters a day would be marched to the sound of a beating drum to the grass market in Edinburgh where they would be hanged by the neck until they were dead.

Before their execution most would take the opportunity to publicly pledge their allegiance to the covenant and give God praise as they joyfully anticipated meeting their Lord in a matter of minutes.

Once dead it's a little gruesome here that's why I wanted to get the point across. Scots are actually nice people today but once dead their head and their hands would be chopped off and they would be posted on a place called the Netherbo Port as a warning to others.

[33 : 19] Sometimes supporters would come at night at great risk to themselves and remove these remains and have them buried in the criminal's corner of a local cemetery. Today we forget there were men who did not think it too high a price to give up their life and their liberty for the sake of the gospel and to fight for the religious freedoms and liberties that we enjoy today and sadly take for granted.

The government in fear of a full-scale rebellion in 1662 raised 20,000 men and 2,000 horses to be used to track down these covenanters. At a place called Dolry, four covenanters who had come in from the moors to have breakfast at a local inn witnessed Sir James Turner's men trying to roast an old man on the gridiron for not paying his fine.

covenanters shot the corporal that was leading the soldiers, tied up the other men and escaped.

News of this reprisal traveled fast throughout the covenanting community.

Next day, 150 covenanters captured Sir James Turner and marched towards Edinburgh gathering numbers as they went. Their intent was to have the government ease the recent clamp down on the covenanters.

However, the government fearing an all-out battle set cannons at the gates of the city of Edinburgh and sent a band of soldiers out in advance to look for them. About a thousand covenanters reached the gates of the city of Edinburgh after walking 70 or 80 miles in the cold, wet, November weather, but were not welcomed.

[35 : 17] And they retired to a place called Rulian Green in the Pentland Hills just to the south of the city to await their fate. Didn't take long to come because on the 28th of November 1666 the King's armed forces of about 1,200 men led by a man called Tom Delisle fought the ill-equipped covenanters.

There was about actually 900 of them at the Green. And surprisingly only 50 covenanters were killed. in this battle.

And they were actually buried at a small cemetery at the battle site. The following day the King's army attacked the survivors of the battle who had moved over to an adjacent hill. And only the cover of darkness saved many of these men as they dispersed throughout the country. Those who did not escape were captured and they were hung, drawn and quartered. Their bodies displayed in the towns associated with their insurrection. A young man by the name of Hugh McQuill, a much-loved covenanting minister, who was suffering from tuberculosis at the time, was captured and tortured by the boot.

[36 : 38] This was advice that they put around the leg of the prisoner and the hammered wedges down inside this boot until the leg was completely crushed, crushed to a pulp in some cases.

They did this before they hanged them. The reaction to this only helped the covenanting cause and the authorities realizing this for a time became more conciliatory.

I think someone once said, what's the quote, the death of the tyrant is the end of his rule, but the death of the martyr is the beginning of his rule.

Two acts of indulgence were passed to encourage the expelled ministers back to the parishes, but of course under very strict conditions. Some ministers accepting this caused once again a split in the covenanting movement.

Others did not accept the acts of indulgence, believing that to give in or compromise on even one point was to disobey the will of God. Those who adhered to the covenant now risked automatic death, an automatic death sentence if they were caught preaching at these conventicles.

[38 : 18] Those attending, just those attending the conventicles would be imprisoned and deported. Spies and informers were used by the government to track down conventicles and remnant preachers.

One of the most famous and inspiring of these preachers was a man known as Alexander Peden. He was called the prophet of the covenant. Towards the end of his life, he lived in a cave close to his hometown of Saan.

Although he was almost caught by the king's soldiers who were looking for him at his sister's home, he died of natural causes about two days later after that incident.

A close associate of Peden was a young minister from Dumfries called John Blackadder. He was a kind of extremist. He was expelled from his church and escaped to the hills to preach.

His family suffered great persecution and for a time he had to move to the safety of Holland. However, he returned to Scotland and was captured in 1681.

[39 : 28] Landowners were made to ensure that their tenants attended the state church church. And because of the fear of rebellion, Scotland was also placed under martial law.

And to help enforce this new law, Highland soldiers were brought down to the lowlands by the Duke of Lauderdale. They were known as the Highland Host. Most of the people in the north of Scotland really weren't impacted too much by the Covenanters.

And many of them were actually Catholics. And they were billeted mostly with suspected Covenanters sympathizers. They essentially plundered everything they could from their horse, the folks they lived with, sort of ate them out of house and home.

In the summer of 1678, a group of Covenanters were crossing a moor near the town of St.

Andrews, when a carriage came into view. It was the hated Archbishop of St.

Andrews, a person by the name of James Sharp. He was heading home to St. Andrews from Edinburgh with his daughter. Sharp was a former Covenanter who turned court when offered a bishopric by the king.

[40 : 48] These Covenanters wondered what they should do in these circumstances. Sometimes they didn't always use good judgment. But on this occasion, ignoring the pleas of Sharp's daughter and one other member of the Covenanters themselves, he took Sharp from his coach and slowly and painfully killed the men.

Around the same time, a band of 80 Covenanters under the leadership of Sir Robert Hamilton rode into a town by the name of Rutherglen, which is just on the outskirts of Glasgow. On this occasion, the citizens were celebrating the king's birthday and the restoration of the monarchy.

Bonfires had been lit to celebrate these events. Hamilton and his men, after burning copies of all the acts of parliament passed by the king, extinguished the flames of these bonfires and nailed a manifesto to the cross, the market cross, rejecting the king's authority.

Sir Robert and his band of 80 adherents to the covenant rode off into the night. Reaction was fast. The government dispatched troops under the command of a keen young soldier by the name of John Graham of Claverhouse, otherwise known as Viscount Dundee. Have you been to the home of John Claverhouse? No? Well, it's right on the road going north out of the city of Dundee, towards Brody Ferry.

[42 : 23] Viscount Dundee, he was quite a terrible man really. he was sent to find Sir Robert Hamilton and his men. A few Sundays later, bloody Claverhouse, as he became known, happened upon a large conventicle at a place called Drumclog in Ayrshire.

As Claverhouse approached with his dragoons, the preacher told the congregation, you have the theory, now for the practice. What Claverhouse didn't know was that this group was well armed and familiar with the surrounding terrain.

Claverhouse was outnumbered four to one. The covenanting side was led into battle by Sir Robert Hamilton, the very man that Claverhouse had been searching for weeks earlier.

Claverhouse was routed. High on success, the next week, 5,000 armed covenanters held a conventicle on what today is Hamilton Racecourse. And the dragoons, they couldn't do anything about it to stop it.

Then an unfortunate incident, not too long after this, on the 22nd of June, 1679, there was a battle at Bothell Bridge. This is a bridge that crosses the river Cline, a very narrow bridge.

[43 : 39] Four to 5,000 ill equipped covenanters took on the Duke of Monolith's forces. The bridge was, as I say, a narrow arch bridge with a toll booth in the middle.

And while only 10 or 12 covenanters were killed in the fight, that took place on the bridge itself in the flight after the battle, like so many other battles in these days, over 1,000 were captured and taken prisoner and marched to Edinburgh.

The sheer numbers of prisoners overwhelmed the government, and after a month in appalling conditions, some having already escaped, the government offered the men a peace bond to sign. This John Blackadder mentioned earlier encouraged the men not to sign, but many did, and they were released. Around 200 who refused to sign were put on a vessel to be deported to the plantations in Barbados.

However, the ship foundered just off the coast of Scotland and most, if not all of them, were drowned. deportees, if they were men, they had one year chopped off, and the women were branded with a hot iron so that their past could not be forgotten, even if they were to gain their freedom at a later time.

[45 : 01] Normally, they had to serve seven years as slaves on these plantations. When the covenanting period was at its lowest point, so many having been killed or deported, two brothers, Richard and Michael Cameron, returned from Holland to fan the flames.

The Camerons nailed their colors to the mast at a place called Sanker, making a declaration there in 1680. Eventually, they and their group of followers were tracked down and killed at the Battle of Fairmoth.

The Camerons gave their name to a famous Scottish and later a British army regiment, raised in their honor. This regiment only stood down in 1968.

In answer to the prayers of the Covenanters, another well-known minister, James Rennick, became the next leader. He also was a bit of an extremist who took to the hills with 60 of his men to conduct a constant offensive against the government.

He preached passionately and he wrote many articles. He was a great organizer but he was physically a very weak person. He was later hanged as well in Edinburgh.

[46 : 23] One of Rennick's supporters was a man by the name of John Brown of Priest Hill, a place near Muirkirk in Ayrshire. John Brown was known as the Christian Carrier.

Priest Hill is a very isolated and lonely spot with a certain beauty. But on the 1st of May 1685, John Brown and his young nephew were up on the hills above the home where they lived, cutting peat for fuel.

And they were overtaken by Claver House and his dragoons. Both were taken down to the house where John Brown and his wife and young children lived. The young man was shamefully treated and then handed over to a man by the name of Drummond, who later hanged him.

John Brown was interrogated. His house was sacked until Claver House discovered what he deemed to be treasonable papers. John Brown was ordered to go to his prayers, which he did, then

was told to take goodbye of his wife and children, that he also did.

John Brown stepped before the troopers and Claver House gave the command to shoot John Brown. But such was the effect of John Brown's prayers on the troopers, they failed to comply with the command.

[47 : 51] Claver House then stepped forward, took out his pistol and shot John Brown through the head. We can only imagine the screams from his wife and children. Claver House turned to John Brown's wife, Bentley, with a sardonic smile and said, O woman, what think ye now of your husband?

She replied, I thought ever much of him, and more now than ever. Friends came to comfort John Brown's wife and lay him to rest.

And the place of his burial is a memorial there at Priest Hill. a number of years ago I was working for a firm in Vancouver here and I met a man who asked me, he said, have you ever heard of John Brown of Priest Hill?

I said, well I've heard the name, I just can't remember all of the story. He said, well I know he was a martyr in Scotland. And so I kind of researched it a little bit and it turned out this gentleman that I sort of worked with, he was a direct descendant of John Brown.

On another occasion the dragoons rode into a small town called Wigton and arrested three women. One was an old woman and there's varying sort of information about how old she actually was.

[49 : 16] Some say she was 60, others say that she was in her 80s. The accounts differ. Her name was Margaret MacLachlan and she was accused of sheltering the expelled preachers.

The two other women were teenage girls who were said to frequent their house and were therefore under suspicion. Their names were Margaret and Agnes Wilson, daughters of a local farmer. When the father of these girls who were condemned to be drowned in the waters of the Solway Firth, he gathered all the money he could and he rode at top speed to Edinburgh with a hundred pounds.

He was able to buy the life of his daughter Agnes who was age 13.

He could not save the life of Margaret. two stakes were driven into the Solway Firth where the tide is set to run faster than a horse can gallop.

[50 : 28] It was coming to the end. the old woman. The old woman was chained to the outer stake and everyone could see that woman perish as the tide came in. Margaret Wilson was chained to the stake nearer the shore and the whole neighborhood were crying and praying and pleading and begging her to recant.

Her mother was in hysterics almost scolding her daughter. The water rose and the crowd shouted to her, say God save the king, say God save the king.

She replied God save him if he will. People screamed, she said it, she said it. The grunt rode out and lifted up her head and asked her to renounce the covenants and take the oath of allegiance to the king.

She said I'm one of Christ's children, let me go. They stuck her head under the water, she was only 18. she's never been forgotten since.

The covenants suffered further persecution but retaliated publishing the Apological Declaration proclaiming that they would not spare the lives of those that sought their lives.

[51 : 49] Of course this made matters worse. The Lord advocates Sir George Mackenzie sentenced so many covenants to death. he became known as Bloody Mackenzie. Hundreds more he sent to the plantations in the Caribbean.

All those who admitted to supporting the Apological Declaration were shot on the spot. And so many died in this manner. That in the first year of the reign of James VII, James II, who was a brother to Charles II, this was referred to as the killing time.

It was only after James VII, James II, was deposed and fled to France in 1688, that the persecution of the Covenanters finally ceased.

The Revolution Settlement of 1690 restored the Presbyterian Church of Scotland as the established church by law, as the national church in Scotland.

So, ladies and gentlemen, that's my talk for this morning. Very tragic events, some of them fairly traumatic, I guess.

[53 : 12] But I can reassure you, the Scots people are very nice people, despite their violent history. They were very romantic and a very violent history, unfortunately.

I don't know if we have time for questions. I'm not really qualified. As I said, I'm not a doctor like Bill has advertised out there. I hope I'm not here under false pretenses. Yes, Bill?

I have a question. I haven't very long answered that, but it's been early in the 18th century that anyone was experiencing the West and that kind of all.

That's right. things quietened down. I hope they quietened down. Well, when William and Mary came, Mary I think was the daughter of, I'm not sure if it was James VII or a previous James, but they came and William was from Holland.

He was a Protestant. He did try initially to once again enforce the Episcopal system in Scotland, but I think it was a gentleman, one of his advisors by the name of Carstairs, who advised the king against this and finally the king, King William, took this advice.

[54 : 30] Really, that was the end of the Covenanting Movement. Although, of course, there is a movement today to still honor these people. There's many of these monuments throughout the country. As I said at the beginning, people go out, groups go out and have open air meetings, these conventicles, just to keep the memory of these people alive that stood for the purity of the gospel.

Yes, ma'am? The third one was denunciation of all the acts of parliament that had been passed.

Right. It was a kind of rambling document. It goes on and on and then below all of this, the signatures.

The first person to sign was the Marcus of Montrose who was a covenanter, of course, one of the leading ones, but he eventually fought on the king's side.

He felt the covenanting movement became too extreme. He actually fought on the king's side eventually and was hanged. He came again from the town that I was raised in.

[55 : 55] Yeah? Yeah, that's very true.

Because they were fighting for religious liberty, they weren't trying to impose just Presbyterianism on Scotland, although that was to be regarded as the national church. But they were also fighting for Christian liberty.

So today if you go to any town or city in Scotland, you'll see Methodist churches, Baptist churches, Anglican or Episcopal they call them there, Christian Brethren, which was the one I was mostly associated with.

Many, many churches, including the cults, of course, they're there in full force, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons. Do the covenanters deeply believe that his personal salvation was linked to the form of church covenant?

No, they accepted the doctrines of grace as opposed to the Roman Catholic doctrines where they taught that salvation was based on church membership, being baptized as an infant, and being a member of the church, basically.

[57 : 22] The strange thing was that both in England, the Church of England and the Presbyterian Church believed the same reformed doctrines.

It was only sort of a question of church government. It seemed a little extreme to us today that people would fight about these things. Very strong feelings, I guess, about small points of doctrine. A friend of mine who's a professor at Aberdeen, or was a professor at Aberdeen, he wrote a book called The McDonaldization of the Church. I've never read the book, but I can just imagine some of the comments he made in there, because people just want fast food.

They don't want the details. They don't want to look into the doctrines too closely, just pick and choose whatever they feel is good for them. But in these days, even small points of doctrine were very, very significant, and people would be willing to die for these.

Well, there's an Englishman, I have to apologize. No, these were Scots against Scots, you know, like, but, yeah, it was the English form of church government, the Episcopal system that the king was trying to impose, purely for political reasons, because the bishops were not really Christian men all the time, they were just political appointees, they had no, often no qualifications to be bishop.

[58 : 50] Unless the arguing still goes on, I'm glad they're not hanging, and I'm glad they're not there. Well, we can agree to that. Thank you.