

THE LORD IS COMING
1 Corinthians 16:22



MARANATHA

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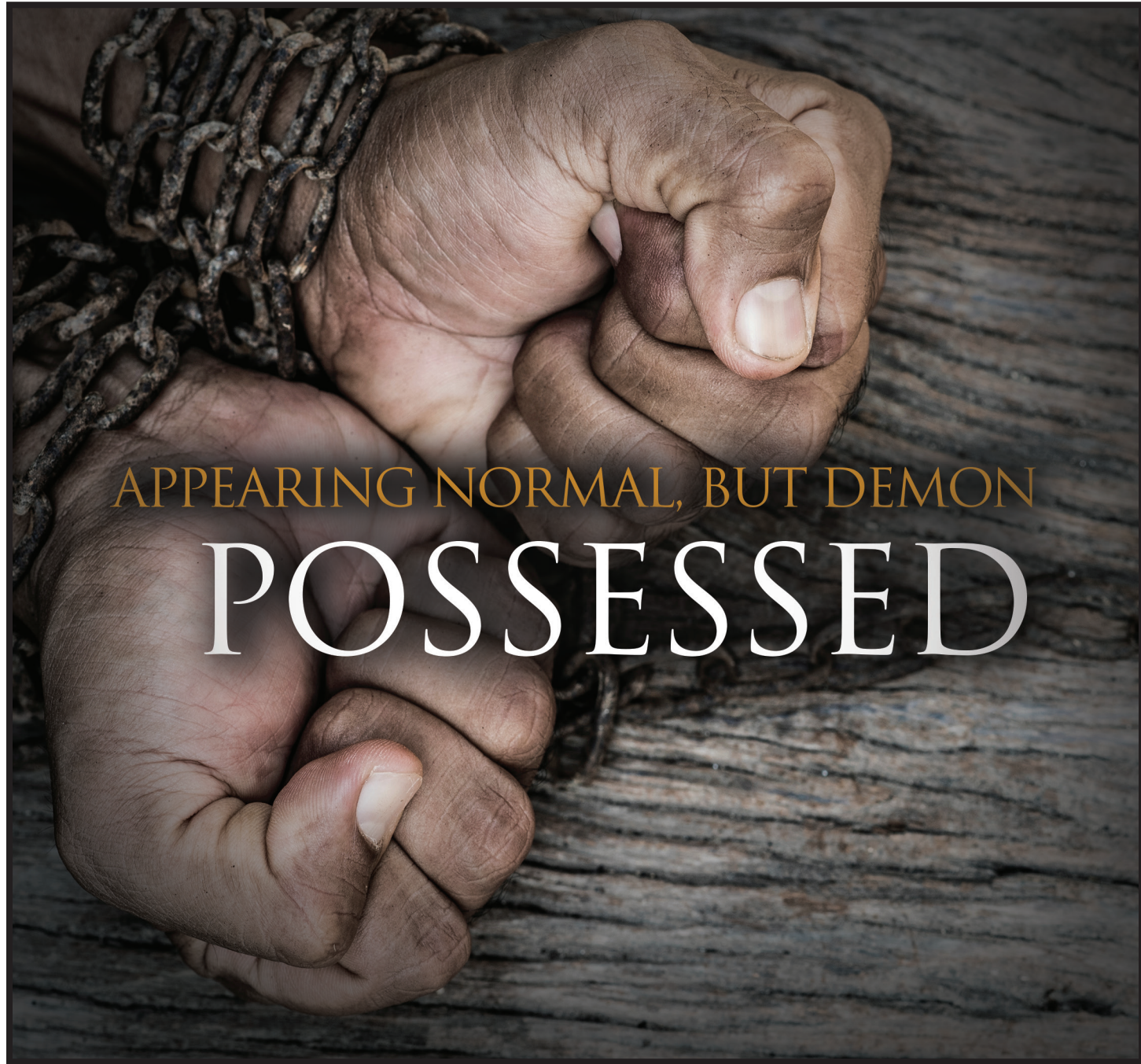
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APPEARING NORMAL, BUT DEMON
POSSESSED

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EDITORIAL

I greet you once again in the wonderful Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to unto Him for allowing us to complete one more year. Our God said: *“I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life”* (Jn. 14:6). He is the one who gives and sustains our lives! He is Life, our life!

It’s really amazing how time has flown by, especially these last three years. The more movement (action/activity) there is, we feel that time passes more quickly. Time is movement and change, when time ends, movement and change end. As time passes, things change, the only thing that does not change is the One who created time, which is not subject to it, *“JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME yesterday, and today, and forever”* (Heb. 13:8). Although God uses time to set limits, he also uses time to fulfill his purposes.

“Everything that comes to your hand to do (movement), do it according to your strength; because in the grave, where you go (at the end of our time), there is no work (movement or change), nor industry, nor knowledge, nor wisdom” (Eccl. 9:10).

The word “TIME” in Hebrew is “moed”, which means “APPOINTED TIME OR SPACE”. The word “YEAR” in Hebrew is “shanah”, which shares its root with the word “shoni”, which means “CHANGE”. In other words, every year (365 days of appointed time) there must be positive changes in our lives. The word “MONTH” in Hebrew is “chodesh”, which shares its root with the word “chadash”,

It is convenient for us to relate, deal or come to terms with “time” and with the understanding of Moses concerning time, and that is, that the time of our life on earth is brief and numbered:

“Teach us in such a way to number our days, that we may bring wisdom to our hearts” (Ps. 90:12). *If we truly understand the meaning of Moses’ words, we will have the urgent sense of the Words of our God, who said: “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work”* (John 9:4)

which means “NEW”. “HOLIDAYS” in Hebrew is “moadim”, which means “HOURS OF MEETING BETWEEN US AND OUR GLORIOUS GOD”. In order to achieve these positive changes in our lives, we must have “moadim” with the Lord every day. The key words here are, time/moed = appointed time or space, shoni root word of year = change, month/chodesh which shares root with chadash = new, and Holy-Days/moadim = hours of meeting between man and GOD. Use a combination of these words and you’ll receive a special message.

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Every day, God presents us with a new opportunity so that He can work changes in our lives by drawing closer to Him and following His Word, *“For God is the one who works in you both to will and to do, for his good will”* (Phil. 2:13). In what way do we have to change the manner in which we see and relate to the time that God gives us in this life? *“Take heed, then, how you*

walk wisely; not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are bad. Therefore, do not be rash, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:15-17). *“Let’s not sleep like the others; rather let us watch and be sober”* (1 Thess. 5:6).

What are we doing and going to do with the very limited allotted time that God has given us in this world? *“Because what is your life? Certainly it is a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes”* (James 4:14). Each one of us knows what changes we need in our life which we will only be able to achieve with the help of the Lord; He is here to help us and He is waiting for us. Let us be clear in our minds as to what we must change so that we may acquire determination, perseverance and sacrifice in order to be pleasing before the Lord. For the Word says, *“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”* (1 Cor. 9:25).

That this New Year we may change more and more for His Glory. Let’s not just stay with the “intention to change”, let us make real changes and be better in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ! Let’s take advantage of this great opportunity that the Lord is giving us, while there is time! For the day of the *“Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thes. 2:1) is already at the doors, let Him find us going from glory to glory and remain firm and faithful until the end. *“Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ”* (Phil. 1:6).

God bless you
Pastor Efraim Valverde III. ■



“Seventy weeks are determined over your people (Jewish People) and over your holy city (Old City of Jerusalem)” (Dan. 9:24).

Shalom, the King of Israel who lives and reigns forever is at the gates! The day when our King, Bridegroom and Beloved of our soul will come is nearer than ever. Thank God, we can make this statement because HIS CLOCK, ISRAEL has NOT stopped. Because of God’s Clock, we can know what time it is. The time is fulfilled!

Here are some of the most notable events that have occurred in the past three months amongst the Jewish people and in regards to the city of the Great King, Jerusalem.

October 2, 2022. “The Jerusalem Post” published the following: The Israeli government on Sunday approved a proposal to speed up the immigration of Russians who qualify under the Law of Return. Due to recent events in Russia, tens of thousands of Aliyah (return to Israel) candidates are expected to arrive in Israel in the coming months.

October 13, 2022. “The Jerusalem Post” reported: Violence erupts in Jerusalem on the most violent night in the capital in years. Arab rioters threw Molotov cocktails and stones, and fired fireworks at Israeli Forces across East Jerusalem. The car of the mayor of Jerusalem, Moshe Lion, was also stoned.

October 18, 2022. “Israel National News”, Reports: Israel’s Prime Minister Lapid Said: We Will Not Allow Jewish Prayer On The Temple Mount. The Prime Minister calls on the Arab-Israeli sector to vote for Yesh Atid in the upcoming elections.

October 21, 2022. “The Times of Israel” announced that the ongoing United Nations Commission of Inquiry investigating rights abuses in Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip following the 11th day of last year’s fighting between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, released its second report on Thursday, calling on the Security Council to end Israel’s policy and the “permanent occupation,” and on individual UN member states to prosecute Israeli officials.

GOD'S PROPHETIC CLOCK

Pastor Efraim Valverde III

October 30, 2022. “The Jerusalem Post” reported: “Israel must get rid of all its nuclear weapons and place its nuclear sites under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency,” declared the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in an initial vote of 152-5.

November 3, 2022. “Ynet News” reported the following: Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu won this week’s Israeli election, final results showed on Thursday, paving the way for his return to power.

November 15, 2022. “The Times of Israel” reported that three Israelis were killed and three wounded in a stabbing and car-ramming attack in and around the Judea, Samaria settlement of Ariel on Tuesday morning, military and doctors said.

November 17, 2022. “Israel National News” published the following: Israel records the highest number of terror casualties since 2008. With the Lapid government weakening Israel’s deterrence, the country experienced its worst wave of terror attacks in more than a decade.

November 19, 2022. “The Times of Israel” announced that the FBI director has said that the Jewish community in America is being hit from all sides and desperately needs more support from the agency amid an apparent increase in anti-Semitic attacks.

November 20, 2022. Israel National News reported that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, considered a leading candidate for the 2024 United States presidential election, defended the right of Jews to live in their Biblical homeland of Judea and Samaria, and reiterated that he does not consider these territories to be “occupied”.

November 23, 2022. “AP News” reported the following: Two explosions went off near bus stops in Jerusalem, killing a Canadian-Israeli teenager and wounding at least 18, in what police said were Palestinian attacks.

November 27, 2022. “The Jerusalem Post” reports: The State of Israel is “on the brink of civil war” between Jews and Arabs, Acre Mayor Shimon Lankri warned on Sunday during an emergency conference of the Forum for Security, Governance and Settlements.

November 29, 2022. “The Times of Israel” reported that UN Secretary General António Guterres said Tuesday at a Palestinian solidarity event that “the occupation must end,” amid growing international alarm over an increase in violence in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria).

December 1, 2022. “The Jerusalem Post” announced: The UN will commemorate “Nakba Day” (the establishment of Israel considered a catastrophe). The vote was 90-30, with 47 abstentions. The United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom were among those who opposed the measure.

December 6, 2022. “Israel National News” reported the following: NEW YORK – Anti-Semitic hate crimes in the five boroughs of New York City more than doubled last month from the year before, Monday’s data from the New York Police Department (NYPD) revealed.

December 7, 2022. “The Jerusalem Post” reported that a new report from a think tank warns of the possibility of Iran launching an accelerated effort to achieve some “crude” nuclear weapons in six months.

December 16, 2022. “The Times of Israel” reported that “Yeshiva University

in New York City must formally recognize a group of LGBTQ students,” a New York court ruled Thursday, upholding an earlier decision in the middle of a long and acrimonious legal battle in which the school has claimed that doing so would violate their religious rights.

December 22, 2022. “The Jerusalem Post” announced: A total of 70,000 olim (immigrants) from 95 different countries made Aliyah (return to Israel, promotion) in 2022. This represents a record number of olim in the last 23 years and a spectacular increase from 2021, when some 28,600 new immigrants arrived in Israel.

December 22, 2022. “The Washington Post” reports: Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu announced the formation of the country’s most-ever far-right government on Wednesday night, marking the imminent return of its longest-serving leader and granting an unprecedented share of power to its far-right and ultra-Orthodox allies.

After two years of Israel being governed by the most contradictory liberal left-wing government in the history of the Modern State of Israel, we see how the hand of the LORD has made a drastic change with this new government which is the complete opposite of the former government. The fact that the God of Israel has once again set Benjamin Netanyahu back in the leadership role of the Prime Minister of the Nation of Israel and with a government that is being called the most “extreme right-wing government in the history of Israel” is a tremendous confirmation that we are nearing the midnight hour.

Let’s arouse and arise ourselves from any and all slumber and sleep and let’s fill our vessels with the oil of God’s Spirit, so that He lights our lamp with fire to receive Him, the Beloved Husband. The alarm of the times were in is sounding loud and clear, can we here it?: “Behold, the Bridegroom comes; go out to meet Him!” (Matt 25:6). “Watch therefore, for you do not know the day or the hour that the Son of Man is coming” (Matt. 25:13). Let’s be prudent, watchful, and prepared.

God bless you. ■



“GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN”

“But when He (the Lord Jesus) had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men” (Mk. 8:33).

When I refer to this particular Scripture, I always remember a poor simple-minded old man who, after reading an article I had written explaining that the true baptism is in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, sent me a letter telling me that those of us who believe this are wrong. In this letter he stated: “This baptism was commanded by Peter, and the Lord referred to Peter as being Satan.” This is not the only a blasphemous statement that I have heard from the lips of those who don’t have revelation concerning the baptism in the *“Name that is above every other name” (Phil. 2:9, Acts 2:38)*. But on this occasion, I will be using this Scripture as a base for discussing another extremely important subject which inevitably affects the life of every child of God at one time or another and this is, the manner in which Satan operates in our minds.

I will begin by pointing out that there are some people who teach that the devil does not know what we are thinking. This extremely absurd teaching is precisely one of the most effective weapons Satan uses to defeat the Christians who believe such a

APPEARING NORMAL, BUT DEMON POSSESSED

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

teaching. There is nothing more dangerous for any Christian than the fact of not being aware of the real presence and subtle manipulation the enemy has on the minds of even the children of God.

If we include the connection that this operation has with the *“filth of the flesh” (1 Pet. 3:21)*, we realize that Satan not only has perfect knowledge of our thoughts and feelings, but God has even granted him the power to manipulate these (**Jn. 19:11**). This is precisely what Satan did in the mind of the apostle Peter in the verse I cite above.

If he was able to manipulate the good intentions and purposes of the Lord’s faithful disciple, causing him to say something that was not correct, with all the more reason he can do this and more in the minds of the believers and ministers who are “walking in the flesh” (**Rom. 8:1**). Satan especially works in the minds of those who already having allowed the sinful thoughts and feelings that the Word of God reproves and do not repent from these things and neither confess them. As a natural consequence, these minds are fertile ground for the devil to easily work in their minds whenever the opportunity presents itself. After

all it is written that *“the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:4)*.

THE “APPARENTLY NORMAL, BUT DEMON POSSESSED PERSONS”

The term “demon possessed” describes a negative situation in which it is understood that someone is controlled by demons. When we say that someone is demon possessed our minds are immediately directed to the biblical story about the Gadarene (**Lk. 8:26-36**) or to other persons who had been possessed by unclean spirits, which were delivered by the Lord. We also think about or remember contemporary cases of demon possessions which we have witnessed. We think about the situations in which we have seen the demons possess a human body and cause the affected person to behave in grotesque and completely abnormal ways, such as twisting, yelling, cursing, running as a crazy person, foaming at the mouth or in other similar ways. We have seen this occur not only in the lives of unbelievers or among Christians who are living in sin, but also

among the faithful children of God. It is beneficial to briefly mention here that I am fully aware that there are members and ministers who do not believe that this is possible and who teach that this can never happen to a faithful Christian. Therefore, using the authority that my God has given me over hell itself, I emphatically declare that those who deny that this can happen, don’t really know what they are saying. The main reason that they deny this reality is simply because they haven’t had personal experiences in which they’ve battled against *“spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12)*. If they had personally experienced this, then they would conduct themselves with greater maturity and surely think differently about this.

We all know that it’s normally considered an insult to tell someone that they are “demon possessed.” I am also aware that it has always been shameful for any faithful Christian who has experienced or is experiencing this type of situation, and rightfully so. This is especially true if they are surrounded by the type of careless Christians who instead of helping someone who has suffered through this type of experience, point the finger and judge them. When the ministers who should be helping these people are counted among those who when have come face to face with the demonic operations realize that they don’t have the God given authority to cast out demons, they try to cover their impotence with “sophisticated explanations.”



They try to justify their own lack of power by blaming the victim who, at that moment of desperation, doesn't need advice, judgment or doctrinal dissertations, but at that moment desperately needs to be delivered from the demons that are tormenting them.

What I am explaining here is based on the many personal experiences that I have dealt with throughout the years, even to the present. Among these many memories I can recall certain ridiculous situations during which we witnessed that not only the women became frightened, but also some ministers who escaped the situation by stating that they had other important issues to deal with in another location far away from the physical possession of the enemy. All the situations I have experienced regarding this subject have certainly not been "pleasant" or "pretty." But I now fully understand that they have been the method that God has used to confirm to me about the spiritual authority He has given me over demons. However, what I really want to emphasize in particular in this article isn't about the outward manifestations of Satan that I have mentioned, but the other manifestations which are subtle and much more dangerous, that is, the Satanic operation which works among those "appearing normal, but demon possessed persons."

I use this apparently incorrect expression, "appearing normal, but demon possessed persons," to describe the undeniable fact

that it's not necessary to be demon possessed in the previously described manner in order for a person to be controlled by Satan. The basic irrefutable and fundamental situation that helps me to prove what I am saying is precisely the situation that involved the apostle Peter (**Mk. 8:33**). I'm fully aware that many believers and ministers won't agree with this expression "apparently normal, but demon possessed persons." However, the unbelief of these multitudes of people won't change the reality that: the satanic operation working in what we can call "the normal human mind" is an undeniable truth that no one can avoid. To deny it or to try to ignore it will not bring any favorable change, but on the contrary, this behavior will make the devil's manipulative operation in the mind even more effective. For this reason, many believers and ministers who are victims of this deceit live in an ungodly fashion, while believing that they are right before God.

The incredible reality is that the satanic operation, which works in the manifestly visible cases can literally and clearly be identified as demon possessions. However, no matter how horrible these blatant manifestations might be, they could never be as dangerous as the satanic operation which works in the apparently normal mind. In the first type of possession, everyone is aware of the presence of the devil. However, the second type of satanic operation is so subtle and crafty that many times, such as in the case of the apostle Peter,

only the Lord knows that it's Satan who's behind those thoughts, words or actions. Since this diabolic operation is so difficult to recognize, there are many Christians who easily fall prey to this operation. For this reason, the vicious cycle continues to repeat itself among the children of God, especially among those who are wrong, being deceived by Satan, such as what occurred to the apostle Peter. However, in the eyes of everyone else it appears that they are perfectly fine.

It's certainly true that what I'm saying here doesn't apply to those who are deliberately living in false appearance, hypocrisy. These persons aren't deceived, they know what they're doing. This warning is for those who, like the apostle Peter, aren't aware that their minds are being manipulated by Satan. I repeat that it's logical to think that this can happen to proud, conceited members and ministers, but the reality is that the faithful, humble Christian can also fall victim to this operation. This is why I continue to insist that this is a matter of life or death, and that in order to effectively fight against this satanic operation it's imperative that we first know how to identify it and to understand how it works. It is also a basic fact that we must acknowledge that the "power of darkness" is real and that it's much more powerful than we are of our own strength. We must understand that it's impossible to be delivered from this manipulative power in our minds by merely using our human

strength and astuteness. It's also impossible when we attempt to use our own strength to defeat it when it attacks us

Just as it is necessary to have revelation from God to understand the different mysteries and secrets in His Word, it is also necessary that He give us the revelation to be able to declare: "*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices*" (**2 Cor. 2:11**). For this reason, the positive, victorious aspect of our fight against our terrible enemy consists primarily in our unconditional belief that our victory comes only through our Defender, the God of Glory, our Almighty Lord and Savior, JESUS CHRIST. It's only through Him that we can join together with our apostle in exclaiming: "*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us*" (**Rom. 8:37**). It was many centuries ago that David, the servant of God, speaking about the enemies of the People of the saints, declared: "*If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us. Then they had swallowed us quick*" (**Ps. 124:2-3**).

But this marvelous victory has its conditions. It's not us who place these conditions. These conditions are placed by our God and Father. These conditions and ordinances made by the Holy Spirit are found in the Word of the Eternal One so that we, as members of His chosen people, can "*prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*" (**Rom. 12:2**). But in



like manner, we also find in the Holy Book those things which are specifically commanded that should not be found among God's people. Inclusively, it mentions those thoughts, sentiments and actions that God warns that can bring condemnation upon His children. This can occur particularly to those who, having been warned about their evil ways, **DON'T HUMBLE THEMSELVES** and **DON'T REPENT**. These are people *"who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them"* (**Rom. 1:32**).

For this reason, we should always give thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ for the privilege of possessing His infallible Word. We thank Him for this supreme rule of authority because it's through this authority that we can unequivocally discern and know at the necessary time if we are correct or if we are incorrect. It's through the Word of the Lord that we can make a solid determination in deciding if the thoughts that are operating in our minds are His will or if Satan is trying to manipulate our thoughts so that we might say or do something that's not of God, just as what occurred with our brother, the apostle Peter.

But there are those who might ask, and with good reason, the following question: "Why is it that there are so many people who have the Word of God in their hands and who profess that they know His Word, and who

even preach it, but who think, live and behave incorrectly? Can they not see in their Bible that what they are doing isn't correct? Are these Christians being deceived by the devil or are they conscious of their error? We find the answer to these questions in God's Word, when He tells us: *"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word."* He then repeats: *"Hear the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His Word"* (**Isa. 66: 2, 5**).

The power, the virtue and the operation of deliverance that resides in the Word of God, according to what the Lord stated, has always worked and will always work in the lives of those who are genuinely and truly *"humble of heart"* (**Mt. 11:29**). Demonstrating **TRUE HUMILITY** before God has always been the **DIVINE KEY** to obtain His blessing. It's this virtue that the true child of God uses as the supreme weapon to defeat the enemy and to be triumphant in everything. This special virtue, which is highly pleasant before God, resided in our brother Peter. This is why the Lord delivered him from Satan in the previously mentioned situation. It was that same virtue that moved the Lord to also forgive him for all his mistakes, and even for the very noticeable sins that he committed during his walk with the Lord (**Mt. 26: 69-75; Gal. 2:11-13**). Unconditional humility is the supreme mark of the true children of God. The maximum example of this humility can be found in the life of the Lord *"in*

the days of His flesh" (**Heb. 5:7**). At Calvary, He *"humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"* (**Phil. 2:8**).

The Christian in whom this true humility resides can be assured that the Lord will always deliver him from the Satan's snares and deceit. This same humility helps him (or her) understand that he knows nothing or can do nothing on his own, and that his deliverance doesn't depend on any of his human abilities, but that it comes only from the Lord. When the believer or minister is not living in this mindset and is allowing pride, haughtiness to invade his life, then he is leaving himself exposed and unprotected. He is not only exposed to the danger that Satan might blind him and that the Lord might not deliver him, but he is always exposing himself to the danger that the following horrible judgment be pronounced upon him: *"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believeth not the truth"* (when they were warned), *but had pleasure in unrighteousness"* (**2 Thess. 2:11-12**).

It is precisely to many of this kind of believers and ministers that the Holy Spirit is issuing the following message: *"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love"* (**Rev. 2:4-5**). It's also this spiritual deviation that the apostle Paul is referring to when he speaks about love (**1 Cor. 13:1-7**). This is the

dangerous satanic operation I have referred to as "apparently normal, but demon possessed persons." It doesn't operate by causing a scandalous manifestation, but instead operates by using a diabolic subtleness. It doesn't attack those who are just starting their walk with the Lord, but instead maneuvers itself in those who have been walking with the Lord for some time. It usually doesn't operate among those who don't have a special place, but among those who do have a special place. It has caused me deep sorrow to witness throughout the years how this incredibly subtle operation has defeated many believers and ministers who have chosen not to humble themselves. God tells all of us who do desire to hear His voice that we should walk now and continue walking humbly before Him, so that He can deliver us from the devil and from being counted among those who think that they are walking uprightly before God, but who in reality aren't.

"CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM AND CHILDREN OF THE WICKED ONE"

As faithful children of God, if we state that the world is demon possessed we could sound as absurd and completely out of order. In fact, those who hear us say this might take it as a heavy insult and we could expose ourselves to being cursed or mistreated. However, we see that the Word of God makes this distinction in terms a bit more



acceptable when it declares: *“And we know that we are of God (speaking about His faithful children), and the world lieth in wickedness” (1 Jn. 5:19)*. Using these common terms the Holy Spirit is making the distinction that among all of humanity, and even among the people of God, there are two types of people: *“The children of the kingdom (the true believers), but the tares are the children of the wicked one” (Mt. 13:38)*. We can easily deduce from this passage that if among the People of God, the wicked one controls the minds of the “tares” (those who know the Word of God but not obey it), with all the more reason he controls the minds of the rest of humanity.

I continue to insist that this terrible reality can only be discerned through revelation. But even if we do not understand it, it continues being a very present reality. The *“dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan” (Rev. 20:2)* began working in the minds of men since the time of the Garden of Eden. He seduced our first parents and influenced them to disobey God (**Gen. 3:1-6**). This Satanic operation has been functioning for more than 6000 years. If someone wants proof of this operation, all they have to do is read about the history of mankind and then carefully examine the painful present day situation. We are living in a world that is corrupt and that is full of every type of sin, perversion, sexual depravity, vices, and similar corruptions. It’s full of hatred, hypocrisy, pride

and death. It’s plagued by misery, hunger, pain, sicknesses and many other similar things. All this is fruit of the satanic operation I have been describing.

One again, it’s in subtlety where this alluded to Satanic operation has operated. These subtle operations don’t present themselves through demoniac manifestations in which all it achieves is to frighten—some people. It works through that infernal subtlety that operates in apparently normal lives. It’s a diabolic confusion that not only controls the minds of humanity as a whole, but it also defeats the children of God who are without God’s divine protection (**Dan. 7:21, Rev. 13:7**). Once they’ve been defeated they begin to think, feel, speak and behave in the same deviated ways displayed by those who don’t serve God, but they still believe and claim that they’re living right before God. In this manner Satan has achieved his goal that in the pulpits and in the pews of churches there are many sophisticated “apparently normal, but demon possessed persons.”

It is this type of Christians, among whom are many ministers, that the apostle Paul describes saying that they *“have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof” (2 Tim. 3:5)*. It is this category of Christians that the Lord and each one of the apostles spoke about in such a great number of Scriptures that it is impossible to mention all of them here. They refer to men who claim to be of God and

who have used sacred things to deceive many people. *“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18)*. They are deceivers *“whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, whom mind earthly things” (Phil. 3:19)*. These “Christians,” “normal demon possessed persons,” are the truly the most dangerous type.

On a certain occasion, after hearing me speak about this topic, someone approached me and asked with much fear and reverence what would be the simplest and easiest way a person can be delivered from the devil working in his mind. This person also asked how one can identify false brothers and ministers. The simple, yet effective, answer I gave this person (and I continue giving this answer to this day) is the application of some Scriptures which we can use as an infallible rule of the Spirit to measure a person. *“Let nothing be done through strife and vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:3-5)*. When a sincere Christian recognizes that he has been living outside this divine rule, then the following step becomes necessary: *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed” (James 5:16)*. The attempt to fake perfection is part of the operation that Satan uses to

infiltrate the mind of a Christian with the purpose of causing him to deviate from the truth.

Any child of God, whether he is a member or a minister, who proposes, with the Lord’s help, to continually subject himself to these simple, yet powerful Words of the Spirit has guaranteed his victory over the devil. He who delivered the apostle Peter is the same One who promises to deliver His obedient children so that they won’t become counted among those are wrong, having been deceived, yet believing they are right. Those who live ignoring that the fundamental truths of the work of God consists in living in love and in doing righteousness, and that without these basic elements in our lives, everything else we do isn’t worth anything. After all, it’s clearly written: *“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother” (1 Jn. 3:10)*. This is why the Lord speaks *“peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly” (Ps. 85:8)*.

Living among this universal confusion are the *“people of the saints of the Most High” (Dn. 7:27)*. It’s a people known by God who distinguishes themselves by living a life of subjection and obedience to the Word and will of the Eternal One. Let’s be possessed by the Spirit of the Lord!

God bless you. ■



WHAT WILL THE YEAR 2023 BRING US?

“Happy New Year” is the common greeting this time of the year. Laying aside the secular traditions and going on to something more serious, the question we should ask ourselves and our brothers in Christ is: What will this new year 2023 bring to the entire world and particularly to the true followers of Christ? We are aware what the year 2022 brought us, but God has not allowed us to know the future.

More than 19 centuries ago the Apostle Paul wrote inspired by Gods Spirit that: *“the days are evil.”* (Eph. 5:16). If he was able to assure us that the times were evil then, what can we say about the times that we live in today, which are the End Times. The world is filled with humanity that does not believe, or know, and do not want to know the reality of what is coming. This commentary is not for them, it is for my brothers and sisters who like me are striving to be prepared to receive our King at His Coming in Glory, When He shall appear soon in the clouds of heaven and every eye shall see Him (Rev. 1:7).

It would be impossible to enumerate in this brief writing all of the powerful signs and their ramifications that are taking place among us and around the world in these days religiously, politically, militarily, economically, morally, environmentally ,etc. There is one thing I want to emphasize in this occasion, the government of Israel and the duration of Benjamin Netanyahu through out the years as prime minister, the reality is that it is not a common thing. After three consecutive terms as prime minister, in 2019 Netanyahu continued to hold office after the

April 2019 elections in which no candidate managed to form a government, and the same happened with the September elections in that same year. Following a third consecutive election, Netanyahu accepted his fifth term in May 2020, in a coalition government with Benny Gantz who was to become prime minister in the 2nd half, but the coalition collapsed and new elections were held again in March 2021. In 2022, Netanyahu has won the elections again, and has already announced the formation of the government in Israel, thereby marking the imminent return of its longest-serving leader. *“And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings:”* (Dan. 2:21). If the Lord does this among all the nations of the world how much more does He do it with His chosen people.

Netanyahu has served as prime minister for a total of 15 years (from 1996 to 1999 and from 2009 to 2021), making him the longest-serving prime minister in Israel’s history, surpassing even the founder of the state, David Ben Gurion. (So far, it’s 15 years, but the count of the number of years continues, since Netanyahu is once again assuming the position of prime minister). Netanyahu is the only one that has managed to form a government three times in a row (2009, 2013 and 2015). Netanyahu has been elected prime minister

the most times, heading a total of six governments (1996, 2009, 2013, 2015, 2020 and 2022).

Let us turn our attention to the wars that are taking place all over the world, when the year 2022 began, we witnessed the largest conventional military attack on European soil since the Yugoslav wars: The war between Russia and Ukraine. At 05:50 (Russian time) on February 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the start of a “special military operation” in Ukraine. Soon after, Russian troops crossed the border and invaded the country, at the same time shelling was reported in major Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv and Kharkiv.

This war is generating thousands of fatalities, and millions of refugees the largest crisis on the continent since World War II. So far it has been estimated that about 100,000 Russian soldiers and 100,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed or wounded in the war in Ukraine. There are also more than 40,000 civilians who have died in this war. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine continues. The fighting in different areas of the country and the bombardments of Ukrainian cities has not ceased. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has not only caused a large-scale humanitarian, migration and refugee crisis, but has also added downside risks to the world

economy still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. The question around the world is the same: How can this be? It’s because the days are evil.

In a certain way, the human mind has been conditioned to the idea of continually hearing news of incredible events with catastrophic consequences. But none of this makes them stop to consider that all this is the undeniable sign of the proximity of the greatest event in all human history: THE COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN GLORY! But there is a people that are waiting for Him, and that are watching “so that that day does not overtake them like a thief” (1 Thes. 5:4).

A new year has begun, and we are not naive as others who are expecting happiness and bliss, on the contrary, because we are aware that the days are going from bad to worse, and that if incredible things happened in the year that has just passed, greater things are yet to be seen in the days ahead. Our cry should be the same as King David in Psalm 46:2 *“Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea”*.

Weird and hard to believe things are happening and will continue to happen in the personal lives of many of my brethren. None of these things harm the children of God but on the contrary, this is how God has decided to be glorified through His sons, who are those that are willing to be faithful to Him no matter what this new year 2023 brings.

God bless you. ■



PEACE AND SECURITY

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober". (1 Thes. 5:1-6)

These words could very well be our own words, addressed to faithful Christians in these days that are faithful to their Lord and Master in the midst of turbulent world events, universal confusion and worldly currents that daily surround and threaten those who are waiting for, *"that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" (Titus 2:13).*

There is one thing that has kept Gods servants throughout the ages and that is the hope of seeing the Divine Face of God Our Saviour. King David said: *"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."* (Psalm 27:13). To this day the believers in Jesus Christ the Lord have obtained the strength to continue forward just like David, the prophets, and the apostles did, through this glorious and blessed hope.

The reason I am writing is to stir up my brother and sister who at

times feel as if they cannot continue on under the burden, to open your eyes and behold all of the great signs that surround us and are undoubtedly announcing: *"He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."* (Heb. 10:37) Gods prophetic clock has incessantly been marking time announcing that the day is already at hand and very soon the King of kings and LORD of lords, our God and Savior JESUS will appear in the clouds with power and great glory.

In these last days the parable of the fig tree (Israel) has not only received the attention of the believers who wait for the LORD, but of the whole world. The events that have been taking place have caused a chain reaction which in turn has provoked the UN (United Nations) to have many meetings where the principal purpose and the main treatise is "LET THERE BE PEACE" and this is heard around the World. As humans we desire peace in the world, at the same time we cannot ignore the warning given through Gods Word from our initial Scripture.

The portion of Scripture I used is very clear and doesn't need much explanation. We just have to believe and hope. This next admonition is also very clear:

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7).

According to the prophecies in God's Word the days that lie ahead are going to be the most difficult. The different signs that are listed in the tract "The Time is Fulfilled" is an undeniable reality today, and everything, everything, is pointing to that most terrifying day (The Coming of the LORD) for the world that is living in darkness, but the most glorious and marvelous day for the children of light.

Israel will continue to be harassed by its enemies, because peace cannot and will not be achieved by men, since the only One who will establish peace is the Prince of Peace, Our LORD JESUS (Is. 9:6), and He will do this, when men say: "PEACE AND SAFETY". How long until this happens? Not too much longer. In the meantime, the APOSTATE CHURCH will continue to SLEEP, but the FAITHFUL CHURCH will be WATCHING and WAITING for their LORD.

Do not faint, my brother, MARCH ON to THE GOAL! God bless you. ■

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

(1 Thes. 5:1-6)



"I have chosen you, and have not rejected you" (Isa. 41).

The blessed peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. I thank the Eternal God for allowing us to carry out such a beautiful activity for the 28th anniversary of the congregation in the Ejido Francisco Villa community, Cd. Obregón, Sonora, on October 20, 21, 22 and 23, 2022; where my father and pastor, Carlos Labandera Salazar (who has already left to be in the Presence of the Lord, **2 Tim. 4:7-8**), together with his beloved wife, Teresa Armenta de Labandera, both by vision of the Holy Spirit, were granted the privilege to start this work. The Lord Jesus Christ



REPORT OF FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN SONORA, MEXICO

Pastor Joel Antonio Labandera

blesed us in a supernatural way during these days. We had the visit of many pastors and brothers from different states of the Mexico. We were able to carry out a musical concert with a cause, where items from the basic basket could be collected. We were able to carry out beautiful services of adoration and praise to our God, as well as different teachings for marriages, and some baptisms.

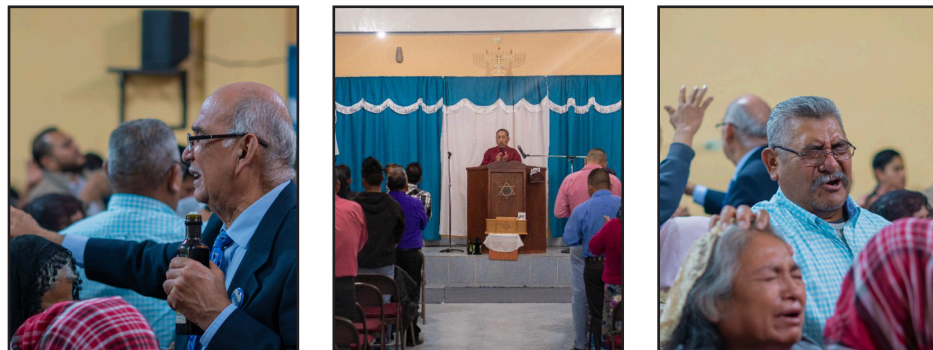
We invite you to join us in our future activities; God willing, in the month of April we will carry out our family camp.

God bless you.

Pastor Joel Antonio Labandera. ■

Shalom, brothers!. I thank our Lord Jesus Christ, for having granted us to carry out this fellowship in the year 2022, on November 11, 12 and 13, 2022, it was a great blessing.

On Friday we started with the fellowship, our brother Eliezer Mendoza touched on the subject of the authority with which parents have to teach their children. Pastor Alfred Tienda also spoke and shared biblical points about the people of Israel, and also testified about Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr., about how God removed him from organized religion



REPORT OF FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN HERMOSILLO, SONORA MEXICO

Pastor Delfino Chavez

system. On Saturday, brother Néstor Quintanar spoke to us about the Second Coming of the Lord and the millennium. On Sunday, he had several counseled us with God's word.

God help us! I also thank God for all the brothers and pastors who visited us.

We ask all who read this report to pray for us.

Your beloved brother,
Pastor Delfino Chavez. ■

I greet you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by His Grace gave us the opportunity to attend the youth fellowship in Juxtlahuaca, on October 7, 8 and 9, 2022.

On Friday, Pastor Néstor Quintanar spoke to us about the Humanity of the Lord Jesus, which was holy and different from our humanity (**Heb. 7:26**). On Saturday, Pastor Miguel González gave spiritual advise the young people, he mentioned the need to take care of their minds so



REPORT OF YOUTH FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN JUXTLAHUACA, OAXACA

Brother Nestor Quintanar II

as not to be confused (**Ps. 71:1**), and to live in the holiness that the Lord demands of us. On Sunday, Pastor Néstor Quintanar urged pastors and parents to pay attention to the children and family (**Prv. 27:23.24**), and then Pastor Miguel González continued with the same advice. The service ended by seeking the Lord Jesus in prayer and adoration through songs.

The Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all.

Brother Nestor Quintanar II. ■

A brotherly greeting to all who read this Maranatha Newspaper.

I testify of this youth camp in Lockwood, CA, on October 7, 8 and 9, 2022, which was a great blessing.

On Friday night, Pastor Efraim Valverde, III spoke about the persecution that the people of God are going through in the world. The Presence of God manifested itself and we were moved to pray for our persecuted brothers, then we prayed for each other. The following

I bless God for the privilege of being able to greet you through this newspaper, which is a great blessing.

On December 3, the Lord gave us the blessing of being able to receive our brothers once again for our youth service. At the beginning, our brother Phillip Nava imparted the Word of God to us, also leading us in praise to the Lord. Later. Our brother David Valverde (Pastor E.V. III son) spoke to the young people about the importance of cultivating what God has started in our lives. In the afternoon service, our Lord continued to speak to us through

It is a great joy for me to be able to greet you in the wonderful Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a great blessing to be able to see a large number of brothers and sisters that we were able to gather on our October 28 and 29, 2022 yearly youth conference.

We were able to hear the Word of the Lord shared by Pastor Efraim Valverde III, Brother Phillip Nava and Pastor Justino Flores. We were listening through Pastor Efraim Valverde III, about not only knowing about God, but knowing God. We were also shared about the importance of being able to understand the reality of what the temple of God is based on the apostle

REPORT OF YOUTH CAMP IN LOCKWOOD, CA

Pastor Fred Griffith.



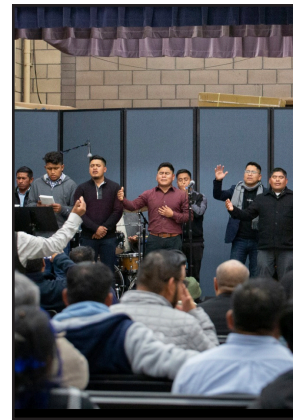
day, anonymous questions from the youth were answered and our Pastor ministered about the Oneness in the Godhead, and once again, we ended in prayer and with the manifestation of the Spirit of God in His and upon His people.

I want to encourage the young people who have not been able to attend these special activities to make an effort in the Name of the Lord Jesus and be part of what God is doing among the youth.

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Fred Griffith. ■

REPORT OF YOUTH FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN MADERA, CALIFORNIA

Brother Efraim Arreola II.



our Pastor Efraim Valverde III, emphasizing the great danger of opening the door to our carnal desires. He reminded us that this is the biggest obstacle today for the children of God because it steals the freedom to worship and serve the Lord in spirit and in truth (**Rom. 13:14**). I ask prayers for the congregation here in Madera, CA, for our brother Pastor Bernardino García, so that he continues to be a blessing and a help here in the congregation.

The Lord Jesus Christ bless you.
Your brother,
Efraim Arreola II. ■

REPORT OF YOUTH FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN SANTA MARÍA, CA

Brother Josué Hernández



Paul's letter to the Corinthians (**1 Cor. 6:19**).

We had a very special time of praise and worship to the Lord, we were able to exalt the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord also moved in a very special way during the time of prayer, where we were summoned to come before Him with a sincere, humbled, and broken heart, acknowledging that everything comes from the Lord.

My desire is that the Lord bless and keep you.

Your brother Josué Hernández
Santa Maria, CA. ■



Dear brothers in the precious faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, I have the privilege of coming to you bearing witness to this last fraternity of the year, on December 23, 24 and 25, 2022.

Since the seminar began on Friday, the Word of God has been a great blessing. The Lord used Pastor Efraim Valverde III to share with us about the Scripture in **John 10:22-32**. May God also continue to use our much loved brother Phillip Nava in praising the Lord together with his colleagues in the music ministry. Saturday we were warned about the dangers of “assimilation”, since the

REPORT OF SEMINAR IN SALINAS, CA

Pastor Jaime Vidal



attraction to the world is very strong, mainly through the media (social networks). There are many who do not have conviction and are led by that same spirit of assimilation that is nothing less than the present civilization, the fourth beast (**Ap. 13**). Sunday, Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein was with us from Jerusalem, thank God for the precious teachings he gave us about the important meaning of the Hanukkah festival and holiness.

God bless you!
Your brother,
Pastor Jaime Vidal. ■

Brethren, I greet you in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving Him the honor and glory for once again giving us the privilege of holding our annual youth fellowship on November 19, 2022.

The Lord once again used our pastor Efraim Valverde III, to share the Word of God with us. He began by

REPORT OF YOUTH FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN POWAY, CA

Pastor Martimiano Ortiz

exhorting us to know the time in which we are living, since it is a different and very dangerous time (**Os. 4:6; Dn. 12:4**), because many false teachings and wisdoms have increased and multiplied, but what we need is true wisdom, *“the wisdom that is from above”* (**James 3:17**), to

know “the one who is true... Jesus Christ, this is the true God and eternal life” (**1 Jn. 5:20**).

I ask you in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to take us in your prayers to help us continue to believe in His Word and to wait for His Coming.

God bless you.
Pastor Martimiano Ortiz. ■

I greet you with the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, thanking God for giving us the privilege of meeting for another year in this fellowship, on October 29, 2022.

On Saturday morning, we had the privilege of hearing the voice of God on the lips of Pastor Emmanuel Woods, speaking to us about not

REPORT OF FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN MEXICALI, B.C.

Pastor Pablo Ojeda

being “blind or myopic.” In the afternoon, the Lord ministered to us through Pastor Alfredo Tienda, taking as a reference the story of King David, who was a man with flaws, certainly, but he knew how to

connect with God, and a man was found to be after God’s own heart (**Acts 13:22**).

We ask you in the love of our God, to take us in your prayers so that the Lord Jesus helps us to continue on His path.

Pastor Pablo Ojeda. ■

Beloved brothers, I greet you with the peace that only our Lord Jesus Christ can give. We are grateful to our Lord, for the service that he allowed us to hold on October 22, 2022. The service began with the participation of special songs from each congregation that attended. Then our pastor, brother Efraim Valverde III took the place, using a Scripture text

REPORT OF FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN WOODBURN, OREGON

Pastor Fernando Amador

that the Lord placed in my heart, which became the theme of our service: *“And this, knowing the time”* (**Rom. 13:11**). After we received the Word of God,

Pastor Efraim made a call to the altar where the Lord poured out His Presence upon us. Take heart, my beloved brethren, *“And let us consider one another so that we may stir up love and good works”* (**Heb. 10:24**).

God bless you.
Pastor Fernando Amador. ■



YOUTH SECTION

Hno. Ricardo Mérida II



failures. God has been showing me examples of His children who have never denied their faith so that I can imitate them. God has always been faithful, and He will keep His promises, if I am also faithful to Him. *“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”* (Gal. 6:9).

Young people, may God help us to be consistent in our walk with Him and give us understanding to know He is the only one we can trust as our guide. As young people, there are many things that can distract us from God’s path, but I’m sure of one thing. None of these things are worth more than our salvation. We are a very special treasure to the Lord (Ex.19:5), and the devil knows this very well. This is why he is increasingly corrupting the youth. But for this same reason, it is important that we follow the Supreme Example that our Lord Jesus Christ left when He came to this world.

Let’s, also, not forget the people God has used to inspire us to serve God and walk in His ways. I don’t know how the Lord came into your life; perhaps God used your relatives, friends or something written to draw you to Him. In my case, it was my parents. Since then, the Lord has also used many brothers and sisters and faithful young people to help me continue walking with the Lord. I encourage you to be that generation that continues to seek and love God more each day.

In closing, I ask prayers for my pastor, Andrés Espinosa, and for all the congregation in Tijuana. God bless you.

Brother Ricardo Mérida II,
Tijuana, B.C. ■

Young people, may our Lord Jesus Christ bless you! First, I give thanks and honor to God for the privilege of being able to write these words in this Maranatha.

Everything I am, everything I have accomplished or have come to understand, is by Grace and the mercy of my Lord Jesus Christ, *“from whom are all things, and we exist for Him”* (1 Cor. 8:6). I am very blessed to have been raised in a Christian home, and I understand the privilege of having parents who seek God with a simple and humble heart. The Lord has used my parents to bring this blessing to my life.

I fondly remember my late pastor, Juan Morales, who went to be with the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:8) When he was very sick, we went to visit him. I remember that day well. He told us to never stray from God for we are on the one and only true Path. He encouraged us to always put God first so that it goes well with us. His words are engraved in my mind. Now I understand that it was the Lord speaking through him. Months later I was baptized as God had been working in my heart and mind.

Now I understand that God has always been with me despite my

WOMEN OF GOD

Hna. Leticia Vidal



friends in the faith, have left our congregation and ultimately even our daughters. I don’t say this as a complaint, but as a testimony and with the intent to glorify the Name of my Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of these trials (2 Cor. 6:1-11).

This is where I cling to Psalm 27, especially verse 4. There are days when I feel like I can’t go on anymore, but I cry out to the Lord to give me the strength and faith to believe and live believing that:

May the blessing and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ fill your lives and homes. It is a privilege to be able to share with you, my sisters, through this Maranatha. God bless and strengthen our pastor, Efraim Valverde III, his family, and the entire team that is in charge of this publication.

I want to share with you, my sisters, some of my favorite Scriptures: **Joshua 1, Psalm 27, and Romans 8:28.** They inspire me to keep going and not give up on my mission.

During our time here, each of us is allowed to go through difficult situations (Phil. 1:29), and so many times it seems impossible to overcome. Our Lord and Savior allows us to go through difficulties with a greater purpose, that is our spiritual development, because *“No temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* (1 Cor. 10:13). For example, in my family we have been going through a very difficult situation for several years now. Also, part of our local congregation, our brothers and

1. God is Sovereign and Omnipotent.
2. God knows what He is doing.
3. God loves me.
4. Everything works for good.
5. I just have to thank God for the perfect plan He has for me, His daughter.

I have experienced that when I thank God for in the midst of adversity by declaring the five points mentioned above, that the feelings of anxiety and helplessness go away. Hallelujah! I’ve experienced it myself; it’s not something I’ve been told. I encourage you, my sister, to try it for yourself. *In everything give thanks to God, because all things work together for good to those of us who love Him* (Rom. 8:28). Do not give credit to the enemy for the anguish you are going through (2 Cor. 7:10). Wherever you are, strive, be brave, do not faint and hold on to the Word of God.

God bless all my sisters. I ask you to pray for our family so that our faith does not fail. Blessings and encouragement.

Hna. Leticia Vidal.
Oxnard, CA. ■



BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

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 *“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 Phillip 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.

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

Many present-day religious leaders teach that baptism is not truly important; thereby contradicting the same Lord they claim to obey and serve. They are following the example of the Pharisees and lawyers who *“rejected the counsel of God against themselves”* by refusing to be baptized by John (Luke 7:30). Nevertheless, this tract is not directed to those who oppose the Word of God, but to the sincere Christians, who, having a pure and sincere heart, want to obey the Word of God. These Christians are willing to obey God’s commandments, whether they come directly from the Lord or through His apostles, since the Lord bestowed upon them His authority when He declared: *“He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me”* (Matthew 10:40). I must clarify here, that I am not



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

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