



## "Cross Connection"

Radio Ministry of Hope Wesleyan Church and Wells of Salvation Ministries  
Ultimate Oldies Radio – FM 97.7 and 101.1, Huber Heights, Ohio



Series: Christian Messages In Secular Music

12/15/08

Program 62 "After Forever" © 1971 Tony Iommi

A program featuring a song by Black Sabbath?! After you pick yourself up off the floor, give it a chance. This number presents an incredible amount of rock-solid spiritual truth for our discussion. You may say, "I won't consider anything coming from a group like that!". But just consider what the Apostle Paul said –

*"...The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached..."* (Philippians 1:18, NIV).

That is not to suggest that the songwriter penned these lyrics with false motives (Indeed, he alludes to a personal conversion experience in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stanza), but to highlight that God will honor His word, however it goes forward... and it does not return void!

### The Song <sup>1,2</sup>

- Featured on Black Sabbath's 3<sup>rd</sup> studio album, *Master of Reality*, released in '71
- Focuses entirely on Christian themes – an astounding anomaly in the group's repertoire, since most Black Sabbath songs feature dark, gloomy lyrics

### The Group – Black Sabbath <sup>1,3</sup>

- Formed in Birmingham, England, in 1968 as Earth Blues Company
- Changed name to Black Sabbath after a song inspired by an experience of the group's bassist, Terry Butler, who dabbled in the "black arts"
  - He observed "a figure from the dark side at the foot of his bed one night"
  - Song's title came from a Boris Karloff film of the same name
- Noted for riff-based songs, extreme volume, and dark, demonic subject matter
- Credited with creating "heavy metal" -- a new genre in the world of rock music
- Members characterize themselves as a "heavy underground" band
- Became eligible for Rock and Roll Hall of Fame '95; inducted in '06
- Recorded their most popular album, *Paranoid*, in just a few days
  - Included "Iron Man" and "Paranoid", for which the group is best known
- Ozzy Osbourne left in '78; group continued, but never equaled prior successes

Have you ever thought about your soul –  
 can it be saved?  
 Or perhaps you think that when you're dead  
 you just stay in your grave  
 Is God just a thought within your head  
 or is he a part of you?  
 Is Christ just a name that you read in a book  
 when you were in school?

These words have been spoken from many pulpits!

- Acknowledges we each have a soul
- Alludes to need for salvation
- Atheism asserts there is nothing beyond this life
- Christ / God → living in you? or just concepts?

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rockhall.com/inductee/black-sabbath>

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master\\_of\\_Reality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master_of_Reality)

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Sabbath](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Sabbath)

When you think about death do you lose your breath  
Or do you keep your cool?  
Would you like to see the Pope on the end of a rope  
do you think he's a fool?  
Well I have seen the truth,  
yes I've seen the light and I've changed my ways  
And I'll be prepared when you're lonely and scared  
at the end of our days

### Do you worry about or fear dying?

*"When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" -- 1 Corinthians 15:54-55*

### Jesus has taken away any need to fear!

*"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (emphasis added) – Hebrews 2:14-15, NIV*

Could it be you're afraid of what your friends might say  
If they knew you believe in God above?  
They should realize before they criticize  
that God is the only way to love

Is your mind so small that you have to fall  
In with the pack wherever they run  
Will you still sneer when death is near  
And say they may as well worship the sun?

### The influence of peer pressure

*Comment on YouTube... "I love Black Sabbath but this song would've been so much better if it wasn't for the lyrics. I'm Anti-Christian so the lyrics do bother me because it's \_\_\_\_\_. However the music is nice." <sup>4</sup>*

I think it was true it was people like you that crucified Christ  
I think it is sad the opinion you had was the only one voiced  
Will you be so sure when your day is near, say you don't believe?  
You had the chance but you turned it down, now you can't retrieve

Perhaps you'll think before you say that God is dead and gone  
Open your eyes, just realize that he's the one  
The only one who can save you now from all this sin and hate  
Or will you still jeer at all you hear? Yes! I think it's too late.

*"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" – Psalm 14:1a*

*He wagers his very life on this lie*

### Final Thoughts...

If you listen to Christian rock music today, you may readily conclude that this Black Sabbath number was about 35+ years ahead of its time. Amid all the gloom, doom and dark themes for which this group is known shines the message in "After Forever". It continues to be aired on radio, and performed for crowds that desperately need to hear its message and to know Jesus Christ. Accept Him today – live for Him – and don't be ashamed!

*Jesus said -- "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."*

*– Luke 9:23-26*

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcmKTNhPk8U&feature=related>