

THE LORD IS COMING
1 Corinthians. 16:22



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MARANATHA

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GREATNESS OF
HUMILITY



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EDITORIAL

I greet you in the Almighty Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, desiring that each one of you is striving enthusiastically and fervently to go forward, being aware and understanding that the days, weeks, months and years continue to transpire as time marches on. We are running out of time and we must fulfill our service to the Lord and finish our race with joy.

In **Psalm 90:3-6**, and verse 10, we are told how brief our life is and how quickly time passes: *“Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”*

The urgency of the call for men to return to God is because man's time here on earth is **EXTREMELY LIMITED**. For if to God a thousand years is as yesterday when it is past, then what in reality is the time of man's life? It is only as a watch in the night, or as a dream or as the grass that withers. We begin the day fresh and radiant, but by the end of the day we are dried up and withered. *“Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?”* (**Job 7:1**).

“Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not... Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass” (**Job 14:1, 2, and 5**). *“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed,*

and the bounds of their habitation” (**Acts 17:26**). There are those whose lives last one year. For others it is 10, 15, 20, 30, 50, 70 or 80 years. There are relatively a few that God grants more time than this. None of us knows what our appointed time is. Only God knows.

Our time in this life is short being that the years, months, days, hours, minutes and seconds which have been given to each of us are determined by God. The Lord has established the appointed time for each one of us and no one can pass that boundary. Only God can make exceptions and extend our life as He chose to do with King Hezekiah. It was the Lord who told him: *“And I will add unto thy days fifteen years”* (**2 Kings 20:6**).

It is certain that for every person who will be alive on this earth at the time of the Lord's Second Coming the time granted to them to seek God will come to an end. But what about those who reach the “end of their days” which are “determined” for them as individuals before the day of the Lord? None of us knows if we will be counted among those who will be alive when the Lord returns or if we are going to die before that day arrives. Therefore how much time does each of us have left?

In **Psalm 90:10**, Moses tells us: *“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”* We understand that Christ the Lord is coming soon. But let us suppose that there were 100 more years until the Lord's coming and that each one of us had the opportunity to reach the age of 70 or 80. Calculating from our present age, how much longer would we have if we reached the age mentioned by Moses? But what if we don't reach that age and our life ends before. When will it end? A young person may think that he has a lot of time left. A person in good health may think the same thing. However, when the appointed time of each person's race arrives, it does not matter if that person is healthy, sick, young or old.

In **Psalm 90:12** Moses pleads to the Lord: *“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”* In other words, each one of us needs to learn how to live as one who understands that his days are numbered. Only then will we understand that we need to seek God. How easy it is to allow our life to pass without daily considering our mortality and without filling our hearts with something that we do not have on our own: the wisdom from the Word of God.

When we do not *“apply our hearts unto wisdom,”* we will spend our lives focusing only on that which is frivolity and not on those things which will benefit us eternally. We will live our lives as Gentiles (those who do not truly know God) seeking the things that they seek, that is material things only. *“For after all these things do the Gentiles* (those who do not know the Lord) *seek* (this is their principal desire)” (**Matt. 6:32**). Those who do not know the Lord put their heart and their life goals only in seeking material things. But the Lord tells us: *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness...”* (**Matt. 6:33**). We must *“seek the Lord while He may be found”* (**Isa. 55:6**) because *“the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth”* (**Psa. 145:18**).

“Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night” (**Psa. 90:3**). *“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us”* (**Acts 17:26-27**). The time of our life is brief. It passes quickly. In our humanity we are mortal. We must understand that God *“hath determined the times before appointed* (in our lives), *and the bounds of* (our) *habitation; that* (we) *should seek the Lord, if haply* (we)

might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us” (**Acts 17:26-27**). *“And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart”* (**Jer. 29:13**). We must learn to understand and apply the wisdom of the Word of God in our hearts.

How much time does each one of us have to seek and serve the Lord with all of our hearts, doing His will?

God bless you.

Pastor Efraim Valverde III.

ETERNITY

(1)

*As the swiftness flying of the eagles
Time passes over the human race
All the minutes are transformed into
millennia
That conduce us into eternity
And oh so many do not see
This unchanging reality
And all of them just live their lives so
carelessly*

CHORUS

*But all your children my sweet Lord
All those that love You with their heart
Lord we desire that You lead us in your
love
So we can count all of our days
And live with wisdom in our lives
Being aware that we are headed to
Eternity*

(2)

*There's a multitude of Christians who
confounded
We can see them living so carelessly
With their vision in the vanity of this
life
In the things that are only vanity
The Lord tells them to heed the call
Look unto Me the Lord declares
For in the end you'll enter into eternity*

(3)

*In this world that is filled with mortal
people
Who in blindness ignore their Creator
Their illusion is in nothing but the
temporal
They despise the eternal in His love
They cannot see reality
They do not know the end is near
Living eternity without Jesus the Lord*



“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (the Jews) and upon thy holy city (the Old City of Jerusalem)...” (Dan. 9:24).

In these past three months God’s clock has continued to march forward. The level of hatred against the nation of Israel, and the Jewish people, against both of those who live in Israel and those who live in other countries around the world, is increasing. Presently, Hamas (Israel’s staunch enemy) has launched more missiles toward central Israel aiming at the city of Tel Aviv (one of the missiles exploded near a Jewish home, injuring seven persons, including two infants, according to “The Times of Israel,” on the 25th of March of this year.), which was previously considered to be “off limits.” This has created a new level of alert in Israel.

Let us continue to pray for our Jewish brothers because it appears that a new war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip is on the horizon. As I am writing this article, the missiles continue falling and Israel is responding to these attacks from the terrorist organization, Hamas.

During the month of January the Israeli government reported that in France anti-Semitic attacks and threats increased by 69%. Currently, those attacks against Jews are originated by neo Nazi and white supremacist racist groups. The number of Jewish deaths propagated by anti-Semites is the highest since the attacks against the Jewish community in Argentina during the 1990’s.

On the 27th of January, the French newspaper, “AFP,” affirmed that the number of Jews assassinated in anti-Semitic attacks around the world in 2018 reached its highest level in decades. The most documented of these attacks was the massacre of eleven Jews in the U.S. city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who were worshipping at a synagogue during Shabbat services.

On the 10th of February the news reporting agency, “Al-Monitor,”

GOD'S PROPHETIC CLOCK

Pastor Efraim Valverde III

reported that two leftist parties formed an alliance whose goal is to defeat the Likud party. This prompted Israel’s Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, to encourage two right wing parties to unite with the purpose of strengthening his possibilities to form a new government. On the 26th of March, the newspaper, “The Jerusalem Post,” published a report which stated that Iran was responsible for ordering the latest attack on Israel with the intent of weakening Benjamin Netanyahu’s position in the upcoming elections.

On the 22nd of March, the Jewish newspaper, “Arutz Sheva,” reported that the Council on Human Rights of the United Nations held its 40th meeting in which it voted in favor of officially recognizing a report that accuses Israel of war crimes against the “Palestinians” during the confrontations that occurred on the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip. The vote was 23 nations in favor, 9 against and 14 abstentions (Mexico voted in favor of adopting the report).

Also, on the 22nd of March the newspaper, “Independent,” reported that the president of the United States, Donald Trump, surprised many in Israel’s government when he affirmed that the United States will adopt a new policy recognizing Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights (captured by Israel in 1967 during the Six Day War). Most of the nations around the world condemned this declaration. Turkey, Russia and Iran, along with the European powers, severely rebuked this action. In Zechariah 14:2, the Lord declares: *“I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.”*

On the 26th of March, during the night, Hamas sent a shower of missiles against Israel, according to the

news reporting agency, Ynet News. (Thank God there were no physical injuries, but the mental trauma is real.) This attack provoked a strong response from Israel which attacked hundreds of installations from which this terrorist groups operates. In fact, Israel attacked the headquarters of the leader of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh. Prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, cut short his trip to the United States to return to Israel, so that he could participate in an emergency security meeting.

On the 27th of March, the “Jerusalem Post,” reported that the 28 member states of the European Union jointly rejected the United States’ recognition concerning the annexation of the Golan Heights by Israel (which it captured in 1967 and then annexed in 1981). The director of the European Union’s foreign affairs office, Federica Mogherini, issued the following statement: “Trump’s declaration annulled 52 years of U. S. policy, which until this week had refused to recognize Israel’s control over the Golan Heights, which Israel’s Defense Force captured from Syria during the Six Days War in 1967.”

On the 28th of March, the “Jerusalem Post,” reported on the meeting held by the United Nations Security Council in which a vote was held condemning the declaration of the United States recognizing Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights. Fourteen of the fifteen members voted to condemn the declaration. Also, President Trump’s administration is on the brink of revealing its peace plan involving Israel and the self-named “Palestinians” which President Trump is calling “the Deal of the Century.” This plan will possibly be revealed after the elections in Israel which will take place on the 9th of April of this present year. It is

almost certain that the heart of this plan has to do with dividing Jerusalem. The time is fulfilled! Let us continue to love, to pray, to teach and to act in support of our elder brother, the nation of Israel.

“For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth...I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence. And give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isa. 62:1, 6 and 7).

God bless you,
Pastor Efraim Valverde III.

PURIM, DAY OF TRIUMPH AND SALVATION

The holiday recorded in the book of Esther is a holiday which this year falls on the 21st of March (on the Gregorian calendar). It is a holiday which commemorates how Haman, an enemy of the Jews (the people of God called to be a light unto the nations), tried to wipe out the entire Jewish nation. Haman was a descendant of the nation of the Amalekites who tried to kill the Jews after their exodus from Egypt. Haman attempted to imitate his predecessors. After the miraculous turn of events which caused the Jews to be delivered from their enemies, the Scripture tells us that they were now in authority over their enemies. Today, just as what happened with the Jews during the time of Esther, the malignant influence of a world of wicked people is attempting to destroy all those who walk in God’s paths. Let us pray so that we might be delivered from being exterminated and let us proclaim that we, just as it happened with the Jews of antiquity, will also triumph over our enemies, which in reality are enemies of God. Have a happy Purim!

Rabbi Shimon Menahem.



THE GREATNESS OF HUMILITY

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

of our Perfect Example (the Lord Jesus Christ *“manifested in the flesh,”* (1 Tim. 3:16), and was also evident in the lives of each of His true followers, both in the past and in this present time. If we, the Gentile Christians, take into consideration our Lord Jesus Christ in His aspect of Humanity when He came to this earth, the concept that many Christians have in their minds is that His humility consisted in an unconditioned submission and in a self destructive abnegation without any reservations or objections. This interpretation is completely wrong and those who have lived their lives imitating this erroneous idea have done themselves harm and have not pleased the Lord by living in this manner. The correct example is emphatically described in the New Testament, beginning with the life and earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus as well as in the lives of His apostles, whose testimony remains as an example for us.

When the Lord Jesus *“went into the temple of God, and cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves”* (Matt. 21:12), He did not display the form of humility which many have pictured in their minds. To begin with, I believe, without fear of being wrong, that the moneychangers in the Temple who were the recipients of the Lord’s behavior did not accept the fact that He was *“meek and lowly in heart”* (Matt. 11:29). But

the undeniable reality is that the Lord possessed true humility, both on that occasion and also when He was arrested and crucified. However, the difference consists in the fact that He knew exactly when it was appropriate to act in one way or the other. Many sincere, humble Christians, having been taught incorrectly by those who deceive or who are themselves deceived, suffer needlessly the consequences of this error, believing that Christian humility consists in being a type of “fool” who anyone can kick around or who thinks that he (or she) must bear all things without ever saying anything. Such behavior does not cause major harm when it is displayed by one of the members of the Lord’s Church. However, if it is the minister who behaves in this manner, it is possible that a situation will arise in which he must confront evil and he will allow the wolf to eat all the sheep, because he erroneously believes that he must “suffer everything, unconditionally.” It is true that the Lord was *“oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth, and was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, he opened not His mouth”* (Isa. 53:7). But this is not the end of the story, because it is also written that the day is coming in which *“the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thess.

The humility of the true Christian, whether he is a member or a minister, is not the degrading humiliation of the defeated, of the abandoned or of the fallen. On the contrary, the humility of the true Christian is a humility marked by honor and dignity, because he knows when he should submit himself to the maximum, and when he should not bow down before his adversaries. He knows when it is appropriate to plead, to ask or to even beg, but he also knows when he should rebuke, attack and even lash out. He demonstrates humility of heart, not one of a “humble and suffering appearance” only.

1:7-8). The humility of the true Christian, whether he is a member or a minister, is not the degrading humiliation of the defeated, of the abandoned or of the fallen. On the contrary, the humility of the true Christian is a humility marked by honor and dignity, because he knows when he should submit himself to the maximum, and when he should not bow down before his adversaries. He knows when it is appropriate to plead, to ask or to even beg, but he also

Before I begin I want to stress the undeniable fact that the subject which headlines this study is of supreme importance. To those who live a life of true humility it is life and to those who do not live in this manner it is death. As is the case with all of the other virtues that are a fruit of the Holy Spirit, it is very easy to discuss, to write or to speak about the greatness of this virtue. There are many people who do all of this, especially among the people called by God. But the sad reality is that there are only a few persons that are willing to pay the price that is required to be paid in order to live a life of genuine humility such as the one commanded by the Lord Jesus when He proclaimed: *“Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and LOWLY IN HEART: and ye shall find rest for your souls”* (Matt. 11:29).

Once again I state that each time I am moved by God to minister His Word by speech or by the written word, I do so with pain in my soul, because I know that, universally speaking, among my companions in the ministry and my brothers in Christ the Lord, there are only a few who both speak about and live a life of genuine humility. I repeat, that living a life of the true humility mentioned by the Lord requires paying a price. Usually, this price is so high that multitudes of Christians, both ministers and members, are not willing to pay it. And, precisely because the great majority do not want to pay the price, it is very easy to become a part of this majority and to feel justified in speaking and preaching about humility while at the same time refusing to live a life marked by the intense humility which marked the life



knows when he should rebuke, attack and even lash out. He demonstrates humility of heart, not one of a “humble and suffering appearance” only.

Any father in a Christian family who, because he is so “humble,” allows his children to do whatever they want to do is wrong. The Christian husband who, due to his great “humility,” loses his virility and control as the head of his marriage is wrong. The Christian who, at work, at school, or anywhere else he might be, is so “humble” that he allows the perverse persons around him to fill his ears and mind with filth without rebuking them is wrong. The minister who, because of his “extreme humility,” does not risk exhorting or rebuking the lukewarm, worldly attitude in the Church so that he will not offend the brothers is wrong. It is one thing for a person to be humble and it is another thing for him to be a fool and to allow the devil to play games with him.

The apostles understood this and we see them displaying the true humility with its two aspects and times. Peter did not defend himself (in fact, he rejoiced) when he was humiliated and whipped “for the Name” (Acts 5:41). However, when the time came he did not hold back from strongly rebuking the “false teachers,” even calling them “brute beasts” (2 Pet. 2:1, 12). On the other hand, he was sufficiently humble to receive the harsh rebuke from his brother, the apostle Paul (Gal. 2:11), and did not retain bitterness toward him, even later honoring him (2 Pet. 3:15). No faithful Christian can deny the fact that the apostle Paul also possessed genuine humility. Yet, we see him behaving harshly toward “Elymas, the sorcerer,” even

to the degree of cursing him, causing Elymas to become blind (Acts 13:8-11). Likewise we see him acting in defense of the truth with God’s authority when he “delivered Hymeneus and Alexander unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20). This and other harsh behaviors demonstrated by the apostle do not diminish the veracity of his words of counsel when he advises us to “esteem others better than ourselves” (Phil. 2:3) or when he asks: “Have I committed an offense in abasing myself?” (2 Cor. 11:7).

Therefore, true humility, according to the Divine Example, is not the behavior based on an erroneous concept that the child of God must act as a “foolish and innocent” child. Neither is it the idea that in order for a Christian to be humble he must display a certain type of wimpish or faint-hearted behavior, without virility and without “a backbone.” It also does not mean that we should walk around like a traumatized person with our hands crossed over our chest and with our eyes constantly looking toward the clouds. The Christians who have truly learned the meaning of being “meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29) are not worried about trying to convince a confused world which surrounds them by displaying the “outward appearance of humility” which is so popular among false Christians.

In addition, the humility of the child of God does not consist of an attitude of impotence and fear like the “coyote caught in a trap,” which displays very sad eyes and even whimpers because he has no other alternative. It is also not marked by the very common behavior of being a “docile kitten with those who are stronger, but a

True humility in the children of God of the Most High God does not flow from a fountain of weakness, but from one of power and strength. It does not originate from principles based on shame, embarrassment or dishonor, but from joy, satisfaction and supreme honor. After all, the true Christian does not humble himself only because “he is forced to do so,” but he does so because he desires to “bow himself before the Most High God” (Mic. 6:8).

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THE FALSE HUMILITY OF OUTWARD APPEARANCE ONLY

What I have previously mentioned in this article can be applied in a general manner to those Christians who need to rise up from that

level in which they sincerely, but erroneously, have been living based on a false concept of humility. But we must now focus on another negative aspect of humility. I am referring to the behavior displayed by those ministers and members among the people of God who intentionally use “the humility of appearance only” to gain for themselves results and benefits which satisfy and feed their egos. These are the type of Christians the apostles refers to when he states that they “have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof” (2 Tim. 3:5). These are persons who, in the eyes of those around them, appear to be humble, but before the Lord who knows the hearts they are arrogant.

It is not difficult being humble when you are poor. Neither is it difficult to do so when you are weak (although we also know that there are those among the people of God who have little or no material things, but who are nevertheless arrogant). It is certainly true that there are many poor or weak Christians that are humble, but regarding our present subject, the commentary I am making is with the goal of pinpointing the danger that has always been prevalent among Christianity. This danger lies in the fact that the humble, poor Christian becomes arrogant when he is no longer poor, or when the weak, humble child of God stops being that way when he gains strength. We also see it when a small, humble minister transforms into an arrogant person when he grows in knowledge and begins to feel important. This metamorphosis usually works in such so subtly that the individual is not even aware of the change that the spirit of evil is operating in him.



The humility that God requires from His people is not the natural, spontaneous and innocent humility of a child, but a mature humility which has been conscientiously cultivated by a spiritual adult. It is not difficult for a new Christian to be humble in the first days of his new life in the Lord. The humility which he experiences at that time is a natural product of the operation of his new birth in Christ the Lord. However, maintaining this humility after the years have passed in his Christian walk, when he now knows and understands things he did not know before or when he now possesses certain things or can now do certain things is what truly counts before the Eternal One. It has been proven throughout the ages among the people of the saints that it is only a minority that have been delivered from being affected by the subtle, yet powerful, diabolic operation of arrogance.

As we embark on our journey of discernment we must accept the fact that since we do not know the hearts it is very difficult (and usually impossible) to be able to separate false humility from genuine humility. On countless occasions it is the fake humility which receives more credibility than the true one. This happens for the simple reason that those who fake humility present a more refined product than those who display humility in its natural form. Due to the fact that the faked humility strives in a premeditated fashion to appear as being true humility, this causes their voice to sound as tearful melodies. It causes them to have a delicate, tender look in their eyes. Furthermore, all of their actions are measured and calculated to impress those that they are attempting to convince. However, the behavior displayed

In the New Testament John the Baptist is the example par excellence of a humble man. We see how his words of acknowledgement before the Lord Jesus are gigantic among the sublime expressions found in the Holy Book: “The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose” (Mk 1:7), and “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn. 3:30). In contrast, his appearance and his words were extremely rough, and his firmness in rebuking sin was so great that it cost him his life

by those who possess true humility is often the opposite to what I just described.

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extremely rough, and his firmness in rebuking sin was so great that it cost him his life (Matt. 14:3-11). The Christian who is “lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29), and the minister who is truly humble are not worried about faking or exhibiting their humility for the simple reason that it is not something “extra” in them, but it is an integral part of their life. On the other hand, the opposite occurs in the life of one who only has an “appearance of humility.” Genuine humility produces peace. Fake humility destroys and consumes the bones. The Lord specified this when He spoke of being **“LOWLY IN HEART,”** which produces *“rest in your souls”* (Matt. 11:29). The child of God who is truly humble does not lose sleep in worrying that someone might be better than him or that someone is threatening to “steal” his blessings. As a result of his true humility he is fully aware of his true measure before God. He is also fully aware of what his Lord has given him and what He has not. He rejoices (instead of burning with envy) when his brother has more than he has. He also desires that his brothers who have less be given more.

HUMILITY AMONG THE MINISTRY

All that I have stated thus far has been in a general sense, that is, it has been directed to all of God’s people, both ministers and members, men and women, young and old. However, this present article would be incomplete if I did not mention specifically the part of those who bear the greatest responsibility: the ministers of the Gospel. We must mention that one of the most difficult situations in which to practice humility is when one has to apply it in relation to his companions,

his colleagues and to the members of his profession, since this is one of the most common and most harmful problems which affect Christian ministers. It is painful to see, as I previously mentioned, that the amount of ministers who speak and teach about humility without reflecting true humility in their own lives is much greater than those who are genuinely living humble lives. It is relatively easy for a minister to convince those who hear him speak, and many times to convince himself, that he is humble. However, in his relationships and dealings with his companions in the ministry, he cannot do the same. After all, if his fellow minister is a spiritual man, that minister will be able to perceive in his spirit that his brother is simply faking humility. On the other hand, if his fellow minister is like him, the spirit of competition will not allow the minister who has an “outward appearance of humility” to play his game of faked humility as freely as he does among those he presides over.

One of the most common and easiest things to happen among the ministry is that the special honor which this divine calling implies is transformed by the human nature of the minister and by the operation of the diabolical power of the air into a rivalry and competition among his fellow ministers. This is precisely where it can be proven if the minister’s humility is genuine or false. The first person who will discover what spirit is in him is the minister himself. As he finds himself in the compromising environment of competition he will be able to discover through his own feelings, what it is that he feels or has. If it bothers him that one or some of his fellow ministers are better than



him in any aspect of the ministry, he must recognize and accept the fact that the virtue of humility is not mature or complete in him or maybe it is nonexistent. If the minister who is always counseling others, when confronted with a situation in which he himself needs counseling, finds himself feeling awkward or uncomfortable, then something is wrong in his life in regards to the virtue of humility. The minister who is genuinely humble will rejoice in being able to receive counsel, not only from those he considers to be greater than him, but also from those who are equal or even "lesser" than he is, and not only from among the ministry, but also from among God's people. This is where the admonition of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the apostle Paul, applies in a very direct and specific manner, when he declares: *"let each esteem other better than themselves"* (Phil. 2:3). It is very common to observe the extremely ridiculous attitude displayed by ministers who are normally "firebrands behind the pulpit," yet when they must listen to someone else speak (even more so when the strong message being given applies to their life) they become more stoic and silent than Lot's wife when she was turned into a pillar of salt. This means that their humility is not real.

Another of the snares of the false humility is the outward physical appearance, especially in reference to the attire of the minister. Just as there are ministers who defend the ostentatious vanity of their clothing by arguing that humility is found only in the inner man, in their feelings, there are also those who go to the other extreme and teach that the dirtier and unkempt the minister is, the greater his humility. Although it is true that

Another of the snares of the false humility is the outward physical appearance, especially in reference to the attire of the minister. Just as there are ministers who defend the ostentatious vanity of their clothing by arguing that humility is found only in the inner man, in their feelings, there are also those who go to the other extreme and teach that the dirtier and unkempt the minister is, the greater his humility. Although it is true that humility (as well as all the other virtues of the Spirit) must reside primarily in the minister's inner man, but that does not cancel out the importance of the exterior aspect.

humility (as well as all the other virtues of the Spirit) must reside primarily in the minister's inner man, but that does not cancel out the importance of the exterior aspect. Unfortunately, the balance between those two points of view

has always been easily used by many ministers in order to gain an advantage by using one of the two extremes.

The vestments used by the Levitical priesthood were established and designed by God Himself. But there are no such ordinances that exist for Christian ministers. Nevertheless, it is no secret that a crude imitation of God's ordinances for the Levitical priests exists today among the "priesthood" of a nominal Christianity. However, this present commentary is not directed to that segment of false Christianity, but to those of us who claim to know the truth, and who therefore sincerely desire to live as the Lord commands us to live. We therefore affirm that the ostentatious and vain attire among some ministers cannot in any way be justified. If the minister truly has humility in his heart, he will acknowledge the undeniable truth of this declaration.

Shifting our attention to another extreme, we must emphatically reprove the idea that humility consists in "certain" attire or pieces of clothing or in the manner the minister dresses. It is possible that some may think that it is unnecessary to speak about these things, but the truth is that many Christians have had their original humility adulterated by some of these erroneous ideas. It might seem ridiculous but we are aware of some ministers who have taught the brothers that the filthier or unkempt they are, then the greater there degree of humility is. And as a way of confirming their teachings, I personally have seen some of them dressed in a manner and emitting an odor that is shameful and degrading for a minister of God.

There are many cases and aspects of this "appearance of humility" that we could mention, but what we have stated here is sufficient for *"the wise"* (Dan. 12:10). We should also mention that the false humility is very difficult to detect, but it is difficult and even impossible at times to man, but not to God. In the chapter which closes out the Old Testament the Lord declares: *"For behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble"* (Mal. 4:1). The false humility of many will come to an end on that day. However, those who are truly humble will be justified on that day.

As we examine the text more closely we notice that it mentions two groups: *"all the proud,"* and *"all that do wickedly."* It first mentions *"all the proud,"* and then *"all that do wickedly."* The reason the Lord spoke in this manner is because there are those who do not do wickedness (in man's eyes), but who are proud. This applies in a direct manner to those mentioned by the apostle Paul when he mentioned those who have *"a form of godliness"* (2 Tim. 3:5). It is impossible to do evil if pride does not exist in the person, but it is possible to possess pride hidden in our heart without doing evil outwardly.

In conclusion the only thing that remains for me to say is that he who truly loves his salvation will not ignore what I have said here. On the contrary, with HUMILITY, fear and acknowledgement before the Lord, he will be diligent in seriously and carefully examining his life, so that he will not join those who *"having preached (taught) to others, I myself should be a castaway"* (1 Cor. 9:27).

God bless all of you.



SHOULD WE KEEP THE "SABBATH"

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

in the "Ten Commandments" given to Moses by God it is only natural for the sincere Gentile Christians, those who have been saved by the Lord's Grace and who in their heart have the desire to keep God's commandments, to ask if "keeping the Sabbath" is also part of their responsibility or if they only have to obey the rest of the commandments, excluding this one.

I insist in the fact that many of the people who have asked me this question are not in favor or against anyone. Moreover, they have not asked for this answer so that they might be able to argue against or judge someone else. The majority of them are Christians who desire to grow in the knowledge of the Word of God and therefore seek to learn from those who they think can instruct them in what is correct, both concerning the subject of "keeping the Sabbath," as well concerning other subjects.

MORAL AND RITUAL COMMANDMENTS

A while back, as I was speaking to a young man (who gave the impression that he had an ample understanding of the Word of God), I asked him about the difference between the moral commandments and the ritual ones. To my surprise I discovered that this young man did not know how to respond. This caused me to think that there might be many other Christians who also do not know the difference. When these Christians (primarily ministers) are ignorant concerning this fundamental reality, what has inevitably happened in the past is that as they try to teach

Gentile Christians concerning the correct relationship between "keeping the Sabbath" and obeying the other commandments that are rituals commanded for Israel to obey, they have confused them since they themselves do not know the difference between the moral commandments and the ritual ones. (These are the key words he points out. I think they should be highlighted)

The commandments which are moral in nature are those which have to do with the character and morality of humanity in general. These commandments applied before the flood to humanity in its totality, even before the Law was given to Israel. They also applied during the time of the Law and they even apply when the Divine Law does not exist. On the other hand, the commandments which are ritual in nature are ceremonies, rituals and multiple ordinances given specifically by God as a mark or a sign to distinguish the Jewish people from the rest of the nations.

The members of the Church of the Lord, beginning with the apostles and the other Jewish believers in the first years of the Church, and continuing with the Gentile believers, even to this present day, are perfectly informed by the "*apostle of the Gentiles*" (Paul) (**Rom. 11:13**), that we have not been saved by works or by rituals, but only and exclusively by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is of supreme importance that this marvelous truth always be present in our minds, because it is a very natural inclination among humans to do good works and then to consciously

or unconsciously feel justified by their good works. The undeniable reality, according to the message of Grace, is that our "good works" were of no value to us in the beginning and they are still of no value to us in this present day. This is precisely because there exists a great difference between the Law and Grace.

The keeping of the moral commandments ordained by the Law is so that we can gain merits. In the Time of Grace, keeping these commandments should not be to feel justified by them, but as a result of our gratitude, understanding that not only were we saved by Grace, but we also remain standing each day because of this same Grace.

Therefore, it is impossible to attempt to mix the obligatory ordinances of the Law with the voluntary actions of obedience which stem from a heart filled with gratitude as the Christian continually remembers that he is a partaker of "*such great salvation*" (**Heb. 2:3**), without having done any works or without being worthy of or deserving this Grace.

THE SABBATH AS PART OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

We began by declaring that Israel was not only given the "Ten Commandments," but they were given a total of 613. Included in the ten, universally recognized, commandments we find the commandment to keep "*the seventh day*" (the Sabbath) (**Ex. 20:8-11**). For this reason many sincere Christians who, because of their gratitude, are already living the moral commandments feel obligated to literally "keep" the Sabbath.

This mindset was evident in the beginning of the Church, primarily when the new Gentile Christians were instigated by the Jewish Christians, who believeth and taught that it was necessary to be circumcised, to keep the Sabbath and

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (**Ex. 20:8-11**).

IS THIS A COMMANDMENT FOR THE GENTILES?

Since I have never before written specifically and amply about this subject, I felt the moral obligation to supply my brothers with this information, those who have read what is written in the pages of the Holy Book (particularly in the Old Testament) and are intrigued by the emphatic manner in which the Lord speaks to the people of Israel regarding obeying this particular commandment.

My purpose of writing about the subject of the Sabbath is not with the intent of trying to convince anyone who might think differently concerning this topic. It is also not to rebuke those who are "keeping the Sabbath." What moves me to write concerning this subject is that there have been multiple occasions on which my brothers in the Lord have sincerely asked me about this subject.

Many sincere Christians who desire with all their hearts to please the Lord and who read the multiple Scriptures in which God commands the observance of the Sabbath (even threatening judgment against those who do not obey), driven by their sincerity, are the ones who sincerely ask if this commandment concerning the Sabbath is exclusively for the Jews (the people of Israel) or if it also applies to us, the Gentile Christians. For reason that the commandment concerning the Sabbath is included



the other holidays which God had commanded the people of Israel to observe in order to be truly saved. The New Testament gives us ample information about this conflict which arose in the early Church, both through the words of the Lord Jesus and through the writings of the apostle Paul.

In the book of the Acts of the Apostles, chapter fifteen, we find the “apostle to the Gentiles” (Paul) **(Rom. 11:13)** in Jerusalem presenting this problem before the other apostles, the elders and the people of the Lord. At this meeting the apostle Paul makes this emphatic declaration: *“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples (the Gentile Christians), which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear (speaking about keeping the Law)?”* **(Acts 15:10)**.

At the conclusion of this historic and fundamental meeting, the following conclusion was reached: *“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well”* **(Acts 15:28-29)**. As we can clearly see, we, the Gentile Christians, were not ordered to keep any of the ritual commandments.

Based on this resolution, our apostle, Paul, tenaciously defended our liberty in regards to the Law of ritual commandments, using harsh expressions such as: *“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law, Ye are fallen from Grace”* **(Gal. 5:4)**. He also clearly explained that anyone who claims to keep even just one of the ritual commandments given in the Law (in our case, the Sabbath) is required to keep all 613 of the commandments: *“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them”* **(Gal. 3:10)**. We know that no

ordinary human has ever been able to fulfill all of the commandments. The only ONE who did fulfill them all was the Perfect Man (the Lord Jesus during the days of His flesh), who declared: *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill”* **(Matt. 5:17)**.

The Lord Jesus fulfilled all the commandments. Now, our part is to simply believe in Him and to accept by faith His saving Grace. The Lord did not command us to keep “certain holy days” or “feasts.” He also did not order us to fulfill certain “ceremonies.” All that He asks of us is that we love Him, and that stemming from our gratitude toward Him, we might seek to live a life which reflects obedience to the moral commandments.

RITUAL COMMANDMENTS AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The apostle Paul, speaking about ritual commandments and about the lives of our predecessors in the Old Testament, tells us: *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope”* **(Rom. 15:4)**. He adds: *“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come”* **(1 Cor. 10:11)**.

It is important that we notice the fact that everything the apostle Paul tells us in these and other similar declarations is not referring to the moral commandments for the simple reason that I have previously explained. In other words, the moral commandments have been in effect ever since the time of the Garden of Eden and even to this present day. These moral commandments are same ones which ruled mankind before the flood. They continued in effect after the flood. They also directed the lives of the patriarchs of Israel who lived before the giving

of the Law. After the Law was given they continued in effect and are currently in effect today. These commandments have also applied to pagan nations throughout the ages and until the present. But these commandments apply particularly to the Church, to those of us who have been saved by the Grace of God.

Circumcision, kosher food, the Sabbath, the yearly celebrations and the many other ritual commandments which are generally unknown to Gentile nations (and even to many Gentile Christians) were not given by God to all of the world. They are exclusively for the nation of Israel.

Not only did God choose Israel, but He also *“formed them so that they might show forth His praises”* **(Isa. 43:21)** and so that they would be His *“particular treasure unto Me above all the peoples”* **(Ex. 19:5)**. He made them different and distinguished them among all the nations of the earth in order to convert them into His Divine oracle, and to use them as an instrument that He would use to make Himself known among all of humanity. In fact, the Jewish people have been the vehicle and instrument used by God to give to the entire world, and especially to those of us who are believers among the Gentiles, the knowledge of His will through the Holy Book, the Bible. The undeniable reality is that if the Jewish people would not have existed in antiquity, or if they did not exist presently, then the Church would only be a myth, an empty story, very similar to all the pagan and false religions. However, the Bible is a living Book because the Jewish people (Israel) live today. It is to the story of this people, to the events which occurred in their lives through the ages, and to the ritual commandments which govern them, that the apostle Paul refers to when he states that *“these things happened unto them for examples”* to us *“upon whom the ends of the world are come”* **(1 Cor. 10:11)**.

WHAT IS IN REALITY THE SABBATH?

Israel was told that the Sabbath should be a “day of rest” because God Himself “rested on the seventh day” **(Ex. 20:8-11)** after having created all things. Thus, the Shabbat (in Hebrew) is a symbol for rest. The Lord Jesus proclaimed: *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you (shabbath) rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find (shabbath) rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”* **(Matt. 11:28-30)**.

The apostle Paul tells us: *“For we which have believed do enter into rest...for he that is entered into His rest (the true rest that comes from having accepted the Lord’s invitation), hath also ceased from his works (his old life) as God from His”* **(Heb. 4:3-10)**. The rest (Shabbat) that the Lord has given us is not physical; it is a spiritual rest for our souls.

Being perfectly aware of this truth, our apostle tells us: *“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days”* **(Col. 2:16)**. Because the truth is that our Shabbat (rest or peace) does not come from keeping a “certain literal day.” It is a rest and peace in our conscience since we now understand that *“being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* **(Rom. 5:1)**.

Each one of the sincere true believers can testify that during the days of our previous life (before being called by God) it did not matter how many material things or benefits of this world we possessed, we did not have the rest and peace in our souls that only our God through His Grace brought to our lives. After all, it is written: *“There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked”* **(Isa. 57:21)**. Someone might say that they have peace without having Christ in



their life, but they are lying, because *“the Scripture cannot be broken”* (Jn. 10:35). What is happening is that the eyes of their soul are blinded so that they cannot see their misery, and they try to fill their lack of true peace by engaging in the pleasures of this world, or by using alcohol, drugs and other similar things.

I emphasize that our rest does not consist in keeping a “certain” day of the week, but we experience it every day of our lives, as long as we continually acknowledge the LORD who called us and who has given us *“rest for our souls”* (Matt. 11:29). The Lord Jesus Christ our God is our Sabbath.

As true Christians, we have no problem with the day of the week that the world chooses to rest from their material jobs. Just as “nominal Christianity” has chosen Sunday as a day of rest, if it decides to change this day of rest to Wednesday, all that we would have to do is to not go to work on Wednesday. Why do I say this? I say this because our Sabbath covers every day, week, month and year of our lives.

THOSE WHO JUSTIFY THEMSELVES BY “KEEPING A CERTAIN DAY”

Those of us who have been in Israel are aware that the Muslims flock to their mosques on Friday, which is their holy day. The Jews observe the Sabbath in their synagogues and the Christian observe Sunday in their temples. In this case, the only ones who are correct are the Jews, since they were given direct, specific commandments concerning keeping the last day of the week.

On the other hand, the Muslims keep Fridays, according to the teachings of Mohammed, who established this day as an imitation of the Jewish day of rest and to differentiate also from Christianity, who by that time had already established Sunday as the

day of rest. The Koran was written by Mohammed 600 years after the First Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the establishment of His Church.

For their part, Christianity established Sunday to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath, basing themselves on the reasoning that the Lord resurrected on *“the first day of the week”* (Matt. 28:1, Mk. 16:2, Lk. 24:1). In addition they cite that the *“first day of the week”* is mentioned in Acts 20:7 and in 1 Corinthians 16:2, and Revelation 1:10 mentions the *“day of the Lord.”*

Herein lies something extremely important for us to consider: We, the Gentile Christians, who have been saved exclusively by the Grace of God cannot regress to seeking justification by keeping a “certain day,” as I have previously explained. This is precisely the error that nominal Christianity fell into many centuries ago by limiting their service to God to Sunday only and justifying themselves for doing so.

It is proven by the annals of history that throughout the ages nominal Christianity has used not only their observance of Sunday as the day of rest, but also many other erroneous interpretations, customs and invented traditions as a means of self-justification. They have forgotten that in Grace we please God by bearing fruits of the Spirit which are born in our hearts and *“against such there is no law”* (Gal. 5:23).

The apostle Paul, seeing that the church at Galatia had deviated from the truth, strongly admonished them and wrote them an ample explanation concerning this subject. He reminded them that they were saved only by the sacrifice of Christ the Lord on the cross, and made it clear to them that no good work or no rite or ceremony could, in the times past and to the present, make

us acceptable in the Presence of our God.

If someone keeps the Sabbath or observes Sunday and this caused them to forget the truth Paul describes, then, instead of being a blessing to them, it can become a curse. After all, it was the Lord Himself who declared: *“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him”* (Jn. 4:23).

THE LORD IS OUR SABBATH (OUR REST)

“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the *greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also”* (Gen. 1:14-16).

Day and night, morning and evening, weeks, months, seasons and years were all made by God, not by

man. Man cannot add to or take from the hours in a day, the days in a week, the weeks in a month, the months in a season or the total number of days in a year. What man has simply done is to make clocks and calendars to mark time, which was made by God.

God instructed Israel and gave them a schedule on how to use the days, weeks and months of the year to observe the different holy days and rituals that He Himself commanded them to keep. Other cultures and civilizations, apart from Israel, that have existed throughout the ages have made for themselves their own clocks and calendars, but even these are subject to the *“times before appointed”* (Acts 17:26) which were

established by the Creator. Even today, some of the major civilizations are not subject to the “Gregorian calendar” which is commonly used among the nations in the Western hemisphere. It is important for us to know this because it is not the calendar which controls our walk with the Lord. I repeat. The truth is that all of the days, weeks, months, seasons and years of our lives are from Him and for Him. Among all of the instructions given to Christians in the New Testament there is not any direct or specific commandment for us to “keep Sunday.” Now, if on Sunday (according to the Gregorian calendar) the majority of us do not work, and if on that day we can gather to worship the Lord together, it is not intended for us to idolize the day. I continue to insist that we should be walking with Him every day of our lives. Now, returning our focus to the Sabbath, we have understood that THE LORD IS OUR SABBATH (REST) and if as long as we are walking with Him, then we are continually keeping the Sabbath (Rest). The Lord Himself issued an emphatic statement rebuking the fanatic zeal being displayed by the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath, when He proclaimed: *“Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath”* (Mk. 2:28, Lk. 6:5).

Let us be careful not to lose our special blessing by trying to justify ourselves or to please God with our own works. The truth is that if we now do the works of the God, it is because one day the Lord came into our lives. Since that day we have been living and doing God’s will. If at times we are tempted to believe that our works are our own, let us remember the declaration made by the Lord Jesus: *“For without Me, ye can do nothing”* (Jn. 15:5).

God bless you.



YOUTH SECTION

Esteban Trujillo

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever"
(Ecccl. 3:14).

My fellow Christian youth, may the Lord bless you. I give the Lord many thanks for the great honor and privilege He gives me to be able to share a few words in this International Christian publication, "Maranatha." All glory and honor to the Lord.

I would like to share with you my personal experience regarding pursuing a higher level of education. Ever since I was a child I grew up having the mentality that when I was older I was going to pursue a professional career, so that I could be "someone" in life, since this is what I was always told I should do.

When I was in the last semester of high school I recall that the question my teachers asked me was not whether or not I was going to continue my education. They simply asked: "What university do you plan to attend?" I was very excited since I was about to enter a stage in my life in which I could fulfill my lifelong dream. But, on the other hand, since I already knew the Lord, I was not sure if I should do this, due to all of the danger related to "going somewhere to study."

By this time I had already earned a scholarship to attend a certain university. Also, a second university was trying to recruit me so that I could continue my education at their institute. Furthermore, a prestigious technological school in Mexico City was interested in me and had offered me a full scholarship. It appeared that my future was set. Everything appeared to be in my favor. However, we were praying to the Lord, asking Him to do His will in my life.

I thank God for the counsel I received. I know it was from the Lord. After all, although "education in itself is not evil," I was able to understand that pursuing a professional career does not only involve studying (with the danger of losing my mind and falling away from the Lord). It also implies placing all of your mind and energy into what you are doing (and not on the Lord), and then later putting all of your focus in practicing your profession (if you want to be successful). Now, the greatest thing in your life is not the Lord, but it is your career. If something separates us from the Lord, then that thing becomes "evil."

Even being aware of all this, I remember that one night I was packing my belongings to go register at a university. Suddenly, the Presence of the Lord filled the room I was in and a voice resounded in my mind, saying: "You are not going." I was stunned,

not being sure what was happening. The voice told me again: "You are not going!" I then remembered the petition I had placed before the Lord when I asked Him if I should continue my studies or not. Then, with tears in my eyes, I replied: "I am not going. No, Lord, I am not going."

I had not fully absorbed what was happening, but I had something clear in my mind: I am going to obey the Lord. I shared the news with my family and with the brothers in the congregation. There were those who rejoiced with me and who gave me their full support during these moments. However, when I gave the news at my school I received a totally opposite reaction. The principal and my teachers offered to find sponsors for me, to provide economic assistance and personal assistance as well. In the minds of all of them I was a "fool" to refuse the scholarship, sponsorships and all the other types of benefits they were offering me. I must admit that it was not easy to say "no" to the opportunity to fulfill my dreams, but I was fully aware that the Lord knows what is best for me.

Soon after this, the Lord called me in a special way to serve in His work. I can now clearly see that the profession that He called me to partake of is celestial. It is not of this world. This "career" is not limited to this life, but it transcends all earthly limits and reaches eternity.

May the Lord have mercy on those who have lost their Christian identity while pursuing their professional career. May He also continue to help those who were able to further their education without losing their identity, so that they will not forget what it means to be humble.

Each person is free and responsible for making his own decisions. I chose to set aside my earthly dreams and chose to accept what the Lord had in store for me. Please believe me, young people, when I tell you that the life the Lord has given me to this day has greatly exceeded anything I could have ever imagined and is far more valuable than any concept of "greatness" that I had in my mind. Whenever your time comes to face these decisions, seek the Lord in prayer and seek the counsel from His Word. The Lord is faithful. I am a witness to that. I have chosen to use all of the talents and gifts that the Lord has given me to better serve Him.

God bless you.

Your brother,
Esteban Trujillo

WOMEN OF GOD

Silvia Sanchez

To my sisters who at this time might be reading my words, I desire that the Lord's peace be with you.

In my home there were 18 siblings. We were all brought up in the Catholic church. My parents were in charge of cleaning the church and of attending to the needs of the priests. My father always attended the services and my brothers were altar boys. That is, all of us were involved in one way or another in the different rites performed there. At that time I was seven years of age, but I always had a certain fear of the statues and idols that were in the church. Despite all of this, my father always treated my mother badly. I did not fully understand what was happening since I was only a child. I remember that I would always look to the horizon and to the heavens and I would think: "There has to be something better over there, far away." Now, I remember how God called Abraham to leave his country and his father's household in order to go to the Promised Land.

When all of us grew older, one of my brothers chose to become a priest. When this happened our entire family became more involved with the parish that he presided over. Later, God led me to move to Mexicali, B.C.N, where I met my future husband in 1978. God made a way for us to be married in December of that same year in Guadalajara, Jalisco. I was 18 years of age at the time. We lived in Ciudad Guzman for a while and it was there that our first daughter was born. It was also during this time that we heard the Lord's voice speaking to us through the ministry of Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr. We had a small radio on which we heard teachings from the program, "La Voz del Evangelio Eterno" (the Voice of the Everlasting Gospel). I was a few days from giving birth to our first daughter and I had already found a godfather for her so that we could baptize her. However, God in His marvelous decision chose us to partake of the holy calling (1 Pet. 1:1-9, Rom. 8:28-30). During those days, Pastor Efraim Sr. spoke about the baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus on one of the programs. God, in His marvelous love, chose to reveal to us about the true baptism. We decided not to baptize our infant daughter. To this day, she and her husband and her children all serve the Lord.

God has loaned us seven children and I thank Him for each one of them. Although at times there are difficulties in the family, God always shows us a way out of each situation. I thank God that He chose to do with me as He did with Abraham and chose me from among all of my family, so that I can serve Him. Because of the decision I made to serve the Lord, I have suffered in the past and still suffer today contempt from my siblings. However, when the Lord chooses you, He will guide you in His ways and will always be with you to help you enter into the Promised Land.

My testimony is lengthy, but I hope that the few words I have shared here have been a blessing to my sisters. Remember that if you have been chosen by God, do not grow weary because the Lord has promised to be with us *"always, even until the end of the world"* (Matt. 28:20).

Greeting from your sister in Christ Jesus,

Silvia Sanchez, Desert Hot Springs, CA.



"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. OUR FEET SHALL STAND WITHIN THY GATES, O JERUSALEM" (PSA. 122:1-2).

I thank the Lord for allowing me to travel to Israel this year. This was my fourth trip to Israel (one year I went twice). I would also like to honor and thank God for Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr., whom God used to give us instruction on how to love, to bless and to appreciate the people of Israel and the Holy Land. I would also like to thank God for Pastor Efraim Valverde III who has continued with the same vision and mindset that his grandfather had.

The first place we visited was the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem where the Lord is going to plant His feet on His Second Coming (Zech. 14:4). As you stand there you realize that you are actually viewing Jerusalem, *"the City of the Great King"* (Psa. 48:2), live and not simply in a photo. Just remembering this moment gives me goose bumps on my skin.

We were able to visit Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum. Each time I visit this place my eyes fill with tears as I see how the Jewish people suffered *"as sheep to the slaughter"* (Psa. 44:22).

I thank God for allowing us to celebrate one more fellowship service on the 5th of March of this year, 2019. Glory and honor be to His Name today and forever.

On this occasion we had the support of the pastors, Delfino Chavez, Manuel Madera, Gabriel Castelu and Alfredo Tienda, who ministered the Word of God to us.

Beginning on Friday evening at 5p.m. Pastor Alfredo Tienda shared with us his experiences and what he learned on his recent trip to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem. We rejoiced greatly in hearing what he shared with us.



But the death of the six million Jews during the Holocaust was not in vain, because a few short years later the world witnessed the birth of the Modern State of Israel (Isa. 66:8).

We also visited the hill called Golgotha, (this hill has the figure of a skull) where our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. We next visited the Lord's tomb which is only a short distance from Golgotha. The door of the tomb is open and the tomb is empty. His body is not there because

On Saturday morning he spoke to us about the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues and of living separated from sin, because *"by their fruits ye shall know them"* (Matt. 7:20, 23). After a brief break, Pastor Alfredo Tienda spoke about Mount Moriah and about the Chief Cornerstone. During this message God

REPORT ON 2019 TRIP TO JERUSALEM

the Lord Jesus rose from the dead! He is alive! After visiting the tomb we gathered in a special area near the tomb and partook of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of what He did for us. As we were thanking Him for His sacrifice, we felt His Presence mightily.

The Lord also allowed us to visit the Western (or Wailing) Wall. On some days we gathered there two or three times to pray. We were able to ask the Lord to grant the petitions

the people of God sent with us to place in the cracks of the wall. When you enter the Western Wall plaza there is a plaque which reads: "The Divine Presence never departs from this place." Entering here you enter a place of power because of all the prayers that are lifted up to God day and night.

We were also able to visit many other places such as the Dead Sea, Qumran, Ein Gedi, Hebron, the Jordan River, Capernaum, Mount Sinai, Tiberias, Mount Hermon, the Golan Heights, Cana, Nazareth, Caesarea and Shiloh. We also visited the Garden of Gethsemane, King David's tomb, the upper room, the Tomb of the Patriarchs (and Matriarchs), as well as other places.

In conclusion I would like to thank God for the privilege of traveling with several companion pastors including Clemente Perez, Fernando Lazcano, Jose Covarrubias, Eladio Lopez, Roman Bustillos, Moises Quintanar and Marcos Burgette. I also thank the Lord for all the 55 brothers and sister who were part of this trip. We rejoiced greatly and each one of us received something special from the Lord God of Israel.

God bless you,

Pastor Alfredo Tienda.

REPORT OF SERVICE IN VILLA JUAREZ, SINALOA MEXICO

chose to honor us with His presence, pouring out His Holy Spirit upon all those present. We began humbling ourselves, weeping and crying before the Lord. Next, the local congregation presented a Jewish dance as a symbol of our love and appreciation for the people of Israel, **"FOR ZION'S SAKE WILL I NOT HOLD MY PEACE"** (Isa. 62:1). During this presentation

the Lord touched the heart of many of the brothers who were present and they began dancing before the Lord.

On the last day of the activity we were reminded of four fundamental doctrinal points: "God is One," "Who Israel is," "There is One Church and its Owner is the Lord Jesus Christ," and "The Mysterious Rapture does not exist." At the end of the activity four persons decided to be baptized and to take hold of the kingdom of heaven, washing their sins away by *"calling upon His Name"* (Acts 22:16).

God bless you, Pastor Cripino Diaz Aguirre.



REPORT ON FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN SAN DIEGO, CA

During the afternoon service Pastor Efraim Valverde III spoke to us about the following verse: *“And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? (2 Sam. 6:9).* He explained that King David was shaken up when he tried to bring the Ark of the Covenant in the same manner as the Philistines did when they returned the Ark to Israel, instead of carrying it in the manner that the Lord had commanded, bearing it upon the shoulders of the Levites: *“And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders*

with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the Word of the Lord (1 Chron. 15:15). This is the manner in which God wants to bring His glory, bearing it upon the shoulders of the priests, the ministers of the Lord. What is tremendous is that both bro. Adam Perez and Pastor Efraim Valverde III both spoke to us about King David without knowing nor previously agreeing about what they were going to speak about. May the Lord Jesus bless them both.

After this teaching the pastor made an altar call prompting us

to call upon the Lord together. We were able to feel God’s Holy Spirit among us as we cried out to the Lord. Following the prayer the musicians directed us in singing songs of praise. We rejoiced and danced before the Presence of the Lord together.

I thank God for my fellow pastors, companions in the ministry, Moises Quintanar, Jaime Vigil, Fidel Resendiz, Martimiano Ortiz and Epigmenio Pulido, who together with your servant, Alfredo Tienda collaborated in hosting this service.

Pastor Alfredo Tienda

REPORT ON FELLOWSHIP SERVICE IN JUXTLAHUACA, OAXACA



does not remain silent, but that he speaks, publishes, announces and gives a good presentation with his life. To do all these things we must learn how to improve our walk with the Lord. After this he took some time to be with the pastors who were present and during this gathering he encouraged us to continue doing

the work of the Lord. In the evening he spoke about the house of prayer, which is us, the faithful Israel and the faithful Church. He said that we are God’s dwelling place, and as “lively stones” we make up part of the Lord’s spiritual house. We are called to be a people of prayer (1 Pet. 2:2-5. 9). On Sunday morning Pastor

Alfredo Corcoles spoke to us about the importance of seeking the Lord and of walking in seriousness with Him. Pastor Efraim III once again spent time with the pastors and he told us that we must continue in the truth. Meanwhile, Bro. Daniel Perez spoke to the brothers about Bethel. In **Genesis 28:12** we read about a “ladder” that ascended into heaven. This ladder represented a way to gain access into heaven and symbolized the way of life demonstrated by Jacob and his forefathers.

Also, on Sunday God touched the hearts of twenty bold brothers who gave their lives to the Lord and were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. To conclude, Pastor Efraim III led us in a prayer in which we thanked the Lord for being with us throughout the weekend services and in which we also blessed the nation of Israel.

Pastor Timoteo A. Cervantes.

The fellowship service took place on the 23rd of March and began with a prayer led by Pastor Epigmenio Pulido, followed by some worship songs led by a group comprised of members from several different congregations in the San Diego area, under the direction of bro. Antonio Zeferino II. Following this bro. Adam Perez from Salinas ministered to us about the desire that King David had to build a temple unto God but was denied his request to do so. However, King David demonstrated a correct attitude after having his request denied. *“But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for My Name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood” (1 Chron. 28:3).*

I thank God for once again allowing us to host this annual service. It has always been a great blessing to us. This year more brothers attended than in previous years. The Church of the Lord is growing.

We began the activity on Friday by sharing the Good News of the Gospel in the Municipal Park. Later that evening bro. Nestor Quintanar spoke about several doctrinal points, including seeking the guidance of the Lord and “ignorance causes arrogance.”

On Saturday morning Pastor Efraim Valverde III spoke to us about the importance of the calling God has given us as *“Ambassadors of Christ the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:20).* He pointed out that if we are truly ambassadors, we should also be ambassadors for His people, Israel. He said that we must bless and speak in favor of Israel, the Jewish people and the beloved City of God, Jerusalem. He mentioned that an ambassador



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 the “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (**Mark 16:16**). On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, through Peter’s lips, declared: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you...for the remission of your sins...” (**Acts 2:38**). Paul, referring to the Lord’s sacrifice, declares that the Lord gave Himself for His Church “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water (baptism) by the Word” (**Eph. 5:26**). Peter, referencing the fact that Noah was saved by water in the ark, states: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now SAVE US...” (**1 Peter 3:21**).

HOW SHOULD WATER BAPTISM BE ADMINISTERED?

Paul explains to us that baptism is a symbol of the burial of one who has died. For this reason he poses the following question: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were

baptized into His death? Therefore we are BURIED with Him by baptism into death” (**Rom. 6:3**). On another occasion he explains to us that we are “BURIED with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him” (**Col. 2:12**). According to these Scriptures, baptism is a symbolic burial through which the believer, now dead to the world (repented) is buried in the waters of baptism and emerges from them, ready to live a new life in Christ. For this reason, baptism should be administered through immersion, submerging the body of the penitent completely in water, according to the example given by the Lord Himself when He entered into the Jordan River to be baptized: “And Jesus, when he was baptized, WENT UP STRAIGHTWAY OUT OF THE WATER” (**Matt. 3:16**). Likewise, when Phillip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, the Scriptures tell us that “THEY WENT DOWN BOTH into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when THEY WERE COME UP OUT OF THE WATER...” (**Acts 8:38-39**).

WHAT NAME SHOULD BE INVOKED DURING BAPTISM?

The Lord commanded His disciples to baptize the Gentiles “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (**Matt. 28:19**), and when the apostles carried out the Master’s commandment, they baptized thousands upon thousands of

believers in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They did not disobey the Lord, as some have had the audacity to say. On the contrary, they faithfully executed His commandment, because they had understood that the “Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” is JESUS the Lord, and that He is ONE. They understood when the Lord told them: “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father” (**John 14:9**). They understood that “God was manifest in the flesh” (**1 Tim. 3:16**). They understood that the Lord Jesus was Israel’s Messiah, and that He could be none other than God Himself, because there is only one God (**Deut. 6:4, Isa. 44:6**). They understood that only the God, YHWH, can save, and they were given revelation to understand that the Lord Jesus is that same God, because the Name of God given to men that they might be saved is JESUS the Lord (**Acts 4:12**). This is the Name “which is above every other name” that Joel mentioned when he prophesied: “That whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered (saved)” (**Phil. 2:9, Joel 2:32**). The following Scripture verses bear witness that the original believers in the Church were all baptized calling upon the Name of Jesus Christ, and never with the titles Father, Son and Holy Spirit: **Acts 2:38, Acts 8:16, Acts 10:48, Acts 19:5, Acts 22:16, Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:27, 1 Pet. 3:21**. The baptism invoking the titles of Father, Son and Holy Spirit was not utilized in the apostolic era or in the first centuries of the Church. It was an interpretation which came later as part of the package of many other false doctrines, fruit of the apostasy, which were accepted and confirmed by the Council of Nicea in the year 325 A.D.

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



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

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

You, the reader, can find the answer in the Word of God. It is for the Jews (**Acts 2:36-38**). It is for the Samaritans (**Acts 8:14-16**). It is for the Gentiles (**Acts 10:45-48**). It is for believers who have already been baptized with other baptisms (**Acts 19:1-5**). “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, EVEN AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL” (**Acts 2:39**).

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

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

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

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

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

It is for those who have come to the point in their lives in which they are compelled to ask the same question that the jailer at Philippi asked Paul and Silas: *“What must I do to be saved?”* If you find yourself in this category, through the love of Christ the Lord, I will explain to you God’s plan of salvation precisely as it is described in the Holy Bible.

FIRST STEP: You must

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

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

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

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

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

SIXTH STEP: The Lord has promised to give each of His

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

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

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

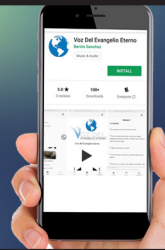
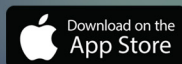
CONCLUSION: Even though we may not know you, the Lord knows who you are, and our prayer is that He will bless you. We also ask our Lord Jesus that He will work in your life, praying that the plan described in this tract will bring the change in your life that you greatly desire. If the Lord places in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

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

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

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

Baptism is by immersion (Rom. 6:4)

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

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

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

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

The Church of the LORD is not a religious organization, It is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27, 2 Tim. 2:19)

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