

STUDY GUIDE FOR AGAINST THE TIDE

Understanding What Happened

1. Why did the Covenanters oppose King Charles II?
2. What did the King do to force the people in the Lowlands to accept him as head of their church?
3. Why did Margaret's father insist on attending kirk services?
4. What were the conventicles?
5. What scriptures convinced Margaret that it was right to disobey King Charles?
6. How did she and her brother and sister survive living in the hills without help from their parents?
7. Why did Margaret decide to go to Wigtown after her visit with Widow M'Lauchlan?
8. What was it like to be imprisoned in Thieves' Hole?
9. What happened at the trial?
10. Why didn't Margaret acknowledge the King as head of the kirk and save herself from being drowned?

Questions to Think About

1. Would you like to have been Margaret's friend? Why or why not?
2. What made Margaret brave enough to leave home and live in the hills?
3. Was she foolish to leave her pleasant home and kind parents? Why?
4. Were Margaret's parents wrong to attend services at the kirk? Explain your answer.
5. Many Scots girls were married at fourteen. Why didn't Margaret flee to safety with Fergus?
6. Is your faith in Jesus as strong as Margaret's? Would you be willing to die to keep your promise to live for Him, no matter the cost?

Discussion Questions

1. During the 17th century, Bibles were scarce and many families could not afford one. Sunday Schools, youth groups and church camps had not yet been established. Parents taught their children the scriptures regularly and a catechism class was held between the morning and afternoon services at the kirk. How else could Margaret have learned the scriptures?
2. On April 30, 1685 the Lords of the Privy Council recommended the reprieve of Margaret Wilson and Widow M'Lauchlan. Supposedly this decision was never received in Wigtown. Could it be that it did arrive, but Grierson of Lagg ignored it? What do you think?

3. What is the significance of the title of this book: *Against the Tide: The Valor of Margaret Wilson*?
4. Persecution of followers of Jesus Christ is increasing around the world. Mission Network News reported these situations at the time *Against the Tide: The Valor of Margaret Wilson* was published.
 - **India:** Christians were beaten and threatened with death for sharing the Gospel.
 - **China:** Many believers have been imprisoned because of their faith in Jesus. Severe restrictions were placed on Christian workers in what seemed like an attempt to curtail Christian witnessing in the forthcoming Summer Olympics.
 - **Turkey:** Anti-Christian violence increased against two thousand Iraqi Christian refugees trapped in this country.
 - **Pakistan:** Christians were threatened for refusing to convert back to Islam. Believers were warned to leave the city or face serious consequences.
 - **Eritrea (East Africa):** Two thousand believers have been taken into custody along with their children since the government closed all churches five years ago.
 - **Afghanistan:** In July (2007) twenty-three South Korean Christians were taken hostage by the Taliban in Afghanistan.
 - **Gaza:** A Christian University professor was forced to convert to Islam and marry a Muslim man. Now in the minds of the Muslims, she is a Muslim. Reverting to Christianity is a crime worthy of execution in the Muslim mind.

What can you do to help this woman who was forced to become a Muslim? What would you do if you were a believer living in any of these countries listed above? What would you want others to do to help you?

NOTE: In 2005 three Christian women were sentenced to three years in an Indonesian prison after being accused of converting Muslim children to Christianity in their Sunday School. The women were released unharmed after two years. What changed the heart of their captors? Believers around the world prayed for their release and wrote letters to the Indonesian government asking that they be set free. Read I Samuel 12:23 and 2 Corinthians 1:8-11.

Things to Do

1. **SINGING.** The Scottish Metrical Psalter. Go to this website to find the Psalter used during Margaret's time.
http://www.cgmusic.com/workshop/smp_frame.htm Locate your favorite Psalm.

Download a copy and memorize it. Make up your own tune or fit the words into the tune of a hymn or chorus you already know.

2. **COOKING.** Bannocks, oatcakes and porridge were three foods eaten regularly in the 17th century. Try one of the following recipes and share what you made with your family, friends or classmates. (Or do a web search to find your own recipes.)

BANNOCKS

3/4 c. flour
 2 tbsp. baking powder
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/4 c. oatmeal
 2 tbsp. soft butter
 2 tsp. sugar
 Milk

Sift flour, baking powder, and salt into a bowl and add oatmeal. Add the butter and stir until well mixed. Add the sugar and mix into a soft dough with a little milk. Roll out lightly to 1/2 inch thick. Using a plate as a pattern, cut into round bannocks. Cut into triangular pieces like a pie. Cook on a hot, lightly greased skillet for about 10 minutes, turning occasionally until browned.

SCOTTISH OATCAKES

Serve these plain or with butter, honey or jam. Or top them with cheese, meat or smoked fish.

1/2 cup shortening
 1 cup regular or quick-cooking oats
 1 cup all-purpose flour
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 2 to 3 tablespoons cold water

Cut shortening into oats, flour, baking soda and salt until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Add water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until mixture forms a stiff dough. Roll until 1/8 inch thick on lightly floured surface. Cut into 2 1/2-inch rounds or squares. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees until oatcakes start to brown, 12 to 15 minutes. Cool on wire rack. Makes 18.

PORRIDGE

Porridge was one of the main ways of eating oats in 17th century Scotland.

2 cups water (Or one cup water and one cup milk)
 2 ½ rounded tablespoons medium-ground oats (not oatmeal)
 Pinch of salt

Bring the water (or water and milk) to a good rolling boil, preferably in a non-stick pan. Slowly pour the oats into the boiling liquid, stirring vigorously with a wooden spoon until it has returned to the boil again. Reduce the heat, cover the pan and simmer very gently for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the salt, simmer and stir for five to ten minutes—until thick but still pourable. Serve hot in wooden bowls. Serves 2.

Some interesting facts about porridge:

- Porridge was served in individual bowls. A horn spoonful of porridge was dipped into a communal bowl of double cream (heavy cream) before eating.
- Porridge was eaten standing up, perhaps because busy farmers were doing other things while eating their morning porridge.
- Porridge used to be poured into a "porridge drawer" and, once it had cooled, it could be cut up into slices. These were easier to carry than brittle oatcakes. Do a Google search for "Porridge and Spurtle" to find "Poems and Stories of Oskar Douglas. You'll find an intriguing use for porridge there.

3. ART PROJECTS - DRAWING

- Do a Google image search to find pictures of the trees, plants and birds mentioned in *Against the Tide*. Draw a background scene and make a miniature mural by pasting these items on to it. If you like to draw, use the pictures as guides for your own drawings.
- Make a mural on the chalk board showing major events from Margaret's life.
- Choose a favorite scene from Margaret's story and create a greeting card to send to a friend.
- Search the web to find a copy of the "Martyr of Solway" painting of Margaret Wilson by John Everett Millais and paint your own a copy of it.

MODELING or CARVING: Do a Google search to find a photo of the marker placed in the Bladnoch River where Margaret was drowned on May 11, 1685. Make a clay model of the monument. Or carve it from wood or a cake of Ivory soap.

SCULPTING: Search the web for Knox College, University of Toronto to find a statue of Margaret Wilson. Sculpt a desk-size version.

4. LANGUAGE ARTS

- Choose three to five scenes from Margaret's life that depict the most important events, such as leaving home, being caught in Wigtown and being thrown in to Thieves Hole. Write a brief skit for each scene. Then act them out in your classroom or for another class.
- **WRITING:** Pretend you are a Covenanter who witnessed Margaret's trial and execution. Write a letter to your friend in London to tell him/her what happened.
- **WRITING:** Pretend you are a dragoon describing the drowning of Margaret Wilson and Widow M'Lauchlan to other dragoons who were not present.
- **WRITING:** History does not tell us what happened to Agnes Wilson. What do you think happened to her after she was released from Thieves' Hole? Put it in writing.
- **WRITING:** Do a web search from one of the topics listed below. Find out how he/it was involved in the Covenanters' struggle.
 - a) Grierson of Lagg
 - b) Donald Cargill
 - c) James Renwick
 - d) John Graham of Claverhouse
 - e) Arthur Tackett (17-yr-old)
 - f) Alexander Peden
 - g) Hugh McKail
 - h) Highland Host
 - i) Grayfriars Kirkyard

5. SOCIAL STUDIES - GEOGRAPHY

- Draw a map showing Glenvernoch, Wigtown, Drumjargan and Edinburgh. Find out how far it is from one place to the next and add a mileage chart to your map.
- Draw a map of Scotland and showing the division between the Highlands and the Lowlands, the main rivers and the chief cities.

HISTORY:

- When we think of Scotland, we often think of plaids (tartans), but the people of the Lowlands did not wear plaids during the 17th century, nor did they wear red clothing. Do an Internet search to find out why. Hint: Look up "Highland Host."

- Do a brief report on tartans in which you explain how they differed according to clan. Download a copy of both the ancient and modern Wilson Tartan worn by the Highlanders and in the 18th century by the people in the Lowlands and show it to your classmates.

MATH: Mr. Wilson posted a bond of 100 pounds to secure Agnes's release. How much would that be in American money today?

WHAT SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE. . .

Bits of folklore came to the surface after the deaths of the two Margarets. Tradition says that for many years thereafter, a broken man wandered the streets of Wigtown. Being afflicted with an unquenchable thirst, he carried a large jar of water. The man was both loathed and pitied. He was believed to be the soldier that thrust Margaret's head under the water saying, "Tak' anither drink, hinny!"

A ballad sung by Bob McNeil concerns Margaret's father, Gilbert Wilson. According to the song, he was sent to Jamaica as a slave. Eventually he escaped and returned to Kirkowan, Scotland. He changed his name, concealed his wealth and lived in comfort and health. A rather unlikely tale, I think.

A grotesque tradition is that of the 'Cleppie' Bells. Bell was the soldier who tied the Wigtown martyrs to the stakes. He was asked how the poor creatures behaved when the rising waters foamed about their heads. "Oo," he replied cheerfully, "they just clepped roun' the stobs like partons, and prayed." (They clutched the stakes like crabs and prayed.) Soon after, Bell's wife was brought to bed with child. The midwife exclaimed in horror, "The bairn is clepped!" (i.e. The fingers are webbed). Several more children were born to the Bells and each little wretch was seen to be 'clepped.'

One final tale. Nineteen years after Margaret's martyrdom a prematurely old man appeared before the Kirk Session of Wigtown. He declared his grief in having taken part in the trial of the Wigtown martyrs. He asked for forgiveness and for the privilege of sharing in the Sacrament (communion service.). The man was Bailie McKeand, the town magistrate who was second in command to Provost Coltrane.

What do you think about these traditional tales? Which is the most believable to you? Why?

THREE WORD PUZZLES

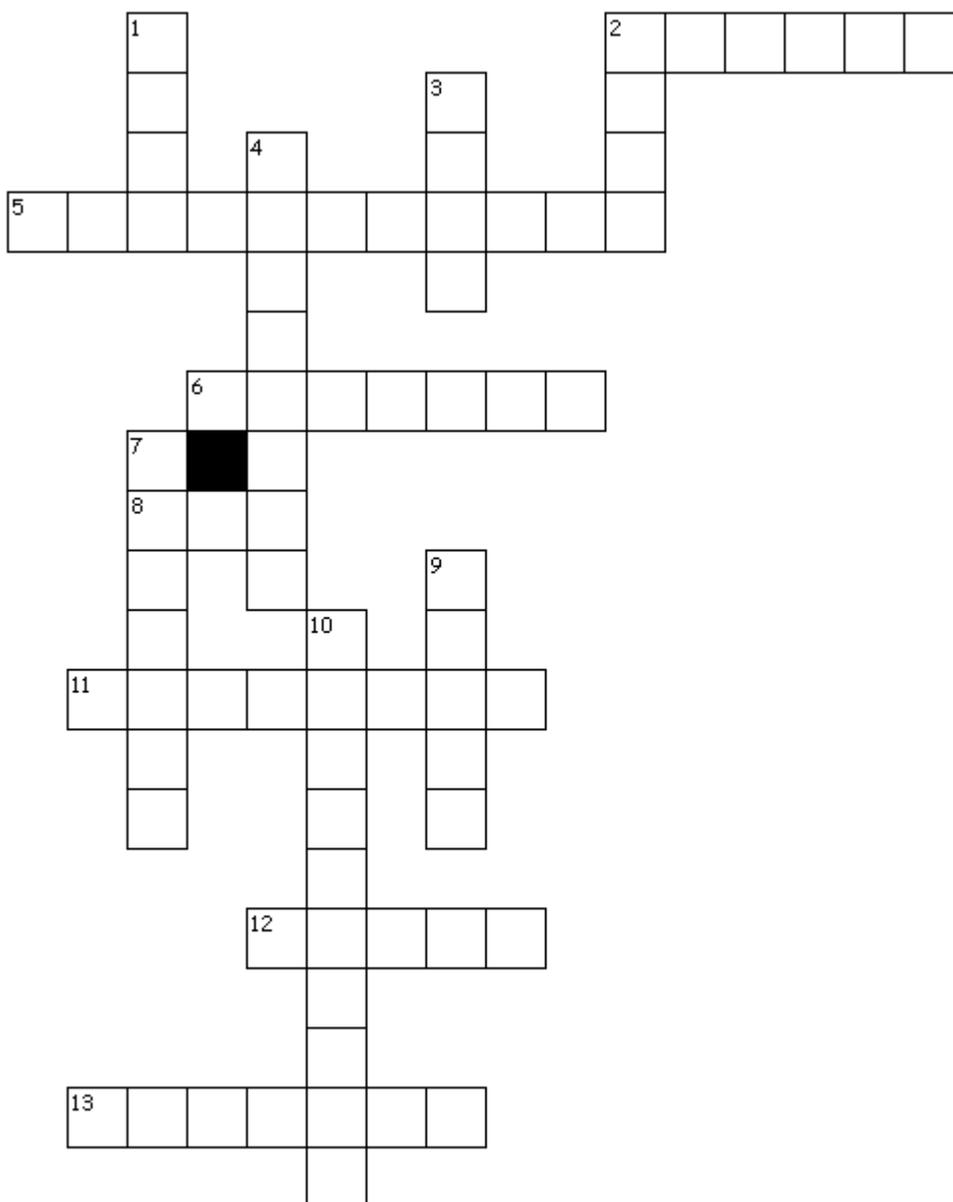
(HINT: Keep a copy of *Against the Tide: The Valor of Margaret Wilson* nearby when you work these puzzles.)

MARGARET'S LAST SONG

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
23												6							9						14	

<u>M</u>	<u>Y</u>											<u>A</u>				<u>A</u>		<u>T</u>						<u>Y</u>		<u>T</u>							
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			3	5	22		9	13	14																				4	22	10	23	9

WORDS TO KNOW



Across

2. Infants
5. Secret, religious meeting
6. Mounted, armed soldier
8. Yes
11. Local courthouse
12. To like someone or something
13. Combination battle-axe and spear

Down

1. A brook or stream
2. Cattle shed
3. Cabbage-like vegetable
4. Pungent smoke from a peat fire
7. Flat, round cake
9. A cap worn by married women
10. Made an agreement with God