

Guatemala,

September 24, 2025

Beloved brothers and sisters,

We welcome you to our fifteenth training convention,

BACK TO ZION

Jehovah in Zion is great...(Psalms 99:2)

The mountain of Zion is the place where we began our journey, since we were there as spirit and soul, before coming to this world. There was nothing there but Jesus and us; there were no religious formalities, church services, positions to occupy, ministries to covet, organizations to climb; there were no quarrels between brothers, or various churches to which we could move, moved by some displeasure. The only thing that existed and mattered was the living relationship of love and the perfect communion we had with Jesus and with the Father, and with the other stones of fire (Ezekiel 28:14).

With him I was arranging everything, and I was his delight day by day, having solace before him at all times. I rejoice in the habitable part of his land; and my delights are with the sons of men.

(Proverbs 8:30-31)

When we come to this world and through the sin we inherit from our parents, Leviathan puts a veil around us that blinds us. This veil is what makes us fall into the traps in which all men fall, one of the most dangerous being that of religion. But when Jesus comes into our lives, the veil is removed from us.

And he will destroy in this mountain the covering with which all peoples are covered, and the veil that envelops all nations.

(Isaiah 25:7)

Jesus puts us on the path that will lead us back to Zion. Each step we take will be a great victory, bringing us closer and closer to that state that our spirit and soul knew in the beginning, and unconsciously but intensely yearn for.

They will go from strength to strength; each of them appears before God in Zion. (Psalms 84:7)

God faithfully laid out the path back to Zion, using shadows, types, and figures. The journeys of Israel from Egypt to Canaan and finally to Zion, illustrate the spiritual path we must walk to return to Zion; the Mosaic tabernacle illustrates the path to Zion, with the most holy place being the representation of Zion.

The nation of Israel never managed to see beyond the literal because they did not have the eyes of faith open, so they never found that state of perfect communion with God and of love, which was waiting for them. Contrary to this, they ended up creating a religious system that they always retained, with which they justified themselves, until they ended up moving away from God completely. They depended completely on their physical temple and their various habitual religious practices, just as many people who consider themselves Christians do today.

But King David was the exception. He saw beyond the figures; he saw the way back to spiritual Zion.

Your processions have come into view, God, the processions of my God and King into the sanctuary. (Psalms 68:24)

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David saw beyond the furniture in the tabernacle; he saw the steps or spiritual experiences that each piece of furniture represented, sought these experiences, and obtained them. David found spiritual Zion. Zion is not religious forms or a physical and tangible place; Zion is a personal spiritual experience with God. We already mentioned that one of the biggest traps that the devil makes us fall into is to conform and entertain ourselves with religion, with formalities, and make us lose sight of the personal experience. But just as God had mercy on David, God has it with us; just as the Lord instructed David, so He instructs us today through David.

Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander for the nations.

(Isaiah 55:3-4)

In this convention we will be studying what the mount of Zion is and means to us.

In our classes, we will explore the living and personal spiritual experiences that are represented by each piece of furniture in the Tabernacle, which will bring us closer to Mount Zion.

Let us prepare ourselves, then, not only for a wonderful time of learning in the Word of God, but also for a powerful time in the Holy Spirit, as we pray and worship the Lord together. If we all do our part, God will do His so that our lives will be transformed. We will also enjoy delicious refreshments and wonderful times of fraternal fellowship.

We thank all the people who directly and indirectly have given of their time and talents, and all those who will be actively participating in the days of the convention, so that it may be a reality and a success, and so that the life of all may be revolutionized by Jesus Christ.

And we thank God for Dr. Graciela Esparza and for Rev. Berniece R. Hicks, through whom we learned to seek and find the hidden Treasure in the field of the Word of God.

God bless you!

IGLESIA DEL EVANGELIO DE CRISTO
Carlos & Susy de Stahl
Pastors Carlos and Susy de Stahl
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CONVENTION SCHEDULES

SEPTEMBER 24-28

Miércoles, 24 de septiembre	
17:00 - 18:15	Clase No. 1. Cómo podemos tener un Altar de Sacrificios vivo Hno. Luis Hurtado
18:15 - 19:15	Refrigerio
19:15 - 21:30	Servicio No. 1
Jueves, 25 de septiembre	
17:00 - 18:15	Clase No. 2. Cómo podemos tener una Fuente viva para limpiarnos Pastor Eric Urruela
18:15 - 19:15	Refrigerio
19:15 - 21:30	Servicio No 2
Viernes, 26 de septiembre	
17:00 - 18:15	Clase No. 3 Cómo podemos tener un Altar de Oración vivo Pastor Samuel Rivera
18:15 - 19:15	Refrigerio
19:15 - 21:30	Servicio No. 3
Sábado, 27 de septiembre	
10:00 - 11:15	Clase No. 4 Cómo podemos tener una Lámpara encendida viva Hno. Nicolás Noguera
11:15 - 12:00	Refrigerio
12:00 - 13:15	Clase No. 5 Cómo podemos comer el Pan vivo Pastora Susy de Stahl
Domingo, 28 de septiembre	
9:00 - 10:15	Clase No. 6 Cómo podemos llevar sobre nuestros propios hombros el Arca de Dios Hno. Carlos Hurtado
10:30 - 13:00	Servicio No. 4 (Servicio general)



ZION AND THE PLACES
SOLITARY PLACES

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OUTLINE

A. DEFINITION - Hebrews 10:25

B. THE SOLITARY PLACES

1. Jesus.

- Luke 2:40
- Luke 2:52
- Matthew 14:23
- Mark 1:35
- John 16:32

2. Abraham.

- Hebrews 11:8-10
- James 2:23
- Genesis 15:1-21
- Genesis 17:1-14
- Genesis 18:16-33
- Genesis 22:1-18

3. The Apostle Paul.

- Galatians 1:15-2:1
- Hebrews 12:18-24

4. King David.

C. DAVID AND THE SOLITARY PLACES

1. David knew the solitary places.

2. David grew up in the solitary places of contempt and rejection.

- I Samuel 16:1-11
- I Samuel 17:12-14; 28-29
- I Samuel 17:55-58
- I Samuel 16:14-23

3. It is in the solitary places that David sought and found God.

- Psalms 102:6-7

D. David remained as an example to follow for us

- Amos 9:11
- Acts 15:13-18
- Isaiah 22:22
- Revelation 3:7
- Isaiah 55:3-4

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GUATEMALA

A. DEFINITION

Zion (Heb.) tziyon, dry or thirsty place.

- From (Heb.) tziyun, to be conspicuous, monumental or guiding column; sign, monument.
- ^{From} (Heb.) tziyah , dryness, drought, desert, aridity, barren, place solitary.

Strong compares it with (Heb.) natsakj, to shine, to shine from afar, to be eminent, to be permanent; root of netzakj, goal, target, eternity, perpetuity, victory, direct, chief, principal, the principal musician.

Zion is, then, two things: (1) It is the spiritual goal in which we must set our spiritual eyes, so we need the revelation that makes us know what Zion really is; and (2), Zion is a lonely place, a place that we must find and experience alone, in a personal way. We will never stop needing to have a collective experience, which is why it says:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

(Hebrews 10:25)

We need to be exhorted and exhort (console, encourage, admonish, instruct, strengthen), until we all come to have this personal, solitary experience with Jesus Christ on the spiritual Mount Zion.

B. THE SOLITARY PLACES

In the Scriptures we learn of several people who found God in a personal and special way in the solitary places of their spiritual journey, with Jesus himself leading our list. They were willing to walk in where few have walked, to find their spiritual Zion. Some of them are:

1. Jesus.

Jesus Christ left the heavenly Zion to come to earth as a man. Despite being one with Christ, the divine and eternal Word, Jesus had to grow, strengthen and be filled with wisdom (Luke 2:40). He also grew in spiritual stature (Luke 2:52). Jesus used to go to lonely places to seek God.

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. (Matthew 14:23)

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. (Mark 1:35)

Although Jesus was always surrounded by people, being a unique person in every sense of the Word, Jesus walked a solitary path. This became fully noticeable in the last days of His life on earth, which He had announced to His disciples in advance.

Behold, the hour is coming, and has now come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. (John 16:32)

Jesus had to experience the agony of Gethsemane alone, since His disciples fell asleep. God finally sent an angel to strengthen Him. The Father was with Him.

Jesus was alone when He was being judged and condemned by the religious and civil authorities. The Father was with Him.

Jesus was alone on the cross. The Father was with Him.

Jesus has created solitary places for us, being our forerunner. It is in solitary places that we will find the Father, as in no other place. In solitary places we will find our spiritual Mount Zion.

2. Abraham.

By faith Abraham, when called, obeyed by going out to a place he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

The foundations of the New spiritual City are found on the spiritual Mount Zion, just as the foundations of the natural Jerusalem are found on the natural Mount Zion. In seeking the New City, Abraham was seeking Zion. In the Bible, sooner or later we see that Jerusalem and Zion became practically synonymous.

Lot went with Abraham in the first stage of their journey. But Abraham continued alone the rest of the way. It is on this solitary path that Abraham came to know God, and was called a friend of God.

And the Scripture was fulfilled which says: Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was called a friend of God. (James 2:23)

Abraham was alone with God in the most important moments of his life:

- He was alone when God promised him a son of Sarah, that his offspring would be like the stars of the sky, and that God would give him the land of Canaan for inheritance. Genesis 15:1-21
- He was alone when God established the covenant of circumcision with him, after having revealed himself as El Shaddai, the Almighty God. Genesis 17:1-14
- He was alone when he interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 18:16-33
- He was alone when he gave Isaac, putting him on the altar. Genesis 22:1-18

3. The Apostle Paul.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days; but I saw none other of the apostles, save James the Lord's brother... afterwards I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia... then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus with me also. (Galatians 1:15-2:1)

The Apostle Paul had a clear revelation of the spiritual Zion because he, in solitude and through his search for the Truth after having encountered Jesus Christ, found his personal Zion.

For you have not come to the mountain that could be touched and that burned with fire [Sinai]... but you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem... (Hebrews 12:18-24)

4. King David.

David found his personal spiritual Zion, thanks to the choice he made to seek God in the solitary places of his life. David is one of the authors who gives us the most revelation about Zion. It is no coincidence that it was David who made the conquest of the literal Mount Zion, who reigned from there as king and who will reign perpetually from there, in the ages to come.

C. DAVID AND THE SOLITARY PLACES

1. David knew the solitary places.
 - Psalms 63.

God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You, in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.

(Psalms 63:1)

It is in the solitary places that David found his spiritual Zion, the place of God's habitation. As we have already said, natural Zion is a figure of spiritual Zion.

In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion. (Psalms 76:1-2)

Whoever loves the Lord and has experienced His presence, like David, will cry out and seek Him with all his heart and with all his strength when he is in solitary places. Whoever loves the Lord cannot live without Him or without His presence!

2. David grew up in the solitary places of contempt and rejection.
 - I Samuel 16:11. David was called the youngest, qatan: insignificant, unimportant; from qut, to abhor, detest, mourn, grieve.young, small, R
 - I Samuel 16:1-11. His father despised him and kept him away, with the sheep.
 - I Samuel 17:12-14; 28-29. His brothers despised him; because he was the youngest, they held him in low esteem.
 - I Samuel 17:55-58. Saul, whom David had already served, despised him by not recognizing him. This tells us that Saul had no interest in the person of David, but only made use of his ability to play the harp and of the anointing he had from God (I Samuel 16:14-23).
3. It is in the solitary places that David sought and found God. It is there that he found and loved His presence, it is there that he had an experience with God. From there on, nothing more than an experience would satisfy him.

I am like a pelican of the wilderness;
deserts; I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop.

I am like an owl of the

(Psalms 102:6-7)

Solitary (Heb.) badad, means to withdraw, separate, isolate, be alone.

The roof (Heb.) gag, refers to the top of the golden altar of incense.

The root of the word gag is gaah, which means to grow, rise, be majestic, triumph, be exalted in triumph. In the lonely moments of his life, David was not alone because he knew how to run to the altar of prayer to meet God there. It is there that David found spiritual Zion.

D. DAVID REMAINED AS AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW FOR US.

In that day I will raise up the fallen tabernacle of David...(Amos 9:11)

Simon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. And with this the words of

the prophets agree, as it is written: After this I will return and rebuild the tabernacle of David, which is fallen...(Acts 15:13-18)

David raised a tabernacle of spiritual experiences. This is what Jesus seeks to build in our lives, making it available to everyone who wants it, whether Jew or Gentile. The end and objective of the New Covenant is that the tabernacle of David or Zion be built in our lives.

And I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David...(Isaiah 22:22)

Write to the angel of the church in Philadelphia: This is what the Holy One, the True One, says, the one who has the key of David...(Revelation 3:7)

David and Jesus have the same key, the key that opens the way to Mount Zion and to the heavenly Jerusalem.

David was given to us as a witness, leader and teacher of the eternal covenant that God makes with men, through Jesus Christ.

Behold, I have given him as a witness to the peoples, as a leader and teacher to the nations. (Isaiah 55:3-4)

GUATEMALA



THE MOUNT OF ZION
CELESTIAL

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THE MOUNT OF CELESTIAL ZION

Pastor Carlos Stahl

A. ALL WE BEGIN OUR EXISTENCE AND OUR
EXPERIENCE WITH GOD, ON THE MOUNT OF CELESTIAL ZION.

- Isaiah 51:1
- I Peter 2:4-5
- Galatians 4:26
- Ezekiel 28:14
- I Peter 2:25
- John 10:4-5
- John 10:14-15
- Proverbs 8:22-31
- Isaiah 14:13
- Ephesians 1:3-12

B. WHAT DO WE SEEK, WHEN WE SAY WE SEEK THE MOUNT OF
ZION?

1. The natural Mount Zion.

- Deuteronomy 12:5
- II Samuel 5:7

2. The spiritual Mount Zion.

- Isaiah 26:8-9

3. The celestial Mount Zion.

- Revelation 21:10

OUTLINE

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The natural Mount Zion is a shadow, type or figure of the true Mount Zion, the spiritual and eternal one. When we say that Zion is our goal, we are referring to the place or spiritual state that is defined or described as Zion.

A. ALL WE START OUR EXISTENCE AND OUR EXPERIENCE WITH GOD, ON THE CELESTIAL MOUNT ZION.

The Father through Jesus Christ, the Son, made the spirit and soul of all of us. God took from Himself the substance to make them, so Isaiah 51:1 says:

Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. (Isaiah 51:1)

This makes us, so to speak, stones of fire or living stones.

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

(I Peter 2:4-5)

These are the stones of fire that were sheltered in the holy mountain of God, or in the heavenly Mount Zion, which was comparable to a great maternal womb. That is why Galatians 4:26 calls the Jerusalem above (which is found on the spiritual Mount Zion), the mother of us all.

But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
(Galatians 4:26)

Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

(Ezekiel 28:14)

Lucifer, when he was still in his original state as a protective cherub, watched over and covered this mountain and the stones of fire. But more importantly, Jesus Christ was there instructing (shepherding) our spirit and soul, delighting in us at the same time that we delighted in Him.

Therefore, when we receive salvation, it is said that we have returned to the Shepherd and to the Bishop of our souls.

and

For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. (1 Peter 2:25)

And also for this reason, when we hear the voice of Jesus speaking to us and calling us in this life, we know perfectly well how to recognize that voice and distinguish it from other strange voices.

When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.
(John 10:4-5)

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.
(John 10:14-15)

Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God and through whom God created all things, rejoiced and delighted in us, in such a way that He was our only cause and object of joy, of pleasure, of delight and of desire. In the heavenly Mount Zion there was nothing else to desire and that produced pleasure, than Jesus!

The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old... I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind. (Proverbs 8:22-31)

The word rejoice (Heb. sachaq), means: to laugh, to play, to rejoice, to frolic.

The word delights (Heb. shashua), means: to enjoy, to delight, pleasure, to look with complacency, to pamper, to revel, to be caressed.

Of course, our pleasure and desire were tested with Lucifer's rebellion and, unfortunately, many succumbed to temptation. But this only further affirmed the desire of many of us for Jesus!

At some point the time came to leave the heavenly Mount Zion and come to this existence. Our parents provided us with a body for our spirit

and our soul; our spirit and our soul came with the fact engraved in the depths of consciousness, that the only true delight and pleasure is found in the person of Jesus.

The heavenly Mount Zion is also called the mount of testimony. Lucifer, after having been corrupted and to his ruin, sought to possess this place.

You who said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the testimony on the farthest sides of the north. (Isaiah 14:13)

The word testimony (Heb. moed), means: a designated place or time, a designated meeting, a designated sign; an assembly (convened with a defined purpose), the congregation; a predetermined sign.

When we come to this existence, many of us come with Mount Zion fixed in our spirit and in our soul, in our heart and in our will; we come with a pre-established appointment, to return to Mount Zion and to meet there again. We come with the promise made not only that we would find salvation, but that we would find the way back to the heavenly Mount Zion; we come with the promise made that we would find the spiritual Mount Zion here and now; we come with a spirit and a soul that nothing and no one in this world can satisfy, except Jesus Christ himself.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him, in love having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved... In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:3-12)

B. WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR WHEN WE SAY WE ARE LOOKING FOR MOUNT ZION?

1. The natural Mount Zion.

It is the place to which God led Israel after taking them out of Egypt, after making them cross the desert and after conquering the territory that was in the possession of the nations of Canaan. Zion is the place that God chose to put His Name in it. Zion and Jerusalem became synonymous. King David is the one who finally conquered and possessed the mountains of Jerusalem, so that Solomon could later build the temple there.

King David possessed Mount Zion

natural, because he was the only one in his generation who found the spiritual Mount Zion for his life.

But the place that the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and his habitation there, to that place you shall seek, and there you shall go. (Deuteronomy 12:5)

But David took the stronghold of Zion, which is the city of David.

(II Samuel 5:70)

2. The spiritual Mount Zion.

It is the spiritual state we reach when Jesus becomes the one whom our spirit and soul desire; when He becomes the cause and the object of our joy, our pleasure, and our delight; when in our world, the one who truly matters is Him. Spiritual Zion is what we experience when we seek God, clinging to Him in prayer, in the lonely places of life. The reason God has created places and moments of solitude for us is that if we seek God, we will find the spiritual Mount Zion there. Many times we will experience these moments of solitude, even when surrounded by many people.

In the path of your judgments, O Lord, we have waited for you; your name and your memory are the desire of our soul. With my soul I have desired you in the night, and as long as my spirit is within me, I will seek you early...(Isaiah 26:8-9)

3. The heavenly Mount Zion.

It will be our eternal reward, the eternal dwelling place that we will inherit, for having found the spiritual Zion here and now.

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

(Revelation 21:10)

GUATEMALA



ZION, REVEALED IN
THE PSALMS



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1. PSALMS 2

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. (Psalm 2:6)

Seeking to draw us to Him, the Lord sends from Zion, the place where His throne is, His cords of love.

- Hosea 11:1-7. God seeks to draw us, to free us from the yoke that enslaves us, to feed us and teach us to walk, so that we may draw near to Him.

There are those who respond; there are those who seek to break free from those cords and cast them away. One day, God will reward as appropriate, both those who responded and those who did not respond.

- Acts 4:23-31. In Acts chapter 4, Psalm 2 is quoted. The rulers, the elders, the scribes, the high priest, and all who were of the family of the high priests, opposed the apostles and the message of Jesus Christ. They did not want to be drawn by the cords of love of God, but the apostles did.

The apostles had a living, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They found their personal Mount Zion, so nothing and no one could have made them back down and turn away from the Way. This is the people who will reign together with Jesus Christ from Mount Zion, in the millennial kingdom of Christ and in eternity.

2. PSALMS 9

Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings. (Psalm 9:11)

Have mercy upon me, O Lord; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death: That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation. (Psalm 9:14)

When we have a living experience with Jesus Christ, when we have allowed ourselves to be drawn by His cords of love and our eyes and our heart are fixed on Zion, God will continue to be our confidence and our hope in the midst of any adverse situation. One day we will find ourselves singing praises to God in the heavenly Zion, eternally, because here and now we find our spiritual Zion, and we never stop singing praises to God despite how difficult our journey has been.

- II Thessalonians 1:1-12. The mount of Zion has a price. Paying that price is the only thing that will make our faith, our love, and our patience grow. This is what will give us entry into the kingdom of God or to Mount Zion. Those who trouble us and persecute us are doing us the favor of bringing us closer to Zion. And then, when all has been said and done, God will repay with tribulation those who troubled us.

3. PSALMS 14

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord restores the captives of his people, Jacob will rejoice, and Israel will be glad.

(Psalm 14:7)

It is from Zion that salvation comes, and that it will come for Israel. Salvation does not proceed from traditions or religious forms; it comes from Jesus Christ himself, who dwells in Zion.

4. PSALMS 20

May the Lord hear you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you. May he send you help from the sanctuary, and sustain you from Zion.

(Psalm 20:2)

Since the Lord dwells in Zion, in Zion is His Name, it is from Zion that our defense, our help, and our strength come; it is to Zion that our spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise go, and from Zion that comes the reward and the answer to our petitions. In other words, the Lord will reward us by bringing us closer to that place or spiritual state in which He is our only desire and delight.

In that day you will ask me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:23-24

5. PSALMS 48

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in his holy mountain. (Psalm 48:1)

Zion will be restored and lifted up when Jesus Christ establishes His kingdom on the earth. He will reign in Zion over all the nations of the earth, and with Him those who found their spiritual Zion in their journey through the earth.

We know that we have found our spiritual Zion when we magnify God and praise Him greatly, in the midst of any circumstance of life; when instead of fleeing from God when we are being afflicted, we flee to God for refuge.

Mount Zion will rejoice; the daughters of Judah will be glad because of your judgments. Walk around Zion, and surround her; count her towers. Consider her bulwark carefully, look at her palaces; so that you may tell it to the coming generation. (Psalms 48:11-12)

6. PSALMS 50

From Zion, perfection of beauty, God has shone forth. (Psalms 50:2)

This word beauty (Heb. yophiy) and its root (Heb. yaphah), appears in the following texts and in relation to the following things, in the Scriptures:

- Psalms 45:2 - the beauty of the King, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Psalms 45:11- the beauty of the queen, the bride of Christ.
- Isaiah 33:17 - the beauty of the King, Jehovah, who dwells in Zion.
- Lamentations 2:15 - the city of Jerusalem, which was called perfection of beauty.
- Ezekiel 16:14 - the perfect beauty of the city of Jerusalem, because of the beauty of God that He put in it, before it prostituted itself.
- Ezekiel 27:3 the perfect beauty of the proud city of Tyre, whose spiritual king or principality was Satan in person (Ezekiel 28:12-19). Lucifer was originally created perfect in beauty. After becoming proud, allowing himself to be corrupted and being cast down by God to Sheol (Isaiah 14:12-17), the devil has set himself the task of making men seek temporary, vain perfection and beauty, in a carnal way, paying any kind of cost, only on the outside, in the body, and completely away from the Lord Jesus Christ.

But in Jesus Christ, the closer we get to Zion, the more His beauty is perfected in us on the inside, in the soul and the spirit; this is permanent and eternal, the fruit or the result of His work in us, which we will radiate outward through our good works.

God said the following to the corrupt and prostituted Israel:

And you, O destroyed one, what will you do? Although you dress in scarlet, although you adorn yourself with ornaments of gold, although you paint your eyes with antimony, in vain you adorn yourself [beautify yourself]; your lovers will despise you, (Jeremiah 4:30)

The Lord tells us through Peter:

Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. (I Peter 3:3-4)

- Ezekiel 31:7-8, Assyria, the most beautiful tree in the garden of God, whose heart was lifted up because of its height, so God rejected it. The Lord would do the same with Pharaoh king of Egypt.
- In the Song of Songs, the Lord, the heavenly Bridegroom, says beautiful to His beloved, seven times:

Song of Songs 1:15
Song of Songs
2:10 Song of Songs
2:13 Song of
Songs 4:1 Song of
Songs 4:7 Song of
Songs 4:10 Song of
Songs 7:6

7. PSALMS 51

Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.

(Psalms 51:18)

In Psalm 51, David expresses his deep and sincere repentance for the sin committed with Bathsheba, and for the murder he committed with Uriah. He was aware of having spoiled his sweet communion with God, or his personal spiritual Zion.

Had he not repented, David would have left Zion (the spiritual and then, as a consequence of this, surely the natural as well) forever. But for him, there was nothing more valuable and satisfying to his soul and spirit than his communion and personal experience with God.

The terror of losing

this is what most moved him to humble himself, to confess and to repent. A breach had been opened in the walls of his personal Zion, which was closed with God's forgiveness.

Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

(Psalms 51:11-12)

8. PSALMS 53

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores his people from captivity, Jacob will rejoice, and Israel will be glad.

(Psalms 53:6)

Salvation comes only from Zion, the personal spiritual experience, since it is there that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior, dwells. Salvation could not come from Mount Sinai, since the moral law and the ceremonial laws cannot save. These were given (1) to restrain and protect men while Jesus Christ came to transform the heart, and (2), to reveal Jesus Christ through shadows, types, and figures, before His visible manifestation to men.

Then, what is the purpose of the law? It was added because of the transgressions, until the seed to whom the promise was made should come; and it was ordered by angels in the hand of a mediator.

(Galatians 3:19)

So the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.
(Galatians 3:24)

9. PSALMS 65

Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion; vows to you will be fulfilled.

(Psalms 65:1)

Since God dwells in Zion, the praises we offer to Him always reach there. Praising God connects us with Zion: it makes us remember Zion, that Zion is fixed in our mind; it makes us desire Zion with greater intensity and cling more strongly to the cords of love with which God is seeking to draw us to him. With reason, after a service of praise, our spirit and our soul are reconnected with God.

It is God himself who draws us to Zion:

Blessed is the one you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.

(Psalms 65:4)

10. PSALMS 69

Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them. For God will save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah; and they shall dwell there and possess it. The descendants of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall dwell in it.

(Psalms 69:34-36)

The theme of this Psalm is not the sufferings of the literal city of Jerusalem, or Zion; the theme is the sufferings of David, which are identifying him with the sufferings that Jesus Christ would suffer later. So this is a prophetic, messianic Psalm; however, it describes a real, afflictive and painful experience for the psalmist himself.

In this context, David is comforted, saying: God will save Zion (Heb. yasha', help, liberate, rescue, give victory). Indeed, and in due time, God will save the literal, earthly Zion. But now God must liberate the spiritual Zion of David. In other words, suddenly and because of suffering, David is not feeling the same, seeing with the same clarity, desiring God with the same strength. His personal, spiritual Zion has been taken captive. But it is in this lonely and dry place that God will save Zion, eventually giving David an even greater love and desire for God. It is to this new spiritual place that God is leading David, who loves the Name of the Lord. Those who love his name will dwell in Zion.

11. PSALMS 74

Remember your congregation, which you acquired long ago, which you redeemed to be the tribe of your inheritance; this Mount Zion, where you have dwelt. (Psalms 74:2)

This Psalm is a MASQUIL, or an instruction. Surely it was not written by Asaph himself (he would have been dead by then), but by one of his descendants at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem at the hand of the Chaldeans (Babylon). God destroyed the literal Zion (Jerusalem and the temple), because the whole nation of Israel neglected and forgot their spiritual Zion, to have a living relationship with God that would lead them to make God their only desire and their only true source of joy. They cast God behind their backs (Nehemiah 9:26).

Before restoring the literal Mount Zion, exalting it and making it the center of the whole earth, which Jesus Christ will do in His second coming, the Lord Jesus Christ seeks to build the spiritual Zion in the hearts of men.

Under the Old Testament, David found the spiritual Zion and made it known to Israel. But soon, after David's death, they forgot how to have a living and personal experience with God and returned to their cold religious ways. Jesus Christ promises to raise up the fallen tabernacle of David giving believers a living and personal experience with Him. And then finally in His kingdom, He will raise up the tabernacle of David on the earth for all men.

In that day I will raise up the fallen tabernacle of David, and close up its gaps; and I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old.

(Amos 9:11)

12. PSALMS 76

God is known in Judah; in Israel his name is great. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. (Psalms 76:1-2)

Many people are content with knowing about God. This is what they call knowing God. There are people for whom the Name of the Lord is great, because they have heard about Him through other people. There are people who have become living tabernacles of God, who are still on a pilgrimage, seeking a permanent place of habitation. But there are people who have found their personal spiritual Zion; they have found the place or the permanent state of communion with God, in such a way that nothing moves them anymore. It is in this state that the weapons of the enemy will no longer have a way to overthrow us, or to deviate us from the path. Having found this spiritual place, we will have found the peace that surpasses all understanding, despite there being no peace around us.

There he broke the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war. (Psalms 76:3)

13. PSALMS 78

In this Psalm, Asaph is recounting to the new generations the wonderful works that God did for Israel and the rebellion of the people since their miraculous departure from Egypt, so that they would put their trust in God, and not forget the works of God, that they would keep his commandments and not be like their fathers (Psalms 78:7-8). Furthermore, Asaph is reminding them that it was Mount Zion that God chose as a permanent place of habitation on earth.

He rejected the tent of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loved. He built his sanctuary like the high places, like the earth which he has established forever. (Psalms 78:67-69)

David, who found the spiritual Zion, was the one whom God chose to reign in the natural Zion. To those of us who find the spiritual Zion, God will give the privilege and the power to reign over all the earth together with Jesus Christ.

14. PSALMS 84

Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Blessed is the man whose strength is in you, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. Psalms 84:4-7

From the King James Bible, we read:

Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. (Free translation.)

From the Aramaic Peshitta Bible, translation by Dr. George M. Lamsa, we read:

They have passed through the valley of tears, and have made it a place of habitation; the Lawgiver will cover it with blessings. (Free translation.)

From the Pratt Bible, we read:

Passing through the valley of Tears, they turn it into a spring of waters; also the early rain covers it with blessings.

This is very important, because it is about the path that will take us from power to power, until we not only find our own spiritual Zion, but the eternal, heavenly Zion.

God not only does not avoid the valley of tears or the valley of the shadow of death, but intentionally creates one or more of these valleys for us. His intention is that there we put our strength in God, put in our heart (understand) His ways, and seek Him in His sanctuary. It is there that more and more of His power chayil , His strength, will be formed in us,

ability, efficiency, wealth, virtue and value, so that we reach Mount Zion. It is there where God has hidden the spiritual bread we need to strengthen ourselves and reach Zion.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me... You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalms 23:4-6)

15. PSALMS 87

The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
(Psalms 87:2)

Zion is the place God chose to put His name in it. In other words, it is in Zion that we find all the riches of full understanding (Colossians 2:2) of His Name, of His nature, of His essence; of His ways and His mode of operation. In Zion our joy is fulfilled; our rest and our peace are made perfect.

In Zion is the spring or fountain of life, of love and of the light of God in Jesus Christ; the fountain of joy, peace and rest. Therefore, the singers and players say:

All my springs are in you. (Psalms 87:7)

16. PSALMS 97

Zion heard and rejoiced, and the daughters of Judah, O Lord, rejoiced because of your judgments. (Psalms 97:8)

Natural Zion (or Jerusalem) will be liberated by the Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes to reign on the earth, after destroying the Antichrist and all his system. During the period of great tribulation the whole earth, beginning with the nation of Israel, will be worshiping the Antichrist and his deceptive image. Jesus will destroy all that idolatry when he manifests himself to the nation of Israel. Then the earth will mourn (Zechariah 12:11-14), and in that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for purification from sin and uncleanness (Zechariah 13:1).

In the same way, the Lord works by destroying the idols or images that we have formed in our minds, in order to liberate Zion, so to speak, in our lives; in other words, it is not until He has torn down our personal idols that we will truly have a revelation and the desire to seek the experience of spiritual Zion, in a personal way.

We find our personal Zion when we finally let Jesus be the Lord and king of everything in our life; when we let Jesus be Lord of everything, that is when we find our personal Zion.

17. PSALMS 99

The Lord is great in Zion, and exalted above all peoples.

(Psalms 99:2)

Just as God reigns from the heavenly Zion, great, holy, and just, so God in Jesus Christ will reign over all the nations of the earth from the earthly Zion. In the same way, when we find and build our own spiritual Zion, the Lord comes to reign completely in our lives.

18. PSALMS 102

You will arise and have mercy on Zion; for it is time to have mercy on her, for the appointed time has come. For your servants love her stones, and have compassion on her dust. So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth your glory; because the Lord has built up Zion, and in his glory he shall be seen.

(Psalms 102:13-16)

God was angry with the earthly Zion when the nation of Israel turned away from Him, seeking strange gods. When Jesus Christ comes a second time, after destroying the Antichrist and his armies, He will personally rebuild Zion and the Temple, and will reign from there for a thousand years over all the nations of the earth.

And speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the Branch! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." (Zechariah 6:12-13)

The nation of Israel will finally be able to understand the connection between the heavenly Zion, the earthly Zion, and the personal spiritual Zion, when those who spiritually built Mount Zion in their own hearts are the ones who instruct them.

Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3)

19. PSALMS 110

The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." The Lord will send forth from Zion the rod of your power; rule in the midst of your enemies. (Psalm 110:1-2)

Heavenly Zion is the dwelling place of God. It is from Zion that the Lord Jesus Christ will come as King of kings and Lord of lords, to judge the nations and to establish His kingdom on earth.

20. PSALMS 125

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. (Psalm 125:1)

The heavenly Mount Zion is eternal, immovable, and permanent; God and the Lamb dwell there. There God has put His Name, which is eternal and infinite. Likewise, when we reach that place or spiritual state, when our knowledge of His Name has become more complete, our roots and foundations of trust in Him become deeper; therefore, nothing and no one will be able to move us.

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

(Ephesians 3:17-19)

21. PSALMS 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.
(Psalm 126:1)

Earthly Zion was taken captive by the Chaldeans, when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and the temple and took many Israelites captive to Babylon. The reason why this reached this point is because they never repented and did not want to turn away from their idolatry.

Sometimes, the spiritual Zion of our relationship and personal experience with God can also be taken captive: How often do we find ourselves only following religious forms, but our spiritual vision has ceased to be clear and our heart has stopped burning as before. We know that we have become lukewarm. When we find ourselves in this state, we must examine ourselves: surely the Lord will have found some idol that was hidden somewhere in our will. He will be faithful

in showing it to us. If we sow tears of repentance, we will reap tears of joy, when the Lord has brought back our captivity.

Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the Negev. Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.
(Psalm 126:4-6)

This was Job's experience. When with the help of Elihu and the Lord Job saw himself and repented, the Lord delivered him from the image of pride that was in his unconscious will and brought back his captivity.

And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. (Job 42:10)

This same passage reads as follows in the King James Bible:

And the Lord turned the captivity of Job...

22. PSALMS 128

The Lord bless you from Zion, and may you see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life. (Psalm 128:5)

When we fear the Lord and walk in His ways (Psalm 128:1), the Lord sees it and blesses us. His blessing not only comes from Zion, but the Lord blesses us by giving us a clearer vision and drawing us even closer to Zion, to the spiritual and the heavenly.

23. PSALMS 129

Let all who hate Zion be put to shame and turned backward.

(Psalm 129:5)

Those who have historically hated earthly Zion do so because heavenly Zion has never been revealed to them; or perhaps, they have never wanted to see it. Therefore, these ungodly (Psalm 129:4), unless they repent and surrender their lives to the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, will never find spiritual Zion in a personal way: They will never find the true source of satisfaction, of joy and delight for their soul and spirit.

24. PSALMS 132

For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place. This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

(Psalms 132:13-14)

David was the one who conquered the city of Jerusalem and Mount Zion, the place that God chose to put His Name on it. David loved the Name of the Lord, His nature, His power, His character, His sovereignty. David found the spiritual Zion for his own life; therefore, David reigned over Israel from the natural Mount Zion, and will reign from there in the ages to come.

Just as the heavenly Zion is the Lord's resting place in the heavens, the earthly Zion is His resting place here on earth. Our heart becomes a spiritual Zion when the Lord finds in it a resting place for His Name.

When Jesus Christ comes into our heart, we become a dwelling place for Him. Dwelling (Heb. moshab), means seat, place, abode.

But He will find His rest in us when He has conquered and overcome those things that do not allow us to be at rest: Our distrust, our unbelief, our pride; in other words, our carnal mind. The word rest (Heb. menuchah), means place of quiet, peaceful, marriage.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

(Matthew 11:28-30)

The first rest is given to us by Jesus Christ. The second rest we will find if we take His yoke and learn from Him.

The people of Israel had the Tabernacle in the desert, which was the dwelling place of God; but they never found the rest of God.

Therefore, there remains a rest for the people of God. For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:9-11)

We find this rest when we find our spiritual Zion, when we reach the place or state in which all our trust and our desire is the Lord.

25. PSALMS 133

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in harmony!... [it is] like the dew of Hermon, which descends upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord sends blessing and eternal life.

(Psalms 133:1,3)

Let us remember that Zion means a patched, dry, desert, arid place. The road to Zion is a lonely road, even when we find ourselves surrounded by people and serving them. But when we arrive at that place or spiritual state of rest in God, we will meet the other pilgrims who have arrived at that place as well. There we will enjoy perfect harmony with them, and peace with other people.

One of the results of having found the spiritual Zion in a personal way, of having traveled the lonely road to reach this state of communion with God, is that we will be at peace with others.

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.

(Hebrews 12:14)

I therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

(Ephesians 4:1-3)

26. PSALMS 134

May the Lord bless you from Zion, He who made heaven and earth.

(Psalms 134:3)

The Lord dwells in Zion; therefore, it is from Zion that His blessing comes. He blesses everyone equally in many ways, because that is His nature; but His blessing acquires an infinitely higher and deeper dimension when we have found our own Zion and it has formed in our heart.

That you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
(Matthew 5:45)

27. PSALMS 135

House of Israel, bless the Lord; house of Aaron, bless the Lord; house of Levi, bless the Lord; you who fear the Lord, bless the Lord. May the Lord be blessed from Zion, who dwells in Jerusalem. Hallelujah. (Psalms 135:19-21)

One is the praise that comes from the house of Israel, the saved believers in general who still have to grow and mature; another is the praise that comes from the house of Levi, from those who have grown a little more and have learned to minister to the Lord with their prayer and their praises; another is the praise that comes from the house of Aaron, from those who love the sovereignty of God and seek to do His will and please Him. But another is the praise that comes from Zion, from those who have found in God their delight, their pleasure, their joy and their peace; from those who have found a marital relationship with Jesus Christ.

Let's see how in the Song of Songs, the beloved matured in her knowledge and relationship with God; therefore, in her worship towards Him.

- My beloved is mine, and I am his... Song of Songs 2:16
- I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine... Song of Songs 6:3
- I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me. Song of Songs 7:10

As we grow in our relationship and experience with God, more and more we disappear from the picture, and more and more great and predominant Jesus Christ becomes. This will be reflected in our life of prayer and worship. There will come a time when the one who truly matters is Him, and no longer ourselves.

28. PSALMS 137

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, and we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows in the midst of it we hung up our harps. For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, and those who plundered us asked of us mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? (Psalms 137:1-4)

This Psalm was obviously written in the time of the captivity of Judah, in Babylon. As we have mentioned in the commentary of Psalm 126, Judah was taken captive and taken to Babylon because of her idolatry. Judah desired and coveted to be and do what they saw the Chaldeans be and do, thus casting the Lord behind their backs, so God judged them by giving them everything they wanted from Chaldea. In other words, the Lord gave them over to the desire of their heart.

This is the same principle that the apostle Paul describes in Romans 1:21-32: "For although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity...

- (v.24) To impurity
- (v.26) To dishonorable passions
- (v.28) To a debased mind"

Israel finally understood what it had lost, until it no longer had it; the same happens to us when we covet other things outside of God and the Lord ends up giving us over to those desires. When this happens, we begin to miss and desire Zion, those wonderful spiritual experiences we had with Him in the past. God will take us back, but not before giving us a well-deserved and profound lesson.

If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill!
My tongue
cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy! (Psalm 137:5-6)

29. PSALMS 146

The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!
(Psalm 146:10)

When we find our personal spiritual Zion, we find the understanding and knowledge of who God is, of how wonderful, loving, powerful, and merciful He is. Then we will have put all our trust and hope in Him, and He will indeed be reigning over everything in our life.

As if this were not enough, the Lord will reward us by making us reign together with Him from the earthly Mount Zion restored by Jesus Christ himself. And in the Perfect Age, we will be forever with God and the Lamb in the New Jerusalem, on the heavenly Mount Zion.

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God.
(Psalm 146:5)

30. PSALMS 147

Praise the Lord, Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. (Psalms 147:12)

In heavenly Zion is the Creator of all things, who sustains all things with the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3) and through whom all things subsist or consist (Colossians 1:17). It is from Zion that God has made Himself known to men, especially to the nation of Israel in antiquity. And it is from Zion that His salvation comes to us.

From ancient times, God established Mount Zion on the earth and the city of Jerusalem, and gave them as an inheritance to Israel. God put His Name in Zion and in Jerusalem, so that these would be faithful witnesses or a reflection of heavenly things. What God did for Israel, He has not done for any other nation on earth.

He has not done so with any other of the nations; and as for his judgments, they did not know them. Hallelujah. (Psalms 147:20)

Just as God reigns from the heavens, His desire was to reign over Israel and over the nations of the earth, from Zion. And although Israel rebelled and turned away from God, and must be through judgment, God will not rest until He sees His desire fulfilled for Zion and for Jerusalem, in the future. Jesus Christ will soon come after judging the earth and cleansing it of sin, to establish His kingdom and reign over all the earth from Zion.

31. PSALMS 149

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King, let them praise his name with dancing; let them sing to him with tambourine and harp.

(Psalms 149:2-3)

The true spiritual children of Zion, those who have attained a living and personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, are the most joyful people on the face of the earth. They are the ones who will have the privilege of coming to judge the earth, together with Jesus at His second coming, because they will have allowed Jesus to judge the earth of their own heart and cleanse it of all the enmity that was found there.

Let them exalt God with their throats, and two-edged swords in their hands, to execute vengeance among the nations, and punishment among the peoples; to imprison their kings with shackles, and their nobles with chains of iron; to execute on them the judgment decreed; this will be glory for all the saints. Hallelujah. (Psalms 149:6-9)

Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge very small things? Or do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more the things of this life? (I Corinthians 6:2-3)



MOUNT SINAI AND
MOUNT ZION



IGLESIA DEL EVANGELIO DE CRISTO

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GUATEMALA

A. MOUNT SINAI

- Hebrews 12:18-21
- The mountain could be touched
- The mountain burned with fire
- God surrounded Himself with darkness and gloom
- Lightning and thunder
- Sound of the trumpet
- Galatians 3:19
- Deuteronomy 4:36
- Deuteronomy 4:12
- Exodus 19:16-25
- Exodus 20:18
- Isaiah 1:11

B. MOUNT ZION

- Hebrews 12:22-24
- Revelation 21:9-10
- Many thousands of angels
- Hebrews 1:14
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- The Judge of all
- Psalms 19:9-10
- The righteous made perfect
- Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant



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GUATEMALA

A. MOUNT SINAI

For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that no word should be spoken to them anymore. For they could not endure what was commanded: "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with an arrow." And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling." (Hebrews 12:18-21)

- The mountain could be touched. In other words, God took His people to a physical place. The encounter with God that Israel had at Sinai did not open their eyes of the spirit, to be able to see beyond the physical and the natural.
- The mountain burned with fire, as a constant reminder of the consuming power of God, if we approach Him full of wood, hay, and stubble.
- God surrounded Himself with darkness and gloom so as not to consume the nation of Israel with His glory. Israel must have focused more on the darkness of God than on His glory. In God there is no darkness (I John 1:5), but He creates them to surround Himself with them and thus be able to manifest Himself to His creation without consuming it.

He made darkness His secret place; His canopy around Him was dark waters, thick clouds of the skies. (Psalm 18:11)

- Storms accompanied by lightning and thunder, by their nature cause fear in people. On Mount Sinai, the lightning gave testimony of the separation between God and men, and of the perfect union between the Father and the Son. God's intention was to have a perfect union with His people, after they separated from sin and idolatry.
- The sound of the trumpet accompanied the revelation of God's moral law. But later, when the trumpets sounded, the people could not do anything but remember that they were not walking in this moral law.

When God gave His law to the nation of Israel on Mount Sinai, He certainly did so at the hands of Jesus Christ the Mediator; otherwise, the people would have perished.

So what is the law for?

It was added because of the transgressions, until the seed to whom the promise was made should come; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.

(Galatians 3:19)

The glory of God covered Mount Sinai and the whole mountain burned with fire. Then we read that God spoke both from heaven and from the fire that was on the mountain; in other words, the Father spoke from heaven to Jesus Christ the Son, and the Son spoke to the people of Israel from the fire.

From heaven he made you hear his voice, to teach you; and on earth he showed you his great fire, and you have heard his words from the midst of the fire.

(Deuteronomy 4:36)

And the Lord spoke with you from the midst of the fire; you heard the voice of his words, but except for hearing the voice, you saw no figure.

(Deuteronomy 4:12)

The way God manifested himself to Israel (see Exodus 19:16-25) caused great fear in them and instead of seeking to draw near to God, all the people stood far away.

All the people observed the thunder and lightning, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when all the people saw it, they trembled and stood far away. (Exodus 20:18)

God's intention in instilling fear in His people was so that they would not sin. At the same time and in the way God cared for them, God wanted to help them to understand how much He loved them.

Finally, in general terms, Israel never learned to love God; and in the end, they didn't even fear him.

Mount Sinai, then, represents the fear of a God who can remain distant if we do not come to know and love him, and the continuous fear of not fully complying with God's moral law, which is impossible for man to do. Sinai is man's attempt to approach and please God with his own effort. The ceremonial law was also revealed to Israel at Sinai. As this consisted of clear and precise instructions, the people of Israel never stopped fulfilling it. But without a right heart and walk, the ceremonies ended up wearying God.

What good is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? says the Lord; I am full of burnt offerings of rams and fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of male goats.

(Isaiah 1:11)

B. THE MOUNT OF ZION

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

This passage refers to the spiritual Mount Zion, which is the living experience that God wants us to have in Jesus Christ, and to the heavenly Mount Zion, the dwelling place in which we hope to spend our eternity, if we allow ourselves to be formed as a bride for the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the dwelling place of God; the place where the New City is founded.

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, (Revelation 21:9-10)

In Zion we do not need and have no value religious forms or any type of object or physical place; in Zion what we seek are personal spiritual experiences, to know and draw near to God through Jesus Christ, to love Him and let ourselves be loved by Him, to grow in Christ and let Christ grow in us.

Repentance is the key that connects us back to Mount Zion, the spiritual place from which our spirit and soul come; the state that our spirit and soul knew before coming to this physical body, of perfect love between the Father and the Son, and between God and us. Mount Zion is that place or state in which the only thing that matters is Jesus; He is the only thing that our spirit and soul desire and seek.

- In the heavenly Mount Zion there are many thousands of angels serving God with praises, doing His will and serving us, who have been made heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14).
- In Mount Zion are found all the firstborn or the firstfruits of God, those who consciously and voluntarily chose Jesus Christ, and who matured spiritually and bore fruit first.

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads... These were redeemed from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.

(Revelation 14:1-5)

- In Zion we have perfect union and harmony with the Judge of all, because the Judge, Jesus Christ, is also our faithful advocate. Growing spiritually will have led us to say with the psalmist:

The judgments of the Lord are true, they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

(Psalm 19:9-10)

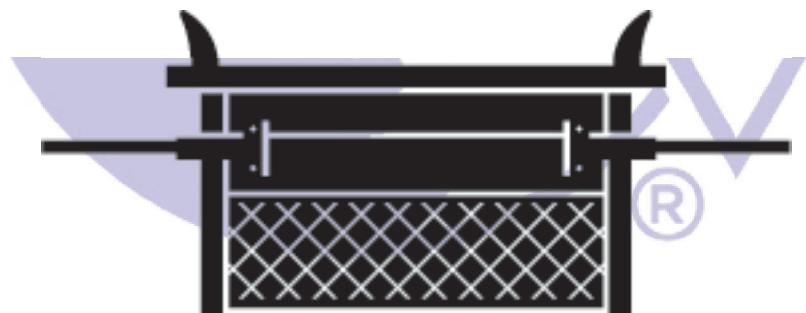
- The righteous made perfect will have reached Mount Zion in their spiritual journey. Those who are already in heaven are awaiting the day of resurrection, when their body will rise perfect and be joined again to their soul and spirit, to serve the Lord in the ages to come.
- Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant. The old covenant rested on the blood of animals that could not take away man's guilt or touch his heart to transform and convert it. But in Jesus Christ we have:
 - A better hope (Hebrews 7:19).
 - A better covenant or testament (Hebrews 7:22).
 - Established on better promises (Hebrews 8:6).
 - A better sacrifice to purify all things (Hebrews 9:23).
 - A better and lasting inheritance in heaven (Hebrews 10:34).
 - A better country (Hebrews 11:16).
 - A better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35).
 - A blood that speaks better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:24).

Abel's blood cried out from the ground, waiting to be avenged with the death of the one who shed it; that is, the death of Cain (Genesis 4:8-15). But the blood of Jesus was shed in our favor, to give man redemption and eternal life. The blood of Jesus cries out: It is finished!

Mount Zion, then, represents the state we find after receiving salvation through Jesus Christ and having grown in our loving relationship with Him, in the knowledge of God, in spiritual stature, and in moral stature. Mount Zion represents the confidence and familiarity that salvation gives us, to be able to approach God by the way that He Himself has provided for us, with the heavenly Mount Zion being the goal and eternal inheritance of.



HOW CAN WE HAVE
A LIVING ALTAR OF SACRIFICES



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GUATEMALA

OUTLINE

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GUATEMALA

A. THE BRONZE ALTAR:

God left us a path traced in the Bible so that we could follow in His footsteps. To us as humans, mortal and limited in our perception of this natural and spiritual world, shadows have been left, types or figures of the way to God, so that in this way, with visual examples and of different kinds, we can understand the message that God wants to transmit to us.

Who serve what is a figure and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was warned when he was about to erect the tabernacle, saying: Look, do all things according to the model that was shown to you on the mountain. (Hebrews 8:5)

So that they may seek God, if in any way, groping, they may find Him, although He is certainly not far from each one of us. 28 For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as some of your own poets have also said: For we are also His offspring. (Acts 17:27)

In the tabernacle that Moses built, copied from the celestial model, there was a piece of furniture that was a bronze altar. On said furniture a sacrifice was placed; that is, an innocent victim, for atonement for the sins of the person who went repentant confessing their faults and offenses and seeking forgiveness. When the offering was placed, fire descended from heaven, which was a sign that said sacrifice had been accepted; that fire consumed the offering placed on the altar.

In the book of Leviticus, the different offerings and sacrifices that were placed on the bronze altar are mentioned, which were five; at this moment we are going to focus only on one: on the burnt offering or the whole burnt offering.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Command Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering shall be on the fire on the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it. (Leviticus 6:8-9)

God's purpose in our spiritual journey is that we keep an altar lit, bringing Him daily our repentance, confessions of our sins and gratitude; this will automatically become a continuous fire that burns day and night in our hearts; that is, a fire that manifests itself in a total surrender, surrendering our carnal sovereignty. This fire is so important because it is the foundation for prayer and the revelation of the Word to be kindled in us, among many other things. We will return to this verse later.

B. JESUS THE ONLY AND SUFFICIENT SACRIFICE

The book of Leviticus explains the ordinances and priestly instructions that the Levites were to perform as part of their office, to minister to God and serve the people of Israel in the tabernacle and in matters relating to the law. In addition, this book explains the different sacrifices that were made, which are shadows, types or figures of the person of Jesus.

If we want to be a living sacrifice, we must first set our eyes on Jesus to learn from His example, and the book of Leviticus gives us details of His nature.

If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it voluntarily at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord. (Leviticus 1:3)

When the Word instructs that they should offer an offering without blemish, this undoubtedly referred to giving the best they had available; this speaks to us of the complete sacrifice of the Father in giving His Son, and of the perfect nature of Jesus.

The sacrifice was voluntary, which teaches us the capacity that God the Father and Jesus had to choose; that offering also had to be brought to the door of the temple, which tells us that Jesus, our only and sufficient sacrifice, is the only key to access to enter the presence of God.

The animal that was offered was at the mercy of the will of the priest; its life literally depended on what someone else could do. Such is the degree of the sacrifice of Jesus, being He the image of God. He was available to other foreign wills, thus giving His life and embracing death.

Once the animal was sacrificed, its blood was sprinkled. The Bible mentions that life is in the blood, which teaches us how through His death, many would attain life. His total submission would bring with it the freedom and resurrection of all of us who lived in our offenses and sins.

These verses not only reveal to us the perfect and wonderful nature of the Lord Jesus, but apart from that they invite us to grow to that stature.

Righteousness will go before him and prepare us for his steps.

(Psalms 85:13)

C. BECOMING A LIVING SACRIFICE

The Apostle Paul tells us in the book of Romans that we must become a living sacrifice. If we truly want Christ to grow in us, then we must voluntarily offer ourselves on the altar to the death of our nature, to attain His life.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (Romans 12:2)

The only way we can be renewed in a solid and constant way is through reason. Emotions and experiences can give some impetus to our Christian walk; however, it is only through the Word of God that the mind and human nature can be renewed. Therefore, this verse emphasizes that we offer a worship, a rational worship, which has the necessary understanding to know what we are doing and what we are aspiring to.

To present a living sacrifice we must remember the figures and requirements of the victims that were mentioned in the book of Leviticus:

1. Without blemish or defect:

The people of Israel had to offer the best of their cattle. This tells us that we must give the most valuable thing we have in our life. Here we can mention that we give the most valuable and important of our resources, of the things we love the most, of our time, our intellect and will, and anything that we consider of high esteem before our eyes.

To present a living sacrifice we must place everything on the altar, knowing that once it has been placed before our high priest the Lord Jesus, we leave it at His disposal, surrendering our desires and aspirations, so that He may do with what we have given Him what pleases Him.

2. It was voluntary:

The Holy Spirit will be constantly illuminating the areas of our heart that need to be worked on and the things that we must deliver, but in the end this delivery is voluntary; it is something that we must choose and after making a choice, let us walk before Jesus presenting our offering.

3. The offering was brought to the temple door:

Our offerings are a blessing. Many times we have felt condemned and miserable for all the sin and for the weaknesses of our flesh; the Lord Jesus knows them perfectly. He knows our weaknesses, but if we take all this and bring it to the door of the temple, we can turn these weaknesses into the fuel that will keep us growing inside the presence of the Lord.

4. Death gave way to life:

As we grow in the stature of the Lord Jesus, we can flow more naturally in love and service to our neighbor. The death that we sow every day, surrendering what is most valuable and surrendering our will to God, is gradually becoming substance that will later be used to minister to others. Mature children of God can act according to His character, letting the light of the Father shine through them.

D. THE CONFESSON OF OUR SINS

When Adam and Eve sinned, they inherited a nature that hides from God. It is very common for human beings to keep secrets of the sins they commit. Sin germinates in darkness, far from the light of God. Although nothing is hidden from God (Mark 4:22), the fact that we do not voluntarily expose our sins and iniquities will not allow the light of the Lord to come and illuminate those areas of our lives, so that we can be healed.

The word confession in Hebrew is נִגְאָד (nāgad), which means among other things: to firmly oppose, confront, declare, discover.

Confessions are difficult to make. We know that our actions can have consequences; these facts may be shameful or simply the flesh knows that once they are confessed and what is hidden comes to light, the Lord will be able to illuminate and bring liberation. That is why the old man resists so much to discover evil.

The quoted meaning of that word, “to firmly oppose,” is striking. When we seek to confess our sins, we are opposing our flesh; we are making a firm call in our spirit to choose Jesus and walk in His will.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. (I Peter 2:11)

But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (I Corinthians 9:27)

To be a living sacrifice we must fight against silence, and the temptation to keep things. Everything that operates in darkness cannot be restored; the Lord gives us confession as the tool where we can express and undress what has been hidden. The good news is that once this comes out of our mouth with the intention of finding forgiveness and liberation from the Lord Jesus, God provides us with devouring fire that will consume our wickedness and in turn become a fragrant aroma to His nostrils.

And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces." (Leviticus 9:24)

We must practice confession with God daily, and each time it will be easier to bring things to light; we can use a private journal to write, if this helps us to express ourselves; also, at some point, we can lean on the brotherhood, talking with mature brothers in the faith about difficult situations and challenges we face in our daily lives and in our struggle to seek holiness.

E. OUR HARVEST AS A LIVING SACRIFICE

Confession and repentance put to death our carnal sovereignty:

Like every human being, we are governed by our carnal sovereignty, which drags us to death and darkness and from which nothing good can come, neither earthly nor eternally; therefore, it is urgent that we free ourselves from it.

When we present ourselves as a living sacrifice, that sovereignty automatically begins to decrease, to give way to the divine and loving wisdom of God.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the Lord in anything which ought not to be done, and does any of them; if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the Lord for his sin which he has sinned, a young bull without blemish as a sin offering. He shall bring the bull to the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord, lay his hand on the bull's head, and kill the bull before the Lord. (Leviticus 4:1-4)'

Once the offering was presented and there was room for repentance and confession, the victim was beheaded. The neck and head represent our will to govern. This beautiful figure reveals to us that after we accept that we have broken God's laws and accept those faults asking for His forgiveness of mercy, God rises above our government, and we are not only forgiven but also transformed.

Confession and repentance open our spiritual eyes:

Navigating in our mind and learning to know our flesh is walking on muddy and dark ground. Our heart is very deceitful and only God can know it perfectly, but as we begin to confess, God begins to open our spiritual eyes; now we will begin to see more of the perfect nature of the Lord, we will begin to discern better between light and darkness and to know our flesh better, so as not to fall easily into its traps.

I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you. (Job 42:5)

Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. (Psalm 19:12)

Asaph also mentions in Psalm 73 how he was filled with sinful thoughts against the government of God and with bitterness, for seeing the supposed prosperity of the wicked; but once he entered into the presence of God confessing his sin, he was able to see with open spiritual eyes the goodness of the Lord and the reward for the wicked man.

When I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end.

(Psalm 73:16-17)

Confession and repentance separate us from darkness:

In the book of Ezra, a moment is mentioned where Ezra is notified by the princes of the people of Israel that the Israelites had mixed with the princes of the land. This unleashed a deep weeping and repentance in Ezra, who went before the Lord to confess the sins on behalf of all the people; after that, the instruction was that they separate the foreign women and children that the Israelites had taken.

After these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites, and they are doing according to their abominations. For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed has been mixed with the peoples of the lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass." When I heard this, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down dismayed.

(Ezra 9:1-3)

While Ezra was praying and making confession, weeping and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children from Israel gathered to him; for the people wept very bitterly. And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken foreign wives from the peoples of the land; yet in spite of this there is hope for Israel. Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my lord, and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. (Ezra 10:1-3)

Let's pay attention to the word mixed, which is the word H6148 arab מִשְׁמָר, which means something that has been mixed; this is related to the word H6153 ereb עָרָב which means dusk, alluding to the time of day when light and darkness mix. Here God describes a picture: the people of Israel had a mixture of light and darkness, but they could not continue walking with Him in that state; it was necessary to separate both things. The moment Ezra lamented and confessed all these sins before the Lord, the separation occurred. Confession is the separation of what is hidden, so that it may be placed before the Lord in His divine light and thus be separated from our heart. The more we present ourselves before the Lord for confession of sins, the more separation we find; that is another reward of becoming a living sacrifice.

F. FEEDING OUR ALTAR SO THAT THE FIRE BURNS
CONSTANTLY

GUATEMALA

In the book of Leviticus 6, when the burnt offering is spoken of, the altar was to burn day and night; but if we examine these verses, we will find principles that will help us understand how to keep our altar burning and how to be living sacrifices.

The burnt offering was voluntary and referred to a total surrender before the Lord. Surrendering our will in that way requires the complete determination to die to sin and follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 9 Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: It is the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. (Leviticus 6:8)

In this portion of the Word, God mentions that the altar will burn at the beginning of the night, which gives us a great understanding of the importance of spiritual nights; the greatest growth and the greatest deliveries occur in the dark moments of our lives. These experiences that we go through in the moments when we cry out to the Lord the most, mark our lives forever. Then, when the night was over, the priest had to put more wood on it so that the fire would continue to burn.

The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. 13 The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out. (Leviticus 6:12)

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G. PAIN AS A PATH TO REPENTANCE

Pain is something that every human being will be guaranteed to experience during their time on this earth. These experiences can serve as a catapult in our spiritual growth, helping us to know the Lord in a deeper way in many of His facets. All this is if we know how to bring that pain to the bronze altar, with confessions of our carnal weakness and inclinations, with repentance for the faults we commit because of what springs from our heart, and in general for the pain suffered in this corrupted world. However, if we do not bring these painful experiences to the altar, this will only serve to harden our hearts and to distance us greatly from our Creator.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn your statutes.
(Psalms 119:71)

David mentioned in this Psalm the good purpose of having been humbled. By going through the pain, he undoubtedly approached the bronze altar to deposit those experiences, thus obtaining wisdom and knowledge, as well as gratitude. By mentioning that it was "good" to go through those experiences, David is recognizing God's goodwill: that everything He creates is for our good and for our spiritual prosperity.

Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns, and make a wall, so that she cannot find her paths. 7 She will follow after her lovers, but she will not overtake them; she will seek them, but will not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now.' (Hosea 2:6)

God also puts a hedge around us, to prevent us from continuing to walk in the opposite direction behind idols.

These hedges can be

painful experiences that make us reflect on the fruit that sin is producing in our lives. God's purpose is that we taste the bitterness of idolatry and also that a confession be extracted from us, where we can openly recognize that the only place where we will find peace, pleasure, comfort, and forgiveness of sins is with the Lord Jesus.

In this passage of Hosea, we have a picture of the spiritual situation of the people of Israel; this is also a figure of the church, which has strayed after strange loves, but at some point, those loves can no longer satisfy it, opting in the end to return to the Lord.

It is important to highlight the confession and the action that are described in that passage, mentioning that the first husband, that is, the Lord Jesus, is more benevolent and capable of fully satisfying the church; the action of returning is also highlighted.

The word repentance in Hebrew is: (shuv, Strong H7725), which means "to return", "to go back" or "to repent". In this passage, Israel decides to return, doing what repentance means according to the definition of this word. Taking a different course returning to the Lord Jesus is true repentance. Without a change of direction, it does not exist; it will only be remorse.

Repentance is not only recognizing our mistakes and offenses to the Lord and to our neighbor; it is also taking a path or a direction different from the direction we were going. That is, repenting involves our will and the decisions we make; otherwise, as we mentioned above, this would only be remorse. One of the ways we can keep our bronze altar lit is by entrusting

our way to the Lord. In this way, we can include in our prayer that God illuminates our steps, delivers us from our ignorance, and teaches us which paths are not pleasing to Him and where we have to turn around and seek Him in prayer and in His Word, so that He may instruct us if we do not know; or simply, that He helps us to practice what we already know so that our way of walking is pleasing to Him.

Our heart is very deceitful and not trustworthy, that is why our ways and criteria are so twisted and far from the eternal Truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we place ourselves under His mighty hand, in an attitude of humility and surrender, we can tell Him that we are going to trust in Him, to stop trusting in our criteria.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5)

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go. (Isaiah 48:17)

H. GOD'S LOVE AS A PATH TO REPENTANCE

On the other hand, the experiences of pleasure and mercy that God gives us can also lead us to repentance. God's nature is to give and is love; everything that comes from Him has the purpose of showing Himself and helping us grow more in His divine stature. Contrary to our human nature and punitive, God

also leads us to repentance with His grace and His goodness. When we are blessed by God, we can harden our hearts and believe that we are worthy of everything He commands, or fall prostrate full of gratitude and humility, with the knowledge that we do not deserve anything that comes from His hand, but that we know that it is He showing His love to draw us closer. As human beings we need both experiences, the pleasant and the painful; both will help us in different areas of our life according to their need and both will also reveal different facets of the Lord.

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

(Romans 2:4)

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

(Lamentations 3:22-24)

When we have eyes to witness and remember the times that God has shown us His undeserved love and His grace in the midst of any situation we are going through, we will be able to experience a goodness totally contrary to our nature and inclinations. This will lead us to live prostrate before Him, because that love eclipses our human logic. Taking advantage of this helps us to live in repentance, with our altar lit and as living sacrifices.

I. CONCLUSIONS

Being a living sacrifice is much more than walking in a basic Christianity: this requires complete surrender, willingness to die, and submission before the Lord. When we are willing to make a sacrifice, we will reap from the countless kindnesses of God. Although our main objective is to become a fragrant aroma to Him, we will inevitably absorb more of His divinity and His holiness.

The current of water of deception that runs through this world is getting stronger every day. That is why it is even more urgent that we turn into this sacrifice. We are sowing for all eternity; and more importantly, we are honoring the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. May the desire of our heart be to finish the race and fight the good fight as Paul did, so that we can present ourselves clean and perfect before God.

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OUTLINE

- A. INTRODUCTION
- B. THE SPIRITUAL WATER IN HIS WORD AND IN HIS HOLY SPIRIT
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 - 2. To wash us
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- D. WE MUST GO DAILY TO THE WATERS OF THE WORD OF GOD
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- G. OUR SOULS ARE PURIFIED WITH THE OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Vida Cristiana

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A. INTRODUCTION

- Let's go back to Zion.
- To get to Zion there is only one Way.

B. THE SPIRITUAL WATER IN HIS WORD AND IN HIS HOLY SPIRIT

1. Quench our thirst

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? (Psalm 42:1-2)

In this psalm written by the sons of Korah, they express their love for God as a vital need, which can only be satisfied by the water of the Word of God.

2. To wash ourselves

- The body:

Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. (Leviticus 8:6)

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:22)

Aaron and his sons were to be washed all over their bodies for their purification and consecration to God, as priests. The washing was a ritual ordained by God, which demonstrated the holiness of the priestly service and reminded the nation of Israel of the need for spiritual cleansing, to stand before the Lord.

- The hands and feet:

Then the Lord said to Moses: "Make a bronze basin, with its bronze stand, for washing. Place it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it.

Whenever they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water so that they will not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by presenting a food offering to the Lord, they shall wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants for the generations to come." (Exodus 30:17-21)

Although Aaron and his sons had already been washed in their bodies, they had to wash their hands and feet each time before serving. This was intended to teach them to remain pure in all acts of their ministry and for their spiritual growth. Hands get dirty with anger and doubt, and feet get dirty with the rejection of others.

- His clothes:

And the Levites purified themselves, and washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before the Lord, and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them. (Numbers 8:21)

This act symbolized the elimination of all impurity and sanctification to become the exclusive property of God, fully dedicating themselves to his ministry in the Tabernacle.

- The eyes:

His eyes are like doves by the streams of water, washed with milk, and perfectly set. (Song of Songs 5:12)

This comparison tells us what the eyes of the bride of the Lord Jesus should be like, full of faith in the Word of God.

Your neck is like an ivory tower; Your eyes like the pools of Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim; Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, which looks toward Damascus. (Song of Songs 7:4)

Heshbon was the land conquered by Reuben and Gad. Reuben means “see the Son”; Gad means “fortune, luck.” When our eyes are like the pools of Heshbon, we see the Son in every circumstance of life, whether pleasant or unpleasant. And seeing the Son at all times is our true fortune.

- The teeth:

Your teeth are like flocks of sheep that go up from the washing, all with twin lambs, and none barren among them. (Song of Songs 6:6)

The teeth speak of the ability to eat from the Word of God. The twin lambs speak of fertility, fullness, and life in God.

And such were some of you; but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (I Corinthians 6:11)

By washing ourselves in the Word of God, we are also sanctified and justified.

C. THE WATERS OF BAPTISM REPRESENT YOUR DEATH, YOUR LIFE OF RESURRECTION, HIS NAME AND HIS WORD

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death?
Because we are buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. (Romans 6:3-8)

The water of baptism puts to death our old man, who is carnal and sinful. This is like the death of the Egyptians when they crossed the Red Sea.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word. (Ephesians 5:25-26)

It is the Word of God that purifies us each time we go to it to wash ourselves.

D. WE MUST GO DAILY TO THE WATERS OF THE WORD OF GOD

1. So that it may put to death the earthly in us and make His nature live

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses. (Colossians 2:9-13)

The waters of Baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus put to death our flesh, having buried the old man.

2. So that it cleans our mind and our heart

Wash me more and more from my wickedness, And cleanse me from my sin...Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow...Create in me, O God, a clean heart, And renew a right spirit within me.
(Psalms 51:2,7,10)

Every time we go to the Word of God to read it, study it, memorize it or to meditate on it, it cleanses our mind of bad thoughts and our heart of bad feelings.

E. GOD'S WAYS MAKE US GO THROUGH WATERS FOR CLEANSING

Your way was in the sea, And Your paths in the many waters; And Your footsteps were not known. (Psalms 77:19)

Our walk is cleansed when we practice the Word of God.

F. THE LORD JESUS CONVERTS OUR DESERTS INTO POOLS OF WATER

He turns rivers into desert, And springs of water into dry ground; A fruitful land into barrenness, Because of the wickedness of those who dwell in it. He turns the desert into pools of water, And the dry land into springs of water. There He establishes the hungry, And they found a city in which to live. They sow fields and plant vineyards, And yield abundant fruit. He blesses them, and they multiply greatly; And He does not diminish their livestock. (Psalms 107:33-38)

In the natural, deserts and dry lands represent hunger and death; so it is also in the spiritual.

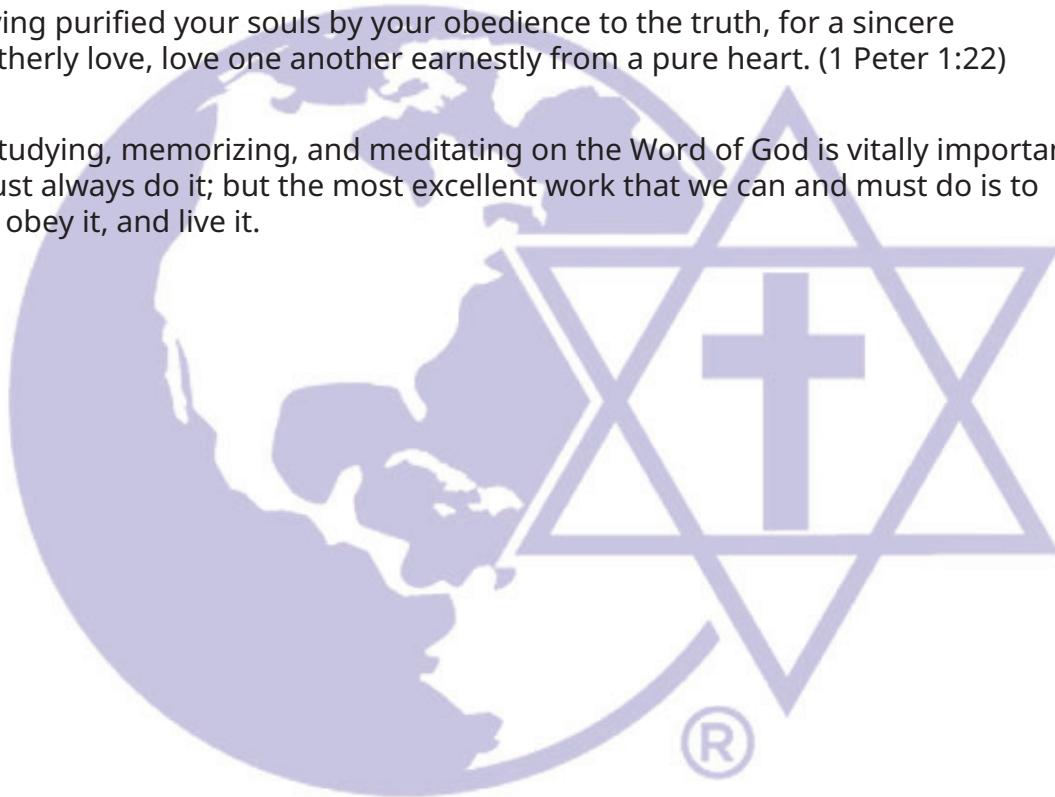
But the Word of God has the capacity to turn deserts and dry lands into ponds, rivers, and springs, which produce an abundance of fruit.

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G. OUR SOULS ARE PURIFIED THROUGH OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth, for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart. (1 Peter 1:22)

Reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on the Word of God is vitally important and we must always do it; but the most excellent work that we can and must do is to practice it, obey it, and live it.



IGLESIA DEL EVANGELIO DE CRISTO

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GUATEMALA



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GUATEMALA

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
 - A heart after God's own heart.
2. Description of the Altar of Incense in the Tabernacle of Moses
 - Function of the altar, the incense to be burned, the measurements, the location and parts of the altar.
3. The heart of the Christian life is prayer
 - The meaning of praying.
 - The heart that pumps life and love.
4. Making it a reality
 - Enter and close the door.
 - What happens inside.
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5. There is no substitute for the prayer room
 - Our refuge and our platform for new heights.
 - Discipline creates a habit and consistency creates a need.
 - How to start
 - Don't forget to bring something to write with
 - There are times to be silent
 - There are times to meditate
 - First thing in the morning
6. The love that keeps the altar of incense alive.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A heart after God's own heart

Samuel, the great prophet, had died. The Philistines were camped near Israel to attack them, and a great fear seized the heart of King Saul. Cornered and distressed, he decided to consult God to know what to do, but God did not answer him.

And Saul inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. (I Samuel 28:6)

This was not the first time this had happened. When King Saul built his first altar to God, he inquired whether he should attack the Philistines, but the Lord did not answer him on that occasion either.

And Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel?" But he did not answer him that day.

(I Samuel 14:37)

The relationship between God and Saul was broken at this point in history. Saul was the first king of Israel, but despite his humble beginnings, he quickly allowed his pride to completely distance him from the Will of God. Saul always believed he had a better idea than God's instructions, and his heart was inclined toward the people and consequently toward himself. For Saul, consulting God was just another way to secure his kingdom and avoid looking bad in front of the people; he never tried to please God, much less have a relationship with Him.

While King Saul was being rejected by God, an unknown shepherd had found the key to pleasing the Lord's heart.

And Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. (I Samuel 15:28)

But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has appointed him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you. (I Samuel 13:14)

And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.

(Acts 13:22-23)

King Saul had the priests, the ephod, the ark, and the rest of the tabernacle's furnishings, but he did not have an intimate relationship with God. On the other hand, while he was not yet king, David had nothing more than his relationship with the Lord. This was the key to his life to become a witness, a leader, and a teacher for us of how to approach God and have an intimate relationship with Him.

Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.

(Isaiah 55:3-4)

David suffered toils and anguish, was imperfect and made mistakes several times, was persecuted and troubled by enemies, but he always sought God. He carried his toils and anguish to the Lord in prayer and repented of his sins and obtained mercy. During the most difficult moments of his life, he did not run to people or possessions; he ran to God in prayer and was strengthened. It was evident that David loved the Lord more than himself.

And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

(I Samuel 30:6)

Time in the secret place of prayer is irreplaceable for us Christians. Church services, however wonderful they may be, can never replace the time of intimacy with God in His presence. Having fellowship with other Christians will also not be able to replace the fellowship we must have with God alone, because our entire Christian life depends on our time and our communion with God in the secret place. That secret place is the heart that pumps life into all the other spiritual experiences that we must have.

In the prayer room our strength is regenerated, the worries and problems of life are silenced, heavy burdens are lightened, and our heart is tuned to hear the voice of our beloved Lord. Once we have a real and sincere prayer life, we cannot go back: we become witnesses that there is nothing better or deeper than being in the presence of God, alone, in intimacy.

However, on this wonderful spiritual path, we run the risk of falling into the error of King Saul: possessing only the theories without having a relationship with God. Theories are beautiful, but without real experience, they are not very useful to us

This was the reason why David always kept his heart according to God's heart. He had a sincere and personal relationship with his

Lord and not with people, or with theories or with the religious system; King David found the secret to keeping an altar of prayer alive and not a dead piece of furniture: a loving relationship with God.

My personal experience in the prayer room began long before I knew the theories. Long before I knew there was a New City, a group of 144,000, a Tabernacle or even an altar of prayer, I had already experienced depths of love with God in prayer alone. Then along the way, knowing the theories not only confirmed several of my experiences but I was driven to seek and ask for those that I did not have but now knew existed. As I progress on my spiritual journey, my foundation remains the same: a sincere loving relationship with Christ Jesus and this cannot be cultivated without spending time in the secret place of prayer.

In this lesson we will study how to have a living prayer life thanks to lessons we find at the altar of incense in the tabernacle of Moses, in the life of King David and of course in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout the lesson I will also share my own experiences and how these have become the heart of my spiritual life. Each principle we study will make us want to bend our knees immediately and seek God in the secret place; this will lead us to desire to experience the communion of love with God that can fill our soul.

Our foundation for this lesson is found in the description of the altar of incense in the tabernacle.

God gave specific instructions to Moses

for each piece of furniture and each utensil. Behind each of the descriptions of the altar of incense we find wonderful principles that help us understand the life of prayer that we need to have with God.

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2. THE ALTAR OF INCENSE IN THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES

The complete description of this piece of furniture is found in Exodus 30:1-10.

The function of the Altar of Incense

The purpose of the altar was to burn incense before God in the Holy Place. Incense was to be burned every morning and every evening with the fire that came from the bronze altar of burnt offering. Incense represents prayer that rises to the Lord.

...and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints;

(Revelation 5:8)

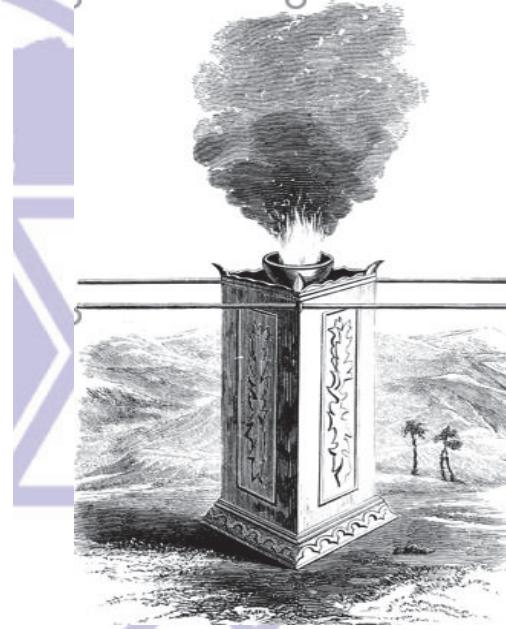
King David himself understood the principle when he said, "O Lord, I call upon you; hasten to me; give ear to my voice when I call to you! Let my prayer be set before you as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!" (Psalm 141:1-2).

The Incense that was to be burned:

The incense consisted of a very specific composition that is described in Exodus 30:34-37.

This incense represents the Nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is the sweet aroma that should always accompany our prayers and supplications.

By lifting up this incense of the sweet Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our prayers are heard by the Father and are pleasing to Him.



Whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

(John 14:13-14)

...giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:20)

Each component of the incense represents something of the Perfect Nature of Jesus Christ. The stacte or pure myrrh represents the Humility of Christ, the onycha represents His Abhorrence for sin and His Power to devour it, the galbanum represents the Burning Love of Jesus for doing the Will of the Father, the pure frankincense represents the faith we need to draw near to Him, and finally the salt, which represents the Power of God that battles and overcomes our flesh.

The Measurements of the Altar

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In Exodus it is described to us that the measurements of the altar were 1 cubit in length, 1 cubit in width, and 2 cubits in height, which represents the perfect unity between God and man. The Bronze Altar was an altar where God touched man through the forgiveness of offenses and sins through sacrifices, but the golden altar was where man could touch God in prayer, in communion.

The Location of the Altar

God instructed Moses to place the altar of incense in front of the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, right in the middle of the entire tabernacle, thus representing the heart of the entire Stature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
(Ephesians 4:13)

The altar of prayer represents the life that extends to all other spiritual experiences: prayer. Without a prayer experience, the others cannot be sustained, just as in a body all the organs cannot be sustained without the heart.

The Parts of the Altar

~~The four horns:~~ Like the Bronze Altar, the Golden Altar had 4 horns on its corners. In the Bible, horns are a shadow type or figure of power. These horns represented the power of prayer that rises with the sweet aroma of the Perfect Nature of Christ Jesus.

...The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

~~The top and the walls:~~ On the top of the altar was the lid or cover where the incense was burned. This cover represents the power to elevate ourselves spiritually and have communion with God (we will touch on this in depth later). Likewise, the altar had walls that represent the walls of defense that we manage to obtain to find refuge in God through prayer (we will also study this later).

Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you. (Psalm 9:10)

~~The crown of the altar:~~ At the top, the altar had a crown or cornice. The altar of prayer is one of the few pieces of furniture in the tabernacle that had this crown or cornice, which represents the ability we can have to govern our thoughts by spending time in the presence of God, whether meditating on His Word, conversing with Him, or simply listening to His Voice. By cultivating this communion with God, our mind is protected from worries and mental tribulations that want to steal our peace.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (Hebrews 10: 4-5)

The rods and rings: The altar also had rings and rods for its transport during the desert. This represents the mobility of the prayer experience, telling us that prayer is something we can have and take wherever we go.

3. THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS PRAYER

The meaning of praying

Prayer is talking to God. And as simple as this sounds, it is still something extraordinary: it is the ability we have as mortal human beings to communicate with the Creator, the Sustainer, the Almighty God and Eternal Father. What a transcendental gift! Personally, before praying, I usually take a couple of seconds before trying to understand and assimilate who I am about to speak to. This has helped me to enter with all expectation, gratitude and reverence.

Praying also means interceding, crying out, asking, pleading, meditating, thinking, worshiping and judging. This experience is the vital breath of our life. Without prayer, our spiritual journey dies slowly, because we all have the need to communicate with God.

True communication with God does not should be a monologue; it should be a moment where we not only speak with Him, but we are also in the perfect place to hear Him speak. This wonderful communion will have moments where we will shed tears without words, moments where we will present complaints before God and we will be able to vent, there will also be moments of

confession and repentance, moments where we will remain in silence listening to His Voice, there will also be moments where we will meditate on His Word and where He will give us the way out and the answer we need.

Prayer is a true experience with God that we can never we can exhaust, but that we often avoid.

You can find depth of details in the book "Precious Gem in the Tabernacle" by Rev. B. R Hicks and the book "The Treasure of Prayer" by Pastor Carlos Stahl.

The heart that pumps life and love

Prayer is truly the heart of the Christian life and it is there where we can feel fullness with Jesus Christ.

I can tell you from experience that once

I close the door of my secret place and pray to the Lord, my heart feels complete, full and full. It is definitely a spiritual experience that we cannot have by theory; it is something that we must verify for ourselves.

And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:19)

The Golden Altar and the heart have many similarities in the Bible. In fact, the Hebrew word used to describe the walls of the altar of prayer in Exodus 30 is the same word used to describe the fibers of the human heart. From the heart, from the Golden Altar, germinates life and love to other spiritual experiences. This is reflected all the time in prayer since it is there,

in the secret place, where we repent and make new deliveries (Bronze Altar), it is there where we can be washed of our offenses and impurities (Bronze Fountain), it is there where the Word comes to life when meditating on it and listening to the Voice of God (Golden Candlestick), it is there also where we are strengthened by communion with the Living Bread (Table of Loaves) and it is there where we completely surrender our will to be guided and governed by the Will of God (Ark of the Covenant).

Now, it is useless to have an altar without having it lit, just as it is useless to only have an inactive heart in the body. We need to have our altar of prayer alive. How do we keep it alive? With the only thing that can ignite it in a genuine way: love. The Golden Altar is not kept lit with theories, much less with religion. This is why many people live confused thinking that knowing about something means being something. But this is not the case, knowing about prayer, seeing other people pray or attending a prayer meeting, does not mean having a live or lit incense altar.

...knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know anything as he should know it. But if anyone loves God, he is known by him. (I Corinthians 8:1-3)

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Let's look at David's example because no other person in the Old Testament achieved the experience of sincere and intimate love with God more than he did, and we see it expressed in his prayers:

How lovely are your dwelling places, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, Near your altars, O Lord of hosts, My King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; They are ever praising you! (Psalm 84:1-4)

I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop. (Psalm 102:7)

David felt so much love for God that he wanted to be near Him forever, more than life itself.

It is interesting that David chose the sparrow to describe his feelings in Psalm 84. The sparrow is a bird that lives in monogamy, that is, they have only one partner for life. David felt like this bird in relation to his relationship

with God and his intense love for being near Him. In the natural, when these birds are separated from their mate, they tend to remain solitary because they are waiting to meet again someday. This was exactly what David felt when he was watching in prayer, he longed to be near his beloved Lord! The word "housetop" that is used in Psalm 102 is the same word that is used to describe the "covering" of the Altar of Incense in Exodus

30. This teaches us that, through fervent love for God, we will constantly wait on that covering of the altar. Love is what feeds and keeps the prayer experience alive.

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. (John 14:23)

When I did not yet have the baptism in the Holy Spirit, I remember that, although my prayer was very basic, my desire to love God and seek Him in intimacy was genuine; in fact, that was what led me to want more of God and want to receive the baptism of the Spirit. Once I obtained the gift of speaking in other tongues, my prayer matured to other levels and I was able to express with greater intensity my cry and the fire of love that burned in me for God. What is intimacy with God, if not loving Him? Many times we believe that our prayer time ends when we receive and obtain what we were asking and seeking. It usually happens that once we have the victory, the answer or the touch of God, we decide that the prayer time is over and we never stop to think that we could spend more time praying, just loving and ministering to God.

Let us remember that the Golden Altar of incense is the place where we must first touch God, because loving the Lord there in the heart of the Christian life will keep us from becoming unfocused and falling into the error of religion. That love will drive us to grow in levels and depths of prayer and will feed back the fire to produce more love.

I remember when I learned that there was such a thing as the intercession of the Spirit, I became obsessed with the idea of obtaining the experience at any cost. That desire was born of the genuine love I had for God, but I quickly turned that desire into an idol. I realized it easily, because my prayer changed and became only asking for intercession and nothing else. Do you think I obtained the experience of intercession that way? I spent a good amount of time asking this way until I understood that I had lost balance, I had left intimacy with God to be only focused on myself, so I changed my prayer and said "Lord, you know that I need this level of prayer, but the purpose is to love you more, so you will know better than anyone when I should receive it. I thank you for the way and the moment in which it will happen."

Several months passed after this until one day arriving at my mother's house (I was still single) I parked; my mother and my sister got out of the car and I was about to leave, when I remembered that I had left something in the trunk. I went to the back of the car and while my mind was on something that had absolutely nothing to do with prayer, the Holy Spirit poured out on me and I fell to my knees and received the intercession of the Spirit. It was not at a convention, it was not in my prayer room, it was not after they laid hands on me; it was in the parking lot of my mother's house, on my knees, shedding tears in front of the back of the car. I understood then that all the experience of prayer with God comes from and is maintained by a relationship of sincere love. It is not about obtaining benefits or consulting an oracle to never be wrong; it is about a communion in the secret place. And from that communion, all the experiences that God knows we need will naturally come.

4. Making it a reality

Enter and close the door

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Matthew 6:6)

In the context of this passage, Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them to pray. And before teaching them what they should say, Jesus taught them something they had to do.

The room that the previous verse refers to is an intimate place, a secret chamber, a place where we will meet with God. One of the first things I learned from this was to reserve a special place to meet with God wherever I was.

Many times I didn't have a room with walls

and a door, only with a corner of a room or the terrace of my mother's house. Wherever the place was, I knew it should be a place reserved to meet with the Lord. In this reserved place, God is already waiting for us. Have you ever felt far from God and that you cannot find Him? Well, there is a place where He is already waiting for us; the prayer room, in the secret place.

Jesus told his disciples that the Father was already in secret and that they were the ones who should enter. God is waiting for us in the prayer room! We are the only ones missing.

Not only does God wait for us in secret, but this reserved place needs to be isolated from everything outside. Before knowing what to expect from this intimate place with God, we must close the door. This means that everything outside (work, pending tasks, distractions, etc.) must wait there because we have an appointment with God. Many times we get distracted and bored easily in the prayer room, and it is not because God is not there (God is in secret); it is because our door is not closed and what is outside calls our attention more than what is inside. So before you start praying, close your door.

Remember the location of the altar of incense. It was located in the Holy Place, an isolated place, a dark place that only had the light source of the candlestick. Being a closed space, the entire aroma of the incense completely filled the Holy Place and the priest who ministered inside ended up impregnated with this smell. Likewise, as we spend time alone in prayer with God, with the door closed, His sweet Perfect Nature becomes more and more impregnated in us. This aroma will be noticed by people out there quickly, when they see the Nature of Christ coming out of us instead of our own carnal nature.

The beloved in the book of Canticles gives us a beautiful example of this:

Who is this that comes up from the wilderness like a column of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, And with all the powders of the merchant? (Song of Solomon 3:6)

The word "perfumed" comes from a Hebrew root that means: enclosed and fenced. It indicates that the beloved, by spending time in the closed room of prayer, in the chambers of the king, managed to be enclosed and fenced by the Nature of the Lord. What a beautiful image of what happens in the prayer room!

The Holy Place, a closed and isolated place, corresponds to the experience that the people of Israel had in the desert. They were in a completely isolated place and God had them there for the purpose of having the experience with the Law of His Word and His Presence that accompanied them. The whole purpose of being in that place was that when they left the desert and entered the land of Canaan, they could have absorbed enough of God to let the Perfect Nature of the Lord be made known, instead of their own carnal nature. The people of Israel failed to do so, but we have the good example of the beloved who was able to absorb from the desert, all the sweet aroma so that when she left there, she became a closed and fenced column of incense.

But behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. (Hosea 2:14)

Let us not miss the opportunity to go to the prayer room, the isolated and secret place. Many times, God creates the perfect opportunity for us to go to that place, but we avoid doing so.

Let us remember Hannah, the mother of Samuel, who was pushed by God to seek Him in prayer thanks to her rival Peninnah. Let us also remember that the majority of Psalms written by David, which are nothing more than prayers, were written during the greatest difficulties of his life. God is calling us, attracting us and inviting us to the prayer room!

I recently had an experience with this. I was dealing with a very difficult situation and could not understand what God was looking for from me. It was 3:30 in the morning and I simply could not sleep so, angry and frustrated, I went for a walk. And while I was walking completely alone and in the dark, I complained to God because I could not decipher with my great head, what He wanted and was looking for from me.

I immediately heard the Lord say to me "What I want is this and this situation alone was enough to take you where I wanted...here." When I heard that I started to cry. I finally understood that the whole point was not to decipher the situation, it was to spend more time alone with Him. God was calling me to the prayer room, to the desert, to the secret place so that His Aroma would be impregnated in me. Can you hear God's invitation for you?

What happens inside

Oh, that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the young women love you! Take me away with you—let us hurry! The king has brought me into his chambers.

(Song of Songs 2:2-4)

Once inside the secret place with the door closed, that reserved place becomes the most exciting place on the entire planet. The secret chambers of the King, where we can have communion with Him face to face, are a place that no matter if it is under a desk, the closet of your room or the basement of your house; that place becomes the contact with eternity, where time and space seem not to matter because it takes us back to the true throne of God.

Being present before God is already a battle won. Let us remember that David, being a shepherd, surely made time to seek God in prayer. Then, when he became king of Israel, David continued to make time to seek God in prayer. His pending matters and commitments did not keep him from longing to be in communion with his Lord.

Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws.

(Psalm 119:164)

While our Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled His ministry on earth, He gave us the greatest example: above serving others, is the relationship with God. Jesus used to get away from the crowd and even from his disciples to pray. He kept the altar of incense lit all the time and always paused everything else to seek His Father alone.

Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. (Luke 5:15-17)

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

(Luke 6:12)

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Nothing can replace our time in the prayer room in the chambers of the King, but be sure that Satan and your own flesh will find any pretext to prevent you from being there. We know the saying well: no one has time because time is made; and it is true: the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ found and made time to pray alone, invalidates any pretext that we can invent to avoid being in the prayer room.

Now I must confess something: being present in the prayer room with the door closed does not guarantee that you can feel a spiritual ecstasy or that you can hear the audible Voice of God, all the time. I learned this lesson with pain, because many times I came out disappointed for not being able to have visions or hear thunder and have unspeakable revelations.

I didn't know then that

God was teaching me to just be present.

To this day, I still have days where I don't hear or see wonders, but I still show up for the appointment. I have learned that being present, willing to listen and pour out my soul before the Lord is my unconditional part. Day by day I keep in my mind that I must present myself before God without expecting to feel something in that place. All the times that I have decided to remain faithful in His presence without feeling something, are worth it when God chooses one of them to open the heavens and give me the experience of feeling, seeing and hearing everything.

How should I pray?

It happened that Jesus was praying in a place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him: Lord, teach us to pray... (Luke 11:1)

The Word of God reveals to us the different levels and ways in which we must pray and all are necessary and available to the believer.

The first level, the most basic, is the level of petition. _____ Being the first, also it is our foundation for the other levels. King David practiced this level all the time and it was in the secret place, where his strength was regenerated by simply crying out, asking and meditating on God.

Hear, O Lord, my words; Consider my groaning. Be attentive to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, Because I will pray to you. O Lord, in the morning you will hear my voice; In the morning I will present myself before you I want (Psalms 5:1-3)

Listen, O God, to my prayer, And do not hide from my supplication. Be attentive, and answer me; I cry out in my prayer, and I am moved.

(Psalms 55:1-2)

Have mercy on me, O Lord; For I cry to you all day long. Gladden the soul of your servant, For to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. For you, Lord, are good and forgiving, And great in mercy to all who call upon you. Hear, O Lord, my prayer, And be attentive to the voice of my pleas. In the day of my distress I will call upon you, For you answer me. (Psalms 86:3-7)

With my voice I will cry to the Lord; With my voice I will ask the Lord for mercy. Before him I will expose my complaint; Before him I will manifest my anguish. When my spirit was anguished within me, you knew my path. (Psalms 142:1-3)

In order to experience this first level, we only need to go to the Lord with humility and sincerity in our hearts and speak with Him. Our foundation for prayer is to confess our sins and sincerely repent; then, covered with the redeeming blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can expose our complaint, our petition, our concern and anguish to God.

The next level of prayer is that of the intercession of the Spirit.

And likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know what we should ask for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26)

To experience this deep level of prayer we need to be first baptized in the Holy Spirit. Once baptized, we are introduced to all the different kinds of tongues that also exist (I Corinthians 12:4-11). There are unlearned foreign tongues, as on the day of Pentecost; but there are other tongues that are used to sing and pray (I Corinthians 14:2,15) and there are other tongues with which we are spiritually edified (I Corinthians 14:4, Judas 1:20). Intercession in the Spirit is the deepest kind of tongues, for it is an unutterable, strange, unintelligible and accelerated groan that cannot be understood or provoked, for it is of the Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit takes control of our mouth, He takes control of the rudder that steers the whole ship of our carnal nature (James 3:1-5) and then He begins to intercede to the Father, using us as a means, so to speak. Let us remember that it is the Holy Spirit who can intercede according to the Will of God, then once we step aside, He takes control and we experience the most precise and punctual prayer, because although we are only listening to ourselves groan rapidly, the Holy Spirit is praying mysteries according to the Heart of the Father for us and for us (I Corinthians 2:10). Thank God for the intercession of the Spirit!

The next level of prayer that the Word of God describes to us is that of labor.

My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.
(Galatians 4:19)

This level is the deepest and most intense of all, because once we experience the other levels, we come prepared to lose all preconceived notions about how to pray. Here, having labor pains, we groan, shout and cry out with spiritual inner pain. These cries and groans do not mean that we suffer any physical pain, because it is spiritual, and we groan in such a way because of the intensity of the effort to intercede so that we "give birth" to what God has sown in us.

Jehovah, in tribulation they sought you; they poured out prayer when you chastised them. Like a woman with child when the time of delivery approaches, she groans and cries out in her pangs, so have we been before you, O Jehovah.

(Isaiah 26:16-17)

This way of praying has the function of interceding so that Christ may be formed and brought forth in a mature way in us. Believe me, we need to pray with this intensity if we want the fruit of Christ to be brought forth, because the enemy and our flesh oppose this with greater intensity. Let me also tell you that if there is anything that Satan does not want, it is for us to grow and bear fruit; since this is so, we need to pray with intensity so that Christ may be formed.

Prayer is an inexhaustible resource!

There are many ways to pray, I recommend Pastor Carlos Stahl's book "The Treasure of Prayer", where you can find other ways to pray (authoritative prayer, how to speak to the mountains, how to cleanse the temple, how to curse the fig tree, how to wrestle in prayer, etc.). Make everything you read your own and nourish your prayer time with the Word of God and you will see that you will never be able to exhaust this divine resource.

Now, if one day the same thing happens to you as it does to me and you feel that you run out of things to say and God is leading you to continue in prayer, pray the Scriptures. Take some portion of the Word of God and read it along with some of your own prayers. Personally, several times a Psalm or some biblical portion has become my structure and my vehicle for praying.

5. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE PRAYER ROOM

Our refuge and our platform for new heights.

Long before knowing the wonderful lessons about the altar of prayer, the Lord gave me several experiences in His Presence. At that time, my prayer room was the living room of my mother's house that I took by storm, the terrace or even the roof of her house. I chose to stay up late just to be able to pray with the lights off and the music up to the top. I didn't know much about prayer, but once I closed my eyes, I entered the refuge or fortress for my soul.

In you, O Jehovah, I have taken refuge; Let me never be ashamed. Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness; Incline your ear and save me. Be to me a rock of refuge, to which I may continually resort. You have given a commandment to save me, For you are my rock and my fortress.

(Psalms 71:1-3)

Whatever problem I might have, I learned not to run to people, much less to my intellect; my best option and the only solution that has worked for me is to find refuge in God, in the secret place. If you feel afflicted and troubled, you don't need to find a solution because it already exists: run to the refuge, run to the fortress; run to the prayer room. This is why there is no substitute for this place. There is no alternative to the peace and strength we obtain by pouring out our soul in prayer. Theories or religion can never simulate or replace the life produced by the Golden Altar lit in our life.

Now, let me tell you that the fact that this place is a refuge does not prevent the attack and pressure from continuing to bombard from the outside. When Daniel was in Babylon, the governors of King Darius found no way to get rid of him except by attacking what they knew was safe: his prayer life (Daniel 6:1-11). When Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus, he knew very well where to take the servants of the high priest: to the place where the Lord prayed (Matthew 6:36-50). It is possible to find refuge in God through prayer, but don't be surprised to find even more opposition. When you see the pressure increase, it is not to stop taking refuge there: cling to the horns of power of that altar and take refuge in no one else but God.

My soul, rest only in God, For my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my refuge; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is our refuge. (Psalm 62:5-8)

Do you remember the walls of the altar of incense? (Exodus 30:3). The word used for these walls and for the fibers of the heart is the Hebrew word "quir H7023 which means: wall, fence, to wall, to tear down, to cease, and its Hebrew root means: to annul a claim. The prayer room is surrounded by these walls and ramparts, which protect us as a safe place from everything that is lurking outside. It is also there where any claim against us is annulled.

I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies. (Psalm 18:1-3)

I've said it before, but I grew up in a practically Baptist church, and what I appreciate most about my Christian foundation were the beautiful hymns I learned as a child. I have many favorites, but one of them, which I always keep in my heart, is "What a Friend We Have in Jesus!" and the lyrics enclose a great truth: we are filled with anguish, worry, anxiety, or depression because we do not take everything to Christ in prayer.

"¿Are you weak and burdened with worries and fear? Tell Jesus, eternal refuge, everything in prayer... does man live devoid of peace, joy, and holy love? this is because we do not take everything to God in prayer..."

What a Friend We Have in Jesus!

This was key for King David and his personal journey. When King Saul sought fortune tellers, counselors, and his own intellect to solve his problems, David always took refuge in God through prayer. Psalms 54 and 55 were written by David when he suffered great betrayals and pains, but in both prayers David never unloaded his anguish on other people; David chooses what he has always chosen since he was just a shepherd: to take refuge within the secret place of prayer. Problems and situations are not enemies, they are your allies to take you to the secret place, to the refuge of God!

When we humbly take refuge in the prayer room, we are lifted by God above afflictions. When we find refuge at the altar of prayer, we kneel in humility on the cover of the altar (the roof where the sparrow waits) and something happens: we are lifted to new heights. The word "cover" that is used in this passage is the Hebrew word "gag" H1406, which

means roof, terrace, ceiling, roof, cover; this word comes from a Hebrew root, which means to rise, magnify, grow, be majestic, raise and triumph. When we remain on this cover, so to speak, we are also raised and lifted to new heights in God.

Hannah, Samuel's mother, spent a lot of time without seeking God and spent it angry, avoiding what she always waited for to save her from her anguish. Until she poured out her life before God, she arrived at the place that the Lord wanted to take her: to the place of humble prayer.

And Hannah prayed and said: My heart rejoices in the Lord... There is no one holy like the Lord; Because there is none besides you, And there is no refuge like our God... He raises the poor from the dust, And exalts the needy from the dunghill, To make them sit with princes and inherit a place of honor... (I Samuel 2:1-8)

God knew that bringing Hannah to the dunghill and dust required a Peninnah (her adversary). Likewise, God knows that our anguishes and anxieties are the ones indicated to bring us to the ground in humility, so that we have the opportunity to take refuge in prayer and then be exalted when the Lord commands it.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (I Peter 5:6-7)

Discipline creates a habit and consistency creates a need.

I perfectly understand the world in which we live, where we obtain everything immediately without any effort, but life really doesn't work this way, and our spiritual life will never work that way; discipline and effort are needed to maintain a life of prayer.

Discipline is needed to bend the knees when feeling and motivation are lacking. And along the spiritual path we will sooner or later understand that feelings and emotions are not the compass that should guide us. I have also had days when I don't have the feeling or motivation to seek God, but that is where discipline, habit and need help me get to the secret place.

Has it ever happened to you that when you are in the prayer room, time passes very slowly and the desire to do other types of activities increases to the power of a thousand?...to me too, but the same discipline that has led me there is the one that has taught me to stay there until I finish. In fact, waiting on God is one of the lessons that King David also learned and teaches us through the Psalms. Surely he also had moments when he did not wait for God and made mistakes, as it says in Psalm 31:22: "I said in my haste: I am cut off from before your eyes; But you heard the voice of my pleas when I cried to you."

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

(Psalms 42:11)

My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. (Psalms 130:6)

In this context of discipline and habits, I share a couple of tips that will surely help you:

1. How to start: Start praying for the amount of time you can spare, but be sure to increase that amount as the weeks go by. Personally, my first goal, which took me quite a while to achieve, was to pray for an hour. It seems impossible at first, but I was always encouraged and challenged by the verse where our Lord Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane and rebuked his disciples for not being able to pray for even an hour (Matthew 26:40).

With each increase in time that you make to your prayer time, you will realize that it becomes easier and more enjoyable to spend prolonged time in the presence of God. Constant exposure to the Light of His Glory will change our countenance as it did to Moses when he was on Mount Sinai, or as it did to the beloved, as she spent time in the chambers of the king.

Draw me; we will run after you. The king has brought me into his chambers...I am dark, O daughters of Jerusalem, but lovely.

(Song of Solomon 1:4-5)

2. Don't forget to bring a Bible and notebook: In that secret place, the Word of God comes to life. I will never forget when one day while working in my old profession (producing advertising videos) I suddenly understood this principle: I was composing a recording scene, I put the cameras, the lighting and the rest of the equipment; when I finished I realized that the scene looked somewhat "flat", without texture, "lifeless". I knew it was missing something, but I didn't know what it was since everything was already in its place. In a moment I remembered that light needs something to come to life and take on texture; that is, "smoke". The light in front of the camera seems linear, but when mixed with a little smoke it becomes three-dimensional, because it begins to take on texture, shape and movement. When I did it on that occasion, I understood the principle that the incense of prayer makes the Light of the Word of God have the same effect: it comes to life. So never forget to accompany your prayer time with reading and study time of the Word and vice versa.

Having somewhere to write things down has also helped me to remember what the Lord speaks to me or reminds me of in His presence.

Unless your law had been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget your commandments, for with them you have given me life. (Psalm 119:92-93)

3. There are times to be silent: There is a secret in prayer and it is a secret, because most people do not practice it; this is to listen in silence. Remember that prayer is not a monologue; in fact, it is a very dynamic dialogue and there are times when it is not even necessary to say anything, because God is speaking. Silence is the key to listening.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. (Psalms 37:7)

Being silent before the presence of God does not mean being silent to think about the problem, or what I am going to do after praying; it means being silent to meditate. While we are silent, our mind is a river that needs to be channeled somewhere. Inside your prayer room, choose to direct that river towards the Word of God and the Nature of the Lord. By doing so, you will experience that while you meditate, the Lord in His time will begin to speak to you, to show you direction, or simply to minister and touch His Spirit.

I remember once I was in the dark in my closet (one of my prayer rooms), and I began to feel a great need to be silent. At first I thought it was just exhaustion, so I resisted, but then I really felt the need in my heart, so I understood that it was from God. I sat on the floor, I was silent, I put my mind on God and I began to meditate on His Word and on all the attributes of the Lord and of His Nature, when suddenly the Lord took me and took me to moments of my life where I had been hurt and could not understand the purpose of the pain. It was on that occasion that the Lord, after years of asking Him, showed me the reason and answered my cry. Maybe He had been wanting to talk to me for a long time, but there was no way I could be silent and it was not until I decided to listen, that I could get my answer.

4. There are times to meditate: We have already seen that the prayer room is the perfect place to meditate on the Word of God, but meditating is not putting the mind blank. The words that the Bible uses for "meditate", have several meanings in common: to converse, to contemplate, to think, to speak and my favorite, to have communion. Meditating involves the action of using our mental faculties to digest and contemplate the Word of God. It is this meditation that will cause our feet to be directed in the right path.

Personally, I can say that God has not shown me many visions and signs to teach me what to do. He did it a few times at the beginning, but then he began to teach me the side of not depending on such things to put my feet on the right path. At first it was very difficult, because sincerely it is very easy to know what to do if we have visions and signs. God began to teach me as in Psalm 1 or in Joshua 1, that my job and my part was to meditate on His Word day and night, because it was not up to me to know where to go, what to do and what step to take; it was up to me to seek Him and

to meditate constantly on His Word. This produced in me the wisdom and prudence of His Word to walk in the right path. Many times we try to know all the steps of our path, but in reality that desire is simply pride. God does not want us to focus on never being wrong; He wants us to focus on Him, so that our steps are directed.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.
And everything he does will prosper. (Psalm 1:2-3)

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may keep and do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:8)

5. First thing in the morning: Seek the Lord in prayer in the morning, first. Years ago I received advice that helped me a lot to understand

the importance of praying in the morning: Your prayer time does not start at 5 a.m., it starts the night before. These words hit me hard because at that time I went to bed very late and did not have good habits to rest. This resulted in me not finding strength or motivation anywhere to seek God in the morning. It is a practical advice that will help you a lot. Don't you think so? Check it out for yourself and join the group of those who did not believe this principle, but after trying it now we cannot stop sharing it.

God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water, To see Your power and Your glory, So as I have seen You in the sanctuary.

(Psalm 63:1-2)

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One of the worst risks of our spiritual life is that our heart is not where the Heart of God is. It happened to the disciples of Jesus that when the Lord was sleeping and resting, they were afflicted and distressed crying out to God, but when the Lord cried out to the Father, they were asleep (Matthew 8:24-25, Matthew 26:40-41).

Do not let sleep cause your heart to lose synchronization with the Heart of God; let us deny our flesh and strengthen the spirit!

GUATEMALA

6. The love that keeps the altar of incense alive.

The altar of incense, as well as all the other furniture of the tabernacle, was consecrated with the oil of the holy anointing which in turn carried the anointing of the Holy Name of the Lord (Exodus 30:22-29). In this way, the Name of God YHVH on the oil, anointed the altar.

If for each horn of the altar

we multiply the four letters of the Name of God that were contained in the oil that consecrated them, we would obtain the number 16 as a result. What does the number 16 tell us, if not of love? This principle proves what we have been reinforcing in this lesson: the key to the living altar of incense is the loving relationship with God. In I Corinthians chapter 13, we are told of 16 characteristics about love:

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal... Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (I Corinthians 13:1-8)

We can have the gifts and the theories about all this wonderful spiritual walk, but if we do not have a sincere relationship of love with God, we do not have life.

For this reason I kneel before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that he may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power in the inner man through his Spirit, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be fully capable of understanding with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:14-19)

The Apostle Paul gives us the basis and the foundation to be filled with all the fullness of God. This love was what covered the Altar of Incense and what also ignited it with the fire of first love, which was represented in the fire of the Bronze Altar. By having an Altar of Incense lit by love, our prayer room, the secret place, will become the place where our heart will be united to the heart of God as it was in the beginning, only that now it will not be by gift, but by choice.

Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; For love is as strong as death, jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. (Song of Songs 8:6)

I can't stop thinking about King David and how he achieved it with something so simple to say, but so complex to cultivate: love. David's heart always beat for the love he had for the Lord; nothing and no one else occupied that place. So great was the love and intimacy he had with God, that David reaped all that he sowed: God loved him in the same way and made him a house, a room for him.

David: "I will not enter the dwelling of my house, Nor go up to the bed of my couch; I will not give sleep to my eyes, Or slumber to my eyelids, Until I find a place for the Lord, A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob" (Psalm 132:3-5).

God: "said the king to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains."...Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel... Also the Lord declares to you that He will make you a house'" (II Samuel 7:1-11).

God about David: "Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place...Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name" (Psalm 91:9-14).

On an altar of living incense, our heart synchronizes with the heart of God, to the point that our wills cease to compete.

And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. (Luke 22:41)

It is implied, but King David would never have achieved it by just watching other people pray or by being a spectator of the Glory of God. In fact, all these experiences helped David never depend on anyone other than God, because all other people always failed him.

Remember that incense was a shadow, type, or figure of the nature of Jesus Christ. This is why the Lord instructed that this mixture of incense should be sacred to Him and that anyone who adulterated it by copying it or by raising a different one in the altar, should be cut off from among the people. In the Old Testament there were two people who raised strange fire with incense and died: Nadab and Abihu, the first two sons of Aaron (Leviticus 10). Their names mean "liberality (Nadab)" and "he is my father (Abihu)". They were on the mountain with Moses contemplating the sapphire pavement (Exodus 24). However, when raising the strange incense, it was evident that they were never interested in really knowing God.

This is a tremendous lesson for us: when they pray, people who do not have a true and personal relationship with God raise a strange incense. That is, their prayers are not accompanied by the incense of the nature of Jesus Christ, but are accompanied by the experiences of someone else, or something they are trying to copy, or their own carnal name and nature. If we do the same, our prayers will not be pleasant incense before God; therefore, they will have no power.

But some of the Jews, itinerant exorcists, tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus on those who had evil spirits, saying: I adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preaches... But the evil spirit answered and said: I know Jesus, and I know who Paul is; but who are you? (Acts 19:13-15)

No one else can have this experience of union in love with God for us. No one can pray for us and surrender our will on the altar; we must get personally involved in this. Over time, I have found that the more time I spend with God in my secret place, the less resistance I find to His Master Plan for my life; I leave that place lighter and simpler. In that place I not only shed tears, but also hardness, confusions, religious forms and walls against God fall.

I could tell you the times that, on bended knees, I have seen miracles happen and the impossible resolved. I have seen the wonders of God, but I have also seen the dirt of my heart; I have found the comfort and peace that no one has ever been able to give me, being there on the terrace of my house, in the closet of my room, on the walk with God in the afternoons and under my desk. This for me has been fundamental to travel the road.

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And I have good news for you: you don't need to know Hebrew or Greek to experience it, you can start today and now. Let love burn fervently and ignite your prayer day after day. You will soon see that your heart begins to widen with more love for God and with more desire to surrender your life completely on the altar of incense.

I invite you today to stop being a spectator. Experience this for yourself and see how that secret place is ignited with sincere love for God.

GUATEMALA

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love; and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. (I John 4:16)



HOW CAN WE HAVE
A BURNING LAMP ALIVE



®

IGLESIA DEL EVANGELIO DE CRISTO

Vida Cristiana

GUATEMALA

INTRODUCTION

WHAT WE NEED TO KEEP OUR LAMP LIT

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PURPOSE OF HAVING A LAMP LIT A.

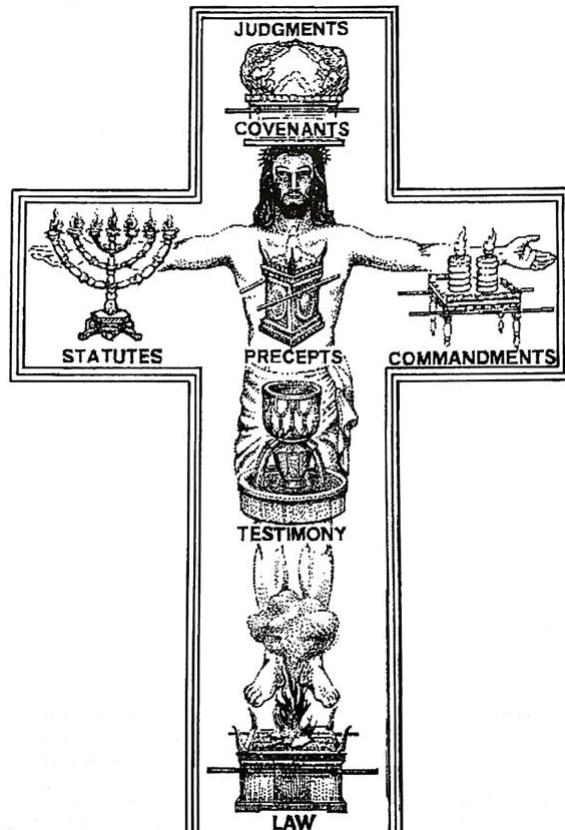
See the way
B. Be light to others

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

After God brought Israel out of Egypt, He led them to Mount Sinai where He gave them His Law through Moses, to whom He also revealed the pattern of the Tabernacle that the people were to build in the desert. Since God indicated to Moses four times that he should take care to make the Tabernacle according to the model that was shown to him on the Mount (Exodus 25:9, 40; Exodus 26:30; Exodus 27:8), this is of utmost importance to us,

because it is a figure of the Spiritual Stature of His Son Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:11), to which God wants us to grow (Ephesians 4:13).



Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me." We can conclude that the tabernacle shows us the way back to God, once we have been saved by the Blood of Jesus Christ. So that each experience reflected by the furniture of the Tabernacle is a step that helps us ascend and know God more.

The Tabernacle contained seven pieces of furniture and was divided into three areas: the Courtyard, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place. In the Courtyard, we find the first piece of furniture, which is the Bronze Altar of sacrifices, in which we see reflected the initial experiences of Salvation through the Blood of Jesus Christ and Baptism in the Fire of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues.

The second

piece of furniture we find in the Courtyard is the Laver in which we see reflected the spiritual experience of Baptism in the Waters of the Name of Jesus Christ, who died and rose for us. These three experiences that we receive by the Grace of God are what drive us to respond to the Love of God when we seek Him in prayer and in His Word.

Unlike the Courtyard, the Holy Place was closed to all the people, except for the priests, who ministered to God by obeying the daily ordinances of keeping the Golden Altar of Incense and the Golden Lampstand lit day and night.

Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps. And when he lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. (Exodus 30:7-8)

The incense of the Golden Altar speaks to us of prayer, and the Lampstand, which had seven lamps (Exodus 25:37), speaks to us of the Word of God. We see this confirmed in the life of David, who learned to have a relationship with God in prayer and in His Word embodied in the Law that God gave to Moses. David understood the spiritual principles behind the patterns and ceremonies that God had ordained in the service of the Tabernacle.

May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice. (Psalm 141:2)

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. (Psalm 119:105)

David saw and understood the way that God showed through the Tabernacle, having only the Law; that is, the five books of the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Your processions have come into view, O God, the processions of my God and King into the sanctuary. (Psalm 68:24)

Just as David learned to have a relationship with God in prayer and through His Word, God wants us to seek Him in order to know Him.

WHAT WE NEED TO KEEP OUR LAMP LIT

Since the Golden Candlestick is a figure of the Light of the Word of God in our life, then the ordinances that God established for its service and maintenance show us those things that we must obtain and do to keep that Light alive and burning in us.

And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel. (Exodus 27:20-21)

The first thing that God requests, pure beaten olive oil, is the fuel for the Golden Candlestick, the fuel in which the fire from the Altar can burn in it.

A. Pure beaten olive oil

Both in ancient times and in new industrial methods, to obtain pure oil, olives must go through processes of grinding, pressing, decanting and storage.

experiences that we have in prayer through life situations from which we get the oil we need to feed the Candlestick of the Word.

We see this reflected in the life of Jesus, who in the midst of all the accusations of those who did not follow him and the needs of the people who followed him, never stopped seeking His Father in prayer.

And [Jesus] was teaching daily in the temple; but at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives. (Luke 21:37)

And [Jesus] came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. (Luke 22:39)

And when they had sung an hymn, they [Jesus and his disciples] went out into the mount of Olives... Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. (Matthew 26:30, 36)

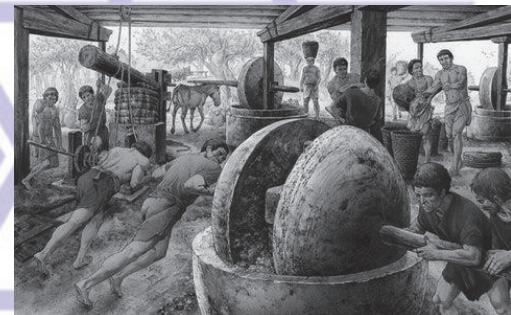
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Jesus prayed on the Mount of Olives, where Gethsemane was located. The name Gethsemane means "oil press." Surely in this physical place the fruit of the olive was worked to extract the oil. And in that same place Jesus prayed at night, where he also prayed fervently before dying on the Cross for us. Jesus certainly teaches us to be ground, pressed, decanted, and stored (or preserved) olives through prayer.

1. Grinding

In ancient times, huge wheels or loads of stone mobilized by human or animal force were used to grind the whole olives, including the pulp, the seed and its skin. The resulting mass or paste passed to the next process.

Grinding speaks to us when we go to Jesus in prayer in the midst of situations that



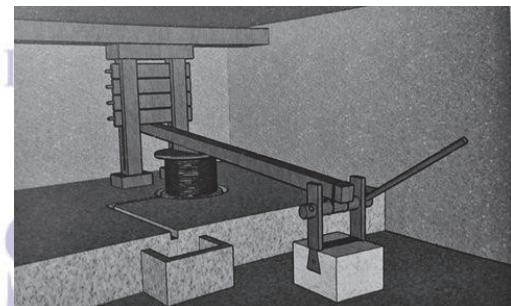
grind our pride and our reputation. We also come to Jesus in prayer to grind all foolishness and the hardness of our heart (Psalms 73:21-24).

2. Pressing

In the ancient oil mills, the pressing was carried out with beam and screw presses, which exerted pressure on the olive paste to extract the juice.

The liquid

resulting was a mixture of water and oil which had to be separated in the next process.



Many times we find ourselves in situations that press us on all sides or we have burdens that press us. But we can draw near in prayer and pour ourselves out at the feet of Jesus, who has control and can sustain us (Psalms 55:22; Psalms 145:14).

3. Decantation

The decantation process consisted of letting the water and oil liquid rest in large containers. Since oil is less dense than water, it rose to the surface and the water remained at the bottom, along with any other impurities or solid particles that may have remained. This process required time and patience to obtain the pure oil.

It is in prayer that we learn to wait patiently and persevere in prayer (Psalm 71:14; Luke 18:1-8).

4. Storage

Once the oil was extracted, it was stored in amphorae of clay, leather or wood. These containers were intended to preserve the flavor and properties of the oil.

When we come to Jesus with the right attitude, recognizing that we are clay (Isaiah 64:8); when we come with sincere

repentance, letting Him clothe us with the skin or leather of His Justice (Genesis 3:21); when we come to Him to crucify the attitudes and dispositions of our flesh with the wood of His Cross (Galatians 2:20), then we can be suitable vessels to store the oil we need to keep the Light of His Word burning in our lives.



B. The Fire of the Holy Spirit

I indeed baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Matthew 3:11)

Once we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we receive that Holy Fire of God's Love in our hearts, which ignites our being to love and seek Him.

...and hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us.

(Romans 5:5)

We love him, because he first loved us. (I John 4:19)

Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. (Psalm 91:14)

And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You. (Psalm 9:10)

It is the Fire of the Holy Spirit that feeds on the oil we have obtained in prayer, and that illuminates the Lampstand of the Word of God. If we maintain the Fire that we have received from our first love, who is Jesus Christ, then our lamp will remain lit.

If not

we maintain that Fire, our lamp will go out, just as God warned the church of Ephesus.

But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. (Revelation 2:4-5)

C. A secret place

The Holy Place was a place set apart from the rest of the people, in which only Aaron the high priest and his sons the priests could enter to minister to God, according to what He commanded through Moses.

...and has made us kings and priests to God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (I John 4:19)

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (I Peter 2:9)

Now we, being priests through Jesus Christ, can minister to God. But now we do not need a physical temple or tabernacle, but we can seek and minister to God in a secluded place, a secret place. This secret place is none other than our prayer room, that place that we have set aside to seek God in prayer and in His Word, where we leave out the things and worries of life and dedicate the time to seek Jesus.

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Matthew 6:6)

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. (Psalm 51:6)

You are my hiding place [secret place] and my shield; I hope in Your word. (Psalm 119:114).

D. Constancy

Command the children of Israel to bring pure oil of crushed olives for the light, to keep the lamps burning continually.

(Leviticus 24:2)

The word “continually” in Hebrew is tamid, and it means “constant, regular and daily like the daily sacrifice.” That means, **EVERY DAY**. The Lampstand of the Word of God must be kept lit in our lives daily. If the Lampstand was lit yesterday, that does not mean that it is lit today.

And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it [Altar of Gold]; every morning when he prepares the lamps, he shall burn it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense; a perpetual statute [tamid] before the Lord throughout your generations. (Exodus 30:7-8)

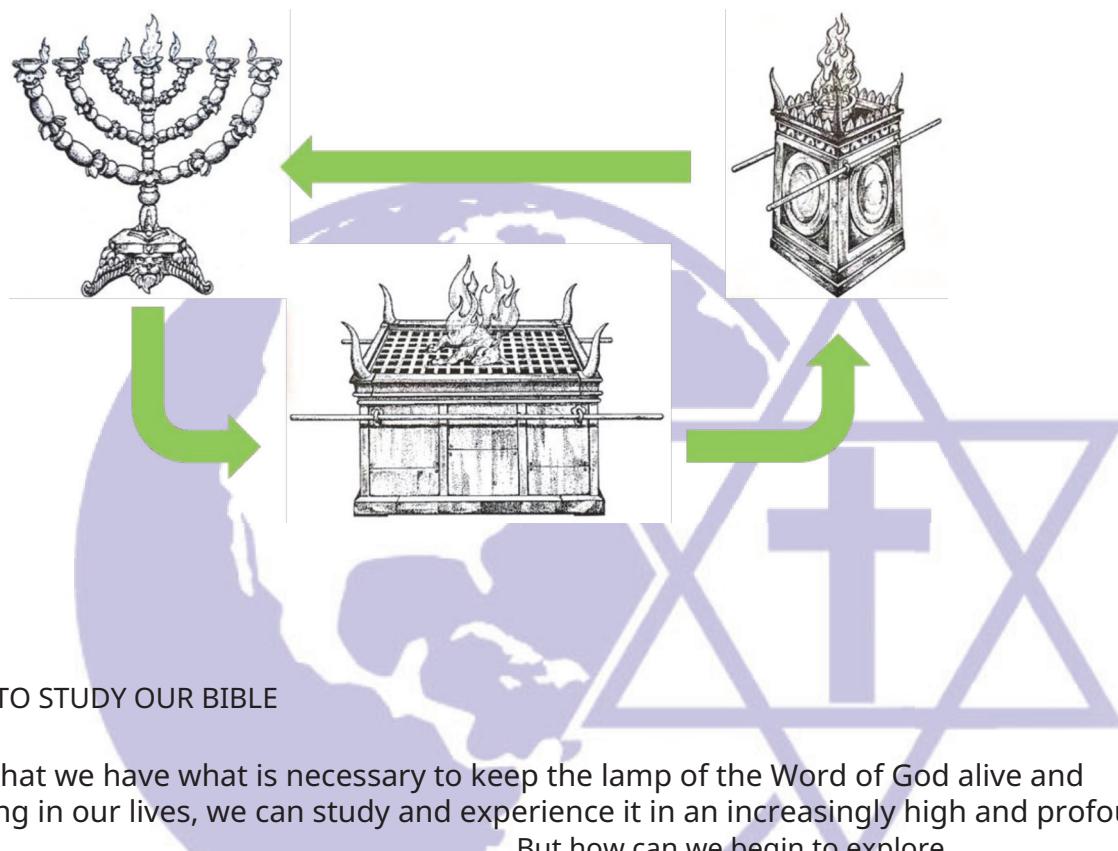
The Lampstand was lit in the morning and at night, at the time when incense was burned on the Altar of Gold. Likewise, the Altar of sacrifices had to be kept lit in the morning and at night.

And you shall say to them, This is the offering made by fire that you shall offer to the Lord: two male lambs a year old without blemish, day by day, as a regular burnt offering [tamid]. One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. (Numbers 28:3-4)

Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering shall be on the hearth upon the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it... And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not go out. The priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order on it; and he shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. The fire shall be burning continually [tamid] on the altar; it shall not go out. (Leviticus 6:9, 12-13)

Our daily experience with the Word of God must go hand in hand with our daily surrender and our prayer life. If we keep the Fire of our first love burning and alive on the Altar, and if we keep the Fire of our relationship with Jesus in prayer, then the lamp of the Word of God will be lit in our lives. And it is the light of the Word that shows us who God is and who we are ourselves, which leads us again to the feet of Jesus with a new surrender and gratitude.

(See diagram on the next page)



HOW TO STUDY OUR BIBLE

Now that we have what is necessary to keep the lamp of the Word of God alive and burning in our lives, we can study and experience it in an increasingly high and profound way.
 But how can we begin to explore the Word of God? How do we find personal profit in the portion of the Bible we are studying? The key is to maintain a correct attitude when studying the Word of God; in knowing the different methods to study it and how we can persevere in it.

A. Maintain a correct attitude

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Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)

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Dios prueba nuestros motivos y nuestras intenciones ¶



If we wish to study the Word of God, we must go in prayer before Him, as did King David, and ask Him to test the motives that move us and to show us the true intentions of our heart. If we are sincere before God and see a bad motive or a wrong intention, then we can go and confidently give it to Jesus (Hebrews 4:16) so that He can transform it into a right motive and intention.

Our motives and intentions for studying the Word of God generate an attitude. If our intentions are right, our attitude will be humble and pleasing before God. On the contrary, if our motives are wrong, our attitude will be proud and unpleasant.

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" (Luke 10:25-26)

When we seek the Lord in prayer and study His Word, we must sincerely ask ourselves: How do I read? What is my purpose and interest? What is my attitude? A lawyer is supposed to be a teacher who studies the Mosaic law in order to teach it to the people. To do this, he had to practice the law and, above all, master it.

So, what should be our attitude when studying the Word of God? Well, first, we must recognize who we are and who God is. Rev. B.R. Hicks mentioned the following phrases a lot in his sermons:

- I am nothing (Galatians 6:3)
- I have nothing (I Chronicles 29:11-14; I Corinthians 4:7; James 1:17)
- I can do nothing (I Corinthians 10:12; Philippians 4:13)
- I know nothing (I Corinthians 3:18, 8:2; Romans 11:33-36)

We study the Word of God to know Jesus, the living Truth, more and to know what pleases Him and what does not. Our desire is to know Him and be obedient to Him.

Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

In the Word of God we see the following examples, which show us the attitude that God wants to see in us when studying His Word.

1. Like newborn babies

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. (I Peter 2:1-3)

The Apostle Peter teaches us to first discard everything that may hinder us from receiving the Word of God. The Word is being likened to pure spiritual milk, speaking of the doctrine of the Word that is pure; that is, free from all human opinion and interpretation. The Bible does not need our opinion or our ideas, because it explains itself. Therefore, if we want to understand any portion of the Scriptures, we must discard what hinders us from being able to receive it.

The word "discard" in Hebrew means: "to extinguish, avoid, uproot, remove, remove and behead." We must completely remove everything that prevents us from receiving the Word of God. So, what things do not allow us to come as newborn babies to receive the pure spiritual milk of the Word of God? Peter mentions five things that we must uproot and remove from ourselves.

a. All malice

All malice refers to all kinds of thoughts or desires for evil. If we come to the Word of God with malice, we are going to use it to justify our desires or attitudes, even criticizing and judging the written Word, so as not to commit ourselves to it. In this way we are not going to see the Truth; much less are we going to be nourished by the unadulterated milk of the Word.

b. All deceit

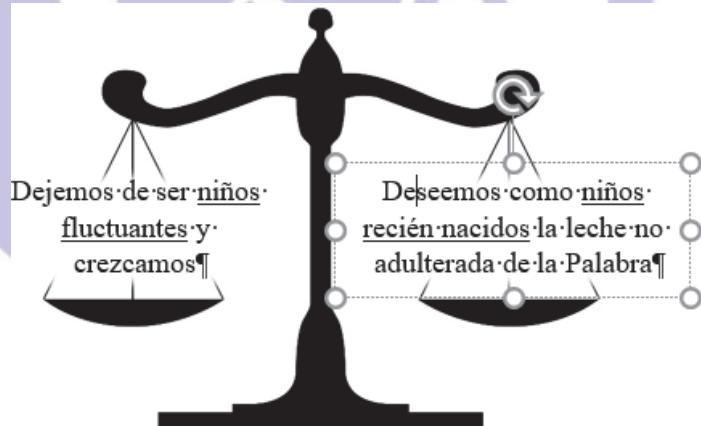
All deceit refers to every trap, trick or subtlety on the part of the enemy, seeking to make us reject the Truth. Since the devil presented himself in the Garden of Eden to Eve as a serpent (II Corinthians 11:2), this being more astute than all the animals that God had created, he also presents himself to us with much cunning, even using the Word of God in a distorted way. Let us also remember that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14-15). Therefore, let us not be surprised that the enemy uses the Word itself, out of context, to deceive us.

It is important to remember the following:

or Truth does not depend on anything, because truth is; lies depends on the truth, because without it nothing is.

or A text, without the context, is just a pretext.

That is why it is so important to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle Paul expressed to the church of Ephesus, "that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting," (Ephesians 4:14). On the one hand, let us stop being immature children who are not stable in the Truth and are moved by any idea or thought that uses the Word of God out of context. And on the other hand, let us desire, like newborn children, free from all deceit and malice, the Word of God, "that you may grow thereby to salvation."



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c. Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy means: "acting under a feigned role, pretending to be something or someone else, an actor." The Word of God is like a mirror that shows us our true condition. But if we do not want to change and do not work in prayer on what we see in ourselves, sooner or later we begin to pretend to be something we are not, especially if we have a public position or a ministry in the church. Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites (Matthew 23:13-36), who pretended to be something they were not, believing they were what they knew, but doing nothing with it. Similarly, hypocrisy makes us judge others without seeing ourselves (Matthew 7:1-5).

d. Envy

Envy, similar to malice, is an evil desire or thought towards someone or something; also the desire for what someone else has and we do not. Envy makes us use the Word of God to justify that evil desire or thought towards someone else, and to criticize the person in order to elevate ourselves because we do not have or are not what that person has or is. The Word of God is not to see and point out others, but to see ourselves, to then go to Jesus and do something about it (James 1:22-25).

e. All Detractions

Detraction means: "defamation, talking behind someone's back, murmuring, gossip, being talkative or chatty." As a general rule, all defamation is a mixture of truth and error, because it may be something that someone else did, but we know nothing of the intentions. Whether what we can say about someone is true or not, the truth is that we know nothing of their intentions, only God does (Jeremiah 17:9-10). If God himself knows the deepest part of our heart and does not go around divulging it to others, who are we to divulge someone else's fault? And if the person repented of what they did, wouldn't we be falsely accusing someone of some fault, if the Blood of Jesus already erased it? Wouldn't we be doing the same thing that Satan does, accusing others (Revelation 12:10)? Talking behind people's backs will close the Word of God to us.

Therefore, we must deal with these things in prayer through the Power of the Name of Jesus, cutting them off and removing them from our midst so that we can, as newborn children, desire the spiritual milk of the Word of God. Especially if we are going to study something that we had never studied from the Word, let us have the attitude of a newborn child, who knows nothing about it, but wants to learn. Likewise, if we are going to listen to someone, perhaps something that we had learned before, let us take the attitude of newborn children because, without a doubt, God will have something new for us.

2. Like little dogs at the table

Answering him [Jesus], he said, It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs. And she said, Yes, Lord; but even the little dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table. (Matthew 15:26-27)

Jesus deliberately provoked this situation to teach his disciples a great lesson in humility. It is not that Jesus insulted the Canaanite woman, but that Jesus indirectly called her a little dog, as it was the term that the Jews used to refer to the Gentiles. The bread of the children refers to Jesus as the Bread of Life, who was primarily sent to the lost sheep of the house

of Israel, His people. But the Canaanite woman recognized two things: first, that she was a little dog, a Gentile, not part of God's people; and second, that despite being a Gentile, Jesus was her Master and Owner, for she called Him Lord, Adonai that is exclusively used to designate God Himself.

In other words, God is pleased with a humble attitude that recognizes who He is and who we are. We are **simple** little dogs, grateful for having just a crumb of His Word. In this case, she wanted only a crumb of God's Power, so that her daughter would be freed from a demon. This teaches us so much; first, to recognize that we are not worthy of even the smallest revelation of the Word of God and second, to recognize the Nature of God that can be given to us by Grace and Mercy.

3. As blind men

Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. (Psalms 119:18)

God is the only one who can open our spiritual eyes to His Word. If we recognize that without God we cannot see the principles of Truth hidden in His Word, He then opens our eyes so that we can see. But if we do not recognize our inability to see the Truth without God's help, we will force our own carnal interpretation on the Scriptures, which will result in conclusions far from the Truth. Only Jesus can help us to see and understand the principles of Truth that we need, to grow in knowledge of Him.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free. (Luke 4:18)

If our eyes are not opened by our Lord Jesus, we will only see others and we will be unable to see ourselves; much less will we see and know more of the Nature of God through His Word. Therefore, it is imperative to come to Jesus recognizing our condition, that in His Mercy He may open our eyes, for He is the only one who can do it (Matthew 20:32-34).

Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands. (Psalms 119:73)

The Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesians, that the eyes of their understanding would be opened so that they could see what they could not otherwise see.

...having the eyes of your understanding enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. (Ephesians 1:18)

4. Like a wild olive shoot grafted in

For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.
(Romans 11:24)

Let us remember and thank God for the people of Israel because thanks to them we have the Bible, since all the writers were Israelites. Let us also remember to always be grateful for the fact that it is by Grace that we are saved, not by anything we have done (Ephesians 2:8-9). So, if God has cut off the people of Israel, his chosen people, to graft us in,

who are we to be proud of something we have received?

For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

It is not because we are something or deserve something, nor because we have the capacity, but it is by the Mercy of God that we are on the Way. (John 14:6)

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B. Methods or levels for studying the Bible

GUATEMALA

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. (II Timothy 2:15)

In the King James version, the phrase "do your best" reads as "study" and in the Greek language it means 'to use speed, make an effort, study, be punctual, immediate, fervent and diligent; to work, strive and endeavor'.

God commands us to work (John 6:27) and to strive in the study of His Word, in order to be approved by God.

The word “approved” in the Greek language, implies the acceptance that is received after a test, examination or trial. And in the Hebrew language the phrase “present yourself approved” means to be alert, attentive and awake, to remain, to be firm, to speak the truth with certainty and firmness, to be a pillar of truth.

God commands us to study His Word so that, in the midst of trials, we can be alert and attentive to the same Truth that we have studied, being workers or “workers who practice what they learn.” God wants us to study His Word in order to be approved workers, who put it into practice.

There are four methods or levels to study the Word of God. of study is important and prepares us for the next level.

³ Each level

1. Elementary

This method consists of familiarizing ourselves with the biblical context, reading the Bible from cover to cover or in a specific order; it goes hand in hand with the fundamental basic understanding of Christian doctrine. The foundations of Christian doctrine are fundamental to reading the Bible from cover to cover, in order to obtain a solid conclusion based on the Truth and not on our carnal interpretation. By means of this method many doubts naturally begin to arise, which prompt us to explore the text we are reading.

2. Exploratory

This method consists of exploring specific texts in the Bible that cause us doubt, or that highlight a specific topic that we are looking for. It is very useful to base ourselves on teachings (from sermons, books, podcasts, etc.) that we have previously received, from which we can also obtain topics to explore. It is through this method that we ask ourselves in each topic that we study, what is the practical use for us.

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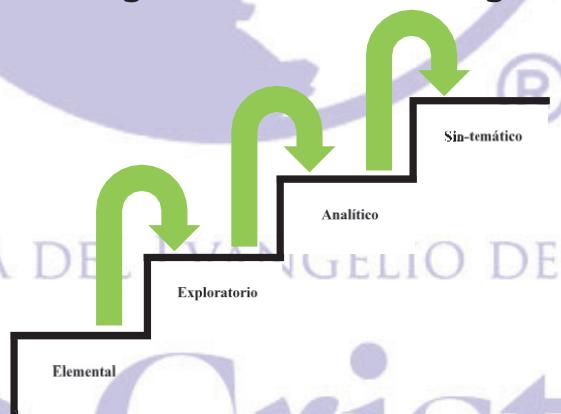
3. Analytical

This method consists of investigating the Word of God more deeply, using dictionaries, concordances, diagrams, references and other translations (and also certain versions) of the Bible. Since the Bible was not written in Spanish, it is very useful to obtain the most accurate meaning and translations of the words through tools such as Strong's Concordance, without the need to know Hebrew or Greek.

4. Syn-topic (syn-thematic)

Term coined by Rev. B.R. Hicks, where sin comes from the Greek syn which means "next to, unite" and topic refers to "themes, subjects or matters", giving to understand with this the "union of themes". This method consists of uniting multiple themes and principles that God has given us either through sermons, personal studies or even in times of prayer, worship and praise. This method ceases to be a method and becomes the result of growing in knowledge and having a living relationship with the Word of God.

As we seek God in prayer and in His Word, these methods become a ladder that propels us higher in the knowledge of the Word of God.



C. Seek in the morning

What better time to seek Jesus than in the morning, where our time in prayer and in His Word is not interrupted by the chores of the day, nor by the responsibilities that we must fulfill. With the exception of some other better time in case work or studies do not allow it, time in the morning is essential to seek God in a fresh way, starting our day with Jesus in mind. There are certain people who prefer to seek God at night, which is also valid, as long as we have the time without interruptions.

When God provided miraculous food to the people of Israel in the desert, He sent them manna, wheat from heaven, bread of angels (Psalm 78:24-25). Along with the provision, God commanded them to gather the manna in the morning, before the sun came out.

And they gathered it every morning, each according to what he was to eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted. (Exodus 16:21)

The sun represents the heat of the trials that each day brings. Before facing the trials, God is giving us the manna, the sustenance of His Word, to have the strength and vigor we need to face the situations, without taking our eyes off Jesus. If we do not collect our portion in time, the heat of the trials will make it impossible for us to obtain what God would have had for us that day.

I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me.
(Proverbs 8:17)

Seeking Jesus is work; and if we seek, we find Him, even if we sacrifice a little sleep to do so. Seeking Jesus is the result of His Love and His Grace in our life.
Any sacrifice on our part to seek

Jesus will never compare to the perfect sacrifice He made for us on the Cross.

D. Writing and meditating on the Word of God

Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to observe them, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)

God commanded the kings to make a copy of the Law in their own handwriting. God's purpose was that they would learn and know the Law, His Word, in order to know Him. Furthermore, of course, above the responsibility they had before God to govern His people, they needed the wisdom of the Word. But reading from the life and works of all the kings in the books of Kings and Chronicles, we can conclude that there was only one king who surely made a copy of the Law, King David. Proof of this are the Psalms he left us, especially Psalm 119, in which we see the relationship that David had with the Word of God.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart. (Psalm 119:1-2)

King David had a living relationship with the Word of God, which was his guide and comfort.

Lead me in the path of Your commandments, For in it I delight. (Psalm 119:35)

Remember the word to Your servant, Upon which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life. (Psalm 119:49-50)

On the contrary, we see that David's son, King Solomon, never made such a copy of the Law, despite having received the gift of wisdom from God. Considering the previous verses of the Deuteronomy passage, we see that Solomon did exactly what God told the kings not to do.

But he [the king] shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself. (Deuteronomy 17:16-17)

King Solomon multiplied horses for himself (1 Kings 10:26), turned his heart back to Egypt by marrying Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kings 3:1; 2 Chronicles 8:11) and bringing horses from Egypt (1 Kings 10:28-29). Furthermore, he took many wives for himself, who turned his heart away (1 Kings 11:1-8) and accumulated silver in abundance for himself (II Chronicles 9:27).

The purpose for writing the Scriptures is to reason and meditate on them. If our motive is to put the Word of God into practice, we will do what is required to keep our mind set on His Word. When we write the Word, we are not only reading it, but reasoning it at the moment we write it. In addition, writing the Word makes it easier for us to memorize and remember it for meditating on it.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

King David shows us how trying the Word of God in our mind and heart keeps our life. When David looked at his past and saw the Word of God, instead of worrying about the uncertain future, David meditated on it.

How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to your word. With my whole heart I have sought you; do not let me stray from your commandments. In my heart I have hidden your sayings, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O Lord. Teach me your statutes. With my lips I have recounted all the judgments of your mouth; I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies more than in all riches. I will meditate on your commandments; I will consider your ways. I will rejoice in your statutes; no I will forget your words. (Psalms 119:9-16)

PAST	FUTURE
With all my heart I have sought you	In your commandments I will meditate
In my heart I have hidden your sayings	I will consider your ways
With my lips I have recounted all the judgments of your mouth	I will rejoice in your statutes
I will have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies	No I will forget of your words

David sought the Lord with all his heart. The word seek, in Hebrew means:

“to frequent, persecution or search, inquire, consult, worship.” David learned to seek God intensely in his prayer room and obtained the Word of God every day. ^{keep, means: ‘Hide, hoard, accumulate, reserve’} What did he do with the Word he received? The Hebrew word for protect”. This means that David accumulated the Word of God for himself, hid it in his heart and protected it.

All this Word in David's heart guarded his mind and his ways.

It says

that with his lips he recounted the judgments of God. The word for count, means: “inscribe, make a count, enumerate and celebrate”, which we see in the Psalms when David in the midst of difficult situations returned to what he already had of the Word in his heart, writing and celebrating with joy how God had delivered him, remembering what God had already done in his life.

This caused David to have his mind occupied, not to worry or be anxious about his uncertain future while Saul persecuted him, while his enemies accused him, or even when his own children plotted against him. In moments like this, the Word of God was his guide. That is why we see David willing to meditate on the Word, considering the course and manner of God's acting in his life. David purposed to rejoice and not forget the words of God. In him there was no room for sorrow or worry.

Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad.
(Proverbs 12:25)

THE PURPOSE OF HAVING A LAMP LIT

The purpose of having a lamp lit is multiple. God brought us to this earth in order to know Him and that we may choose for Him. God has a plan and a purpose for our life, so He has given us a lamp to light our way and to guide us to make the decisions that will lead us back to His presence.

A. See the way

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

(Psalm 119:105)

The word lamp in Hebrew is ner, which is the root of the word menorah which translates to “candelabrum,” referring precisely to the Golden Candelabrum of the Tabernacle. The Candelabrum was carved with 22 almonds, 22 apples, and 22 flowers, totaling 66 figures (Exodus 37:17-24), which speak to us of the 66 books that make up our Bible. Therefore, we can conclude that each book of the Bible is important to us today and is useful for lighting our way.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

(II Timothy 3:16-17)

“The Bible was written over approximately 2000 years by 40 different authors on three continents... These facts alone make it unique, but there are many more amazing details that defy natural explanation. Pastors, kings, scholars, fishermen, prophets, a military general, a cupbearer, and a priest wrote portions of the Scriptures. They had different immediate purposes in writing, whether to record history, impart spiritual and moral instruction, or dictate judgment. They composed their works from palaces, prisons, the desert, and places of exile while writing history, laws, poetry, prophecy, and proverbs. However, despite this wonderful variety of themes and objectives, the Bible shows impeccable internal coherence. It never contradicts itself or its common theme...”
which is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

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⁴Chaffey, T. (2014, julio 27). Unity of the Bible. Answers Magazine

The Word of God is useful for teaching the doctrine and foundation of the nature of God, for rebuking and reproving us in order to lead us to repentance, for correcting us and changing our course of life and way of action, and for instructing and guiding us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The phrase "instruct in righteousness" in both Hebrew New Testaments, that of Salkinson-Ginsburg and of Dalman-Delitzsch, really says, "instruct in paths of righteousness". This is exactly the same expression that we find in Psalm 23 of King David.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23)

Therefore, we can conclude the following:

Psalm 23	II Timothy 3:16
...He makes me to lie down	Teach (doctrine)
...He leads me	Rebuke
He restores (will convert)...	Correct
He leads me in the paths of righteousness...	Instruct in paths of righteousness

In the first part of Psalm 23, King David expresses the experiences he has had with the Word of God, in the secret place. David experienced how the Word made him rest in the teaching of the doctrine of the nature of who God is. The Word rebuked and reproved him, moving him from the pastures outside to the pastures inside (John 10:9), leading him to repentance in order to give him rest from himself.

Also, the Word corrected and converted his soul, making him turn away from any deceitful desire that was in his flesh. Furthermore, the Word guided him in paths of righteousness, teaching him to walk justly and uprightly. We see that these experiences speak to us of the pleasant side of the road, because God is there and we feel Him. Even when He rebukes and corrects us, we feel and taste His Goodness that guides us.

But from the second part of Psalm 23, the scene changes. Now David is on the side of pain. It is there that David transferred to his present situation what he saw and experienced in the Word of God. The Light we receive in His Word illuminates our path and shows us the steps we must take, both in pleasant and painful situations. The Light of the Word is our guide when we walk in that valley of the shadow of death.



It is there where what we receive in pleasure helps us when we are in pain. It is there when we discover that the Truth in the Light is the same Truth in the darkness. David knew how to use the Light he had received in the dark situation that he was experiencing. How did he know that God was with him, even though he did not feel it and that nothing made sense in his life? Well, he returned to the Light of the doctrine of the Word that had taught him that Jehovah is merciful, that he was not going to forget him, nor destroy him, much less forget His Covenants (Deuteronomy 4:31).

Likewise, let us also seek God while there is still time; let us have an experience with His Light, which we will need in the dark moments of life.

B. Being light to others

You are the light of the world; a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

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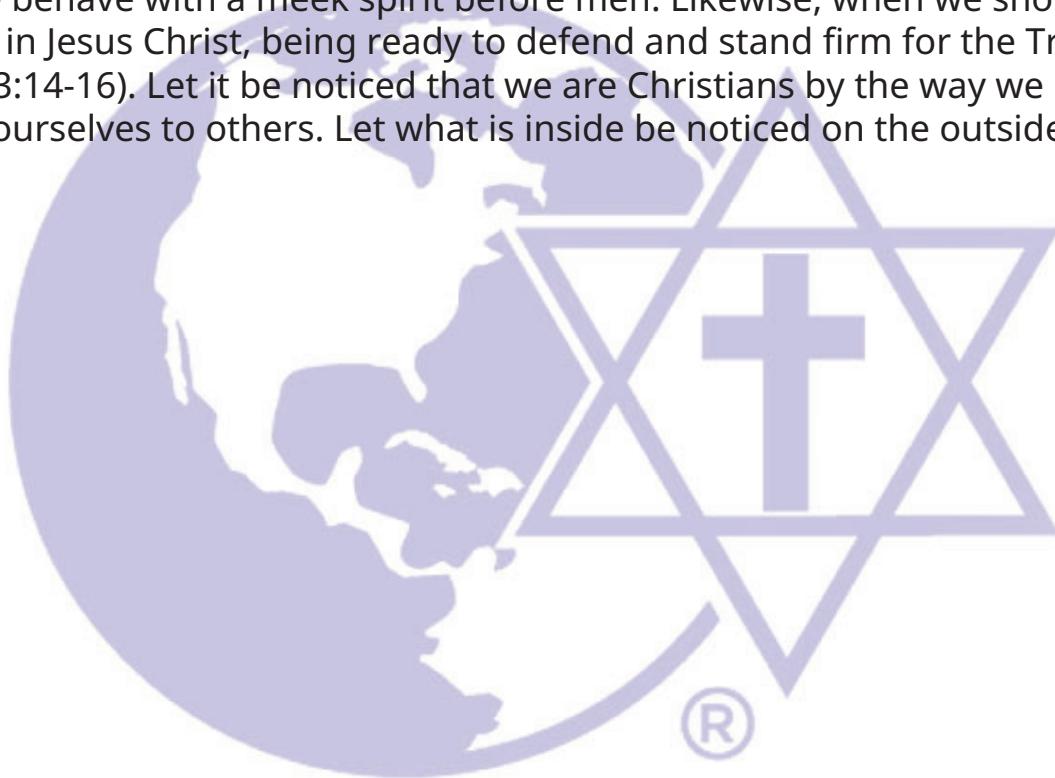
(Matthew 5:14-16)

The Word of God guides us on the path, illuminates our heart and what is inside, and illuminates our eyes to see and know more of the nature of God; but this must be reflected in our life. We must not only receive the light but we must reflect it, being obedient to the Word of God.

Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (I Timothy 4:12)

We must reflect the Light of Truth, being an example to others of what a true Christian is.
We must reflect Jesus through our conversation
daily (our conduct, and our works).
Jesus will be reflected in us,

when we behave with a meek spirit before men. Likewise, when we show our faith in Jesus Christ, being ready to defend and stand firm for the Truth (I Peter 3:14-16). Let it be noticed that we are Christians by the way we present ourselves to others. Let what is inside be noticed on the outside.



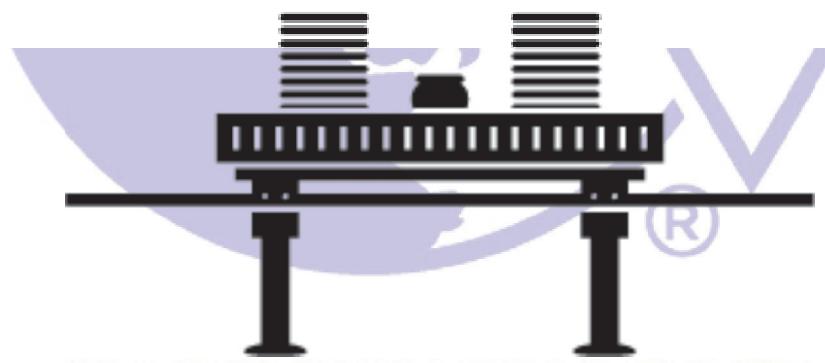
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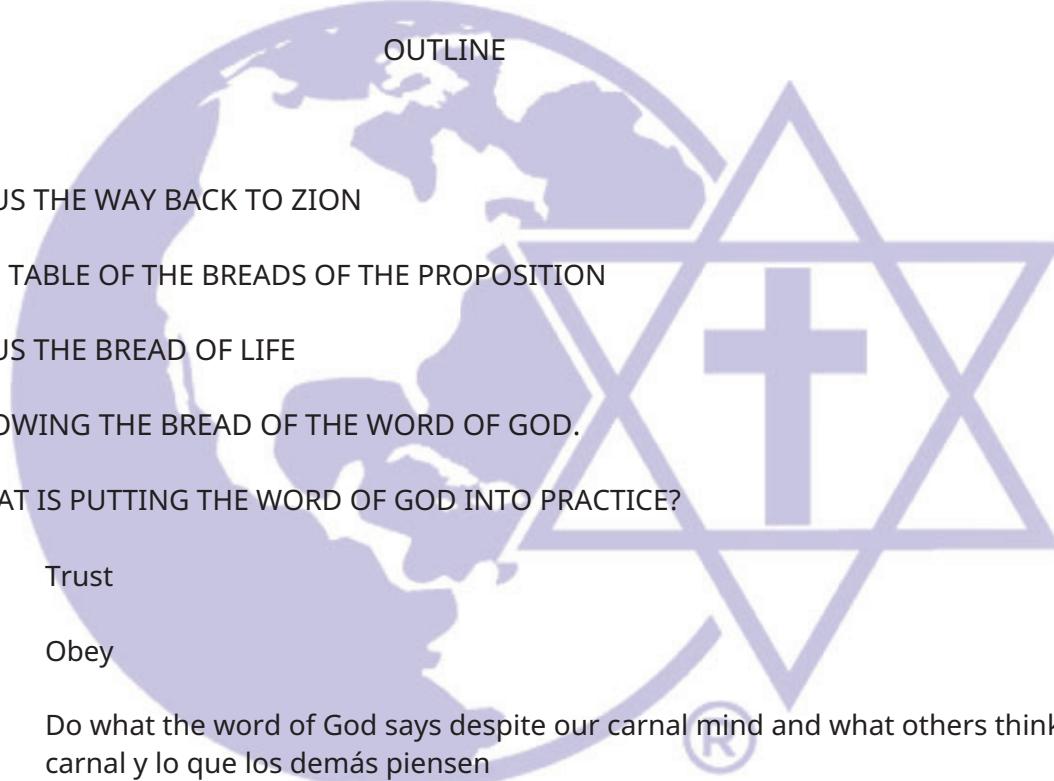


IGLESIA DEL EVANGELIO DE CRISTO

Vida Cristiana

GUATEMALA

OUTLINE



- I. JESUS THE WAY BACK TO ZION
- II. THE TABLE OF THE BREADS OF THE PROPOSITION
- III. JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE
- IV. KNOWING THE BREAD OF THE WORD OF GOD.
- V. WHAT IS PUTTING THE WORD OF GOD INTO PRACTICE?
 - A. Trust
 - B. Obey
 - C. Do what the word of God says despite our carnal mind and what others think
carnal y lo que los demás piensen
 - D. Stop doing what the bible tells us to stop doing
- VI. EXAMPLES:
 - A. King Saul
 - B. King David

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I. JESUS, THE WAY BACK TO ZION

Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were cut, and to the quarry from which you were hewn.
(Isaiah 51:1)

- STONE: tsur ; from 6696; prop. Cliff fig. refuge; —God (mighty), fortress, strong, strength, flint, rock, crag, stone, refuge, Rock.
- QUARRY: bor ; pit: —abyss, quarry, fountain, pit.

Our soul and our spirit come from God and when we come into this world, we leave a space, a hole in the Stone from which we were cut. In the moment we were begotten, the sin we inherited from our parents entered us and deformed the nature and image of God in us. To return to the space in the Rock from which we came, it is necessary that our sinful nature be transformed and absorbed by the clean and pure nature of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. It is for this that Jesus became man, died and rose again, to be able to come and dwell in the heart of man and from there destroy the work that sin did.

The Lord looked down from heaven on the children of men, to see if there were any who understood, who sought God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

(Psalms 14:2-3)

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

(Psalms 51:5)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones,

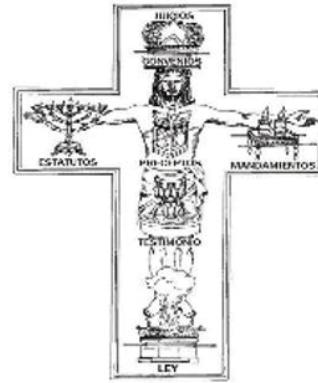
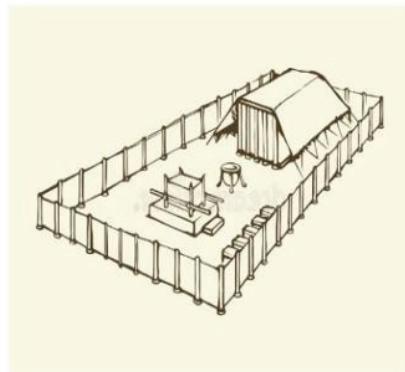
are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (I Peter 2:4-6)

The moment Jesus enters our heart and we receive salvation in our soul, He puts us on the path that will lead us back to the Rock, Mount Zion. It is very evident that, although we receive Jesus in our heart, our nature does not change overnight; we need to seek Him and know Him so that He changes us, transforms us and conforms us to His nature.

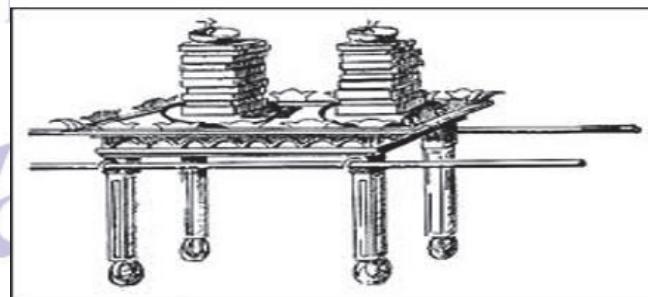
Until we all reach the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13)

Tabernáculo de Moisés

Estatura del Señor Jesucristo



II THE TABLE OF THE BREAD OF THE PROPOSITION



...And you shall put on the table the bread of the proposition before me continually. (Exodus 25:30) continually.
(Exodus 25:30)

- Table: (7979) shulkján ; table (as extended); by impl. food: — banquet, table.
- Bread: (3899) lékjem ; food, food (for man or beast), esp. bread, or grain: —food, eat, food, fruit, grain, delicacy, bread ([of the proposition]), raisin, provision, victuals.

You shall bring in the table and set it in order. (Exodus 40:4)

- Order: (6186) arák; a primitive root; to put in a row, (that is) arrange, put in order): —arrange, prepare, align (-self, for battle), fight, skillful, dispose, divide, esteem, expose, fix, set a price, prepare, value.

To put in order:

...And he arranged the wood, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar on the wood. (Genesis 22:9)

And Israel and the Philistines put themselves in battle array, army against army. (1 Samuel 17:21)

O Lord, in the morning you will hear my voice; in the morning I will present myself before you, and wait. (Psalm 5:3)

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

(Psalm 23:5)

Yes, they spoke against God: They said, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

(Psalm 78:19)

The nation of Israel saw with their own eyes the wonders that God did when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, and yet they wondered if God could give them bread in the middle of the desert. We act the same when we see the impossibility of our problems, and although we do not say it openly, we are disturbed in the face of our adversaries instead of trusting that, if God has already saved us on other occasions, He can save us once more.

III. JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE

...Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 8:3)

Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; but much increase is by the strength of the ox. (Proverbs 14:4)

Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him. (John 6:27)

He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows vagrants lacks understanding. (Proverbs 12:11)

A capable wife, who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. (Proverbs 31:14)

The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with a consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" The one who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, who despises extortion and refuses to accept bribes, who stops their ears from hearing about bloodshed and shuts their eyes from looking on evil— this is the one who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. Their bread will be supplied, and water will not fail. (Isaiah 33:14-16)

Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars. She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. She has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city, "Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment. "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight." (Proverbs 9:1-6)

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." (Mark 14:22)

When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." (Luke 14:15)

For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. (John 6:33)

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry. (John 6:35)

I am the bread of life. (John 6:48)

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I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:51)

IV. KNOWING THE BREAD OF THE WORD OF GOD

Knowing, understanding, and handling theories is not enough; we need to have an experience with the living Word of God. However, how can we practice what we do not know? God instructed the kings to make a copy of the law so that, by writing it in their own handwriting, they would become involved in such a way that they would not forget the commandments that the Lord commanded them and fear Him, putting them into practice.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

(Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, from that which is in the charge of the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, and do them.

(Deuteronomy 17:18-19)

V. WHAT IS PUTTING THE WORD OF GOD INTO PRACTICE OR EATING THE BREAD?

Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." (John 6:28-29)

A. Trust

Putting the Word of God into practice is trusting that if we obey it, the things that God has said should happen if we do will happen.

He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." (Genesis 22:12)

Know (3045) yadá; to know (to be sure upon seeing), to experience.

Abraham feared God and loved Him, but he had never had the opportunity to prove his love at this level. His love and fear of God were stronger than the love for the son he so desired and waited for.

God served Abraham a table with bread to eat, and because he had a personal and close relationship with God, Abraham was able to trust in God, that He knew what He was doing by asking for his only son and that He was able to raise him so that the word He gave him about the offspring that would come through Isaac would be fulfilled.

It is one thing to say that we love God, but another thing is to prove it with our choices. We need to know and know what the Word of God says, so that then trust and put it into practice.

B. Obey

And Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering. (Genesis 4:4)

Cain and Abel must have been instructed, so that both knew how they should present their offering to the Lord. Abel pleased God with his offering, but Cain did not please him because he did not offer it as God instituted it.

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous... (Joshua 1:7-9)

Let us note that in this passage emphasis is placed on the fact that we must strive to go to the Word of God every day. It even says, day and night; in other words, when we are in spiritual days and when we are going through spiritual nights. This requires effort and diligence, and this is where many Christians fall short.

Joshua trusted that just as God was with Moses, God would be with him and that if God promised to prosper in everything if he obeyed His Word, God would fulfill it.

C. Doing what the word of God says despite our carnal mind and what what others think.

Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed (Genesis 12:1-4)

Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are brothers. Is not all the land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left."

(Genesis 13:8-9)

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out not knowing where he was going. (Hebrews 11:8)

Abraham trusted, obeyed, and made decisions even though it seemed absurd to his carnal mind or to others.

D. Stop doing what the Bible commands us to stop doing

Being a Christian is practicing daily what God says in His Word. Most Christians today fail to unite theory with practice, and there is a divorce between what they know and what they live; they no longer see as wrong what the Word of God points out as wrong. Today, many Christians live their lives as those who do not know God live, thinking that daily living has nothing to do with the title they bear as Christians. The Christianity that many practice in these times is limited to attending a church once a week, and they believe that living by faith is confessing everything they want to obtain from God, and when they do not receive it, they get angry with God.

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(See example on the next page)

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THE NATION OF ISRAEL STOPPED DOING WHAT GOD COMMANDED IT TO DO

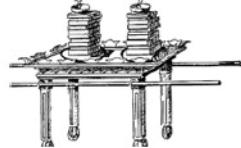
TEORIA (que recibió)



Éxodo 20:1-17 Ley Moral de Dios

1. Yo soy Jehová tu Dios
3. No tomarás el Nombre de Jehová tu Dios en vano
4. Acuérdate del día de reposo para santificarlo
5. Honra a tu padre y a tu madre
6. No matarás
7. No cometerás adulterio
8. No hurtarás
9. No hablarás contra tu prójimo falso testimonio
10. No codiciarás

EXPERIENCIA (que practicó)



Malaquías 1-3 Ley que practicaron

1. ¿En qué nos amaste?
2. ¿En qué hemos menospreciado tu nombre?
3. Habéis además dicho: ¡Oh, qué fastidio es esto!
5. ¿No tenemos todos un mismo padre? ¿No nos ha creado un mismo Dios? ¿Por qué, pues, nos portamos deslealmente el uno contra el otro, profanando el pacto de nuestros padres?
6. ¿En qué le hemos cansado? En que decís: Cualquiera que hace mal agrada a Jehová, y en los tales se complace.
7. Y no seáis desleales para con la mujer de vuestra juventud.
8. ¿En qué te hemos robado? En vuestros diezmos y ofrendas.
9. Y dijisteis: ¿Qué hemos hablado contra ti?
10. Bienaventurados son los soberbios, y los que hacen impiedad no sólo son prosperados, sino que tentaron a Dios y escaparon.

And you have profaned it when you say, 'The table of the Lord is polluted, and its fruit, its food is contemptible.'

(Malachi 1:12)

The nation of Israel never did anything with what they heard at the foot of Mount Sinai when God gave them His moral law, even though they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do..." (Exodus 19:8).

They followed their own ways, and when they arrived in the land of Canaan, they adopted the pagan practices of the Gentile nations, which God clearly commanded them not to do.

All the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let God not speak with us, lest we die." And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."

(Exodus 20:18-20)

Practicing the Word of God is the result of fearing God, because we believe that what He says is so.

VI EXAMPLES

A. King Saul

1. Israel asks for a king

...Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. (I Samuel 8:5)

The nation of Israel offended God by asking for a king, moved by their desire to be like the other pagan nations around them. God granted it to them and sent the prophet Samuel to anoint a young man from the smallest tribe, the tribe of Benjamin.

2. Saul is anointed as king of Israel

And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him, "There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people." (I Samuel 9:17)

Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: "Is it not because the Lord has anointed you commander over His inheritance? (I Samuel 10:1)

3. Saul receives instructions

After this you will arrive at the hill of God where the garrison of the Philistines is; and when you enter there into the city you will find a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, and they will be prophesying. Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you with power, and you will prophesy with them, and be turned into another man. And when these signs have happened to you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. (I Samuel 10:5-7)

4. Saul disobeys

And he waited seven days, according to the time that Samuel had appointed. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering. As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him...Then Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. (I Samuel 13:7-10)

Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the Lord said to me this night." And he said to him, "Say on." And Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. And the Lord sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord?"

(I Samuel 15:16-19)

And Samuel said, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king." (I Samuel 15:22-23)

Saul started well, recognizing that he was small for the tremendous calling he received. God chooses the small to show His greatness; it's not about us, it's about Him.

Obviously Saul never had a loving relationship with God in such a way that he sought to obey Him and do His will; on the contrary, he decided how things would be done despite the instructions he received from the prophet Samuel and rejected the living bread that was served to him on the table. From there, although he was still the king, Saul was discarded.

God called us to be kings and priests. But if we do not eat of the bread of His Word, ceasing to obey it, and instead of destroying Amalek (who represents the flesh) we feed him, thus minimizing what the Word of God tells us, we will not be able to conquer more ground in the land of our heart.

In regard to your former way of life, put off the old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires. (Ephesians 4:22)

Flee also youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

(II Timothy 2:22)

Teaching us that, renouncing ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age. (Titus 2:12)

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. (I Peter 1:14)

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (I Peter 2:11)

For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (I John 2:16-17)

Let us not spare Amalek's life, but let us seek every day to eat the living bread of the Word of God and be obedient to His Word, which commands us not to live according to the desires of our flesh.

IGLESIA DEL EVANGELIO DE CRISTO

B. David

1. David is despised by his family.

Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all your sons?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here." (I Samuel 16:11)

GUATEMALA

From a very young age, David experienced contempt and rejection from his own family. Being the youngest, he was not even taken into account for this important moment.

He was doing what he always did: taking care of the sheep; but while David was doing that, he got to know God in a very personal way.

2. David is chosen king over Israel

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, because I have chosen a king from among his sons." (I Samuel 16:1)

Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all your sons?" And he replied, "There remains yet the youngest, and he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him, for we will not sit down until he comes here." So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah. (I Samuel 16:11-13)

3. David is persecuted by Saul to kill him

Saul spoke to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David; but Jonathan, Saul's son, loved David greatly.

(I Samuel 19:1)

Saul gives the order to kill David.

Now the evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was playing the harp. (I Samuel 19:9)

Now therefore, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find." The priest answered David and said, "I have no common bread on hand, only consecrated bread...I have no common bread on hand, only the bread of the Presence." (I Samuel 21:3-4)

Have I only today begun to inquire of God for him? (I Samuel 22:14)

And David stayed in the wilderness in strongholds, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. (I Samuel 23:14)

...And he said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord." (I Samuel 24:3-6)

And may the Lord repay each one for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the Lord delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed. (I Samuel 26:23)

Then it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more. (I Samuel 27:4)

4. David is rejected by the people.

...Only those of the house of Judah followed David. And the number of days that David reigned in Hebron, over the house of Judah, was seven years and six months. (II Samuel 2:10)

E. David is betrayed by his son Absalom

And a messenger came to David, saying, The heart of all Israel is after Absalom. Then David said to all his servants who were with him in Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. And the king's servants said to the king, Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king decides. Then the king went forth, with all his household after him. And the king left ten women, who were concubines, to keep the house. (II Samuel 15:13-16)

And David went up by the ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up, with his head covered and barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and went up weeping as they went. (II Samuel 15:30)

David had many opportunities throughout his life to practice the word of God and he did not miss them, but allowed them to help him know God in a closer way.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalms 23)

GUATEMALA

Let us strive to eat of the bread that God serves us!



HOW CAN WE CARRY ON
OUR OWN SHOULDERS
THE ARK OF GOD



IGLESIA CRISTO
Vida Cristiana
GUATEMALA

OUTLINE

- A. INTRODUCTION: THE INCOMPARABLE GOVERNMENT OF GOD
- B. THE THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT
 - 1. Inside the Ark of the Covenant were three things.
 - 2. The Ark should have the rods placed in its rings, to be carried.
 - 3. Not just anyone could carry it, only the Kohathites; and it had to be carried on their shoulders.
 - 4. The Ark was covered with badger skins and with the veil of the curtain, before being transported.
 - 5. The Mercy Seat was the piece of furniture that covered the Ark of the Covenant.
 - 6. The Ark and its poles were covered in gold.
- C. THE PROCESS OF LEARNING TO WALK UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD
 - 1. The angles of Christian growth
 - 2. Learning to carry the Ark
 - 3. Am I carrying the Ark of God in my life?
 - 4. What to do if we fail?
 - 5. How do we stop resisting carrying the Ark?

A. INTRODUCTION: THE INCOMPARABLE GOVERNMENT OF GOD

The Ark of the Covenant is one of the seven pieces of furniture in the Mosaic Tabernacle, representing a spiritual experience that we must have and that is completely necessary for our growth in the Lord. The benefits of this experience are infinite: when we carry the Ark on our shoulders, we will feel a greater closeness to the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ; we will know with total confidence that we will go in the direction He wants us to go; we will carry the burden that He wants to assign us in all areas of our lives, being free from the worries of this century that constantly want to torment us and that are designed to never end. The sovereignty of God on our shoulders is the guarantee that we are becoming oxen willing to work and obey without questioning.

Our paths lead us to perdition; the paths of Jesus lead us to abundant life, to enjoy it in pleasure and in suffering. The paths of the human mind seek pleasure thirstily, overflowing to appease for a moment the misery that cries out from the soul and spirit. But God knows that this rest, quietness, contentment and piety will be achieved only when we bow our heads, when we prepare our shoulders and when we stop discussing what we believe to be the "best" and, instead, only obey the one who created the heavens, the earth and the universe.

This cannot be learned solely through theories, however beautiful they may be. It is necessary to sharpen the ear, soften the heart and cleanse ourselves of the weight of sin that besets us, to be willing to enter an eternal realm; we must envelop ourselves in the thoughts of God for our lives, which are diametrically opposed to what our tiny mind can reach to see on the horizon.

When we know the sovereignty of God by experience, the Lord gradually opens our eyes and trains us to hate our own ways.

For this,

we need to walk in good measure with Him to be able to differentiate between the result of obeying Jesus, or of following our own paths. Even so, knowing the Lord, sooner or later we will realize that in us there will be doubt and challenge from our mind, believing that it has something better than the infinite mind of the Lord; of course, God already knows it and is ready to help us overcome those walls that are found within the depths of our heart. Today, a large part of the church wants to have a Savior, but does not want to have a Lord; they want to be free from the wages of sin, but not from the cause of sin. They are so comfortable making their own decisions without consulting God before doing so, while in ignorance or deliberately they miss the opportunity to be free from their own carnal sovereignty, which at this point often becomes subtle and innocent, but in reality hides rebellion and a constant struggle against the pure mind of Christ.

Brothers, time is running out; it is necessary to have these experiences in our daily lives in order to advance to the goal. We know that, God willing, we can achieve it because what is impossible for man is possible for God. It pleases my heart to be able to share some theoretical principles of this topic, and also personal experiences with the sweet voice of my Lord. These have marked my soul, guided me through His footsteps and marked my mind forever, teaching me that Jesus reached me for a purpose higher than just going to church every Sunday, or simply calling myself a Christian. Glory to God, we know that He lives forever and that He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Let us remember that the Old Testament reflects shadows, patterns and figures of what Jesus would come to illuminate, to give us a complete understanding of the spiritual principles and the holy nature of God. The Tabernacle is undoubtedly one of the most extensive, detailed and meticulous works and representations of these shadows and figures that we can find in the Bible. Every detail points to Jesus and also points to the design of a personal relationship between God and man. Within all those details I will briefly take some that are related to the Ark of the Covenant, to touch on principles that can become a personal experience.

B. THE THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

The Ark represents the government and sovereignty of God for our lives and is a shadow and figure with meticulously described details that highlight the way in which we must attend to His government in our daily lives. As part of the stature of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Ark is located in the realm of the Head of the Lord, which begins to shed light on the fact that He wants to show us how His mind and thoughts can govern our mind and the way in which we direct our life.

1. The Ark of the Covenant contained three things:

Which had a golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant. (Hebrews 9:4)

- Aaron's rod that budded. This represents the authorities human or natural that are governing in some way over us. If we have authorities human over us, regardless of whether they are "just" or "unjust", they are being imposed by God, and it is God who allows them to be upon us.

- A golden urn with manna that descended from heaven. This is a precious figure of the daily sustenance that God has for his children, to give us that which is His will for us on a daily basis; these are the resources we need to prosper in His master plan. Nothing we will lack to be able to do His perfect will. This sustenance is not much or little, but it is enough to advance and walk in what Jesus Christ wants us to do or stop doing.
- The tablets that Moses broke when descending from Sinai. These are the commandments of the moral law, which are the covenant that we must fulfill with the Lord. Keeping His commandments is a clear sign that we love God, that we love His Will, that we love holiness and closeness with Jesus. The commandments are intended to show us that our will is far from God's will, so that we may see and choose for Him; so that through a daily choice and in all kinds of situations, we build obedience and a deep desire to follow Him, above our carnal and earthly desires.

2. The Ark had to have the rods placed in its rings, ready to be transported

And you shall put the poles through the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried with them. The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. (Exodus 25:14-15)

Interestingly, even if the Ark did not move, it needed to have the rods ready at all times; the rods should not be removed from the Ark. It seems so just a design detail, but behind the letter hides another spiritual principle again, and that is that we must be ready to obey at all times, making continuous progress. We must take the sovereignty of God everywhere, not only when we want to or when we think it is convenient. The rods are like the desire and aptitude we have to cope with God's government.

These rods will be formed to the extent that we long to be obedient, and also when we train more and more when we put these principles into practice.

3. Not just anyone could carry it, only the Kohathites; and it had to be carried on the shoulders.

This will be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of meeting, in the most holy place: When the camp is to move, Aaron and his sons shall come and take down the veil of the curtain, and cover the ark of the testimony with it; and they shall put on it a covering of badger skins, and spread over it a cloth all of blue, and insert its poles. (Numbers 4:4-6)

This principle shows us that there was an exclusive design for the sons of Kohath, who were descendants of Aaron, the High Priest chosen by God. Only those who have an office of priest can take the ark and place it on their shoulders. It is necessary that we train ourselves as priests to minister His Name in His presence. This is formed when we spend time with Him, worshiping in His presence and administering the mysteries of His Word. God has placed us to be bearers of His presence and of His Words wherever we go, so that we may also minister the holy Name of Jesus to others, through the holy nature that has been formed in us and that is notorious through our actions and our way of life.

4. The Ark was covered with badger skins and with the veil of the curtain, before being transported.

This will be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of meeting, in the most holy place: When the camp is to move, Aaron and his sons shall come and take down the veil of the curtain, and cover the ark of the testimony with it; and they shall put on it a covering of badger skins, and spread over it a cloth all of blue, and insert its poles.

(Numbers 4:4-6)

The Ark was not visible at any time to people who did not enter the Most Holy Place and had the opportunity to see it for themselves. When it rested in the Tabernacle, the Ark was hidden thanks to the curtains that surrounded the courtyards and also thanks to the structure of the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place; it was far from the sight of anyone who did not enter the Tabernacle and it was impossible for him to go to the deepest part. For this, the Kohathites had to follow strict instructions in order to transport it when the Tabernacle

was dismantled. At this time, there was also a covering for the Ark, which was the curtain of the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, added to the badger skins that were above the roof of the Holy Place and added additionally to a cloth all of blue, according to the description made by these verses.

The coverings teach us that God's sovereignty is strange to those who are far from God's presence and His principles. The badger skin covering is

a very modest covering in human sight; this teaches that anyone who wants to discover the beautiful glory of God must have the necessary humility to know that God's ways are bitter to the carnal man and outdated to the earthly mind. God designed it that way, in the same way, with our Lord

Jesus. Jesus took the form of an ordinary person, being born in a small region of Israel in those times, Bethlehem. He did a little-recognized job as a carpenter; it is even public knowledge that Jesus was not a person of high academic levels, to be able to speak the way he did (John 7:15); however, that humble humanity hid the incarnate Creator who dwelt among us.

This will be our experience before others, when we embrace God's Will; in the same way we will be seen by those who are not being illuminated by the Word of God or listening to His Voice. Sadly, this group also includes Christians.

5. The Mercy Seat was the piece of furniture that covered the Ark of the Covenant

You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width. And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at its two ends of one piece with the mercy seat. And the cherubim shall spread out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces facing one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat. You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. (Exodus 25:17-21)

The Mercy Seat represents, among other things, the eternal mercy of God. This is the perfect companion to His Sovereignty and Government, since carnal man continually goes to evil. Man is constantly trying to deviate from God's ways, to stubbornly seek, with swift feet to evil, his own ways. But God's mercy shows His longsuffering and slow to anger nature, willing to correct the sinful man and show him with eternal love the good way, which will lead him to an intimate relationship with the Creator.

This type of obedient walking is not achieved overnight, but we have at our disposal the mercy of God to cover our faults and to gain confidence, knowing that He wants to help us in our weakness, so that we rely on Him.

6. The Ark and its poles were covered with gold

They shall make an ark of acacia wood; its length shall be two and a half cubits, its width a cubit and a half, and its height a cubit and a half. You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and you shall make a molding of gold all around it. You shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them on its four corners, two rings on one side of it, and two rings on the other side.

(Exodus 25:10-12)

The Ark was completely covered with gold, in the same way as the rings and poles, just as the other furniture of the Holy Place and the Mercy Seat were. This is a beautiful picture of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing this gives us peace and confidence, since God knows perfectly well that, to carry His sovereignty on our shoulders, we cannot do it by our own strength. We need the New Man, who is Jesus Christ in us, to be able to bear God's direction for our lives. and the carnal mind cannot and do not want to do the Will of God, because they are too busy seeking their own vices, desires, and delights; these have an antonymous nature to the Holy Directive Will of the Lord. This fact makes this task impossible without the help

of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew that "His yoke is easy and His burden is light"; without a doubt, the Ark of the Covenant is part of that burden. It becomes easy when Christ in us carries it and teaches us how to carry it, which fills us with joy when we know that we are doing what He wants us to do.

On the other hand, in the book of Isaiah there is written a prophecy about the birth of Jesus, which indicates that the government will be on His shoulder. This is good news for all of us who are Christians: Jesus carries on His shoulder that directive and direction of the Lord for our lives. All that remains for us is to rest in Him, knowing that Jesus Himself will teach us to carry it, and will give us the strength in union with our New Man, so that we may be fit to do it in accordance with our spiritual growth. We would never be able to do it by ourselves, but we have been justified by the precious blood of the Lamb, we have been made clean from our uncleanness, and we have access to the presence of God, with His humble and infinite mind. Glory to God for that.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

C. THE PROCESS OF LEARNING TO WALK UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD

1. The angles of Christian growth

The theories of the Word are beautiful and perfect, to convert our soul; it is our duty to make them a living experience. This is a constant challenge, because every day we will face different situations where we will have the option of choosing in favor of ourselves or choosing for the Will of the Lord. God is faithful in preparing us and speaking to us while we have our times of ~~prayer, communion with the Lord, and study of the Word.~~ ^{and the Word, and study of the Word.} acquire wisdom, in order to act opportunely and choose under the principles of the Bible.

It is here where many Christians are left behind; very few are willing to grow in the Lord.

Spiritual growth has two sides, which we have seen many times over the years: 1) Spiritual education, which is acquired by studying the theories of the Word; and on the other hand, and 2) moral development, which is the exercise of theories. Both angles are powerful to overcome our flesh, because they renew our mind and our works.

For the purposes of this study, we will be focusing on the angle of moral development.

2. Learning to carry the Ark

When we began to try to walk in obedience to God in our first days as Christians, it did not take us long to know that the Bible and the commandments of the Lord were far above what occupied our minds during the twenty-four hours of the day. What is in our minds translates into actions that are not congruent with those commandments, and in the end distances us from the Will of God. Faced with this reality, if we wanted to grow, even a spiritual centimeter, we had to have been honest with ourselves and beg for the Lord's help to change not only our habits but, more importantly, our nature.

I remember when I was in my first months as a Christian, at nineteen years old. When I heard my first leaders speak in the church I attended at that time, it was very impressive to be able to hear their conversations made with an educated language typical of a Christian.

At the same time, I looked in the mirror and it was completely noticeable that frequently my expressions were not the most appropriate, not only in the words that I coined with my way of expressing myself, but also in some of the intentions with which I said phrases or ideas.

When trying to change this to

seek to please the Lord, I quickly realized that many of my words were spoken out of inertia, out of habit, and out of bad habits. This was disappointing to me, knowing that I had wasted several years of my adolescence molding myself to the world, instead of seeking the Lord and pleasing Him with my way of life.

But after knowing the power of the Blood of Jesus, I gave myself to the task of carefully evaluating my way of speaking, to know if there was progress in my life or not.

I soon noticed that as time passed

in prayer, a dislike for my old-fashioned way of speaking was automatically generated and I came to have deep degrees of repentance that I never thought I would have, having my eyes open to the impact of speaking in that way. My gratitude for the Lord went to another level, because it was not easy; this took several months, but throughout the process I saw His faithfulness.

Now, working to cleanse the heart is a daily battle, to prevent roots of bitterness, hatred, anger, malice or slander from growing that can contaminate my way of speaking. And before any sin, the Blood of Jesus is faithful. So far, I have experienced the power of God to wash and erase, and I know that He wants to continue that work with me.

Learning to carry the Ark requires daily effort, constant practice, and learning from the mistakes that lead us to slip or fall. This is part of the path that God designed; otherwise, how could we know the power of His Blood to align us to His will, to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all evil? We cannot learn to carry the Ark if we only sit on Sundays to listen to the Word. Experience is indispensable.

3. Am I carrying the ark of God in my life?

I hope that after this reading, the reader will ask himself these types of questions, to sincerely question his current situation regarding the topic. How to know? It is important to emphasize that God designed a specific plan for each one, and that God can illuminate each believer with His voice in every matter and situation. Each believer has the responsibility to seek the face of the Lord, to entrust to Him the decisions he makes, but also to ask for advice and direction, inclining his ear to listen.

I have another testimony to tell. About nine years ago, God gave me a dream, indicating the area where the offices of the next job I was going to have were located. After several years I never forgot the dream, but I was somewhat skeptical about its meaning, despite the fact that the dream I had caused very strong impressions on me that made me not forget it. Finally, a year ago and after looking for more than a year to move to another company, I was contacted by a company that was located exactly in the area that God indicated to me in the dream. Feeling some insecurity and distrust, I realized that I could be facing what God had told me at some point. When I told the dream to some people, I was filled with opinions of disbelief and a lot of caution; this caused fear and insecurity in me to make a decision. For about a month I was seeking the Lord in prayer and fasting, and I clarify that I did not do this for being a "super spiritual" person; on the contrary, I did it because I recognized that I had many doubts and fears. Finally, they made me the job offer and after strengthening myself in prayer and considering what came from God, I made the decision I can tell this a year after it happened, where I again saw God's faithfulness to show me with much anticipation His plans for my life.

I tell this testimony to show how we can humble ourselves to understand God's will coming from His perfect mind, and that as weak humans we can have access to those thoughts, to obey His perfect plan. On the other hand, it is easy to see in the Bible the Will of God for each believer. There we can take a brief exam to see if we are carrying the government of God for our lives. Here are some examples:

- Family matters - The Lord wants full relationships between parents and children (Malachi 4:6).
- Way of life - God seeks that during our life as singles we are involved in the things of God (I Corinthians 7:32). The Lord asks us for consecration, so that He may have a closer personal relationship with us (II Corinthians 6:17-18).
- Use of financial resources - We must give tithes and first fruits of what we produce, to honor the Lord (Proverbs 3:9-10). We must choose God above natural riches, if we do not want to be subjugated by these riches (Matthew 6:24). The Bible asks us to recognize that the power to make riches comes from the Lord and not from our own abilities (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

- Spiritual growth - Through the Bible we understand that the true strength we acquire when we can dominate our spirit (Proverbs 16:32). That same strength is what is required to deny ourselves, every day (Luke 9:23).
- Sexual life - For our marriage to be blessed by the Lord we must honor it, and part of that honor is to have an undefiled bed; in other words, to have intimacy without any kind of immorality in between (Hebrews 13:4).
- Children - For those who are fathers and mothers, God knows that we can leave deep marks on our children, especially because in their youth we find more nobility, tenderness and sensitivity in them than in adults; therefore, we can contaminate them with anger (Ephesians 6:4).

These are some of the many areas of our lives, or situations that we can face; of course, the Bible is full of examples and wisdom that go according to God's government, so that we walk under His will. We don't have to be too smart to read and simply obey. We shouldn't give

too many turns to verses like these; we should simply do what they say, and along the way we will have important revelations from the Lord. I say it with all the certainty of the case. This is fundamental to begin to walk carrying the Ark on our shoulders. If you wonder how to start, this is an easy and sincere option.

4. What to do if we fail?

This question applies to all of us who are believers in Jesus. We are definitely going to fail, and more often than we think. The road to perfection is full of trials and new experiences, destined for us to know who we are and what is the carnal nature that we inherited from the first Adam.

His footprints have left Blood all along the way, so that we see His redeeming and forgiving power in all our steps. On the one hand, if we are maturing, we will see how we are skilled in stopping making the mistakes and committing the sins that we used to do a while ago, because we will have gained wisdom and fear of the Lord. Additionally, we will have new areas of our life exposed, or we will face areas of our life that will take more time and effort to overcome. Whatever the case, there will be falls; but we will have to learn to run to the cross and to the throne of grace, where His Blood is fresh and the Lord will be ready to apply it.

Throughout my Christian life, I have seen how many of my roots of sin have been easily defeated, and I have acquired a new nature that to this day has made me not go back. But on the other hand, there are battles that have taken years, with many lessons in between. This has slowly removed the hardness, rebellion, and ignorance in my heart, seeing above all things the love and mercy that God has towards my life. Also, in my daily walk I have battles of which I am aware, and I know that much of my carnal nature is exposed and lurking at any moment of weakness. Although many times I have asked the Lord for answers and wisdom to be able to overcome, I have not stopped seeing the Lord's faithfulness in showing me a new portion of Him, even after having failed by having sinned or having strayed from His path.

With this, I emphasize above all the desire to know the Lord more and to crucify the flesh. Without a doubt, this flesh wants to do the opposite of the Word, but a true disciple of the Lord will not justify his sinful actions; he will simply lift up the Name of the Lord to move forward, even if he has failed once more.

Let us not confuse this with a lifestyle where we believe that we can sin deliberately, thinking with blindness that God will forgive us and that He will have no problem seeing how we live a double life.

The Lord is

faithful to forgive, but He expects us to grow and consecrate ourselves, aligned with a true and deep repentance.

I have one more testimony to add to this, and that is that God is faithful to speak to us even in natural matters. This has been no exception in my life. God has spoken to me about my projects and ventures, explicitly speaking to me about investments in some financial markets, showing me that He is the one who has guided me to venture into them. Incredibly, God has spoken to me through dreams and visions about the specific actions to take; even so, I have made many mistakes in trying to follow His voice. This has caused frustration in my life and in my thoughts has caused doubt, even about my levels of obedience. However, I have felt the direction of the Holy Spirit to seek the Lord in another way, and I am currently in a great learning process to fine-tune my ears and listen to Him in a better way, which has filled me with joy.

We cannot have victories without fighting against our old nature. The Lord is ahead, but we must put aside what we owe and deliver what God wants us to deliver. He is faithful to give us the necessary resources and achieve His will. David is a perfect example of someone who fine-tuned his ear to listen better and obey better, in such a way that the Lord has left him as an example to us, so that we may be edified through his experiences.

Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him as a witness to the people, a leader and a commander to the nations.

(Isaiah 55:3-4)

5. How can we stop resisting carrying the Ark?

Would it be too much to ask if we resist carrying the Ark? To the extent that it is, the answer is that we do resist carrying it. There is a profound truth and that is that we inherit a nature contrary to the nature of God; we have it within us, in a deceitful heart inclined to sin. We have been led astray, but we have been saved by the Lord and the power of His blood. So if we discover actions or attitudes that go against the Government and Sovereignty of God, congratulations! This means that our eyes have been opened and that we have been given a new opportunity to overcome and dominate our flesh, to walk in the footsteps of the Lord.

Let us be grateful if we are aware of those areas in our life that resist following God's Will, because then we will know that we know the battlefield where God is interested in being and helping us to overcome. Easy? Not at all; but if we want to speak the truth, we will know that God is faithful and that He began the good work, and wants to perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. We just have to start lifting up the Name, glorifying His Name and speaking the Truth, so that we begin to see powerful miracles in our lives.

The objective of carrying the Ark is that we can advance towards the goal; this is not the end, but a means to have the correct direction, the correct habits and the desire to live subject to the Lord, in order to obtain the end, which is to know Him more, love Him more and be closer to Him.

our blessed Lord Jesus Christ!

Praised be his Name, the Name of

Vida Cristiana

GUATEMALA