

THE LORD IS COMING
1 Corinthians 16:22



A translated version of the International Christian periodical
MARANATHA

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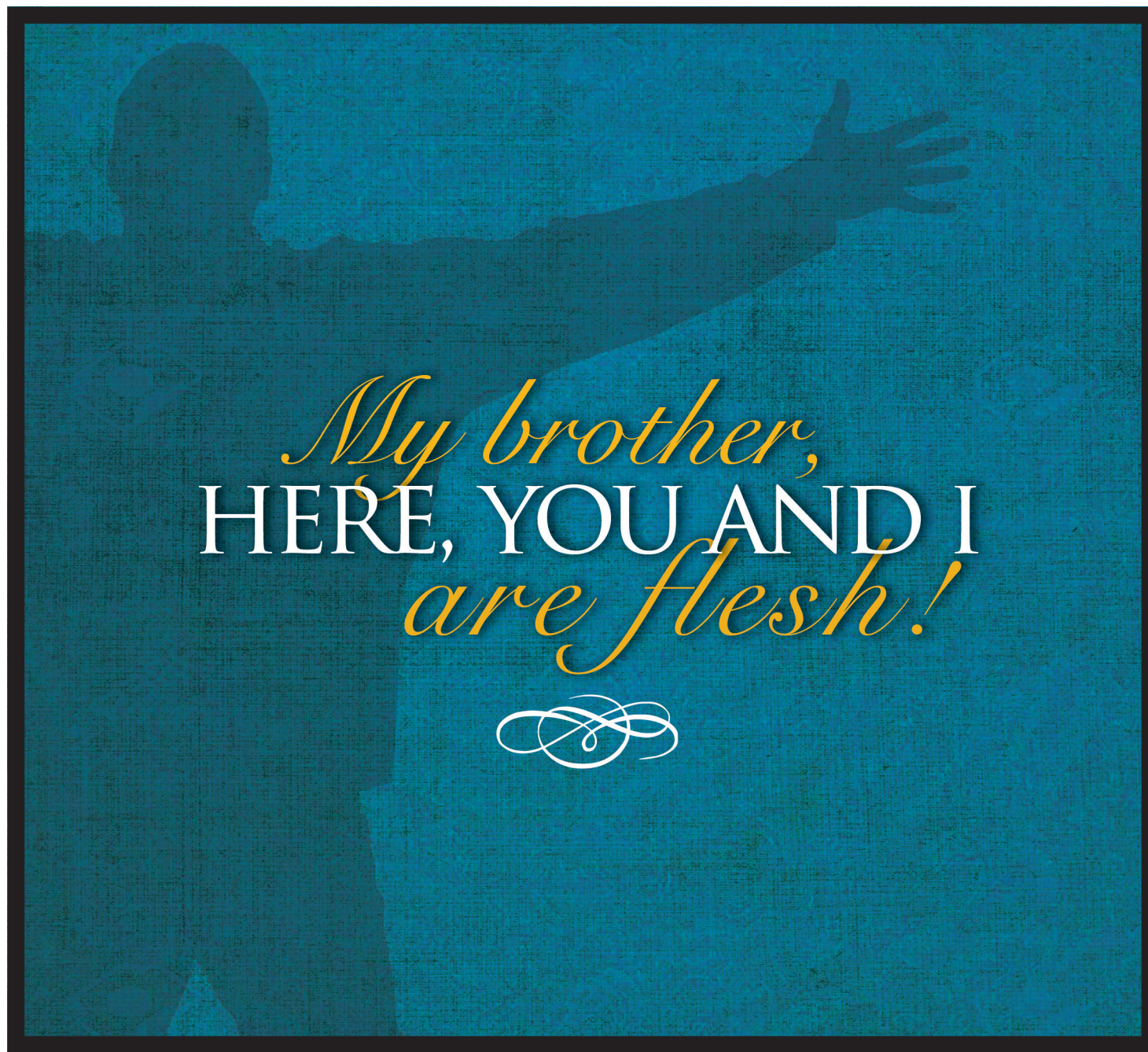
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EDITORIAL

REVELATION AND PROCLAMATION OF THE SUPREME TRUTH

When the Lord asked His disciples: *"But whom do you say that I am?"* (Mat. 16:15), that is, what do you understand about who I am?, He was asking them about what they understand about His identity. *"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son (the visible Image, Col. 1:15) of the living God (Jn. 1:18, 4:24)"* (Mat. 16:16).

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for (what you understand about my identity) flesh and blood (no human being or for the fact of being "intellectual") hath not revealed (the understanding that Christ is God comes by way of revelation) it unto thee, but my Father (eternal, invisible Spirit) which is in heaven (although God fills and covers all things and places, He came in the form and appearance of a man in His manifestation here on earth, but His eternal, invisible Spirit was not limited to His form as a man)" (Mat. 16:17).

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock (Supreme Truth, which we can only understand by revelation through His Spirit: God is One, Christ Jesus the Lord is the Only True God, Jn. 5:20) I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18). Here the Lord states He was going to build His Church (the Church belongs to Him because He is the only one who paid the price for it) *"upon this rock."* But what did the Lord mean when He said *"upon this rock"*? Was He referring to the apostle Peter? NO! (In Greek, "petros" means "a small rock"). But in this verse the word used in Greek is "Petra", which means a "large mass of rock." In the context of the Lord's question: *"Whom do you say that I am?"*, this rock is the understanding that *"He is the Christ, the Son (the visible Image or visible Body) of the (invisible) living God."* He is the manifestation and visible revelation of God Himself (Isa. 40:3-5, 9)!

On the day of Pentecost, what were the words, directed by the Holy Spirit, that caused the people to be pricked in their hearts? The Lord, through the apostle Peter, spoke to them of His death and His resurrection, stating these words:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God (the infinite and invisible Spirit) had made that same Jesus (the visible Image, the visible Body of the invisible God in His aspect as a man), whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Those who have heard this received revelation from the Holy Spirit that the Lord Jesus was the One God of the Old Testament revealed. Therefore, when they heard these words their hearts were pierced. They understood that the Lord Jesus was not a common man, but that He was the Christ (not simply an anointed person, but GOD'S ANOINTED ONE), the visible Image of God (invisible, infinite Spirit) who had subjected Himself to death, but who later resurrected and in due time ascended.

The Scriptures tell us that the Jews that were in Jerusalem were pious, dedicated and zealous. They understood perfectly when the Spirit of God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, proclaimed that there is only One God and that only He can forgive sins and save us (Isa. 6:3-4, Psalms 130:4, Isa. 43:25, Dan. 9:9, Mic. 7:18, Isa. 12:2, Isa. 43:3-11, Isa. 45:21-22, Hos. 13:4). For this reason, when the Lord, when passing through Capernaum, told the lame man that his sins were forgiven, the scribes reasoned in their hearts: *"Who can forgive sins but God only?"* (Mark 2:7). On another occasion when the Lord Jesus was in the home of a Pharisee a woman entered and began to wash His feet with her tears and to anoint them with oil. When the Lord told her that her sins were forgiven, *"they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"* (Luke 7:36-50).

When the Holy Spirit revealed unto the Jews that He that had been crucified, had laid down his life, was buried, was resurrected and ultimately received into glory was the Lord and Savior, that is, the same God who had spoken through Isaiah and the other prophets, that is when they asked: *"What shall we do?"* (Acts 2:37). Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, stood and declared unto them what God Himself manifested in flesh had commanded *"...that repentance and remission (forgiveness) of sins be preached in His Name..."* (Luke 24:47) *"...baptizing them in the NAME (not names or titles)..."* (Mat. 28:19). Based on these commandments given by the Lord, the apostle Peter was inspired to proclaim with the power of the words of the Lord:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the NAME of JESUS CHRIST for the remission of your sins..." (Acts 2:38).

Why did approximately three thousand Jews accept to be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ? It was due to the anointed declaration of what the Lord had done for them and the revelation that He is the Image of God (not another God, Isa. 43:10-11), the Only One who can save. If on that day they had not understood this message by revelation, they would not have accepted to be baptized in the NAME for FORGIVENESS of SINS. However, since they had understood that the LORD JESUS was the Only True GOD, and no one beside Him, they accepted the baptism in the NAME of GOD. Glory to God!

On the day of Pentecost, the Lord fulfilled what He had prophesied when He declared: *"On this rock (Truth) I will build (establish) My Church"* (Mat. 16:18). *"Built upon the foundation (the Word of God) of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (the Principal Truth of the Word of God: God is One and He is The Lord Jesus Christ, the visible Image of the invisible God)"* (Eph. 2:20). The central truth in all of God's Word is that "God is One and His Name is Jesus Christ the Lord." The Lord's plan was that His Church would be built and founded upon this Principal Truth and He fulfilled that plan. What caused the Gospel (the Good News of Jesus Christ the Lord) to be so explosive was the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the revelation that it was not only "some common person" who gave His life, was buried and resurrected. He who did that was the Son of the living God (the visible Image of God, Col. 1:15), God Himself manifested in flesh, 1 Tim. 3:16, Phil. 2:6-7). It is through this revelation that those Jews received the baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord began to build His Church founded on this revelation. And, *"upon this rock (Truth)"* He has continued to build His Church, even to the present, using those, who like Peter, have received this revelation and understanding and who are filled with the Presence of His Power in order to live for Him and to declare that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One true God.

"And we know that the Son of God (His Image, the Form of the invisible God, Col. 1:15, Phil. 2:6-7, who presented Himself the form and the aspect of a man,

1 Tim. 3:16, and that Word that was God was made flesh, that is, took on the form or aspect of flesh, **Jn. 1:14**) *is come, and hath given us an understanding (through His revelation to this world and by way of His Spirit in our understanding), that we may know Him (have an intimate, personal relationship with Him) that is true, and we are in Him that is true (the infinite, invisible Spirit of God), even in His Son (His Image, the visible Body of the invisible God in an aspect, appearance of a man) Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life"* (**1 Jn. 5:20**). JESUS CHRIST THE LORD is the Name of the invisible Eternal Father (**Isa. 9:6, Jn. 14:7, 18**), manifested by way of His Son (His own Image, the Image of the invisible Eternal Father, **Jn. 1:18, Col. 1:15**). JESUS CHRIST is the Name of the Only Begotten Son (the Only visible Body of our God and Father, who is invisible and eternal). JESUS CHRIST is the Name of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not another Spirit different than the Eternal Father, who is Spirit, (**Eph. 4:4, Jn. 4:24**), but is the same Redeeming Presence and Power of God that operates in the fallen human race to regenerate and transform.

My brethren, by the Blood of the Lamb and for love of His Holy Name, we, as a people of the Name of the Lord, have a joint responsibility and a holy (**2 Tim. 1:9**), high (**Phil. 3:14**) and heavenly (**Heb. 3:1**) calling to walk faithfully before our Lord Jesus Christ, to announce that God is One and to declare that Jesus Christ is God, with the power and anointing of His Holy Spirit. We must also proclaim what He has done for us, that He gave His life to forgive our sins and to save us from His wrath and from the wages of sin, so that He might give us a new life in Him and the hope of one day being with Him for -also declare to others how they may receive what God has done for and given to us: His marvelous Grace (**Jl. 2:32, Mat. 28:19, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-47, Acts 2:38 and 4:12**) and teach them to walk in His Holy Ways. This is what the Lord commanded his disciples to do after they had received the power of His Holy Spirit, beginning *"in Jerusalem (in our home and family), in all Judea, and in Samaria (at our workplace, at school, in our community), and unto the uttermost part of the earth (proclaiming and announcing this message to the rest of the world using all means and methods available to us)"* (**Acts 1:8**). God bless you,

Pastor Efraim Valverde III.



"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (the Jewish people) and upon thy holy city (the old city of Jerusalem)" (Daniel 9:24)

GOD'S PROPHETIC CLOCK

Pastor Efraim Valverde, III

"Obama Administration: A UN Resolution That Would Divide Israel And Jerusalem Is Back In Play

According to the Wall Street Journal, the White House is considering drastic measures to reboot the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Among those measures is a UN Security Council resolution that would set the parameters for a two state solution and that would recognize East Jerusalem as the official capital of a Palestinian state. If Barack Obama makes this move, it will almost certainly be before the election in November. I had previously reported that France was ready to introduce a similar UN Security Council resolution back in September, but at that time the French backed off because they did not have full support from the Obama administration. But now that Obama is approaching the end of his term, he suddenly seems more willing to make a bold move.

Remember, this is not just some Internet rumor. This comes directly from an article that was just published in the Wall Street Journal that claims to have top White House officials as the source of this information. According to those anonymous officials, the Obama administration is now ready to potentially move forward with the kind of UN Security Council resolution that I mentioned above...

"The strongest element on the list of options under consideration would be U.S. support for a Security Council resolution calling on both sides to compromise on key issues, something Israel had opposed and Washington has repeatedly vetoed in the past."

The article goes on to say that the parameters of an agreement for a two state solution would be based on the 1949 armistice line but would allow for land swaps so that many Jewish settlements that have been built since 1967 would not be swallowed up by the new Palestinian state. The Palestinians would be required to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, and

East Jerusalem would receive full UN Security Council recognition as the capital of a new Palestinian state. This is something that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has promised that he would never agree to.

But Barack Obama appears to be completely fed up with Netanyahu at this point, and that is why the White House is now strongly considering moving forward with a UN Security Council resolution. Needless to say, this would represent a dramatic change in policy from previous administrations. Here is more from the Wall Street Journal...

"Mounting a push for a Security Council resolution would be a significant shift in U.S. policy and one the Israeli government has feared could marshal international sentiment in a way that could make it harder to resist making concessions.

Such a move could further strain already tense relations between Messrs. Obama and Netanyahu, who have clashed over U.S. diplomacy with Iran and the administration's past attempts to forge a Middle East peace agreement.

Last year, the White House threatened to allow action at the U.N. to proceed without objection from the U.S. after Mr. Netanyahu said during his re-election campaign that he wouldn't support a two-state solution. The Israeli leader subsequently walked back his statement, and the White House didn't follow through with its threat."

Right now, 136 nations already formally recognize a Palestinian state. But a Palestinian state has never had full UN Security Council recognition because the United States has always blocked efforts in that direction.

Many people don't realize this, but if Obama throws his support behind such a resolution, it would be considered binding upon both the Israelis and

the Palestinians. The following comes from Israel National News...

"A Security Council resolution would be binding upon all parties, unlike General Assembly measures which are non-obligatory recommendations. Such a resolution would remain in force even after the president leaves office next January, effectively shaping the future of American policy in the region for Mr. Obama's successors. The resolution would require Israel cease construction over the Green Line and would force Israel to recognize eastern Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine."

Needless to say, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would be absolutely furious if the Obama administration pushes forward with a UN Security Council resolution that would attempt to dictate a solution to the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Perhaps this explains why Netanyahu just cancelled a meeting with Barack Obama at the White House later this month... "Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declined an offer to meet President Barack Obama at the White House later this month and canceled his trip to Washington, the White House said on Monday, citing Israeli news reports.

Netanyahu's decision to nix his U.S. visit marked the latest episode in a fraught relationship with Obama that has yet to recover from their deep differences over last year's U.S.-led international nuclear deal with Iran, Israel's arch-foe."

Of course there are lots of reasons why Netanyahu would potentially be upset with Obama. In addition to the ridiculously bad Iran deal, we should also remember that Obama tried to help defeat Netanyahu during the last Israeli election, and the Wall Street Journal has reported that the Obama administration has been actively spying on Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders.

Barack Obama has stabbed Israel in the back over and over again, and so it would be absolutely no surprise if he decided to push for a UN Security Council resolution that would permanently divide the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, such a move would have very serious implications for all of us. By dividing the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, Obama would be cursing our nation, and that is not something that any of us should want.

If Obama is going to do this, it will almost certainly happen before the election in November.

That means that we are looking at roughly an eight month time period. Personally, because of how the UN schedule works, I would say that the most likely time for such a resolution to be introduced would be in September or October. But it is definitely possible that it could come sooner than that.

For a long time, Barack Obama has expressed a desire to see the establishment of a Palestinian state before he leaves office. Netanyahu has always been his nemesis in this regard, but now Obama seems determined to try to make something happen at the United Nations while he still has the power to do so". End of article by Michael Snyder

In the last three months the various types of attacks against the Jewish people in Israel and in other countries have increased and are intensifying. Now, with these current actions and schemes the world is orchestrating against Israel, we can clearly see everything developing to bring to fulfillment the prophecies announced in **Zechariah 12:1-4 and 14:1-4**.

The Lord Jesus Christ will help us to be prepared, and while we are awaiting His Return doing His Work, announcing that He is God (**Rom. 9:5, 1 Tim. 3:16, Col. 2:9-10**), announcing what He has done for us, announcing how to receive Him, how to walk with Him and announcing that He is returning soon.

God bless, prepare, keep and use your life while you await His near return.

Pastor Efraim Valverde III



"And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he is flesh" (Gen. 6:3). "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him, for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust" (Ps. 103:13-14).

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

I have been fully aware for some time now that there are Christians who receive this publication, or who have it available to them, who do not read the messages that I have presented in other editions, or the ones I am presenting in this current edition. I am also aware that there are those who do read the articles, but with an attitude of negative criticism and judgment. Yet, these and other negative attitudes are nothing new to me.

On the other hand, for many years and even to the present, I have had that satisfaction of receiving positive testimonies from many readers, members of the Church of the Lord Jesus in different parts of the world, many of them ministers, who have borne witness that they have received blessings for their spiritual lives and for their ministries through the truths published in this newspaper.

THIS MESSAGE IS FOR ALL HUMANITY

This message is directed primarily to my brethren in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ who will read this with a positive spirit. However, on this occasion, as we meditate on the undeniable truth described in the title of this article, I ask the Lord Jesus that He will work so that not only those with a positive spirit will read and receive this message, but also those have a negative and critical spirit. The reason I pray this is because the truth that I emphasize here applies to every human being without exception, while we are here in this world, "YOU AND I ARE FLESH." For this very reason, this message is for you. Yes, for you! It is for you who at this precise moment are reading this article. It is possible that there have been other messages that you have considered are not directed to you, but to someone else, since you are in not in such a situation

as described in the message or it could be that you simply have not wanted to accept the message as if pertaining to you. However, here on earth, you and I are flesh. This is a truth that you cannot avoid as long as you live. Just as the rest of humanity was born one day, you were also born. Since you are a human being, you live being subject to the same inclination to passions and emotions as everyone else and one day as everyone else you will die.

Who you are, or where you or how you live, I do not know. What I do know with all certainty is that here, you and I are flesh. Whether you are a man or a woman or whether you are a young person, a middle aged person or an elderly person, in any case, here, you and I are flesh. If you are married or single, alone or accompanied, if you are attractive or not, whatever your height or body frame you might possess, here, you and I are flesh. Whatever your name is, whatever your age is, whatever position you may occupy in society, whether you are rich or poor, educated or illiterate, a professional or a laborer, an owner or an employee, none of this makes a difference. In any case, here on earth, you and I are flesh.

Whether you live in a palace or rent a home, if you are one who rents homes to others, whether you live on the streets or in the dump, it does not change the fact that here on earth, you and I continue to be flesh. If you have a large or a small family or even if you do not have a family that does not change the fact that here on earth, you and I are flesh. If you possess all that you need for this life, if you live with certain limitations or even if you do not have anything, the fact remains, here on earth, you and I are flesh. If you are healthy or if you are ill, if you are blessed or if you live a life of misery and unhappiness, nothing of this changes the undeniable truth that here on this earth, you and I are

flesh. I hope that you now understand why I insist that this message applies to you. As a human being, invariably your life is reflected in one or more of the situations that I described.

BELIEVER IN THE LORD JESUS OR NOT, HERE, YOU AND I ARE FLESH!

If you believe in the existence of God and your mindset is a positive one, I am certain that this message will be a blessing to you. What I share here will help you realize how little you are so that you will not forget that here on earth, you and I are flesh. As mortal human beings, how much value do you and I have before the Awesome and Almighty Creator who created us as well as the universe itself? As we consider this truth, we will be moved to a greater necessity to personally know our God and Maker. Many years ago the following declaration was made by a human being who fully enjoyed all the pleasures of this life: *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).*

If you are a person who does not believe in the Lord Jesus, I invite you to nevertheless read what I am sharing here. Whether you are a believer in the Lord Jesus or not, even if you do not want to do so, you must accept the fact that here on earth, you and I are flesh. Where can you go or what can you do to evade the hand of the Supreme Judge upon your mortal humanity? The fact that you do not believe in God does not in any way change the reality of your human condition. Neither does it make you in any way different from all other human beings. Today you are subject to the same physiological needs, exposed to the same sicknesses and inevitably to the same death as any other human being. Your pride, your rebellion and your ridiculous human bravado are worthless before the

"which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16)

presence of the Almighty God. At the end, on the day of your death, if you do not acknowledge Him beforehand, you will cry out before Him in a fearful dread, begging for His mercy upon you. Remember, here on earth, you and I are flesh. We are mortals.

If the Lord made it possible for you to read this article, I know that it will have an effect on you, because it is the desire of your Maker, who is speaking to you through this message, so that you can stop living in your stubbornness. You cannot tell me that you do not know what I am referring to. You live in a world that speaks about God and that knows the Bible and among people who in the great majority profess to be "religious" or Christian. You live among people who in the midst of their sinful, depraved lives, they celebrate "religious" holidays and other events that have their origin in God's Book, but *"which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16).* If you are reading this article it is a sign that God loves you and that He is calling you to repentance, so that you may believe in Him. Here on earth, you and I are flesh, filthy and sinful flesh.

Now, if you are counted among those who know and believe the Word of God, but who do not want to take this seriously, you will be held even more responsible before the Lord. At the last day, the day of judgement, your condemnation will be greater if you continue to take the Lord Jesus lightly. You know very well that the type of evasive action you have taken in regard to the Word of God will not deliver you from the punishment set forth by God in His Word. Here,



you and I are flesh, and like it or not, you are counted among those who are admonished and forewarned by the Holy Scriptures which state: *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Cor. 5:10). *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Heb. 9:27). You know these truths and believe them.

IN LOVE WITH THIS TEMPORARY LIFE

According to biblical chronology, six thousand years have passed since man began to experience death and to understand that he could not live here on earth forever. Nevertheless, humanity as a whole has behaved, even to this present day, as if it is not convinced of the reality that this life inevitably must end in death. Presently, among the great majority of mortals, it is considered normal and natural to place one's whole heart and effort into seeking all the benefits, happiness and pleasures that one can possibly obtain during one's lifetime. These impulses are so strong that for many neither old age, nor debilitated bodies can stop them from obsessively seeking material wealth.

We can certainly consider the above mentioned mindset to be normal among those who do not know God. I lament to say, however, that this same mindset prevails in the lives of multitudes of those who profess to be Christians. This attitude is not only found among those who live a nominal, social Christianity, which is the most common, but it can also be found among those Christians (among them many ministers) who know the Word of God well, and who even claim to having been "born again" (Jn. 3:3). It is to this class of Christians that I direct this message.

It is precisely among this Christian environment which professes to know the Word of God (some more than others), that the Lord has called me to minister for a lifetime across borders and frontiers. I have utilized all means available to me to minister to both the faithful and the unfaithful, to those who appreciate and to those

who do not, and I will continue doing so until the last day of my journey here on earth. Therefore, I trust in the Lord that He will once again reach many believers, both among those who have a positive mindset and also among those who have a negative mindset. I pray that it will also reach those who are in the valley of decision (Joel 3:14), and also those who have not yet believed and who are opposed to this message. I direct my words, for I know that you understand that here on earth you and I are flesh!

IF YOU ARE A BELIEVER, CONSIDER THIS TRUTH

The core of this present message is that you and I, my brother in the faith, aside from the place we may occupy here in this life as I listed previously, we are more importantly servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. But also, here on earth, you and I are flesh. I do not know what your place is in the "body of Christ, which is His Church." God knows it and you also know it. If you are one of the faithful followers of the Lord, He knows it. If you are not currently walking with Him as He demands, He knows it. The truth above all things is that here, you and I are flesh. If you are a sincere, humble Christian, an obedient member who participates faithfully in your local congregation or if you are the contrary to this, He knows it. Whatever your situation might be, the reality is that here, you and I are flesh.

If you are one of God's faithful, long-suffering ministers or if you are an arrogant, vain minister. If you are a companion in the ministry or if you have chosen to become an enemy, the Lord knows it. If your ministry is currently small and limited or if it is prominent and distinguished, remember, you're before the Master's sight. Whatever your situation may be, the truth remains that here you and I are flesh. Whatever your thoughts are concerning the subject I am mentioning in this writing, whether you accept it or reject it, God is aware of it. One thing I am totally sure of is that here, you and I are flesh, and if *"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are"* (James 5:17), whether we like it or not, we are also aware that we are subject to the same passions.

WITH GOOD INTENTIONS BUT STILL AN ERROR

It is no secret that among our Christian environment (and I am aware this is true worldwide) the error that I am pointing out here is believed and preached, although with good intentions, but without sufficient explanations. It is taught that when a sinner is transformed in his mind and in his spirit by the power of God, that his flesh is also automatically transformed, and that consequently sin no longer abides in him. As a result of this erroneous doctrinal interpretation, I am aware that there are many sincere, yet unwary, believers (including ministers) whose spiritual lives are being affected by this teaching. As a result of their belief in this erroneous doctrine, they present a false appearance of holiness, and as a consequence live life being miserable inside.

This doctrinal interpretation is nothing new, since it has existed for centuries among Christianity. In fact, it is one of the deceitful teachings which the Holy Spirit from the beginnings of the Church marked as being one the *"seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils"* stating that there would be those who would *"forbid to marry"* (1 Tim. 4:1-3). In fulfillment of this prophecy, there currently exists a popular doctrine of asceticism (enclosing oneself in a convent or secluded environment) which has been practiced for centuries among nominal Christianity. By this time, history bears an undeniable witness of the multiple sexual depravities which the doctrine of asceticism has produced among those who practice it. When a believer denies the reality of the filth of his flesh in an attempt to suppress the normal course of his natural impulses, he will invariably harm himself. The reality is (whether we like it or not) that here, you and I are flesh.

My brother, the fact of having believed in the Lord Jesus, or of having been *"born again"* (Jn. 3:3), or of having been transformed by the power of His Word, (it hurts me to repeat this) does not change anything, because, here, you and I are flesh. My brother, the fact of having been baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ

for the forgiveness of your sins, of having received the gift of the Holy Spirit and even the fact that you are presently serving God faithfully, does not in any way lessen the fact that here, you and I are flesh. As a result, invariably the *"filth of the flesh"* (2 Cor. 7:1) continues to live in our human condition. Or, do you honestly think that we are better than King David or the prophet Elijah or the apostle Paul?

THIS ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATION IS DANGEROUS

There are certainly some erroneous doctrinal interpretations whose negative effects are not of great danger. However, I am personally aware that the erroneous interpretation that we are discussing here has caused the spiritual death of many sincere Christians, who in all sincerity believed that once they gave their lives to the Lord, they would no longer struggle against the sinful impulses of the flesh. However, after the first few days of having experienced the supreme joy of salvation, the enemy has troubled their minds and has caused them to believe that they are not right before God. To their unpleasant surprise, they have discovered that certain sinful thoughts and impulses that they thought they would no longer have are still latent and alive in their flesh.

If in the beginning of his walk a "newborn" Christian receives the help and counsel that he needs to understand this reality, he will be mentally prepared to walk with the Lord and to firmly confront the *"filth of the flesh"* and the *"wiles of the devil"* (2 Cor. 7:1, Eph. 6:11). However, if that "babe" in Christ has as his spiritual guide one of those ministers who fake a perfection which they do not possess, the newborn Christian will be dangerously harmed. I am personally aware of many of these Christians who, having being affected by this erroneous message, no longer seek the Lord because the devil has convinced them that there is no hope for them. Others, as a result of this error, go forward in their Christian walk, faking a false purity.

However, I am also aware of a third type of believers and it this group that I hope will benefit most from what I am sharing here. This group encompasses



a greater part of Christians who have not strayed from the will of the Lord nor learned to fake a perfection that they know they possess not. Most of them are members of different congregations, but some are also ministers of the Lord. The problem that many of these faithful children of God have is that they live among environments in which falsehood and appearances prevail. These are environments in which there exists much “speaking in tongues,” much singing and much loud preaching, but all this exists only as an attempt to cover up the reality of the presence of the filth of the flesh.

In those environments those who speak and preach present a Christian walk filled with joy, victories, triumphs, blessings, healings, testimonies of deliverance, which in their proper place are perfectly fine. However, it is forbidden in these environments to speak of the hidden torments that the child of God struggles with in his personal and intimate life. The Christian who struggles with passions that he does not want to have, these struggles are the result of “the filth of the flesh”. In these types of environments of false perfection, a genuine Christian can’t find the help they desperately need. He knows that if he confesses the things he is struggling with, instead of encountering comprehension and help, he will receive judgment and exhortation and will be told that this is happening because he is “not totally repented.”

MANY SUFFER IN THESE ENVIRONMENTS OF FALSE PERFECTION

There are married couples who are living a hellish torment in their intimate lives, but who have to present an appearance of happiness and joy so that they can be counted among “the victorious.” Among these miserable Christian marriages are many ministers who stand behind the pulpit and preach with a fervor that they and the Lord know very well is far from being genuine and true. Many of these ministers of the Lord do not fake this perfection because they desire to do so, but because they are obligated to do in order to serve the

“official system” to which they pertain.

Also counted among these faithful believers are many men and women who are single due to many different reasons, being victims of this atmosphere of false perfection, they suffer and desperately seek help. Finding themselves tempted by the *“lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh”* (1 Jn. 2:16), they anxiously seek words and counsel that will provide them spiritual strength so necessary for them to be able to overcome and continue forward in their walk with the Lord. All sincere, true believers know that the devil constantly provokes the impulses that reside in the filth of our flesh in an attempt to make the faithful believer think and feel those things which he or she does not want to think or feel (this is precisely what the apostle Paul explains in Romans, chapter 7).

But when all these sincere Christians can’t find an environment in which they will receive the spiritual help which they know that they need, they are forced to continue to dance the demonic dance of spiritual masks. In this manner, multitudes of Christians, some more aware of what is happening than others, are swept away by this deadly current of phony perfection. This multitude includes members, ministers, young men and women as well as those who are middle aged, including those who are elderly. The problem that these Christians encounter is that many are aware of their need, but they do not find the help they are searching for. Unfortunately, on the contrary there are others who not only don’t seek assistance, but continue dancing the dance of false and faked perfection, seeking to ignore the undeniable fact that they, as well as you and I, are flesh.

THE REASON SOME FALL INTO THIS ERROR

In the Christian environments in which there is a *“form of godliness, but denying its power”* (2 Tim. 3:5), there exists everything, except a genuine

humiliation. The members of such environments know everything, and do everything. Someone who does not know or cannot tell the difference might be led to believe that everything is perfectly fine and that such Christians are doing the work of the Lord. In fact, there are many sincere, but unaware Christians who live and accept this farce as being true. Just like a child tries to imitate the actions of those around him, these unwary Christians attempt to imitate the actions of the fakers, even though they at times can see and feel that these actions do not alleviate their situation because the truth is that the negative human passions reside in their flesh.

From the moment that all that is said or done is carried out with the intent of trying to deny the fact that the filth of the flesh has never ceased to reside in every Christian, then automatically, this environment cannot be genuine. Wherever these erroneous teachings of false perfection of the flesh prevail, the honor and credit does not go unconditionally and totally to the Lord, because man will take some of the credit. This is precisely what has caused a spiritual ruin in the lives of many Christians, and eventually spiritual death.

That is why it is written: “But God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE” (1 Cor. 1:27-29). Invariably, any child of God will harm himself when he ignores or takes for granted this truth. For it is likewise: “As it is written, There in none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Ecl. 7:20). “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn. 1:8). When the Bible calls us righteous, we know that we can never be righteous based on our own merits

or righteousness. The truth is that we have obtained this supreme privilege only by the marvelous grace of God, because here, you and I are flesh.

A PERSONAL EXPLANATION AND WARNING

Before I enter into detail of the aforementioned, for the satisfaction and joy of my brethren, I want to testify that *“I know nothing by myself* (I have a clear conscience), *yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is God”* (1 Cor. 4:4). It has been only the power, grace and mercy of my God that has kept me for a lifetime from slipping and from becoming a victim of the filth of my own flesh. I am aware that it has not been because of my own astuteness or my own strength. As I write this, I am placing myself on the same level as every other human being, not because at anytime I have been overcome by my enemy, but to acknowledge that he has sought to work in my human condition just as he seeks to work in the human condition of everyone else. I write this to humble myself before my God and to be of help to you. I have repeated many times in this article that here, you and I are flesh, acknowledging this fact just as the apostle Paul did beforehand when he declared: *“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing”* (Rom. 7:18). By doing this I rejoice, knowing that I am giving all of the honor and credit to my Lord Jesus.

After all that I mentioned previously, it is very possible that you would like to know more about the specific qualities of the filth of the flesh, and you are correct in wanting to know. However, the information I am going to provide for you has two aspects and this all depends on your attitude. If you have a sincere, positive attitude and have humbly accepted all that I have explained to this point, beginning with the reality that here, you and I are flesh, then receive what I am about to share for your blessing and help and for your spiritual edification, my brother and my sister.



However, if you continue to have a negative attitude and despite all that I have shared, you are determined to stubbornly sustain your fake human perfection, denying the irrefutable truth that you have filth in your flesh, then what I share next will be a rebuke to your stubbornness with the hope of delivering you from your sinful pride. Because in season or out of season, one day you must acknowledge (although you may not want to or like to) that here, you and I are flesh. Therefore, according to the attitude that you have chosen to have, I challenge you in the Name of the Lord Jesus to continue reading.

CLASSIFYING THE FILTH OF THE FLESH

When in the Sacred Scriptures (particularly in the New Testament) the apostles of the Lord refer to *"the passions"* (James 5:17), of *"the lust"* (1 Jn. 2:16), and of *"the filth of the flesh"* (2 Cor. 7:1), all students of the Bible know that they are referring to the sinful condition of our human nature in general. On various occasions there have been believers who have been offended when I have used one of these expressions during the course of a teaching. I do not deny that they are unpleasant expressions, and can even qualify as being dishonorable expressions.

But what I have precisely been trying to emphasize in this article is that we need to be sincere realists in order to acknowledge and accept this "filthy" condition in our flesh, so that we will not be offended nor be "afraid of our own shadow." The fact is that some of the negative aspects of our human condition do not necessarily have to be considered as something shameful or dishonorable. What we must do, especially as faithful children of God, is to learn to put everything in its proper place and order. After all, since it was God who made our flesh, there are negative aspects which have a positive purpose, but we can only understand this through the instruction received from the Word of God.

These negative factors (call them what you want) can be placed into three categories: physical, moral and spiritual filth. We must understand that it is possible to classify them but not to separate them, since all of these different types of filth operate jointly as integral parts of our sinful humanity.

THE FIRST CATEGORY OF THE FILTH OF THE FLESH, THE PHYSICAL ASPECT

The first category of "the filth of the flesh" is the physical aspect in which the human body invariably produces waste. These include excrement, urine, sweat, mucous and other glandular waste. When they occur outside our privacy, some of these types of human waste are embarrassing, but in their proper place, they are not only correct, but indispensable. After all, ridding our bodies of these types of filth is an integral part of our physiological needs, because if we do not do so the toxins contained in the waste products can kill us.

Included in this first category of the physical aspect of "the filth of the flesh" are all the different classes of illnesses that can be named. All these are filth that adhere to our flesh against our will. There is not a single human being that claim to be totally immune to all the different types of sickness. By the way, some of these sicknesses are considered to be something natural that occurs, but others carry a stigma of dishonor.

THE SECOND CATEGORY OF THE FILTH OF THE FLESH, THE MORAL ASPECT

The second category is more complex, it has to do with "the filth of the flesh" which are of the moral character. They consist of a mysterious mixture, something we do not completely understand, of natural human impulses together with thoughts and emotions in our spirit. The first and strongest of these human impulses is

our sexual drive. I commented briefly on this earlier in this article. I use the term "briefly" because concerning this particular filth of the flesh there is much to be said, since it deals with our own human origin, as well as our being, because all of us are products of sex. We all have sexual impulses, whether they be strong or passive, very much alive or very weak. The reality established by the Creator is that due to the fact that we are human, we have a sexuality established by God. Men are masculine and women are feminine. After all, here, you and I are flesh.

Is sex something shameful? Is it a sin? Is it a dishonor? It certainly can be all these things when it occurs outside the parameters of the only "honorable" order established by God. It is written: *"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge"* (Heb. 13:4). For the natural human being who does not fear God, and therefore has no restraint, the issue of sex does not imply a problem. That is why humanity has reached the depravity that we see around us. However, for the faithful believer, whether he or she is a man or woman, young or elderly, married or single, a member or a minister, these sexual impulses can become a burning fire.

I have previously explained that there is no Christian, male or female, who can totally and absolutely control or suppress their sexual drive to the point that they never think or feel in any form or fashion those things that as a faithful believer he does not desire and even hates. It is precisely in this intimate situation where the Christian who fears God must come to the inevitable alternative of acknowledging and accepting that he lives in a sinful human condition. Thereby, he can choose to be helped or to continue faking a fictitious human perfection to his own ruin.

NON ACCEPTANCE OF THIS TRUTH DOES NOT CHANGE OUR CONDITION

If you, dear reader, are one of those Christians who are fakers and who,

ironically, is judging my words, remember what the Lord (who knows you perfectly and who knows very well what you are thinking) said: *"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"* (this applies both to men and women) (Mat. 5:28). I ask: "Did the Lord make this statement to condemn us?" No! He said it to warn His faithful, sincere children about the danger which exists in our own flesh. But He also declared this to reprove the hypocrisy of those who call themselves "perfect," so that *"no flesh should glory in His presence"* (1 Cor. 1:29).

If you are one of those believers who is presently confused by the erroneous teachings and have lived your life faking a non-existent human perfection, remember that this type of attitude is an abomination before the Lord. In addition to harming yourself, it is possible that you are negatively affecting others with your mockery. If you are a believer (or a minister) who is a victim of lasciviousness (which is part of the filth of the flesh), you have experienced in your own life that faking perfection is not the medicine for your ailment. Remember how you felt in occasions when you have been provoked or moved by filthy and wicked thoughts that have come to your mind to maliciously lust after flesh that does not pertain to you, even while being in a Christian environment (not to even mention how you have felt outside the Christian environment).

If these or other sexual temptations are your problem, do not fake perfection. But also, do not believe the devil when he tells you that you are the only one who suffers in this manner (1 Cor. 10:13). This is what I have been repeating, that here, you and I are of the same sinful material. This is not only true of those who do not fear nor serve the Lord, but it is also true of those of us who believe in the Lord. Also, do not believe those "Puritans" who make a big scandal when they learn about what you are suffering. They do this to try to cover up their own situation. Many times they are living a burning in their flesh much



worse than yours. The only difference is that they have learned to become fakers, but they cannot deny before God that the filth of their flesh is very much alive.

LET US ACKNOWLEDGE OUR PART SO THAT WE MAY OVERCOME

You and I should acknowledge and accept, just as the apostle Paul did, the undesirable, but undeniable reality of the inner struggles in which *“the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would”* (Gal. 5:17). This should not surprise or discourage you. We have been warned that *“Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”* (2 Tim. 3:12). can be certain that the powers of the air will utilize every opportunity to persecute the faithful Christians, provoking the filth of our flesh in any way possible in an attempt to destroy us. But we can defend ourselves against these attacks by putting on *“the whole armor of God”* (Eph. 6:11-18).

Therefore, I urge you to flee from being a feigned and deceptive “Christian”, which the Lord hates, since it is based on carnal pride. Instead, you should humble your flesh, confessing your condition, so that you can be “healed,” as the Holy Spirit teaches us through the apostle James (5:16). This is the only effective way to overcome your flesh in order to continue marching forward. Remember, we do not walk with the Lord by our own strength, much less by depending on our own righteousness for the simple fact that we do not have any. Those who justify themselves are deceiving themselves (1 Jn. 1:8). We, the faithful, however obtain victory only through the Lord, *“because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world”* (1 Jn. 4:4).

I could say much more concerning this major aspect of the moral type of filth of the flesh, but on this occasion before we look at the third category of “the

filth of the flesh” I will mention other filth and tendencies of the flesh that the sincere Christian is exposed to and being attacked. Some of them include gluttony, slothfulness, covetousness, contention, stubbornness, anger, and a great list of others (read the list in Gal 5:19-21). There are also the addictions which controlled some in the past such as alcohol, tobacco and various types of drugs. Many, who are now faithful Christians, are tempted by the devil, who uses the filth of the flesh in an attempt to make them lose their blessing. But the faithful overcome by confessing, trusting in the Lord and asking for help.

THE THIRD CATEGORY OF FILTH OF THE FLESH THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT

The third category of the “filth of the flesh” is the most dangerous and subtle of them all, it is the aspect of filth that works exclusively in the spirit. This type of filth can limit itself to operating solely in the mind without having to utilize the flesh. Paul classifies this kind of filth as *“filth of the spirit”* (2 Cor. 7:1). This description agrees completely with what the apostle James stated when he declared that “the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy” (Jam. 4:5). This type of filth resides in all, particularly in those members or ministers who, according to the apostle Paul, live *“having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof”* (2 Tim. 3:5).

These are the type of Christians the Lord referred to when He said that will *“come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”* (Mat. 7:15). They are the same type of “Christian” the Apostle Paul mentioned when he stated: *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter among you, not sparing the flock”* (Acts 20:29). It is not easy to detect the “filth of the spirit” that has possessed the lives of these Christians (and more particularly, the ministers), because this filth can present itself as a moral life without

The fact that this type of filth of the flesh operates among a humanity that does not know the Lord is nothing strange, but among the people of God, it is different. Among us it is a sin that can result in condemnation since it is strictly prohibited by God.

any outward stains (Mat. 23:27). This type of filth can operate solely in the thoughts and emotions, that is, solely in the realm of the human spirit.

For this reason, the form of godliness in the lives of those possessed by the filth of the spirit can present itself on many occasions as a mask of perfection. For precisely this reason that this operation consists of thoughts and emotions, it is not difficult for the faker to hide it and to disguise their hypocrisy with sincerity, pride with humbleness, hatred with love, intrigue and vengeance with nobleness, betrayal and rivalry with friendship, envy and covetousness with generosity, etc.

The fact that this type of filth of the flesh operates among a humanity that does not know the Lord is nothing strange, but among the people of God, it is different. Among us it is a sin that can result in condemnation since it is strictly prohibited by God. In fact, He commands us to do the exact opposite of these and many other similar deviations. However, *“none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand”* (Dan. 12:10).

OVERCOMING THE FILTH OF THE FLESH

In the verse in which the apostle Peter speaks of the filth of the flesh, he also states, in reference to baptism for salvation, that this is how we can obtain *“the answer of a good conscience toward God”* (1 Pet. 3:21). I am well aware that the common interpretation of this expression is that “God demands from us a clean conscience.” Such an interpretation is completely absurd, because no faithful, humble and sincere Christian, who is fully aware that his salvation comes only through the grace of God, will accept the idea that it is possible to obtain a good conscience before God by our own merits or righteousness. The Lord Jesus, being fully aware of the filth that resides in our flesh, repeats many times in His Word that it is impossible for us to have a good conscience on our own. For this reason, He never demands this from us.

As I previously mentioned, the apostle Paul in Romans 7:25 issues a cry of victory, exclaiming: *“I thank God through Christ Jesus our Lord!”* This has been and still is the cry of victory proclaimed by every faithful follower of the Lord. We have understood that our God, despite all of the filth that resides in our sinful flesh, if He sees that we acknowledge our misery, repent and humble ourselves unconditionally before Him *“and if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one to another”* (1 Jn. 1:7). For it is by His grace, by His Name, by His Spirit and by His Blood that He *“cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 Jn. 1:7) and He gives us a good conscience. His marvelous grace began cleansing us from the day that we believed in Him. It has continued cleansing us every day and it will continue to cleanse us so that we can victoriously make it to the end. Faithful believer, here, you and I are flesh, *“but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is!”* (1 Jn. 3:2). HALLELUJAH, AMEN!



THE SINFUL FILTH OF OUR FLESH

PART ONE

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

INTRODUCTION

"When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ"
(1 Pet. 3:20-21).

Considering the subject matter of this book reflected by the title, I know that it will be repulsive to more than one reader. However, the Word inspired by the Holy Spirit remains standing, and we cannot deny it, much less can we remove it. I know that what many have attempted to do is ignore this unpleasant reality, but those who do that can only bring harm to themselves. The fact is that "the filth of the flesh" doesn't disappear if we try to ignore it or say it doesn't exist.

I write this in a time I'm an old minister who has served the people of God for over half a century. My ministry has not been limited to a certain region nor to a limited number of believers or ministers. By this time in my life I have established connections with the children of God of different races and on various continents. Therefore, what I say in this commentary is based on what I have seen throughout my long journey at different times and in different places.

Furthermore, what I write here I have proven on an innumerable amount of occasions with the lament that I have heard come from the mouths of many sincere Christians, who *"abhor (their) flesh"* as Job hated his (Job 42:6). I have heard those laments from members of congregations; men, women, adults and young people, as well as from ministers of different ages, races, and positions.

The truth is that even the most revered minister during the 20 century of the Church Age, Paul, the apostle to us Gentiles, shames his flesh in order to give us a lesson and example in complete humility by saying: *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing"* (Rom. 7:18-25). Therefore, we have no other choice than to accept the reality, no matter how unpleasant it might

be. We must confront the reality by acknowledging it and speaking about it. This is one of the most effective weapons we can use to fight against the filth of the flesh. Having this in mind, James the apostle, states: *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed"* (James 5:16).

SIN WAS IN GOD'S PLAN

Someone might accuse me of being wrong when I say that the existence of sin among the human race was included in God's plan of creation. Throughout my long life I have heard many speak about the origin of sin in the Garden of Eden. I have heard people blame our first parents, Adam and Eve for the existence of sin in the human race. It has been a common thing to say that if they had not conceded to the serpent's provocation, then the sin which we, their seed, inherited would not exist. Such thinking is childish and absurd. No one can deny the fact that nothing can happen without God knowing about it, nor can anyone say that something can escape Him.

The undeniable truth is that the Creator, in His infinite wisdom, planned beforehand all that happened in the Garden. We are told in His Word that He also planned everything that occurred before and after the Garden, even to this present day. In fact, we know that he has already planned those things that are yet to be fulfilled in God's plan of creation and redemption. There is nothing that He does not know because He is the Eternal One. Time does not exist for Him. That is why it is written about Him, concerning His divinity: *"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever"* (Heb. 13:8). It is our blessing to acknowledge this irrefutable and tremendous reality. It is the key to understanding the divine mysteries.

When Adam and Eve were created, the Lord created them in a state of innocence. Without a doubt, while they were living in the Garden before the "fall," that was the human condition they

had. The greatest proof of the innocence which was in them is the fact that *"they were both naked, Adam and his wife, but were not ashamed"* (Gen. 2:25). Naturally, they possessed sufficient mental maturity and wisdom to have dominion over all the creation, but there was no malice in them. On the other hand, we read in the book of Genesis that, although they were commanded by God to *"be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth"* (Gen. 1:28), they did not fulfill this command while they were in the Garden in the state of innocence.

The first child born to them, Cain, was begotten by Adam and conceived by Eve when they had already been expelled from the Garden (Gen. 4:1). It was impossible for such a thing to happen during the time that there was no sexual attraction in them. Therefore, we can easily understand that as long as they were in that state of innocence, they had no "sin" in them, beginning with the sexual impulses, and continuing with all the other emotions, thoughts and passions which the Word of God categorizes as sin. We see, therefore, that it was indispensable for "sin" to exist in order for the Divine plan to continue.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Presently, one of the most popular teachings is attributing all the evil that happens in the world to the devil, because "God is only love," and therefore cannot have any part in evil. This way of thinking glorifies Satan by creating in the minds of everyone the impression that the devil has the power to do as he wishes. This is a vile lie. It is a lie that the Old Serpent likes. It teaches that the Evil One was able to deceive Eve on his own initiative. The terrible truth, although difficult to swallow for some, is that which God Himself declares, saying: *"That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me, I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things"*

(Isa. 45:6-7). As confirmation of what I mention here, we find the following declarations in the Word of God: *"Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good?"* (Lam. 3:37-38) Also, *"Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid" shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"* (Amos 3:6) is certainly true that *"God is love"* (1 Jn. 4:8), but He is also a *"consuming fire"* (Heb. 12:29).

When Satan wanted to do harm to the Patriarch Job as is described in his book; we see that he first had to ask permission from God to do so (Job 1:8-12 and 2:35). In the New Testament, the Lord implies that He gave Satan permission to torment Peter, when He said: *"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat"* (Luke 22:31). Also, when Pilate threatened Him, boasting that he had the power to crucify Him or to release Him, the Master's answer was: *"Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above"* (John 19:11).

I emphasize the fact that how terrible it would be if our enemy did have his own power and authority to destroy us. King David said: *"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us—naturally implying the presence of Satan himself in the enemies of the children of God—then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us"* (Psalm 124:2-3). I know that it is difficult for many believers to accept the raw, heavy truths which I am declaring here, especially those who for a lifetime have been taught the basic, elementary message that "God is only love." However, all of us have no alternative than to accept these truths. We cannot reject them because they are Divine truths.

WE CANNOT DISCONNECT FROM OUR FLESH

On one occasion a sincere, young man, who I knew to be a faithful Christian, came up to me and said: "Pastor, please pray for me, so that these sinful desires I feel will leave me." I answered him in the same way I have answered each one of the children of God whom at different times and in different places have made that same request. "You are asking me to do the impossible, because it would



be impossible to remove you from your own body." I mentioned earlier that there have always been Christians who have attempted to ignore reality. Inclusively, many "ministers of God" mimic the ostrich, which buries his head in the sand and thinks that by doing so he is also hiding his entire body. Personally, throughout the length of my walk with the Lord, I have dealt with Christians of this attitude. They react in one of the following two ways: (1) Seeking at all costs to ignore or hide the undeniable sinful condition of their own flesh, they do not touch the subject. They feign a holiness and human perfection which, according to the Word of God, doesn't exist (**1 Jn. 1:8**). They behave in this way in an attempt to create an aura of extraordinary respect and honor in the eyes of those who surround them and those who they preside over. What they are really doing is cultivating an "appearance of godliness," which is reproved by the Word of God (**2 Tim. 3:5**). (2) The second group of Christians is much like the first, except these do mention the subject of sin. Yet, they speak of it in order to teach that they now "walk on water," claiming that sin no longer exists in their lives. Although this may seem absurd and incredible to those who think "normally," the truth is that there have always been this type of extremists. What is even more incredible is that there are always those who would believe these extremists and who follow them. All who have believed and lived this way throughout the centuries, invariably, have brought judgment and a curse upon themselves. Furthermore, those among them who were teachers have harmed their followers, who have deemed it biblically correct to emulate such examples.

I have witnessed these two types of behaviors at different times and in different places, and among different races and cultures. They exist in different so-called Christian religious groups and organizations. However, I have seen this more often among those who believe what the apostles preached and administered, that the Baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ "does save us", of which baptism Peter refers to in our initial scripture (**1 Pet. 3:20-21**). Baptism Does Not Remove the Filth(negative human passions) of the Flesh. We are aware that the majority of Christian believers, groups and

The apostle James tells us: "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are"(James 5:17). With this he makes it clear that not even one of the biblical heroes, both in Israel and in the Church, were exempt of the inheritance which is fruit of the "sin in the Garden."

denominations which don't baptize "in the NAME" but rather in the titles Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of which are attributed to belong to the bearer of "the NAME" (The Lord Jesus Christ) in **Matthew 28:19**. Most if not all these groups claim that baptism "Does Not Save." They argue that it is simply an outward demonstration of their profession of faith. From the very moment that they don't recognize and acknowledge that the "NAME of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" is the Lord Jesus Christ (**Phil. 2:9-11**), they don't accept that baptism in the NAME as the fulfillment of the commandment for salvation and for *"the remission of sins"* (**Acts 2:38**) *"in his NAME"* (**Luke 24:47**).

As a result of the divergence in this important doctrinal truth, it has been and continues to be natural for those of us who know and believe that baptism is "in the NAME" continue defending this Biblical truth, maintaining that *"the baptism DOES now save us"* (**1 Pet. 3:21**). *"He that believeth and is baptized SHALL BE SAVED..."* (**Mark 16:16**). *"...and be baptized every one of you in the NAME of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."* (**Acts 2:38**) When we receive remission of sins, we are then SAVED from the wages of sin. Yet, it is in this verse that we encounter the anomaly and the issue that occupies us in this study. There are those who overemphasize the fact that the act of baptism does produce salvation. However, by doing this they ignore the spiritual aspect and also the declaration

the apostle makes within the parenthesis. I am well aware that this false appearance stems from a dogmatic, extremist zeal. However, on other occasions it stems from the fact that the teacher or preacher, being unlearned, ignores the basic punctuation marks such as the period, comma, exclamation point, question mark, and parenthesis. Such is the case in the scripture in question.

I remember many years ago that one of these unlearned preachers, who by the way did not know how to accept instruction, nor much less correction, declared from the pulpit: "The baptism does now save us. But not the removing of the filth of the flesh! It does not save in that way! But as demanding a good conscience before God! In that way it does save!" After the service I attempted to explain to him about the usage of parentheses. However, his arrogant reply was "that doesn't mean anything to me." The truth is that the parenthesis does matter, and what Paul calls "the filth of the flesh," whether we like or not; continues living in the flesh of the believer even after he has been baptized with the baptism that "doth save." This is not true because the believer wants it to be so, on the contrary, I am personally aware of a countless amount of faithful believers and ministers who have come to me throughout my years in the Lord's service, especially in my aged years, crying with desperation that I pray for them so that they can control the sinful impulses of their flesh. Although sexual impulses are the most common tormentor, there are other impulses as well.

"...HE ALREADY COMMITTED ADULTERY IN HIS HEART."

The expression I cite above is very familiar to someone who knows the Word of God (**Matt. 5:28**). I have been asked to comment on this verse on many occasions. The Lord's statement is so strong here that it has forced sincere Christians to comment on it as they try to ease their conscience after looking at the "mirror of the soul." I repeat that this type of temptation does not operate only in Christian men, but in corresponding fashion in Christian women as well. Throughout a good number of years of my walk with the Lord, probably because the teaching of "the sanctified ones had influenced me" I lived under the false impression that there are Christians-

especially among the women- who lived their lives free from sexual impulses. Seeing how much I battled with the passions of my human condition, especially when I was in prime physical strength, in my ignorance I envied those Christians who I thought lived free from these passions.

Yet, with the passing of time, God awakened me to the reality, which deeply shook me, and I had to stop dreaming as I acknowledged something so simple as is stated in the following verse: *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (**Rom. 3:23**). Also, *"if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"* (**1 Jn. 1:8**). It is appropriate to explain here that what the Lord says in **Matthew 5:28** is not intended to condemn us. The Lord simply makes this declaration so that no one will attempt to justify himself or herself, claiming that they have no sin.

The apostle James tells us: *"Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are"* (**James 5:17**). With this he makes it clear that not even one of the biblical heroes, both in Israel and in the Church, were exempt of the inheritance which is fruit of the "sin in the Garden." If all these individuals distinguished by God are counted among "the sinners", then it is Biblically impossible and even absurd to think that one of us is exempt from sin.

For this reason I must repeat the unpleasant, but undeniable reality that the Creator planned for sin to exist in the flesh. Many times His reasoning is much too difficult for us to understand, due to His "incomprehensible judgments" (**Rom. 11:33**). Not only the humans who do not know the Lord are partakers of this condition, but we, the children of God, partake of it as well (**Heb. 2:14**).

This is why I state that if we ignore the parenthesis, we are harming ourselves. If we act this way due to our dogmatism or due to plain ignorance it still affects us because it makes us believe that being baptized in the Name for salvation delivers us or makes us immune from the filth of sin which continues to reside in our body■



I thank God for allowing us the opportunity to gather together for a fellowship service in Saba Colon, Honduras. There were brothers present from Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and the United States together with members of the local congregation. I was extremely pleased in seeing how all those present listened attentively to the teachings. We missed the brethren from Ecuador who were unable to attend. Hopefully they will be able to attend on another occasion. I give praise to the Lord for the valuable effort made by everyone that was able to attend. It was well worth the effort. Pastor Efraim Arreola

Service in Honduras

from Madera, California, shared the Word of God with us, speaking to us about the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:19). We were happy to see him once again in Saba. He also shared his testimony with us about the miraculous way the Lord healed him. Glory to God! Only by the power of the Lord he is still alive. The brethren had desired to hear his testimony in person and we glorify the Lord Jesus for this miracle. Let us continue praying for our brother Efraim Arreola.

Later, Pastor Efraim Valverde III shared with us teachings concerning marriage based on **Ephesians 5:22**. He also spoke to us concerning God's prophetic clock and other valuable teachings. Glory to God for the wisdom He has given our brother to share these tremendous teachings. We do well in listening attentively to the words shared by our brother which are so necessary for the world we live in today. By all means, we do this without forgetting the teachings of

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr., who continues to nourish us through the teachings God gave him to leave to us in written form.

We also enjoyed the savory meals prepared for us by our brothers and sisters. I am very grateful to God. This gathering was a great blessing to me, although the great effort required to coordinate it affected me physically. But that does not matter. It was well worth it. *"For all these things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word" (Isa. 66:2).*

Pastor Orlando Fernandez

Once again we thank our Lord Jesus Christ for allowing us to host this fellowship service on February 5-7 of this year.

Service in Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca

Beginning on Friday, we began sharing the Word of God in the plaza of Juxtlahuaca through songs, skits and evangelization to the people that passed through this area. We did it hoping and trusting that God would touch the hearts of some of those present and that His Word would not return void.

On Saturday morning, Bro. Daniel Ybarra, a minister from Salinas, California, led us in prayer and then taught us concerning the reason many Christians were being deceived. He shared with us that one of the reasons for this deception is that we are not close to the Lord Jesus, because His Word tells us: *"Many shall come in My Name, saying: I am the Christ; and they shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:5)*. He stated that this deception comes as a result of carelessness in our personal walk with God. He cited King Saul as an example, who for a short time obeyed God and walked with Him according to how the Lord demands from us. However, when he became careless in his relationship with the Lord, he began distancing himself

from God and began doing things which did not pertain to him, such as offering the sacrifice, something which only the prophet Samuel should do. He shared with us how this deception can manifest itself in many different ways. For this reason we must demand understanding from the Lord in these troubled times. What is presently occurring in Israel and around the world are signs indicating how short the time is before the Second Coming of the Lord. We should lift our voices to the Lord, asking Him to deliver us from being deceived.

Later that evening, Pastor Efraim Valverde III provoked us to dedicate a time to seek the Lord. He also spoke to us about the "Convocation, A Challenge to Spiritually Violent Christians" (Joel 2:12-18). He reminded us that in prayer and fasting we should place these three petitions before the Lord. First of all, that the Lord will pour out His Holy Spirit upon us. Second, that He will confirm His Word through signs and wonders.

Thirdly, that we must continue to pray for and bless the people of Israel. He also spoke to us about having prayer vigils, participating on a more consistent basis of the Lord's Supper and of the washing of the feet. He told us that the purpose of this convocation was to help us draw closer to God, to affirm ourselves in His Word and in His truth. He pointed out that this challenge is directed to the children of God who know that only the Lord can help us, and who trust in the power of the Lord's Spirit. He also shared that behind the actions of the convocation there should always be the correct spirit of the convocation, so that when the Lord Jesus returns for His Church, He will find us prepared. Afterward, He invited us to come to the altar of the Lord to pray and to seek the presence of the Lord and His mercy. The Spirit of the Lord moved in a mighty way.

On Sunday morning we began once again with a prayer. Then, Pastor Efraim Valverde III spoke to us concerning the limit God has

established on each one of our lives. He told us that we should not wait until we are near death to draw closer to God. He shared with us that our time here on earth is limited and that there is no guarantee that we will have the opportunity to seek the Lord in the future. He also shared the testimony of two members of the congregation who had departed to be with the Lord the week previous to this service and then asked the question: "Who is next?" He stated that each one of us should put our house in order, speaking on our personal relationship with God. He also stated that the passion for God in our lives should be consistent, based on conviction and not on our human emotions.

Later that day several couples presented their children before the Lord and over thirty persons were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Once again I thank the Lord Jesus Christ for His mercies and for blessing us and giving us something to reflect on through His Word. We thank all of those who were able to accompany us in this fellowship service. May the peace of the Lord Jesus govern your lives.

Shalom, Pastor Timoteo A. Cervantez Perez



"Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long" (Psa. 119:97).

By means of this brief report, I want to share how the Fellowship Service in the San Diego County Area was a great blessing. Pastor Epigmenio Pulido began the service and then passed the placed over to Bro. Antonio Zeferino Jr., who led us in several worship songs during which we felt the presence of the Lord. Following this time of worship, Bro. Felipe Nava shared the Word of God with us, using the Scripture: *"Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgements which I speak in your ears this day" (Deut. 4:5-7).* In speaking to the children of Israel, God emphasized the importance of instruction, of repetition and of meditation on God's Word. Also to His Church among the Gentiles, God emphasized the importance of searching the Scriptures (John 5:39).

As a pastor I am astonished upon seeing how few Christians read the Word of God daily. One of the characteristics that distinguish the children of Israel is that when the indicated time comes for them to read the Word of God, they do so without shame, no matter where

they may be at the moment. For my part, I have read the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation 18 times, and I am in the process of reading through it once again. Currently I am reading in the book of Psalms and in my daily journey through the Word of God I can echo what the Psalmist declared: *"Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long" (Psa. 119:97).*

We were also reminded that we should appreciate receiving instruction, which come through the vessels that God chooses to minister His Word, who have taught us a doctrine of truth and who have warned us of messages that are "part truth and part lies," in other words, the spirit of iniquity. He also mentioned the verse: *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Tim. 3:1-7).* He told us that we are living in perilous times and that there are diverse attacks from Satan that can affect many different areas of our lives.

Service in San Diego, CA

In conclusion, he mentioned how Christian marriages should have a firm foundation upon which to instruct their children (Deut. 6:7-8), in order to be able to transmit the Word of the Lord so that our conviction, our life and our example can make its mark upon the lives of our children, even if they later stray from the Lord's path. He mentioned that it is important for the parents to let their children know that whenever they face serious problems, they can run to their parents for spiritual help, and that we as parents should be that pillar of strength that they can lean on. During this same time, Pastor Efraim Valverde III was ministering to the pastors and ministers concerning the responsibilities we bear on our shoulders. He emphasized the fact that we should be spiritual servants when we minister to the people, and that we should not serve according to the flesh, but should allow the Spirit of God to work in us and through us. He

also mentioned that anytime we plan a major fellowship service, if we prepare for it with prayer and fasting, then we are preparing the environment for that activity to be a spiritual success. He also mentioned that we should be a spiritually disciplined people. He also mentioned that more than ever before, we should be seeking the face of the Lord. The pastor also provoked us to coordinate ourselves, just as his grandfather had previously done. He reminded us of the "Convocation, A Challenge to Violent Christians," and to use it as a method of praying and fasting at the same time and on the same day.

We thank the Lord for the following pastors that have coordinated with one another, being in the same mind, to host this fellowship service: Pastor Jaime Vigil from San Marcos, Pastor Martimiano Ortiz from Poway, Pastor Luis Quintanar from Oceanside, Pastor Epigmenio Pulido from San Diego, Pastor Fidel Resendiz from Escondido and myself, pastor in Vista. It is our pleasure to serve our brethren, so that they may receive a blessing from the Lord.

Pastor Alfredo Tienda

Service in Guatemala

the brothers from Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mexico joyfully received. As a result of this blessing, four brothers were baptized. Glory to God!

That evening, we returned to Ciudad Hidalgo, Chiapas, Mexico, where we once again ministered the Word of God. The next day, brother

Genaro Villatoro, who hosted us in his home and who also took us to the airport, was baptized in the glorious Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Our brothers in these places have been receiving Godly instruction through the books left to us as an inheritance by our beloved brother,

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr., of blessed memory. We thank God that He has chosen Pastor Efraim Valverde III and the congregation in Salinas, California, to continue forward with this work.

God bless those of us who were able to accompany Pastor Fred Griffith from Lake Elsinore, California, on this trip including Pastor Emanuel Woods from Las Vegas, Nevada, brother Pablo Ojeda from Mexicali, Mexico and your servant, Ubaldo Rojo, pastor in Mexico City, Mexico.

Dear readers of the newspaper, "Maranatha." I greet you in the glorious Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. On this occasion, God allowed us to be in Guatemala from February 26th to the 28th of the current year, where our brothers from different countries came together. We were on the island of Tulate where our brother, Isaac Rodriguez, is the pastor.

The Lord Jesus honored us with His presence, allowing us to preach His Word with liberty, which



YOUTH SECTION

Sis. Keren Corcoles



God bless all those who might read this newspaper, “Maranatha,” which has been a blessing in my life. It is a privilege which I feel that I don’t deserve to share these few words with you, since I know that the young people who read this publication are young people who love the Lord Jesus.

I thank God for the spiritual environment in which He has allowed me to be raised, for the ministry that God gave to our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr., and for each of the faithful pastors that have been a blessing and a help for my life. I also thank God for my family which has been an example for me and a great blessing as well.

We are living in dangerous times in which there are many things which around us that try to separate us from the Lord. If we are still standing, it is only by His mercy. Nothing can continue to preserve us in these difficult times except for the Lord. This is why He invites us to seek Him.

God, through the apostle Paul, counsels us to flee from our own desires which seek to separate us from the Lord and that we should seek those things which will draw us closer to Him. *“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity,*

peace, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22). The action of fleeing from sin and from our youthful lusts does not make us cowards or weak. On the contrary, by fleeing these things, we become strong in the Lord. Let us avoid situations and places that are not proper for a son or daughter of God. Let us not expose ourselves to temptation. Rather, instead of seeking that which is evil, let us seek that which is good, that which pleases God.

The Lord through this same verse encourages us to seek the company of those who seek the Lord out of a pure heart. He encourages us to continue attending our local congregation. We should seek to have friends that love and seek the Lord with all their hearts and that have the same hope as we do to be with Him one day. We should avoid those who incite us to do that which is not pleasing to the Lord. We should not develop close relationships with them because people influence our lives more than we realize.

Although this time that we are living in is certainly dangerous, it is also a time in which God has promised to do great things through His faithful children. For this reason, young person, I encourage you to continue to seek the Lord. Let us ask the Lord that He make us partakers of what He is doing and of what He will do in the future. I also encourage you to not become discouraged in presenting your petitions before God, because *“He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).*

Please continue to pray for me, for my family and for the youth in Purepero, Michoacan, so that God will keep us unto the end. God bless you.

Your sister in the Lord, Keren Corcoles.

WOMEN OF GOD

Sis. Beatriz Perez

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:2).

It was more than twenty years ago that I was baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in obedience to what the Scripture says in the book of **Acts 2:38**. Before that, I remember the first time I attended a Christian service. On that occasion pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr., was preaching and I remember thinking, “wow I have never heard anyone speak the Word of God with such clarity”, being that I was brought up in the Catholic environment. What the pastor shared on that occasion, concerning our families and our children, really impacted my life. At that time I was expecting my first daughter.

“Train up a child in the way that he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6). Pastor Valverde, Sr. shared this and other Scriptures, adding: “Sister, fill your child’s mind with the Lord Jesus Christ, so that even while your child is in your womb, he or she will already be hearing that Jesus Christ is Lord.”

After I had given my life to the Lord Jesus, while I was reading His Word in **Deuteronomy 6:4-7**, I understood the importance and the responsibility I have as a mother to instruct my children in the ways of the Lord. By the grace of God I began putting into practice what I had understood and began teaching my children Bible verses and Psalms. The first verse they learned was **Deut. 6:4**, together with **Psalms 23**. By this time God had blessed my husband with two children. One was three years old and the

other was two. I was amazed that in only two hours they were able to memorize both the verse and the Psalm. I have continued doing this for the past twenty years. I know that my children are not perfect, but I also know that my Lord will fulfill His promise to keep them, as long as we do our best in obeying the Lord, and ask Him for His help. I thank God that I have been able to dedicate time to them since I am a stay-at-home mother. My husband and I are well aware that secondary only to our relationship with God and with one another, the most valuable possession we have is our children.

I thank God for the ministry He placed on our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr., which has been and continues to be a great blessing for me, for my husband and for our children. I thank the Lord for the marvelous teachings and revelations He placed in Pastor Valverde, Sr. mind and heart, beginning with the understanding that God is One and that His Name is Jesus Christ. Also, the privilege of understanding that the nation of Israel is God’s chosen people and that there is a great blessing in loving and blessing them. These, together with many other marvelous teachings have been a blessing to us. I also thank the Lord for our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde III, and for the ministry God placed on him to continue in the work of the Lord. May the Lord bless him.

Please pray for my husband, Clemente Perez, for me, for my children and for the congregation in Elma, Washington. God bless you.

Sis. Beatriz Perez,
Wife of Pastor Clemente Perez
In Elma, Washington



BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

The doctrine of baptism is a subject of supreme importance, and has been considered to be so throughout the centuries which have passed since the Church was founded by our Lord Jesus Christ. He himself demonstrated the prominence of this sacrament when he issued the following command: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16). He also commanded His apostles to: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"* (Matthew 28:19). He also emphasized the importance of being baptized, when He traveled to the Jordan River where John was baptizing, and asked John to be baptized Him, saying: *"Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:15).

Many present-day religious leaders teach that baptism is not truly important; thereby contradicting the same Lord they claim to obey and serve. They are following the example of the Pharisees and lawyers who "rejected the counsel of God against themselves" by refusing to be baptized by John (Luke 7:30). Nevertheless, this tract is not directed to those who oppose the Word of God, but to the sincere

Christians, who, having a pure and sincere heart, want to obey the Word of God. These Christians are willing to obey God's commandments, whether they come directly from the Lord or through His apostles, since the Lord bestowed upon them His authority when He declared: *"He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me"* (Matthew 10:40). I must clarify here, that I am not discussing the subject of water baptism with the purpose of obtaining members for a certain religious denomination or organization. Rather, my goal is that the obedient Christian, whoever and wherever he is, will receive from God the fullness of His salvation. Now that we are aware of these basic truths, let us now continue in our discussion by considering the following questions.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF WATER BAPTISM?

The Lord stated that the *"he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, through Peter's lips, declared: *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you...for the remission of your sins..."* (Acts 2:38). Paul, referring to the Lord's sacrifice, declares that the Lord gave Himself for His Church *"that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing*

of water (baptism) by the Word" (Eph. 5:26). Peter, referencing the fact that Noah was saved by water in the ark, states: *"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us..."* (1 Peter 3:21).

HOW SHOULD WATER BAPTISM BE ADMINISTERED?

Paul explains to us that baptism is a symbol of the burial of one who has died. For this reason he poses the following question: *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death"* (Rom. 6:3). On another occasion he explains to us that we are *"BURIED with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him"* (Col. 2:12). According to these Scriptures, baptism is a symbolic burial through which the believer, now dead to the world (repented) is buried in the waters of baptism and emerges from them, ready to live a new life in Christ. For this reason, baptism should be administered through immersion, submerging the body of the penitent completely in water, according to the example given by the Lord Himself when He entered into the Jordan River to be baptized: *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water"* (Matt. 3:16). Likewise, when Phillip

baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, the Scriptures tell us that *"they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water..."* (Acts 8:38-39).

WHAT NAME SHOULD BE INVOKED DURING BAPTISM?

The Lord commanded His disciples to baptize the Gentiles *"in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matt. 28:19), and when the apostles carried out the Master's commandment, they baptized thousands upon thousands of believers in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They did not disobey the Lord, as some have had the audacity to say. On the contrary, they faithfully executed His commandment, because they had understood that the "Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" is JESUS the Lord, and that He is ONE. They understood when the Lord told them: *"He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father"* (John 14:9). They understood that *"God was manifest in the flesh"* (1 Tim. 3:16). They understood that the Lord Jesus was Israel's Messiah, and that He could be none other than God Himself, because there is only one God (Deut. 6:4, Isa. 44:6). They understood that only the God, YHWH, can save, and they were given revelation to understand that the Lord Jesus is that same God, because the Name of God given to men that they might be saved is JESUS the Lord (Acts 4:12). This is the Name *"which is above every other name"* that Joel mentioned when he prophesied: *"That whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered (saved)"* (Phil. 2:9, Joel 2:32).

The following Scripture verses bear witness that the original believers in the Church were all baptized

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calling upon the Name of Jesus Christ, and never with the titles Father, Son and Holy Spirit: **Acts 2:38, Acts 8:16, Acts 10:48, Acts 19:5, Acts 22:16, Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:27, 1 Pet. 3:21.** The baptism invoking the titles of Father, Son and Holy Spirit was not utilized in the apostolic era or in the first centuries of the Church. It was an interpretation which came later as part of the package of many other false doctrines, fruit of the apostasy, which were accepted and confirmed by the Council of Nicea in the year 325 A.D.

TO WHOM DOES THE BAPTISM BY IMMERSION, INVOKING THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, APPLY?

You, the reader, can find the answer in the Word of God. It is for the Jews (**Acts 2:36-38**). It is for the Samaritans (**Acts 8:14-16**). It is for the Gentiles (**Acts 10:45-48**). It is for believers who have already been baptized with other baptisms (**Acts 19:1-5**). *"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call"* (**Acts 2:39**).

In conclusion: My beloved brethren and friends, if you love the Lord and are one of those who are interested in being sure of the salvation of your soul, we sincerely invite you in the love of Christ to meditate on this important doctrinal subject. The message contained within this tract is not merely a denominational point of view, but is a very specific commandment given by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who declared: "He who believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Note: If you were enlightened by reading this brief tract or if it awakened an interest in you to know more about this fundamental doctrine in the process of salvation, we invite you to visit your brethren at the address listed on this tract or write to the editor of Publicaciones "Maranatha."

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

"Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (**Acts 16:29-31**).

I must inform you that this message is not for everyone. It is only for those who are convinced of the fact that none of the many things that this world has to offer can give the peace that their soul desires.

Neither is it written with the intent of obtaining followers by attempting to convince someone to leave their religion to accept a different one. On the contrary, it is for those who have already experienced the fact that no religion can change their lives. This message is intended to help those who, because of the miserable circumstances in which they presently live, whether it is a sickness, marital or family problems, addictions, traumas, prisons or similar situations, have arrived at the conclusion that only God can deliver them.

It is for those who have come to the point in their lives in which they are compelled to ask the same question that the jailer at Philippi asked Paul and Silas: *"What must I do to be saved?"* If you find yourself

in this category, through the love of Christ the Lord, I will explain to you God's plan of salvation precisely as it is described in the Holy Bible.

FIRST STEP: You must acknowledge and confess your misery and need before God, and you must sincerely repent from your sins. Without this fundamental step, everything else you do will be in vain (**Acts 3:19**).

SECOND STEP: You must now accept the Lord Jesus as the Savior of your soul. You must believe that by His Grace and His Blood that He shed on the cross, He is able to cleanse all your sins, no matter how filthy they might be (**Isaiah 1:18**).

THIRD STEP: You must believe that by doing the previous step, this is proof that you have become a partaker of the miracle of having been *"born again"* (**John 3:3**), which is the same miracle as having been *"born of God"* or *"begotten of God"* (**1 John 5:18**).

FOURTH STEP: It is now imperative for you to be immersed in the waters of baptism just as the Lord was, making certain that when you do so, the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ is invoked upon you (**Acts 2:28 and 4:12**).

FIFTH STEP: Being now a *"child of God"* (**1 John 1:12**), a *"new creature in Christ"* (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), allow the Lord—who now lives within you—to direct you in how you must live, what you must do and what things are not beneficial to you.

SIXTH STEP: The Lord has promised to give each of His children the power of His Holy Spirit to help us to overcome and to give forth the *"fruit of the Spirit"* (**Galatians 5:22**). Ask the Lord to give you this gift together with the evidence of *"speaking with other tongues"* (**Acts 2:4**).

SEVENTH STEP: Exercise yourself in reading the Word of God so that you might grow spiritually and become grounded in your faith. Occupy yourself as much as possible in serving others, thereby doing God's work.

FINAL STEP: now try to live the rest of your life in peace and in holiness, loving everyone, and being in communion with those who love the Lord as you love Him now. Seek out as much as you can the fellowship of those who live *"looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ"* (**Titus 2:13**).

CONCLUSION: Even though we may not know you, the Lord knows who you are, and our prayer is that He will bless you. We also ask our Lord Jesus that He will work in your life, praying that the plan described in this tract will bring the change in your life that you greatly desire. If the Lord places in your heart the desire to receive help from us in any way that we can, please contact us. We are here to serve you.

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FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

The LORD our God is one
LORD (Dt.6:4)

God is not a Trinity
(John 1:1, Col. 1:15)

The Supreme Name of our
God
Is the LORD Jesus Christ
(Phil. 2:9)

Baptism is by immersion
(Rom. 6:4)

In the name of the LORD
Jesus Christ (Act. 2:38)

The Holy Spirit of God
manifests itself by means of
the fruits (Gal. 5:22-26)
The gift of the Holy Ghost by
the evidence of speaking in
tongues.

To seek to live a sanctified life
is an imperative requirement
(Heb. 12:14)

The Church is ONE and it
belongs to the LORD
(Matthew 16:18, Acts 20:28)

The Church of the LORD is
not a religious organization,
It is the body of Christ
(I Cor. 12:27, 2 Tim. 2:19)

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