



MARANATHA

A translated version of the International Christian periodical

P.O. BOX 10271- SALINAS, CA 93912-7271-VOL. 11-NO.1-JANUARY-2019-TEL: 831-422-0647

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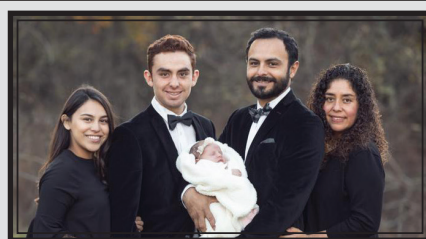
PERIODICAL
POSTAGE PAID AT
SALINAS, CA 93901

FOR CONTRIBUTIONS
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www.Evalverde.com

Maranatha (usps 452-370) Is published quarterly free of charge by the Church of Jesus Christ In the America, Inc. General Office: 160 Pajaro St., Salinas, CA 93901-3430 Periodical postage paid at Salinas, CA Postmaster + Please send change of address to; P.O. BOX 10271 Salinas, CA 93912-7271 /Maranatha 160 Pajaro St. Salinas, CA 93901-3430 evalverde@evalverde.com



EDITORIAL



Pastor Efraim III and Sister Claudia Valverde
with their granddaughter and their children
Efraim IV and Esther Valverde

We thank God for the miracle of our "Heritage of the Lord" (**Psalms 127:3**) Our granddaughter Hadasah, who was born on the 20th of November 2018.

we going to set daily, weekly, biweekly or monthly goals? The answer to these questions depends on the goals we are setting.

FINAL OBJECTIVE

Our final objective is to be prepared to receive Jesus Christ our Lord on the day of His glorious Second Coming, so that, together with our family, we might *"receive the end of our faith (objective), even the salvation of our souls"* (**1 Pet. 1:6-9; 1 Thess. 2:19, 3:13, 5:23; Phil. 2:16, 3:20; 1 Jn. 3:2-3; Rom. 6:8, 22; 2 Pet. 3:12; Col. 3:3-4; 1 Thess. 4:17, 5:10; 1 Co. 1:7-9; 1 Tim. 4:8; Tit. 2:13; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Jn. 2:28; Heb. 9:28**) and so that we might guide others to the Lord for salvation: *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word"* (**Jn. 17:20; Rom. 1:16**).

PURPOSE OF LIFE

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (**Rom. 6:13, 12:1, 14:7-9; 1 Co. 6:20; Gal. 2:19; Phil. 1:20-21; Col. 3:17, 23; Rom. 6:22**).

We exist in order to live for God (**Gal. 2:20; Tit. 2:12; Rom. 4:8, 6:13; 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Pet. 2:24; Col. 3:17; Deut. 30:19-20**). We exist to love God (**Deut. 6:5; 1 Jn. 4:19**). We exist

to serve God (**1 Chron. 28:9; Col. 3:23-24**). We exist to know God (**2 Pet. 3:18; Phil. 3:8**).

We exist to know His ways (**Psa. 24:5, 86:1**).

We exist to walk in His ways (**1 Kings 8:61; Psa. 143:8; Jer. 42:3**).

We exist to live in His will daily (**1 Pet. 1:14-15, 4:1-2; Rom. 12:2**) and in all things (**Col. 3:23-24**).

We exist to make Him known to others (**Deut. 6:7; Eph. 6:4; Rom. 1:16-18, 10:13-15; 1 Cor. 9:16; 1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 3:10-11**).

LIST OF GOALS

Our daily, weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly goals should align themselves with the purpose of our life so that we can reach our final objective.

*To have an intimate relationship with the Lord.

*To grow in personal devotion and holiness.

*To apply the Word of God in our life.

*To share the Word of God with others.

*To be useful to God and to others.

*To guide our family and others toward the same goal.

*To draw closer to my spouse.

*To have family prayer.

*To learn the Word of God through devotionals with the family.

*To serve others as a family.

IMPLEMENTING THIS PLAN

Now that we have a plan we need to determine and define when and how much time we are going to invest in personal prayer, reading God's Word, studying God's Word, spending time with our spouse, spending time with our children, sharing the Word of God with the family, praying as a family, sharing the Word of God with others, serving the congregation, etc. Only if we establish a definite time which includes monthly, weekly, daily and even hourly goals are we going to be able to accomplish our goals. If we do not have the determination to do this, we will not succeed. **Psalm 119: 59-60** tells us: *"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments."* Let us not delay or procrastinate in doing this!

When do I want to fulfill my goals for the purpose of my life so that I might reach my final objective? I repeat. We need to establish definite days and schedules. We must avoid saying: "I will do this later or I will do it someday." We must have a clear goal in our mind. When will I develop a more intimate relationship with the Lord? I want to pray more, but at what time will I wake up in the morning to seek the Lord's face? For how long and when throughout the day will I read the Word of God? What day will I schedule to spend time with my spouse or with my family?

In this new year let us ask the Lord to give us the strength so that we might serve Him better in all aspects of our lives. Let us ask His help so that there might be changes in our lives. *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure"* (**Phil. 2:13**).

May God bless you.

Pastor Efraim Valverde III ■

I greet all of my brothers and everyone who reads this publication in the marvelous Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, asking Him that each one of you would be daily seeking more of His Face and that *"He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man"* (**Eph. 3:16**), knowing that *"they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength"* (**Isa. 40:31**) to be able to press forward each day until "the day" which is the goal of our lives arrives, the Second Coming of our Lord, so that we might be with Him and receive our bodies *"like unto His glorious Body"* (**Phil. 3:20-21**).

Incredibly, we just finished up another year and are beginning a new one. During the year that just passed, what did we set our eyes upon? On what or on whom did we focus? What were we able to accomplish? Now that we are beginning a new year, do we know who we are, what we should be doing and where we are going?

At the latter part of the year 2016 the Lord inspired me to write the following for my family with the intended purpose of helping them to avoid generalizing the goal each one of us has in our life and to help keep them from having their own concept of what our goal is or should be. My desire is that the goal be clear in our minds. I can add more to this but this is a good foundation to build on. It is important that our final objective be clear in our minds, because it is this objective that will influence our daily lives. Therefore, the daily purpose of our lives will guide us toward reaching our final goal.

Once we have our ultimate objective clearly defined in our minds, we must then establish goals and envision how this will appear in our lives and determine when we are going to begin implementing these goals. Are



"For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:7-8).

In chapter three of the book of James the apostle focuses primarily on the power of the tongue. This entire portion of Scripture serves as a sermon in itself which does not require too much assistance for us to understand the message the apostle conveys. Any person who reads the Bible can easily understand what is explained in this chapter regarding the danger that resides in the use of our tongue.

As a prelude to our discussion of this subject it is to our benefit to clarify that the apostle James is directing his words to the members of the Christian church. (This is also true concerning all the messages contained in the New Testament.) I say this because God in His Word is not speaking to a world that not only ignores Him, but also rejects and even curses Him.

Since the beginning the Lord has always directed Himself to His people, because He desires that His people understand His will. However, even among the People of God (both in Israel and in the Church), there have always been two types of children: those who have always sought to hear and obey the Father's voice and those who do the opposite.

Therefore, what the apostle James declares here under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit regarding the tongue is not something that we will spend too much time and effort in trying to explain to an

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

Since the beginning the Lord has always directed Himself to His people, because He desires that His people understand His will. However, even among the People of God (both in Israel and in the Church), there have always been two types of children: those who have always sought to hear and obey the Father's voice and those who do the opposite.

unbelieving and wicked world in which cursing and blaspheming with the tongue are a common occurrence. On the other hand, among those of us who believe in the Lord Jesus, if there be any who choose to voluntarily ignore this

divine warning, they can be assured that they will regret this when they appear before the *"Judgment Seat of Christ"* (2 Cor. 5:10).

The Lord Himself emphasized this truth when He declared: *"But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned"* (Mat. 12:36-37). It is also written: *"But now ye also put off these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth"* (Col. 3:8).

I am certain that many of us, during the time in which we did not know the Lord, had a mouth which was a fountain of filth and our tongue was precisely a *"deadly poison"* (James 3:8). However, God through His power delivered us from the sin of blasphemy and of using our tongue to curse our neighbor. That is why we strive to be part of those children of God who accept with seriousness this warning given by the apostle James.

THE TONGUE AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

The apostle James tells us that the beasts, the birds, and the sea dwelling creatures can be tamed by man because God has endowed the crown of His creation, man, with faculties superior to those of the rest of creation as declared in

Psalm 8:5-8. It is certainly true that a great many of animals have tongues and some have certain limited abilities to communicate. But the Creator has not given any of them the complete capability to communicate as He has done with man, who can use his tongue to perfectly communicate with his peers. Therefore he can plan, coordinate and come into agreement with others to resolve different situations that may present themselves. The apostles James compares the human tongue to a small rudder that can control a huge ship in order to make it go in the direction the pilot chooses.

Throughout my entire life, especially in my travels to various parts of the world, I have always been fascinated by the diverse languages spoken throughout the world, beginning, of course, with the dominant ones. But I have been even more amazed to learn about the existence of multitudes of dialects which are limited to certain regions or to certain small aboriginal communities so that those who live in towns that are distant from one another cannot understand one another because their dialects are different.

Having been a witness to this, I have asked myself many times: "Who invented the words that make up each of the different dialects?" I especially asked this after I have heard people engage in lengthy conversations (which I absolutely could not understand) which deal with different aspects of their lives. All I can say is that this is the marvelous human tongue in action.

This operation of various languages and dialects was initiated by God Himself when He confounded the



language of the humans who, due to the fact that they all spoke the same language, had come into agreement to rise up against the Creator by building the tower of Babel (**Gen. 11:1-9**). We can speculate about which language they all originally spoke, but the reality is that at this present time there are an innumerable amount of languages spoken throughout the world.

To learn to speak the languages spoken in the most prominent countries is certainly something marvelous. There are some people who have learned to speak four, five or even more languages. However, what is even more amazing is to see how people who belong to so-called “savage” tribes have invented their own dialects and are able to communicate with each other. The truth is that the Creator has endowed the human tongue with abilities and faculties that have no comparison. However, the choice about whether to use these faculties in a positive manner or in a negative way lies solely with each individual.

THE TONGUE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR LIFE

Speaking more about the positive aspect of this “*little member*” (**Jam. 3:5**)-little in comparison to the other major members and organs of the body-we can all remember a time in our life in which we had experiences which have brought us joy and happiness, simply because we received words, opinions, good news and blessings by way of someone else’s tongue.

Among these positive experiences are the loving words of a mother, the correct counsel of a wise father, the tender words of a son or a

daughter and the mutual expressions of love between a man and his wife. And what can we say about the demonstrative expressions of a faithful, intimate friend? Without a doubt there are many other similar examples which we could mention but we will limit ourselves to these at this time.

When God created Adam, He placed in him the ability to communicate by using his tongue. However, at that time the only One with whom Adam could converse was His Creator. Although all the other beings among creation (who, by the way, recognized Adam as their master) also had tongues, he could not communicate with any of them in a specific manner, much less carry on a conversation with any one of them.

He was only able to converse with someone else after God created another being similar to him: Eve, his companion. It was only with her that Adam could communicate the commandments that he had received from God regarding “*the tree of life*,” “*the tree of knowledge of good and evil*” (**Gen. 2:9, 16, 17 and 3:2-3**). It was also with Eve that he could share his innermost feelings and exchange romantic expressions.

But now, those of us who believe in the Lord Jesus our God can bear witness of the most supreme positive operation of this “*little member*” (**James 3:5**). We can do this since we now possess the most amazing treasure available to man: our salvation. We received this sublime hope because someone used their tongue to communicate the Word of God to us. The Divine message has been

transmitted by the spoken word through the use of the tongue throughout the centuries and ages. In fact, in the time that He had predetermined to do so, the same God of “*terrible majesty*” who spoke to Israel atop the mount “*that burneth with fire, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest*” (**Heb. 12:18**) was “*manifested in flesh*” (**1 Tim. 3:16, 2 Cor. 5:19**) and in His aspect of humanity used His blessed tongue to share with us the supreme message of the Gospel.

Therefore, when the tongue is used in a positive manner it has always been a special blessing to the human race and especially to the children of God. I close this portion of this article by mentioning that another characteristic that demonstrates that the Holy Spirit abides in us, apart from us bearing the fruit of the Spirit, is the sign of “*speaking in other tongues*” (**Acts 2:4**).

NEGATIVE OPERATIONS OF THE TONGUE

In the Scriptures that we are using as a basis for this commentary we notice that the majority of what the apostle James mentions refers to the negative effects of the faculty that resides in the tongue. He tells us: “*The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity*” (**James 3:6**). It is unfortunate to say this but the truth is that the positive operations of the tongue which I mentioned briefly earlier in this article are minimal in comparison to the negative operations.

The apostle James declares that “*...the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude*

of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth both blessing and curse.” He then exclaims: “*My brethren, these things ought not so to be*” (**James 3:8-10**). He then asks: “*Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom*” (**James 3:11-13**). I emphatically repeat that this exhortation is not for a humanity who does not serve God, but it is for the believers in the Lord Jesus. However, it is not the apostle James, but the Lord Jesus, who knows what is in our hearts and what we are thinking, my dear reader, who asks the question: “Who are the faithful ministers and members in His Church that are willing to seriously take heed to this message concerning the tongue? Although it is true that no man can perfectly and completely control his tongue, there are those of us who acknowledge our errors and who daily desire Divine help so that we may do a better job of controlling our tongue.

THE TREMENDOUS POWER OF THE HUMAN TONGUE

On one occasion in which I was ministering to a congregation of more than 500 members, the following thought crossed my mind. I knew that I did not have the physical strength to lift even a single adult that was in the audience. But then, understanding the power of the tongue, I directed myself to the multitude and said: “Will everyone please stand.” In less than 30 seconds everyone



stood to their feet. Although this might seem to be a simple insignificant illustration, it accurately demonstrates the potentiality of the power that resides in the words produced by the human tongue.

Throughout the course of biblical history the instruments that God has used to make His will known to His people have been the vessels He has endowed with special abilities in their tongues to be able to communicate His Divine messages. The most distinguished example that comes to mind among these human vessels is Moses. His words, although faltering at times, moved and directed the multitude of the people of Israel in their journey from Egypt to the Jordan River.

We also read in secular history about the lives of certain men who being gifted with a superior linguistic ability were able, throughout the ages and even to the present, to influence multitudes with their words. These men, both those from the past and those from the present, discovered the communicative power that resides in their tongue and have known how to tap into this ability, some for good and some for evil.

As a unique example of how the tongue can be used for evil we can point to the life of Adolf Hitler, who during the 20th century was able to control an entire nation by way of his words and speeches. He used his tongue to “electrify” the masses so that the German people would support him in his attempt to bring to fruition his crazy dream of establishing a world empire that would last a thousand years and that would be controlled by the “Aryan race.” Furthermore, he was

able to convince other nations, in addition to his own “Nazi Germany,” to perpetrate the greatest genocide that has ever occurred throughout all the annals of history, the macabre Holocaust, during which more than six million human beings were tortured, massacred and exterminated in indescribable ways for the only “crime” of being members of the chosen people of God, the people of Israel.

In order for this, and many other events that have transpired throughout the history, to occur it has been the power of the tongue that has moved, raised up and confused entire nations and empires. For this reason it is indispensable that we (those who want to please God) never underestimate the tremendous potential that resides in our tongue. This potentiality is an undeniable reality, even in the most reserved and quiet Christian. The truth is that any normal human being is going to confront situations in his life in which he will be forced to use his tongue, whether it is for good so that they might please God or whether it is for evil, thereby sinning against Him.

THE TONGUE AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE

All of humanity, both those who do not know or serve the Lord and those of us who do know Him, can be burned by the fire of the tongue. But the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the apostle James, expresses the desire that we as children of God strive to do all that we can to avoid being burned by the fire of the tongue. In this manner we can also avoid killing one another with the deadly poison which resides in the tongue.

In the more than 50 years that I have lived serving the Lord, there are an innumerable amount of cases, among the lives of others as well as in my own life, in which I have seen the tongue scorching some and its poison killing others. Some by way of false accusations, others by scheming, lies, vengeful words, betrayals, etc.

It is certainly true that the *“tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell”* (James 3:5-6). Just in the cases that I am personally aware of there are countless number of ministers of the Lord who at one time were filled with God's anointing, but who have been destroyed and have even been spiritually killed by the power which resides in the tongue.

The Scriptures bear witness of the testimony of a minister named Diotrephes who attempted to defame the apostle John during the primitive years of the Church. The elderly apostle tells us that Diotrephes *“prated against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would and casteth them out of the church”* (3 Jn. vs. 10). The apostle Paul rebukes a pair of “wayward” ministers name Hymenaeus and Philetus who were teaching *“that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some”* (2 Tim. 2:17-18).

I have seen others, who, like the gladiators who fought to the death

in the ancient Roman Coliseum, have mutually mutilated and killed one another using the malignant power of the tongue. Each one of them, instead of humbling himself and choosing to lose, thereby following the supreme example left by our Master (Phil. 2:6-8), chose to go out of their way to try to prove that they had more power in their tongue than their brother (who now has become their rival). The hatred produced and cultivated by the mutual cursing coming from poison filled tongues has created, throughout the history of the Church, the unfortunate environment of divisions and separations within congregations. It is in this environment that Christians, instead of loving one another as commanded by the Lord Jesus (Jn. 13:34), hate one another, therefore fulfilling what the Master had foretold (Mat. 24:10).

THE TONGUE AND CHRISTIAN FAMILIES

I briefly mentioned at the beginning of this article the positive aspect of the tongue which distills “honey” among family relationships. Unfortunately, as is the case with the other examples I have mentioned, the positive, sweet words are minimal in comparison to the poisonous and destructive operations of the tongue, even within the private circles of marriage, family and intimate friendships.

It would be impossible for me to mention here all of the different situations I have witnessed throughout my lifetime in which the tongue of a prideful, unjust



husband has caused the spiritual ruin of his wife and even the destruction of his marriage. Or cases in which the tongue of a despot, irresponsible, easily irritable father has fomented a deadly resentment in the lives of his children who he treats only with cutting words and yelling.

On the other hand there is also the poisonous tongue of a wife who, because of her spiritual negligence, has brought about a spiritual misery and ruin to the life of her husband, who in many cases is not only a faithful Christian but also one of God's ministers. (Many times she believes that she is doing nothing wrong.) The indomitable tongue of this type of women who does not keep her place as a woman has produced a hellish environment in her marriage and consequently in her children as well.

In a congregation, the loose tongue of a pastor who does not know how to keep the secrets that the faithful have shared with him has spiritually killed many of the Lord's "sheep." The malicious, burlesque, and even filthy, words of Christian men, who would be expected to have a greater degree of integrity, have offended others and have even destroyed the lives of new believers who did not expect to hear such low level conversations in the Church.

I am personally aware of the incredible damage that can be inflicted by tongues who speak the infamous gossiping and murmuring which regularly abound in the congregations, fabricated by the tongues of

women who *"learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house (nowadays, from phone to phone); and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not"* (1 Tim. 5:13).

There are also the cases of Christians (both men and women) who speak in *"other tongues."* They speak one type of *"tongues"* when they are in the church services, but they speak another type of *"tongues"* when they are at home with their families. Also, they speak still other *"tongues"* when they are out in the world, at work or at school (if they are students).

The apostle Peter tells us: *"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"* (2 Pet. 3:11-12). *"None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand"* (Dan. 12:10).

BATTLING TO CONTROL THE TONGUE

It is also the apostle James who tells us: *"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body"* (James 3:2).

Let us take notice that the apostle includes himself among the imperfect when he states: *"We offend."* Also, the beloved disciple

(Jn. 21:20), the apostle John confirms this when he declares: *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"* (1 Jn. 1:8).

But the apostle Paul is even more specific in this sense. In his letter to the church at Rome he places himself as an example of this unpleasant truth as he amply and repeatedly bears witness of the sin and imperfection that resides in his flesh. He exclaims: *"Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me"* (Rom. 7:17). And he continues repeating this throughout the entire chapter.

The apostle Peter, speaking about the *"baptism that doth also now save us"* (1 Pet. 3:21), explains that baptism does not *"put away the filth of the flesh"*. Therefore, through the Scriptures we have cited, the apostles confirm the truth that among humanity there is not one person who can truly say that they are *"a perfect man"* (James 3:2). (The only One who was perfect in His humanity was the Lord Jesus.) However, we can confidently state that throughout the ages, and even to this present day, among the imperfect humans there has always been a faithful remnant (Rom. 11:5) who tries to avoid offending others with their words and who daily battle to try to control their tongue.

God knows which of His children around the world who, motivated by a continual acknowledgment of their imperfection, when they have sinned with their tongue, feel the pain of repentance and call out to the Lord, asking Him for forgiveness.

These sincere believers are those in who does not exist the premeditated intention of doing harm to their fellow man with their tongue, but when they realize that they have unintentionally offended their brother in some way through their words, they have the sufficient spiritual grace to humble themselves, to apologize and to even ask for forgiveness. On some occasions I have seen these faithful children of God take the blame for something, even if they were not at fault, simply because of their love and desire to be in communion with their brother.

These are Christians who do not return cursing for cursing. In fact, they bless those who curse them, following the example set by our Lord, who, when He was hanging on the cross, directed these words to His executioners: *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34).

These faithful disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ stand out among the rest of humanity because normally their tongue is a fountain of life. These Christians, throughout the ages and to the present, have always taken serious heed to the warning issued by the apostle James. Are you one of these faithful, my dear reader? Let us always be reminded of the recommendation made by "the apostle of love." *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth"* (1 Jn. 3:18).

God bless you.■



"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (the Jews) and upon thy holycity (the Old City of Jerusalem)..." (Dan. 9:24).

We are still in the time that marks the 70th anniversary of the miraculous birth of the Modern State of Israel that occurred on May 14, 1948. The birth of the State of Israel is the most portentous prophetic fulfillment since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (Lk. 21:5-6), the scattering of the Jewish people and the destruction of Jerusalem (Lk. 21:24). All these things occurred in AD 70. With the birth of the Modern State of Israel the alarm began to sound: the Second Coming of the Lord our God is at the doors!

With the birth of the Modern State of Israel what the disciples were awaiting was fulfilled in part when they asked the Lord: "Lord, will Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself in **Matthew 24:32-33** declared that the sprouting of *"the fig tree"* (the revitalization of the Land and of the nation of Israel with the return of the Jewish people) would be both an announcement of encouragement and warning. Therefore, upon seeing the fulfillment of this prophecy, we would know that He would be at the doors, ready to soon manifest Himself for the second time.

GOD'S PROPHETIC CLOCK

Pastor Efraim Valverde III

With the birth of the Modern State of Israel what the disciples were awaiting was fulfilled in part when they asked the Lord: *"Lord, will Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).* Why do we say that it was only fulfilled in part? Because the kingdom of Israel which the Jewish people was and is still awaiting, and which now we also await (by the Grace of God), would not be complete and in its full splendor until the King of kings and Lord of lords manifests Himself to reign in righteousness (**Isa. 32:1**)! Then, on that day, *"there shall be one fold, and One Shepherd"* (**Jn. 10:16**)!

Throughout this 70th anniversary of the miraculous birth of the Modern State of Israel there have been many events that have occurred, not only in Israel, but also throughout the rest of the world. In the previous editions of this magazine covering the past nine months we have pointed out the most outstanding events that have occurred in Israel. What is still left to be fulfilled in the last five months of this year marking the 70th anniversary of the Modern State of Israel? Only God knows. But, there's one thing we do know and this is that we are near the peak of greatest events of all times. Tremendous things are about to take place.

The following are some of the events that have happened to the Jewish people, both those who live in Israel and those who are part of the Diaspora, during the past three

months. On the 13th of November of 2018, beginning at 5:00 in the morning the terrorist group Hamas started firing more than 400 missiles and mortars at Israel, according to reports given by the Israel Defense Forces. This massive bombardment, which is the most Israel has ever received against her southern border, caused one death and 20 wounded.

On this same date it was revealed that the percentage of hate crimes against Jews in the United States has increased. The Federal Bureau of Investigations reported an increase of 37% in comparison to the year 2017. This is the greatest increase recorded in one year and the second most increase recorded since the Anti Defamation League began recording these types of occurrences in 1979.

We cannot stop mentioning the anti-Semitic act of terrorism which occurred in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on the 27 of October of 2018. On that date an armed man entered a Jewish synagogue on Shabbat, during the Brit Milah (circumcision) of a baby, shouting: "All Jews must die!" He murdered 11 of our Jewish brothers (their ages ranged from 54 to 97, among them two brothers and a married couple) and left at least six wounded. The president of the United States, Donald Trump described the attack as a "perverse act of mass killing." The Jewish Anti Defamation League declared that this could possibly be "the most

lethal (terrorist attack) against the Jewish community in the entire history of the United States."

Also, focusing our attention on the European Jews, a study published by the Agency of Fundamental Rights in the European Union reported on the 10th of December that the European Jews are feeling more each day the pressure caused by anti-Semitism due to the increase of the hate crimes against Jewish communities. Consequently, at least one out of three European Jews in the last five years has considered immigrating to Israel, because they no longer feel safe due to the increase of anti-Semitism. These feelings of insecurity were particularly notable among the Jews in France, followed by those of Poland, Belgium and Germany.

Regarding the Israeli government, on the 24th of December of 2018, the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the parties in his coalition decided to dissolve the Knesset (Israel's parliament) that week and to set the date for the future general election, which will be held on the 9th of April of the year 2019. "With God's help, we will win," stated Netanyahu, who promised to form the same type of coalition after the election.

Let us continue to pray for the blessed people of Israel so that the Lord will continue to strengthen them in the midst of all that is currently happening. The Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is imminent!

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (**Psa. 122:6**).

God bless you, Pastor Efraim Valverde III. ■



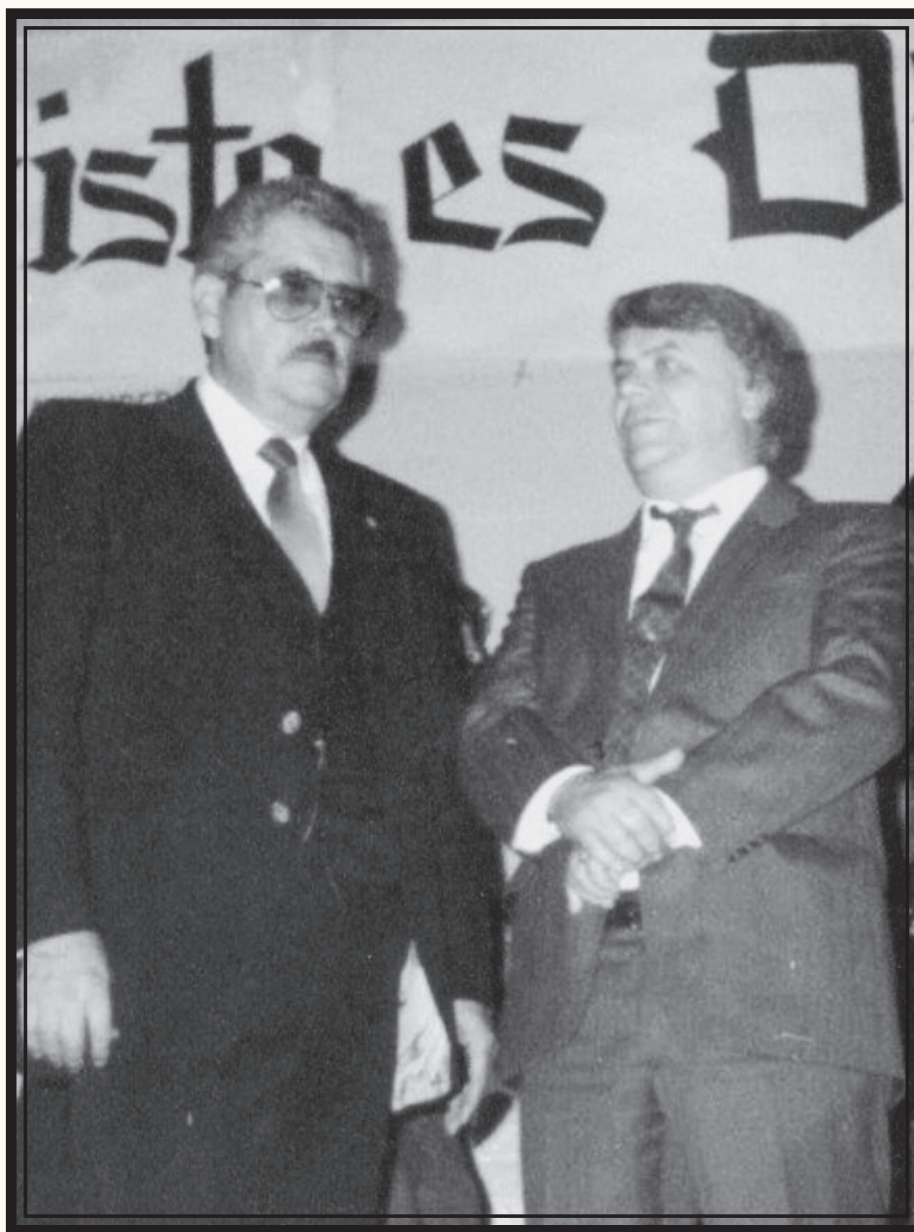
IN MEMORY OF BROTHER SHLOMO HIZAK

In memory of my beloved friend and companion in the blessed Land of Israel, Shlomo Chai Hizak.

Brother Shlomo was a champion pioneer and visionary in establishing relations between Christian and Jews. He clearly understood that he was called with a high, holy and heavenly calling *"for such a time as this"* (Est. 4:14) in order to build bridges by way of Biblical teachings and by declaring the truth about the history of the era of anti-Semitism among Gentile Christians, even in the midst of difficulties and tribulations that he faced.

His love for the Word of God, the Jewish people, the Land of Israel and Jerusalem influenced others greatly. His passion to preach, to teach, to translate and distribute Bibles in many different languages, and his compassion for orphans and for other persons provoked others to collaborate in loving what God loves and to bless what God blesses.

As a consequence of the bridges Bro. Shlomo built we have been blessed through the many contacts we have established with Jews from Israel who we now consider to be our friends and family. The list of some of our blessed brothers and friends who have visited us many



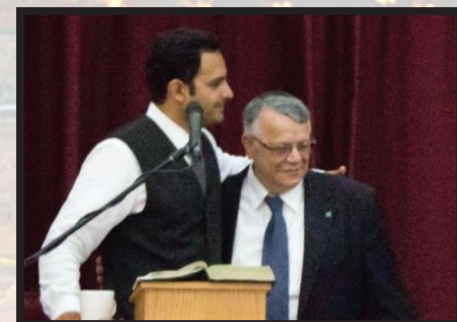
times in Salinas, California, throughout the years includes Rabbi Israel Lippel, Dr. Bernard, Dr. Medzini, Rabbi Menahem and Robert Ilatov (a member of the Knesset, Israel's Parliament).

My grandfather, Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr. first met Bro. Shlomo in Jerusalem in February of 1972. That was the beginning of a life-long friendship marked by mutual encouragement and support that spanned four generations of the Valverde family. I first met Bro. Shlomo in 1979 when I was 7 years old during the first of his many visits to Salinas. His last visit to Salinas was in December of the year 2016.

I miss him very much and I know others also miss him greatly. To us he was part of the family. We miss his visits to Salinas. We also miss him on our trips to visit the Land of Israel. We will never forget our beloved brother. His soul now rests from his labor of love which he offered and extended to multitudes around the world.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

Pastor Efraim Valverde III. ■





YOUTH SECTION

Juan Antonino



God bless you young people, companions in Christ the Lord.

I thank God greatly for this opportunity that was given to me to share a few words of advice for young people in this edition of the Maranatha magazine.

We decide and forge our destiny, but God works in us through His written Word. God desires to influence us.

He imparts wisdom to us when we live with Him, in Him and for Him, but He does not decide for us. God can give us the direction for our lives because He has grandiose plans for His children. *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end"* (Jer. 29:11). The will of God is that we turn our lives over to Him and He will give us the ability to make decisions that are in harmony with the principles of His kingdom.

We continually need to know the will of God so that we will not make mistakes and end up harming ourselves. God desires to guide us if we ask Him to lead us by way of His Word. *"And then thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left"* (Isa. 30:21). Do not blame God for the bad things that happen in your life. Blame yourself for not obeying His Word. *"The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord"* (Prov. 19:3). Loving God and obeying His Word in what brings purpose to our lives and fills us with spiritual strength. Seek the Lord in prayer before you make your decisions, so that you will not cry later because of your mistakes.

The apostle Paul counsels us: *"Take heed unto thyself..."* (1 Tim. 4:16). Do the right thing, even though no one is watching what you are doing. God is watching you. The decisions we make will take us to our final destiny.

The final question is not: If God is love, why would He send people to hell? The true question is: Why would someone choose to go to hell instead of seeking refuge in the mercy of a loving God? The Psalmist declares: *"Order my steps in Thy Word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me"* (Psa. 119:133).

Young people, let us not make decisions on our own. Let us seek God and He will guide us.

May God bless you.

Your brother in Christ, Juan Antonino,
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.■

WOMEN OF GOD

Sis. Martina Arias.

God bless all my sisters. My name is Martina Arias. My husband is Jose and we live in Casimiro Castillo in the state of Jalisco, Mexico. My husband is the pastor of the church of the Lord here in Casimiro Castillo and Villa Purificacion. The truth is that I admire him for the love and courage that the Lord has given him, because although he is ill, he continues working in the Lord's work, at times through extreme difficulties and labors, but always going forward.

It is an honor and a privilege to be able to participate in the writings of the Maranatha publication which has been and continues being a great blessing. Each time I read it I am greatly edified, and although there are those who do not give it the value it has, to me it is still very valuable.

My sisters, I would like to share something from the Word of God with you that has been a tremendous blessing to me. First of all I would like to say that I have found the key to being happy and blessed. Although my husband and I have passed through many difficult situations, I thank the Lord that all these things have worked out for good in our lives (Rom. 8:28). This is the key (it is very likely that some of my sisters already know it, but it has helped me a lot): love the Lord with all my heart, with all of my soul and with all of my strength (Deut. 6:5).

My sisters, as we all know, in all marriages there are problems, including in Christian marriages. At times when I felt offended by my husband, I would think: "I am going to do the same thing to him, so that he can feel what I feel." But then the Word of God would come to my mind which states: *"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her...she will do him good and not evil all the days of her life"* (Prov. 31:11-12).

And as we meditate on the Word of the Lord, I think that any woman who is a child of God wants to be that woman mentioned in the Bible. I want my husband to have trust in me. I don't want to seek my own good. I want to honor my Lord by honoring my husband, even more so because he is a pastor.

My sister, if you are a pastor's wife don't start arguments based on jealousy, because the emotion of jealousy is very human. We all experience it, but it is a bad thing to be fighting with your husband because of jealousy. If we continually find ourselves doing this we will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21).

My sisters, what I have written here, I have written with much fear, trembling, love and respect, desiring with all my heart that if we as wives find ourselves doing this that we will ask the Lord to help us to stop doing it. We want to inherit the kingdom of God which is coming soon. We do not want to find ourselves weeping and lamenting because we did not stop doing it.

Please help me pray for my husband so that the Lord will grant him his healing. Also pray for our son, Jose, and his wife who were recently baptized. Also pray for my daughters and for all of my family. Pray for me so that the Lord will give me grace and wisdom so that I may teach the Word of God to the children of the congregation. I also ask you to pray that God may remove all enmity that may exist among brethren.

I thank God for the life of our brother, Efraim Valverde III, and his wife, Sis. Claudia. May the Lord continue blessing them.

God bless you,
Sis. Martina Arias.■



We inform you that this seminar was an extremely special blessing.

On Friday, the Lord spoke to us through the lips of our pastor Efraim Valverde III telling us that we must not lose our ability to cry out to the Lord. It is a virtue that very necessary in our daily walk with the Lord.

During the first session on Saturday, after a delicious breakfast, our pastor, Efraim Valverde III, spoke about the need to establish a plan for seeking God in His Word and in His Presence, through prayer and reading His Word in a consistent manner. He stated that if we fail to plan, we are planning to fail. The study provided very detailed steps that we must take in order to develop the consistency that is necessary for this journey. That is if we truly want to reach our heavenly home to be with the Lord and with the saints that are already there. In addition, the visit of our brother, Rabbi Menahem Shimon, was a great blessing. His brief participation on Saturday evening was a blessing. It was refreshing to hear his voice, his greetings and his brief commentary. We ended the night gathered together at the altar calling out to our Lord.

On Sunday morning Rabbi Menahem spoke to us about Psalm 122. He gave us a detailed explanation on the

REPORT ON THE FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN SALINAS, CA



importance and significance of being *"in the house of the Lord."* Because the pastor requested him to do so, he spoke to us about what the people of Israel believe concerning the Messiah. His dissertation about Psalm 122 from a Jewish perspective was very edifying and inspiring. We also remembered and missed our very beloved friend and brother, Shlomo Chai Hizak, whom the Lord took home. Our brother Shlomo Chai Hizak was born on January 7, 1941 in Jerusalem, Israel. His parents were Mordechai and Zipporah (Kandinoff) Hizak. He is survived by his wife, Shoshana Danoch and his four children: Amit, Noami, Ruth and Shlomit. We observed a moment of silence in memory of our dear brother.

We thank God that our pastor was able to be with the family one day after the death of our brother Shlomo. We will miss him.

We ended on Sunday filled with the blessing of the Lord. We thanked God and continue to thank Him for His Presence throughout the seminar. Only He can bring blessing and eternal life to our assemblies. We also thank God for the great number of brethren and pastors who attended. The sanctuary, the lobby and one of the largest classrooms in the school were all filled with our brethren who came from various different locations. Our spirit felt a savory atmosphere of brotherly love.

Your brother,
Felipe M. Nava.■



I thank my God for the privilege of being able to direct myself to you, my brothers.

God has opened the doors making possible the distribution of some of the books written by Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr. (Eph. 6:18).

We have heard testimonies about certain pastors who are using the literature to give seminars and teachings. One of them is Pastor Mario Tomas Barahona. The Lord opened his heart to these truths. He has great influence on thousands of pastors, both nationally and internationally. He is backing us so that these books might reach

REPORT ON DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE IN HONDURAS

thousands of pastors in Tegucigalpa (the capital of Honduras) and also outside the country with great acceptance.

This pastor is extremely grateful and is making available to us the television station, "My Vineyard Channels," which has a coverage that spans 80% of the nation and is also transmitted in other countries. He is offering his assistance so that the teachings of Pastor Efraim

Valverde, Sr. can be transmitted through this television station.

We are also distributing the literature to various associations of pastors in Tegucigalpa and in other cities in Honduras. We are seeing great results. God bless Pastor Efraim Valverde III for the wisdom that God has given him. May God continue to use him and let us continue to pray for him.

Additionally, some of the persons here who did not believe that this could happen are now giving God thanks, as they see how He is glorified through this literature. To those of you who are supporting the vision that God has place in the heart and mind of Pastor Efraim Valverde III, I pray that you will not grow weary in doing this.

Please pray for us so that we might continue doing our part in this marvelous work.

Greetings,
Pastor Orlando Fernández■

I greet you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, desiring with all my heart that the blessings from the Eternal One cover each one of you, your families and your congregations.

The fellowship service in Vizcaino, Baja California Sur, was held on November 30th through December 2nd of the year 2018.

We began on Friday, the 30th, with Pastor Francisco Rojas from Cd. Insurgentes sharing the Word of God. He reminded us about the importance of seeking "the wisdom that cometh from above" (Jam. 3:17) so that we might be able to confront each circumstance, area and aspect of our lives.

On Saturday morning we were blessed with the presence of our brother, Nestor Quintanar, who, calling for unity and harmony among us, motivated us to remain "firm in God's purposes." Following this, our brother,

REPORT ON THE FELLOWSHIP SERVICE VIZCAINO, B.C.S.



Pastor Eladio Lopez, shared the Word of God with us, exhorting us to remain firm in the truth.

On Sunday, to close the activity, we baptized several persons in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, as several young people made manifest their conviction to walk with our God.

I once again bless the Lord Jesus for this fellowship service which was a great blessing. My desire is that God continue to pour His blessings upon you. I encourage you that we sincerely care for one another with the purpose of provoking one another to love and good works. Let us not stop gathering together. Let us continue to encourage one another.

May God bless you!

Pastor Tereso Bautista Flores,
Vizcaino, B.C.S.■



On December 8, 2018, we received here in the city of Saskatoon, Canada, the visit of Pastor Efraim Valverde III from Salinas, California, and Pastor Elias Murillo from Guadalajara, Mexico. They were both a great blessing to me, Pastor Miguel Robles, and to the congregation "El Siloe." They provided counseling giving instruction about marriage which opened the understanding of many and they ministered to us in various services. The members of the local ministry found new friends in them. We desire that this will not be the last time that they visit us, despite the extremely cold weather (on December 25th the temperature here was four degrees colder than the North Pole). The Lord used Pastor Efraim greatly to give us marriage counsel-

REPORT ON THE FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN CANADA



ing that we had never heard before. For instance, he told us that before viewing our wife just as our wife, we should remember that she is a child of God and that we should treat her with special privileges. One of the brothers commented that this visit was a great blessing to him because he now views the Christian walk with a better perspective. Also, one of the ministers told me that the pastor provided a totally different focus on what it means to pray with passion, with total surrender and with understanding.

May God continue to use these servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.
God bless you,
Pastor Miguel Robles Sandoval.
Saskatoon, Canada ■

We give infinite thanks to the King of glory, our Lord Jesus Christ, for allowing us to once again host our annual fellowship service on November 17, 2018 where we were able to receive all of our brothers who accompanied us. We were able to savor what the environment described in Psalm 133:1, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to gather together in unity!" The Lord made His presence felt and we experienced a marvelous blessing.

We thank all the pastors and their respective congregations who honored us with their presence. We also thank the Lord for all that He allowed us to do on this day of many blessings. The pastors all greeted us and shared with us what the Lord has been doing with each one of them.

May the Lord bless our brother, Pastor Chuy Torres, for ministering the Word of God to us during the morning service. We also thank our brother, Pastor Jaime Vidal, who shared the Word of God with us during the evening service. We also thank the

REPORT ON THE FELLOWSHIP SERVICE VENTURA



congregation from Santa Maria who assisted us with the music so that we could praise and worship the Lord. May the Lord repay and bless them for giving us a hand. This service, as in previous years, was blessed by the Lord.

This year more brothers attended than in previous years. We estimate that at least 800 brothers accompanied us. We rejoice in what we were able to accomplish with the help of God, praising and glorifying His Name with songs and worship. I also want to thank the Lord for granting me personally the privilege of being with my brethren rejoicing and praising our God. We are anxiously awaiting our Lord who is coming soon. We long to be with Him soon. May God bless all of you and greetings to all our brethren with which we fellowship. We also thank the Lord for this New Year, 2019. We know many trials and tribulations lay ahead. Let us prepare ourselves for the Coming of the Lord. May the Lord bless all of the God's family. Pastor Pedro Aguilar and congregation, Ventura, CA ■



"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee" (Job 42:5) exclaimed the patriarch Job after he went through a tremendous trial in his life at the end of which he was able to truly understand who God is.

By this time in my ministry I can state, without fear of being wrong, that among the thousands of Christians "of the Name" whom I have dealt with, without even counting the rest of Christianity, that there are two types of believers—those who have **TRULY RECOGNIZED WHO GOD IS** and those who **THINK THAT THEY KNOW GOD**, but who do not truly know Him. This same declaration I am making can be used as a proof to distinguish one group from another.

Those who truly know God will tremble before Him as they consider the initial question. With humility and profound reverence they will exclaim: *"My God may I, like your servant Job, each day understand more and more, not only about Your great love, but also about Your awesome majesty"* (Job 37:22). On the other hand, it is very possible that there are some that may be offended, not only by the initial question I ask, but also by what I said afterward, and who may think in their heart: "Who is this old man to make such judgments."

For my part, I continue with the initial question, trusting that the *"Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart"* (1 Sam. 16:7). My God knows which of His children will benefit from what I write here. He also knows who among His children think that they already know enough and therefore do not want to receive the instruction that I am about to give.

DO YOU TRULY UNDERSTAND WHO GOD IS?

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS ALWAYS WANT TO LEARN

Now, shifting our attention from those "who think they know everything," and due to this pride have not accepted the alluded challenge, I then direct my words to the humble and sincere Christians. I speak to those believers and ministers who acknowledge that, due to the lack of receiving the necessary instruction, they have a very limited understanding about the Oneness of God. I am aware that many of them share their testimony with a good heart, and some are even preachers, but I am also aware that the level of revelation in their minds concerning the *"mystery of Godliness"* (1 Tim. 3:16) is limited to certain nebulous ideas.

It do not in any way want to imply that these faithful servants of the Lord Jesus do not know God. It would be offensive of me to state or imply such a thing. But in the love of God and with all due respect I am relating something that I am personally aware of. The fact is that among my brothers in the faith, including many of my companion ministers, there are those who need to have a greater and clearer understanding in their minds concerning the *"mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ"* (Col. 2:2).

THE MYSTERY OF GOD, AND OF THE FATHER, AND OF CHRIST

The subject of the Godhead is the most important and most extensively

mentioned in God's Book. It is an undeniable fact that there is not one person who can truly state that they know God in all His eternal and infinite fullness. The apostle Paul, even with all of the faculties and revelations he received from the Lord, acknowledged the *"unsearchable"* depth of God's judgments and even of the Eternal One's existence (Rom. 11:33-36).

I ask. Can anyone among us say that we know more than the apostle Paul? On many occasions it has called my attention to see that among Christians who say that they believe that God is One, and who are even baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are those who have in their minds the idea of "two persons in the Godhead," just like those Christians who believe in the "Trinity." This popular, although absurd, doctrine teaches that God is "three distinct persons in one true God." However, when they depict the "Trinity," what they actually portray are two persons and a dove. They cannot portray it in any other fashion since they must forcibly accept the fact that the Holy Spirit is not a person. This truth is what the Lord proclaimed: *"God is a Spirit"* (Jn. 4:24).

In order to truly understand the *"mystery of Godliness"* (1 Tim. 3:16) we must understand who the Father is and who the Son is. The apostle Paul explains this when he declares that the Son *"is the (visible) image of the invisible God"* (the infinite Spirit)

(Col. 1:15). After all, in the Scriptures which refer to God as the invisible, infinite Spirit, He is referred to as "the Father." His own visible Body, which is the *"express image of His person"* (Heb. 1:3), is identified as *"the Son."* *"God is One"* (Dt. 6:4). *"There is one Body, and one Spirit"* (Eph. 4:4). He is not two, much less three, persons. He is the **ONLY GOD** in all of His distinct manifestations.

The Scripture I cite above does not mention the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It mentions *"the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ"* (Col. 2:2). This Scripture provides us a clearer description of the major manifestations of the Godhead.

As God, He reveals to us the Divinity of the Infinite, Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent Being, the Eternal Spirit, who never began and will never end. He covers everything in what our limited minds recognize as time and distance.

As the Father, He describes His relationship with us. He has always been God, but when He begat us, His children, He became a Father. He is *"our Father"* (Mt. 6:9) and the *"Everlasting Father"* (Isa. 9:6).

As Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah), *"God was manifest in the flesh"* (1 Tim. 3:16) in order to redeem His children (Heb. 2:14), because *"God was in Christ"* (2 Cor. 5:19).

My prayer to the Lord Jesus is that this brief study will be of assistance to someone, either to confirm or to bring understanding of the truth that **GOD IS ONE**, not two or three.

God bless you.■



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 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" (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 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?

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

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." ■

"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 (Isaias 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).

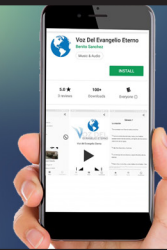
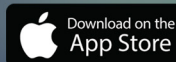
CONCLUSION: Even though we may not know you, the Lord knows who you are, and our prayer is that He will bless you. We also ask our Lord Jesus that He will work in your life, praying that the plan described in this tract will bring the change in your life that you greatly desire. If the Lord places in 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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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 (Acts 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
(I Cor. 12:27, 2 Tim. 2:19)

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