

MM/DD/2021

To Whom it May Concern,

It is my understanding that one of our church members, NAME, is requesting a religious exemption from the NAME OF VAX vaccine requirement. NAMES are strongly committed Christians who are regular attenders of NAME OF CHURCH.

At NAME OF CHURCH, we teach and believe that God speaks to us, as any good Father speaks to his children, and gives us direction in our everyday choices, including whether or not to take vaccines.

#### Background

We are Protestant Christians who believe that when Adam and Eve sinned (often referred to as “the fall”), every person born thereafter was born with “original sin,” which brought death into the Garden of Eden. (1)

As a result of sin, all of humanity was penalized by being separated from God for eternity. Relief from that separation (salvation) could only come through someone with the authority to cancel the penalty. (2)

Jesus Christ, as the only begotten son of God, is the person with that singular authority. He paid for the sin with his life by dying on the cross; the only person to ever live a sinless life. He conquered sin by living a sinless life and conquered death when He rose from the dead three days later because without the penalty of sin, death could not hold Jesus in the grave. (3)

When Jesus rose from the dead (celebrated at Easter), He promised his followers that they would receive guidance to help them live in obedience to God through an infilling, or “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” (4)

NAME is a Christian because she/he received Jesus Christ as her/his savior when she/he asked Him to forgive her/his sins and be the Lord of her/his life. At that moment she/he was filled with the Holy Spirit, who serves as a power source in her/his life to keep her/him on the path of obedience to God. All Christians must have the Holy Spirit in order to say that Jesus Christ is Lord. (5)

She/He made the difficult decision that day to subordinate her/his free will to the will of God, who is referred to as “Father” in the bible. (6) It was a difficult decision because our sin-filled birth-nature does not want to surrender to God’s nature in us through the Holy Spirit (“second birth” or “born-again”). (7)

When NAME prays she/he is asking for guidance from God through the power of the Holy Spirit, in conjunction with the lived-example of Jesus Christ. She/He is using the bible as her/his source text to understand how to practically walk-out her/his obedience to God. Jesus is referred to as “The Word,” just as the bible is referred to as “The Word of God.” (8) Reading the bible and following in Christ’s footsteps are in sync with God’s will.

NAME has discussed this with me at length and informs me that she/he has prayed about whether or not to take the vaccine – not surprising since she/he prays about all her/his decisions. After serious prayer and reflection she/he feels led that it is not God’s will for her/him to receive the vaccine. Her/His belief taking the vaccine would be the sin of disobedience to God. The bible is full of examples that demonstrate how Christians are guided by God, through the Holy Spirit, in prayer. (9)

Finally, since Jesus is our ultimate role model, here are five specific scriptural references where he states the importance of receiving direct guidance from God in prayer:

John 5:19-20 says, “Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does.

John 5:30 [Jesus speaking] “By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.”

John 12:49-59 [Jesus speaking] “For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

John 14:10 [Jesus speaking] “The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”

In summary, I admire NAME for her/his willingness to obey the guidance she/he received in this matter when it would be more convenient to take a different path—she/he has a strongly held religious belief of what God has guided her/him to do and is following it. Our church supports her/him in this decision to receive the religious exemption. I would be happy to speak if necessary and I can be reached at (555) 555-5555, or [email@email.com](mailto:email@email.com).

Sincerely,

Pastor NAME

NAME OF CHURCH

[www.churchweb.com](http://www.churchweb.com)

#### References

1. The description of the fall of Adam and Eve is found in the book of Genesis, chapter 3.
2. The understanding that all people must receive forgiveness of sins is found throughout the New Testament, but emphasized in Romans chapter 3, where it says, "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," and "the wages of sin is death". Romans 10 that says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
3. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus are found in all four gospels. The most explicit explanation of the power of the resurrection is found in 1 Corinthians Chapter 15.
4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is described in Acts 2; it occurred on the Jewish feast of Passover, as had been prophesied by the Prophet Joel, in the book of Joel, chapter 2, verse 28.
5. 1 Corinthians 12:3 says, "No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.
6. In Matthew 6:9 Jesus says, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."
7. Galatians 2:20 says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me."
8. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
9. In Acts chapter 9:11 God speaks to a believer named Ananias in a vision and tells him to go to a specific address to find a man named Saul. In Acts chapter 10, God speaks to the Apostle Peter while in prayer and tells him to visit the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion.