

Bible News Prophecy

July - September 2025

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FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF: BOB THIEL



Feast of Trumpets: Events Leading to Christ's Return

The Fall Holy Day season commences with the Feast of Trumpets which begins at sunset September 22nd and runs through sunset September 23rd in 2025. Nine days later is the Day of Atonement and five days later begins the Feast of Tabernacles, immediately followed by the Last Great Day which ends at sunset on the 14th of October 2025.



Blowing of a Shofar (Wikipedia)

Most of the Greco-Roman churches do not keep the biblical holy days that generally occur in the Fall. Yet, these Holy Days portray many pivotal events in God's plan.

The Feast of Trumpets not only pictures the coming of Christ to resurrect the firstfruits from the dead, it also pictures the terrible time of devastation just ahead and the intervention of Jesus Christ to save the living from total annihilation and to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

Let's understand how this festival fits into God's great master plan.

Consider that there is a major time gap between the Day of Pentecost and the Feast of Trumpets. Since the New Testament church began on Pentecost and basically ends when Jesus returns at the last trumpet (1 Corinthians 15:51-57), in a sense the period of time between Pentecost and the Feast of Trumpets can be considered as representing the church age.

The fourth Holy Day, the Feast of Trumpets, is observed in "the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month" (Leviticus 23:23-25).

The number seven in God's plan signifies completion and perfection. The seventh month of God's calendar (occurs in September and/or October) contains the final four festivals, picturing the completion of God's great master plan for us. The festival that falls on the first day of this month marks the beginning of the final events in God's plan.

It is another annual Sabbath of rest from one's regular work, and it was to be a memorial of blowing of trumpets (Leviticus 23:24-25). It is also a time to learn God's ways (Nehemiah 8:2-3; cf. Ezra 3:1-7). Much of what happened to the children of Israel was written for our "examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

It is from the blowing of trumpets that the Feast of Trumpets draws its name.

There is a great deal of symbolic meaning tied in with the blowing of these trumpets, especially with regard to the end times in which we're living. It should be noted that the modern Jewish name for this date, Rosh Hashanah, is not biblical nor even original for the Jews. It was something that they adopted centuries after God gave it to them and after the Old Testament was written (Kramer, Amy J. Rosh Hashana Origins. Copyright © 1998-1999 Everything Jewish, Inc.).

The Bible teaches that Trumpets were blown to announce God's feasts, as well as to call people to assemble (Numbers 10:1-3, 10).

Seven trumpets will be blown according to the Book of Revelation.

Notice events that come before Jesus returns related to four of those trumpets:

6 So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

7 The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

10 Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

12 Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

13 And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" (Revelation 8:6-13)

Many major signs will occur following each of the trumpets.

Here is what the Book of Revelation reports will happen after the 5th and 6th trumpets are blown:

1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

7 The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8 They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. 9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. 10 They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. 11 And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

13 Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. 16 Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. 18 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed — by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. (Revelation 9:1-21)

All of the events related to those six trumpet blasts will occur before Jesus returns. He cannot return before those leading events.

Interestingly, Jewish scholars have tied the Feast of Trumpets in with the 'Book of Life' (Peltz M, Rabbi. What is in a Rosh Hashanah greeting? Haaretz, September 17, 2012). Why is that of interest?

Well, the Bible teaches that those who are listed in the 'Book of Life' (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5) will be resurrected (Hebrews 12:22-23).

When?

At the seventh and last trumpet:

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

The Book of Revelation clearly teaches that seven trumpets will be blown (8:2), punishment comes upon those who are not protected by God (9:4), and then God's kingdom and judgment will come (11:15-18). Finally, it teaches that those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will experience the second death (Revelation 20:14-15).

Consider that the Bible shows that during Israel's history, which was heavily punctuated with conflicts and rebellion, trumpets continued to be used as warning devices, to call to arms or as preludes to important messages — always to mark an event of tremendous import to the whole nation.

God also used the prophets, among them Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea and Joel, to warn Israel about punishments He would bring upon them for their constant rebellion against His laws. These prophets were to use their voices like trumpets to blare their warnings to God's people.

¹ Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins. (Isaiah 58:1)

We in the *Continuing* Church of God are working to do that today — despite the efforts of Big Tech and some governments to block us. We boldly tell of the sins of society and how world events are aligning with properly understood prophecy — which we also strive to explain.

Yet there will also be literal trumpet blasts coming in the future as the Book of Revelation teaches (Revelation 8:1-13, 9:1-18). But most will not heed those warnings.

Many are blown in the Book of Revelation, and a lot were to be blown on the Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:24) — hopefully many can see the connection.

But the most important trumpet, in a sense, could be the last, the seventh one. Here is what Revelation teaches about that:

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken

Your great power and reigned. ¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth.” ¹⁹ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11:15-19)

The Feast of Trumpets pictures the future blowing of trumpets and the reality that Jesus will come and establish the Kingdom of God on the earth. The good news of coming Kingdom of God is a big part of what Jesus wants His servants to proclaim now (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20), and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).

The Feast of Trumpets points to Christ's victory over this world as well as His return.

Greco-Roman historians, such as Jerome and Epiphanius (*Catholica Omnia Tabulinum De Ecclesiae Patribus Doctoribusque Materia Migne JP Argumentum Patrologia Latina Volumen MPL025 Ab Columna ad Culumnam 1415 – 1542A*, pp. 922, 930 and Epiphanius (*Ephiphanius. The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book II (sects 1-46) Section 1, Chapter 19, 7-9*. Frank Williams, editor. Publisher BRILL, 1987, p. 117-119), recorded that the 'Nazarene Christians' continued to keep the Fall Holy Days into the fourth and fifth centuries. They were also kept by the faithful Christians in Jerusalem who claimed the original Christian building in Jerusalem into the fourth century until they were stopped by Imperial authorities (Pixner B. Church of the Apostles Found on Mt. Zion. *Biblical Archaeology Review*, May/June 1990: 16-35,60).

The anti-Semite John Chrysostom specifically attempted to stop people from keeping the Feast of Trumpets in the late fourth century (John Chrysostom. *Homily I Against the Jews I:5;VI:5;VII:2*). However, those trying to be faithful continued to do so throughout history. The *Continuing Church of God* does so now.

The [Statement of Beliefs](#) for the *Continuing Church of God* states:

The Feast of Trumpets helps picture the blowing of the seven trumpets in the Book of Revelation announcing events taking place during the 'Day of the Lord' (Revelation 8,9,11:15-18; 15:1-8; 16:1-21; 19:1-21). The last trumpet signals the resurrection of the saints and the second coming of Jesus, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Every seven years, a year of land-rest and debt release begins with this Holy Day (Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 15:7-11).

Thus, because of its New Testament fulfillments, the Feast of Trumpets is something that should be highly relevant for Christians.

Remember, Jesus is coming on the seventh trump. Keep the biblical holy day, as well as the others this Fall.

What New Members Should Know About the Feast of Tabernacles



Feast of Tabernacles 2024 Galveston, Texas

By Dr. Herman Hoeh

The following edited article was written by the late Dr. Herman Hoeh and published by the old Radio Church of God in the Good News magazine for September of 1961 (and hence is in the public domain and can be used in this magazine):

Was the Feast of Tabernacles a part of the "law of Moses"? It is commanded in the New Testament? Did the apostle Paul observe it after everything was "nailed to the cross?"

You are now a part of the true NEW TESTAMENT Church of God, if you have been baptized and have received the Spirit of God. You have become a follower of Christ — and of the apostles in so far as they followed Christ.

What was Christ's example? Did He observe the Feast of Tabernacles? Was He merely following Old Testament practice, or did He come to set the New Testament example?

New Testament Teaching

You have probably heard that Jesus merely followed the customs of Moses — that He set only an Old Testament example. That it was left to Paul to set up New Testament theology and practice.

Many today have accepted without question the idea that Paul, not Jesus, really founded New Testament teaching. Yet nothing could be farther from the truth!

Consider! MOSES set the true Old Testament example. He was the one called of God to establish the practice of the Old Testament Church. He gave the "law of Moses" to the Old Testament Church. The Jews had MOSES' example for their church.

Jesus did not come in Moses' name, merely repeating the example of Moses. Jesus brought a New Covenant message. The gospel came by Jesus Christ! Christ brought the New Testament promise of the Holy Spirit. HE set the example for the New Testament Church. Christ left us "an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Several times over Jesus had to declare: "You have heard it said by them of old time" — that is the Old Testament message — "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU..." — that is the New Testament message! Read it for yourself in Matthew 5:21 and 22; in 27 and 28 and in many other places.

The apostle John was inspired to write: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments... whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: HEREBY know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him OUGHT HIMSELF ALSO TO WALK, EVEN AS HE (CHRIST) WALKED" (1 John 2:4-6).

Notice! We are to walk as CHRIST walked. It doesn't say "as MOSES walked." Christ not only died to pay for our sins — He also LIVED so that we would know how to live

How did Christ live? What was His example? What did He teach? Did He set us the example of keeping the Feast of Tabernacles? Did Paul follow Jesus' example and keep the Feast of Tabernacles LONG AFTER everything was "nailed to the cross"?

Notice Paul's command to follow HIS example as HE followed Christ's: "BE ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

That is very plain. Are we willing to follow Paul as he followed Christ? How did he follow Christ?

Nailed to the Cross?

You have probably heard it said that the Feast of Tabernacles — as also the other annual festivals — were a part of the ceremonial law of Moses added "till the seed should come." That the Holy Days of God were "nailed to the cross."

What most of you probably were not told is that after everything was nailed to the cross, WE STILL FIND THE APOSTLES AND THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OBSERVING THESE DAYS!

In 1 Corinthians 5:8 Paul commands Gentiles to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. "Let us therefore keep the feast," he exhorts the Gentile converts at Corinth. By becoming

neglectful of the Feast, the Corinthians were allowing the leaven of sin to creep into their midst.

Notice what this means. Either Paul was not the apostle of Jesus Christ and was trying to re-establish what was already abolished, or else the laws regulating the festivals were not abolished at the cross! Isn't that plain? Paul would have been without any authority whatsoever to command these Gentile converts to "keep the feast" unless it was STILL GOD'S LAW to keep the Holy Days.

Now notice the examples of Paul himself planning to KEEP an annual festival. The first is found in Acts 20:16. Paul is rushing by Ephesus in order to be at Jerusalem. Why does Paul want to be at Jerusalem? — in order to preach to the Jews? Not at all! Notice how this verse reads: "For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible, for him TO KEEP the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem."

Paul was determined to KEEP the day of Pentecost with the Headquarters Church before launching on a campaign into Spain.

Many translations obscure the real meaning of this verse. The original, inspired Greek word here translated "to keep" is "genesthai," which is an infinitive form of "ginomai." The King James and other versions incorrectly render it "to be." The Greek word for "to be" is "einai," but Luke was inspired to use "genesthai" here in Acts 20:16 which can mean among other things "to keep, to celebrate, or to solemnize a festival" according to the "Analytical Greek Lexicon."

This same root word is used in Matthew 26:2, which ought to be translated: "Ye know that after two days the Passover IS CELEBRATED..."

So here we have two important examples of Paul — (1) commanding Gentiles to observe the Days of Unleavened Bread and (2) planning to KEEP the day of Pentecost with the Headquarters Church at Jerusalem.

But what New Testament examples are there for keeping the Feast of Tabernacles?

Christ's Example in the New Testament

The last autumn before He died, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Tabernacles!

The entire seventh chapter of the Gospel according to John is devoted to what Jesus said and did at that Festival. Because of the Jews, Jesus did not go to Jerusalem with his family, but separated from them (verses 8 and 10). He did not appear publicly to teach in the temple until the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles (verse 14). John records parts of the

special sermon of Christ delivered on the last great day of the Feast, beginning with verse 37.

Did Paul follow Jesus' example?

Paul Kept Feast of Tabernacles

Paul obeyed Jesus Christ. Paul kept the Holy Days Jesus commanded. That included the Feast of Tabernacles. Where, in Scripture, do we find Paul keeping this festival? Turn to the book of Acts for the answer! Notice the sequence of events. God used Paul to reach the Gentiles with the Gospel. In 50 A.D., Paul crossed over from Asia into Europe and began to preach the gospel at Philippi "on the day of weeks" — Pentecost — according to the inspired original Greek (Acts 16:13). Pentecost is also called the "feast of weeks" in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 16:10).

Most versions render the Greek expression "on the Sabbath day"; but the original inspired Greek is in the plural — and means "the day of weeks." This was exactly 19 years to the day since the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost in 31 A.D. (Acts 2).

After a few weeks at Philippi, Thessalonica (Acts 17:1), Berea (Acts 17:10) and at Athens (verse 16), Paul came to Corinth in the late summer of A.D. 50. After spending several Sabbaths teaching in the synagogue (Acts 18:4), Paul continued to hold meetings in the house of Titius Justus (verse 7) for "a year and six months" (verse 11). This brings us to the spring of 52 A.D.

After a riot stirred up against the Apostle was quelled, we read the following about Paul: "And Paul after this tarried there A GOOD WHILE, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria" (Acts 18:18). It was now well into the summer of 52 A.D. The Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost — the two festivals near the beginning and end of spring — were now past.

To continue with Paul's journey. On his way from Corinth to the port of Syria, "he came to Ephesus" and "entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell, saying, I MUST BY ALL MEANS KEEP THIS FEAST THAT COMETH IN JERUSALEM: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus" (Acts 18:19-21).

Paul planning to keep the feast with the Headquarters Church at Jerusalem? Indeed! That is what the Scripture says!

Which Feast? Obviously the Feast of Tabernacles!

The spring festivals were already past. The two late summer or early autumn Holy Days, the festivals of Trumpets and Atonement, were held at any of the local congregations. Yet here was a major festival being held at Jerusalem IN THE AUTUMN. The only major festival that occurs in the autumn is the Feast of Tabernacles! Paul told the Ephesians that he "MUST BY ALL MEANS KEEP THIS FEAST" with the Headquarters Church in Jerusalem. Paul had just completed his first journey into Europe with the gospel. He felt he had to report the progress of the work to the Headquarters Church and the brethren in Palestine (verse 22). What better time than to do so while keeping the Feast of Tabernacles!

Here is the example of Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. After years in the New Testament ministry he is still KEEPING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

Verse Left Out in Corrupted Manuscripts

Acts 18:21 appears correctly in the King James Version of the Bible. But numerous modern translations leave out that portion of the verse which tells of Paul's intention to keep the Feast.

This verse, in its entirety, BELONGS IN THE BIBLE. It has always been 100% a part of the Greek "Received Text" — which is the inspired text handed down to the Greek speaking world by the original true Church of God. The overwhelming majority of Greek Manuscripts (95%) have this verse in it. The only manuscripts which leave it out are those 5% copied in Egypt and in the Latin-speaking portions of the Roman Empire.

There would have been no reason to add this verse to the Bible if it were not there originally. BUT THERE IS EVERY REASON WHY MEN WOULD LIKE TO REMOVE IT FROM THE INSPIRED TEXT! The Catholic version of the Bible leaves it out as do almost all modern Protestant translations of the Bible. These are just the churches who do NOT want to keep this feast!

Here, brethren, is proof from the New Testament — from Christ's teaching and example, and the apostle Paul's example — that the New Testament Church is commanded to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. How plain the Scripture is when we are willing to believe and practice what it reveals!

Began Before the Old Covenant

Many people assume that the command to keep the Feast of Tabernacles was a part of the Old Covenant — and since the Old Covenant is no longer in force it is no longer necessary to keep the Feast. This idea is false. Here is why!

The Old Covenant was a marriage agreement (Jeremiah 31:32). If a marriage agreement is broken, THAT DOES NOT ABOLISH THE LAWS THAT REGULATE MARRIAGES.

The laws incorporated in the Old Covenant are like the laws which regulate a marriage covenant. They exist before a marriage agreement and regulate it. Israel's breaking of the Old Covenant did not abolish the laws to which Israel agreed.

This brings us to another fact! THE OLD COVENANT DID NOT INSTITUTE THE HOLY DAYS!

The statutes which regulate the annual festivals existed PRIOR to the Old Covenant. What the Old Covenant did not institute it cannot abolish. The Old Covenant was merely a marriage agreement between the Eternal (the Husband) and Israel (the wife) in which the wife agreed TO OBEY the Husband's laws WHICH WERE ALREADY IN FORCE. In return for obedience, Israel was physically blessed and provided for above all other nations.

The statutes which instituted the Holy Days were required to be kept BEFORE the Old Covenant was made!

Turn to Exodus 15:26: "If you will diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear unto His commandments, AND KEEP ALL HIS STATUTES, I will put none of these diseases upon you that afflict the Egyptians."

Here is the Lord Jesus Christ commanding His people to keep ALL His statutes BEFORE the Old Covenant. These statutes could not have been instituted by the Old Covenant because the Old Covenant was not completed until Exodus 24.

These statutes, which God was revealing to Moses and the people before Sinai, were LATER incorporated into the Old Covenant — just as was the weekly Sabbath (Exodus 20). But the Old Covenant did not begin then. The Old Covenant merely required obedience to what already was in full force and effect.

Among all the statutes which were IN FORCE BEFORE SINAI and later incorporated into the Old Covenant ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO OBSERVE THE ANNUAL FESTIVALS — including the Feast of Tabernacles (Exodus 23:14-17). If the annual festivals had not already been God's laws they could not have been included in the Old Covenant.

Began with the Church

The weekly Sabbath began with man. It was made at creation (Genesis 2). But the annual festivals God gave first to the Church when the Church began. The twelve tribes of Israel were first formed into a Church just before the Exodus from Egypt. The FIRST function of that Congregation or Assembly was TO KEEP THE ANNUAL HOLY DAYS. The first

time the word Congregation is used for the tribes of Israel is in Exodus 12:3, where the annual festivals are first introduced!

Just as the Sabbath keeps MAN in a right relationship with his Creator, so the annual Holy Days keep THE CHURCH in a right knowledge of the Plan of God. Any group which refuses to keep holy these days God made holy is not in a right relationship with God. Such a group is spiritually like the Egyptians who scoffed at God's festivals!

When the Congregation of Israel — the Church in Old Testament times — began to sin (began to be in a wrong relationship with God) and to break these laws, God TEMPORARILY ADDED — AFTER the making of the Old Covenant — various physical rituals and sacrifices which were imposed ON EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR until the coming of Jesus Christ to shed His own blood for our sins (Hebrews 9:10 and Galatians 3:19). These temporary, physical laws did not exist prior to the Old Covenant (Jeremiah 7:22-23). They were given only to the Old Testament Church for a limited duration. JESUS NEVER PRACTICED THESE RITUALISTIC LAWS. You cannot find one place in the New Testament where He sets us any example to keep them. But He did keep the Feast of Tabernacles as an example for us — and He commanded those who love Him to keep His words, which included the observance of the annual festivals.

Commanded FOREVER

Nowhere in the Bible was the "law of Moses" commanded forever. But the annual festivals are commanded to be kept by the people forever!

It is time we opened our Bibles to see what the Scriptures actually say. Notice the many texts which declare the festivals are to be "observed by a statute FOREVER."

"And this day" — the Passover — "shall be unto you for a MEMORIAL; and ye shall keep it a feast [the word "festival" is a better translation] to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by a statute ["ordinance" is not the correct translation] FOR EVER" (Exodus 12:14).

"And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore [as a MEMORIAL] shall ye observe this day in your generations by a statute ["ordinance" is not correct] FOR EVER" (Exodus 12:17). In this chapter, verse 24, the Passover is again referred to: "And ye shall observe this for a statute to thee and to thy sons FOR EVER"!

In Exodus 13:10 the Feast of Unleavened Bread is commanded to be observed in his season from year to year." As long as a new year occurs this festival is to be observed!

Notice what the Bible states about the Day of Atonement: "And this shall be a statute FOR EVER unto YOU: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict

your souls, and do no work" (Leviticus 16:29). And verse 31: "It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute FOR EVER."

Concerning the Feast of Pentecost: "And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you, ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute FOR EVER in all your dwellings throughout your generations" (Leviticus 23:21). Israel's generations are still continuing. Most of YOU are of Israel!

Again, "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a MEMORIAL of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation [verse 24]. ALSO on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement [verse 27]. Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute FOR EVER throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (Leviticus 23:31).

The Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned in verse 41 of this same chapter: "And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute FOR EVER in your generations."

Notice! Here are God's annual festivals COMMANDED FOREVER — throughout the generations of Israel. Israel's generations are still continuing. THE MANNER OF OBSERVING THE DAYS IS DIFFERENT NOW THAN UNDER THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD, BUT THE DAYS ARE STILL TO BE OBSERVED — STILL TO BE KEPT HOLY — NO SERVILE WORK TO BE DONE IN THEM!

These verses mean what they say!

In every one of these scriptures GOD MEANS EXACTLY WHAT HE INSPIRED THE WRITERS OF THE BIBLE TO RECORD FOR US! When He declares a law to be everlasting, HE MEANS IT!

NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE WERE PHYSICAL SACRIFICES COMMANDED TO BE PERFORMED BY THE PEOPLE FOREVER! People have merely taken for granted that the Bible says so! But it is not true!

No stronger proof than these nine verses can be given that the Church of God must keep holy these days God made holy! Yet in not one of these places is any mention made of physical sacrifices being commanded forever.

As final proof we have the New Testament example of Christ and of Paul and the inspired New Testament Church. They kept holy these days God made holy. The true New Testament Church has continued to keep holy these days. Together with the Sabbath they constitute the very SIGN by which we are known as the PEOPLE of God!

A COLLECTIVE Duty

It is a COLLECTIVE duty of the New Testament Church of God to observe the Feast of Tabernacles. It is not an individual matter. It is MOST vital that all members understand this!

YOU, as an individual member, are not responsible for determining where or when the WHOLE Church shall assemble. If you were, then God would be using you as His direct instrument for determining WHERE all other members should assemble. God would be ruling the Church through you!

God has not left it for the individual member to decide WHEN the Church shall assemble. God Himself has set aside His Holy Sabbath, sanctified and hallowed the seventh day of every week.

Is it permissible for YOU, as an individual member, to decide that the WHOLE CHURCH shall meet on Tuesdays or Sundays? Of course NOT. Put that way it seems ridiculous. To keep any different day and profane GOD'S day which HE appointed is a basic SIN!

God sets the TIME for the annual festivals. In like manner GOD sets the PLACE!

Only GOD can sanctify — set apart — a place to which all His people are to assemble.

GOD determines where we are to assemble! But how can the Church know which is the place God has chosen for the Feast of Tabernacles?

HOW and TO WHOM does He reveal it?

Since observing the Feast is a collective matter, WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO BIND GOD'S CHOICE OF A PLACE ON THE WHOLE CHURCH? Is the individual member given the power to bind all other members — the power to rule the Church — in this matter?

What is the New Testament way by which GOD RULES His Church, by which GOD KEEPS UNITY among the members so that all may collectively assemble in harmony at the locations He has chosen for the Feast of Tabernacles?

Christ the LIVING RULER of His Church

God RULES His Church — the Church of God — through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Head of the Church, not some man! Jesus rules from Heaven!

But how does Jesus reveal His decisions to the Church on earth?

Where, in the Bible, do we find HOW Jesus governs His Church? What is the instrumentality by which Jesus, who is in Heaven, carries out His will on earth? Notice the Bible answer:

God "hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..." (1 Corinthians 12:28) — or, as in Ephesians 4:11-14, some are "apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry... till we all come in the unity of the faith" — that is, unity in doctrine or belief — "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine has chosen as His ministers and His instruments for administering HIS AUTHORITY, for the very purpose of preventing false doctrine creeping in to divide and to destroy the flock — for the very purpose of keeping UNITY in the Church.

It is to the ministry of God's Church that Christ said: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven..." (Matthew 18:18). It is not through individual members, but through His ministry, that GOD reveals where He wants us to assemble. It is through the ministry that He BINDS HIS CHOICE of the place on the whole Church.

Thus, God reveals through His ministers the place He sets apart to which HIS WHOLE CHURCH IS TO ASSEMBLE! When individual members attempt to determine and to decide for themselves which place God has chosen, they make themselves competitors and enemies of God's Church and of God's government in it. They stir up dissension, cause division, and thus put themselves out of the Church.

The individual must first determine for himself — must satisfy himself — as to which is the one true Church of God, and then he must be subject to the government of God in His Church. This he must voluntarily submit to. He ought, however, to know HOW God's Church is led to recognize the place God has chosen for the Feast of Tabernacles.

Not Jerusalem Today

Notice the Book of Zechariah. The one feast in the Millennium which all will be required to attend in one place at first is the Feast of Tabernacles! "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem" — and all nations will come against Jerusalem — "shall even go up from year to year... to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

In the Millennium even the Gentiles will be required to assemble at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

But JERUSALEM is NOT NOW the place which God has chosen. Jesus said: "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain (where the false Samaritan worship was

centered), nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father"(John 4:21). God rejected Jerusalem after 69 A.D. He withdrew His name from it. It is at the second coming of Jesus Christ that "the Lord... shall choose Jerusalem AGAIN" (Zechariah 2:12).

Jesus Leads Our Church Today ...

For years there was ONE place in the United States and Canada!

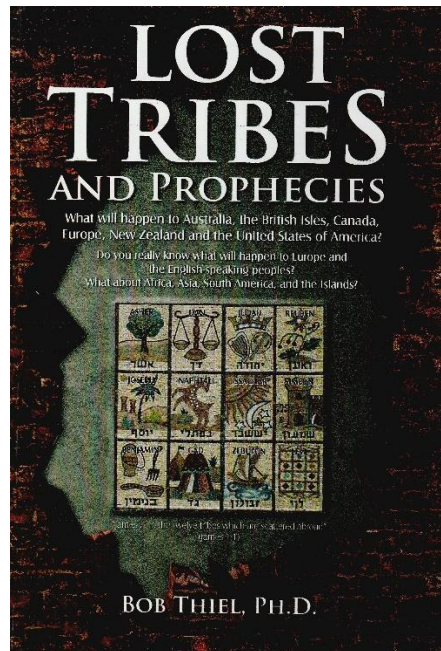
Jesus leads His Church — this Church. We are the Church of God. Since Jesus never changes, we find Him leading the Church today in exactly the same manner as He did in apostolic times. He is leading His ministers today to know where the festivals of God ought to be held, just as He led the apostles and ministers in old times to know where God's people should meet.

God provided in His law for us to save the SECOND TITHE so that we all could journey to a central place for the Feast of Tabernacles. ...

JESUS CHRIST MADE THE CHOICE. He revealed it. We now must do what He commands through His servants — His Ministry.

Brethren, let's all be at the Feast of Tabernacles this autumn wherever held.

Gentile Europeans: Background and Prophecies – Part 2



By Bob Thiel

This is the second part of a two-part series covering information and prophecies related to Gentile Europeans. This part has some information that came out after the book shown above came out.

Germanic Peoples

Some may wonder where the Germanic peoples in Europe came from. Let's first look at information related to the sons of Noah's son Shem:

²¹ And children were born also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder. ²² The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. (Genesis 10:21-22)

So, one of Shem's sons was named Asshur.

The first century Jewish historian Josephus tied this son Asshur/Ashur in with Assyria:

Shem, the third son of Noah, had five sons, who inhabited the land that began at the Euphrates, and reached to the Indian Ocean. Elam left behind him the Elamites, the ancestors of the Persians. Ashur lived in Ninevah; and named his descendants Assyrians, who became the most fortunate nation, beyond others. (Josephus. Josephus Complete Works. Antiquities of the Jews, Book I, Chapter VI, Verse 4. Translated by William Whiston in 1867. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids (MI), 1960, p. 31)

Similarly, we see the following from the late fourth/early fifth century Roman Catholic doctor and saint Augustine:

Assur, father of the Assyrian ... Of these nations the names have partly survived, so that at this day we can see from whom they have sprung, as the Assyrians from Assur ... (Augustine. *The City of God* (Book XVI). Translated by Marcus Dods. From *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*, Vol. 2. Edited by Philip Schaff. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887)

The term Assyria has long been considered to be a derivative term for descendant of Assur/Ashur/Asshur, grandson of Noah. Some Assyrian kings were named a version of Ashur (Rines GE. *The Encyclopedia Americana: a library of universal knowledge*, Volume 2. Encyclopedia Americana Corp., 1918 Original from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Digitized Nov 9, 2007, pp. 428-439). The ancient Assyrian homeland was in the Near East (Porter B. *Proceedings, American Philosophical Society* (vol. 140, No. 2, 1996). (Politics and in Ancient Assyria: 164-174).

While some called Assyrians are now in the Middle East, there is a 21st century report that concluded that certain modern ancestors of the Germans came from the Near East:

A study of remains from Central Europe suggests the foundations of the modern gene pool were laid down between 4,000 and 2,000 BC - in Neolithic times ... a wave of migration by Near Eastern farmers ...

"We have established that the genetic foundations for modern Europe were only established in the Mid-Neolithic, after this major genetic transition around 4000 years ago," said co-author Dr Wolfgang Haak. (Ricon P. *Making of Europe unlocked by DNA*. BBC, April 23, 2013)

People coming from the Near East is consistent with Assyrian migrations from that area — some would have been later than 2000 B.C. And there are also various facts and legends about the Assyrians.

Probably one of the more famous early Assyrian kings was Sargon. Interestingly, a later eighth century B.C. Assyrian king named Sargon II ascribed his success to a god named Asshur:

Sargon and his successors continued the worship of Merodach. Sargon constantly ascribed his power to the united favor of Asshur and Merodach, and Esar-haddon sculptured the emblems of these two gods over the images of foreign gods. (Clare IS. *Ancient oriental nations*, Volume 1 of *The Unrivalled History of the World: Containing a Full and Complete Record of the Human Race from the Earliest Historical Period to the Present Time, Embracing a General Survey of the Progress of Mankind in National and Social Life, Civil Government, Religion, Literature, Science and Art*. Unrivalled Publishing Co., 1889, p. 225)

Various records of history show that the Assyrians claimed ties to Asshur. He is apparently originated from the one in Genesis 10. Sargon II's son was Sennacherib, who invaded and took the fortified cities of Judah as discussed in Isaiah 36:1-2:

¹ Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. ² Then the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field. (Isaiah 36:1-2)

Smith's Bible Dictionary states:

Assyria, Asshur ... The civilization of the Assyrians was derived originally from the Babylonians. They were a Shemetic race, originally resident in Babylonia (which at that time was Cushite) and thus acquainted with Babylonian inventions and discoveries ... But they were still in the most important points barbarians. Their government was rude and artificial, their religion coarse and sensual, and their conduct in war cruel. (Assyria. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Hendrickson Publishers, pp. 61-62)

Also notice:

Ishtar was a favorite goddess of the Assyrian kings, who styled her as "their lady," and sometimes coupled her with Asshur, "the Great Lord," in their invocations. Ishtar had a very old temple at Asshur, the primitive Assyrian capital, and this temple, Tiglath-Pileser I, repaired and beautified. (Clare, p. 225)

Ishtar, also known as Easter/Oster/Ostern (the Germanic goddess of Springtime), long influenced the Assyrians and as well the modern Germans. Ishtar was the goddess of fertility and war. Ishtar also has ties to the ancient Babylonian mystery religion and Nimrod. She was also called Beltis. Beltis was the wife of Bel-Nimrod. She was called "the Queen of Fertility" and also known as "the Great Mother" (similar to how some revere Mary, the mother of Jesus today) and essentially was also Ishtar in the Assyrian triad. (Clare, pp. 222-223)

The Roman Catholic saint Jerome (late fourth/early fifth century) seems to have indicated that the descendants of the biblical Asshur (Genesis 10:22) which seems to be Assyria (Radmacher Concordance in. Nelson Study Bible, p. 11), ended up in parts of Europe, like Germany:

He that lets is taken out of the way, and yet we do not realize that Antichrist is near. Yes, Antichrist is near ... The whole country between the Alps and the Pyrenees, between the Rhine and the Ocean, has been laid waste by hordes ... *For Assur also is joined with them.* (Jerome. Letter CXXIII to Ageruchia, Chapter 16. Translated by W.H. Fremantle, G. Lewis and W.G. Martley. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 6. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893)

The late scholar and evangelist Dr. Herman Hoeh wrote the following:

Ninus (his Bible name was Nimrod), according to Genesis 10, led the ancient Assyrians from Babylon and supervised their building of Nineveh, the capital of ancient Assyria ... From there the Assyrians began their conquest of the ancient world. They, too, called themselves "the Master Race." But why do the German records speak of the son of an

ASSYRIAN King as the builder of their first city? What connection have the German tribes WITH THE ASSYRIANS of history?

Jerome, who lived at the time when the Indo-Germanic tribes were invading Europe, gives the answer: "For 'Assur (the Assyrian) also is joined with them'"! ... Jerome said ... he ... was an EYEWITNESS to their migrations from Mesopotamia and the shores of the Black and Caspian seas!

Only 300 years before Jerome, the Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder declared the "Assyriani" – the Assyrians – were dwelling north of the Black Sea ("Natural History", IV, § 12, page 183). But the Assyrians did not remain there! They are not there today! Of course not – they migrated into Central Europe – where the Germans live today! (Hoeh H. Germany in Prophecy! - Part 1. Plain Truth, December 1962)

Various other scholars have noted similarities between ancient Assyria and modern Germany:

Assyria is interesting on account of the close parallel between her methods and morals and those of modern Germany. In politics, Germany has been an imitator of Assyria. (Vestal SC. The maintenance of peace, or, The foundations of domestic and international peace as deduced from a study of the history of nations. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1920, p. 118)

Similarities between Assyria and Germany have been noted by several (e.g. Oswalt JN, Oswalt J. The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39 New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1986, p. 226).

Some others, like George Spiteri, also called modern Assyria Germany (Spiteri G. Return of the Living Jesus Christ. Xulon Press, 2007, p. xxvii), but without going into much detail as to why.

A 21st century work that goes into a lot of detail about the similarities on this was published by Craig White and is titled *The Great German Nation: Origins and Destiny*. His book looks at ancient records and practices of the Assyrians, including certain archaeological records, to demonstrate his reasoning why Germans are, in the main, basically descended from ancient Assyrians. He also wrote that Assyria in prophecy also includes the Prussian east/Assurhim descendants of Keturah and the Aramaeans in the northwest.

In the first century A.D., Pliny reportedly claimed that the Assyrians were north of the Black Sea (Pliny the Elder. Natural History, Book 4, Chapter 85).

Basically, Pliny's account seems to support the idea of the bulk of the Assyrians ending up in Middle Europe. Similarly, one of the oldest traditions of the Bavarians claim that they came to Central Europe by way of the Black Sea (White, p. 100).

There is also a very old legend that claims that the city of Trier in Germany was founded by an Assyrian leader:

For legend, going history better by more than 2000 years, ascribes the founding' of Trier to Assyrian Prince Trebeta, who gave it his name, in 2053 BC. (Fodor E. Germany 1962. D. McKay, 1962, p. 175; see also Treverorum A. British Quarterly Review, July 1875, pp. 1-3)

Hence, the idea that at least some of the Germans have Assyrian heritage has long been held and is not a new one.

Secular scholars have tended to minimize connections between the Assyrians and Germans, such as the old city of Trier, the writing of 1605 that Dr. Hoeh referred to, and other information.

It is not that many of the relevant scholars do not know about Trier and certain aspects of the Assyrian-German connection, it is basically that they consider these records of history as questionable myths/legends which do not tend to fit their preferred views on the origins of the Germanic peoples. Yet many supposedly "scholarly" theories that I have seen of Germanic ancestry have no real proof of where the German peoples originate from much prior to the time of Christ and the Roman Empire.

Basically, mainstream scholars tend to simply believe that somehow people from Asia (including those just north of the Black Sea) ended up in northern and central Europe through migration, but without being clear as to from whom they originally descended from. In one sense that is understandable, given that they do not have a biblical basis for their theories. Those who truly accept scripture realize everyone had to have descended from someone listed in Genesis chapter 10 of the Bible. Furthermore, the connections of the Germanic peoples having Asshur as at least one of their progenitors has at least similar historical support than the non-biblical theories for the related time period. It is not unscientific to accept the connections.

That said, the Bible has several end time prophecies involving those it calls the Assyrians. They are prophesied to rise up militarily but later be correctively punished (e.g. Isaiah 10:5-16, 26-27).

Consider also the following from Dr. Hoeh:

Germany has set itself up as the bulwark of European civilization for well over a thousand years. Germany for centuries has claimed to stand as the eastern wall of defense against the barbarism of Asia. It was on German soil that the hordes of Asia, sweeping across eastern Europe, were more than once stopped.

The German Reich long endured as the oldest political institution in Europe — older than the government of France or England by centuries. The German people called their Reich the Holy Roman Empire. It bore rule over Europe for a thousand years. This "Holy Roman Empire of the German People" was officially designated by the Church in the Middle Ages as "The Kingdom of God" on earth. Its citizens, the Germans, felt themselves true Romans and bearers of the Christian Reich or Kingdom. THEY were therefore the CHOSEN PEOPLE of the Christian era, (Hoeh H. Germany in Prophecy, Part 1. Plain Truth, December 1962)

Thus, even without looking at migratory connections, there are reasons to consider that the Germanic peoples in Europe will fulfill the prophesied end time roles of those scripture calls Assyrians.

Aspects of the so-called 'Holy Roman Empire' look to be referred to in the Book of Revelation with a final revival of a power long considered dead to rise again. Notice just one verse:

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. (Revelation 13:3)

While much of the world will be surprised, those who believe and understand the Bible here will not need to be. The 'Holy Roman Empire' was dominated by Gentiles, but also included some on the European continent with Israelite heritage. Though many believe it is dead and gone, a more powerful version of that empire will arise again.

A revival of the 'Holy Roman Empire' is also taught in Roman Catholic prophecies (Birch DA. Trial, Tribulation & Triumph: Before During and After Antichrist. Queenship Publishing Company, Goleta (CA), 1996, p. 555).

The Slavic Peoples

Slavic peoples tended to descend through those called Sarmatians (McNair, Key to Northwest Origins), which look to have descended from the biblical Elam and Madai (White C. In Search of ... The Origin of Nations. History Research Projects, p. 283).

The Slavic nations are in lands south and east of the Benelux nations – so consistent with Daniel 8:9, many in Slavic Europe will support the end time European power.

Furthermore, back in WWII, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Croatia were part of the Axis powers aligned with Germany.

Poland was taken over by Germany early in that war and was basically an occupied nation – so, some Poles fought against Germany. Currently, Poland is considered to have one of the largest and best trained ground armies in Europe (Karnitschnig M, Kosc W. Meet Europe's coming military superpower: Poland. Politico, November 21, 2022).

The Czech Republic was forcibly annexed by Germany in WWII. Slovenia was also annexed by Axis powers.

Though Slavic, historically, Serbia has differed from most others in eastern Europe.

Unlike many eastern Europeans who supported Germany in WWI and WWII, the Serbs (which mainly live in Serbia, and Montenegro) were opposed and supported the Allied forces. The Serbs also worked with Russia in WWII against Hitler's forces. Serbia is considered significantly stronger militarily than many countries with similar populations (2022 Serbia Military Strength. GlobalFirePower.com, update of May 02, 2022).

The Bible tells of a son of Shem named Elam (Genesis 10:22). History shows that there were also numerous tribes of Elamites (Basello G, et al., eds. *The Elamite World*. Taylor & Francis, 2018). The tribes of Elam were the Anzan, Uxii or Uxians, Armardians, Mardians, Khapirt, Aipir, Messadatae, Cissi, Cossaei or Coss, and Khuzi or Huzha tribe (White, *Origin of Nations*, p. 283).

Yet researchers have concluded:

Any attempt to trace the Elamites ethnologically is beset with difficulties (Hinz W. *The Lost World of the Elamites*. Sidgwick & Jackson. 1972, p. 21)

That being said, some Elamites are believed to have been the progenitors of the Serbs (White C. *In Search of ... The Origin of Nations*, p. 287), but some part of the Medes (from Madai) may also have been involved.

According to Herodotus, there were numerous tribes of the Medes (Herodotos I-3. Edited by A.H. Sayce. *The Ancient Empires of the East*. MacMillan & Co., 1883, p. 62). And originally, this was a reference to a geographic region, and not ethnicity (Ibid, p. 62) which included areas that the Elamites were believed to have lived in.

Pliny the Younger in his work *Plinii Caecilii Secundi Historia naturalis* from the first century AD (69-75) mentioned people named Serboi, who lived near the Cimmerians, presumably on the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

[In the 2nd century (around 175 AD), the Egyptian Greek scientist Claudius Ptolemy mentioned in his *Geography* people named Serboi or Sirboi, who presumably lived behind the Caucasus, in the hinterland of the Caspian Sea.] (From Petrović AM. *Arheografija naroda jugoistočne Evrope*, Beograd, 2006, page 19., as Cited in *Origin hypotheses of the Serbs*. BibleWikipedia, accessed 4/08/22)

It is likely that the Serbs were an Elamite and/or Median tribe. Croatians *may* have come from a different tribe. Some consider that the Serbs and Croatians had the same (or very similar ancestry) but became divided because of culture, geography, and religion: Croatians being more Roman Catholic and Serbs more Russian Orthodox.

Additionally, Croatia was part of the old 'Holy Roman Empire,' but Serbia was not.

Historically, the Croatians have been more supportive of Germany than Russia. It is likely that they will remain that way. Serbia has tended to back Russia more than Croatia.

Even though Serbia looks to be a nation that will support Europe for a time, it appears likely that Serbia will be part of the force that will back Russia against end time Babylon, (Ezekiel 32:24-28; Jeremiah 51:11, 27-32).

Russia and the Medes

Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus tend to be considered as East Slavs. They tend to be descended from Japheth's sons Madai, Tubal, Mechech, and Gomer (Genesis 10:2).

All of which have descendants in Russia. Belarus seems to have mainly descended from Madai (or possibly Midian).

There were numerous tribes of the Medes (which descended from Madai) with the Buzhians in the northwest part of Ukraine (White, In Search of ... The Origin of Nations, p. 273)

Russia, which is both in Europe and Asia, will, for a time, prosper through trade with the coming European Beast (as will Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine).

Prophecies related to the Medes and Russia are mentioned later in the *Lost Tribes* book.

The Baltics

At least some of those of the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are believed to have descended through Abraham's second wife, Keturah (Genesis 25:1-4).

Specifically, those of Latvia and Lithuania reportedly descending from Letushim (Genesis 25:3) and Leummim (Genesis 25:3) for Estonia (and perhaps some of the Finns); with some of Estonia reportedly descending through a non-Abrahamitic line through Riphath (Genesis 10:3; White C. Who are the Latvians & Lithuanians? Version 2.0, 2022)

The Baltic region has been fought over and dominated by Russia or Germany for much of the past couple of centuries. The Baltics are currently part of the European Union and are expected to align with the coming European Beast power, though some may turn against it.

Italy, Macedonia, and Greece

The Greeks appear to have descended from Javan (Genesis 10:2), with the Macedonians also descending from Elam (Genesis 10:22).

The Italians are from Javan and Canaan (Genesis 10:6), although those in the north have been claimed to have descended from Chesed (Genesis 22:21-22).

Italy, Macedonia, and Greece were once part of the ancient Roman empire. Italy and Greece are currently in the European Union and North Macedonia has applied to be.

All of them are expected to support the final Beast power. They will have the temporal financial benefits as well as the plagues (Revelation chapters 15 & 16) and destruction (e.g. Revelation chapter 18; Jeremiah 50:41-46) that will affect the coming European Beast superstate.

Albania and Kosovo

Albanians seem to have derived from Lud (Genesis 10:22) or Canaan (Genesis 10:6).

Albania has applied to be part of the European Union. Despite an Islamic population majority, Albania looks likely to support the coming European Beast superstate. Albania's currency, called the Lek, is pegged at a fixed rate to the euro.

Though some Kosovars descended from Elam (Genesis 10:22) as many Serbs live there, Kosovo also has an Islamic population majority of people of Albanian heritage.

Before the formal introduction of the euro, which Kosovo now uses, many Kosovars used Germany's Deutsche Mark as their currency.

Kosovo is recognized by the European Union as a potential candidate for accession and looks likely to support the coming European Beast superstate.

What About Spain and Portugal?

One European nation that essentially became a multitude of nations is Spain. Most nations in Central and South America are Spanish (though mixed with earlier peoples).

Portugal is a nation that ended up with a "great nation," Brazil, which is larger than any Spanish-speaking nation.

Spain and Portugal are culturally brothers, so what about them representing the sons of Joseph? Could they be representing Ephraim and Manasseh respectively?

Look at the prophetic blessings to Joseph:

¹⁴ With the precious fruits of the sun, With the precious produce of the months, ¹⁵ With the best things of the ancient mountains, With the precious things of the everlasting hills, ¹⁶ With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let the blessing come 'on the head of Joseph, (Deuteronomy 33:14-15)

The British empire was the largest land empire in human history and the United States of America became the wealthiest nation in human history. They, better than Spain and Portugal, fulfilled the promises of those blessings.

Furthermore, the Spanish monarchy either started with the collapse of the ancient Roman Empire, or as most sources point to, with King Pelayo in 717 (List of Spanish monarchs. Encyclopedia Britannica online accessed 08/04/22). Either way, we do not have a record of royal succession from near the time of King Zedekiah (6th century BCE), hence Spain would not appear to represent Ephraim/Israel.

Then there are migration and linguistic matters that also point towards British-American Israelism. Furthermore, while Brazil has become a great nation, it never attained anything close to the level attained by the U.S.A.

The Portuguese appear to have descended from Javan (Genesis 10:2) and Canaan (Genesis 10:6). The same is basically true for Spain, although those in the north have been claimed to have descended from Aram (Genesis 10:22) and Chesed (Genesis 22:21-22).

As far as Spain and Portugal go prophetically, since they are in Europe, they are expected to support the rise of a leader there that will make Europe the dominant power in the world. They will share in the economic benefits as well as the frightening end of that power (cf. Revelation 18; Isaiah 13:1, 17-19; Jeremiah 50:41-46, 51:27-32; Joel 2:2-6).

The European Beast

A political-religious power will arise in Europe. This will be led by the Beast of the Sea and his henchman, the Antichrist (also known as the two-horned Beast and False Prophet). It will enforce the “mark of the beast”, and God’s word shows that those who take that mark will suffer “the wrath of God” (Revelation 14:9-11).

Revelation 13:2,4 reveals that Satan will give this religious-political combine its power, and seat, and great authority. However, that does not mean that the millions of people who will be within it are in themselves any more evil than the rest of humanity in this world (cf. Luke 13:1-5). THIS WHOLE WORLD — all nations — has been DECEIVED by Satan (Revelation 12:9).

A deceived person may be sincere, thinking he/she is right. Those deceived — all but the very minimal “elect” — are simply natural — or carnal-minded — and the natural mind is hostile against God, and not subject to the LAW of God, neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7). The Bible points out that the “heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). THAT DESCRIBES ALL OF US, as those who are true Christians were prior to true conversion!

The Bible is clear that all those without “the love of the truth” will be deceived (2 Thessalonians 2:9-11).

The Bible further warns Christians to not be part of the coming end time Babylon that will arise in Europe:

² ... Babylon ⁴ ... Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. ⁵ For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. (Revelation 18:2,4-5)

Plagues from God will be coming. Likely within one decade.

And yes, they will affect the peoples of Europe.

The coming prosperity and military conquests by Europe will lull many into a false complacency according to your Bible. Europe’s sins will stop being tolerated.

STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE



Lesson 25c: Baptism

Bob Thiel, Editor-in-Chief

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Preface: This course is highly based upon the personal correspondence course developed in 1954 that began under the direction of the late C. Paul Meredith in the old Radio Church of God. Various portions have been updated for the 21st century (though much of the original writing has been retained). It also has more scriptural references, as well as information and questions not in the original course. Unless otherwise noted, scriptural references are to the NKJV, copyright Thomas Nelson Publishing, used by permission. The KJV, sometimes referred to as the Authorized Version is also often used. Additionally, Roman Catholic-approved translations such as the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) are sometimes used as are other translations.

The Meaning of Baptism

What is the REAL MEANING of baptism — its true significance? What is its real purpose? Exactly why does God command baptism?

Let's understand the answer from your Bible.

1. Did Jesus Christ CONDEMN sin in the flesh by living a SINLESS life? Romans 8:3-4 and Hebrews 4:15. Did He suffer death to pay the penalty OUR SINS have incurred? 1 Corinthians 15:3. Was He buried and then resurrected from the dead? Verse 4 and Romans 8:11, KJV.

COMMENT: Christ DIED for our sins and was BURIED. After three days He was "quickened" – that is, He was "made alive," or "given life" by God's Spirit that dwelt in Him while He was alive and will "give life" to our mortal bodies through His Spirit (Romans 8:11, NKJV).

Christ set us an example by the sinless life which He lived. He "condemned" sin by living sinlessly through the power of the Holy Spirit, thus showing us that we need not sin. His death paid the penalty of sin that we have incurred. And His resurrection shows He triumphed over sin and death.

2. Is baptism SYMBOLIC of one's death, burial and resurrection from a "grave"? Colossians 2:12-13 and Romans 6:2-6. Also read the rest of the verses up to and including verse 13.

COMMENT: Just as Christ was buried, our BAPTISM – being plunged into a watery "grave" – is symbolic of the BURIAL of our old sinful life. And as Christ was resurrected in newness of life, our coming up OUT of the water immediately after baptism is symbolic of rising up to live a NEW LIFE free from the shackles of past sins and the death penalty!

Baptism, then, is DUAL. It pictures the DEATH, BURIAL and RESURRECTION of Christ. It also pictures the death and burial of the sinner and his rising up to begin living a Christian life.

Going down into the water pictures the death of Christ and of our old self. Likewise, being buried in the water pictures the burial of Christ, and of our old sinful life. And coming up out of the water pictures Christ's resurrection, and our coming up to walk henceforth "in newness of life" – in OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAWS! We now reckon ourselves as DEAD, so far as sin is concerned, but ALIVE through God and His Son Jesus Christ! (Romans 6:11-12.)

After baptism, Christ begins DWELLING WITHIN us by the Holy Spirit which we receive from God (Romans 8:10). That Spirit enables us, from that time forward, to RESIST the pull of sin in our mortal flesh and to obey God's spiritual laws (verse 13).

The Apostle Paul said: "I am CRUCIFIED with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live IN THE FLESH I live by the FAITH of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20, KJV).

Water baptism is simply an ordinance of Christ by which we SYMBOLICALLY express our faith in Him as our personal savior – our belief and acceptance of His death, burial and resurrection. Baptism also SYMBOLICALLY expresses our sincere and TOTAL REPENTANCE of our old sinful life, our burial of that sinful life, and our rising up to a NEW life of spiritual obedience to God.

BAPTISM, then, symbolizes the death and burial of the old self which has been contrary to God and His laws. It symbolizes our faith in, and acceptance of, the literal death of Jesus Christ for

our sins. It symbolizes, also, our acceptance of and faith in His resurrection, which our coming up out of the watery "grave" pictures (Romans 6:5).

Baptism clearly signifies that our selfish, vain and sinful self HAS TO DIE. It shows our realization of our own sins, our vanities, our wretchedness. It is an OUTWARD ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of our realization that the old self must die in order that we might rise again to live — this time really live — by God's laws and commandments (verse 6).

Sin is the transgression of God's Law (1 John 3:4, KJV). Baptism shows our willingness to BURY sin, and the old sinful man, and to walk in NEWNESS of life, obedient to God and His laws through the POWER of God's Spirit which He promises to give us after baptism!

Baptism, in the final analysis, SHOWS OUR TOTAL SURRENDER TO GOD. It symbolizes the complete burial of the old self and our beginning a new life surrendered to the will and authority of God. God demands UNCONDITIONAL surrender to His rule, His authority over our lives. Baptism is the SYMBOL of OUR SURRENDER and desire to OBEY GOD, no matter what He commands!

In baptism, the old self is symbolically buried:

12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, (Colossians 2:12-13)

The one properly baptized emerges from the watery baptismal grave as a new person in Christ. The baptized person's whole way of life is now changed. The baptized have a different sense of direction in life. The intention of the baptized is to serve God instead of Satan the devil and his way of life (Romans 6:16-18). The baptized are to emerge as a "new" person (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:21-24; Colossians 3:9-10).

This is part of why mere sprinkling is not enough for the rite of baptism. Immersion helps show total commitment and is consistent with the burial analogies (e.g. Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12) related to becoming a Christian. Sprinkling with a few drops of water is not the same thing and does not convey the totality of the commitment.

Have YOU really surrendered your will and your ENTIRE LIFE to God?

"In the NAME of Jesus Christ"

Should a person be baptized "in the NAME of Jesus Christ"? Exactly what does this phrase mean?

1. Did Jesus baptize more disciples than John? John 3:22 and 4:1. But did He actually perform the baptisms Himself? John 4:2. Then who did the baptizing? Same verse.

COMMENT: Jesus did not actually do the physical work of baptizing these people. He had HIS DISCIPLES do it FOR HIM — IN HIS STEAD!

2. Did the apostles baptize repentant believers in Christ's NAME? Acts 2:37-38, 41.

COMMENT: The inspired Greek expression for "in the name of" means "by the AUTHORITY of." If you do anything in the name of another, you do it with or BY THAT PERSON'S AUTHORITY — by his express PERMISSION.

Jesus' disciples did the baptizing "in Jesus' name" — that is, in His stead, FOR Him, BY HIS AUTHORITY — and that was considered just the same as if Jesus had actually done it Himself.

3. Are God's true ministers today commanded to do ALL things in the NAME of Christ? Colossians 3:17.

COMMENT: Baptism, when performed by God's ministers, is therefore always done "in the NAME of Jesus Christ" — that is, by His DIVINE AUTHORITY!

Since some have been baptized over again "in the name of Jesus ONLY" in order to eliminate the Father, and the Holy Spirit, this should be considered here. The contention of many of these people is that this passage in Matthew 28:19 is the only place in the Bible, associated with baptism, where the terms Father and Holy Spirit are included. They argue that a thing must be established "in the mouth of two or more witnesses," and since they claim there is but this one witness to this command, it must be rejected. They suggest all other passages make only mention of the name of Jesus — but that is not the case (e.g. 1 Corinthians 6:11).

In Matthew 28:19, the word translated "in" should properly be translated "into." The meaning, then, is that repentant believers are baptized INTO God the Father, and into Christ the Son, and into the Holy Spirit. But the one who plunges the new believer under the water performs the act IN THE NAME OF — that is, by authority of, JESUS CHRIST. Why? Because Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).

Jesus has ALL authority! Jesus further tells the ministry:

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
(Matthew 28:19-20)

Either we in the church do it by His authority, or else we are doing it without any real authority.

In Jesus' name means under His authority — it does not mean that we should not mention the Father or the Holy Spirit.

Notice something that John the Baptist declared:

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Matthew 3:11)

Consider that the Bible says:

1 ... the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), (John 4:1 2)

So, while Jesus had His disciples immerse people in water, He also was not laying hands on the baptized to pray for the Holy Spirit. Instead, He told His church leaders to perform baptisms for Christians (Matthew 28:18-19).

Jesus' disciples baptized under His authority — HIS NAME! They did it in His stead and this was considered the same as if Jesus had done it Himself.

To do things in Jesus' name is to do things for Him — it is some equivalent in modern times when someone does something with the "power of attorney" for someone else.

Herbert Armstrong also taught the following in a Bible Study on 1 Corinthians 10:

The baptism today is a baptism into the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a public expression of your faith in Christ after you've repented.

Yes, the Holy Spirit is part of the ceremony. And baptismal ceremonies are still done in Jesus' name.

Baptized "Into" What?

1. What further instruction does Christ give His ministers concerning baptism? Matthew 28:19.

COMMENT: Many have misunderstood this important scripture. Let's understand exactly what it means.

In Matthew 28:19 the original Greek word translated "in" is "eis", and actually means "into." Therefore, this verse should be translated,

" ... baptizing them INTO THE NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

In other words, when a person is baptized and receives God's Spirit, he becomes the begotten SON of God – God places HIS OWN NAME on the newly baptized believer! He now carries the name of GOD. He belongs to God. He is God's SON!

This scripture simply means we are baptized or immersed INTO the DIVINE FAMILY NAME CALLED "GOD"! And it is done "in the name" – by the AUTHORITY – "OF Jesus Christ."

In Matthew 28:19, the word translated “in” should properly be translated “into.” The meaning, then, is that repentant believers are baptized INTO God the Father, and into Christ the Son, and into the Holy Spirit. But the one who plunges the new believer under the water performs the act IN THE NAME OF — that is, by authority of, JESUS CHRIST. Why? Because Jesus said, ““All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18).

At present, the literal spiritual Family of God consists only of the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the divine nature and power of the God Family — not a "third person" as some erroneously assume.

Notice carefully, too — we are “BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST” (verse 3, above), or, as Jesus expressed it in Matthew 28:19, into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — NOT INTO SOME CHURCH ORGANIZATION OR DENOMINATION.

In many sectarian churches today, the minister will refuse to baptize one except into his church — his group or organization of human beings. That is not proper baptism. We are to be baptized into the DIVINE FAMILY — the family of God. And it is to be done “in the name” — by the authority — of Jesus Christ.

Baptism has degenerated in many churches into a rite or ceremony of entrance into the fellowship of that sectarian organization — nothing more than a rite by which one joins a lodge or social club!

Note well these facts: One may “join” a lodge, social club, or organized group of MEN (and most churches today have degenerated into social societies). But ONE CANNOT JOIN THE TRUE CHURCH OF GOD! You cannot GET in of your own accord! No, GOD MUST PUT YOU IN — no man can do it — you cannot do it yourself!

How does one gain entrance into the true CHURCH? “By ONE SPIRIT are we all baptized into [PUT INTO] one body” — the Body of Christ, the true Church of God. “Baptize” means “PUT INTO.” When we receive the Holy Spirit of God to change us — to make us as new creatures in Christ — it is the impregnation of eternal LIFE from God. It is the very life-germ from God the FATHER. It is the Spirit of sonship whereby we become HIS CHILDREN and may call Him “FATHER” (Romans 8:14-15). The CHURCH OF GOD is the Household of God — composed of GOD’S CHILDREN. We do not become His children until begotten of Him — until we receive His Spirit — His Nature — His Life. When we receive His Spirit, therefore, we are automatically PUT INTO His family — HIS CHURCH! Joining one of the social clubs called churches does not put one into GOD’S Church!

Now water baptism is a required CONDITION to receiving the Holy Spirit.

And remember, obedience to God is another required condition per to receive the Holy Spirit per Acts 5:32.

2. Are spirit-begotten Christians plainly called "sons of God" in the Bible? Romans 8:14 and 1 John 3:1.

COMMENT: Our receiving of the Holy Spirit following baptism merely BEGETS US as the "sons of God." But we shall ULTIMATELY become God's BORN sons at the resurrection.

Jesus told Nicodemus:

5 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

Christians become begotten through water and the Spirit after being immersed in water for baptism and having hands laid upon us to receive God's Spirit. We later, then, will be born into the Kingdom of God at the resurrection.

When the Holy Spirit enters one, that person is begotten by God:

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (1 Peter 1:3)

The Christian's remaining physical life can be considered analogous to human gestation. If one remains faithful (Revelation 17:14), "endures to the end" (Matthew 10:22, EOB), one will be born again into God's kingdom at the resurrection (cf. John 3:5-6; 1 John 3:9; 1 Corinthians 15:49-54) as Jesus, in a sense, was at His resurrection (Romans 1:4-5).

The teaching that Christians are to be born-again at the resurrection was confirmed in the second century by Church of God pastor/bishop Theophilus of Antioch. Theophilus taught that we are not to be "born again" until the resurrection:

But the moon wanes monthly, and in a manner dies, being a type of man; then it is born again, and is crescent, for a pattern of the future resurrection. (Theophilus of Antioch. To Autolycus, Book 2, Chapter XV. Translated by Marcus Dods, A.M. Excerpted from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2. Edited by Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885).

Christians are born-again, not now at baptism, but at the future resurrection. We are begotten by the Holy Spirit after baptism.

A human being is named after his human father — carries the same SURNAME as his father. If we become begotten children of GOD, we become "God's-sons," SONS OF GOD, though not yet born of Him. We bear the same FAMILY NAME!

Therefore, when we are baptized "into" the name of the Father and Son it is into their family and this is done through the Holy Spirit to receive God's Spirit, we automatically become SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN MEMBERS OF THE GOD FAMILY!

Notice also:

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 19:5-6)

12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

These two passages in 1 Corinthians clearly are tying the Spirit of God the Father and Jesus Christ with baptism. They also show that one is baptized into one body, a body that in a sense represents the family of God. The God family now consists of the Father and the Son, and through the Holy Spirit after the resurrection, this is the family that Christians enter into. This is consistent with the passage in Matthew 28:19.

Why Baptism Is Necessary

1. Did Jesus promise His disciples the "baptism" of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:5. When did the Holy Spirit finally come? Acts 2:1, 4.

COMMENT: On this day of Pentecost, 31 A.D., God began His spiritual Church on earth by putting the Holy Spirit WITHIN His disciples.

2. Is God's true Church actually the "BODY" of Christ? 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27 and Colossians 1:18.
3. HOW do we become MEMBERS of that body — the true Church? Can we join it? Or must we be PUT "into" it by God's Spirit? 1 Corinthians 12:13.

COMMENT: In Romans 8:9, Paul tells us plainly that unless the Spirit of Christ dwells within us, we do not belong to Him. We become Christ's, then, only when the Holy Spirit comes into us!

Each MEMBER of Christ's "body" — His Church — is joined to the other by the common bond of God's Holy Spirit residing in them. So when we become Christ's by receiving His Spirit, we are then put "into" His body — the Church of God — BY THE HOLY SPIRIT!

Just being physically baptized in water does not put us into God's true Spirit-led Church. You must be put into the Church BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD! God determines who are the true members (those who have truly repented) by placing His Spirit within them. Unless God gives a person His Holy Spirit, he might sit among God's people BUT WOULD NOT BE ONE OF THE "BODY" OF CHRIST!

Therefore, it is the RECEIVING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT which automatically PLUNGES US — immerses, "baptizes," or PUTS US — "into" the true Church of God! This immersion into the Church by the Holy Spirit is termed by the Scriptures, "the baptism WITH," "the baptism BY," or "the baptism of the Holy Spirit."

Receiving the Holy Spirit

After a person is baptized, does he immediately receive God's Spirit? Or is there something else required first?

Notice what the Scriptures say.

1. Is the "laying on of hands" one of the basic doctrines of God's Word? Hebrews 6:2.
2. Why were Peter and John sent to the new disciples in Samaria? Acts 8:14-16. What did the apostles do so these new converts could receive the Holy Spirit? Verse 17. Did they lay hands on them and PRAY over them? Same verse and verse 15.
3. Did Simon the Magician, called Simon Magus in history, realize that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands? Verses 18-19.
4. When the Apostle Paul came to Ephesus on his third journey, he found people there who had been baptized by John's baptism only — the baptism of repentance (Acts 19:1-4). What happened to these believers after they were baptized in the name of Christ, and after Paul laid his hands on them? Acts 19:6.

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit was given to baptized believers when God's servants LAID HANDS ON THEM!

God works in the same way today. God's ministers baptize people who have truly repented of their sins, then lay hands upon them, and pray over them for the receipt of the Holy Spirit. Of course, there were some instances where individuals received the Holy Spirit without the laying on of hands, such as with Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48). But they are the SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS and not the rule!

The act of baptism also represents their total willingness to submit to God and His personal rule over our lives. The Laying on of Hands represents the first extension of the government of God through human instruments into their lives — that if they are going to be a part of God's government forever, they must be willing to live under the government now. The Laying on of Hands invests the baptized person personally with the responsibility of doing a job through that government — of being a part of God's work.

The laying on of hands is the connection/means of granting the Holy Spirit to those being baptized. Here is one scriptural example of that being done:

14 ... Peter and John ... 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 ... They had only been baptized in the name of the

Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17)

Who can lay hands on the baptized?

While the Apostles Peter and John did it in Acts 8, they are no longer available. Nor is the Apostle Paul who, as it is recorded elsewhere (e.g. Acts 19:6), laid hands on other baptized persons as well.

Normally, the baptizer will be a true Church of God minister who has had hands properly laid on him or one commissioned by such a minister to do this (cf. John 4:2; 1 Corinthians 1:14-17; Acts 8:14-23).

The man who handles the baptism is merely performing this physical act for Christ, in His stead. We are not to look to the human man, further than to conscientiously try to go to one you honestly feel is a man of God, called of Christ, and used of Him in the work of His true Church. And if that man later turns the wrong way, your salvation does not depend on that man or any other mortal man, BUT SOLELY UPON CHRIST! Also, one is not to baptize nor lay hands upon oneself.

The laying on of hands remained a Church of God practice after the time of the original apostles (Schaff P, Schaff D. History of the Christian Church, Vol 5. C. Scribner's Sons, 1907, p. 475). The *Continuing* Church of God continues that practice that as well.

That said, the hands of the minister or other persons involved in the baptism do not actually impart the Holy Spirit. The lead man laying on hands (because more than one can be laying on hands as shown in Acts 6:6, 8:17) prays to God for Him to grant His Holy Spirit. Once granted, we are then "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

The Holy Spirit is given by the Father, if the Father answers that prayer — and that is mainly dependent upon the sincerity/repentance of the person being baptized. Therefore, even if the specific man who performed the ceremony has issues or falls away from the truth, presuming he was properly authorized by the Church of God ministry to perform the baptism, the procedure is still valid. The Holy Spirit comes from God, not anyone's hands. As no man or minister is perfect and without sin, and since baptism was in reality done BY CHRIST THROUGH HIS NAME/ AUTHORITY, baptism should not be done over by another in order to be rebaptized, even if the man who baptized became unfaithful.

The late Herbert W. Armstrong also wrote:

At Samaria, and again at Ephesus, they did not receive the Holy Spirit until after they were baptized in water (Acts 8:14-17; 19:1-6). True, at Cornelius' house they did receive the Holy Spirit, and thereby were baptized BY the Spirit into the CHURCH before water baptism — but Peter immediately commanded water baptism. This was a rare exception to the rule.

BUT THERE IS NO PROMISE THAT ANYONE WILL RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT UNTIL BAPTIZED IN WATER — even though God in His wisdom and love may on rare occasions make an exception. The command is, “Repent, and be baptized” — and THEN “ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Armstrong HW. All About Water Baptism)

Yes, to be a true Christian, one needs water baptism AND the laying on of hands.

5. After one receives God's Spirit, does a sensation or "feeling" overwhelm him? Does he tingle with some ecstatic emotion? 2 Timothy 1:7.

COMMENT: God's Spirit is the spirit of a SOUND MIND. It does not cause an emotional outburst or some "feeling." When a person receives God's Spirit, it enters the MIND of the individual and begets him spiritually. Of course, the newly baptized person feels a certain gratitude, joy, and thankfulness, because of his OWN normal emotions. But there is no special ecstatic "feeling" caused by receiving the Holy Spirit of God.

Salvation Without Baptism?

Since water baptism is commanded by God, what about the thief on the cross? Was he saved without being baptized?

Let's notice the plain truth.

1. Does baptism itself SAVE US? Romans 5:9-10.

COMMENT: Baptism in water is NOT what saves us, although it is a commanded step in God's Plan of salvation. As explained before, it is merely SYMBOLIC of that which remits our sins — the DEATH of Christ. It also pictures His resurrection, by which we are finally SAVED.

We are not saved by the blood of Jesus, which reconciles us to God, but through His life:

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:9-10)

It needs to be understood that just calling Jesus ‘Lord’ and even having done wonders does not save you. Jesus, Himself, warned about that:

21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ (Matthew 7:21-23)

Those who practice lawlessness are those that refuse to obey God and His laws. Jesus says they will not be saved even if they thought that they considered Him to be Lord.

2. What did the thief on the cross (actually stauros) ask Christ? Luke 23:42. What was Jesus' reply? Verse 43.

COMMENT: This verse SHOULD read, "Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in Paradise." See the Lamsa translation, as well as others.

Most translations are improperly punctuated in order to make it appear that Jesus and the thief would be in Paradise that very day. However, the Bible shows Jesus did not go to Paradise that day. He went to the GRAVE! (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Mark 15:44-46.)

The Companion Bible states, "The interpretation of this verse depends entirely on punctuation, which rests wholly on human authority, the Greek manuscripts having no punctuation of any kind TILL THE NINTH CENTURY, and then it is only a dot (in the middle of the line) separating each word" (Appendix 173).

The truth is that the thief was UNABLE to be baptized. Since baptism is NOT the thing which saves us, or gives us eternal life, he did not lose salvation because of circumstances beyond his control. Some have pointed to him (Luke 23:40-43) as proof of not needing baptism. That was not a matter of need so much as it was baptism being an impossibility. That criminal did not disobey but did as he was able. If you are repentant and able, baptism is essential. If you are called and able and do not get baptized, you are disobeying and will not be granted God's Holy Spirit. YOU need to be concerned about what YOU CAN DO, not improperly rationalize that you cannot do something you somehow could do (cf. 1 Peter 1:17; Acts 17:30).

We need not worry about the thief on the cross, or anyone utterly UNABLE TO be baptized. We do need to be very MUCH concerned, however, about obeying God's plain command when we ARE ABLE!

When to Be Baptized

Many put off baptism. They feel they are too infirm, too old, too weak — or they feel they are "not ready" yet SPIRITUALLY. Some think they must be PERFECT BEFORE being baptized!

What misunderstanding of the inspired Word of God!

How could a person be "perfect" BEFORE he has received God's Holy Spirit, which helps us to BECOME perfect?

The truth is, NONE of these excuses is any good in God's sight. There is NO EXCUSE! If a person KNOWS enough about God's Plan, KNOWS that God commands baptism, knows that he SHOULD be baptized, and his conscience convicts him — THEN HE SHOULD BE BAPTIZED!

Old age makes no difference with God. Circumstances make no difference. The truth is, there is NO EXCUSE for not being baptized when a person UNDERSTANDS this vital, urgent spiritual truth.

But WHEN should a person be baptized?

1. When the Ethiopian eunuch learned the truth of God, and came to understand Christ was his Savior, did he hesitate about being baptized? Did he put it off? Acts 8:35-38.
2. When Paul was first converted, and learned CHRIST is the Son of God, whom he had been persecuting, did he procrastinate about being baptized? Acts 9:16-18.

COMMENT: Neither of these men put off water baptism. They saw their own personal need. They knew they NEEDED Christ as their Savior and NEEDED their sins covered by His shed blood. They felt dirty and despicable before God, if they stood before Him in their sins. They knew they were the SLAVES of sin, and did not have God's Holy Spirit dwelling within them.

Therefore, AS SOON AS WAS POSSIBLE, THEY WERE BAPTIZED!

So, when should you be baptized?

The Apostle Paul wrote that God's law was spiritual and that the carnal (unconverted) person does not please God:

If you want to please God, YOU should get properly baptized as soon as you can. The unbaptized are not fully developing the type of love God wants us all to have and share.

Those baptized are to be the ones that have the fruit of the Holy Spirit:

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:22-24)

It is only those who have God's Spirit who are Christ's (Romans 8:9).

Since one cannot truly spiritually understand God's spiritual Law or many spiritual things UNTIL after receiving the Holy Spirit, and one is to be baptized before attaining the promise of the Holy Spirit, one should be baptized when one is ready and able.

Yet, many are afraid to request baptism as they do not feel they "know enough." This fear is usually unfounded. The two basic prerequisites for baptism given in God's Word are repentance and belief (Acts 2:38). What we repent of is sin, which is the violation of any of God's laws (1 John 3:4) — and we are to believe that Jesus is our Lord (means "master") and Savior, hence we are to be willing to obey Him.

The Bible teaches, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Yet, God can, and will, grant repentance to a carnal mind before the conversion of that mind for those He

is calling. You do not need a spiritual college education in Bible knowledge to repent and be baptized into Christ. Jesus told His ministry the following order of events: (1st) PREACH THE GOSPEL, (2nd) BAPTIZE repentant believers, and (3rd) TEACH THEM ALL JESUS COMMANDED (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19-20). That is also consistent with what the Apostle Paul taught (Romans 10:15; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 28:31; Colossians 1:28).

Notice that more teaching comes AFTER baptism as we are to grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

So, how long should baptism be put off?

The answer is, just as soon as one has been convicted in his/her heart of his/her past sins and sinful life — just as soon as one realizes his/her own way of life has been WRONG, and no longer wants to tolerate it, and turns from his/her own ways and wants to find GOD'S WAYS and live them, truly REPENTS of his/her past life of sins, and BELIEVES in and ACCEPTS Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, and the One whom he/she must obey always, and WANTS TO TURN TO THE CHANGED, TRUE, DIFFERENT, NEW AND HAPPY LIFE OF FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS, and to become a child of God — then that person should be baptized IMMEDIATELY if possible — and if this is not possible, then AS SOON as a true servant of God is available to perform the baptism. And the one who wants to be baptized should immediately strive to live as a Christian until (and, of course, after) baptism. For assistance on that, please see our free booklet, online at ccog.org, titled: *Christians: Ambassadors for the Kingdom of God, Biblical instructions on living as a Christian*.

Do not delay for baptism might be neglected until it's too late!

Only ONE WAY to Salvation

How clear it is. Mere "acceptance" of Christ is not enough. Mere profession of Him won't save anyone! Merely "believing" on Him, the Scriptures show, won't save you.

In addition to believing on Christ, and believing the Gospel He brought, one must also come to see his own SINS and his rotten human nature for what they really are. He must cry out to God for forgiveness, REPENTING of his sins and sinful nature.

Then a person is "READY" for baptism.

This is the way to salvation GOD has ordained. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY!

After one is baptized, and has the laying on of hands, he receives the SPIRIT OF GOD which plunges him into the body of Christ — the true Church of God. He becomes a begotten SON OF GOD, a member of the DIVINE FAMILY of God! He becomes an heir of salvation and a true Christian!

Those who do not think that they need to obey God and be properly baptized would not be real Christians, despite what they may claim or hope.

Understand that the New Testament teaches:

9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, (Hebrews 5:9)

Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey. Salvation is not promised for those who refuse to obey.

Jesus tied baptism in with salvation:

¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved ... (Mark 16:16)

Jesus made baptism a salvation issue.

Are You a Christian?

You have PROVEN to yourself from God's own inspired Word that baptism in water is a commanded step in God's Plan of salvation. Christ commanded it. The apostles did it. The early inspired New Testament Church practiced it.

Jesus Christ warned, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

Christ COMMANDED His true followers, "Go you therefore, and TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM ..." (Matthew 28:19, KJV).

Have YOU been baptized? Have you repented of your sins and your evil, filthy, rotten human nature? Have YOU accepted Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior and coming King?

Do YOU DESIRE SALVATION?

Examine yourself!

Perhaps you were "sprinkled" when a child. Or perhaps a man of the cloth "poured" water over your head. If so, then you need to admit that YOU WERE NOT BAPTIZED!

Unless you have been baptized by IMMERSION, after SINCERELY REPENTING of your sins, and have received the gift of God's precious Holy Spirit as a begettal, YOU ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN! SO says your Bible (Romans 8:9).

The Vital QUESTION

The vital question many of you students face today is: Will you SURRENDER your life to God, and DO as He says? will YOU repent of your sins — your transgressions of God's Law — accept Christ as your Savior, and be BAPTIZED?

Only you can make that decision. No one can make it for you. But don't put it off!

If you would like to be baptized, contact a Continuing Church of God leader in your area. Of course, they will not figuratively “twist your arm” to be baptized. God has made every human a free moral agent.

God compels each to make his/her own decisions, particularly on matters of salvation (cf. Philippians 2:12-13), and the true God will never force you to be converted. Yet, if you, of your own volition, desire personal counsel about repentance and baptism, why not request a private counseling session with one of God’s ministers?

And perhaps you may wish to jot down on paper any questions you want to ask. Jesus said to “count the cost” and be willing to “forsake all” to be His disciple (Luke 14:28,33).

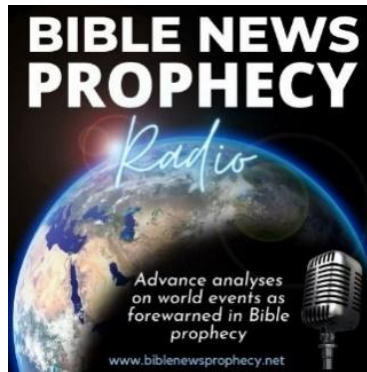
Consider, carefully and prayerfully, your situation, the truth according to scripture, and then make your decision as to what to do next.

If God is calling you, and you are willing to respond as a true Philadelphian Christian, contact a Continuing Church of God near you (who may not be physically very near).

Information on contacting Continuing Church of God leaders can be found at ccog.org

Also, if you want more information on this vital subject of baptism, be sure to download Dr. Thiel’s free booklet titled "About Baptism". Available at www.ccog.org/books.

Continuing Church of God Radio Log



In addition to being online in the English language at www.biblenewsprophecy.net and other languages at www.bnpi.net, there are numerous radio stations the *Bible News Prophecy* radio program is on.

Europe, Middle East, & North Africa: Via European Gospel Radio

AM/MW 1323 kHz + streaming. This broadcast is also on shortwave at the 7295 kHz location from October through late March; from late March to late October, it is 7290 kHz.

Far East and North America

Radio Miami International, WRMI, SW 5850 kHz. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 0130 UTC

Kenya

Radio Milambo 103.8 FM, Migori – Friday 6:00 pm

Ghana

OTEC 102.9 FM, Kumasi – Sunday 7:00 am

Sunsum 98.7 FM, Kumasi – Tuesday 6:00 am

USA

KCLE 1460 AM Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas – 6:45 pm Saturday

KCLE 93.1 FM Cleburne, Texas – 6:45 pm Saturday

KCLE 95.7 FM K239CC, Burleson, Texas – 6:45 pm Saturday

KHKM 98.7FM, Missoula, Montana – 1:45 am and pm Monday thru Friday

KYMS 89.9FM, North Idaho – 1:45 am and pm Monday thru Friday

WCDG 88.7FM, Dahlonega, Georgia – 1:45 am and pm Monday thru Friday

WCRY 89.9FM, Blairsville, Georgia – 1:45 am and pm Monday thru Friday

WKID 95.9 FM Vevay, Indiana 7:00 pm Saturday

Worldwide on the Internet

biblenewsprophecy.net - *Bible News Prophecy* radio program is available 24 hours per day, worldwide.

bnpi.net - *Bible News Prophecy* international radio has multiple languages.

USA Podcast

Faith Stream Network – Saturday 1:30 pm; Sunday 1:46 pm

Video: <https://bbsradio.com/bbsradiotv/bbs-radio-tv-2.html>

Audio: https://bbsradio.com/html5_player/html5_player2.htm

Multimedia

The Continuing Church of God proclamation, via radio, podcasts, and other forms of media, can be found at its Multimedia page: <https://www.ccog.org/multimedia/>



By Bob Thiel

Q: In 1985, a daughter of a Worldwide Church of God member wrote the following asking for assistance, “I am a 15-year-old girl and have a big problem. Some kids at my school have been spreading some very bad rumours about me to all my friends. This is destroying my reputation and upsets me very much.” What can be done?

A. Well, we can understand this concern. As it turns out, the old saying that sticks and stones may break bones, but words cannot hurt us is wrong.

Words can be harmful indeed. The Bible says:

11 Even children are known by the way they act, whether their conduct is pure, and whether it is right. (Proverbs 20:11, NLT)

Yet, some still can pass false and hurtful information.

Jesus said:

11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:11-12)

So, while it concerns us when people speak negatively about us (and faithful church leaders), notice that Jesus said the same thing happened to God’s prophets. So we can be in good company that way. People also said negative and false things about Jesus (e.g. Matthew 11:19).

But sadly, some “love to live a lie” (Revelation 22:15b, NLT) and love gossip (Proverbs 26:22).

However, there are some things we can do when people spread negative information about us.

First, we need to determine if what the others are saying is possibly partly true. If so, we may have some changing to do and should begin immediately. And, of course, we realize that it takes longer to build a reputation back up than it did to tear it down.

That is one reason that spreading tales is a tactic of Satan. Satan is a liar (John 8:44) and he does not care if bad things are true or not. As the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2), the devil influences people to spread and believe gossip.

Second, consider if the rumours are really harmful. Perhaps they are about a subject that is irritating and “makes for good gossip,” but are really harmless in the end. If so, if we don't want to overreact as that could fuel the fire of interest.

Thirdly, if the rumours are false and harmful, go to the people spreading them and ask them why they are doing this. While they may not stop, telling them might help.

Sadly, in this age of the internet, smart phones, and social media, negative statements can spread faster and wider than in the past — and may have even less truth in them.

The Bible teaches:

20 Where there is no wood, the fire goes out;
And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.
21 As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire,
So is a contentious man to kindle strife.
22 The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles,
And they go down into the inmost body. (Proverbs 26:20-22)

16 You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people ... (Leviticus 19:16)

Of course, we do not want to be a talebearer nor one who “loves and practices a lie” (Revelation 22:15).

But more and more people do not seem to care.

Anyway, the Bible also teaches:

12 Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. 13 But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God. (Ecclesiastes 8:12-13)

10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown (Hebrews 6:10)

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. (Matthew 16:27)

Yes, live as you should and God will reward you, no matter what Satan’s assistants in this world may say about you or the church.

Fulfilling Matthew 24:14 And Matthew 28:19-20

Continuing Church of God www.ccog.org

Daily Bible Prophecy News www.cogwriter.com

BIBLENEWSPROPHECY.NET Radio messages of biblical and prophetic interest, plus online links.

CCOG.ASIA This is a website focused on Asia. It has articles in Mandarin Chinese as well as some in English, plus items in many other Asian languages.

CCOG.EU This is a website targeted towards Europe. It has materials in many European languages.

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CCOGAFRICA.ORG This is a website targeted towards those in Africa.

CCOGCANADA.CA This is a website targeted towards those in Canada.

CDLIDD.ES La Continuación de la Iglesia de Dios. This is our Spanish language website.

CG7.ORG This is a website targeted towards those interested in the 7th day Sabbath.

PNIND.PH Patuloy na Iglesia ng Diyos. This is our Philippines oriented website with items in English and Tagalog.



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The Bible News Prophecy program is on commercial, shortwave, and online radio.

The *Continuing Church of God* also uses printed and electronic magazines, books, personal visits, and weekly letters to the brethren to support Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:19-20.