

THE LORD IS COMING
1 Corinthians 16:22



A translated version of the International Christian periodical
MARANATHA

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"AND THE MIXT MULTITUDE THAT WAS AMONG THEM FELL A LUSTING: AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ALSO WEPT AGAIN, AND SAID, WHO SHALL GIVE US FLESH TO EAT?...BUT NOW OUR SOUL IS DRIED AWAY: THERE IS NOTHING AT ALL, BESIDE THIS MANNA, BEFORE OUR EYES" (NUM. 11:4-6).



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EDITORIAL

Esteemed readers, I greet you in the marvelous Name of Christ Jesus our Lord, our God and our Saviour. My desire and my prayer is *“that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God”* (Eph. 3:16-19).

“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our GOD, is ONE Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Dt. 6:4-5). In verse 4 God declares the “Great Revelation”: our God is self-existent and He is One. It has been revealed to us that *“God was manifest in the flesh”* (1 Tim. 3:16), and that He (the Lord Jesus) is the Only *“True God and Eternal Life”* (1 Jn. 5:20). What a glorious revelation! We are told in God’s Word that *“the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Cor. 2:14).

In verse 5 we are given a commandment which reveals to us how we can relate to our God,



PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, III AND FAMILY

who is One. *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might”* (Dt. 6:5). He is not an indifferent, impersonal God. On the contrary, He is a God who loves and who desires to be loved, although He does not need our love. We, on the other hand, are in need of His love.

In Matthew 22:37–38, *“God who was manifest”* (1 Tim. 3:16), God who was *“made flesh”* (Jn. 1:14), calls this commandment which was revealed to Moses *“the first and great commandment.”* He not only calls it the *“great commandment,”* but also *“the first commandment.”* Here in these two verses we encounter two things bound inseparably together: the “Great Revelation” that GOD is One, and the “First and Great Commandment,” the principal doctrine and the principal commandment. God first reveals Himself to us and then He commands us to love Him. What an intense statement! To understand and to know who God is, is a matter of life or death. Likewise, to

choose to give Him all our love or to not do so is also a matter of life and death.

To understand and to know who Jesus Christ is, that He is the Only God, is life-giving. *“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life”* (1 Jn. 5:20). *“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God...”* (Jn. 17:3). The revelation of understanding or not understanding who God is, has life or death consequences.

The choice of serving or not serving the Lord with all our heart, mind and strength also has life or death consequences. The Spirit of God, through the apostle Paul, gives a very strong warning to those who do not love God according to the “First and Great Commandment,” that is, with everything that we have! *“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema (accursed) Maranatha”* (1 Cor. 16:22). He who is accursed is in spiritual death

if he does not repent and does not return to his *“first love”* (Rev. 2:4). On the other hand we are told that *“if any man love God, the same is known of him”* (1 Cor. 8:3). He that is known of God has eternal life!

When we are loving our God in the manner He requires, everything that we do will change. As a matter of fact, our entire life will change! We will not only do everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:17), but with all the more reason, we will do it with love and because of our love for the Lord. The manner in which we serve the Lord will be with our best, with all of our being, because of our love for Him. This is why the Scriptures make the following declaration about our true love toward the Lord: *“... that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous”* (1 Jn. 5:3). When we are abiding in this love, what the Lord counsels and commands us will be a joy to us, and not burdensome, because we love Him with all of our being.

The promises of the Lord are for those who love Him according to the ‘First and Great Commandment’:

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. The things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9). The Lord also tells us in His Word: *“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them*



that love Him" (Jas. 2:5). Those who love the Lord, love His Coming: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

Those who love the Lord will be safeguarded in His love. And they keep themselves because they love Him and they want to see Him and to be with Him. *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (Jas. 1:12).* When the 'first thing' remains first, what follows after will not be grievous.

When we receive the 'Great Revelation' we can understand and know that God is One. Understanding who our God is has always been the key that He uses to open the door behind which *"are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:2-3).*

When we receive and live according to the 'First and Great Commandment,' the Lord will use this to affect the way we worship Him, pray to Him, bear witness of Him and serve Him, but only if our principal motive in doing these things is because we love Him.

May God affirm us daily in His 'Great Revelation and Great First Commandment.'

In Christ Jesus the Lord,

Pastor Efraim Valverde III ■

GOD'S PROPHETIC CLOCK

Hnpo Gilbert Tienda

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

"Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round" (Ps. 22:12).

"For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this" (Est. 4:14).

Greetings, in the Name of the Holy One of Israel, our Lord Jesus Christ, to all of our beloved brethren and esteemed readers. I consider it a privilege to be able to contribute a few words in this publication which has been and continues to be a blessing to multitudes, beginning with my own life. I also thank the Lord for the vessel that the Lord used to enlighten many of us concerning this indispensable truth concerning the prominent place the Jewish people have in God's plan of redemption, Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr. of blessed memory

and for his grandson, my pastor, Efraim Valverde III, who has maintained this spiritual candle burning brightly.

I thought it appropriate to begin this brief article with these above Scriptures since I believe that they are relevant to the present situation in Israel. During the last two weeks of September the 71st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (the UN) took place in New York in which the leaders of their respective nations gathered to discuss different topics that affect the peace and safety of the entire world. Unfortunately, the enemies of Israel, the *"strong bulls of Bashan,"* take advantage of the speaking time assigned to them to launch a verbal attack against Israel before the nations of the world.

Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority, declared the following during his speech before the General Assembly: "In this 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly, I call on you to declare 2017 as the international year to end the Israeli occupation of our land and our people, as we approach in June 2017 a half century of this abhorrent Israeli occupation." He also stated

that he will continue to work toward achieving a UN Security Council resolution that would condemn the "settlements" and the "terrorist activities" of the "colonizers" (the Jews). He also condemned the Balfour Declaration of 1917 as being illegal, stating that Great Britain acted without permission, without authority and without consent of anyone and gave the land of "Palestine" to another people. He stated that this was the cause that the "Palestinian" people were displaced from "their land." He demanded that Great Britain apologize publicly to the "Palestinian" people for all the misery and injustices brought upon them by this declaration (according to him), and that England, as a demonstration of their remorse, should immediately recognize the "State of Palestine." In the month of June, during a meeting of the Arab League nations in Mauritania, Abbas threatened to file a lawsuit against the British government for having approved the Balfour Declaration ninety-nine years ago.

During his speech the president of the United States, Barack Obama, stated that the "Palestinians (Arabs) should cease their incitement of violence against Israel and that they should recognize Israel as a legitimate state, but he also stated that Israel could not permanently occupy or build settlements on the land that "pertains to the Palestinians."



During his speech, the president of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, accused Israel of having illegally obtained and occupied the "Palestinian territory" using military force. He also accused Israel of having biological and nuclear weapons which they had used against the "Palestinians." What he did not mention is that Iran, during a recent military parade in Tehran, arrogantly displayed its military arsenal and that on one of the missiles had a message inscribed upon it which stated: "For the destruction of Tel Aviv."

May the Lord continue to bless the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, because he has not kept silent despite all the opposition there is against the Jewish people and the Modern State of Israel. On the 22nd of September, when he spoke before the General Assembly of the United Nations, he had the courage to express the following: "The UN, begun as a moral force, has become a moral farce. He pointed out that the UN had approved 20 resolutions against Israel and only 3 against all the other nations in the world. He condemned the UN and UNESCO (the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization) for denying the connection of the Jews with the Western Wall in Jerusalem. And referring to the threat issued by Mahmoud Abbas to file a lawsuit against the British government because of the Balfour Declaration, he sarcastically asked: Why not a Palestinian class action suit against Abraham for buying that

plot of land in Hebron where the fathers and mothers of the Jewish people were buried 4,000 years ago? He also stated that the difference between the two societies is that "while Israeli leaders condemn terrorists, all terrorists, Arabs and Jews alike, Palestinian leaders celebrate terrorists. While Israel jails the handful of Jewish terrorists among us, the Palestinians pay thousands of terrorists among them." He ended his speech by declaring: "So I call on all of you: Cooperate with Israel, embrace Israel, dream with Israel. Dream of the future that we can build together, a future of breathtaking progress, a future of security, prosperity and peace, a future of hope for all humanity, a future where even at the UN, even in this hall, Israel will finally, inevitably, take its rightful place among the nations."

Glory be to the God of Israel because we know by His Word that very soon Israel will take its rightful place among the nations in the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus! But until that day comes we must continue loving, blessing and praying for the Jewish people.

The Arab uprising known as "the intifada of the knives" which began a year ago had apparently ceased, but recently another wave of attacks has begun in which Arabs attack Jews with knives. One of the most recent aggressions occurred when two Israeli police were attacked near Herod's Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. Such as been the

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increase of this type of attack that the Israeli government is going to provide all of its police force with new protective uniforms, designed to protect their necks from such attacks.

In another incident, a flotilla of two boats disembarked from Barcelona, Spain, with their destination being the Gaza Strip with the intention of taking food and other types of humanitarian aid to the people which, according to those aboard these boats, Israel has "imprisoned and treated badly." Also, according to these "humanitarians," Israel is using the civilian Arab population in Gaza as a "human laboratory to test new weapons that the Israel army is developing." The difference between this flotilla and others before it is that all of the 22 members of the flotilla are women. Among them are a Nobel Prize winner, a well-known doctor, an ex-colonel of the U.S. Army and a member of

the European parliament. This is simply another strategy of the enemies of Israel to attempt to make it look bad before the eyes of the world, because since it is only women who comprise this group, if Israel does not allow them to arrive in Gaza, Israel will be accused of being "unjust." Let us pray that the Lord will give His people wisdom in handling this type of situation.

In the United States anti-Semitic incidents are on the increase among universities and other centers of "higher learning." One marked example is what is occurring in Berkeley, a well-known university in California. One of the courses being offered is one which explores different methods of "decolonizing Palestine." This is a euphemistic way of saying: "How can we remove the Jews from Israel?"

With all that is happening to the Jewish people, we know that the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus is at the doors. May the Lord help us to continue supporting our older brother with more intensity, and may He help us to remain faithful, because soon *"there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer"* (Rom. 11:26) and He *"shall go forth and fight against those nations as He fought in the day of battle"* (Zech. 14:3). Soon, yes, very soon, our Undefeated and Glorious Lord shall come! Hallelujah! Shalom.

Your brother in the Lord,

Gilbert Tienda■



"And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?...but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes" (Num. 11:4-6).

This biblical narrative is familiar to those who know the Bible. After God delivered Israel out of Egypt and made them to cross the Red Sea on dry land, as they began their journey through the desert, one of the greatest miracles He did was to feed them with Manna, which was a type of bread which rained down from heaven (Ex. 16:31).

At first this miracle, such as was the case with all the other miracles performed among them while they were in the desert, caused great joy and uproar among the people of Israel. But the biblical narrative tells us that with the passing of time, the moment came that the people became fed up with eating Manna and they asked Moses to give them flesh to eat.

The Manna they were receiving at that time is symbolic of the spiritual bread which we, as believers in our Lord Jesus, eat today which is the Word of God. He Himself confirmed this when He declared: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51).*

I believe that it is easy for the reader to understand the teaching that this biblical narrative has for us today. Today, in the case of a Christian who is spiritually awake, he can easily look around him and see an exact fulfillment of the alluded-to symbolism. For my part, as I

observe this condition of "being fed up spiritually" which prevails among the Christian environment, I have once again been moved by my Lord to write this article about this spiritual condition.

Almost two thousand years have passed since the Lord began *"building His Church" (Matt. 16:18)*. Throughout this time the Church of the Lord has gone through many stages. During these different stages the spiritual level of those who comprise the Church has differed in countless ways, to the point that it would be impossible to describe in detail every one of these various conditions.

However, concerning the time period in which we are currently living, I can bear witness to the various spiritual levels that the Christianity which surrounds us has undergone. I can recount what occurred during the first part of the twentieth century by using contemporary history and through the testimony of our "veterans" who labored for the Lord during this time. Concerning the second half of the century, I can bear witness of things I am personally aware of because they are part of my personal experience.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE "LATTER RAIN"

Due to the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the *"latter rain" (Jl. 2:23)* at the beginning of the twentieth century, a hunger for

FED UP WITH EATING "MANNA"

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

The fear of God among the brethren would manifest itself in their lives in spontaneous fashion. Therefore, there was no need to demand of anyone that they walk in integrity, in sincerity and with a perfect heart.

the spiritual MANNA awakened among the Christian people. Very similar to the reaction of the people of Israel with the literal MANNA, the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the century provoked in a unique manner the spiritual appetite of the believers.

Contemporary history and the witnesses of those happenings in those days, who are now elderly knew personally, bear witness of the fervent manner in which the ministers and also the believers worshipped the Lord and loved His Word. They would walk long distances and make great sacrifices to be able to gather together in the services and no one got bored nor did they complain when the services extended beyond their normal hours. The willingness to fast and to pray for long hours, and even for entire nights, was in the heart of the believers. And, as a result of the people's willing attitude, the Lord continued to manifest His power in different ways. The fear of God among the

brethren would manifest itself in their lives in spontaneous fashion. Therefore, there was no need to demand of anyone that they walk in integrity, in sincerity and with a perfect heart.

That same *"latter rain" (Jl. 2:23)* made a noticeable division among Christianity. Those who anxiously and cheerfully partook of the spiritual MANNA, stood out from the professional, materialistic and frivolous Christians. The "professional" Christians accused the other Christians of being fanatic and exaggerated, and they even accused them of being demon possessed. But nothing detained those Christians who had "gone crazy." They continued with their spiritual appetite awakened, not feeling any weariness of partaking of MANNA.

The men who the Lord called as pioneers to proclaim His Word during those first years of the twentieth century served unconditionally without seeking rewards, benefits or recognition. The only thing that motivated them was an ardent desire to fulfill the ministry that the Master had bestowed upon them and that was to share the spiritual MANNA with those among the people of God who hungrily partook of it.

Their messages were neither "sophisticated" nor "elegant." In fact, many of these vessels were men who did not have any type of academic preparation. However, their sermons were powerful and effective, because they were anointed with the power of God. It was during those years that the Lord operated in a way that there was a hunger for the spiritual MANNA among God's people, especially among those who the Lord saw that there was a profound appreciation for His Word. (I



cannot avoid pausing here a moment to mention here that it is my honor to say that during those years one of the vessels who was used by God was my beloved grandfather, Refugio Valverde.)

THE CONDITION OF BEING SPIRITUALLY "FED UP" BEGINS

Years passed and by the middle of the twentieth century, during the time when the Lord changed my life, there was still a strong spiritual hunger among God's people. But just as what happened to the people of Israel in the desert, who were overcome by the sense of being fed up with eating the literal MANNA, the enemy was successful in causing this same feeling of "being fed up" with the spiritual MANNA, the Word of God, to begin to infiltrate into the negligent hearts of the Christian people.

There were now many things which did not exist at the beginning of the century. There were now a greater number of believers and consequently a greater number of congregations. These congregations now had their temples and equipment for different activities. There was also a greater degree of secular preparation among the people and among the preachers. Now, there existed different ranks and recognition among the ministry, and even a certain degree of recognition among the civil governments.

The political-religious systems and organizations which had been established only a few years prior were now functioning, albeit in their beginning stages. Everything appeared to be positive and correct. I say this because I, myself, was one of those who during those mid-century years approved of

this system. I even promoted and propagated it, affirming that all of this was a blessing from God.

However, neither I nor my companions who are now elderly ministers and who now understand the truth were aware of how much these "blessings" were contributing so that the sense of being spiritually "fed up" would invade the people of God to the extent that now prevails. The truth is that the sickness of spiritual weariness is a malignant cancer and that he who is spiritually sick is not aware of his sickness until it begins to kill him spiritually.

In Israel, the people who were weary of eating MANNA began to ask for flesh. I now know that this is an undeniable proof that things are no longer going well among the people of God. The apostle Paul tells us: *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."* He then adds: *"who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).*

The Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the apostle Paul, makes this distinction in order to point out the two major spiritual conditions which are prevalent among Christianity. The expression *"them which are in Christ Jesus"* refers to the totality of believers. But among this totality can be found a minority who *"walk according to the Spirit,"* and a majority who *"walk according to the flesh" (Rom. 8:1).*

The expression *"who walk according to the flesh" (Rom. 8:1),* doesn't necessarily refer to those who are partaking of different vices or worldly lifestyles. That part is understood without explanation. What this expression does refer to are those Christians, in contrast to the pioneers of the early 20th century, began to fall in love with

the "blessings" (political-religious systems and organizations) that I previously mentioned and who by this time have their hearts set very "honorably" in them.

"BLESSINGS" WHICH BECOME A CURSE

Throughout the last half of the 20th century (something that I am a personal witness to), slowly and subtly, the pride which is a common by-product of prosperity began to take possession of the minds of the believers, especially amongst the ministry. Little by little the multitude of believers began increasing and with this also came the capacity to acquire money and to live more comfortably. The humble houses of prayer were supplanted throughout the years by beautiful sanctuaries.

The different groups, which by this time were now organized, found themselves with the "urgent" need to name "ecclesiastical authorities which could control the work of the Lord." To do so they had to create various ranks and positions among the ministry, and consequently they did the same with members. I am fully aware of this because in the beginnings of my walk with the Lord I played a very direct part in doing this among the politico-religious systems to which I belonged.

The church services, as well as other activities, whether they were local, regional or national, were "regulated" in every country according to their respective laws and traditions. And in this manner, for many years everything appeared to be correct and honorable. In fact, both the ministry and the members of the various corporations were very confident that this type of system was approved by the Word of God.

The spontaneous willingness to "suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:29), which was evident at the beginning of the 20th century is now extremely rare

Yet, amid all this "prosperity" and "order" a gradual spiritual metamorphosis began to operate among the multitudes in the ministry and among the believers. They unknowingly (except for the faithful remnant which God has always reserved for Himself) began to feel a distaste for the MANNA and they began to "eat flesh." By this time there are some who have eaten so much flesh that *"it comes out of their nostrils" (Num. 11:20).*

The spontaneous willingness to *"suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:29),* which was evident at the beginning of the 20th century is now extremely rare. In a great majority of ministers and believers the genuine humility has transformed into a denominational pride. Also, for the most part, the secular preparation together with its corresponding "personality" has suffocated the simplicity which characterized the first part of the century.

It has been many years now that the great majority of the different spiritual gatherings have been converted into programmed, bland, dry routines in which intellectuality prevails and not the message that comes from the heart. Other gatherings have become meetings with much superficial noise, which are a result of the emotion produced by the



manifestation of the “Holy Spirit,” but without the corresponding fruit of the Spirit.

In the many different types of meetings I have mentioned what is lacking is a profound conviction and a genuine Divine anointing which invariably can only be a result of partaking, with a spiritual hunger and appetite that comes from the soul, of the spiritual MANNA. *“The flesh”* can never produce such fruits.

WALKING ACCORDING TO THE FLESH

It is exasperating to see how, today, this condition of being “fed up” with the spiritual MANNA has possessed the lives of a great majority among the people of God, especially when we see this same great majority tranquilly living *“according to the flesh”* (Rom. 8:1). They feel justified, some because of the grace of God and others because of the joy of Pentecost, but many have forgotten the pain of Calvary.

In fact, it has been many years ago that the “prosperity” teaching began to gain more acceptance among Christianity. Ironically, I have referred to this teaching as the “American Gospel.” The majority of my readers have heard of this doctrinal interpretation which *“wrests the Scriptures”* (2 Pet. 3:16), falsely teaching that the Church is not called to suffer, and that the true Christian should always be in good health, surrounded by spiritual and material blessings. According to this interpretation if this is not the case it is because he is not walking right before God or because he lacks faith.

According to this erroneous interpretation, God’s material blessing consists in having a lavish sanctuary, a beautiful home,

a luxurious automobile, elegant clothing, etc. And as far as in the spiritual aspect, the Christian must speak in other tongues, have gifts and other prophetic gifts (read **1 Cor. 13:1**). Additionally, this error teaches that this blessing consists in obtaining a higher level of academic preparation, in preaching beautiful sermons, in gathering many people together, etc.

It is certainly true that all of this satisfies the flesh to a high degree. However, I continue insisting (because I am acutely aware of this) that none of these things can bring a true satisfaction to the souls of these ministers and believers. This satisfaction can only be produced by having a genuine appetite for the spiritual MANNA. King David perfectly describes this mindset when he declares: *“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God...”* (Psa. 42:1-2).

But precisely because they do not possess this intense hunger and thirst for the things of God, we see and hear multitudes of Christians everywhere, possessed by this weariness toward the spiritual MANNA, “asking for more and more flesh.” Concerning the “harmless distractions” that the world offers, there are many who live wasting precious time sitting in front of the television or computer. They began with watching the news and documentaries, but end up watching sex and violence.

For many, different types of sports are much more interesting than spending a “boring” night at the prayer vigil. The many types of food and delicacies are so appealing and abundant that they completely hinder the Christian from presenting a fast before the

Lord. The distractions in which many believers occupy themselves are so abundant that they have stopped walking with the Lord *“with all their heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning”* (Jl. 2:12), and they only comply with what is superficial. The preachers have forgotten what the Scriptures declare: *“Let the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar”* (Jl. 2:17).

LET US NOT LEAVE OUR “FIRST LOVE”

The Lord told Elijah: *“Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal”* (1 Kings 19:18). Likewise, God has done the same among His people throughout all history, even to the present. Throughout the course of my walk with the Lord, living aware of what I am explaining here, and always striving to do all that I can to live accordingly, I have rejoiced in seeing this faithful remnant in various times and places.

Many years have passed since my God called me to feed His people with the spiritual MANNA. Today, without fear of being wrong, I can confidently state that one of the positive behaviors that distinguish this faithful remnant from the other Christians is that throughout their lives they have never *“left their first love”* (Rev. 2:4). It is this first love that works in their lives so that they will never become bored with or fed up with the spiritual MANNA.

In doing my part to serve the table with the spiritual MANNA, whether it be by the spoken word or by the ministry of the letter that God has commended to me, I have always felt a great joy in seeing those among the children of God who partake of *“the living bread which came down from heaven”*

(Jn. 6:51) with a great hunger, thereby fulfilling in their lives the proverb which states that *“to the hungry soul (even) every bitter thing is sweet”* (Prov. 27:7). On the other hand, it has always been painful for me, even to the present day, to see many members and ministers in whose lives the first part of that same proverb is being fulfilled: *“The full soul loatheth an honeycomb”* (Prov. 27:7). To this type of Christians who live loathing the MANNA regardless of how the spiritual food “is cooked,” they will reject it and will not eat it. Some who do eat it, end up vomiting it.

Their spiritual digestive systems are so addicted to always eating “flesh” that they can no longer ingest the spiritual MANNA. They cannot swallow it even if it is lovingly placed in their mouths, much less if it is served in a way that appears harsh to them. Paul poses the following question to this class of Christians: *“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”* (Gal. 4:16).

What I have written here is certainly one of those undeniable truths that will serve as a confirmation for some and as an awakening for others. In no way is it intended to offend a certain individual, although I know very well that those who are “fed up” with eating MANNA will view negatively what I have written. In fact, there are those who upon reading the title of the article chose to not read it. With God’s help, who called me to serve in this ministry, I will continue serving this spiritual MANNA using all the methods He allows me to use. I will rejoice with those who partake of it, and I will pray for those who might already be “fed up” with eating it.

May God bless you ■



LEARNED EXTERIOR SINS AND SINS THAT ORIGINATE FROM INNATE IMPULSES

In the Bible, especially in the New Testament, we find several passages that specifically list several of the most common sins committed among the people of God. One of these “lists,” which is the one most often cited, is found in Paul’s letter to the **Galatians** (chap. 5:19-21). In this list the apostle begins citing the most “common and popular” sin, adultery, and then continues mentioning others. We all acknowledge that adultery and fornication, which are essentially the same sexual act, are a product of the sexual impulses outside of marriage. Following adultery in the list are other sins that are also fruit of our own human nature. They are spontaneous eruptions of the filth of our flesh. Included are variance, envying, wrath, strife, and others that originate from our own human condition. These are negative actions that operate in the believer no matter how good his intentions might be. (Nevertheless they can be subdued or mortified by the power of the Lord Jesus, as the apostle tells us in **Colossians 3** verse 5).

Next on the list are the “exterior sins”, In other words, the sins that are not innate, that is to say, that do not originate from our human condition. These are learned or are cultivated with the full knowledge of the careless Christian. In this category are witchcraft, murders, drunkenness, heresies and other similar sins. In order to commit these sins the individual must learn them from someone else, since they are not part of the “package of the inheritance from the Garden.”

These “exterior sins” are less harmful than the innate ones, because if a

person picked them up or learned them from someone else; then he can just as easily cease doing them, aided by the power of God. This is precisely what the Lord has done in the lives of many, particularly in those of us who, having lived in the pleasures of the world, have come to the Way of the Lord loaded with these “exterior sins” which we learned in times past. The Lord removed from us all cursing, drunkenness, vices and countless other filthy habits and behaviors.

The innate impulses are the most dangerous, because no matter how hard we try, or how desperate we get, the faithful Christian cannot rid himself of them. They are part of his being and of his humanity. This is the undesirable “*filth of the flesh*” which Peter mentions (**1 Pet. 3:21**) and the “sin which dwelleth in me,” which Paul mentions (**Rom. 7:20**). Among these innate impulses which torment each child of God who wants to live a pure life are the sexual impulses. The reality is that we are all fruit of sex and, without exception, sexual impulses operate in every one of us. In some, these impulses are not as strong as in others. Regardless, no one can escape these impulses.

THE CREATOR HIMSELF IS THE AUTHOR OF SEX

I explained at the beginning that from the moment in which God, in His plan of creation and redemption, purposed to create humanity, he determined that

THE FILTH OF OUR FLESH

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

The innate sins are the most dangerous, because no matter how hard we try, or how desperate we get, the faithful Christian cannot rid himself of them. They are part of his being and of his humanity. This is the undesirable “filth of the flesh” which Peter mentions (1 Pet. 3:21) and the “sin which dwelleth in me,” which Paul mentions (Rom. 7:20). Among these innate impulses which torment each child of God who wants to live a pure life are the sexual impulses.

humans would multiply using sex, between a man and a woman, as the medium. Furthermore, amid the immense population of humanity that has existed during past centuries and to the present day, the Creator willed that “His children would partake of flesh and blood” (**Heb. 2:14**). Therefore,

we also are products and partakers of sex. It is certainly true that the human race, more than ever, is comprised of human beings who are God’s creation. He, in His mysterious plans, knows what He is going to do with those innumerable multitudes when “time is no more” (**Rev. 10:6**), when we enter into eternity. At this time “the shaking of those things which can be shaken” will have already taken place with the establishment of the “kingdom which cannot be moved” (**Heb. 12:27-28**).

However, we, “the people of the saints of the Most High” (**Dan. 7:27**), the children of God, are more than His creation. We have been “begotten” by God (**John 1:3; Heb. 1:5**). He Himself calls us “*gods*” (**Ps. 82:6; John 10:34-35**) for the powerful reason that we are “partakers of the divine nature” (**2 Pet. 1:4**). Yet, since we are here in this world partaking of flesh and blood, we cannot deny, nor much less avoid, the role that sex plays in our human life.

That is why I state in this section that the Creator Himself made sex. The main reason He did it was so that the humans He created could reproduce and multiply. Therefore, from the beginning until today, in this sense that it is the vehicle for man to perpetuate himself, sex has been a marvelous blessing to mankind.

Nevertheless, in its negative operation or practice, sex has been a curse for man. In His plan of creation and redemption, our God was not ignorant of the fact that man would pervert sex.

Yet, absolutely no one can deny the fact that throughout human history sex has become the most effective weapon in the hands of the “god of the world” (**2 Cor. 4:4**) to destroy



lives, families, nations and even entire civilizations. But more than anything else, sex has served to continually test the fidelity and spiritual integrity of the children of God, who, living under the fiery attack of their sexual impulses, try to control them **(Phil. 4:13, Col. 3:5)** in order to please God.

I continue emphasizing that the sexual impulses are innate, and the believer cannot get rid of them as long he is living in a human condition. Those who are sincere will accept this fact, because they know that this is an undeniable reality. On the other hand, even those who pretend and dissimulate know very well that what I have stated here is the truth. They cannot deny the fact that, deep within the “furnace” of their humanity, their sexual impulses are operating.

MARITAL SEX IS A “LEGAL SIN”

The Sacred Scripture declares; *“Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge”* **(Heb. 13:4)**. I mentioned previously that adultery and fornication are the same forbidden act. In the case of the cited text we see the two aspects of the sexual act: the blessing on one hand, and the curse on the other. The same sexual act of adultery (sexual relation apart from husband and wife) and fornication (sex between a single man and a single woman), nevertheless, within marriage, sex is an “honorable, legal sin,” approved by God in His Word.

God created Adam and gave him dominion over all the animals, both land dwelling and sea dwelling, as well as the birds of the air. During the period of time in which he was alone, before the Lord made Eve, I am sure Adam saw all the animals reproduce. He

most likely witnessed that this reproduction was by means of the sexual act. Since Adam was in a state of innocence, we can say with certainty that he was not affected in the least by what he saw. He probably took it for granted as normal behavior.

However, the time arrived in God’s plan that after the Lord gave him a *“helpmeet”* **(Gen.2: 18)**, and after they both ate from the fruit of the *“tree of knowledge of good and evil”* **(Gen. 2:17)**, the concept of sex changed radically in Adam’s mind. Now, he felt the same sexual impulses that he had observed in the male beasts, and this impulse attracted him to his own woman.

The “honorable, legal sin” entered into function in the positive and blessed aspect as purposed in the Creator’s plan. Consequently, the first human being was born, the son of a father and a mother, begotten by a man and conceived by a woman. Now the Divine command of *“be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth”* **(Gen. 1:28)** began to be fulfilled. How? Through the “honorable and legal sin,” which is the sexual act within a marriage (between a man and a woman).

On the other hand, no one can deny the fact that the sexual act itself is the same in humans as it is in animals. Yet, there is a great difference. The difference is that in humans, who are made *“in the image of God”* **(Gen. 1:27)**, there exists the ability to reason which we call “conscience.” Animals do not have this. This is why, according to the Word of the Creator, “the sin” in the sexual act consists in the “degree of conscience” which exists in the human when participating in the act. The apostle Paul speaks of those *“who being past feeling have given*

themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness, with greed” **(Eph. 4:19)**. These are humans who have lost all conscience and can degrade themselves to a level of depravity which even the beasts, which do not have a conscience, do not steep to.

CONSCIENCE IN THE CHILDREN OF GOD

If in anyone there should be a high degree of conscience among humans, it should be among those of us who claim to be children of God. The reason for this is that in us resides the knowledge of the Word of God. It is through the Word of the Lord that we can plainly understand which things and actions are pleasing to our Heavenly Father and which are evil and sinful in His eyes. This is precisely the reason why the true Christian, who is sincere before God and before those who are around him, acknowledges that it is impossible on his own to live without “a guilty conscience.” He knows that *“if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”* However, *“if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* **(1 Jn. 1:8-9)**.

In accordance with what I have explained, sin in the faithful child of God will produce in him a guilty conscience. The majority of the time the sins which cause him most grief are the different sinful aspects of the sexual impulses. No one can escape being affected in one way or another by these impulses. They affect both men and woman, although the intensity or degree of these impulses will vary in each person. However, in all cases, they will produce a guilty conscience because of the sin

inherent in these impulses.

This is what Peter refers to in the explanatory parenthesis in the headline verse: *“(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God)”* **(1 Pet. 3:21)**. Although it is definitely true that baptism DOES now save us, it does not remove the filth of the flesh, but it gives us the answer of a GOOD CONSCIENCE toward God. It is appropriate at this time to ask the question which I have posed many times to sincere believers, who have many times desperately desired to have a good conscience toward God. Who demands a good conscience from whom? Does God demand it from us, or do we demand it from Him?

Throughout the years I have heard the negative interpretation being taught to the sincere, simple, new, but ignorant Christian that God demands that we have a good conscience on our own. And, according to this teaching, he can only obtain this good conscience by fulfilling all the requirements and rules of “his Church.” (his church organization) There have been a countless number of Christians victimized by this interpretation. It has brought a curse and judgment upon many that, seeing that they could not fulfill all the requirements, have ceased to walking with the Lord.

The pretenders and hypocrites claim to have a clean conscience on their own, although this is a lie, but the sincere believer suffers because he has a guilty conscience. However, thank God for the truth, because we are the ones who demand a good conscience from God daily *“by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”* **(1 Pet. 3:21)**.

May God bless you.■



Once again thank our Lord for His great love and mercy, because without Him we can do nothing. By His will, the Lord allowed us to host another fellowship service in Tijuana, Baja California Norte, Mexico.

We began at 10:00AM by worshipping the Lord with much rejoicing. Afterward, some of the pastors that were present gave a greeting and then our brother, Nestor Quintanar, began to share the Word of God. Next, Pastor Efraim Valverde III shared a message with us concerning the

importance of understanding and knowing Him who had given His life for us. During the break between the services we were able to fellowship and share a meal together with joy and simplicity of heart. When we returned from the break Pastor Efraim Valverde III spoke about the importance of living our lives with a passion

for God. At the conclusion of the message we began seeking the presence of the Lord through prayer and were able to strongly feel His presence among us. Also, the pastors that were present prayed for our brother, Jonathan Larrañaga so that the Lord would confirm his calling into the ministry.

I am grateful to God for everything, for my wife, for my children and for all the members of the local congregation. I thank them for serving our brethren with all of their heart.

I also thank Pastor Efraim Valverde III for being with us at this service. I also thank all those who made the effort to accompany us at this service. Thank you very much, brothers and sisters. May God bless you.

Your brother,
Pastor Jose Covarrubias ■

My beloved brethren in the faith, part of our spiritual family, I greet you in the Name of the Almighty, our Lord Jesus Christ.

On Friday brothers from different places began arriving with a hunger to feed on the delicacies from the Word of God and to refresh our souls and to strengthen our bonds of brotherhood. The apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells the believers: *"because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us"* (Rom. 5:5). Unity is the greatest and most powerful force in the spiritual realm and when we are united in our Lord Jesus Christ nothing can overcome us. Beginning on Friday the sanctuary began to fill up with brothers who came from different places to be with us in this fellowship service and we began the spiritual celebration later that afternoon.

Our brother, Andres Rosales, inspired by God, shared the Word of the Lord with us speaking to concerning the "One Hundred and Forty Four Thousand," based upon the book written by our beloved elder pastor of blessed

Service in Chambersburg, PA



memory, Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr. He also spoke to us about the importance of being united in one mind, the mind of Christ the Lord. The Psalmist wrote: *"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity"* (Ps. 133:1), in one same mind.

On Saturday morning our beloved brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde III, seeing the need among the

people of God, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to share with us the subject: "Getting to God through His Word." In the evening the pastor was moved by God to speak to us about "the Spiritual Warfare, Fighting for Our Families." After hearing the Word of God we were motivated to call upon Almighty God with all of our hearts.

On Sunday our pastor, Efraim III, once again moved by God,

shared with us a teaching which is fundamental to all young people, "Be not yoked with unbelievers," so that our youth might make wise decisions, because he who keeps God's commandments is under Divine authority. He mentions that they, as Christians, are subject to the Creator, but an unbeliever is not, since they do not believe the Word of God. They are far from the Lord's commandments and from His blessings. The Word of the Lord is strange to their ears. He also spoke to us concerning the "two aspects of the Son, (the visible Image of God)." At the end of that marvelous day, five brave persons were baptized who gave their lives to the Almighty God.

We are very happy that our pastor, Efraim Valverde III, together with his family, could be with us. They are examples for us and for all the people of God. Also, Sis. Gloria Martinez and her son, Eliu Mendoza, were able to be with us. We ask that you continue praying for us.

Respectfully, your servant and friend,

Pastor Lázaro Antonino Pascual ■

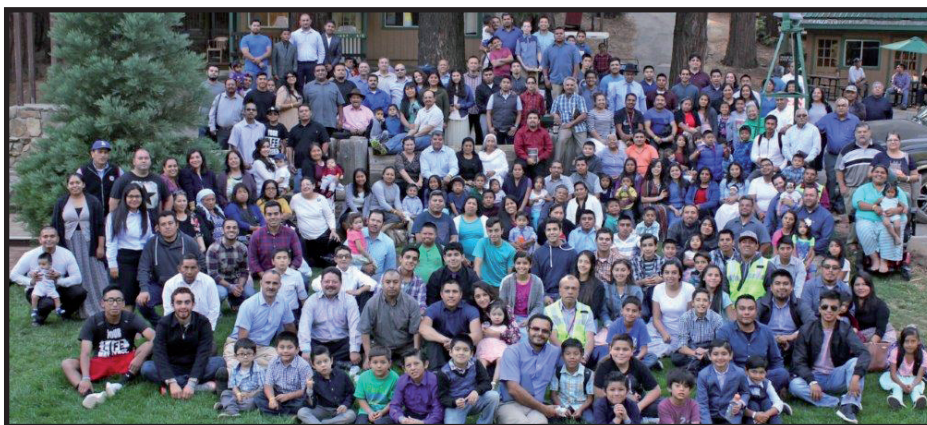


May the Lord bless each and every one of the readers of this fine, respected Christian magazine, Maranatha, which continues to be a blessing and an encouragement for those who carefully and with interest read all the teachings and information contained within this publication.

God granted us to once again host this annual event which began taking place about forty years ago. On this occasion it was once again a special blessing for all of us who attended. We received a variety of teachings regarding our daily living. Our pastor covered various points relating to Christian conduct. The young people who are single were ministered to with Bible-based counsel applicable to their daily lives.

We, adults, were also blessed with teachings concerning our responsibilities as leaders in our homes. We were amply ministered to regarding the management of

Camp Sugar Pine 2016, Report



authority in the home. Our pastor spoke about this subject in great detail and clarity what the Word of God teaches us about this subject. The brotherly environment which it pleased God to generate throughout this camp was extremely edifying and tasty to the soul. There was a vast number of attendees this year. The staff and management expressed

their admiration on the positive testimony that God has granted to remain in this place.

Our pastor and the local congregation give God thanks for the pastors who for many years now have taken seriously the importance of these events, and who have inspired and encouraged their youth to attend. The spark of this genuine desire and interest

continues, and it sparked an interest and desire in others who previously did not take these special events seriously.

We returned home extremely satisfied with what God had spoken to us and with what it pleased Him to do in the minds of every one of us who attended this year. The camp concluded with a good number of "violent" young people who took the kingdom of God by force, declaring this violence in their obedience to God's Word by being baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

We invite those who have never done so, to make the intent and the effort to be a part of this special blessing, and to begin saving up and making plans to attend in 2017, if the Lord allows us to arrive to that date.

May the Lord bless every one, Shalom.

Attentively,

Bro. Philip Michel Nava■

All honor and all glory be to our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless my brethren. I thank God for the privilege that He granted us to carry out this fellowship service one more year, since it has been a blessing for us locally and for all the brethren who visit us. On this occasion God permitted our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde III, together with other pastors from different regions, to accompany us at this event.

The activity began on Friday with our brother, Pastor Efraim Arreola from Madera, California, sharing his testimony on how the Lord raised literally him from the deathbed. In the evening, our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde III from Salinas, California,

Service in Vicente Gro. México



instructed and exhorted us on the "importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit," so that we might be able to walk with the Lord and fight against our human condition. On Saturday, Pastor Efraim spoke

to us about "how we should love our God." Let us pray for our pastor so that the Lord will continue using him to instruct and teach us on how to seek God in these last days, in which the operation

of error (deceit) presented by our enemy has not diminished, and in which the neglect of many has caused a distancing from God, this is something which (that) is extremely dangerous for all of us who profess to serve the Lord.

We thank all our brethren for their assistance and support so that we might in helping us to be able to carry forth this activity, may the Lord continue to bless you. And to all that might read this publication, we ask you to please not forget your brothers in this region. Please continue to pray for us so that together we may continue walking with and trusting in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor Eladio Lopez■



YOUTH SECTION

Antonio Zeferino Jr.

First of all I would like to thank the Lord Jesus Christ for having mercy upon me, not only once, but so many times that it would be impossible to count them all. I also thank Pastor Efraim Valverde III, my pastor, Alfredo Tienda, my mother Socorro, and my dear wife, Yareli, who have helped me throughout different stages in my walk with the Lord. With the strength from the Lord and without the assistance of these special vessels, I don't know where I would be.

God knows all things, even the intentions of our heart and our most intimate thoughts (1 Chron. 28:9), but we, as human beings, do not know everything. As humans we are limited and we can only see what is on the outside. We can only see demonstrated actions. It is impossible to fool God, but it is possible to fool other humans with outward appearances. We can confidently state that there are evils which exist today, especially through the means of technology that did not previously exist. However, there are evils which have always existed among the people of God, such as lying, deceitfulness and demonstrating an outward *FORM OF GODLINESS*. In fact, almost two thousand years ago the apostle Paul had to exhort those who masked themselves in a *"form of godliness"* (2 Tim. 3:5). But he was not the only one who dealt with this subject. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself exhorted the church at Ephesus (Rev. chap. 2), a congregation which outwardly demonstrated strength and obedience, but who inwardly had left their first love for the Lord.

Many of us have been in the church environment for years now, and consequently we have learned to speak (even to shout) words of worship with our lips. Some of us even sing songs of worship in our local congregations. But, may God help us to avoid falling into the error of honoring with our lips only and not with our heart! This type of attitude caused the Lord to declare the following: *"Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor Me, but have removed their heart far from Me"* (Isa. 29:13). My young brother or sister who sing unto the Lord, you who draw near Him with your mouth, and who honor Him with your lips, what is the condition of your heart? It will do us no good if we earn the applauses of the people but do not gain the favor of our King. *"For what is a man profiteth, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul"* (Matt. 16:26).

Hannah, the mother of Samuel the prophet, made an important declaration when she said: *"Talk no more so exceedingly proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by His actions are weighed"* (1 Sam. 2:3). We show one thing outwardly, but what does the Lord find when He places us on the balance? Will He only find an outwardly appearance? Or, will He find a just weight, pleasing to Him? In Proverbs 11:1 we are told: *"A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just (exact) weight is His delight."*

As we view what is happening around us in the world, we know that difficult times are coming for the Church. Times of pain, tears and persecution are coming. During the times of the martyrs, the Christians who remained faithful, even unto death, were not the ones who served God with an appearance of godliness only. These faithful Christians had a true conviction! Likewise, if we want to persevere until the end, we also must have a true conviction.

We must have a conviction such as the one evident in the lives of the young men, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego). The king of Babylon had issued the decree that when all the instruments sounded, all the people had to bow down and worship the golden statue. However, these young men were not willing to follow the example of the majority. They preferred obeying the Eternal King rather than an earthly king. The king of Babylon became infuriated when the young men did not worship the idol and he threatened them with death. Yet, these young men had such a profound conviction that they responded to these threats by declaring: *"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up"* (Dan. 3:17-18).

It is this type of conviction that we need to persevere until the end, even if God chooses not to deliver us from the fiery furnace, from the storm, from a sickness or from a great need.

I love you in the Lord. May God bless you.

Your brother in Christ,

Antonio Zeferino Jr. ■

WOMEN OF GOD

Hna. Laura Tienda



"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the Word, they also may be without the Word be won by the conversation of the wives" (1 Pet. 3:1).

First of all, I bless my Lord Jesus Christ for the opportunity and the privilege that He has given me to write these few lines as part of this blessed publication, which for more than half a century has been providing life-giving messages to thousands of readers across different borders and continents. I fondly remember the special vessel the Lord used to initiate this publication, my beloved elder pastor of blessed memory, Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr. May the Lord bless and continue to use my pastor, Pastor Efraim Valverde III, to continue with this spiritual legacy which is, and has been, a blessing to multitudes.

I have always felt that it is a privilege and a huge responsibility to contribute to this publication. It is something that should not be taken lightly. A few years ago the Lord granted me, along with others, the privilege to assist in the proofreading of articles and designing of the layout of the Maranatha, something I considered to be divine work.

I would like to thank the Lord for placing my husband, Gilbert Tienda in my path, he has been an example for me and for our sons of how to love God and how to walk with Him daily. I would not be

who I am, neither could I walk with the Lord without the help of my husband. As time passes I realize how much more I need to know, to understand, to walk with and to serve my God. I am not writing this to give anyone advice, since I, myself, am in need of much counsel. All I can do is to share a few thoughts. I realize that as I grow older, my need to learn increases. I have understood that I have no honor of my own. Any honor I might have comes from my husband, and his honor comes from the Lord. Many times I have asked myself: "Who would I be if I was not the wife of Gilbert Tienda? Hopefully, no one will misinterpret my words. Although we have the unique place of being God's daughters, the truth is that if we do not honor the man of God that the Lord has given us as our husband, our words and our actions will only have a limited effect. The Lord has given my husband and me the privilege of walking together, loving and serving God with all of our hearts. I have witnessed how the Lord has used my husband, throughout the years, to be a blessing to my family in the flesh and to our family in the Lord wherever the Lord has allowed Him to go. I can say with all my heart that my husband is a man of God who *"goes forth weeping, bearing the precious seed"* (Ps. 126:6). I have seen his tears and his supplications as he seeks to always please the Lord. I have been greatly favored and blessed by God to have given him to me as my companion. We have walked together through trials, and through difficult situations, but have *"endured, as seeing Him who is invisible"* (Heb. 11:27), knowing that it has only been the marvelous Grace of our God that has helped us make it this far.

Many know that we have a son who suffers from epilepsy for more than twenty years, and as his parents, we have suffered along with him. As a mother, I have cried out, I have pleaded and I have begged our Lord to heal our son, but I also know that He is sovereign and His designs are inscrutable. I would just like



to tell any mother who may have a child that suffers from a chronic or incurable sickness that you are not alone. First of all, we have our God who is always at our side, and we also have many of our brothers who are joining us in our prayers. As we have endured this situation, we have seen how God has used this as a way to constantly keep us calling upon Him and seeking His face. We have also seen His mighty hand giving us the strength that we need to continue pressing forward.

During these past seven years the Lord changed the course of our lives, as He placed the desire in our hearts to move to Mexico. It has been an experience living in a very different environment than the one in which we lived. But it has been marvelous to get to know more personally many of our brethren that we had only heard about. We have learned to love them with all our heart as we see their simplicity, their profound love for the Lord, their hearts to serve and their giving of themselves unconditionally to Him. God knows how much we appreciate them! I have also seen that the lack of many human comforts and distractions makes one more sensitive and tender to seek the Lord.

I ask my God to give me more wisdom and grace so that I might continue being the "helpmeet" that my husband needs. I also ask Him that He would help all of my fellow wives, both young and old, so that we might be an example and a blessing to our families and to those who surround us. I ask that God would give us grace to serve our husbands in all aspects, including cooking for them, washing their clothes, fulfilling our household chores and responsibilities, such as cleaning our homes. I have sadly witnessed how there are those who strive to learn many Scriptures and to even read books about different topics (which is fine in its proper order), but who neglect taking care of the basic responsibilities, which is also of utmost importance in our walk with the Lord as His daughters.

I close my words by thanking my God so much, for all of His goodness, His mercies and His favors that He has bestowed upon my family and me. He knows that I love Him with all my heart and that my desire is that I may continue walking with Him, together with my husband and sons, until that "Day." May God bless all of my sisters who love and serve the Lord, and their husbands, with all of their heart.

Your sister in Christ,

Laura Tienda ■

TESTIMONY

Sis. Liliana Arreola



God bless all of you. I thank God for His love and His mercy. May the peace of the Lord be with all of us in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

My name is Liliana Arreola. I live in Salinas, California. I am a member of the congregation where bro. Efraim Valverde III is my pastor. I thank God for using my pastor in a special way to preach the Word of God. I am grateful for having him as my pastor. He has been a great blessing to my life. I also thank God for other brothers who have encouraged us to continue forward such as Bro. Philip Nava, Bro. Satur Macias, Jr. and Bro. Jonathan Gutierrez, as well as others. I thank God for granting me the privilege of having a second opportunity in life, since it is He who has permitted me to be alive to share what happened to me when I was involved in an automobile accident. I pray that this testimony will be a blessing to those that might read it.

On the 20th of May of this year, five coworkers and I were traveling northbound in a Ford Expedition on Highway 101. I was sitting in the front passenger's seat. One of my coworkers was driving. Suddenly another vehicle crossed in front of us and although my coworker slammed on the brakes and attempted to avoid doing so, we crashed into the other vehicle. The greatest impact occurred on my side, but I could see the hand

of God protecting me since I did not suffer any serious injury. All of my coworkers suffered broken bones in different parts of their bodies. Some were seriously injured. Two of them suffered three broken ribs and three of them suffered back and neck injuries and have bruises over their entire bodies.

I only suffered a small cut on my mouth and on my hand, and I have a few bruises on my body. I thank God that all of my coworkers and I are still alive. God was with us, and if He gave us another opportunity to live, I know that it is for a purpose. Everyone tells me that it is a miracle that I am alive and in good health. I should have suffered broken bones due to the accident. At the moment of impact I had my lunchbox on the floorboard by my feet. When I saw the dashboard closing in on me, I lifted up my legs and my knees hit the dashboard. That is the reason that nothing more serious happened to my legs. I had a set of keys inside my lunchbox and the impact was so strong that it even twisted those keys.

I thank God for the privilege of being alive. I thank Him for my legs, my hands, my eyes and my mouth. My body remains whole. The hand of God is with me and this experience has taught me to have a greater appreciation for what He has given me. Now, more than ever, I understand clearly that our body is the temple of God and that we should take care of it to use if for Him. In the **first** letter to the **Corinthians**, chapter 3, verse 17, we are told: *"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."* Therefore, we should worship God with all of our heart and with all of our soul. My brother and sister, if you have hands, how many times have you danced before the Lord as King David danced? If you have

hands, how many times have you used them to clap, giving glory unto God? If you have a mouth, how many times have you used it to share the Word of God with your friend? If you have eyes, how many times do you thank God for being able to see a sunrise, for being able to see what is around you and for being able to see your family? There are a lot of questions on which we can meditate, so we can reflect on the importance of the place that we give God in our lives.

The Word of God tells us: *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Eph. 6:12). We must therefore fight, using the armor of God, which is prayer, the Word of God, and fasting. These are weapons that make us strong, even amid trials. But above all, we must have faith in God at all times, because although we are going through a very difficult situation, nothing is impossible for God.

It is also written in the Lord's Word: *"Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest"* (Josh. 1:9). God sees when we are truly striving and He arrives at the precise moment we need Him. God never leaves us alone. He is always with us and He bestows His love upon us every moment. Never complain about something "bad" that has happened to you. Be grateful to God in the good things and in the "bad," (accidents, sicknesses and other things that are out of our control to avoid), because everything happens to us for a reason and God has a divine plan which is a great blessing.

I also thank God for my family, my brothers in the Lord and my friends that have given me much support. I thank God for placing them in my path. I ask prayer for my coworkers so that they will recover completely from their physical injuries, but I primarily ask prayers for their spiritual wellbeing.

God bless everyone. Let us press forward ■



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
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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.

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

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

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

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