

**Kill-Baby-Rights Women:  
Baby's Body Is Not  
Your "Own Body."**

(Copyright Revised 10-26-2024)  
by Richard Frates  
(Easley, South Carolina)

**PAGE 3**

**Democratic Party Treasonous:  
Worldwide Voter-Drive! Why?**

(Copyright 10-26-2024)  
by Richard Frates  
(Easley, South Carolina)

**PAGE 5**

**In These Trying Times,  
Keeping Trusting  
and Keep... Trying!**

(Copyright 10-26-2024) by Gary C. Miller  
(Pocahontas, Arkansas)

**PAGE 6**

**Why God allows  
such things to happen  
(an annual encore column)**

(Copyright 10-27-2024)  
by Curtis Dahlgren  
(Stephenson, Michigan)

**PAGE 7**

**Kenya Feast 2024**

(Copyright 10-28-2024)  
by William P. Goff  
(Myrtle Beach, South Carolina)

**PAGE 9**

**Who ARE the Real Fascist?  
The Democratic Party:**

(Copyright 10-29-2024)  
by Richard Frates  
(Easley, South Carolina)

**PAGE 9**

**Vote for America**

(Copyright 10-30-2024)  
by Dwight Fleming  
(Oroville, California)

**PAGE 10**

**What Happened at En Dor?**

(Copyright 10-30-2024)  
by Richard T. Ritenbaugh  
(Charlotte, North Carolina)

**PAGE 12**

**A Bride Prepared  
(Chapter 14)**

(Copyright) by Warren Zehrung  
(Little Rock, Arkansas)

**PAGE 18**

**"For Real" Arboreal Ants**

(Copyright) by Karl Priest  
(The Creation Club)

**PAGE 20**

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

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## Commentary:

Hi Everyone,

Please pray for Darwin's brother's family. His brother's son died on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup> of a heart attack. He was 60 years old. The funeral was on Thursday.

We went to the funeral in Aberdeen South Dakota at a funeral home called Spitzer-Miller Funeral Home. We had to leave home around 6 AM to get there by 10:30 AM. I believe we got there about 45 minutes early. The service was conducted by a Lutheran Minister, and he did have a pretty good mini sermon. It was short but not unbiblical.

There wasn't a lot to eat at the brunch afterwards because of our carnivore diet so after that we went out to eat. We had to be at the cemetery in Roscoe South Dakota by 3 PM and after that we went down the road a ways and visited the farm where Darwin grew up. His brother and his family are currently still farming and living there although the house is not the original, some of the outbuildings still are. After the farm we headed home and were there by 7 PM.

In Aberdeen and surrounding areas all the way to North Dakota they have piles of grain, probably corn and wheat and no place to store it so it is just sitting there in huge piles with plastic covers over it. The abundance of round bails of hay was everywhere in stacks, lines and all over. We also saw a flock of thousands of birds. It was like a mainly white cloud that could have stretched out for a mile. They were probably sea gulls headed south for the winter. Yes, we do have sea gulls in North Dakota but no ocean. They live off of French Fries all summer. As cold as it gets here in the winter, we also have cactuses growing across the Missouri River from where we live. They are small cactuses just growing wild and the bigger ones are in the western part of North Dakota. We also saw one healthy looking white tail deer while we were at the family farm.

**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

We hardly ever travel anywhere anymore so the trip was both interesting and nice that we were able to get out of the house for few hours.

Remember that if you have a prayer request or a time dated article to please mark it urgent in the subject line otherwise they just go unread into a folder waiting for their turn to be printed.

Please pray for our brethren in Kenya, Israel and all around the world. Even though some of us have peace right now, others do not. Pray for Donald Trump and His Family, that they may be safe during these trying times.

Again, we are grateful to all the people who contribute to this newsletter.

Hope you all have a happy Sabbath,  
(Written by Laura)

**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.

**Kill-Baby-Rights Women:  
Baby’s Body Is Not Your “Own Body.”**  
(Copyright Revised 10-26-2024) by Richard Frates (Easley, South Carolina)

**Abortion Depravity: Life or death for Baby is a women’s right and “choice!” Democratic party Serpent: VP Kamala Harris falsely claims a women’s “right over her own body” includes killing the baby that is - NOT - her “own body.” Devils dignify the execution of the helpless innocent. Men and women democratic party snakes: The Baby’s body is as unique as yours, there will never be another you, eternal-abortion is your destiny!**

Your body was yours in your mother’s womb and still is! A women’s right over her own body” is **irrelevant to the “baby’s body” struggling for life in her womb!** Frankenstein Democratic party snakes own the bloody - **kill your baby and vote for me, business.** Baby Sacrificed delights happily seduced and evil democratic party female voters. **Father veiled in darkness: The right to know or defend his baby mocked.**

**The Devil’s Work: Mold women into his own evil image and like Adam men follow.** Kill Baby Rights Women: Need **“Open Rebuke.”** Inspires repentance saves baby today and women on “Judgment Day.” Twenty “Kill Baby Rights” Evil Concepts:

1. Women Vote Democrats, defenders of “Killing Baby” close your eyes and blind your conscience, give Bloody Frankenstein, License to kill your baby.
2. Daughters of the State: **As Eve believed Satan instead of God, women believe Devil-Media, instead of God. Kill their Babies with this evil, my, my, totally me motive: Baby you’re in my way, my honor, my prosperity, my fun, and my life to live - Excludes You.**
3. Women and girls “repent” free yourselves from the Devil’s faithful Democratic party Serpents: Delighted to devour your baby in exchange for your - VOTE.
4. Women: Abortion “kill baby rights” is your invitation to hell. Giving your baby over to death will cost you your life, Luke 13:1-5 “Unless you repent you will parish.”
5. WOMEN: The evil “kill baby right” motive for your Vote is - Recorded in Heaven. Matthew 12:37 “By your words (and votes) you will be justified or condemned.”

**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
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**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

6. **Devil-Media Speaks: My Daughters, vote democratic party. “Kill Baby Right” Granted. Wash your hands in Blood and be Innocent in Devil-Media Eyes.**
7. Women: Vote Democrat the Unholy Sacrament of the Democratic Party is Killing Babies. Repent or Judgment Day will be Forever Abortion for you - John 5:28-29.
8. Women and Girls: Vote “kill baby rights” become Mothers or Murderers is your free “choice.”
9. Women: **Devil-Media and Democratic party snakes own you: By your vote you sold your soul for the right to kill.**
10. Women: Kill your baby: Be as **Bloody as Jezebel** - who was cursed and devoured by dogs; except Jezebel would never kill her own - 2: Kings 9:10.
11. Women: **Vote Democrat: Sacrifice your Baby: A Guilty Conscious is your reward, or a Seared Conscious that Can no Longer Distinguish Between “good and evil.”**
12. Women hear your, Demon Possessed Democratic Party Daddy’s message: Daughters vote for me. Baby Sacrificed is my Delight.
13. Women Voters: REPENT - CHOOSE LIFE - Protect the Innocent - Democratic Party Snakes have marked for Slaughter - Love God and your neighbor “as yourself” includes your baby - Matthew 22:37-39.
14. Women - Democratic-Party-Snakes evil enticement - Bloody Kill your Baby Rights: Sexually promiscuous, and Stone-Hearted a women’s free “choice.”
15. Women: Does the statement “Abortions Wins Elections” expose the evil hearts of most Women? God examines the hearts of all.
16. Women: “Kill your baby rights” is freedom from responsibility and becoming wives or mothers. Unfaithful thoughtless - Sexual Relationship welcome, the Devil.
17. Women: **Kill your baby rights really is: Promiscuous Rights for - Evil Women. Repent and wash away the bloody stain of Innocent Blood in your hearts!**
18. Women: The abortion motive for your vote is written on your spirit in Full View of God. Repentance removes guilt from heart, mind, and spirit.
19. Women God gives Life at Birth: Devil-Media, Democrats - **Evil Men and Women** applaud - Death of the Baby Instead of Birth.
20. Women: “Love your neighbor as yourself” includes your baby. Love in the eyes of God is Critical. Boasting “Kill baby right” a women’s “choice” will drag you to hell.

Devil-Media drives Lawmakers, Judges and Gullible Women - like dumb mules! Whatever evils Devil-Media calls good, possessed Lawmakers and Judges defend in Law! Repent: The Son of God - Crucified paid our debt of sin and is light that shines beyond the grave. Praise God.

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**See Richard Frate’s other articles at:**  
[Frates, Richard – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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## Democratic Party Treasonous: Worldwide Voter-Drive! Why? (Copyright 10-26-2024) by Richard Frates (Easley, South Carolina)

Destroy "democracy" render citizen America votes irrelevant. Democratic party, evil is really good, criminal base, and worldwide invader free lunch border jumpers will dominate the vote and keep democratic party Serpents in power. **Republicans wake up label the democratic party a treasonous criminal cabal.** Run against treasonous, democratic party criminals not a candidate.

The Devil is at home in the democratic party but Jesus Christ is a stranger. To democrats' evil must be honored: "Discrimination" against evil against the law. **Jesus Christ preached "repent or you will perish" Luke 13:1-5. Democrats preach "do not repent, parade sin against God and condemn all who will not join the LGBT depravity parade of "discrimination."**

Democratic party snakes are attempting to overthrow the government of America. Then impose nationwide slavery on the working and business class. Plunder America's wealth, through deficit spending, to support their criminal and perverted base, and dependent on the state for support, foreign criminal class voters.

To democratic party snakes: Deception is truth, evil is good, and delusion is reality. Freedom and freedom of speech is the enemy. Freedom and equal treatment for all non-discrimination law is:

1. No one is to impose their sexual practices or the sexual lifestyle of others on anyone.
2. **In court all are the same race: No one is to be rewarded or condemned or discriminated against based on race.**

**That will take money out of the racist - white is racist and black is not - uncivil civil rights law.** Then black playing offended charging racism, and their damned lawyers like VULTURES - will fly away.

**Lawmakers honor God instead of Devil-Media:** Ban same sex marriage in your state. That opens Hells-Gate for parading sexual perverts to adopt, recruit, and sexually pervert the innocence of children.

**Honoring what God decreed evil is Devil-Worship. Five Devil-Media driven Judges: Decreed by what the ruled "I worship the Devil and everyone must do the same." Then the arrogant perverts fraudulently decreed Same Sex Marriage Constitutional.** Why does congress allow sexually depraved judges to rewrite our constitution? Devil-Media Possessed and defeated is why!

**Repent America or God will give you over to "depraved minds" Romans 1:28.** As - Mind-Slaves of the State: You will find yourself compelled to, applaud or smile approval as LGBT sexual perverts flaunt depravity in your face. America's Fathers and Fathers - behave like blind defeated in spirit fools. Dad and Mom has Devil-Media and democrats, educated you to - **Close your eyes** - as sexual perverts force depravity on your children in the classroom!

Fathers and Mothers wake up: Demonstrate and demand sex-ed be outlawed in public education: Send a boy or girl to school and Dr Frankenstein's child comes home. And insist that sexual pervert teachers keep their depravity to themselves in K-12 classrooms.

**God have mercy on America:** Shine light and truth in the hearts of national leaders and penetrate the darkness and deception at home there. God consciousness is the cure: Embrace God's word or Devil-Media will be your conscious and hell fire your destiny! God paid our debt of sin: Christ Jesus Crucified saves from sin and death.

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

## In These Trying Times, Keeping Trusting and Keep...Trying! (Copyright 10-26-2024) by Gary C. Miller (Pocahontas, Arkansas)



### **TRUST**

"Trust in Yahweh with all your heart...in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." (Prv: 3:5)

"Delight yourself also in Yahweh; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to Yahweh; trust also in Him; and He *WILL* bring it to pass." (Psa. 37:4,5)

### **THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT; NOT WHAT YOU DON'T WANT:**

"...as he thinketh in his heart so is he..." (Prv.23: 7)

### **ON THE VERSE OF....SUCCESS:**

"The line between failure and success is...fine...How many a man has thrown up his hands at a time when a little more effort, a little more patience would have achieved success. A little more effort, and what seemed hopeless failure may turn to glorious *SUCCESS*." (Elbert Hubbard 1856 - 1915)

"Many of life's failures are men who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." (Thomas Edison 1847 – 1941)

"Triumph often is nearest when defeat seems inescapable." (B. C. Forbes 1880 - 1954)

### **ONE STEP BEYOND:**

"Most great people have attained their greatest success just one step *BEYOND* their greatest failure."- Napoleon Hill)

(as quoted in "*Three Feet from Gold*", S. Lechter-G. Reid; Back cover)

"The lowest ebb is the turn of the tide." (Henry W. Longfellow, 1807-1882)

### **Dreams that Never Were:**

"Some men see things as they are and ask, "Why?" I dream things that never were and ask, "Why not?" (George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

### **COURAGE:**

"Courage is fear holding on a minute longer." (George S. Patton, 1885 - 1945)

### **QUITTERS NEVER WIN; WINNERS NEVER QUIT:**

"NEVER ever, ever, ever, ever, quit!" (Winston Churchill, 1874-1965)

"Most inventors try a few things and quit. *I NEVER QUIT* until I get it exactly the way I want it." (Thomas Edison, 1847-1941)

See Gary C. Miller's other articles at:

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

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## Why God allows such things to happen (an annual encore column)

(Copyright 10-27-2024) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

"The Truth is stranger than fiction," they say. "But not as popular."

EVER BEEN SO NUMB THAT YOU COULDN'T SHED A TEAR? I'm no stranger to pain either, but I've recently talked to two elderly men who claim they don't believe in God. One of them used to – until his wife died a painful death. Paradoxically, she may be more ready to listen to God now than *he* is.

**Life is real! Life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.**

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882); "A Psalm of Life"

**"A great and strong wind rent the mountains, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, [but] after the fire a *still small voice*."** – Elijah

**"Father of us all, we thank you for women and men to whom bodies are more than gold, and the soul of a little child of greater value than the buildings of a city."** – 19th century prayer

The prayer above opens like this: **"Father of us all, we thank thee for life, that we live *now*; and that our hands have been filled with the tasks of the present. Nor do we despise the *past*. Its errors warn us, its successes inform us, and its sacrifices inspire us."** I'm planning to re-post annually the following column excerpts, partly from my January 1, 2005 column following the Indonesian earthquake/tsunami, and partly from the March 2011 one, after the Japan tsunami.

[www.RenewAmerica.com/columns/Dahlgren/110313](http://www.RenewAmerica.com/columns/Dahlgren/110313) ["Why does God allow such things to happen?"]

**"If there is no God, what makes the next Kleenex pop out?"** – anon.

**"If God allows such things to happen, He must be cruel."** – anon.

**"non sequitur, n; (Latin) 'it does not follow'"** – Webster

The Japanese earthquake/tsunami ought to remind us once again that we have bigger threats than theoretical "climate changes" in the sky! I recently mentioned that we may be living in the time described by the Bible as **"the time of the Great Hatred"** (Hosea).



**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
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**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

**" . . . For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places . . . And then shall many be *offended*, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." – Matthew**

I want to repost the article I posted on New Year's day in 2005 – shortly after the Indonesian quake and tsunami of December 2004. A friend of mine said that it was one of my best columns. Here are at least a few excerpts. [www.RenewAmerica.com/columns/Dahlgren/050101](http://www.RenewAmerica.com/columns/Dahlgren/050101)

Atheists, agnostics, and doubting Thomases do not "feed" on the Word (instead they focus on talking points, catchphrases, and non sequiturs). In recent years, almost any pithy or overused phrase might end up being referred to as a non sequitur, but I'm talking about the original meaning: in logic: a conclusion or inference which does not follow from the premises.

Atheists always ask, "If there's a God, why does He allow such things to happen?" Turning the question into its unstated premise, it is essentially: "If there *were* a God, he/it wouldn't allow such things to happen" (another faulty premise leading to many faulty non sequiturs). In conclusion, two main points;

- A) If these bad things never happened, God would be a liar, and He always tells the truth. He has a long-range Plan; a thousand years with us is like one day to God. The things He allows and the things He causes are two different things; the trick is in figuring out the difference. Some things He will allow in order to save millions, although hundreds may temporarily lose their lives (the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away).
- B) At times such as this one, we need to get "back to the basics" with a child-like Faith. Someone sent me a cartoon showing a little boy in prayer, and he says to God, "Things are going pretty well here in school and everything. **Is there anything You need?" And believe it or not, the Word says that there are some things that He needs!"**

**"I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before Me for the land [as Moses did] – that I should not destroy it." – Ezekiel**

**PS I interrupt my own column for a 2013 post-script.** Here's a most timely and fitting quotation from the late Senator Frank Carlson of Kansas:

**"God and the world need men who will stand in the gap... men who are not for sale; men who are honest, sound from center to circumference, true to the heart's core; men with consciences as steady as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right if the heavens totter and the earth reels; men who can tell the truth and look the world right in the eye . . . "**

[as quoted by Zig Ziglar ("Wanted A Man – A Man Who Will Stand")] Donald Trump says he's no savior, but he is trying to stand in the gap in the hedge.

**PPS:** Just when we needed Him the most, the Libs are trying to make you believe God is dead again.

**Just when we needed Him the most,  
they went to court and told us to get lost.  
Like a stick in the eye, like a thumb in the pie;  
Like salt in the wound, or a wood tick on Rover,  
they said "The Era of Religion is over."  
Like a burr in the boot, or carp in the lake,  
they carp: "Give us cap and trade, and you can eat cake."  
- author unknown**

**"THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE WIND, BUT AFTER THE WIND, A STILL SMALL VOICE."**



See Curtis Dahlgren's other articles at:

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

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## Kenya Feast 2024

(Copyright 10-28-2024) by William P. Goff (Myrtle Beach, South Carolina)

Greetings Brethren,

Hope all of you had a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles and have returned home safely.

The Feast here in Kenya went well, with many in attendance. All of our Feast sites had food for the entire eight days. The widows, orphans and brethren thank you from the bottom of their heart for the wonderful assistance you have given them. May our Almighty Father bless all of you abundantly.

The schools in Kenya have now closed for a two Month break, and the orphans who were in boarding school have returned home. But our funds are totally depleted. If you can help, please do so.

We will be posting a full Feast report soon.

Thank you again for the wonderful assistance you have been giving the orphans and widows, it has helped them so much.

Your brother in Christ.

Bill Goff

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## Who ARE the Real Fascist? The Democratic Party:

(Copyright 10-29-2024) by Richard Frates (Easley, South Carolina)

And Devil-Media. *Oxford Dictionary University Press 1995 - fascism:* "A right wing political system or attitude" "which favors - **strong central authority - and Does - Not Allow Freedom of Speech.**" The Left Wing Not "right" owns that political agenda!

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
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**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

***That definition completely describes:*** The Democratic Party, Devil-Media, google official, Facebook owners, the New York Times, University "safe space" goonies where truth is offensive. And today it describes the DOJ, FBI, America's Military generals, university, and public K-12 education. NOT "RIGHT WING" Republican - INDIVIDUAL FREE SPEECH ADVOCATES.

***Democratic Party Political Fascist: Are Intent on "Total Central Control" and Shutting Down Free Speech." America's capital city is infested with democratic party bureaucratic fascist. Sadly in the DC swamp some republican bureaucrats for personal advantage joined democratic party fascist.***

America's constitution Political and Media Serpents violate with impunity. Absent consciousness of God, Romans 1:28 "depraved minds" ***Devil-Media is the conscious of the Democratic party!*** Evil honored as good, deception honored as truth and delusions praised as reality. Jesus Christ "repent" America's nondiscrimination law preaches "do not repent" Parade sin against God and charge all who will not march with "discrimination." Lawmakers and Judges "repent."

Democratic party snakes and Devil-Media use smokescreen talk: Call truth, honesty, and reality "misinformation" or "disinformation." Why? Avoid and saying, "truth is not true" and be exposed as liars themselves.

The republican base voter: Votes based on freedom, freedom of speech, and love your neighbor. The democratic party voting base: Vote based on party officials promised advantages over neighbors and hate republicans!

God have mercy on America: Shine light and truth on darkness and deception infesting hearts in America's Capital City. ***Control, dominate and muzzle your neighbor requires bloodshed and ends in slavery.*** WHO ARE THE "FASCIST?"

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**See Richard Frate's other articles at:**

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## Vote for America

(Copyright 10-30-2024) by Dwight Fleming (Orville, California)

The Moment of Truth is upon America. We are at a crossroads unlike anything since the Civil War. Not only are we at a major crossroad but we are also standing on the edge of a high precipice with the potential of falling to our doom if we make the wrong move.

Jesus said, "If a house is divided against itself, it cannot stand" (Mark 3:25). This was echoed by Abraham Lincoln in his 1858 address to the Republican State Convention in Springfield, Illinois. America did not heed his prophetic warning and paid an enormous price in blood. Lincoln, as you know, later became President and was able to save the Union. Had the South been successful in their succession from the Union, America would never have become a great nation as it did after the Civil War.

Pivotal to the Union's victory was Lincoln's call to prayer and fasting:

"By the President of the United States of America. A Proclamation: Whereas, the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the Supreme Authority and just Government of Almighty God, in all the affairs of men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation.

"And whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord ..."

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

Full text of this Proclamation can be found at: [Abraham Lincoln's Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day](#)

Despite the victory over the Axis Powers that God gave America in World War II, it wasn't long afterward that sinister forces began to erode our nation's trust in God contrary to any proclamations printed on our currency and in the chambers of the U.S. Congress. God is looking for those who truly are seeking Him and not just using His name for promoting a religious or political agenda.

What should we do in deciding who would best serve our nation and allow God's people to freely worship the Creator God and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations?

"First of all, I [the apostle Paul] urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people; and for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (I Timothy 2:1-2).

We have been witnessing these last four years a terrifying drama of persecution against a former U.S. president who desires to preserve our American heritage of faith in God, the preservation of the traditional family, and the maintaining of moral values based on Biblical principles for safeguarding our Western culture.

Unfortunately, President Trump has allowed politics to weaken some of his prior positions on Biblical standards of marriage and protecting the unborn. But it will take much more than one man to turn the tide of ungodliness which is coming from many sources of influence: media and entertainment, education, government propaganda, corporate marketing hype, etc.

Readers of the Bible are fully aware that the world will descend into immorality before Christ's return as it did before the flood of Noah (Matthew 24:37). Yet God is allowing us to hold back or restrain this tide by our Christian example to others and by exercising our Constitutional right to elect the government officials of our choice. Is this Biblical?

Absolutely! The apostles told the church to select among themselves those best qualified to serve the church in performing physical duties within the church (Acts 6:2-4). This was an election within the church. Moses also had the Israelites choose those whom he would set over them as judges and rulers (Deuteronomy 1:12-13). In other words, they had an election.

Dinesh D'Souza has produced a film to defend all the vicious attacks made against Donald Trump. It is now available at [vindicatingtrump.com](http://vindicatingtrump.com). The video linked below interviews Dinesh about the film with some clips from the film. This FlashPoint video also has other guests who recognize that Donald Trump, similar to Queen Esther, is being used by God "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

Now is not the time for God's people to remain silent. Let your voice be heard by casting your ballot. For if we remain silent at such a crucial time in our nation, our nation may perish and we along with it.

**Video links:**

**Vindicating Trump trailer:** <https://youtu.be/KJuF2RNkyGk?si=0b6cTAO3iOX0IPF9>

**FlashPoint Interview:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYKmgxp73tl>

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**Have a really great Sabbath!**

## What Happened at En Dor?

(Copyright 10-30-2024) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (Charlotte, North Carolina)



Human beings are a superstitious lot, and those who claim Christianity as their religion are no exception. Things that go bump in the night scare Christians and pagans equally. Some branches of Christianity seem to have a morbid fascination with the otherworldly, and this reality probably springs from the fact that the Bible does not hide the fact that [Satan](#) the Devil is alive and well and has hordes of demons ready to do his bidding. The dominant church throughout medieval times—and even some of its Protestant offshoots—delighted in dangling believers over the fires of [hell](#) to force conformity to its questionable doctrines and practices. Works like Dante’s *Inferno* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost* are still quite popular among Christians.

Certainly, Satan and demons are real—they even play significant roles in the gospels, tempting [Jesus](#) and being exorcised from unfortunate demoniacs by Him. The [book of Revelation](#) is full of references to evil and diabolical forces arrayed against [God](#) and His people, causing wars and plagues and all manner of curses. The apostle Paul warns us of our spiritual struggle “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” ([Ephesians 6:12](#)). God’s Word constantly reminds us that we have unseen enemies who want nothing more than to deceive us into giving up our crowns of life.

Superstitions also persist on the equally ethereal subject of the afterlife, a doctrine about which nominal Christians have differing ideas. Catholics, for instance, believe the evil go to hell and the truly good [go to heaven](#), while the majority head to purgatory to work off their heavy load of [sin](#). Most Protestants keep heaven and hell but drop the idea of purgatory. If

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**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

they are not nihilists, millions in the secular Western world, influenced by latent Christian teaching, accept as truth that they are bound for heaven or hell once they die.

These “Christian” doctrinal positions derive in part from the belief in the soul’s immortality—that the soul is the spiritual component of humans that does not die with the body but consciously exists elsewhere after death. These beliefs about the afterlife echo older beliefs—for example, the Greek idea of *hades*—that posited that the spirits of the dead go to a place, often the underworld, where they exist in a state of agony, limbo, or bliss, depending on the life they lived (or until reincarnated).

The church of God, however, does not accept the Doctrine of the [Immortality of the Soul](#), instead believing God’s Word, which says indisputably, “The soul who sins shall die” ([Ezekiel 18:4](#), 20). One of the very first things God taught Adam in the Garden of Eden was the consequence of sin: “You shall surely die” ([Genesis 2:17](#)), a truth the serpent hastened to contradict ([Genesis 3:4](#)).

In the New Testament, Jesus teaches in [Matthew 10:28](#): “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [*Gehenna*, a symbol of the Lake of Fire (see [Revelation 20:11-15](#))].” Paul writes, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” ([Romans 6:23](#)). Humans are mortal, and God must give eternal life; we do not have it inherently (see [Romans 2:7](#); [I Corinthians 15:53-54](#); [I Timothy 6:16](#)).

We believe, then, that man indeed has a spirit ([Job 32:8](#)), “the breath of the Almighty [that] gives him understanding,” but that it is not his soul. When combined with a human brain, the human spirit allows a person to have the powers of mind. When he dies, the body returns to the dust, but his spirit returns to God ([Ecclesiastes 12:7](#)), who safeguards it as a record of his life.

Solomon also informs us that “the dead know nothing” ([Ecclesiastes 9:5](#)), and “there is no work or device or knowledge or [wisdom](#) in the grave” (verse 10), meaning that there is no consciousness in death. The person knows nothing, learns nothing, communicates nothing, does nothing—until the [resurrection from the dead](#) when God will unite that spirit with a new body, either a spiritual body or another physical body, depending on the resurrection (see [Ezekiel 37:1-14](#); [John 5:24-29](#); [I Corinthians 15](#); [I Thessalonians 4:13-18](#); [Revelation 20](#)).

### **Can Mediums Consult the Dead?**

Against this, many bring up the [Old Testament](#) story of King Saul visiting the “witch” at En Dor ([I Samuel 28:3-25](#)), in which she seems to raise the spirit of the prophet Samuel to foretell Saul’s demise. The narrative appears to show that necromancy is not only possible but has been successfully practiced and that the disembodied souls or spirits of all who have ever lived are a medium’s summons away.

If this reading of the story is correct, it clearly contradicts the teaching of the rest of the Bible. Theologians down through the centuries have had difficulty explaining this passage because it appears so blatantly positive on the powers of mediums to consult the disembodied dead, despite the very negative answer Saul received. Foolish and desperate people who see this story in God’s Word need little further encouragement to seek a medium for answers.

So, what really happened at En Dor? Did the woman truly have otherworldly powers? Did Samuel really appear to her? Was what she saw the prophet’s ghost? Are the dead alive and aware of what is happening here on earth? Or do people insert ideas into the story from their preconceptions that are not warranted by what the text actually says?

Perhaps a more insightful question is, “Who is immediately behind all of the action in this chapter, God or Satan?”

### **Three Truths for Context**

Before looking at the details of [I Samuel 28](#), we would be well-advised to review three foundational, biblical truths to construct a necessary background for this story. If we try to evaluate what happened at En Dor without fitting it in its proper context, we will reach wrong conclusions. With these truths in mind, the true story will be apparent.

First, the Bible is not in the least ambiguous about what God thinks on the subject of [the occult](#). It plainly condemns the practice of witchcraft and similar sorceries. Notice [Leviticus 19:31](#), for instance, which condemns consulting mediums:



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**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

“Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.” A few verses later, God adds, “And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people” ([Leviticus 20:6](#)). This is as good as a prophecy of Saul’s demise. See also [Deuteronomy 18:9-14](#), which names practitioners of witchcraft, soothsayers, interpreters of omens, sorcerers, conjurers, mediums, spiritists, necromancers, and diviners as abominations to the Lord.

The New Testament is just as condemnatory as the Old. However, instead of legislating against sorcery and the like—except where Paul lists sorcery as a work of the flesh, mentioned between “idolatry” and “hatred” ([Galatians 5:20](#); see [I Samuel 15:23](#))—the writers recount experiences of Jesus and the apostles battling against it. For instance, on the island of Paphos, the apostle Paul stood against Elymas the sorcerer, really a Jewish [false prophet](#) named Bar-Jesus, saying, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?” ([Acts 13:10](#)). The episode in [Acts 16:16-18](#) reveals that a slave girl diviner, who greatly annoyed Paul by following him around for many days, was in fact possessed by a demon, “a spirit of divination.” The second-to-last chapter of Revelation states plainly that sorcerers will be cast into the Lake of Fire ([Revelation 21:8](#); see also [22:15](#)).

This is sufficient proof that God considers the practice of all forms of occultism to be a moral outrage. He is not by any means involved in them and wants His people to avoid them, forbidding them to consult them or dabble in them in any way. This most important point indicates that God had nothing to do with the events at En Dor except to allow them to move His purpose along, removing Saul to emplace David on Israel’s throne.

Second, the Bible does not typically portray practitioners of the occult and the demons behind them in a particularly macabre way. We moderns have been conditioned to imagine Satan, his demons, and their human minions as dark beings of pure ugliness, bearing attributes of horror and death. We have swallowed this deception from our historical culture and from the images presented by the media to entertain the masses and make millions of dollars.

Yet, while God’s Word warns us against Satanic deceptions, it does not provide the standard horror movie images. In fact, it often does just the opposite, cautioning us with the fact that the Devil and his demons do their best to appear as *appealing* to our senses as they can be. From what we see in Genesis 3, the serpent did not repulse Eve; to her, in her innocence, he was logical and quite convincing. In Ezekiel 28, the description of the king of Tyre, a type of Satan, lauds him as “the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” (verse 12). It describes a creature whose beauty and magnificence turned his heart proud and corrupt (verse 17).

Though he and his demons have been cast down, some of their beauty remains, for Paul tells us in [II Corinthians 11:14-15](#): “Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers [servants] also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.” Demons do not always look like snakes, dragons, gargoyles, or goblins but have the ability to appear attractive to us when it suits them. If accosted by a ghoul, we would shrink in horror and flee. Demons, though, are all about deception, and appearing as good and beautiful is far more subversive. People are far more likely to trust a physically appealing person than an old hag or troll.

Thus, while the tone of [I Samuel 28](#) is at times stressed, suspicious, and fearful—as one would expect when encountering demonic powers—there is nothing blatantly horrifying or even ugly in the narrative. This tells us that a demon, being manipulative to the extreme, will appear to a person in a way that he thinks will work best for his purposes. A demon will stoop to whatever trick he deems necessary, even appearing as a minister of righteousness.

Third, we must consider King Saul’s state of mind. Early in his reign, under the tutelage of Samuel, Saul had been the mighty champion of Israel, pushing its enemies back and making good progress in forging a nation out of the twelve tribes. Yet, just about the time David came on the scene, he began to display severe emotional problems, exacerbated by “the Spirit of the LORD depart[ing] from Saul” and “a distressing spirit from the LORD troubl[ing] him” ([I Samuel 16:14](#)). Evidently, God allowed a demon to cause Saul distress—perhaps severe melancholy and fits of sullenness and anger—and only David’s playing of his harp drove the demon away (verse 23).

Once David had slain Goliath and begun to receive acclaim from the people, Saul became murderously jealous of his young servant. Saul’s distress soon warped into real anger ([I Samuel 18:8](#)) and suspicion (verse 9), and the next time

**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

David came to play his harp for Saul, the king cast a spear at him, shouting, “I will pin David to the wall!” (verses 10-11). The younger man escaped, only to have the scene repeated sometime later (I Samuel 19:9-10). Not long thereafter, David had to flee and hide in the wilderness.

We see, then, that Saul was highly susceptible to demonic influence and emotionally unstable. The distressing spirit that God allowed to torment him had played with his emotions for years, and it is likely that as he aged, as David eluded capture, and as the Philistines grew in strength, Saul only became more depressed and fearful. By the time he was camped on the slopes of Mount Gilboa, brooding over the advance of the Philistine army into camp on the opposite hillside, he was in a state of severe misery and near-terror, knowing that no happy ending awaited him the next day.

These three factors provide the background for the story in I Samuel 28: God is always against those who practice sorcery; Satan and his demons can appear as ministers of righteousness; and Saul himself, emotionally unbalanced, was predisposed to the sway of a demon. Knowing these things makes all the difference in how we understand the events at En Dor.

### **Saul’s Terror and Trouble**

As the story opens in I Samuel 28:3, the author fills the reader in on a couple of background details vital to his tale:

1. The prophet Samuel had died, probably about five years before, when David was hiding in the wilderness from Saul. The king could not have seen the real Samuel in the flesh, as it was well after the prophet’s death.
2. Sometime before, Saul had gone to great lengths to rid Israel of mediums and spiritists. Apparently, his agents had not done a thorough job, but his decree had driven those practices underground, and their practitioners feared the punishment of violating the law—death (I Samuel 28:9).

More than anything, these details provide insight into Saul’s state of mind.

The next verse puts the story on the map. The Philistines encamp at Shunem, a town that sits at the southern foot of the hill of Moreh at the eastern end of the Jezreel Valley. At this location, not only has the Philistine army effectively cut the northern tribes of Israel off from the southern ones, but if it could defeat Saul’s forces, it would also have easy access to the Israelite highlands to the south along the Ridge Route. For this reason, Saul places his troops on the northern slopes of Mount Gilboa, directly opposite the Philistine forces. He probably hopes that the rocky hillside will limit the famed chariots of his enemies and stop the Philistine campaign in its tracks.

The two armies stare at each other across the valley. “When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly” (I Samuel 28:5). The king fears so much because the Philistine army seems invincible. No count of soldiers who took part in the battle is recorded, but it seems plausible that the Israelite forces were greatly outnumbered, bore inferior weapons (see I Samuel 13:18-22), and lacked horses and chariots to counter those of the Philistines.

Adding to Saul’s ill-concealed terror is the fact that God has refused to answer any of his supplications (I Samuel 28:6). In earlier days, he had been able to inquire of Him through Samuel, but since the prophet had been dead for five years, all communication had stopped. Saul has had no inspired dreams to guide him, and he had gone to the Tabernacle to beseech the high priest to use the Urim and Thummin, but to no avail. All other prophets in the land had proven themselves useless, giving him not one word from God.

So, Saul reasons absurdly that, if God had spoken to him only through Samuel, he would seek the prophet, dead or not. He would try to find a medium, if one were nearby, so she could put him in touch with the dead prophet and receive an answer. Saul seems not to have realized that, if God would not speak to him in the approved ways, He would surely not answer him through one of the forbidden ways! His dementia and fear are such that he can no longer reason. He would act contrary to God’s and his own law to get an answer to a question that his heart already knows the answer to.

He asks his servants to find him a nearby medium (verse 7), and they have what seems to be an immediate answer: “One is not too far away, just in En Dor!” How convenient! How do his servants know about this nearby medium-in-hiding?



**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

Did they expect to be asked such a question? Were they in the habit of consulting mediums? Could this be the reason such practitioners had not all been expelled from Israel, that they had high-level protection at court?

Whatever the case, En Dor is not as convenient as it appeared. The village, about ten miles away, lies north and a little east of Shunem on the other side of the hill of Moreh—that is, the Philistine army’s lines stretch between Saul on Mount Gilboa and the medium’s house. Going through the Philistine lines, even disguised (verse 8), is out of the question, and so, either walking or riding in the dark of night, Saul and his two guards are forced to take a circuitous route around to the east, probably doubling the distance over the hilly terrain.

**“Bring Up Samuel for Me”**

When the three men arrive in En Dor and find the medium’s house, Saul immediately asks her to conduct a séance for him. One look at the men tells the woman—who, by the way, is never called a “witch” in the account—that they are Israelite soldiers. Israelite soldiers fall under the command of Saul, whom she knows is in the area, and Saul is the one who had banned her livelihood. She perceives a trap. She crosses her arms and refuses, saying, in essence, “I’m not putting my head on the chopping block!”

Ironically, “Saul swore to her by the LORD” (verse 10), promising that no harm would come to her. Perhaps his authoritative voice convinces her that he means what he says. Perhaps she sees that, despite his disguise, he is a man of some means and, therefore, able to pay her well. Whatever it is that persuades her, she quickly agrees to do as he had asked. “Whom shall I bring up for you?” she asks, and he replies, “Bring up Samuel for me” (verse 11).

The narrative tells us nothing about the procedure the woman went through in conducting the séance for Saul. We might imagine the classical setting of a fortuneteller’s dark room, a few chairs around a table, a crystal ball sitting atop the table, and perhaps a lone candle flickering off to the side. Saul’s séance was probably nothing like this. She may have pretended to scry in a bowl of water or maybe she gazed in the fire or perhaps she burned some incense in a censer and sought images in the smoke. She may not have done any of these things, but simply closed her eyes and fell theatrically into a trance.

All we really know is that, this time, the woman really sees something—Samuel, she thinks—and cries out at the sight (verse 12). Immediately, she turns to Saul and identifies him by name, asking, “Why have you deceived me?” The details of this verse confirm that the woman is a fraud: She pretends to be a medium, but she never really contacts the dead. Yet, this time is different, and it scares her.

Her client, she guesses, must be someone special, and who but Saul has enough pull with God and the prophet Samuel to cause him to appear—to her!—so long after his death? In addition, she suddenly realizes that, like the king, this man is tall—taller than any other man that she had ever seen in Israel ([1 Samuel 9:1-2](#)). She immediately fears again for her life, thinking that Saul had tricked her into revealing herself as a medium.

That the woman is afraid of the apparition is a clue that she does not see a friendly spirit. Scripture contains a number of instances of people seeing angels, and in nearly every case, the angel speaks positive, soothing words (see, for example, [Judges 6:12; 13:3; Daniel 9:22-23; 10:11-12; Luke 1:12-13, 29-30; 2:8-10; Revelation 1:17](#); etc.). On the other hand, when Job’s friend, Eliphaz, has a demon-inspired dream and sees a spirit pass before his face, he feels extreme fear and receives no comfort ([Job 4:12-21](#)).

The text says that “the woman saw Samuel,” but upon further study, it is clear that she only *thinks* she sees Samuel. She had called for Samuel at Saul’s request, and a spirit rose before her, so she *assumes* that it is indeed Samuel. However, when Saul presses her, “What did you see?” she replies more vaguely, “I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth” ([1 Samuel 28:13](#)). Note that Saul sees nothing; he has to ask her what she sees.

The fact that the spirit rises “out of the earth” is a telling detail. The Bible consistently indicates that spirits that come from the earth are not from God, as His messengers come from Him in heaven (see [Galatians 1:8; Revelation 10:1; 14:6, 17; 15:1; 18:1; 20:1](#); etc.). Spirits associated with the earth are demons, who come from Satan, the ruler of [this world](#) (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; see [Job 1:6-7; 2:1-2; Luke 4:5-7; Revelation 12:9; 13:1-2, 11; 16:13-14](#)). The writer of the book is indicating that this spirit is not Samuel but a demon impersonating him.

**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

In Hebrew, the woman describes this being as *elohim*. She may have meant that the spirit was one of the “strong ones,” which is the meaning of its root, *el*, but that is unlikely. Here, the word is accompanied by a plural verb, so her actual words are, “I saw gods ascend out of the earth.” When *elohim* is paired with a plural verb, it is a scriptural indication of pagan gods (see [Psalm 96:5](#); [97:7](#)). Most likely, several spirits rose with the one she thought was Samuel. Would not the great prophet be accompanied by a retinue of angels?

Saul is not content with her vague answer, so he seeks more detail. She replies that she sees “an old man . . . covered with a mantle” ([I Samuel 28:14](#)), and from this meager description, Saul *perceives* that the spirit is the dead prophet and prostrates himself. Why is her scant description so convincing?

Samuel had indeed been an old man when he had died (perhaps as old as 92), a fact everyone knew. However, what sways the king is the mention of a mantle, a loose outer cloak (like an overcoat) that, it appears, had already become associated with prophets. Less than two centuries later, in the days of Elijah and Elisha, a prophet passing his mantle on to another would indicate the transferal of the office (see [I Kings 19:16](#), 19). That Elisha later duplicates one of Elijah’s miracles with the mantle verifies his status as God’s prophet ([II Kings 2:8](#), 14). Perhaps Samuel himself had begun this tradition by wearing such a mantle.

Whatever the case, Saul wants the apparition to be Samuel so that he can get some answers. These two nebulous details prove to be enough to sell him on the identification.

#### **A Cruel Answer**

The internal evidence from the narrative reveals a number of significant details to conclude that the spirit the medium saw was not Samuel but a demon impersonating him. One of the most obvious clues is that the text tells the reader outright—twice!—that the Lord would not answer Saul ([I Samuel 28:6](#), 15-16), and there is no way that God would answer him through a lying spirit during an abominable séance! One of the points of the story is to show what desperate people will do when they are cut off from God, in fear for their lives, and without hope.

Yet, this does not mean that the demon does not give Saul a truthful answer. Acting as if it were Samuel, the demon wounds the king with the cruelest words it can use, complaining about being disturbed in his rest, mocking Saul for seeking him, and rubbing it in that God had left him and become his enemy. It reminds him of one of Samuel’s prophecies—given when Saul had disobeyed God’s instruction about the punishment of Amalek and its king, Agag (see [I Samuel 15](#))—foretelling that the kingdom would be torn from him and given to another, David ([I Samuel 15:23](#), 26-28). Finally, it predicts that both he and his sons would die in the next day’s battle against the Philistines, a reasonable assumption considering how overmatched Saul’s forces were.

The demon’s words have the desired effect: “Immediately, Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night” ([I Samuel 28:20](#)). Playing on Saul’s fears and weakness, the demon succeeds in bringing the big man low, destroying any remnant of hope. Later, after finally eating and resting (verses 21-25), he leaves the medium’s house a completely broken man.

So, what happened at En Dor?

1. At the end of his rope and highly susceptible to suggestion, Saul was ready to clutch at any straw of hope for a better outcome.
2. The medium was a fraud, bilking people of their money by preying on their superstitions. The spirit’s appearance shocked her.
3. At most, God allowed a demon to impersonate Samuel and pronounce Saul’s doom to him, to give him the truth from the only source he had ever trusted to speak straight to him.

In the end, the story of Saul and the medium at En Dor is a morality play of sorts, an object lesson to teach how dangerous it is to forsake God and turn to the counsels of demons through sorcery and divination. It is a path of fear, despair, lies, curses, and death. It records the sad and tragic end of a man who had shown such great potential but who had allowed jealousy and pride to bring him and his house to ruin.

See Richard T. Ritenbaugh's other articles at:

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## A Bride Prepared (Chapter 14) (Copyright) by Warren Zehrung (Little Rock, Arkansas)

### [Chapter 14: Willing to Die for Others](#)

#### *A Bride Prepared*

#### **Willing to Die for Others**

The Bride of Christ is literally willing to die for others. Suppose that someone in the Church that we know of is found to be involved in gross immorality – what is our Godly obligation toward them? We have a Christian duty to get involved because that person is on the road to losing their salvation – and we are our brother's keeper.

How far should the Bride be willing to go in order to provide the **saving love** that the member needs? It is easy to love the brethren when everything is going fine – but when sin enters the picture, it becomes geometrically more complex to love the brethren in a Godly way. The excuses and justifications **not** to step in and become involved begin to run rampant. It is so easy to say: "It is none of my business." "I do not want to get involved." "I'll let the ministry take care of it." "That is what they are paid for." "I do not need the trouble that comes with putting myself in jeopardy.

This is typical of a situation wherein a Christian is bound by God's command to **lay down his life**. The personal involvement could range from a mere inconvenience, all the way to literally putting one's life and reputation on the line in order to save a brother.

#### **The Bride Lays Down Her Life Daily**

For those who take Christ's admonition seriously – situations that demand our participation abound in the Church. We must understand that laying down our lives is more than a passing sentiment – it has to do with **taking up our cross** as Jesus took up His cross. Showing its salvational implications, "*Jesus said, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*" (Matthew 16:24-25)

Luke adds that if we are ashamed to follow this instruction of Jesus Christ – He will be ashamed of us when He returns (Luke 9:26). In other words, we will be disqualified from being the Bride because we failed to demonstrate a genuine Godly care for one another. We must go to the spiritual rescue of a brother who has a serious sin in his life – it is not optional – but mandatory. "*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*" (Galatians 6:1) Jude speaks of our fearfully intervening to save a brother by, "**pulling them out of the fire.**" (Jude :23) We must rescue them spiritually.

Unless we learn what it means to lay our lives down for the brethren in the love of God, we will not have a part in the Kingdom of God. The Scriptures are clear; if we lack the compassion to do everything within our power to salvage a brother who is in danger – we do not possess the love of God. "*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whosoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?*" (1 John 3:16-17) The answer is, the love of God does not dwell in him!

In the past, too many of our brethren have believed that our faith consists mostly of the ceremonial observance of rituals

**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**November 30, 2024 --- Issue No. 200**

and the letter of the law, rather than the spirit of the law, which entails being the **living sacrifices** that we must be (Romans 12:1). Getting involved in perilous circumstances for the spiritual sake of a brother is hardly ever a popular thing to do.

A particularly difficult situation arises when a minister is at fault. How does a member approach a serious offense in a case like that? For instance, what is to be done when a Pastor refuses to deal with adultery in the congregation? The Bible gives us clear instructions on how the brethren are to deal with sin of this magnitude. A minister is also a brother in Christ – and must be dealt with accordingly. He is certainly not above the law in any way. Notice a New Testament example of coming to the aid of a sinner:

Paul, first of all, corrects the brethren for their arrogance (a puffed up attitude) in not dealing with a fornicator. Premarital sex and extramarital sex breed a contemptuous attitude in those who condone such illicit behavior. *“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. And ye are puffed up [haughty], and have not rather mourned, that he that has done this deed might be taken away from among you.”* (1 Corinthians 5:1-2)

It was not being judgmental to conclude that his salvation was at stake. That man was living in sin, and therefore, not entitled to a continuing fellowship with the brethren. He was yielding to his fleshly lusts, when Christians have, by definition, already *crucified the flesh with the inordinate desires and lusts* (Galatians 5:24). [*crucified the flesh*– means that they have killed that sin in their lives] Notice that Paul directs the congregation to deal with this sinner **using Godly love** to help him – not to permanently drive him away. The purpose of his being separated from the brethren is for the express goal of restoring such a one to repentance and salvation.

*“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ... deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”* (1 Corinthians 5:4-5) In other words, send him back into Satan’s world until he learns to defeat his carnality, and repent. Missing the camaraderie is a motivation to be reinstated to the fellowship of the brethren. Paul explains that this process pertains to a wide range of sins: *“Now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one have **no social interactions**.”* (1 Corinthians 5:11)

Sin cannot come into the presence of God (Isaiah 59:2) – and by extension, sin should not be present in the congregation of the brethren – the saints – because they are holy in God’s sight. So, Paul’s instruction on the matter is: *“Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”* (1 Corinthians 5:13) The wonderful thing about this example is the positive results that were achieved because it was handled correctly in accordance with God’s Word – **in showing love to a brother** (2 Corinthians 2:8). The sinful man repented – he learned that he must destroy his carnality with its passions and lusts – and he became a profitable member of the congregation once more (2 Corinthians 2:1-11).

### **A Minister is a Brother Too**

God is not a respecter of persons – so this lesson applies **equally to sinful ministers**. When a minister is sinning – there are two possible scenarios for the outcome. First, prayer, fasting, patience, wisdom and going to your brother (Matthew 18:15-17) may render a successful outcome – or, second, the minister may carry the congregation away into error. When the latter occurs, the faithful brethren will be in jeopardy of being put out of the church (3 John :10). An apt example of this happened in the case of Diotrephes. Diotrephes sought the preeminence, the highest position over all the congregation – meaning he wanted to be their minister – but he was a false minister. John gave the same instructions as Paul gave: *“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that does good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”* (3 John :11)

Satan is subtle, and so are his ministers. Often, they will “only” want you to close your eyes to wrongdoing in the church. They will say things like, “Can’t you go along with it for the sake of peace for a little while?” You might be tempted to say to yourself, “Peace is good!” The correct answer is, “No! I will not be a part of it for one second.” The sinning minister will disfellowship you in a heartbeat – but Jesus Christ says not to worry.

A sinning minister, who casts you out of a church organization when you are faithfully serving Jesus Christ, **is not jeopardizing your salvation**. Our salvation is always between us and Jesus Christ. In fact, helping a sinning minister to see the error of his way is what we must be doing to **ensure our salvation**. Jesus desires that we understand these



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things, so He said, *“These things have I spoken unto you, that you should not be offended. They shall **put you out of the congregations**: yes, the time is coming, that whosoever kills you will think that he is doing God a service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me.”* (John 16:1-3) It is a badge of honor in God’s sight to endure persecution. *“Your persecutions and tribulations that you endure are a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be **counted worthy of the Kingdom of God**, for which you also suffer.”* (2 Thessalonians 1:4-5)

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**See Warren Zehrung’s other articles at:**

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

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**“For Real” Arboreal Ants**  
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Ants that live in trees are called arboreal [are-BOR-ee-uhl], and the spelling makes me think of “are for real.” The ants we’re going to learn about have a scientific name: *Allomerus decemarticulatus*, but we will call them “For Real” ants.

Their color is light yellow, and they have lots of hair on their bodies. “For Real” ants are about two millimeters long. Get out a ruler and, on the metric side, put your fingernail in the mm space. WOW! That is VERY tiny!

A special tree makes little houses for these ants to live in. The houses are called leaf pockets and look like little balls. There are several pockets in the tree, and over a thousand ants live on one tree.

“For Real” ants have a special ability that God designed. While they eat things like nectar, they also are able to capture insects that are a whole lot larger than they are. They do it by building a trap in the form of a platform.



Allomerus trap. Photo credit: Dejean Orivel

The trap's design is amazing! "For Real" ants build a platform on a stem. This platform looks like part of the tree. It is made from tree hairs that the "For Real" ants arrange by spitting up mold that they grow on the tree to use as paste.

"For Real" ants make holes in the platform. These holes are a little wider than the "For Real" ants. They hide in the holes and when a big insect like a grasshopper gets on the platform, "For Real" ants come out of the holes and use their mandibles to bite the big insect. As they do this, "For Real" ants release a chemical odor that lets other "For Real" ants know they need help.

Besides helping the ants get food, the traps protect the tree from predators that would harm the tree.

Just think about what you would have to do to build a trap to catch something that can be 100 times heavier than you. You would have to think and plan. "For Real" ants cannot think and plan. Neither can evolution.

God created "For Real" ants and designed them to do complex things for us to think about. As the Bible says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." (Proverbs 6:6-8)

Consider the For Real ants and not only will you be wise, you will be blessed.

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**New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)**  
**As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.**

## Holy Days 2025

Passover – April 13, 2025 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)  
Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 13-19, 2025

Pentecost – June 2, 2025  
Trumpets – September 23, 2025  
Atonement – October 2, 2025  
Tabernacles –October 7, 2025, to October 13, 2025  
Last Great Day – October 14, 2025

## Notes