

Hellfi

According to Anne Hutchinson, the quickest way to heaven was across the Atlantic Ocean.

Salt spray splashed across the deck of *The Griffin*, where passengers listened with awe to 42-year-old Anne Hutchinson. Squinting into the summer sun of 1633, this woman "of haughty and fierce carriage" declared she received private messages from God. "Never has any great thing happened to me but it was revealed to me beforehand," she said. To prove her point, she predicted the date when they would reach New England.

It was the power of religion that led Hutchinson, her husband William, and their 11 kids onto that ship. Like many of her fellow passengers, Anne was a British Puritan who believed that the official Church of England had to be purified and rid of its lavish rituals in order to save followers from an afterlife in Hell.

According to Hutchinson, only one minister—John Cotton—knew the true path to God. But in 1633, Cotton fled a crackdown against reformers and sailed to the three-year-old, Puritan-controlled Massachusetts Bay Colony. Hutchinson and her family followed. "When our teacher John Cotton came to New England, it was great trouble to me," Anne wrote. "I could not rest but I must come hither." She didn't foresee that her decision would lead to humiliation and bloody death.

The Hutchinsons, wealthy from William's fabric business, soon became community leaders in Boston. Anne won respect with her work as a nurse, delivering babies, and offering such cures as mint for a stomach ache and parsley for a toothache.

One day, Cotton told Hutchinson that she had offended a few women

by not attending their religious meetings. To make amends, she opened her own home for Monday-night discussions. Her new female friends, who were expected to remain silent in church, were thrilled to hear her repeat the Sunday sermon, and boldly interpret it.

In a society that forbade dancing, theater, and many books, these gatherings were a rare entertainment that soon drew Boston's leading men. By popular demand, Hutchinson held meetings on Thursdays too, but the crowd still spilled out her door. "Come along with me," wrote one admirer, "and I'll bring you to a woman that preaches better Gospel than any of your black-coats that have been at the Ninnyversity."

DUNG IN THEIR FACES

Along with popularity came controversy. Hutchinson's belief that true Christians won't lose their place in heaven, even if they sin, made the authorities worry that she was encouraging unlawful behavior. In 1636, ministers from around the Colony denounced the meetings as "disorderly and without rule." In response, Hutchinson led a group of women in a walkout during one of Boston minister John Wilson's sermons and instructed men not to serve in a militia Wilson oversaw. "So the faithful ministers of Christ have dung cast in their faces," wrote minister Thomas Weld. And in November 1637, a poster tacked to Anne's door called her to court.

At the trial, Hutchinson's nimble self-defense nearly got her off. But Governor John Winthrop silenced her: "We do not mean to discourse

Just the Facts

... ABOUT THE ENGLISH
 % of U.S. Population in 1790: 48
 % of Immigrants to U.S. in 1991: 1
 First Town: Jamestown, Va., 1607
 Reasons for Emigrating: Religious persecution and economic woes
 Sleaze Factor: Almost 40% of English immigrants between 1607-1776 were convicted drunks, debtors, or indentured servants.
 Can't Do That: In 1633, Mass. made it illegal to shave, cross rivers, or kiss babies on Sunday.
 Contribution: The game of darts.
 Slurs: Called Limeys because they ate limes to prevent scurvy on long sea voyages.

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with those of your sex." His taunts eventually pushed Anne to lose her temper. "God will ruin you and your posterity, and this whole state!" she warned.

The vengeful court sentenced Hutchinson to banishment, but first imprisoned her for four months. Ministers visited her daily, according to Winthrop, to "reclaim her from her errors." Meanwhile, he dug up the grave of a miscarried child Hutchinson had delivered. He described it as a devil with horns, a tail, and claws.

In March, Hutchinson was called to church for a public scolding from her former idol Cotton. Pale and sickly, she read an apology at the next service. But when Wilson pushed her to revoke her criticisms of the ministers, that was too much. "My judgment is not altered, though my expression alters," she told him. Furious, Wilson delivered his final punishment: excommunication: "I do deliver you up to Satan, that you may

"She's a dangerous instrument of the

learn no more to blaspheme, to seduce, and to lie!"

Hutchinson left defeated, trudging 60 miles through snow-covered wilderness with nine of her children. Finally they reached Rhode Island, where she miscarried her 15th child. Reverend Wilson announced that she had given birth to "a monster made up of 29 lumps, corresponding to the 29 errors that were eventually proved against her."

The Hutchinsons settled on Aquidneck Island, where they formed a new colony with 80 families that followed them from Massachusetts. In 1643, after her husband's death, Hutchinson and her children were massacred by Native American warriors. It was, according to Wilson and Winthrop, God's revenge.

—Michael Small

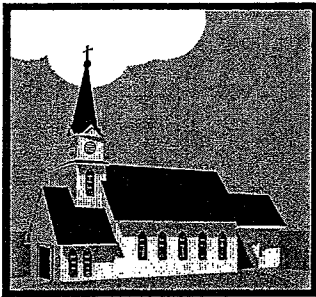


Owen Smith

HELLFIRE!! According to Anne Hutchinson, the quickest way to Heaven was across the Atlantic Ocean.

Answer the following questions using the article by Michael Small. Use the space provided and give well thought out answers.

1. Anne Hutchinson believed in a religious concept called Grace, the idea that you cannot earn your way into Heaven because you are human, and by nature, sinful. However, Grace also provides that God's love is so strong that all we have to do is believe in him, and we will enter Heaven regardless of the sins on our head. Do you believe that you have to earn your way into Heaven or does God give you Grace? Explain This is a major point of debate and division among Christians.



2. After being banished for her beliefs and actions, Anne was given a second chance to rejoin the Puritan community in Boston. What was she asked to do to atone for her wrongs? How did she respond? What was the result of her response to the Puritan leaders' demands? Do you think she did the right thing?
3. Why did Reverend Wilson take Anne's actions personally? How did he get revenge?
4. What did the Puritan leaders tell the rest of the congregation was God's revenge on Anne? How did this justify their Puritanical beliefs?