



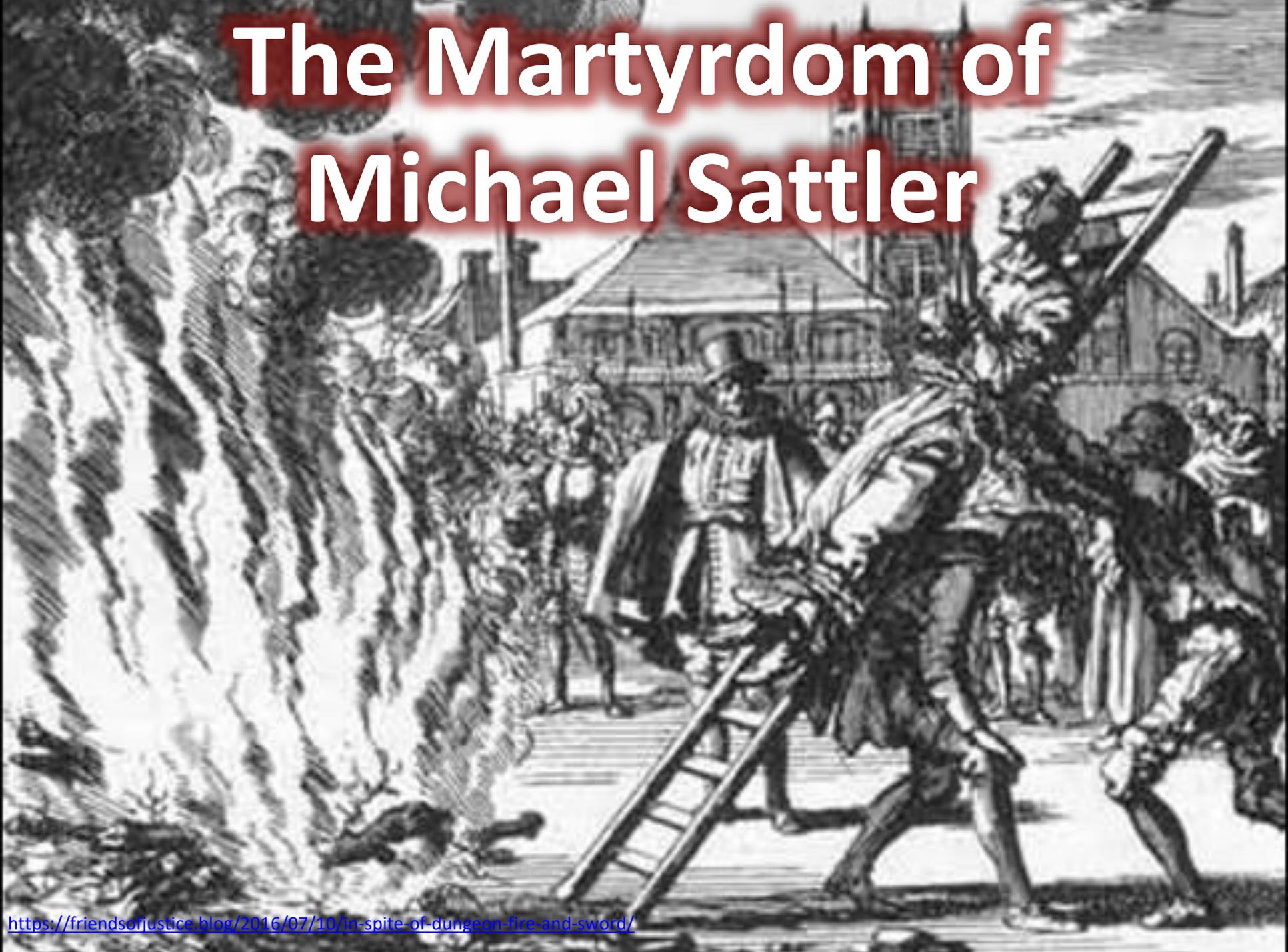
# Review

- What was the Anabaptist view of taking an oath and what was the reason they gave for their view?
  - The Anabaptists refused to swear any oaths, taking their stand on Christ's command "Swear not at all" in the Sermon on the Mount.
- What was the Anabaptist view of serving in the military?
  - Anabaptists refused all military service on principle.
- What was the Anabaptist view of a Christian serving as a magistrate and why did they hold this view?
  - No Christian, they argued, could be a magistrate, because magistrates had to use force to uphold the law, and this was contrary to Christ's teaching of peace.

# Review

- The Anabaptists believed that the state had no right to punish heresy, blasphemy, or idolatry. What did all other contemporary forms of Christianity in that day believe in this regard – whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Eastern Orthodox?
  - That faithful Christian governments *did* have the right to punish its citizens for heresy, blasphemy, or idolatry.
- The Swiss brethren argued that a baby is not capable of repenting, believing the gospel, or joining himself to God's people by his own volition; therefore, *no* baby should be baptized, since baptism signifies repentance, faith, and Church membership. What was Zwingli's "scriptural" response to this argument?
  - Since the coming of Christ in the flesh, baptism has replaced circumcision; therefore the children of covenant parents are now to receive baptism as the initiating sign of their New Covenant membership.

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler



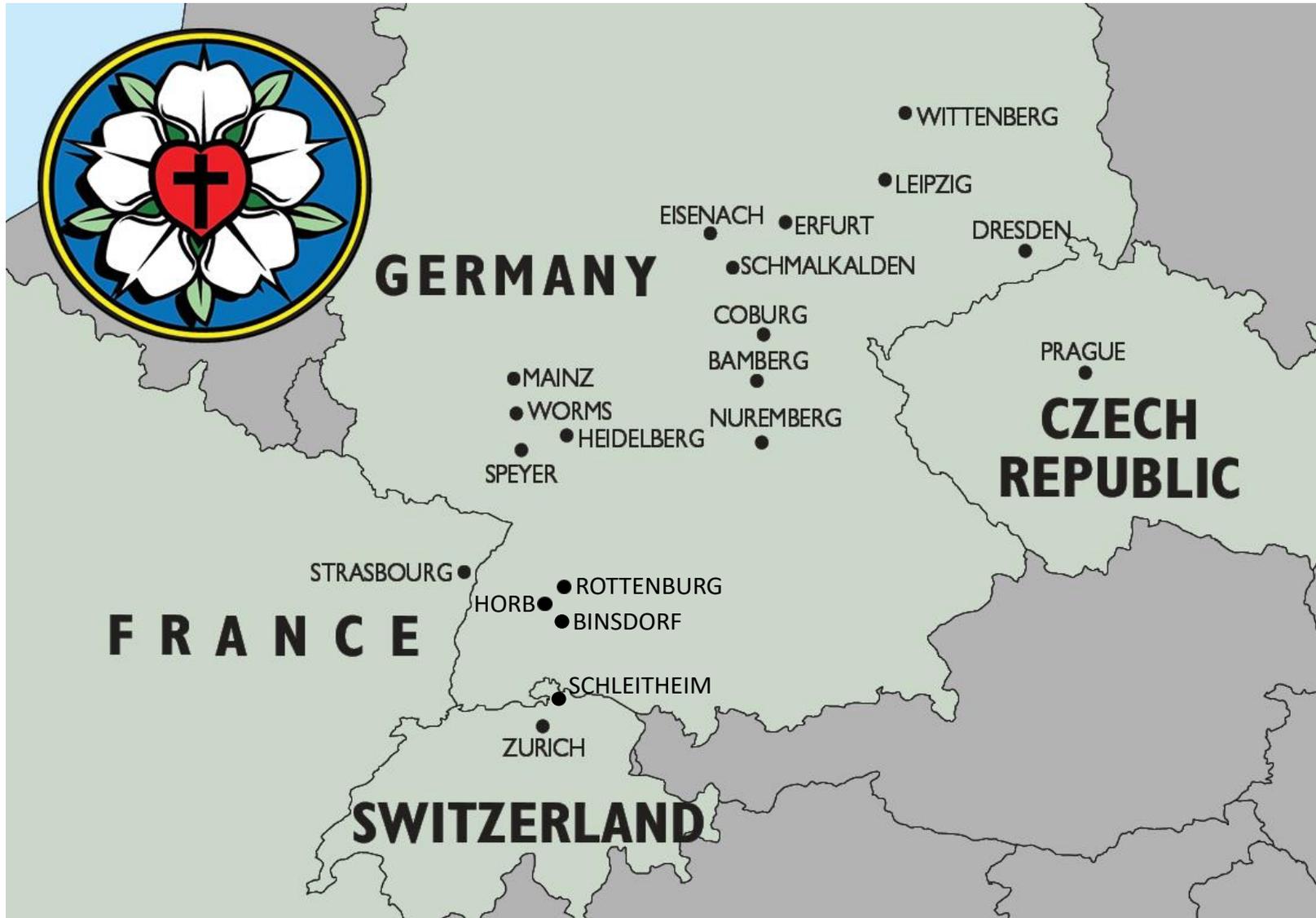
# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- In February of 1527, while Michael Sattler was away at Schleithem, the Catholic authorities in Rottenburg became aware of Anabaptist activity in Horb, Sattler's home town.<sup>1</sup>
- Consequently, not long after Sattler and his wife returned home, they along with several other Anabaptists were arrested by Count Joachim von Zollern, a regent of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria I who was the militant Roman Catholic brother of Charles V.<sup>1</sup>
- The authorities transferred the heavily guarded prisoners to a tower in the distant town of Binsdorf and set a trial date for May in Rottenburg.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William R. Estep. The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism

<sup>2</sup> <http://theradicalsmovie.com/michaelsattler.html>

# Reformation Map



# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- From the Binsdorf tower, Sattler wrote a touching letter of consolation to his beloved congregation at Horb.
- Typical of Anabaptist prison epistles, it abounds in Scripture references, emphasizes love to all, and is completely devoid of bitterness.
- He opens the letter with a trinitarian greeting:
  - *Beloved companions in the Lord; the grace and mercy of God, our Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and the power of their Spirit, be with you, brethren and sisters, beloved of God.*
- As was characteristic of Sattler admonitions, the letter emphasized the importance of **love** as the **chief motivation** in the Christian life:
  - *If you have love for your neighbor, you will not be envious in punishing or excommunicating, will not seek your own, will think no evil, will not be ambitious, and finally will not be puffed up; but will be merciful, just, mild in all things, submissive and compassionate towards the weak and infirm.*

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- Like a faithful shepherd whose primary consideration, even while facing his own death, is the welfare of his sheep, Sattler attempted in the final paragraphs of his letter to prepare his followers for the inevitable:
  - *The brethren have doubtless informed you, that some of us are in prison... being apprehended at Horb, we were afterwards brought to Binsdorf. At this time numerous accusations have been made against us by our adversaries; at one time they threatened us with the gallows; at another with fire and sword. In this extreme situation, I have surrendered myself, entirely to the Lord's will, and prepared myself, together with all my brethren and my wife, to die for his testimony's sake... hence I deemed it necessary to stir you up with this exhortation, to follow us in the pursuit of God, that you may console yourselves with it, and not faint under the chastening of the Lord... Beware of false brethren; for the Lord will probably call me to him, so take warning. I wait for my God; pray without ceasing for all that are in bonds; God be with you all. Amen.*

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- Sattler's concern about being executed was fully justified.
- Archduke Ferdinand had declared "the third baptism" (drowning) to be the best antidote to Anabaptism, and because of Sattler's importance to the movement, Ferdinand suggested that *he* be drowned *immediately*.
- Authorities headed by Count Joachim, however, wanted to give this "ecclesiastical case" some semblance of "justice".
- So on May 15, the court convened with twenty-four judges and Count Joachim serving as chairman of this imposing body.

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- A total of fourteen defendants were being accused.
- At first they were given their choice of attorney.
- Sattler, who acted as spokesman for the group, declined the offer on the basis that this was not a legal matter.
- According to the Word of God, he said, they had no right to go to law over religious affairs.
- His manner was courteous but definite.
- In this reply Sattler wisely addressed the judges as the servants of God, ***recognizing*** their ***authority*** but ***denying*** their ***jurisdiction***.

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- Count Joachim then proceeded to have the charges read against the defendants. The first seven were against *all* the accused, and two additional charges were brought against Sattler *alone*:
  - *First*, he and his disciples have acted contrary to the law of the emperor.
  - *Second*, he taught, maintained, and believed, that the body and blood of Christ were not present in his sacrament.
  - *Third*, he taught and believed, that infant-baptism does not bring salvation.
  - *Fourth*, they rejected the sacrament of extreme unction.
  - *Fifth*, they despised and reviled the Mother of God, and condemned the saints.

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- Count Joachim then proceeded to have the charges read against the defendants. The first seven were against *all* the accused, and two additional charges were brought against Sattler *alone*:
  - *Sixth*, he has declared that men should not swear oaths before a magistrate.
  - *Seventh*, he has commenced a new and unheard of custom in regard to the Lord's Supper, placing the bread and wine on a plate, and then eating and drinking them.
  - *Eight*, Sattler has deserted his religious order, and married a wife.
  - *Ninth*, Sattler said that if the Turks invaded the country, we ought not to resist them, but even if it were right to take part in war, he would rather fight against the Christians than against the Turks!

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- After the reading of the charges and discussion of them, Sattler asked that the articles be reread.
- At this the secretary tauntingly sneered, “*He has boasted of the Holy Spirit. Now if this boast is true, it seems to me, it is **unnecessary** to grant him this; for, if he has the Holy Spirit, as he boasts, the **Spirit** will tell him what has been done here.*”
- Unphased by the absurd response, Sattler simply asked again that the articles be reread, at which point the town clerk begrudgingly agreed to reread them.
- Then Sattler asked permission to consult his brothers and sisters. After speaking with them for a short time, he began his answer:

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- *“Regarding the charges against me and my brothers and sisters, hear this short answer:*
  - ***First**, we do not admit that we have acted contrary to the imperial law. For this law forbids anyone to follow the Lutheran doctrine and delusion, bidding us adhere only to the gospel and the Word of God. But this we have kept; for I am not conscious that we have acted contrary to the gospel and the Word of God. I appeal to the words of Christ.*
  - ***Second**, we admit that the actual body of Christ the Lord is not present in the sacrament. For Scripture says that Christ ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of His heavenly Father, from where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. From this it follows that He is in heaven, and not in the bread, so that He may not be eaten physically. Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9; Col. 3:1; Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1.*

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- *“Regarding the charges against me and my brothers and sisters, hear this short answer:*
  - **Third**, regarding baptism we say that infant baptism is of no use for salvation. Scripture says that we obtain life by faith alone. Again, ‘He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.’ Peter likewise says, ‘There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.’ Rom. 1:17; Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21.
  - **Fourth**, we have not denied the oil [as used in the Roman Catholic sacrament of extreme unction]; for God created oil, and what God has made is good and not to be rejected. However, we do not believe that the pope, bishops, monks, and priests can make the oil any better than it is; for the pope never made anything good. The letter of James does not speak of the pope’s oil. Gen. 1:11; 1 Tim. 4:4; James 5:14.

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- *“Regarding the charges against me and my brothers and sisters, hear this short answer:*
  - ***Fifth**, we have not condemned the Mother of God and the saints. The Mother of Christ is to be called blessed among all women; for to her was granted the grace of giving birth to the Savior of the entire world. But the Scriptures know nothing of her being a mediator and advocate; for together with us she must await the judgment. Paul said to Timothy: **Christ** is our mediator and advocate with God. As for the saints, we say that we believers **now alive** are the saints; which I prove by the letters of Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, and in other places where he always writes: ‘To the beloved **saints**’. Hence we believers are ‘the saints’; but those who have died in faith we regard as ‘the blessed’. Luke 1:28; Matt. 1:21; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Rev. 14:13.*
  - ***Sixth**, we maintain that we must not swear oaths before the authorities. For the Lord says: ‘Do not swear at all; but let your words be, Yes, yes, or No, no.’ Matt. 5:34; James 5:12.*
  - *[The **seventh** charge about placing bread and wine on a plate was ignored. He evidently felt it unworthy of consideration.]*

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- *“Regarding the charges against me and my brothers and sisters, hear this short answer:*
  - *“**Eighth**, when God called me to bear witness to His Word, and I read Paul, and considered the unChristian and dangerous state in which I lived [celibacy], and when I saw the ostentation, arrogance, usury, and great fornication of the monks and priests, I went and took a wife to myself, according to the command of God. For Paul prophesies about this to Timothy: ‘In the last days, men will forbid people to marry, and command them to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving.’ 1 Cor. 7:2; 1 Tim. 4:3.*
  - *“**Ninth**, if the Turks invade, we ought not to resist them, for it is written: ‘You shall not kill.’ We should not defend ourselves against the Turks, or anyone else who persecutes us. We should simply ask God with earnest prayer that He will repulse and resist them. As for what I said, that if war were right, I would rather fight against the so-called Christians, who persecute, arrest, and kill godly Christians, than against the Turks – it was for this reason. The Turk is a genuine Turk. He knows nothing of the Christian faith, and is a Turk in a fleshly sense. But you, who claim to be Christians, and boast of possessing Christ, persecute the godly witnesses of Christ. So you are Turks in a spiritual sense.*

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- *In conclusion: Servants of God, I admonish you to consider the purpose for which God has appointed you, to punish the wicked, and to defend and protect the godly. Since we have not acted contrary to God and the gospel, you will find that neither I nor my brothers and sisters have offended in word or deed against any authority. Therefore, servants of God, if you have not heard or read the Word of God, send for the most learned men, whatever their language, and for the holy books of the Bible, and let them discuss the Word of God with us. If they prove from the holy Scriptures that we are in error and in the wrong, we will gladly withdraw and recant and also willingly suffer the sentence and punishment for what we have been charged with. But if no error is proven against us, I hope to God that you yourselves will be converted, and accept instruction.”*  
*Wisdom 6:4; Acts 25:8; Rom. 13:4; Acts 25:11.*

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- After this speech, the judges laughed and conferred.
- Then the town clerk said: *“O you notorious, desperate scoundrel and monk, shall we hold a disputation with you? The hangman is the one who will dispute with you, I assure you!”*
- Michael said: *“God’s will be done.”*
- The Town Clerk said: *“It would be better if you had never been born.”*
- Michael replied: *“God knows what is good.”*
- Town Clerk: *“You chief of heretics, you have seduced the godly. If only they would now renounce your error and accept grace.”*
- Michael: *“Grace comes from God alone.”*
- One of the other prisoners said: *“We must not depart from the truth.”*

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- Seemingly *nothing* could destroy Michael Sattler's calm self-composure.
- Even when the sentence was pronounced, it failed to shake him.
- An eyewitness, wrote of Sattler's conduct, "*All this I saw myself. May God grant **us also** to testify of Him so bravely and patiently.*"
- The events recorded above took place over a two-day period.
- The sentence was read on May 18.
- Sattler was executed two days later.

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- The torture, a prelude to the execution, began at the marketplace, where a piece was cut from Sattler's tongue.
- Pieces of flesh were torn from his body twice with red-hot tongs.
- He was then tied to a cart. On the way to the scene of the execution the tongs were applied five more times.
- In the marketplace and at the site of the execution, still able to speak, the unshakable Sattler prayed for his persecutors.
- After being bound to a ladder with ropes and pushed into the fire, he admonished the people, the judges, and the mayor to repent and be converted.
- Then he prayed, *“Almighty, eternal God, Thou art the way and the truth: because I have not been shown to be in error, I will with thy help to this day testify to the truth and seal it with my blood.”*

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- As soon as the ropes on his wrists were burned, Sattler raised the two forefingers of his hands, giving the promised signal to the brethren that a martyr's death was bearable.
- Then the assembled crowd heard coming from his seared lips, "*Father, I commend my spirit into Thy hands.*"
- Three others were then executed.
- After every attempt to secure a recantation from Sattler's faithful wife had failed, she was drowned eight days later in the Neckar River.

# The Martyrdom of Michael Sattler

- Perhaps no other execution of an Anabaptist had such far-reaching influence.
- Wilhelm Reublin's booklet containing an account of Sattler's execution found its way throughout Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.
- Bucer and Capito were grieved at the news of the execution.
- The impact of Sattler's superlative witness is felt to this day.
- A contemporary Lutheran pastor and Anabaptist scholar, says this about Sattler: *“Sattler's character lies clearly before us. He was not a highly educated divine and not an intellectual; but his entire life was noble and pure, true and unadulterated.”*

# The Münster Rebellion

The cages that held the bodies of the tortured and executed Münster Rebellion leaders were hoisted up the St. Lambert's Cathedral tower in 1536. The cages still hang there today.

# Class Discussion Time



# \*Class Discussion Time

- Sattler faced unbelievable pressure, intimidation, and death by horrible torture and yet he was still able to:
  - Remain calm, thoughtful, and respectful throughout the process
  - Was able to care about the eternal state of his tormentors, repeatedly appealing to them to repent even to the very end
  - Was able to pray out loud for the benefit of his onlookers, even as he lay in the flames that were consuming him
  - Had the presence of mind and care for his fellow believers while laying in the flames to hold up two fingers, signaling that a martyr's death is bearable!
- We have become accustomed to freedom from persecution in our country, and I pray we can continue to enjoy such freedoms (1Tim. 2:2). But we are not guaranteed such freedoms – in fact, quite the opposite (John 15:20). If you were to face the kind of treatment that Sattler endured, are you committed to try to be as faithful as he was?
- Do **you** have a topic or question that **you** would like to see us to discuss?