

THE LORD IS COMING
1 Corinthians. 16:22



A translated version of the International Christian periodical
MARANATHA

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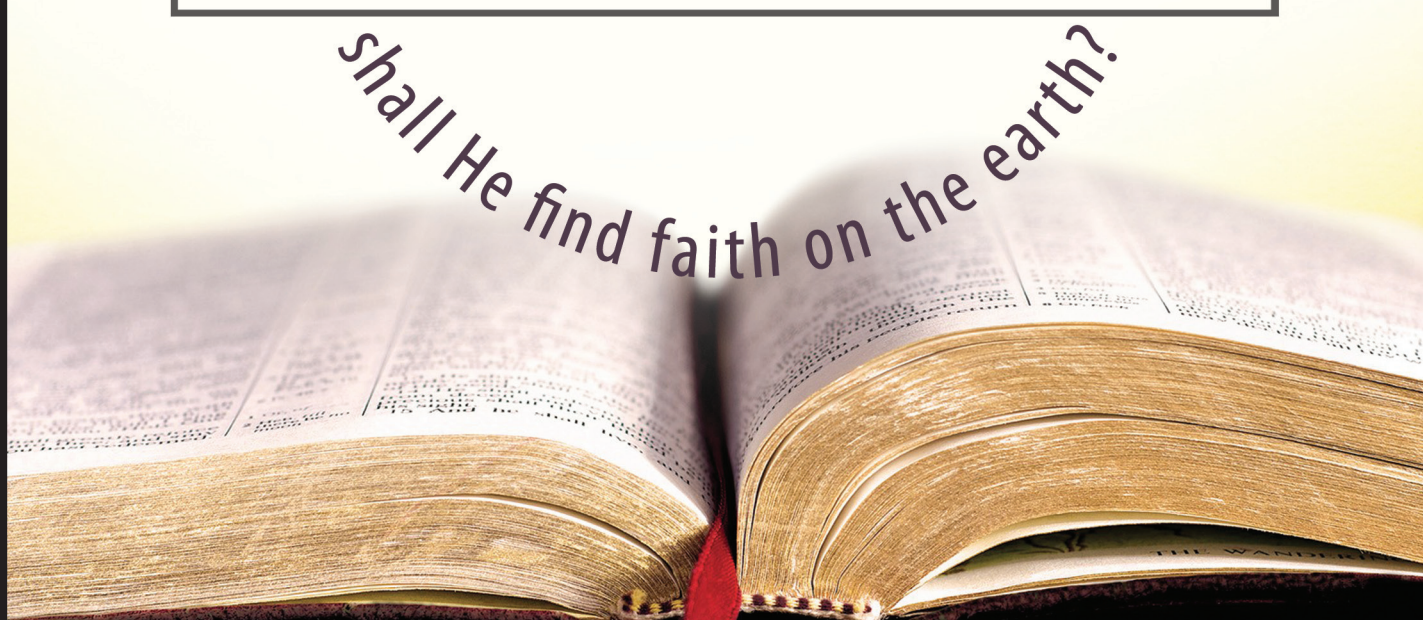
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When the Son of man cometh,

**THE MASTER'S
QUESTION**

Luke 18:8

shall He find faith on the earth?



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EDITORIAL



Esteemed readers, I greet you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, desiring that you have spiritual and physical strength so that you may fulfill the purposes of our God. Time is passing. We see how rapidly the first half of this year has gone by. How quickly time passes! There is so little time and so much work to do for the Lord. Lord, help us to do Your work!

I thank God that He allowed me to travel to Jerusalem in the month of June to attend the celebration of the 50 year anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem. What a special blessing it was to be in the Old City of Jerusalem, praying at the "Wailing Wall," fifty years after the day of liberation and reunification of God's beloved city. As I was praying that night at the wall, where day and night an innumerable amount of petitions, cries, supplications and tears have been shed, I believe that for a moment I experienced the same emotion felt by those who stood before that same wall on June 7, 1967, for the first time after 1897 years.

I received an official invitation from the Chairman of this committee, Robert Ilatov, to attend this event organized by the "Knesset Christian Alliance Committee," I joined leaders from 60 nations and members of the Knesset (the unicameral national legislative body in Israel) who founded this alliance, the morning of June 6 of this present year. In this meeting various leaders of the Israeli

government shared the importance for the Christian communities around the world to be praying for Jerusalem and for the nation of Israel. After this initial meeting, we were taken to the residence of the president of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, where more than 200 Christian leaders from around the world were gathered as part of a delegation organized by the "Knesset Christian Alliance Committee," and cosponsored by the movement in favor of prayer for Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

During this meeting at his personal residence, the president of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, shared these words: "This is a significant convocation." He added: "This meeting of the Knesset that is being held today in my residence

Israel and your friendship toward the Jewish people. We appreciate this very much."

On that day I was able to know and converse with parliamentary leaders of various European nations, as well as with leaders of various evangelical movements from around the world. I was able to share with them the vision that the Lord placed in my grandfather to teach us to love and bless the Jewish people, and the need to share this vision with the world. As I explained to several people what we have understood about the mystery of Israel (the blindness in part, Rom. 11:25), they were greatly impacted. One of the persons I spoke with was able to understand the importance to bless the Jewish people because we love them, because of the special place they have

must not remain silent in blessing the Jewish people, nor in teaching others so that may also learn to do the same. *"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth (Isa. 62:1).* God bless you,

Pastor Efraim Valverde III

The following letter was sent from Jerusalem, Israel, from the MK Robert Ilatov, chairman of the Israel Beitenu Party and president of the Knesset Committee for Christian Alliance, directed to the Pastor Valverde III, charging him with the responsibility of a global project among the Hispanic world.

Esteemed Pastor Efraim Valverde III,

As founder and initiator of "Prayer Breakfast in Jerusalem" (JPBM), I am honored to confirm your designation to the position of Honorary Assessor to the JPBM, in affairs related to the organization and coordination of lobbying events sponsored by the JPBM for the Hispanic communities, as well as the promotion and supervision JPBM sponsored events, collaborating in the development of close lines of communication among the Spanish speaking Jewish and Christian communities around the world.

The call to pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee" (Ps. 122:6) is the cornerstone of the JPBM which has as its mission the building of bridges of blessing between Jewish and Christian leaders around the world.

Please accept our gratitude for your support and active participation.

Sincerely,

MK Robert Ilatov President of Israel Beitenu Party

President of Committee for Christian Alliance.■



is important, since we here in Israel desire to receive the prayers of the Christians in favor of our nation. To not do anything is the same as doing harm, and I know you will do something."

The Chairman of the political party Israel Beitenu, who is also the Chairman of this event, "Knesset Christian Alliance Committee," MK (Minister of the Knesset) Robert Ilatov, declared: "We are grateful for those leaders among the Christian world who have gathered here in the great City. Your physical presence is symbolic of your spiritual strength and support for Israel." He also encouraged all of the Christian leaders gathered there that they should "pray for the peace of Jerusalem." He also stated: "You are here to show your support and love for

before the Lord and because of the special connection they have with the Church of the Lord. He understood that we should not simply bless them because we want a blessing from God or out of fear of being cursed if we curse the Jewish people.

The following day I had the privilege of taking part in the meeting and to bless those who God loves and blesses, the Jewish people, the nation of Israel, God's beloved city and His Holy Mount. It was an extremely special experience. I thank God for this great privilege of being able to comfort Zion (Isa. 40:1), by not remaining silent, but by announcing our love for the nation of Israel and for the Jewish people. I also thank Him for the privilege of supporting them and for being able to teach others to love and bless them. We



“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (Lk. 18:8).

The Lord knows that during the past few years of my ministry, more than ever before, I have asked him: “Lord why did you ask this question?” As I have continually observed the state of mental confusion which is prevalent in the world today, and more particularly, seeing the selfishness which exists among the people of God (to whom this question is directed), I have been moved by the Lord to comment about this evil. This selfishness is one of the most powerful weapons the enemy utilizes to destroy the true faith among the sons of God. Yet, I am continually reminded by the Lord that *“the wise shall understand” (Dan. 12:10).*

Those of us who know the Word of God understand that as the day of the Second Coming of our Lord draws near, the negative activity of the *“spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12)* becomes stronger and stronger. We have been made aware of this since the Holy Spirit warned us saying: *“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev. 12:12).*

THE EVIL OPERATION OF SELFISHNESS

One of the most powerful satanic weapons used by our enemy in his attempt to destroy the true and genuine faith of the saints of God has been selfishness. This attitude of selfishness, which is one of the many negative and innate impulses of the human condition, inevitably operates in the children of God as well. In these last days in which the return of the Lord is at hand,

this evil operation of selfishness has increased tremendously among the people of God. We can understand that the question posed by our Lord Jesus Christ is directly related to this increase in selfishness.

It is true that selfishness has always existed in the heart of man. However, in this time in which the population of the world has multiplied as never before, selfishness (along with all the other negative impulses of our human nature) has increased to the point that we can refer to this last generation as “the most selfish generation.”

It should not surprise us to see this happening in a world that does not know or serve God. In fact, this is an expected result. However, it is painful to observe this diabolical current carrying away many who profess to know and serve the Lord.

We can undoubtedly understand that the Lord’s question is directed to this present generation. For this is the generation that will be alive on the day of *“the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13).*

SELFISHNESS VS. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LOVE

A very powerful Biblical verse clearly states: *“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of*

THE MASTER’S QUESTION

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

God, neither he that loveth not his brother” (1 Jn. 3:10). To love and to do righteousness are invariably linked. In order for someone to do righteousness, it is indispensable for love to be present. Whoever loves exhibits righteousness and whoever works righteousness does so because they have love. The true Christians, in whom *“the first love” (Rev. 2:4)*, which is Christ the Lord Himself, permanently resides, demonstrate righteousness not only with those who love them but also with those who hate and persecute them. For this is the example their Master displayed when He was on the cross.

The formula on how to work righteousness is summarized in the Biblical portion which I have cited on many occasions and will continue to do so as long as I live: *“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:3-5).*

In the Biblical passage in which the alluded-to question is posed (Lk. 18:1-14), the Lord exhorts us that as children of God we should give importance to working righteousness and to being just. Because, when a believer is imprisoned by the evil operation of selfishness, it is impossible for that person to work the righteousness of God. The believer can certainly work righteousness according to

his or her own measure (2 Cor. 10:12), but this righteousness is false. It is this deceptive appearance which brings about judgment. Today, there are multitudes of professing Christians, including many ministers, who behave in this manner. These are the type of believers Paul refers to when he says that they live *“having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim. 3:5).*

It is a fact that among Christianity, selfish Christians are a majority. Many of them use this fact to justify their selfishness as not being something harmful, but the normal, correct way to behave. The admonition of the Holy Spirit in the previously mentioned scripture (Phil. 2:3-5), as well as many others related to this subject, are looked upon as mere words by these selfish ministers and Christians. They hear them, read them and even preach about them very naturally, without seeing their own selfishness, much less repenting of it.

The *“denying of one’s self” (Lk. 9:23)*, the *“looking not every man on his own things,” (Phil. 2:4)*, the example given to us by the apostles and by the Lord Himself does not carry great importance to these selfish Christians. Their main interest is to acquire wellbeing and happiness for themselves and their loved ones. Their ministers seek out honor, authority, benefits and the prosperity of their congregation or religious organization. Yet, the mind that was in Christ the Lord, to deny one’s self in favor of others, is beyond their understanding.

THE CURSE OF HUMAN HAPPINESS

It is quite possible that more than a few people may disagree with



the above subtitle. But spiritually speaking, this declaration is the undeniable truth. It was true in the time of ancient Israel and remains true presently among them. In like manner, it has been true among most Christians. In the almost half century of my walk with God, I have witnessed many believers in the Lord Jesus who have been overcome by this curse. In the beginning of their spiritual journey, when they were living in misery or in bad health, they walked with the Lord without selfishness. Once they obtained human happiness, they ceased to walk unselfishly.

Throughout the ages, God has demanded self-denial from His people. He has always required it from the Jewish people, but now He has also demanded it from the members of His church during the time of Grace manifested by the Gospel. In order for each one of us to have begun our walk with the Lord, we had to invariably understand and individually accept the divine prerequisite: ***"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me"*** (Lk. 9:23).

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not only demand this self-denial from His true followers, but He Himself, being God ***"manifest in flesh"*** (1 Tim. 3:16), who ***"being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"*** (Phil. 2:8). Therefore, He gave us the highest example of self-denial when He came into this world ***"not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many"*** (Matt. 20:28). If His supreme example does not stir up or convince the egocentric Christian of today to repent from his or her selfishness, then what else can?

Throughout the ages, God has demanded self-denial from His people. He has always required it from the Jewish people, but now He has also demanded it from the members of His church

The reality is that selfishness has no place in true Christianity. The foundation of true Christianity is based on giving and not receiving. This fundamental truth was demonstrated with all seriousness by the apostles and by many of the Christians of the early church. They were willing to deny themselves, even to the point of martyrdom and death, because of their love for the Lord. But as the centuries have passed this divine commandment has increasingly been ignored, particularly among Christians who have had the opportunity to enjoy happiness and human comfort.

From the moment that selfishness is an attitude which exists in our human nature, the possibility remains for it to subtly operate, even in the life of a faithful Christian. This cunning deception can exist in the believer, even to the point that they may be counted among the selfish without even realizing it. It is painful to see the great number of sincere and faithful Christians unconsciously being carried away by the impetuous current of selfishness which prevails among the people who profess to know the Lord.

THE MOST SELFISH GENERATION

Solomon said that in his times he enjoyed everything that a man could desire under the sun. He never imagined that in the future, because of scientific advancement (Dan. 12:4), there would be an unprecedented amount of things available to capture our human desire. Precisely for this reason, selfishness, which is self-gratification, has converted this present generation into the most selfish generation of all times. In contrast, self-denial, which is generosity, is ignored at all levels of society and greed reigns in the world like never before.

Abundance, complacency and pleasure have become a curse, most particularly in the Western nations. There is no doubt that these nations are prosperous materially and even appear to be spiritually fine. Yet, in reality, they are wretched and miserable. As never before this is the generation which arrogantly declares: ***"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."*** However, the Holy Spirit continues to admonish saying: ***"thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable and poor, and blind, and naked"*** (Rev. 3:17).

Now, more than ever before, the desire of humanity is to satisfy their appetite for carnal pleasures by acquiring comfort and other various forms of self-gratification. This hunger grows particularly after they have seen so many others obtain it. However, even though the most prosperous of them obtain great riches, their selfish appetite for self-gratification is not satisfied. In fact, this "abundance" has produced a wave of universal degradation in which television has played a unique role. I have noted

that even among communities of miserably poor persons, living in run-down shacks, the inhabitants may not have enough to eat, yet each family has their own television and some even have internet. This is how humanity has been dragged down to sexual perversion, to vices, to drugs, to violence and to many more unspeakable forms of wickedness.

Television and the internet, along with many other means of communication, are being used today by the devil to provoke selfishness and self-gratification not only in the lives of multitudes who do not serve God, but also among the people of God. As a result, there exists presently a selfish Christianity which live their lives as a ***"sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal"*** (1 Cor. 13:1). They have everything and know everything, yet their lives are hollow. Using this strategy, the devil has succeeded like never before in these last days to destroy the faith in the lives of multitudes of those who serve the Lord Jesus.

The Divine question which we have considered here is terrible. It is frightening! It deals directly with the Christianity of these last days. Those that are ***"wise"*** (Dan. 12:10) will heed with all seriousness the voice of the Lord. The situation is very dangerous. We cannot be over confident. Upon considering this explanation, we should cry out from the depths of our soul: "Lord, deliver us from this cursed selfishness and self-gratification, and allow us to retain your true faith until Your Coming, which is at hand!"

God bless you.■



UNDERSTANDING AND SHARING THE MYSTERY OF ISRAEL: "THE BLINDNESS IN PART WHICH HAS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL"

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. 11:25-27).

WHAT MYSTERY?

What mystery is the Holy Spirit referring to through the apostle Paul? It is to the mystery of the "blindness in part which has happened to Israel." If we read the first part of the passage of Scripture, without reading the "reason for not ignoring" this mystery, we can then clearly see what mystery the apostle Paul is speaking about. In other words, if we omit "lest ye should be wise in your own conceits," we read: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery...that blindness in part is happened to Israel."

WHAT IS THE DANGER IN IGNORING THE MYSTERY OF THE BLINDNESS IN PART THAT IS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL?

Why does the apostle warn us that we should not be ignorant (ignoring by giving this mystery its due importance or interest or ignoring due to not having the

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Pastor Efraim Valverde III

information or understanding of this mystery) of this mystery: "blindness in part is happened to Israel"? It is so that you and I would not be arrogant. To be ignorant about something so important or to willingly ignore it will inevitably lead us to act arrogantly.

ARROGANT TOWARD WHOM?

We can understand that the arrogance the Scripture refers to is arrogance toward the Jewish people. By ignoring the significance or by being ignorant of the revelation of this mystery of "blindness in part," we will have an attitude of arrogance toward the people, which is comprised of the nation of Israel and the Jewish people. Being in this state of arrogance, we would have the mentality and attitude that the Jewish people are not important or that they have been "forsaken," because they rejected Christ, and therefore have no part with God, because now the Church has replaced them. What arrogance many Christians are displaying toward God's firstborn, who is also the older brother of the Church! (Rom. 11:16-31). *"For what if some did not believe (blinded)? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid" (Rom. 3:3-4).*

IN WHAT PART HAS THE BLINDNESS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL?

First of all they were blinded in part IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING so that they would NOT RECOGNIZE and accept the LORD JESUS AS SAVIOR AND CHRIST. They understand that there is only ONE GOD, but were awaiting their Messiah. Secondly, they were blinded in part IN NUMBER, since only part of the Jewish people was blinded in their understanding. Not all of them were blinded. Many believe that all the Jewish people rejected the Master. In fact, if we just skim over the verse which states: *"He came unto His own, and His own RECEIVED HIM NOT..." (Jn. 1:11),* we could possibly erroneously conclude that none of the Jewish people received Him, and therefore fall into the mentality and attitude of arrogance toward the Jewish people. Certainly there were some among their leadership and some among the people who were blinded, but not all of them.

The Lord tells us in His Word: *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not*

have crucified the Lord of glory... but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:7-10). It was the princes (the leaders among the Jewish people) who did not recognize the Lord. But why didn't they recognize Him? This is because they were blinded in part so that they would not understand the "hidden wisdom."

When the Lord asked the disciples who were traveling on the road to Emmaus about what had occurred, they responded: *"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND OUR RULERS delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him" (Lk. 24:19-20).*

The first disciples of the Lord were Jews. The first 3,000 through which the Lord began to build His Church were Jews (Acts 2:5, 38 and 41). This means that not all among the Jewish people were blinded to not believe in Jesus and Savior and Christ. That means that the ones who were blinded, in what part were they blinded? They were blinded so that they would not believe, and only part of the people were blinded, not all of them.

In the following Scripture we can also see that the prophet Elijah thought that ALL THE PEOPLE OF HIS TIME WERE BLINDED, but we read the response given to him by God: *"God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he*



The Lord tells us in His Word: “What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh (even the Jews who were blinded were awaiting the Messiah and the salvation he would bring)”

maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I AM LEFT ALONE, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I HAVE RESERVED TO MYSELF SEVEN THOUSAND MEN, WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO THE IMAGE OF BAAL. Even so then AT THIS PRESENT TIME ALSO THERE IS A REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE” (Rom. 11:2-5).

The Lord tells us in His Word: “What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh (even the Jews who were blinded were awaiting the Messiah and the salvation he would bring) ...as it is written GOD HATH GIVEN THEM THE SPIRIT OF SLUMBER, EYES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT SEE, AND EARS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HEAR, UNTO THIS DAY” (Rom. 11:7-8). That is why there were those

among the princes and among the people that did not believe (Jn. 1:11). Why? Because they were blinded. A “vail” was partially placed on them (2 Cor. 3:14); “but the election (those among the Jewish people who were not blinded) hath obtained it (the Messiah, their Savior): and the rest were blinded (they did not obtain this because they were blinded)” (Rom. 11:7). “For what if some did not believe (were blinded)? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid” (Rom. 3:3-4).

DID THOSE WHO DID NOT BELIEVE BLIND THEMSELVES OR DID SOMEONE ELSE BLIND THEM?”

“Blindness in part has happened” (Rom. 11:25). “Happened” means “has come upon.” Their blindness was not something that they chose. They did not elect to be blinded. God is the one who blinded them, and He has placed this same blindness in part of them in each generation, even to this day, so that they would not understand and believe. This is proof that we are still living during the time of God’s grace (Rom. 11:25).

There are three types of blindness or hardness: that placed upon someone by the devil (2 Cor. 4:3-4), self-imposed hardness (Heb. 3:7-11, Rom. 2:5), and blindness placed on someone by God (Rom. 11:8). We can clearly see that the “blindness in part that happened to Israel” was not done by the devil, nor did they willingly place it upon themselves, but it came from the God of Israel, who is also the God of the Church.

The following words given by the Lord to His disciples confirm this truth: “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given...therefore I speak to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of *Isaias*, which saith, by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Mat. 13:11, 13-15).

“But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of *Esaias* the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord (the Image, the Visible Body, Jn. 1:14, 18; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15) been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that *Esaias* said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them” (Jn. 12:37-40).

The following divinely inspired words make it clear and without a doubt, that some of the people of Israel were blinded “in part” and Who it was that blinded them: “For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away” (2 Cor. 3:11-16). “Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway” (Rom. 11:10). “For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all” (Rom. 11:32).

WHY DID GOD BLIND THEM?

“First Moses saith, *I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you” (Rom. 10:19).* The Lord placed a “vail” (2 Cor. 3:14-15) upon them so that they would not see nor understand that Jesus is the Lord and the Christ. It was through the unbelief of some of the princes and people that the door was opened for us, “the dogs” (Mk. 7:27; Rom. 11:30-36). “I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? (Rom. 11:11-12).

God bless you.

Pastor Efraim Valverde III■



“And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Lk. 22:41-44).

On this occasion, this message is particularly directed to those faithful children of God, who; at the time that they are reading these words of encouragement, are conscious of the fact that they have been seeking the face of the Lord with all the strength of their being. It is directed especially to those who have truly learned how to seek God in prayer, and who do not offer the Lord the obligatory, professional types of prayer which are “common and ordinary” among nominal Christianity, but who offer up prayers that are a cry from the soul, just as the ones David, king of Israel, mentioned: *“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God” (Ps. 42:1).*

The words of encouragement in this message are directed exclusively to those children of God who on many occasions in their own lives have reflected the cry of their Lord and Master that we read about in the Scripture which headlines this message. The melodies of this cry, which comes from the depths of the soul of the true children of God, are the *“new song before the throne”* which the apostle John heard. As he continues describing these melodies he states that *“no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth” (Rev. 14:3).* No one other than those included in this number (a symbolic number that typifies

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Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

the complete and perfect work of redemption of God in His people) can understand the melodies of this “song,” because only the “wise” (Dan. 12:10) can understand it and sing it.

It is to these “wise” godly people that God refers to when He states (also through the prophet Daniel): *“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan. 12:3).* It would never be possible for a Christianity that has lived a superficial, mediocre and pathetic walk with the Lord to be counted in that place of supreme honor. That is why the Scriptures declare that: *“none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand” (Dan. 12:10).* It is to these “wise” children of God that I direct these words of encouragement in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

In our human condition there exist sentiments and impulses that are part of our nature. We cannot avoid their on assault us at one time or another in daily living. Some of these impulses are sinful, while others are not. One of those which are not sinful is the feeling of discouragement. Just as it is possible for us to many times pretend or to hide the impulses which are inherent in our humanity, it is also possible to hide our feeling of discouragement, telling all of those who surround us that we are not feeling discouraged. However, as sincere children of God, one of the things that we have learned from Him is that we should not

be pretenders. If we are perfectly aware that we cannot hide anything from the Lord, we should then come to the conclusion that it is absurd to try to present something that we know is not true. It is certainly true that for the wicked it is very common to present a front. It is even considered to be the correct thing to do, according to them. That is why the Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, warns us concerning those who *“have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof,”* stating that we should avoid them (2 Tim. 3:5).

One of the reasons why the children of God suffer, even to this day, is precisely because they do not want to be phonies, and they do not want to hide what they know to be true, and what must be confessed. They also suffer because they do not hold back in stating the faults, errors and weakness, not only in the lives of others, but in their own lives. The apostle John tells us: *“we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 Jn. 5:19).* Therefore, the person who truly is of God, who while living in a world filled with injustice and pretense, but tries to be just and true, continually discovers the unpleasant reality that *“this world lieth in wickedness” (1 Jn. 5:19)* and consequently that it will never be in agreement with him. Therefore, being misunderstood, they discover that they are is-rejected, despised and even hated, even by their own family and friends who do not truly serve God.

At his home, at their school and in the other social environments which surround them, they who is are of God will find themselves to be outsider, no matter how much they desire to fit in. In fact, even among his their own religious environment, they realize that not all those call themselves brothers in the faith think and feel the same as they do. If the child of God is a true minister of God, he will despair, seeing how few people truly receive and live the message of righteousness and truth. In contrast he sees that usually those who are most prosperous among his companions in the ministry are those who have learned to pretend and to control the minds of those who hear them, using beautiful, but feigned, words. He sees that usually those who obtain fame and recognition are those who learn to manipulate the religious environment in which they move, using advantages and cunningness which are not spiritual. For this reason the righteous man of God is tempted at times to feel disillusionment and discouragement.

I have seen this same scene repeated many times on innumerable occasions in different times and places in which the spiritual Christian or minister is suffering (sometimes alone and sometimes together with his family) painful and difficult sicknesses. On the contrary, those who walk frivolously are usually very healthy. Many times the faithful Christians are undergoing trials and temptations, while others appear to be very happy and full of joy. I have also seen children of God who walk closely with the Lord who are suffering from material needs and hunger. On the other hand, I have also seen many *“lukewarm” (Rev. 3:16)* Christians, who live surrounded by all the material necessities. The devil, taking advantage of these unequal situations, uses them to



make the frivolous think that they are fine, and he even uses them to rebuke the righteous and provoke them to feel disillusionment and discouragement.

The truth is that things are not always what they appear to be. On more than one occasion what occurs is that the carnal Christians, who in their spiritual deviation have learned how to pretend and also how to not say what is truly happening to them, are simply maintaining a "form of godliness." They state as truth which in reality is not the truth. They say that they feel something which in reality they do not feel. They say that they possess what in reality they know that they do not possess. They behave this way because they believe or they have been taught that this is how they should behave with the intention of trying to prove that they have much faith or simply to have a sense of superiority. On the other hand, the sincere children of God, longsuffering and humble, do not hide anything. They do not fake it nor do they try to present a false front, rather they make known their needs and their problems, and they confess their weakness and flaws. It is this type of sincerity that the enemy takes advantage of in order to try to put the righteous "face down," with the intent of provoking them to feel disillusioned and discouraged.

What I am describing here is not something that only I or many of my brethren are aware of. This situation, as an inexorable cycle, has repeated itself since the beginning of human history, according to what we read in the God's Book. There are many examples of this reality that we could cite. What is common among all the men and women of God is that all of them, at one time or another in their lives, experienced either one or more of these situations that we

have previously mentioned. The righteous Abel was murdered by his own brother. Noah was scoffed at by all of those who lived before the Great Flood. Abraham had to buy land so that he could bury his wife in the same land that God had promised to give to him and to his seed. Joseph, due to his desire to be faithful, suffered a series of "failures." And what can we say about Moses, Samuel, David, Micah and all the others? These men (and women) of God, seeing the unrighteousness around them prosper, felt the attack of discouragement at one time or another in their lives (**Gen. 4:8, 23:1-19, 37:17-30, 39:1; Ex. 2:15; 1 Sam. 24:3-12; 1 Kings 22:8-24**).

Elias, the tremendous prophet of fire, after God gave him the victory over the 400 false prophets, received a threat from the perverse queen Jezebel and was controlled by a sense of disillusionment and discouragement, and being in that mindset, focused only on the negative, to the point that he wanted to die (**1 Kings, chapters 18 and 19**). Isaiah, being tormented by disillusionment and discouragement, desperately cried out: "*Who hath believed our report?*" (**Isa. 53:1**). Jeremiah proclaimed, having being overcome by that same mentality: "*I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name*" (**Jer. 20:9**). Also, in the New Testament, what can we say about what the apostle Peter felt after he denied the Lord? (**Mat. 26:75**) All the heroes of the faith appear marked with the same distinctive, which, according to the judgment of this world which "*lieth in wickedness*" (**1 Jn. 2:19**), appears to be an embarrassing weakness: they were unable to fake or hide their weaknesses, including that of feeling discouraged.

Why did they act in this manner? Was it because they were cowards? NO! They acted in this way because

they had learned to trust wholly and unconditionally on He who is their Lord and their God. They knew perfectly well that it is not embarrassing to act in this manner. On the contrary, they learned that it is honorable to acknowledge that on our strength we are nothing and we can do nothing. They have learned that even if the world glories in its own strength and wisdom (and even many who profess to know the Lord act in this same manner), the true children of God are not going to make the same mistake. On the contrary, we, in our desire to always honor our Father, will not be fakers nor will try to appear to be something that we are not. We will do this even if it means embarrassing our own dignity, as David, the king of Israel, stated in reference to honoring God: "*And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight*" (**2 Sam. 6:22**).

If you, my brother and my sister, are one of those who believes that the Lord is speaking to you through this message, rejoice, understanding that it is not a sign of defeat if you are currently experiencing the crucible of affliction in one way or another. Rejoice, knowing that it not a sin to feel the attacks of disillusionment and discouragement, and that there is nothing shameful about pouring out our souls in prayer before our God, as we implore Him for His help. In fact this is one of the unique privileges of the true children of God. The inability to be pretenders and the ability to feel the sacred obligation of not hiding our faults comes from God. The Lord told the apostle Paul, who in turn confesses his weaknesses: "*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness*" (**1 Cor. 12:9**). And, you and I are not better than this great apostle.

Furthermore, could it be possible that we are stronger than the Lord?

Is our honor and dignity superior to that of our Master? In the opening Scripture, we read that His anguish was so tremendous that "there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him" (**Lk. 22:43**). The apostle Paul tells us: "*Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered*" (**Heb. 5:7-8**).

However, the extremely popular message of "*the other gospel*" (**Gal. 1:6**), which teaches the Christian to fake things, and to try to convince all those around him that he is healthy, joyful and prosperous, and that he has never felt discouragement, is a false message. That message of having a "form of godliness" only is an abomination before our God. The truth that I am declaring here is found throughout all the pages of God's Book, but I believe that what I have already cited is more than sufficient for "*the wise to understand*" (**Dan. 12:10**). After all, this message is being directed to them. It has pleased God to choose "*the foolish...the weak...the base...the despised...and things which are not*" (**1 Cor. 1:27-28**), and has given them a special purpose. It is these chosen ones who have "*redeemed from the earth...which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth*" (**Rev. 14:3-4**). It is those who have heard and accepted wholeheartedly the Lord's invitation when He says: "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me*" (**Lk. 9:23**). These are those who have received revelation to learn the lyrics and the melodies of that "*new song before the throne*" (**Rev. 14:3**). They are those whose spiritual ears



have been tuned by God's anointing, in the midst of trial and tribulations, to recognize the Lord's *"speech"* (Jn. 8:43). They speak this language and sing this new song in conjunction with others, because those who understand the Lord's language also understand one another.

And, there you are (as the Lord knows that I also am), my brother, my sister, my companion in the ministry, confessing daily before the Lord and before His people *"with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning"* (Jl. 2:12) that of yourself you can do nothing, you have nothing and that you are nothing. And that is how you live, conscious of your need continually before God, waiting solely on Him in all aspects of your life, from the smallest to the greatest. You acknowledge the Lord *"in all your ways"* (Prov. 3:6), always giving Him all the credit and honor in every good thing that you might be able to accomplish, and always thanking Him for all that you receive. You are always content with His will at all times, whether at times things are favorable or unfavorable.

As you live in this manner, my beloved brother or sister, you are counted among the special number which the Holy Spirit describes as being *"firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb,"* because they are those who are not fakers, and *"in their mouth was found no guile"* (Rev. 14:4-5), because they are children of God who *"love and do righteousness"* (1 Jn. 3:10). These are a special remnant before God, who are always willing to pay the price of humbling themselves, whatever the cost may be, with the goal of pleasing their Lord in order to receive His blessing. Who and where are you? I do not know, but the Lord does know. What is happening to you and how do you feel? I am not aware of this, but I do know that the Almighty God, whom

you and I serve, is perfectly aware of your situation.

I know that you are well aware that it has only been His protective and miraculous hand that has kept you and sustained you in the midst of all that you have gone through, even to this day. You know that it has been through His Holy Spirit, that you have received the power to overcome, even to this day, and that it is only through this same power that you will be able to reach the end of your journey. Because, when someone has asked the following question: *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"*, you, as well as your fellow faithful brethren, have been able to answer from the depths of your heart: *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God* (or from the love of our brethren in the faith), *which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom. 8:35-39).

I am sure, my brother, and my sister, that the Lord has spoken to you through this message. What I have expressed here are not my ideas or words. They are living words, because they are our God's words. The disillusionment and discouragement with which the enemy has been attacking you, taking advantage of your weakness and of your sincerity, have disappeared, and now you not only feel comforted, but even victorious in the Lord. You are now a child of God, but remember that *"it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure"* (1 Jn. 3:2-3).

"For when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).
God bless you■

YOUTH SECTION

Brother Lorenzo Mendoza, II

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you. I thank God for permitting me to share a reflection with you by these means. My prayer is that these few lines might be a blessing and an encouragement to you.

Speaking specifically to the youth, I ask this question. How important is it for you to be able to understand and see the importance of having the Word of the Lord in your mind? How can we do the will of the Lord and how are we going to know His will? Only by having His Word in our mind. And how can we do that? By reading and memorizing His Word.

The Lord asks this question: *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word* (Ps. 119:9).

Taking heed means obeying the Word of the Lord and putting it into practice, in other words, living it in our daily lives. The apostle James clearly tells us, in chapter 2 of his letter, that it is of no benefit to us if we say that we have faith if we do not have works (the Word of God) in our lives.

This Word is what directs us in all aspects of our lives.

My young brother and young sister, it is of utmost importance that you read the Word of the Lord so that It can direct your life. We know that the Word is God Himself speaking to us. The Lord Jesus Christ declared: *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the Words that I speak unto you, They are spirit and They are life"* (Jn. 6:63).

Believe me, please, when I tell you that as you read and study the Scriptures, you are going to be able to live a fuller life, because you are going to be able to do the will of the Lord and you also are going to be able to overcome the trials that may come your way.

The Word of God (which is God Himself) is the only thing that changes your life, so that you might be able to fulfill the will of the Lord.

My young brother and young sister, I encourage you to read and carefully study Psalm 119. You will see how the Word of the Lord can guide us in all aspects of our lives.

God bless you,

Brother:

Lorenzo Mendoza II■



Shalom! First of all, I would like to give many thanks to my good God for allowing and granting me the privilege of writing these few words to give an account, if the Lord permits, of what He had planned in His design for the days that He allowed us to be in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, on the 14th, 15th and 16th of April of this year.

As the Lord has granted us to do for several years in the past, we gathered on Friday at one of the plazas in downtown Guadalajara. There we spread the Word of God through various methods, as the Lord moved. We passed out tracts, gave personal testimony to passers-by, worshipped God through song, and the presentation of a drama by the youth group from Purepero, Michoacan, Mexico, which was a great blessing.

The following day, Saturday, being gathered together at the site of the services, God used our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde III, to share about some of the mysteries which are in the Word of God. For some they are still mysteries, but when the Lord chooses to reveal them to us, they become great revelations.

Fellowship Service in Guadalajara

These are treasures as stated in the Word of the Lord: *"And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and the hidden riches of secret places..."* (Isa. 45:3).

The Lord moved our brother to speak concerning the sequence of events that will occur at the Second Coming of the Lord. This was a revelation for some, instruction for others and confirmation for still others. We are thankful to God for this, since we know that not all of those who profess Christianity are awake to this great revelation. In fact the majority believe that the Church is going to disappear in a "mysterious rapture," but this teaching is not found in the Word of God.

Our brother also spoke to us concerning the mystery of Israel, the mystery of the *"blindness in part."* The Lord does not want us to be ignorant to "this mystery," because ignoring it produces

arrogance toward the Jewish people. That is why so many so-called Christians despise, hate and persecute the Jews, because they ignore *"this mystery,"* or are ignorant of the mystery (Rom. 11:25).

Our brother also asked us to pray and fast for him during the days that members of the Israeli Parliament were going to meet in order to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, an event that our pastor was invited to take part in: the celebration of this historic date, the 7th of June of 2017. We will continue to pray and fast for our brother so that the Lord might continue giving him grace before the Jewish people, because we know that it is an honor for him to be part of this celebration. Likewise, it is a great responsibility.

With all that is currently happening we can see the confirmation of the message concerning the people of Israel that the Lord placed in

the heart and on the lips of our beloved elder pastor, Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr. Thanks be to the Lord for the tenacity He place in our elder pastor's heart to continue to provoke us to pay close attention on who the Jewish people, the people of the Bible, the Jewish people are, so that we, by the mercy of God, could obtain the blessing of being able to bless them, since God opened our eyes to understand that Israel is the chosen people of God. Now, we carry the message that God sent to Pharaoh in Egypt (the world who this ignorant of who this people is): *"Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn"* (Ex. 4:22).

We also heard about the true Gospel. As we speak the Gospel, we speak the Word. We speak of salvation, of His sacrifice, and of His resurrection. Who speaks this message? All of Christianity. But as we clarify Who the Message is, Who is the Word, Who is Salvation, Who is the Sacrifice, and Who is the Resurrection, not all can continue speaking the message, because not all can confess that

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I thank our Lord Jesus Christ for granting us the blessing and the privilege of being able to host our first seminar for pastors, which took place on April 27th and 28th, which we held in conjunction with our fellowship service that took place on April 29th and 30th of this year. Both were a great blessing for us. I thank our pastor, Efraim Valverde III, for the teachings, preaching, counsel and motivation that he gave the pastors, as well as the congregation.

I also thank God for all the pastors who supported this activity economically and with their prayers. We rejoiced in the praises led by musical group, "Grupo Piedad" in addition to the

Fellowship Service in Jacksonville, Florida



local group of musicians, "Esperanza en Cristo."

My brethren who read this publication, "Maranatha," let us continue to pray for our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde III, so that the Lord might continue to use him greatly. May the Lord bless his beloved wife and his children, as well as his parents. May we always remember his grandfather, our beloved elder pastor, Efraim Valverde, Sr.

God bless all of you,

Pastor Juan Sanchez ■



We I thank God for permitting my wife and myself to attend this family camp. Many of our brethren began arriving at this beautiful camp since the first day. By the second day this number increased and by the third day a good group of brethren and youth had arrived.

The first day began with a preliminary service. Our pastor was not able to attend this first service since he had. Traveled from Salinas by car with his family on the 15 hour trip from Salinas, after having recently arrived from his trip to Israel, so he was too tired to attend. On Friday morning our brother, Daniel Perez, shared some of his experiences from the first Christian camp that he attended. He stated how God had used that camp to change his plans and his life. We cried together with him as we relived those

Fellowship Service in Olympia, Washington



memorable moments. Later, our pastor ministered to us concerning tithing, a subject that he rarely speaks about. But that day he gave us an ample Biblical explanation, stressing that we should be applying this teaching to our daily lives. Without exaggerating, I can honestly say that this was a great blessing to all of us who were present. In the afternoon, after a

time of worship, our pastor spoke about the spirit of rebellion, which can so easily infiltrate in the lives of our youth. He emphasized the great importance of taken the Biblical commandment and admonition seriously to honor our parents, so *“that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth”* (Ex. 20:12, Eph. 6:2-3). Rebellion and

disobedience destroy our lives and they are compared to witchcraft and idolatry (1 Sam. 15:23).

In the evening service he shared some of what he had experienced and witnessed in his recent trip to Israel. He also spoke about the importance of familiarizing ourselves of—with the historical facts concerning the people and the land of Israel, so that we might be able to counterattack the lies about Israel and its people that are continually spread by the media. He mentioned that as part of *“the remnant of the seed”* of the woman (the Jewish race, Rev. 12:17), we have been commissioned to speak out in these times of the extremely strong waves of anti-Semitism. He shared with us concerning the seven areas that we must be more informed about: 1. Know the history of the land and of the

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First of all I thank God for granting us the privilege of hosting our annual fellowship service in Exeter, Ca.

I also thank all of our brethren who accompanied us from different places. On this occasion the Lord greatly used our brother, Phillip Nava, who spoke to us about the importance of being founded on the doctrine, so that we might have a better relationship with God. Using the Scripture: *“and ye shall love the Lord thy God with all of your heart...”* (Deut. 6:5). He emphasized concerning the “hybrid Christians” that currently live in two opposite worlds. He mentioned that it is not common to encounter someone who has the Lord as their first love, and that we should always be examining our walk with the Lord. He also spoke concerning the “filth of the flesh,” based on what is written in 2 Corinthians 7:1 and Romans 12:1-2, so that we might be able to understand God’s will for our life. He

Fellowship Service in Exeter, California



also reminded us that we are living in the last days and he mentioned some of the things currently happening in Israel.

Also, our brother, Pastor Jaime Vidal, was used by the Lord to speak concerning the story of how Moses returned to Egypt after forty years with the calling to deliver his people from bondage. He mentioned Pharaoh’s reaction and the reaction of the people

of Israel who initially rejected Moses. He mentioned that the Lord, despite of all these reactions, carried out His infinite will. He also spoke to us about the great need to pray, and how we usually seek the Lord intensely when we have problems (Jer. 33:3, 1 Thess. 5:17). He spoke about how important it is to pray and call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, reminding us that the Lord already has everything prepared for us (Rom. 9:9). He

reminded us about how God fulfilled His promise to Abraham and how the Lord wants us to view situations as He sees them, spiritually, so that we can truly see how God works. He spoke about how Esau despised his birthright and that later, even though he sought it with tears, he did not find any place of repentance (Heb 12:17), which tells us of the importance of being serious in our walk with the Lord so that we will not lose our inheritance. He stated that just as Jacob received a blessing from his father, we also desire to receive a blessing from our Father, if we persevere unto the end on this path.

I would also like to mention that our brother, Pastor Pedro Aguilar, accompanied us, although it was very difficult for him to do so because of his physical condition. Seeing this example of this faithful soldier for the Lord, you and I who have still have

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We give thanks to the Lord for allowing us to once again host this fellowship service in Ciudad Insurgentes on May 12-14 of this year, in which the local congregation and the congregation in Ciudad Constitucion welcomed all of our brethren who visited us from different places, and with whom we were able to enjoy the presence of our Lord Jesus. I am infinitely grateful to God that we are able to count on the support of our brothers Pastor Efraim Valverde III, and Pastor Jose Osorio. Their counsel and teaching have motivated us to continue seeking the face of the Lord.

Our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde III arrived on Saturday and God used him in a special way. He emphasized on what we had heard the day before about the importance of giving God our best, so that we might bring an

acceptable offering to our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we should ask, and even beg the Lord so that the flame that is within us should not be extinguished by the lukewarmness which characterized the church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:15-16). We were admonished to seek

out our brothers who also have the fire of the Lord burning in their lives, so that working together we might be able to help others who may have waxed cold, with the goal of provoking one another to seek the face of the Lord with more intensity, because the Second

Coming of the Lord draws nearer each day.

On Sunday, our pastor, Efraim Valverde III, ministered specifically to the pastors and later in the general service, he spoke to us about the marvelous Name of our Lord Jesus Christ and he encouraged those present who had not been baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus to do so. After this call to baptism, two persons were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. After the service we were able to enjoy a meal in company of all of our beloved brethren.

May God greatly bless our brethren who enriched this service with their presence. May the Lord also richly bless the members of the local congregation who helped us serve our brethren throughout this activity. We ask each and every one of our brothers who might

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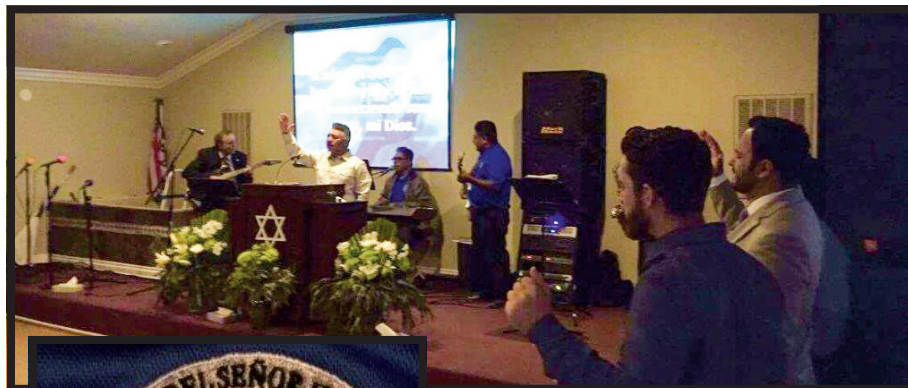
Fellowship Service in Ciudad Insurgentes, B.C.S. México



I greet all my brothers in the Lord with the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving Him thanks in everything and for everything. I especially thank the Lord for the activity that only by His grace and mercy we were able to celebrate the 20th anniversary of our congregation, Church of Jesus Christ in the Americas in San Marcos on the 6th of May, 2017. We received a great blessing in being able to gather together in the same mind and in the same spirit, receiving the support of various companion pastors in the fellowship. We also had the privilege of having among us our pastor Efraim Valverde III and his oldest son, Efraim Valverde IV, who we thank for their support.

On Saturday morning the Lord ministered to us in a special way using Pastor Efraim Valverde III, who spoke to us through the Scripture, Leviticus 6:12-13: *"And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out... the fire shall*

Fellowship Service in San Marcos, CA



ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." What the Lord placed in the pastor's heart to speak connected precisely with the Lord had placed in my heart when I began to organize this special activity in which we wanted to give thanks to the Lord and celebrate His Name for His great mercy and tremendous grace: *"Ebenezer...hitherto hath the*

Lord helped us" (1 Sam. 7:12). We wanted to acknowledge that it does not matter how many years we may have been serving the Lord, the Lord continues to ask us to love Him with all of our mind, soul and strength, so that our altar will continue to burn as it did in the beginning of our walk, and that it may be always be burning with that fire which comes from God. We were able to enjoy the presence of this fire from the Most High, as we felt His presence in a mighty, special way. It was something extraordinary which we desire to continue to experience as we are continually filled with His Spirit, so that we may do His will.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be will you all is my desire and my prayer (Rev. 22:21).

Your brother in the Christ the Lord,

Pastor Jaime Vigil and congregation ■



MY PART IN THIS DIVINE BUSINESS

"He who covereth his sin shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). David adds: *"I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him" (Ps. 32:5-6).*

By this time in my life and in my ministry, I do not hold back from saying that for many years, even to this day, I have had a direct part in helping a multitude of sincere children of God in different ways and methods. Both ministers and members of churches have sought me out at different times and in different places. They have contacted me by letter, by telephone, or by other means, in order to pour out their hearts. With tears, sorrow and shame, they have confessed the sins which they have committed, telling me how they had been trapped by the filth of their flesh, not only after having known the Lord, but also before knowing Him. They have believed and have desired to attain peace in their consciences and have wanted to receive the true and genuine blessing of God which can only be obtained through obeying what the Word of God commands in the passages we have previously cited and in other passages which speak about this same subject.

Yet, they have not felt the confidence to freely open their hearts to just any person, but have sought out a vessel who God has prepared so that this person can help them. It is fitting to say here that in many cases God has given me the privilege to be able to help His children. I have done this by becoming a "garbage disposal," where they have had the confidence to empty their "rotten garbage" that they have in their conscience. Then, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ

FILTH OF THE FLESH PART VI

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

and by the power of His Word, I have been able to deliver them from behind those bars which had them imprisoned. The Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit, cannot fail. James the apostle tells us: *"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he hath committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:14-16).*

I insist in that, having taken a direct part for many years in the fulfillment of the preceding Scripture, I have been deeply shaken by the magnitude of what God has shown me. Therefore, I feel it is my moral obligation to explain in a detailed and direct manner the different types of sinful behaviors and actions of the "major" sins and of the "minor" ones as well. Without contradiction, both are fruit of the eruptions which are provoked by the filth in our flesh.

THE "MAJOR" AND "MINOR" FILTH

Here I discuss not only the sexual type of filth of the flesh which I previously focused on, although the majority of the "major" sins would fall into this category. I must also discuss the many "minor" sins which can also be "sins of death," when the believer, deceived by Satan, does not stop committing them, thinking that they are not lethal since they are considered to be of minor importance. These types of filth of the flesh which I am calling "minor" sins are listed together with the "major sins" on various occasions, especially in the New Testament.

I have previously referenced one of these lists: *"Hatred, variance, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings and such like..." (Gal. 5:20-21).* As the reader can see, I am extracting the sins considered "minor" from the list of "major" sins. The following is another well known list: *"Being filled with all wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, debate, malignity; whisperers, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful..." (Rom. 1:29-31).*

The Lord showed me that many believers are committing many of these "minor sins" daily. They do this under the false impression that only the "major sins" are filth of the flesh. Therefore, they continue to commit one or more of these "minor sins" as if it was something natural to do. Additionally, since they have no bad conscience in doing so, they continue committing these sins, even to the point that it becomes a part of their life. The Lord showed me that the "minor" sins, as well as the "major" ones, are contributing to the curse which is lurking over us. This curse, hovering as a black cloud over us, is detaining the powerful visible answer to the petitions made in "The Convocation." We all know that what we are asking for is something similar to what the Lord did with the apostles and believers in the early Church.

Yet, since those beginnings, the Holy Spirit, speaking through James the apostle, makes a strong warning to the Church of that time: *"From whence come war and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have,*

and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever then will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God (Jas. 4:1-4).

"Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace, wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth appropriate grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands; ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (Jas 4:5-10). It is suitable at this time to ask the reader: To whom does the apostle direct this solemn rebuke? Is it to a world which does not know God or who does not care to know what His will is? NO! Such a thing could never be true! This means that the message is directed to the people who claim to know and serve the Lord.

I know that some that may read this will not believe that what the Lord showed me is true. However, I also know that the Lord will cause others to feel the same thing I have been feeling in these days after they read this message. They will feel a sorrow and a desperation in understanding the reason why we have not received a greater answer to our petitions. Therefore, I trust that just as the Lord moved those who have taken "The Convocation" seriously enough to put it into practice, He will also move His saints to feel the same urgency that I feel. This urgency will cause them to do all that they can to truly live as the Lord commands in the above Scriptures, since only by doing this can we obtain the blessing we desire.

God bless you.■



BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

(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
Continue on page..... 15

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 baptize 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"*



the Church were all baptized 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.

Seeking 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 (1 Cor. 12:27, 2 Tim. 2:19)

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