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**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
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**1Co 14:26** How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

## What Doth Hinder Me To Be Baptized?

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So, you are thinking about baptism?

This brief article will help you go over what the bible says about baptism and how to prepare yourself properly.

### WHAT IS BAPTISM

BAPTISM is an ordinance of the New Testament, foreshadowed in the Old Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ. It is intended to be, to the person baptized, a sign of his/her FAITH and FELLOWSHIP with CHRIST in His DEATH and resurrection, and of his/her being ENGRAFTED into Christ, and of the REMISSION OF SINS. It also indicates that the baptized person has GIVEN THEMSELVES UP to God, through Jesus Christ, so that they may live and conduct themselves in NEWNESS OF LIFE.

The only persons who can rightly submit themselves to this ordinance are those who actually profess repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, being willing to yield obedience to Him.

### WHY BE BAPTIZED

The Scriptures educate us to the reason that we are to be baptized.

Mark 1:4 John did **baptize** in the wilderness, and preach **the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.**

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John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**

John the Baptist told the religious hypocrites that they needed to REPENT (to turn away from sin) and join the others in CONFESSION OF SINS and HOLY LIVING (fruit worthy of repentance).

Matthew 3:5-8 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, **confessing their sins.** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to **flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:**

Repentance is a pre-requisite to baptism. It shows outward belief and faith in the willingness and ability of Jesus Christ to take away all your sins completely.

**So why be baptized?**

The end result of sin is DEATH. (Romans 6:23) Romans 6:23 For **the wages of sin is DEATH;** but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 3:23 For **ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**

**John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**

John 3:16-18 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but **he that believeth not is condemned already,** because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Jesus, our elder brother, King, and Savior showed us to follow His example of baptism (even though He did not sin and need to repent).

Matthew 3:13-17 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, **to be baptized** of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be **baptized** of thee, and comest thou to me? And **Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.** Then he suffered him. **And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

Being baptized shows your good conscience toward God. A token of the relationship you are about to enter, like an engagement ring to the betrothed. 1 Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto even **baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,)** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Through baptism and the giving of the holy spirit we are prepared to witness for Christ to bring others to know the same GOOD NEWS that God is not counting the sins of them who believe on His Son.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, **after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The next questions for someone preparing for the baptismal waters follow.

**WHERE, HOW and WHO SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED INTO**

The answer? Under **water** with the laying on of hands to receive the **Spirit** and in the **authority of Jesus Christ.**

The outward element to be used in this ordinance is WATER (enough to be immersed fully), in which the **believer** is to

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be baptized in the name of JESUS CHRIST. The greek word **baptismo** means to fully immerse or to dip. It does not mean "sprinkle" (rhantizo).

Remember when Philip was asked by the eunuch **what doth hinder me to be baptized?** We see the eunuch believing on Christ and both went down into the water, the eunuch dipped/immersed, and them both coming up out of the water.

Acts 8:36-40 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain **water**: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; **what doth hinder me to be baptized?** And Philip said, **If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.** And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and **they went down both into the water**, both Philip and the eunuch; **and he baptized him.** And when **they were come up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

Another example is found in Acts 10:47-48, **Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized**, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be **baptized in the name of the Lord**. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Some people, borrowing from other religions, believe they need flowing water; as in a river. This is NOWHERE commanded in the scriptures but sufficient water that could be brought to immerse a person is the only requirement by definition of the word baptism itself. However, one should follow the dictates of ones conscience in the matter so not to cause injury to the new faith.

The most important aspect of Christian Baptism is centered in the **AUTHORITY** by which sins are forgiven. New **believers should be baptized, in the name (authority) of Jesus the Messiah (Christ)**. Also, we will see in some of these passages that the gift of the holy spirit is given after baptism through the laying on of hands of the elders.

Acts 2:36-39 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that **God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.** Now when they heard this, they were **pricked in their heart**, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, **Men, and brethren, what shall we do?** Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Peter was one of the disciples to whom Jesus had spoken and whose understanding had been opened. After having listened to these instructions, a few days later he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to preach on the Day of Pentecost. The hearts of the hearers were pierced and, feeling condemned, they cried out to Peter and the other apostles, **"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"** (Acts 2:37). Peter did not hesitate but boldly answered, **"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

The Samaritans, who were not Jews, were also **baptized in the name of Jesus (Greek Iesous)**. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and **preached Christ** unto them.... "But when **they believed** Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and **the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized**, both men and women" (Acts 8:5, 12).

Acts 8:14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had **accepted the word of God**, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might **receive the Holy Spirit**, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been **baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus**. 17 **Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.**

Let us see how Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, baptized. He went to Ephesus many years after the Day of Pentecost and found some disciples of John the Baptist there. "He said unto them, **Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?** And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. **And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.** Then said Paul, **John verily baptized**

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with the **baptism of repentance**, saying unto the people, that they should **believe on him** which should come after him, **that is, on Christ Jesus**. **When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**" (Acts 19:2-5). Although these disciples had already been baptized, the name of Jesus was so important as to cause them to be rebaptized in His name.

There is NO OTHER AUTHORITY by which we may be saved because salvation is ONLY accessible through Christ Jesus. Please understand that *the name* is NOT a magic word or mystical mantra that has power in the phonetic sound. Some believers use *Yeshua* or another Hebraic variation of the Greek name *Iesous* (yes, the bible, written in Greek does record His name as such) or the modern usage of Jesus. The truth is being baptized in His name means being baptized under and into His own authority and personage. The power of baptism and forgiveness of sins is not in the phonetic sounds of speed but in the absolute authority of THE SON OF GOD.

**Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name [authority] under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved".**

It is important to realize that believers are baptized into Jesus DEATH.

Colossians 2:10-14 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: **In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism**, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. **And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh**, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us (*transgressions of His law i.e. sin*), which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Our former self, the old man or woman of sin, willingly dies (dead to sin) and we no longer SERVE the FLESH willingly but rather we SERVE the SPIRIT OF GOD. We cease to live a lifestyle of sin and instead live a lifestyle of purity and holiness.

Romans 6:1-12 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? **Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death:** that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:** Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.** For he that is dead is freed from sin. **Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.** For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. **Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

This implies a CHOICE and also a STRUGGLE. We CHOOSE to follow Christ. We STRUGGLE against the fleshly desires that strive against the spirit. Although after baptism and the laying on of hands you have become a new creature in Christ **you will not immediately be perfect in your Christian walk. You have the power to overcome but sometimes it will not be easy, it will be a spiritual battle requiring the full armor of God** (Eph 6).

#### **COUNT THE COST**

The churches like to center on the count the cost as being a long process. As we have seen in several biblical examples the new believers did not enter into bible study classes or spend weeks pondering their decision to be baptized and to follow Christ. However, it is important to **count the cost** as we will see. Let us look at the passage this term comes from.

Luke 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 **For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?** 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish

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it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

This passage the emphasis is placed on choosing to Love Christ more than anything else always. Christ must be followed and imitated even to the extremity of suffering. You may lose friends. Your own family may turn against you because the light that shines through you from Him might convict them. The cross you carry is to the death of the old you!

[v 30]. Discipleship is character-building, and shame awaits him who attempts to be a Christian and fails to live up to his profession. Unless his tower rises to the heavenly heights to which it aspired, it is but a Babel at last. The parable is not intended to discourage anyone from attempting to be a disciple. It is meant to warn us against attempting so great an undertaking with the frivolity of spirit and want of determination which insure failure [John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible]

Jesus followed the first example with a second of counting the cost: Luke 14:31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

[32] Is the adversary here God or the devil? As warring against God is no part of discipleship, it might seem that the conflict was with Satan. But the case supposed is that of a man who, after counting the cost, is about to decline taking up his cross--about to rebel against the claims of God. But while in this rebellious state he sees a superior force coming against him. This superior force cannot be the devil's, for Jesus could not counsel any to make peace with him, as the parable advises. The superior fear the task of being a disciple may be, it is not so dreadful as to fight against God. As soon as the hesitating man takes in his thought, he will immediately take up the cross which he was about to refuse.] [33] [The tower cannot be built by him who spends his time or squanders his money on other enterprises, nor can the peace be maintained by one who does not fully renounce his rebellion.] [John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible]

Philippians 1:29 For unto you it is given **in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;**

Another cost to look at: You can tell how much something is worth by what someone is willing to pay for it. Let's count the cost of your forgiveness ... what did it cost God? What are you worth to Christ? The highest price ever paid for anything was paid .... for YOU. Jesus died IN YOUR PLACE ... for YOUR SINS. He BOUGHT you to eternal life FOR A PRICE. Count THAT cost, my friend.

Lastly, count the cost of NOT believing and being baptized:

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; **but he that believeth not shall be damned.**

1 John 5:10-12 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: **he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.** And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.**

Revelation 21:7-8 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, **and unbelieving**, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in **the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone:** which is **the second death.**

Seems like a "no brainer" to decide eternal life through Christ Jesus rather than eternal death without Him, doesn't it?

#### **WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED**

The jailor asked Paul and Silas an important question in Acts 16. He received a proper answer which prompted an immediate and appropriate response.

Acts 16:30-34 And brought them out, and said, **Sirs, what must I do to be saved?** And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.** And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that

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were in his house. **And he took them the same hour of the night,** and washed their stripes; **and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.** And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Acts 2:38-41 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. **Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.**

So, reader .... have YOU sinned in your life? If you have even committed ONE sin in your life, then you are self-condemned. You are under a death sentence (second death which is eternal). There is only one way and one person by whom you may be saved: Jesus the Christ.

So ... **what are you waiting for???**

**Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**

Notes: Baptism should be performed by those who bring forth mature spiritual fruit. Seek out the counsel of a local Christian fellowship that live obediently to the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus Christ. After baptism, study the bible and prove all things. Ask God for wisdom and truth. Fellowship with like-minded believers, especially on God's holy Sabbath day. Faith is a long journey. Keep your course and in the end, you will receive eternal life through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Romans 5:8-11 and God doth commend His own love to us, that, in our being still sinners, Christ did die for us; much more, then, having been declared righteous now in his blood, we shall be saved through him from the wrath; for if, being enemies, we have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved in his life. And not only so, but we are also boasting in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom now we did receive the reconciliation;

**God Bless**

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**The Bible**

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There is an unbiblical "convention" or "tradition" in Christendom, dividing the Scriptures into two major portions known as "Old Testament" and "New Testament" -- which is unbiblical. Those terms are NEVER used by Jesus nor by His apostles. Those who gave us what WE call the "New Testament" never refer to it nor to what we call the 'Old Testament' as anything

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but 'the Scriptures'! This strong division recognized by all of Christendom is more confusing than helpful. These are some recent Facebook posts of mine about the arrangement we find in the original manuscripts:

**Books of the Bible**, Facebook post of 4 June 2024:

This post is about the structure of the Bible -- the divisions and order of the books as known in apostolic times.

We have all the Scriptures, but by tradition of men Christian Bibles do not follow the book order of the original manuscripts. As known to the apostles, the books are arranged differently. Since that time larger books were divided. What we call the 'Old Testament' is known to Jesus and His apostles by three divisions of Scripture mentioned in this famous quote of His:

“And He said to them, “These are the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all the things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” (Luke 24:44-45, The Holy Bible in its Original Order).

Jesus was speaking of what we now call the Old Testament, as known to the apostles, its three major divisions. The last division, known alternatively as “The Writings”, is often referred to as “The Psalms” after its first, largest and most frequently consulted book, the hymn book, as it were, of the Scriptures.

While we still have all the 'Old Testament' books, Christian authorities scrambled their order and divided many of them differently than as anciently conceived and found in the original manuscripts. The 'Old Testament' scriptures were only 22 books as understood in apostolic times. (Thus, with the 27 books of the New Testament, the apostle John, who surely made its final compilation, understands the totality of the Scriptures as 49 books—22 'Old Testament' books and 27 'New Testament' books).

$22 + 27 = 49 = 7 \times 7$ .

So, it seems John, the final apostolic compiler, must've understood it. The 49 books also logically comprise seven divisions or categories of Scripture, as noted below.

Christian authorities significantly scrambled the original order of New Testament books as found in ancient manuscripts. We have all the books, but their order was changed, apparently to exalt the church of Rome and to debase the original “Jewish” apostles whose primary and original ministry was to Jews. The “general epistles” by James, Peter, John and Jude, along with the essay to the Hebrews were moved to the “appendix” position and Paul’s epistles, beginning with that to the Romans, moved forward to just after Acts. The original order and divisions of both Old and New Testament is presented below.

I find it useful to understand these things known to the apostles and earliest believers but lost to most of Christendom for many hundreds of years.

The correspondence between then and now:

**‘OLD TESTAMENT’, anciently considered 22 books:**

LAW OF MOSES, the first division of all the Scriptures, compiled mostly by Moses:

- 1) Genesis
- 2) Exodus
- 3) Leviticus
- 4) Numbers
- 5) Deuteronomy

The first five books remain as they were.

THE PROPHETS, the second division of all the Scriptures:



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All these books are about or by prophets. The twelve minor prophets were originally contained on one scroll and were anciently considered one book but are now counted as separate books. Several other books as we now have them in Christian Bibles are divisions of larger books as conceived anciently. Anciently The Prophets division was considered 6 books, but those are now divided into 21 books.

6) Joshua/Judges: originally one book. Likely compiled by Samuel the prophet. Recounts the history of Israel when she had no human kings.

7) The Book of Kingdoms: 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings taken together were originally considered one book, 'The Book of the Kingdoms'. It is a history of Israel (which became divided after Solomon into the separate kingdoms of Judah and Israel) when she had human kings. Isaiah is likely a major compiler of The Book of Kingdoms.

- 8) Isaiah
- 9) Jeremiah
- 10) Ezekiel

11) The Twelve: (1) Hosea, (2) Joel, (3) Amos, (4) Obadiah, (5) Jonah, (6) Micah, (7) Nahum, (8) Habakkuk, (9) Zephaniah, (10) Haggai, (11) Zechariah, (12) Malachi. All these smaller prophetic works comprised one scroll and were considered one book 'The Twelve'.

THE WRITINGS, commonly known by its first, largest and most oft consulted book as THE PSALMS, the third division of all the Scriptures:

- 12) Psalms
- 13) Proverbs
- 14) Job
- 15) The Song of Songs
- 16) Ruth
- 17) Lamentations
- 18) Ecclesiastes
- 19) Esther
- 20) Daniel

21) Ezra/Nehemiah -- considered one book in the time of the apostles.

22) 1 Chronicles/2 Chronicles – originally one book. I've found it useful to realize that this is the last book of the 'Old Testament' as known to Jesus and the apostles. The original canonization (which books in what order to consider inspired scripture) of the 'Old Testament' was likely by Ezra the priest, the likely author.

In apostolic times the 'Old Testament' is 22 books in the three divisions noted by Jesus in Luke's gospel. Aside from various divisions of larger 'Old Testament' books into smaller ones, the order of the books in both the 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament' was also altered by later human Christian authorities.

**'NEW TESTAMENT', 27 books.**

Division 4 of all the Scriptures, The Gospels and Acts, an historical account of Christ during his human life and working through the apostles He choose in the years after His resurrection.

- 1) Matthew
- 2) Mark
- 3) Luke
- 4) John
- 5) Acts

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Division 5 of all the Scriptures, The General Epistles, also known as 'Universal' or 'Catholic' epistles, addressed to all Christians by the pioneers of the Christian faith, who were especially apostles to the Jews, but their letters are intended for all believers. The first three authors "James, Peter, and John ... were known as pillars of the church" (Galatians 2:9):

- 6) James
- 7) 1 Peter
- 8) 2 Peter
- 9) 1 John
- 10) 2 John
- 11) 3 John
- 12) Jude

Division 6 of all the Scriptures, Pauline epistles, letters of the apostle Paul, primarily the apostle to Gentiles (but also to Israel, Acts 9:15).

The first section are Paul's letters originally sent to church congregations:

- 13) Romans
- 14) 1 Corinthians
- 15) 2 Corinthians
- 16) Galatians
- 17) Ephesians
- 18) Philippians
- 19) Colossians
- 20) 1 Thessalonians
- 21) 2 Thessalonians

Then an unsigned work, a polished essay as opposed to a letter, likely written also by Paul (moved to the last "appendix" position among works attributed to Paul by the Roman church authorities):

- 22) Hebrews

Then Paul's letters to individuals (Timothy and Titus were pastors, thus these books are the Pastoral Epistles):

- 23) 1 Timothy
- 24) 2 Timothy
- 25) Titus
- 26) Philemon

Division 7 of all the Scriptures, The Revelation of Jesus Christ to the Apostle John:

- 27) Revelation

It appears Peter, Paul and John decided on the apostolic literature to be counted as scriptural books and their order, with John, who lived much longer, making the final compilation. It appears as John understood them that the 'books of the Bible' were 49 (7 X 7) (22 'Old Testament' + 27 'New Testament') in all, logically forty-nine books in seven divisions.

For those interested in further study, Restoring the Original Bible by Ernest L. Martin discusses and documents the original order as known from ancient manuscripts and as attested by many historical witnesses.

A complete Christian Bible which presents all the books of Scripture in the order noted here (dividing some larger books for convenience, according to what has become our usual convention) is The Holy Bible in its Original Order: a faithful version with commentary, by York Publishing Company.

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A Jewish Bible, Tanakh, a New Translation of the Holy Scriptures according to the traditional Hebrew text, by the Jewish Publication Society, presents the 'Old Testament' Scriptures in the original order, though divides what were anciently considered larger books for convenience, according to what has become our usual convention, such as The Book of the Kingdoms (presented in conventional fashion as 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings). Its table of contents includes a heading (The Twelve Minor Prophets') for The Twelve.

I find it interesting and a little sad that Christian Bible commentaries rarely note the original arrangement of the Scriptures seen in ancient manuscripts and spoken of by historic witnesses. I find it particularly unfortunate that the general epistles were moved to the 'appendix' position among epistles. For the first time Bible reader to comprehend the "faith once delivered" it is better to read the general epistles before Paul, who, Peter says, makes comments "hard to understand" which lawless people twist "to mean something quite different" (2 Peter 3:15-18). Jude warns that even then some were teaching about God's marvelous grace in such a way as to undermine the Lordship of Christ (Jude 4).

Facebook post of June 14: Clues the Apostles Canonized the New Testament

Some biblical clues the apostles themselves chose and arranged the New Testament books in the order of original manuscripts, with the general epistle division preceding the Pauline writings division, and Hebrews after Paul's letters to churches and before his pastoral epistles:

In the introduction to and context of a passage of Scripture that gets a translator's heading: "Paying Attention to Scripture" [2 Peter 1:12-21, NLT] the first paragraph reads:

"Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught. And it is only right that I should keep on reminding you as long as I live (literal Greek: "as long as I am in this tent [tabernacle]"). For our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me that I must soon leave this earthly life (literal Greek: "I must soon put off my tent [or tabernacle]), so I will work hard to make sure you always remember these things after I am gone."

In the last paragraphs of this last letter from Peter he mentions other things which indicate his interest in choosing and arranging 'New Testament' Scripture for posterity (2 Peter 3:15-18). He urges, in view of the final judgment, that believers make "every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight" (2 Peter 3:14). He speaks of "our beloved brother, Paul", notably "all his letters" (2 Peter 3:16". Of Paul's letters, "written with the wisdom God gave him" (vs. 15) Peter warns: "Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction." (vs. 16).

"I am warning you ahead of time, dear friends. Be on guard so that you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people [who twist Paul's comments 'to mean something quite different'] and lose your own secure footing. Rather you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to him, both now and forever. Amen! (NLT)".

'Wicked people' were already twisting what Paul said, as the NIV puts it, "lawless men". Peter is here telling us that Paul's letters are Scripture, but even then, being "twisted" "to mean something quite different" than Paul intended. Peter warns "some of his comments are hard to understand". Nero killed Peter in 68 A.D.

At the same time Paul also knew that his death was impending and was working with Peter to leave the legacy of apostolic Scripture.

Paul's final words are at the close of his second letter to Timothy. He, too, has been shown: "The time of my death is near" (2 Timothy 4:6b NLT). He is in prison, in Rome, asking Timothy to come as soon as he can (2 Timothy 4:9). As almost all English translations put it, Paul is asking for a 'coat' or 'cloak' left behind at Troas, and, as the NLT puts it: "my books, and especially my papers" (2 Timothy 4:12). There was trouble then; important helpers had deserted or abandoned him, and there was opposition from unbelievers. Paul was killed in Rome about the same time as Peter.

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The fact Paul is asking for his books and papers indicates he is cooperating with Peter, in view of their impending deaths, to put together the New Testament.

A stronger indication Paul is choosing and arranging his works to be included in the New Testament is a deeper understanding of a Greek word usually translated 'coat' or 'cloak'. A little-known secondary meaning of the Greek word rendered "cloak" into English is a book wrap, or a bookcase--"receptacle for important documents and/or books" -- for organizing collections of scrolls [ Source: Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus, Baker Book House, 8th Printing, 1990 by William Hendrickson]. While Hendrickson himself does not strongly support this rendering, he notes: "there have always been those who assign this meaning to the word in the present passage." Most likely Paul on this occasion wanted something much more significant than a mere cloak or coat, an item unlikely to have been overlooked by such a frequent traveler.

Peter and Paul were killed in Rome at about the same time, and before they died must have selected and organized the extant New Testament books in the order found in ancient manuscripts. John is believed to have written long after their deaths and must have finished the job of putting together the New Testament as found in ancient manuscripts.

A company of 'old-time' believers were gathered around John after James, Peter, and Paul's deaths. John and 1 John speak with a "we" voice, for example: "we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only son" (John 1:14) and "From his abundance we have received one gracious blessing after another" (John 1:16) and the concluding sentence of John 1:16: "He has revealed God to us."

From the cross, Jesus asked John to take his mother, Mary, into his home (John 19:25-27). Close to the end of John's gospel, John 21:24 we read: "This disciple is the one who testifies to these events and has recorded them here. And WE [emphasis mine] know that his account of these things is accurate" (John 21:24). The very last verse of John's account of Jesus, uniquely containing much he said and did not otherwise on record: "Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written." (John 19:28).

The "we" is also strong in the proclamation of 1 John, for example: 1:1, twice; 1:2, twice, plus an "us"; verse 3, twice plus an "us" and an "our"; 1:4, a "we" and an "our". On and on, throughout 1 John, a plural voice. The proclamation of 1 John is a manifesto of the Kingdom of God (1 John 1:1). It is quite logical that a proclamation to all people for all time should be read before Paul's letters to congregations and individuals, which include, as Peter notes, some things difficult to understand and being twisted to support heresies.

An ancient extra-biblical record (the Muratorian Canon) indicates that Peter's brother Andrew, an apostle and the first 'missionary for Christ' (John 2:35-42) led a cohort that asked John to write another account of Christ's life. "... it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that John was to write all things in his own name, and they were all to certify".

By then all the surviving original disciples of Christ, those who knew Jesus personally and shared in his trials, knew they too were on the way out. They realized there was much that was important yet to be left as a legacy of Scripture. So, we have, especially, the unique and precious gospel of John and the magnificent proclamation of 1 John. Quite natural for those earliest believers remaining alive to gather around John and to be concerned about the legacy of their ministry.

The general epistles are bookended by letters from Christ's half-brothers.

The first general epistle is by James; he claims no blood tie to Jesus, but everyone knows he is his half-brother; he introduces himself as "a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1). Though he was not actually converted until he saw Jesus resurrected, he had known Jesus all his life. He was a praying man with a sterling reputation and cruelly killed by enemies of the faith (62 A.D.). He was a pillar of the Jerusalem church and, though formerly "the party of the circumcision" James changed his mind when the apostles and elders met to resolve the issue. He likely oversaw the meeting and had the last word (Acts 15:13-19). Paul says "James, Peter, and John ... were known as pillars of the church" (Galatians 2:9). The fact James is listed first, even before Peter, is an indication of his reputation. Not surprising, the letter of James, in the estimation of Paul, Peter, and John, would be given first place in the general epistles division, and, indeed, among all the apostolic letters, since in the original manuscripts James follows Acts. His letter speaks of basic apostolic faith and is believed to have been written before any of the other letters included in New Testament Scripture.

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The last general epistle, “Jude” is by another of Christ’s half-brothers. His greeting reminds us of James: “a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James” and his history is similar. Jude warns at the outset: “urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people. I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God’s marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives.” (Jude 3-4). Surely the faith he refers to later in his letter, “your most holy faith” (John 20) -- is the true heaven-sent faith delivered to His holy people by the apostles. The apostolic faith is already in trouble! Jude shares content with 2 Peter and thus Jude is quoting Peter or Peter is quoting Jude.

There are many warnings for Christians in the general epistles. Logically all the apostles would want to have them read before Paul’s epistles, including Paul. Readers are poorly served by putting them in an appendix position, as authorities of post-apostolic Christendom did so long ago.

Jesus, speaking of the murder of God’s prophets “from the murder of Abel to the murder of Zechariah” (Luke 11:51) isn’t speaking chronologically; in the Old Testament as still ordered by the Jews the murder of Abel is near the beginning of the first book (Genesis 4:8) and the last mention of the murder of a prophet by name, Zechariah, is near the end of the last book (2 Chronicles 24:20-22) of the ‘Old Testament’ as the earthly Jesus knew it.

I daresay that Christendom’s re-ordering of the biblical books will not stand after Christ begins to rule from Jerusalem – if it does not fall before then.

While the Old Testament original manuscript book order was preserved by the Jews, neither the Old Testament nor New Testament original manuscript book order has been preserved by Christendom. Post-apostolic Christian authorities, up to our own day, in many other ways have obscured “the faith God entrusted ... once for all time to his holy people ... your most holy faith” (Jude 3 NLT)!

#### **Ancient number of OT books**

A pastor friend expressed doubt that the number of Old Testament books in the time of Jesus and his apostles, notably the apostle John, was reckoned to be 22 (the same body of Scripture has had many book divisions, besides a re-arranged order in Christian Bibles and the Protestant Bible and is now reckoned as 39 books).

Josephus is a well-known Jewish historian writing late in John’s ministry. In *Contra Apion* 1.8 he writes: “We have not a countless number of books, discordant and arranged against each other; but only two and twenty books, containing the history of every age, which are justly accredited as divine.”

Ernest Martin, previously mentioned in my first post about the apostolic understanding of the number and arrangement of biblical books, cites or quotes 22 ancient authorities who confirm the ancient reckoning of 22 books in the Old Testament (*Restoring the Original Bible*, Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, 1994, pp.58-60).

New Testament Manuscript Expert on the Book Order of Christian NT Translations

As far as the divisions of the New Testament and their order in the most ancient manuscripts, the earliest and best place the general epistles (James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, Jude) before the Pauline epistles. Abundant evidence of this is presented in Chapter 22 of *Restoring the Original Bible*, which also has a Select Bibliography of books about the ancient manuscripts.

C. Gregory, author of *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (1924), felt the traditional rearranged divisions of the New Testament (almost all English Bibles follow long-ago Roman Catholic re-ordering, putting the Pauline epistles after Acts) should be rectified in modern translations. But long-established traditions are difficult to break with.

Professor Gregory felt scholars and laity should not treat this matter with indifference. As Martin says, and I agree: “our present versions should be corrected to accord with the manuscripts.”

For many reasons, a first-time New Testament reader is poorly served in reading the Pauline epistles before the general epistles. Evidence is strong that the ancient manuscript order is that established by Christ’s apostles.

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It almost amazes me that so many modern-day Christian authorities know these things but consider them a matter of indifference. As if our Lord Christ Himself does not care!

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**See Jeffrey Caldwell's other articles at:**

**[Caldwell, Jeffrey – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)**  
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## **Holiness**

**(Copyright 10-06-2024) by Jeffrey Caldwell (Arkansas)**

For months now I have been writing to thousands of the leaders and churches of Christendom, of all denominations, everyone I could get an email address for, now in many states from Maine to Georgia, which I'm working on now, having written to about 30 denominations so far in Georgia. I'm writing to them about the HOLINESS of the seventh-day Sabbath. And in other places as well, many Facebook groups with a potential audience of tens of thousands, I've posed this question to those who profess Christ as LORD:

What does CHRIST say about the HOLINESS of the Sabbath today?

To the question, the answer is the same Elijah got to his question to the House of Israel: 'the people answered not a word'. From early on there is a very small percentage of leaders who write making arguments that keeping the Sabbath is not "binding" on Christians. That was actually quite helpful, 'iron sharpening iron' since answering them clarified even more for me the truth about the Sabbath. I've come to see that the Sabbath itself is an essential founding holy institution of the Kingdom of God, such as family and marriage, initiated by God on Day Six.

Before I started on my letters to the states I posed the question to every mega-church in the United States. None of them answered a word. I haven't counted, but working on this for months, I suppose I have sent it to tens of thousands of Christian leaders and congregations. A small percentage of congregations I could not reach with email, but they maintain Facebook discussion groups (usually small congregations); I posted the letter on several which accepted it and it even got a few likes and loves here or there.

This is the current and best form of my letter, which I wish to share with your readers; the subject line is "Holiness":

Holiness

Greetings to all who profess our Savior as LORD!

The first believers follow the Way (Acts 9:2), your most holy faith ... once delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:20,3).

The Way: "Follow none but the LORD your God, and revere none but Him; observe His commandments alone, and heed only His orders; worship none but Him, and hold fast to Him" (Deuteronomy 13:5, Tanakh). Our Savior alone is Teacher, King, and Judge!

Our Savior is the Holy One and we are called to be His holy ones. Peter says, as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16 quotes Leviticus 19:2).

God disciplines us "so that we can share in His holiness ... because no one will see the Lord without it" (Hebrews 12:10,14).

Hazardous to holiness are merely mortal religious authorities --wolves or misguided (Matthew 7:21-23, 23:8-10).

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Our Savior is given all power and authority to put down all dominion, authority and power opposed to the will of God our Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). Let us pray that HE will do that in Christendom, now!

What does CHRIST say about the HOLINESS of the Sabbath today? An unanswered question in Christendom --but should we not know?

Originally, the Sabbath is sanctified on the seventh day of Creation, the first full day of human life, before covenants or sin.

None of the LORD's holy days (Leviticus 23:2) survived the apostolic era in common practice or reverence.

For almost all believers Sunday replaces the biblical Sabbath as the weekly day of worship, with the holiness of the LORD's holy days irrelevant and observing biblical Sabbaths obsolete. But biblically, Sunday is never sanctified, nor proclaimed an official day of worship.

The seventh day at Creation follows Day Six when God created people, male and female, family (Luke 3:38), and marriage. Human life, sexuality, family, and marriage, all sacred, initiated by acts of God on Day Six, in hope of godly offspring (Malachi 2:15). God rested on the seventh day, blessing and sanctifying it for people. All are essential founding holy institutions of the Kingdom of God! God's first instruction for BEING holy: "Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:3). The holy institutions of Day Six and the Sabbaths together nurture holiness.

The Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27) by an act of God. "I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him." (Ecclesiastes 3:14 NIV).

"God's cessation from DOING expresses His desire for BEING with His creation, for giving to His creatures not only THINGS but HIMSELF" --Sabbath theologian Samuele Bacchiocchi. There is no separation between God and people on the Edenic Sabbath and our Savior is the only father Adam and Eve will ever know! HIS EXAMPLE is a model for fatherhood!

Peter, knowing he is about to die, urges us to pay closest attention to the inspired words of the reliable fathers of the one true faith, the biblical apostles and prophets (2 Peter 1:12-21)! THEIRS is a legacy of inspired writings. Let us strive to know THEM as religious authorities! They know our Savior as no others and HE sent THEM to convey the holy faith "once for all time entrusted to His holy people" (Jude 1:20, 3 NLT)! A heaven-sent faith to defend and contend for and suffer for as need be.

According to the Holy One, what makes Sunday superior to the Sabbath for GOD's purposes?

KNOW THE LORD! Holiness is a priority for Him, if not "others"!

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See Jeffrey Caldwell's other articles at:  
[Caldwell, Jeffrey – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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**Have a Happy Sabbath & Holy Days**

## A Bride Prepared (Chapter 8) (Copyright) by Warren Zehrung (Little Rock, Arkansas)

### Chapter 8: Bride of Christ *A Bride Prepared*

#### **Bride of Christ**

Are we conquering ourselves, and going on to perfection? Are we keeping ourselves unspotted? Christ, who is perfect, will have a perfect Bride. She will have made herself ready – but she could not have made herself ready without Christ's help.

John the Baptist understood that the Messiah would take a Bride. He knew from the Scriptures that Christ would enter into an eternal marriage covenant with a righteous Wife. *"For thy **Maker is thy Husband**; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel."* (Isaiah 54:5) Some people thought that John the Baptist was the Messiah; so, calling to mind Isaiah's words, John the Baptist had to explain to them that he was only the "best man" at the wedding, and that he would stand up and be witness to the covenant vows – and that Jesus Christ would be the **Husband of the Bride**. *"He that has the Bride is the Bridegroom: but the friend of the Bridegroom, which stands and hears Him, rejoices greatly because of the Bridegroom's proclamation."* (John 3:29)

There is a prophetic picture in Ezekiel 16, where Jesus washed, dressed, and blessed the nation of Israel so that she would be prepared to be His wife. He cleansed her; He groomed and dressed her in royal garments – He prepared her. That picture will be completed when Jesus takes the Church – spiritual Israel – to be His Bride (Galatians 6:16). Look at the detailed attention Jesus gave to His fiancée:

*"When I passed by you, and looked upon you, behold, your time was the time of love; and I spread my garment over you, [a symbolic proposal of marriage] and covered your nakedness: yea, I swore unto you, and **entered into a covenant** with you, saith the Lord God, and you became mine. Then I washed you with water; yes, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil. I clothed you also with needlepoint work, and placed fur-lined slippers on your feet, and I dressed you about with fine linen, and I covered you with silk. I embellished you also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a necklace on your neck. And I put jewelry on you, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. Thus were you adorned with gold and silver; and your garments were of fine linen, and silk, and embroidered work; you ate of fine cakes, and honey, and oil: and you were exceeding beautiful, and you did prosper into a kingdom. And your renowned reputation went forth among the heathen for your beauty: for it **was perfect** through my grandeur, which I had put upon you, says the Lord God."* (Ezekiel 16:8-14)

Think of Christ doing the same for us – only in the most splendid way – making us lovely and beautiful, **spiritually!** The Bride of Christ will be *adorned in fine linen, clean and white* – meaning that she will be a perfect, spiritual Bride – with the righteousness of Christ upon her. Jesus has done His part in completely washing His Bride. We must be washed. *"Jesus Christ... loved us and **washed us** from our sins in His own blood."* (Revelation 1:5)

#### **Our Part in the Preparation**

The most important question for us to consider is what must the future wife of Christ be doing to prepare herself and make herself ready for the marriage of the Lamb? The Bride of Christ will be adorned, not so much in the elegant physical garments of a dazzling wedding gown, but in the brilliant spiritual attributes of Godly love, obedience, holiness, perfection, righteousness, and brotherly love (1 John 3:14). The Bride will not be of superficial character, but will have developed Godly moral fiber – making her suitably prepared for her wedding to Christ. *"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has **made herself ready**."* (Revelation 19:7)

We all seek, and expect to be the Bride of Christ... so let us ask ourselves this question: Have we done *our part* to be the perfect Bride Jesus is seeking? Notice what Jesus has to say concerning His Bride: *"It shall be in that day, says the Lord, that you shalt call Me Ishi [**my husband**] ... "I will betroth you unto Me forever. Yes, I will betroth you unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness:*



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*and thou shalt know the Lord.*" (Hosea 2:16, 19-20) The marriage of Jesus Christ to His Bride will inaugurate the eternal covenant planned from the foundation of the world. *"To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."* (Revelation 19:8)

See Warren Zehring's other articles at:

[Zehring, Warren – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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## Did Jesus Fulfill the Law?

(Copyright 09-29-2024) by Rod Reynolds (Wentzville, Missouri)

The Apostle Paul warned that "in the last days perilous times will come" (II Timothy 3:1). Jesus warned that as the time for his second coming approaches "because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12). Certainly, we are living today in increasingly "perilous times," and witnessing increasingly pervasive lawlessness of historical proportions.

Unfortunately, popular "Christianity," while historically having some moderating influence on the natural human tendency toward lawlessness, and encouraging moral restraint, has at the same time tended to encourage lawlessness through erroneous teachings regarding the laws of God. One rather common misunderstanding is the idea that Jesus "fulfilled the law" for us, so we don't have to, although the idea may not necessarily be stated in such stark terms.

This has been by no means necessarily a teaching of all professing Christian Churches or ministers but is nevertheless a misunderstanding among many who view themselves as Christians, that has been fostered at least partly by doctrines taught within their churches.

What is the real meaning of Jesus' statement concerning fulfilling the law, and how does that affect your obligations concerning God's word?

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See Rod Reynolds' other articles at:

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## Holy Days 2024

Passover – April 23, 2024 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 23-29, 2024

Pentecost – June 12, 2024  
Trumpets - October 3, 2024  
Atonement – October 12, 2024  
Tabernacles –October 17, 2024, to October 23, 2024  
Last Great Day – October 24, 2024

## Jury Duty Scam

(Copyright 2006) by Rich Daniels (Shawano, Wisconsin)

It checks out on Snopes and at truthorfiction.com

Most of us take those summonses for jury duty seriously, but enough people skip out on their civic duty, that a new and ominous kind of scam has surfaced. Fall for it and your identity could be stolen, reports CBS.

In this con, someone calls pretending to be a court official who threateningly says a warrant has been issued for your arrest because you didn't show up for jury duty. The caller claims to be a jury coordinator.

If you protest that you never received a summons for jury duty, the scammer asks you for your Social Security number and date of birth so he or she can verify the information and cancel the arrest warrant. Sometimes they even ask for credit card numbers. Give out any of this information and bingo! Your identity just got stolen.

The scam has been reported so far in 11 states, including Oklahoma, Illinois, and Colorado.

This (scam) is particularly insidious because they use intimidation over the phone to try and bully people into giving information by pretending, they're with the court system.

The FBI and the federal court system have issued nationwide alerts on their websites, warning consumers about the fraud.

Check it out here: <http://www.snopes.com/crime/fraud/juryduty.asp>

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See Rich Daniels other articles at:  
[Daniels, Rich – The "New" Church of God Messenger \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)  
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## Apocalyptic Four Horsemen

(Copyright 10-06-2024) by Gary C. Miller (Pocahontas, Arkansas)

FOUR HORSES they Ride (Rev.6:2,4,5,8):

**WHITE** Horse (v.2), **RED** Horse (v.4)

**BLACK** Horse (v. 5), **PALE** Horse (v. 8)

### WHAT ARE THE FOUR HORSES?

No Private Interpretation allowed (2 Pet.1:20): "I...looked...In the first chariot RED HORSES... in the second... BLACK HORSES ... in the third...WHITE HORSES... ..in the fourth...SPOTTED and ASH-COLORED..." (Zech. 6:2-3).

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**ANSWER: THE FOUR WINDS**

"... What are these...the angel answered...These are the Four SPIRITS (margin "four winds") which go forth from...the Elohim of...the Earth." (Zech. 6:4-5) ("SPIRITS" is translated "WINDS" in Dan. 7:2; 8:8; 11:4; NT "WINDS" [Rev. 7:1] is the same Greek word used in the LXX of Dan. 7:2; 8:8; 11:4).

The BIBLE interprets the Rev.:6 prophecy with Zech 6.



**FOUR HORSEMEN ARE RIDING THE FOUR WINDS ...AND their Power to Bring Destruction by WIND:** (The Jet Stream, etc.)

**Drought** (mass air movement = temperature extremes)

**Disease** (air-borne diseases), **Flooding** (air moisture),

**Blizzards** (air moisture), **Tornadoes** (high speed wind),

**Hurricanes** [high speed wind:2024: Helene (U.S. SE); 2017 Harvey (Texas), Irma (Florida)]

**THE TIME IS AT HAND FOR THEIR FINAL RIDE OF THE AGES?**

"Hear the words of this Prophecy....for the Time Is at Hand." (Rev.1:3; also Rev. 6:1-8)

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**Benjamin Franklin's Wisdom**  
(Copyright 2023) by Dwight Fleming (Oroville, California)

Lance Wallnau covers Benjamin Franklin's appeal to seek God's guidance in their efforts to draft a Constitution for their new nation. Likewise, the Declaration of Independence was also an appeal to God for guidance and protection. As Lance reads and comments on Franklin's appeal, it becomes **self-evident** of the wisdom that was inspired by God.

Thankfully, our Founding Fathers were willing to **humble** themselves and seek God's council rather than be blinded by any **pride** in their own accomplishments.

For those today who wantonly take pride in their wicked deeds and reject any notion of a Creator God, God warns that He will "break the **pride** of their power" (Leviticus 26:19).

Let the month of July be known as "Humble Month" that all may repent and turn to the true God who has graciously given our nation the blessings of Liberty.

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
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Here is the link to Lance's video: [Benjamin Franklin's Invisible Friend | Lance Wallnau \(rumble.com\)](#)

See Dwight Fleming's other articles at:

[Fleming, Dwight – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](#)

## **Feast of Trumpets: Christ as Judge** **(Copyright 10-04-2024) by Rod Reynolds (Wentzville, Missouri)**

There are many facets to what is pictured by the Feast of Trumpets. Very prominent in what is pictured by that day is that God is a judge – that Jesus Christ, when He returns to the earth is returning in judgement.

In this sermon, Pastor Rod Reynolds discusses some of the prophecies concerning Christ's judgement on the earth, and the principles relating to the manner in which Christ judges.

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Sermon Link: <https://www.cogmessenger.org/en/feast-of-trumpets-christ-as-judge/>

See Rod Reynolds other articles at:

[Reynolds, Rod – The "New" Church of God Messenger \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](#)

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## **A Prayer for the Election** **(Copyright 10-06-2024) by Jeffrey Caldwell (Arkansas)**

A Facebook post of August 9, 2024, a prayer for the election:

Many of our religious tradition believe we should not vote, but we all believe that we should pray.

Paul's first letter to Timothy commends prayers for all people, a neglected teaching. I suppose this would be in the category of prayers for all people (1 Timothy 2:1).

May those candidates who excel the most in fairness, honesty, love of holy freedom and godly wisdom win in November!

See Jeffrey Caldwell's other articles at:

[Caldwell, Jeffrey – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](#)