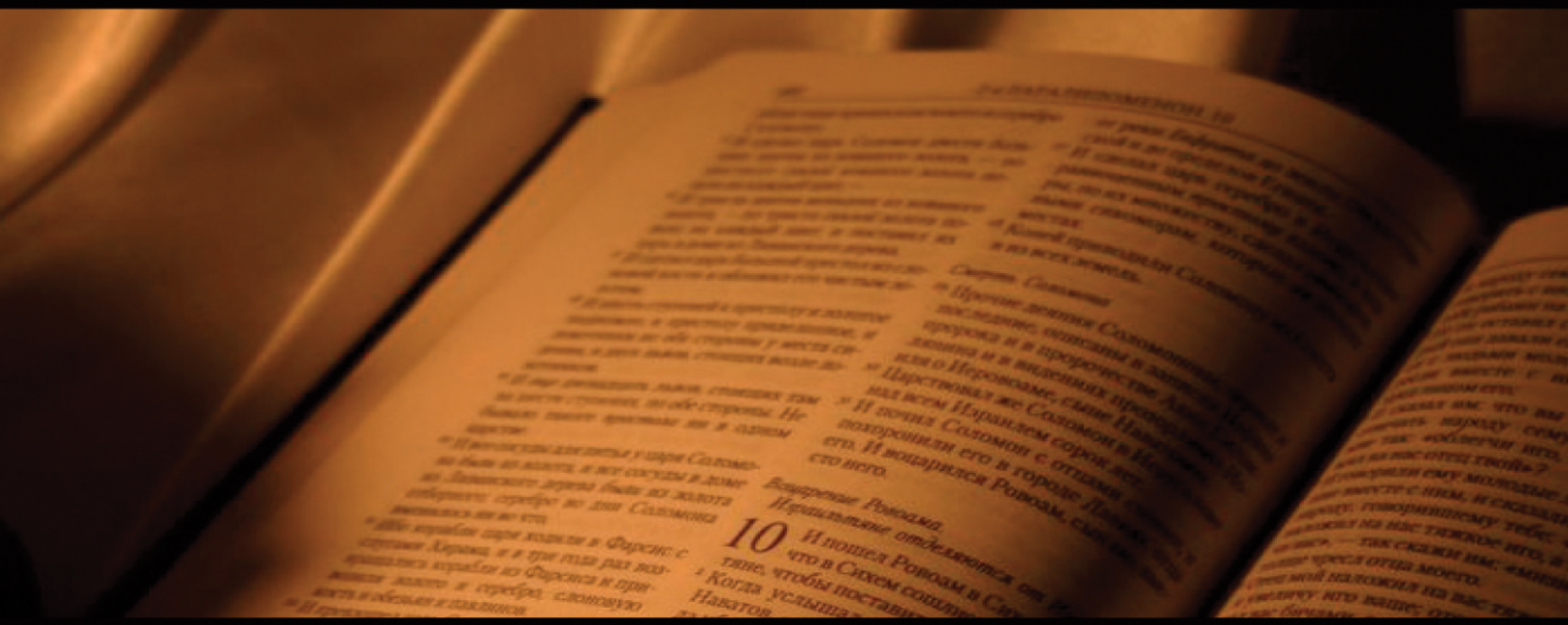
BISHOP EDIR MACEDO

How to do the Work of God



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Luke 10.2

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How to do the Work of God

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ePub: Luis Bernardino

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"So we, being many, are one body in Christ,
and individually members of one another.
Having then gifts differing according
to the grace that is given to us."

Romans 12.5,6

"For many are called,
but few are chosen."
Matthew 22.14

Introduction

The aim of this study is to biblically clarify the position a servant should occupy before his Master and before the world, and also to precisely define his role in the body of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many people have mistakenly thought that the Work of God is done exclusively on the altar. They ignore the fact that there is a multiplicity of ministries in the Church of the Lord Jesus.

In the Primitive Church, there was a concern to assign a function to every new convert within the community, for as the church grew, more people were needed to do the daily tasks.

This happened, for instance, in the daily distribution of food, when the twelve apostles used the opportunity to assemble the church and say:

“It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” Acts 6.2-4

Among the chosen to serve tables, Philip and Stephen stood out the most. The Holy Spirit used Philip in Samaria, and Stephen became the first martyr of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul also taught the Christians in Corinth that God had appointed these in the church:

"...first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues." 1 Corinthians 12.28

It is remarkable that the ministry of administrations features as part of the spiritual ministry. This ministry deals with the physical administration of the church; the ministers of the Word may even advise on the administration of the church's assets, but should not become its administrators. That's because their commitment to win and care for the souls takes priority and is non-transferable.

The Work of God is like a body – every member has its own well-defined functions. If one member does not work well together with the others, the whole body suffers and the Work of God gets stuck. The apostle Paul taught the Christians in Rome about the diversity of tasks in the Work of God and what God expects from each servant, saying:

"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." Romans 12.4-8

When a servant does not know God's will for his life, he becomes lost and consequently insecure in his faith. On the other hand, as soon as he discovers the will of God for his

life, he immediately finds strength and courage to put it into practice. From that moment on, he begins to experience success in his efforts for the glory of God.

Due to the lack of knowledge, trustworthy advice or even for simply not using their faith with intelligence, most of God’s servants unfortunately are led to actions moved exclusively by emotions. Failure and frustration come as a consequence, for their so-called faith does not meet their expectations.

"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"
Romans 1.17

Chapter 1

Conditions in relation to God

Can a blind person see the light before his eyes? No. Why not? Because he is blind. His problem is neither a lack of light nor of eyes, but his visual impairment. Likewise, the human being's greatest problem is exactly his impaired spiritual vision.

The same applies to those who are willing to do the Work of God but still have not been born of the Spirit. It is a waste of time trying to teach them how to do the Work of God if they have not had a personal experience with the Lord of the Work yet. How can one assume the position of a servant without truly being a servant? Or how can one try to serve the Lord if one has not yet been incorporated into the body of servants?

To do the Work of God means to execute His will. But how can one do God's will when one's own will is still sovereign? The first step is to deny oneself. However, this only happens when the person dies to himself and to the world – and people are not always willing to make this sacrifice!

This chapter brings to light the basic conditions necessary for a person to engage in the ministry of preaching the Gospel. Only God Himself can provide such conditions, through the Holy Spirit, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

God's vision

Not all children follow the same vision of their parents and this is also true of the children of God. Not all the children of God have understood His vision.

There can be many reasons for that, but the main one could be related to the personal, selfish goals people usually have in their hearts. If one's objectives in life are exclusively personal – such as the quality of life for himself and his family, material comfort or any other personal goals – then it becomes very hard for the Lord to endow him with His vision, since His vision includes the whole world and not just one individual or another.

It is a fact that when the Lord God chose servants in the past, He did it to benefit all, not just one or another. His vision is given to those whose lives will serve as instruments to help many. Therefore, God's servants must have the Lord's interests at heart; otherwise, they will accomplish nothing.

In the Lord's Prayer, as well as by His life example, the Lord Jesus showed us how a servant must be before his Master: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6.10). "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26.39). "Then I said, 'Behold I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God" (Psalms 40.7).

What God expects from His servants is crystal clear: 'Do My will just as My Son did.'

But does God want everyone to become a pastor? Must everyone be on the altar? Of course not! However, His servants must be willing to live their lives for the benefit of others! Just as the Lord Jesus lived for His Church, He expects His Church to live for Him. But how? By denying our personal goals in order to consider our neighbours' needs.

For example, imagine if every disciple considered his neighbour and won him for the Lord Jesus. The next day, the number of disciples would double. And on the following day, the double would double again... Thus, day after day, the world would be better than the day before. But the great problem is that selfishness has spread and contaminated even Christians. Their motto has been: 'Every man for himself and God for all.'

Unfortunately, Christianity today is more committed to itself than to others. The Primitive Church had a very different vision, as described in the Holy Scriptures:

"Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common." Acts 4.32

Some young students have been asking whether they should interrupt their studies to do the Work of God or not. The answer is contained in the question: they have not yet decided whether to serve God or not! Otherwise, they would never have asked the question in the first place. Quite the contrary. They would have been on the altar already. What still directs their hearts is the doubt about whether they will serve themselves or God. On one hand, a diploma may secure them a promising future; on the other hand, there is always a desire of faith to serve God.

They had better make up their minds before getting involved in the Work of God, for the Lord Jesus said that he who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.

The truth is that God's calling and election depend on one's personal faith, which the person shows as he acts on the

Word of God.

Many people have just mentally believed in their calling, whilst others have believed wholeheartedly and assumed their responsibility. Those who just believe mentally today may not believe tomorrow when difficulties come; but those who have assumed their calling never even consider looking back. There lies the difference between mental belief and heartfelt belief.

Jacob and Esau

The story of Jacob and Esau perfectly reflects the life of many people who are involved in the Church of the Lord Jesus today.

As the firstborn, Esau not only had the duty to succeed his father, Isaac, in looking after and developing his family, but above all he also had the privilege of being the next patriarch. The double portion of his father's inheritance was just a drop in the vast ocean of blessings contained in the rights of being the firstborn.

A patriarch from the lineage of Abraham was like an apostle in the Church of the Lord Jesus. He had the honourable task of building up a nation that was distinct from all the other nations on earth. Distinct because of their faith in the Living God, because of the righteousness and justice existing amongst its people and, finally, because of the quality of life they enjoyed being better than that of the rest of humankind.

The divine guidance based on the commandments would cause people to have a God-fearing conscience.

Consequently, mutual respect would prevail among its citizens as opposed to moral and spiritual corruption. This close relationship with God and with one another would provide the basis for a high quality of life for the entire nation. This was, in fact, what the Lord Jesus proposed to His followers when He said, *“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly”* (John 10.10).

The holy nation the patriarchs built in the past is being built today by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is called the ‘Kingdom of God’.

The pagan world of those days is the religious world of today. Just as in the past the difference in quality of life between the people of the holy nation and the pagans was evident, clear and transparent, so it must be today. This is the only way to reveal the true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. Pagans had and still have many gods and idols. Despite that, the life they live reflects the powerlessness of their deities.

All the promises God made to Abraham were passed on to the first male child, as per the rights of the firstborn. For instance, all the authority given to Abraham was transferred to Isaac, and from him on to his firstborn. The patriarch represented God’s highest authority here on earth. A word of blessing or curse from his mouth was as if God Himself had spoken it. This can be verified through the course of Israel’s history as a nation.

Abraham was the first point of reference for people on earth to know the True and Living God. He had the high privilege of being a type of ‘Lord Jesus’ in his time.

Even though Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn, he could not enjoy his birthright because he was born a slave – children of slaves were naturally slaves too. Ishmael was the result of Abraham's association with a servant; so, when Isaac was born, he became Abraham's only son. Therefore, to live in the faith of Abraham means to have the same rights and privileges he had before his God. That is why the Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, says: "Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham" (Galatians 3.7).

The common biblical reference to 'the God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Israel' should have been 'the God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Esau'. This would have been Esau's greatest glory: to be a point of reference of the Only True and Living God in heaven and on earth.

However, his vision was very restricted, limited only to the physical realm. For this reason, his principles were moulded on physical values. That was what led him to be overcome by hunger and to give up his birthright for a plate of food. Most failures in life are due to decisions based on emotions.

Esau despised his firstborn rights and, consequently, the glory of God because he relied on his abilities, his talent, his courage, and mainly on his physical strength.Defeated by hunger, he ended up selling his anointing.

Esau's renown for being a man of the field and a skilled hunter tells us enough about his character: strong, courageous, skilful in his work, and popular. In times when wild animals roamed the earth freely, those who tamed them were considered heroes. Esau was born to rule, but he went down in history as a pitiful loser. His tears of repentance were not enough to recover the blessing he lost. There are opportunities in life that knock only once; if we miss them, we shall never have them again.

His failure was due exclusively to the fact that he despised the spiritual significance of his inheritance. His physical eyes led him to make the wrong decision, which affected him for the rest of his life. The Holy Scriptures say:

“Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, ‘Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary’ [...] But Jacob said, ‘Sell me your birthright as of this day.’ And Esau said, ‘Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?’ Then Jacob said, ‘Swear to me as of this day.’ So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.” Genesis 25.29-34

Esau represents those born of the flesh; people who are not spiritual and therefore have no spiritual discernment. Esau relied on himself to face any situation, no matter how difficult it was. He was strong, brave and bold – in short, he was proud of his courageous personality. However, he completely despised the virtues of faith and that’s why he sold his birthright.

“I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?” In other words: What good is my faith in God if I do not work for myself?

Esau lost the best in life for being fleshly-minded and failing to discern the treasure hidden behind his birthright. This is the great disadvantage of those who are born of the flesh! That is why the Lord Jesus says, *“Unless one is born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”* (John 3.5).

People who are born of the flesh can only see with their physical eyes. Because they are fleshly-minded, they cannot, and will not even try to understand the spiritual things or the plan of God for their lives. All that matters to them is what their physical eyes can see. They see God as a magician, and that is why they expect immediate results... Their physical eyes see only material comfort and nothing else. But those who are born of the Spirit are not so. Quite the contrary: they are spiritual and have spiritual vision to see beyond what is material.

When a person lacks spiritual vision, he cannot foresee the final result of his decisions. This is the problem of people in general, who suffer because of their bad choices – all because they despise the wise advice from the Word of God.

Esau may have been very hungry indeed, but certainly not ‘about to die’ as he alleged. His father was a very wealthy man and would never let his favourite son die of hunger. And besides, he had a mission to fulfil as the firstborn when he succeeded his father. Therefore, he would never die without achieving the objectives expected of him.

His problem was that he despised the gift of God, the blessing of his birthright! Actually, he was despising not only his natural inheritance but also his father’s authority, inherited from his grandfather, who had received it directly from God. In short, Esau despised God Himself! Unsuspectingly, he underestimated the authority God had conferred on him.

The same has happened to many young Christians graduating from university, who once were called and chosen to be fishers of souls. They heard the calling, but moved by the glory of this world and the eagerness for economic success, they ended up despising the privilege of

serving God in order to serve themselves. Some have postponed their response to their divine calling because they want first to secure their future by learning a profession, in case their calling and spiritual authority do not work.

The New Birth

The new birth is the first requirement for a person to do the Work of God. It is closely related to the calling and election of those who will serve on the altar or in the court.

A greedy, selfish, self-centred heart can never serve as an instrument of the Holy Spirit. In order to serve God, one must have the character of a servant rather than just pretend to be a servant. He who searches the hearts knows very well those who belong to Him.

The Lord Jesus is Lord only of those who serve Him. A servant of God must have His nature in order to be fit to serve Him; otherwise, it will be impossible.

How can a person have God’s nature? In the same way God is spirit, it is vital that His children and servants also be spirit. This can only happen when the person is born of the Holy Spirit.

A person who has been reborn is a new creation spiritually, someone who has been regenerated by the Spirit of God. This has nothing to do with joining a Christian church as a new member, much less with being someone extremely religious or zealous. It is about being a new creature on the inside, carrying the invisible image of God within and showing it naturally without. This involves the emptying of

oneself and a total change of character; one's thoughts become aligned with God's. In practice, this means to have the mind of the Lord Jesus, which enables obedience to the Word of God. This transformation happens exclusively by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit in the innermost part of a person.

Unless one goes through this experience, it is impossible for one to do the will of God, for his old nature is an obstacle to it (see Romans 8.1-17).

It is noteworthy that the Lord Jesus considers the new birth a basic condition for a person to see and enter the Kingdom of God:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3.3)

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3.5)

Those who have not been born again, but have accepted the Lord Jesus as Lord and Saviour and live according to the Word of God, are saved. However, they have not yet seen or entered the Kingdom of God. They are still on the outside and running the risk of losing their salvation, for only those who have been born of God can really overcome the world (1 John 5.4).

What must one do then in order for the Holy Spirit to perform the new birth in him?

First, he must desire the new birth wholeheartedly, with all his strength and all his mind; after that, he must seek it.

The Bible teaches that the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him (2 Chronicles 16.9). Even though there are many people inside the church, unfortunately their hearts still remain outside – hence why the Holy Spirit has not yet been able to perform the new birth in them.

Zacchaeus was a notorious thief, but having heard about the Lord Jesus, he manifested a strong desire to see Him. His great thirst to know the Lord Jesus caused the Holy Spirit to act and plan his encounter with His Son.

When a person really desires to be born again, there is a natural thirst within him to seek the presence of God with all his strength. In response to this strong desire, the Holy Spirit comes and reveals His Son to him. This is exclusively God's doing, but it begins in the heart of the person who relentlessly yearns to know the Lord Jesus.

Born of the Flesh

The Lord Jesus said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* (John 3.5,6).

What is the meaning of being born of water, of the flesh, and of the Spirit? We all know that both water and flesh are material elements of the physical world, whilst the Spirit refers to the Person of God, who is a being of the spiritual world. It is quite simple to understand a birth that happens in the physical world. However, only those who are spiritual can understand a birth that happens in the spiritual world.

If a person is born of the flesh, he is flesh; if he is born of the water, he has a ‘watery’ character. Both the one born of the flesh and the one born of the water keep the same fleshly nature, which is manifested through their attitudes, thoughts and behaviour. A person who is fleshly-minded or watery nurtures within himself thoughts that are inherent to his own human nature. The fleshly-minded does not value the things of the Spirit, just as the spiritually-minded does not value the things of the flesh. They belong to two distinct worlds that oppose one another.

In the physical world, the first has the advantage over the rest. The least serves the greatest, the greatest is exalted, the least is humiliated – and what prevails is the law of the strongest. However, in the spiritual world, the last becomes first, the greatest serves the least, the humiliated is exalted – and what prevails is the law of the Spirit.

There was a sorcerer in Samaria whose name was Simon. He used to con the people of that city with his magic. When he saw the signs and miracles God performed through Philip, he marvelled and quickly embraced the faith, being baptised in water straight away.

Later on, when Peter and John placed their hands on the new converts, they received the baptism with the Holy Spirit immediately. Then, Simon the sorcerer offered the apostles money to have the same power in his hands (Acts 8.9-24). He is a good example of the character of those born of the flesh, whose eyes can only see physical things.

Though he had embraced the Christian faith, he still kept his personal goals in agreement with his fleshly nature, which demanded from him economic profits and made him think only about material benefits.

One born of the flesh will always be flesh until the day he is born of the Spirit. Vast amounts of biblical knowledge will not change his fleshly nature. Only the intervention of the Holy Spirit can make him be born of God. Meanwhile, he will be continually subject to the interests and lusts of his fleshly old creature. Because of his earthly nature, the fleshly-minded has no pleasure in spiritual things. On the contrary, his life is limited to seeking to satisfy the whims of his fleshly nature. His vision is materialistic, his heart is individualistic, and his feelings are committed to pleasing himself. He cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God, for they can only be discerned spiritually. Because he is fleshlyminded, he is always concerned and obsessed about material comfort. He cannot have eyes for the spiritual world; therefore, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

The opposite happens with the one born of the Spirit. Everyone born of the Spirit is spirit. Therefore, he is always subject to the passions of his spiritual nature. His objectives are aligned with the objectives of the Spirit of God, including: a passion for the presence of God, a passion for souls, and a passion to do the will of God. In short, his principles and feelings are essentially spiritual. After all, his nature is spiritual.

Here lies the great difference between those born of the flesh and those born of the Spirit.

The birth of the flesh may even be considered the first step towards the birth of the Spirit, for the person gets to know the Word of God one way or another. But to enter the Kingdom of God, one must be born of water and of the Holy Spirit. To be born of water or of the flesh, which happens when the person hears and accepts the Word of God, is not enough. We may even consider this stage as a period when

one is ‘pregnant’ of the Spirit, although flesh can never become spirit.

The preaching of the Gospel goes on cleansing its hearers as it breaks taboos, tears down cheap and worldly philosophies, removes fleshly thoughts and gradually opens their spiritual eyes until the carnal being is dead and a new spiritual being is born. As time goes by, fleshly thoughts are replaced by spiritual ones. This is the first step to enter the Kingdom of God. Of course, this period of ‘pregnancy’ by the Spirit is not the same as a woman’s gestational period of nine months. The time it takes depends on a person’s readiness to surrender his heart to the Lord Jesus completely. Hence Paul wrote to the Christians in Galatia, saying: *“…for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you”* (Galatians 4.19).

Until such time when the Lord Jesus is formed in the person, the same cannot have His eyes, much less His mind.

He who is born of the flesh may be convinced of the truth, may love and seek to know it more and more, but he cannot gather enough strength to practise it. His faith is theoretical. As long as his faith in the Word of God is theoretical, its benefits will also be theoretical.

Many people have been convinced of the Bible truths by some miracles they have achieved through faith in the name of the Lord Jesus. Consequently, they joined a Christian denomination as in recognition of the blessing received. These include those who remain in the church because they are afraid of losing the blessing received. But within them, there is no real commitment to the Lord Jesus.

This explains why most Christians have not enjoyed the benefits promised in the Bible. They have been born of the

flesh, therefore they are flesh. Their nature remains fleshly and not spiritual as God's. That is why they cannot materialise their faith in the Word of God. In other words, they cannot practise it.

The worst of all is when the one born of the flesh is relaxed about his shameful situation. That's because he will see those who have been born of God progressing and, consequently, he will nurture envy and bear other works of the flesh within himself and among the congregation.

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5.19-21

In summary: born of the flesh is the one who has accepted Jesus as his Saviour, has been baptised in water, is more or less faithful in practising his faith, but cannot live by faith.

Born of the Spirit

The greatest glory of the one who is born of the Spirit is to have God's Own nature, that is, to be spirit. Having his origin in the Spirit of God means he has God's spiritual DNA. He is a divine spirit.

A person born of the Spirit hears and understands God's voice, knows His will and can discern between good and evil.

A spirit does not have a body. Although he who is born of the Spirit still has the same physical body, he is not subject to its limitations. He can enter the presence of God anytime, anywhere, for he is not subject to the limits of matter or physical space. He has freedom of movement – he can come and go into the presence of God in spirit.

The apostle Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, goes even further when he says: *"...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus"* (Ephesians 2.6,7).

Notice that those born of God are already sitting in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. But how is that possible? Only when a person is born of the Spirit does he fall under this condition and understand his new position. He who is born of the flesh does not know or even have a clue what that means, for he is flesh.

The born of the Spirit has the power to live in Spirit and not give in to the lusts of the flesh. It is the case of the eunuch, for example. The Lord said, *"For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it"* (Matthew 19.12).

There are people who make themselves eunuchs; in other words, they sacrifice their sexual lusts to reach the Kingdom of Heaven.

When a person is not born of the Spirit, he cannot understand the things of God. The Lord Jesus said that he

who is born of the Spirit is spirit, that is, the born of the Spirit is spiritual. He has a spiritual nature, he sees through spiritual eyes, he has spiritual understanding – in short, there is a close relationship between him and God, for God is spirit!

There is no point trying to convince a natural person of spiritual things. It is simply a waste of time. It is like trying to explain the things of life to an irrational animal. It may learn some basic things, but we can never expect much from it because it is irrational. Its nature is irrational, therefore it cannot develop its reasoning. So is a person who has not been born of the Spirit. His nature is fleshly, as well as everything else in him. He may even understand some biblical teachings, but he will never be able to grasp God's vision.

Paul calls him who is not born of the Spirit 'natural man'. He said, *"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"* (1 Corinthians 2.14).

Spiritual things are discerned spiritually and they are intended only for spiritual people. Therefore, there is no point in searching for spiritual education in Bible colleges in order to acquire spirituality, as this will never happen. Of course, if in such colleges there is time set apart to seek God's face, then no doubt the miracle of spiritual birth can happen. But theological studies can never qualify people for the new birth, *"For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe"* (1 Corinthians 1.21).

The Meaning of Birth

Birth is the beginning of a new life in the world. This is what happens to the one born of the Spirit. He is a new being in an invisible spiritual world – the Kingdom of God.

A newborn baby has all the appropriate characteristics to come to this world. Its environment requires him to breathe its air, feel its heat, in short, to live according to its conditions. The world does not adapt to him, rather he must adapt to the world wherein he was born. Even the Creator Himself had to assume a physical body just like ours in order to come to the world and save us. The Lord Jesus is the Word that *"became flesh and dwelt among us"* (John 1.14). This means that He could not come to this world in a heavenly body. He had to humble Himself and assume a fleshly, physical body in order to manifest Himself in this world.

The Kingdom of God is not different. It is a spiritual world where there is one Lord and King: the Lord Jesus Christ. To enter this kingdom, one must be spirit in order to assume its characteristics. God is spirit; therefore, His Kingdom is also spiritual. Being spirit is a prerequisite to enter this kingdom. Hence the need to be born of the Spirit and have God's nature in order to live in the Kingdom of God.

The Child of God

A child of God cannot be conceived by blood, by flesh or by the will of man. In order to be a true child of God, one must be conceived by God Himself. Otherwise, he cannot be considered a child of God.

The biggest lie ever told is that ‘everyone is a child God’. In truth, everyone is a creature of God, but not everyone is His child. Child is the one who is conceived by his parents! Jesus came to the world as the Son of God because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a young virgin.

The Jews condemned Him for declaring Himself to be the Son of God. In Jewish thinking, back when there was no Catholic Church, to be the Son of God meant to be equal with God. So much so that, when Jesus declared Himself the Son of God sitting at the right-hand of the Almighty, the high priest protested firmly and, tearing up his clothes, he said, ‘He blasphemed!’ After that, they sentenced Him to death.

Every child has his parents’ characteristics; maybe a little bit more from his mother or from his father, but there is always a physical and/or spiritual resemblance inherited. A child of God definitely has His characteristics, even though he lives, in a way, under the circumstances of this world.

No newborn baby can be considered a child of God, even if he or she is the child of a child or servant of God. Even though all children are innocent and belong to God, still they are not born automatically as children of God. Infant baptism, such as practised in the Catholic Church and others, has no biblical foundation and therefore carries no spiritual benefit. The teaching that says children must be baptised in order not to remain pagan is a blatant lie. No one can be considered a child of God unless he is conceived and born of God Himself through the Person of the Holy Spirit.

Authority in the Spirit

The born-of-God Christian has God’s nature built within himself and is ready to assume the Father’s authority in this world just like Adam did before his fall. The unclean spirits do not submit to those who are born of the flesh because they are flesh. The spiritual nature of the former prevails over the fleshly, physical nature of the latter. The spirit is superior to the physical body. But when it comes to a spirit with a divine nature, unclean spirits recognise its authority and superiority. They must submit to this authority because it is divine.Demons obey the voice of the one who is born of the Spirit because they see God’s authority in him.

When unclean spirits submit to the voice of a bornof-God Christian, they, in effect, go against the voice of the devil, their father. Normally, they blindly obey the devil’s voice. But when they hear the command of the one who is born of God, they must disobey their father, the devil, to obey the one whose filial authority comes from God his Father – even if that provokes the devil’s wrath!

Then comes the following question: Does the born of God enjoy authority over demons only? No! A thousand times no! The disciples had not even been born of the Spirit, and yet they had already been given authority over all evil:

“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” Luke 10.19

Now imagine when the disciples were born of the Spirit! Was this authority invalidated? Weakened? Did it expire? Of course, not! On the contrary! After the new birth, the child of God acquires His nature. All spirits of hell, including the devil, are subject to the authority of those who have the divine nature!

All the power of Satan, that is, all the power of evil, is under our feet! If we do not trample on evil using the authority our Lord gave us, then it will stay active and do us harm. If we do not overcome evil, it is because we do not confront it with our divine authority. Trying to avoid or ignore evil is only a demonstration of weakness. All evil is under our feet already and all we have to do is to trample on it! We must crush it.

The Lord Jesus calls us to resist the devil with His authority. Then he will flee from us. *“Resist the devil and he will flee from you”* (James 4.7).

The principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual forces of evil are under Satan’s command and authority to steal, kill and destroy, just as the Lord Jesus said. But they can only do that to those who are in the kingdom of darkness. They can’t touch those who are in the Kingdom of God! Satan’s authority in this world is limited to affect only those who have not been born of the Spirit.

“We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.” 1 John 5.18

We see then that personal achievements, economic success, a well-established family, children set in good path or material possessions are not a person’s greatest glory. One day, all these things will come to an end. The greatest glory of all is the one that lasts throughout eternity; the one blessing that the Holy Spirit Himself performs inside the human heart: the new birth. The glory of one who is born of the Holy Spirit is the greatest of all honours because it is the birth of a child of God.

The birth of the Lord Jesus was the greatest manifestation of God's glory here on earth. The entire heavenly host rejoiced as never before. The Bible says that "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest'" (Luke 2.13,14). The same joy is repeated in heaven whenever a sinner abandons his evil ways. The Lord Jesus said, *"I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance"* (Luke 15.7).

He who is born of the flesh is flesh. He is a corruptible body subject to decay, which will eventually be destroyed. But he who is born of the Holy Spirit is spirit, and belongs to God's world; therefore, he is eternal. The born again, or born of God, belongs to God; that is, he is a child of God just as the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God!

Being a child of God means being issued out of God. This is exactly the greatest glory a person can have. Only those who have been conceived by God have His divine and eternal nature. In addition, they are also the only ones who enjoy exclusive access to His holy presence, since they too are spirit. *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"* (John 4.24).

When the born of God carefully considers his position before God and before the world, he sees that all his problems are less than nothing, no matter how big they are. So much so that the apostle Paul got to the point of saying: *"Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ [...] Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I*

press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3.8,13,14).

The apostle Peter also, evaluating the weight of our glory, said: *“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.”* (1 Peter 2.9)

Every apostle expressed their understanding of the new birth, but it is in the words of the Lord Jesus that we realise its unlimited possibilities: *“Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”* (Matthew 25.34).

The born of God faces all obstacles in life without losing this spiritual vision. Why? Because he is spirit!

A person who is born of the flesh is like the moon, which is visible in the sky only because it receives sunlight. In other words, the moon depends on the sun for light. And even then, its luminosity does not reflect the reality, as its other half remains in complete darkness. Likewise, the born of the flesh also reflects some light when he is among those born of the Spirit; but when he is alone, he manifests his dark side.

The same does not happen to him who is born of the Spirit. Because he is spirit, he is like the sun; he has his own light. The sun does not depend on any other star, but on itself. So is he who is born of the Spirit: he is independent, he is free, and he is of God! This means that he depends on no one but himself and, above all, God.

No one who wants to do the Work of God should be formally appointed without having experienced the new birth.

Because when he goes through the desert, he will need ‘his own light’. If he is of moon-type, he will give up… but if he is of sun-type, he will stand firm and overcome.

Virtues of the one born of the Spirit

What does God expect from His children? The fruit of the Spirit identify the born of the Spirit. Each component of the spiritual fruit reflects the totality of God’s character. They are:

Love - love for God and love for others just as one loves oneself. It is exceedingly greater than just a simple feeling. It is God Himself working inside the person, making him feel what He feels.

Joy - the joy of the Spirit is spiritual and constant, but the joy of the flesh is ordinary and brief. This spiritual joy shows in one’s face as a friendly, gentle and peaceful expression towards everyone around him, including unbelievers. The born of God gives off His perfume naturally, “For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing” (2 Corinthians 2.15). An ill will is one of the characteristics of those who are oppressed, whilst spiritual kindness is a natural joy come from God. We cannot expect or demand from the born of the flesh something inherent only to the born of the Spirit.

Peace - the born of God exhales His peace because the Prince of Peace lives in him. Even if he is in the middle of a war, there is perfect peace inside him. The Lord Jesus promised, *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be*

troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14.27). Peace is one of the most striking characteristics in the life of the born of God.

Longsuffering - the born of God never breaks down when facing difficulties because he is strong-minded, persistent, and patient. After all, the Spirit that lives in him is the Spirit of the Eternal. *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind"* (2 Timothy 1.7).

Kindness - the born of God has a naturally kind and easy-going character. He is always mindful of not offending anyone.

Goodness - God is goodness and mercy. Goodness is God's mark on the born of God, and so is having good eyes towards others. *"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother'"* (Zechariah 7.9).

Faithfulness - the prophet Jeremiah praised the Lord, saying: *"Great is Your faithfulness"* (Lamentations 3.23). Faithfulness is part of God's character and, consequently, a person who is born of Him also manifests the same faithful character.

Gentleness - David said, "The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalms 37.11). The Lord Jesus repeated the same promise using different words. He said, *"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"* (Matthew 5.5). Gentleness characterises well the born of God, once his calm temperament is an immediate consequence of his regeneration. This is why sheep – a peaceful animal – typify the true Christians.

Self-control - those who are born of God are mentally and emotionally balanced. They may even get angry when necessary, but they have no problem recognising their mistakes in all humbleness. They show moderation not only among brothers but also in their social behaviour.

Baptism in Water

Before being received up into heaven, the Lord Jesus gave His disciples a clear command regarding this subject. He said, *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16.15,16).

The candidate for baptism must repent of his sins before being baptised in water. From that moment on, he dies to himself and to the world. Then, he is ready for the next step, which is the baptism in water. The person’s immersion in water of baptism performed by a servant of God typifies the burial of the old nature. The subsequent emersion from the waters symbolises the person’s resurrection to a new life in communion with God.

Of course, this entire process develops through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Then, the Holy Spirit performs both miracles: the death of the old sinful nature and the birth of a new creature in Christ Jesus. The result is immediate. The transformation in our behaviour is so great that we start to live a totally different life from the one we had before.

The bad moods or difficult temper that were part of our old being disappear completely and are replaced by a new

character moulded by God, as we have seen in the last section.

When the person is baptised without having repented of his sins, the ceremony of baptism becomes meaningless. It is as if he took a bath and nothing more. His baptism did not happen and, therefore, he is still the same old creature.

Baptism in water symbolises a burial. In the same way the Lord Jesus was buried after His death, the sinner also is 'spiritually buried' after repenting, for his past is dead. Sincere repentance means death to sin. To repent means to see, hate and abandon sin.

The Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, put it like this:

"How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans 6.2-4

Newness of life involves having a good and righteous behaviour before God and others. This is referred to as the clothing of "fine linen, bright and clean" in the Book of Revelation, for "the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (Revelation 19.8).

The Lord compared the miraculous process of repenting and being baptised in water to a grain of wheat. He said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain" (John 12.24). The grain of wheat symbolises the person and the ground typifies the baptism in water. If his old sinful nature does not

die and is not buried through baptism, the person will not be able to bear fruit. He is neither fit for the altar nor for the court.

On the other hand, if he dies through repentance and is buried through baptism, he will be fruitful in the Work of God. He will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, which brings forth fruit in its season.

Baptism in water is as important as baptism in the Holy Spirit, for one complements the other. Besides, the Lord Jesus linked salvation to baptism when He said to His disciples: *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel [...] He who believes and is baptized will be saved”* (Mark 16.15,16).

Baptism in water also symbolises the circumcision of the heart. In times past, every male descendant of Abraham had to have his foreskin circumcised. God had established the circumcision as a sign of His covenant with Abraham. Today, however, under the new covenant in the blood of the Lord Jesus, the circumcision is made in the heart through the baptism in water.

The deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery and their journey towards the Promised Land were a kind of baptism for them. We can see this in two separate occasions. The first, when they crossed the Red Sea; and the second, when they crossed the Jordan River, near the city of Jericho.

Jesus and the Thief

Both baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit are requirements for the salvation of those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and still live under the terrible conditions of this world. But for people whose lives are coming to an end, the simple acceptance by faith is enough to save them. This is the case of terminally ill patients, for example. They do not need to be baptised, for they will have no time to fall into temptation or even deny their faith in the Lord Jesus, as it often happens to many who give up along the way. These are victims of persecutions, of the cares of this world, the allure of riches, bad company – in short, there are lots of ways and reasons brought by the devil into their minds in order to discourage them.

The thieves who were crucified with the Lord blasphemed against Him in the beginning, but as the hours went by, one of them recognised Jesus as the Son of God. As he cried out, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom”, the Lord Jesus immediately answered and said: “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23.43).

That man was not religious. He had lived his life as a criminal, hence why he was condemned to die on a cross, the highest penalty for criminals at the time. He was not a disciple of the Lord Jesus neither did he do works of charity. He was not baptised in water or in the Holy Spirit. However, in the last minutes of his life, he was saved. Why? Simply because he believed!

He believed in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, that is, the only Person who could save him. This is the quality of faith needed to save the soul. We call it ‘saving faith’ because it is powerful to redeem each and every sinner.

We conclude then that both the baptism in water and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are indispensable to keep the faithful steadfast in the faith and in communion with God.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

In the same way the ceremony of baptism in water involves three elements – the servant of God, the candidate and the water – the baptism with the Holy Spirit involves three persons: the Lord Jesus, the candidate and the Holy Spirit.

In the water baptism, the minister of God helps the candidate submerge in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. But in the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus is the Minister who helps the candidate submerge in His Spirit.

When John the Baptist was baptising people who repented of their sins in the Jordan River, many Jews thought John was their long expected Messiah. However, he testified of the Lord Jesus, saying: *"I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"* (Luke 3.16).

There is human participation in the baptism in water: it is the minister of God who performs it. But the baptism with the Holy Spirit is performed exclusively by the Lord Jesus. He is the Only Baptiser! Therefore, the candidates to this baptism must pray, asking the Lord Jesus to baptise them. The Lord Jesus Himself promised, *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"* (Luke 11.13).

How does the baptism with the Holy Spirit happen?

The Lord Jesus is the Baptiser with the Holy Spirit, so there are no fixed rules except that the candidate must repent of his sins. Usually, a person is blessed with this baptism when he is worshipping the Lord Jesus with all his heart, strength and understanding.

Praise is the secret to the baptism with the Holy Spirit, although the Holy Scriptures give account of new converts being baptised by the laying on of the apostles' hands.

"Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." Acts 8.14-17

"And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' So they said to him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.' And he said to them, 'Into what then were you baptized?' So they said, 'Into John's baptism.' Then Paul said, 'John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.' When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied." Acts 19.1-6

We see then the simplicity of faith in receiving the Holy Spirit. Those new converts did not even know that the Holy Spirit existed, and yet they received Him when the apostles laid hands on them. The same must happen in the church today! There is a mistaken idea that people must first learn a lot about the Holy Spirit in order to receive Him. So preachers usually teach exhaustively on the subject. But this is not necessary! The first Christian converts were sealed with the Holy Spirit as soon as they heard about Him for the first time.

Maybe there is greater unbelief in those who preach the Word than in those who hear it.

Let’s see then a few reasons that can impede a person from receiving the Holy Spirit:

1. Anxiety to speak in tongues.
2. Concern for the salvation of family members or other people.
3. Requests for material blessings mentioned at the time of praising.
4. Lack of sincere repentance.
5. Grudges against someone.
6. Personal vanity. There are people who wish to receive the Holy Spirit just because others have received Him.
7. Fear of receiving an evil spirit instead of the Holy Spirit.
8. Self doubts about one’s merits or readiness to receive the Holy Spirit.
9. The person has not yet been completely free spiritually.
10. Hidden sins or a guilty conscience.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit happens from the moment the candidate manifests a strong desire to save souls. I doubt there is even one person who is passionate about saving souls who is not immediately sealed with the Holy Spirit. This is the main reason there is baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus said,

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1.8

Notice that the purpose of God’s seal is to enable the disciples of the Lord Jesus to be His witnesses. Receiving the Holy Spirit is a primary and indispensable requirement for those who want to spread the Gospel of power.

Therefore, the person who wants to receive the Holy Spirit must first have this objective in his heart in order for God to visit him. Once this requirement is met, he should get into the spirit of praise and concentrate on finding words of worship, honour and adoration to the Lord Jesus. And when the person finds no more words to express his adoration and gratitude for his salvation, the Lord Jesus breathes His Spirit on him so that his praise can be perfect. In this moment, the person is overwhelmed by an unspeakable spiritual joy that leads him to tears and natural expressions of unintelligible words. Even though he cannot understand his own vocabulary, he does not find it strange or lose his concentration whilst praising. In spirit, he speaks mysteries and words that only God and His angels can understand.

It is important to know that one must not make any kind of effort to speak in tongues. This is God’s gift and only He can perform the wonder of speaking in tongues. *“For him who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no*

one understands him; however, in spirit he speaks mysteries" (1 Corinthians 14.2).

Initially, a person may say many or only a few words when speaking in tongues, but normally they are repeated. The most important thing is that speaking in tongues is an evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit (see Mark 16.17; Acts 2.3,4; 10.46 and 19.6). However, not everyone who speaks in strange tongues is baptised with the Holy Spirit. Many people who are possessed by deceiving spirits speak in strange tongues of hell.

The tongues are an evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, the true baptism is characterised by the spiritual fruits, including one's character and conduct, the way he speaks and dresses, his choice of friends – in short, showing discretion in every way. This combination of attitudes makes him different from others who are not sealed by the Holy Spirit.

It is obvious that when a person receives the Holy Spirit, he will be different from others who have not received Him. Most candidates to the baptism of God think it is all about speaking in tongues. For this reason, deceiving spirits trick many people. They take advantage of their ignorance and try to pass for God, giving them the 'gift of tongues' from hell. That is why many people speak in strange tongues (which are strange indeed) and even prophesy, but their lives do not match the faith they say they have. Their lives are bitter, they are financially, physically and sentimentally tied up, but they still try to save others when they need salvation themselves.

Whilst baptism in water seals the covenant the person makes with God, the baptism with the Holy Spirit seals the

covenant God makes with the person. One complements the other.

Baptism in water formalises a personal decision of faith. It is like marriage, where a person gives up his freedom of being single, that is, he dies to his own will and to the life he had before, he dies to his parents and brothers, dies to his friends – in short, he dies to the world and is hidden away in marriage. The couple starts living for one another. She gives up her easy life in the house of her parents because of the love she has for her husband. Likewise, baptism in water is the giving up of everything because of one's faith in the Lord Jesus

Christ. It is the burial of one's own will for the sake of God's will. It is the giving up of one's freedom in order to become a servant of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus called the crowd of His followers along with His disciples and said, *"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it"* (Mark 8.34,35). Again He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mark 10.29,30).

On the other hand, the baptism with the Holy Spirit is God's decision. It is the Lord Jesus' response to the person's renunciation and complete surrender to Him. It is the seal of union between the person and God. In the same way a gold ring is the seal of matrimony, the baptism with the Holy

Spirit is the seal of the covenant between God and the person.

As a ring on one's finger identifies the commitment he has with another person, God's gifts and fruits in a person identify his commitment with God.

In practice, a person who has not yet been sealed by the Holy Spirit has a passive faith. He is complacent and even accepts his failures in life as something normal. He even thinks that his poor-quality life is God's will. But the person who is sealed by the Holy Spirit has an active faith and is like an erupting volcano... He is always burning inside and manifesting his faith outside with tongues of fire, like a volcano's lava.

His faith is on fire, and God's promises are a never-ending treasure. Therefore, there is no evil force that can defeat him! Not even principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual hosts of wickedness altogether can obstruct his way, because inside him is the Spirit of the Living God! He carries within him an unrestrained revolt against the growth of the empire of darkness. And in one way or another, he fights off this growth by spreading the living Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

He has God's character, so he no longer cares about his life, his future or his family's future. He knows that everything he intends to be, everything he has or intends to have, is on the altar. Life in the world has no meaning for him because he lives for his Lord. He is always burning on the altar of God as a living sacrifice.

Because he fiercely fights evil, his victories are a natural consequence, though the struggle surely is tough.

The sentiment of faith that we have died in Christ, been buried through baptism in water and then raised up again with Him, is constantly renewed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The life of a sealed servant is hidden with the Lord Jesus, and that is why his will is to do God's will.

When a person is truly baptised with the Holy Spirit, he has only one thought: to serve God with all his heart, all his might and all his understanding.

The Holy Spirit said through Paul, *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God"* (Colossians 3.1-3).

"Do not fear any of those things which you are about
to suffer [...] Be faithful until death,
and I will give you the crown of life."
Revelation 2.10

Chapter 2

Conditions in relation to oneself

The first condition for a person to do the Work of God relates to the Lord of the Work. And in this regard, we have already seen the urgent need to receive the Holy Spirit, for without Him it is impossible to do God's Work properly. The second condition relates to oneself.

Faith is the tool of God's servants. Therefore, it is essential to do whatever it takes to develop and protect this faith. Every servant of God must have his own faith well defined and established so other people's 'leaven' will not influence it.

Faith is something strictly personal. It echoes the voice of the Holy Spirit deep down inside a person's soul. And when this happens, the person does not ask anyone what to do, for he knows what God is asking of him. For example, when Paul was called to preach salvation among the Gentiles, he did not consult flesh or blood, neither did he go up to Jerusalem to ask advice from those apostles who were more experienced than him. Rather, following his personal conviction, he went immediately to the regions of Arabia (see Galatians 1.16,17). In other words, whilst the first apostles limited themselves to the borders of Jerusalem, Paul, passionate about saving souls and moved by his own faith, departed for the difficult regions of Arabia. That is the kind of faith the Lord Jesus demands from His disciples. Faith without questions, such as: Why me? How will it be? Where will I live? Who will help me? Can I bring my maid along? What about my dog?

The Servant

What characterises a servant? A servant is characterised by submission, dedication and surrender of life in total service to God. The Lord Jesus is Lord only of those who serve Him. The Holy Spirit can guide only those who obey His voice. Servant is the one who serves!

The fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit are the consequences of a life dedicated to the Lord Jesus. It is quite true that servants in the world must fulfil certain requirements as determined by their masters in order to secure their rights and privileges. But the servants of the Lord Jesus do not worry about their rights and privileges because just the fact that they are serving the Lord Jesus is already their greatest glory. To serve the Lord Jesus is the most glorious privilege in the world, and very few are those who take part in this glory. And it is the Father Himself who honours those who serve Him, as the Lord said: *"If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor"* (John 12.26).

The Fear of the Lord

When we talk about the fear of the Lord, we are referring to the character of servants who are born of God. When the Holy Spirit gives birth to His children, He puts inside them such a feeling that naturally prompts them to turn away from sin. This natural holy fear is what enables them to live life separated from evil.

It is important to say that this spiritual ability does not take away from us the right to exercise our free will. Even after we are sealed with the Holy Spirit and start living in total surrender to Him, God will never force us to do His will. This is when the fear of God reveals itself. It makes us aware of

what does and what does not please Him, and then leaves us to make our own decision.

The Lord never imposes His will on us, because He respects ours. Free will is maintained even when under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He does not impose anything, but inspires and shows His will – and those who are servants naturally obey it.

Of course, this total freedom in the Holy Spirit is subject to the following natural law: *"For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap"* (Galatians 6.7). The awareness that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6.23) restrains our fleshly lusts and, consequently, helps us to avoid the practice of sin.

God-fearing servants have a great zeal in their souls, and this zeal is reflected in the zeal they have for the Work of God. When there is fear of God in the heart, evidently there is a natural aversion to sins. As it is written, *"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil" and "By the fear of the Lord one departs from evil"* (Proverbs 8.13; 16.6).

When there is lack of fear of God, a person's spiritual life gets out of control, and then their downfall is inevitable. Lack of fear in the heart is often linked to the failures experienced by many Christians. A minor sin today, another tomorrow, and then suddenly faith gets cold and the fear of God disappears, thus giving room to doubt. And doubt is what makes one weak before the armies of hell.

The Desert

There are two kinds of desert: man-led and God-led. A man-led desert is arrived at by man's own conduct, and its purpose is to punish him for his faults. This is the case, for

example, of a person who is imprisoned for robbery; or the one who had an accident because he was driving whilst drunk, and so on.

When a person goes through a human desert, he often blames God for his unfortunate situation. But he forgets that he is in the desert exclusively by his fault. It was he himself who headed for the desert! The Word of God has taught and warned us about being careful with the seeds we sow. The fruits depend on the quality of the seeds sown. If a person despises the knowledge and practice of the Word of God, then what does God have to do with the deserts that person leads himself to? He teaches us: “For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6.7).

The Lord God has given us intelligence and ability to decide what kind of future we want for us and for our children. If we sow obedience to His Word, we will reap the fruits of this obedience. But if we despise it, its promises will also despise us!

On the other hand, a God-led desert is arrived at by the hand of the Holy Spirit. Its purpose is not to punish, but rather to prepare a servant for the work he has been called to do. Throughout history, we see God leading the patriarchs, prophets and leaders of Israel to their own desert before they could be used. The Lord Jesus is the most evident example of that. After being baptised in water and receiving the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit Himself led Him to the desert to be tempted.

Moses is another typical example. He lived his first forty years, as a prince in Egypt. The following forty years, he lived in the desert as a servant to his fatherin-law. And only after this period of preparation, did he live his last forty years as a true servant of God.

The journey through God’s desert is proportional to the greatness of the work to be done. In other words, the greater the work God has for a servant, the tougher will be the desert He will lead him through.

If the desert is a mandatory requirement to achieve eternal salvation, much more to do the Work of God – of course! For a person to convert to the Lord Jesus, he needs to be free from himself and from the demons that have been working in his life. There is a real war he has to fight for himself. However, when he makes himself available to serve God and embraces the cause of fighting for other people’s salvation, then obviously he will face the number of demons multiplied by the number of people he wants to save.

If personal salvation has the price of denying one’s own life, imagine the salvation of dozens, hundreds, thousands, millions and billions! In other words: the greater the number of people to be reached, the greater will be the sacrifice of self-denial and, consequently, the greater the desert.

Now, it is easier to understand the reason for sacrifices such as fasting, prayers, persecutions, self-denial, injustices, humiliation, in short, for God’s desert. If the one God called does not endure the spiritual pressures of the desert and flees, surely he cannot serve as God’s chosen. If he cannot endure the difficulties of the desert the Spirit of God leads him to, how will he be able to help others in their respective deserts?

Besides, there are no written or oral tests to know whether the spiritual condition of the candidates who are willing to do the Work of God meets the requirements or not. It is imperative for them to pass through the desert in order to determine whether they are chosen or not.

Moses did not know that he had been chosen and that he was being prepared, but the Lord Jesus did.

The Altar or the Court

The difference between the work on the altar and the work in the court is in the level of commitment and dedication applied to them. We can see this difference already in the physical appearance of the altar, because it stands out among all the other places in the temple.

The altar is a high place where sacrifices are offered, and that is why it cannot be compared to the court or be level with it. It points to Someone who is above everything. Noah, for example, built an altar to the Lord (Genesis 8.20). It was not out of personal intuition or by his relatives' advice that he built an altar to offer sacrifice. It was God who guided Noah on how to please Him, because He saw his heartfelt gratitude for being delivered, along with his family, from the flood. *"And [he] took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma"* (Genesis 8.20,21). The same happened when Abraham built an altar to the Lord (Genesis 12.7). The other patriarchs, such as Isaac and Jacob, also built altars to offer sacrifices every time the Lord appeared to them.

When the sacrificial offering was very special, the altar would be the mountain itself. That was the case of Isaac, who was offered on Mount Moriah, David's sacrifice on Araunah's threshing floor, and Elijah's sacrifice on Mount Carmel – all of which symbolised the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on Calvary.

The court typifies the Church of the Lord Jesus. The court's foundations were made of bronze, which symbolised the

Church’s stability regardless of the political systems in force in the world. When Peter, led by the Holy Spirit, declared that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the Lord answered and said, *“On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matthew 16.16-18).

This promise provides a guarantee to the true servants that winning souls is possible under any circumstances, plus the added assurance that there are no closed doors. When a person is born of God, he sees the difficulties as opportunities, for the Lord of the work is a Living and Powerful God.

Sin

In essence, sin means to break the Law of God. It is the disobedience to God’s Word.

The Lord does not impose anything on anyone, but in order to have communion with Him, one must submit to His instructions.

A person can only have access to the fullness of life as planned by God when this person practises the supernatural faith. This supernatural faith is an assurance bestowed upon the humble in spirit. The harmful effect of sin is in the fact that it brings doubt, which undermines assurance. Doubt neutralises the actions of faith; and where there is no faith, there is no salvation. That is the reason sin leads to eternal death.

The most important tool of a man of God is faith in action. His communion with the Holy Spirit depends on it. If he commits adultery, for example, he immediately interrupts the exercise of his faith and comes under the influence of

doubt. Sure enough, his level of faith goes down and the level of doubt goes up, swallowing up his faith. And then, how can his work of faith survive?

Faith depends on a good conscience. If the conscience of the man of God is guilty, how can his preaching succeed and produce salvation? Without conformity to moral principles, it is impossible to act out and develop a supernatural faith. One may even enjoy an apparent success initially (and can count on the devil's help for that), but in the end the damage will be incalculable.

It is easy to understand this. We only have to look at the heroes of faith who lived in the past. Noah was the only man in his time whose character was blameless. Despite widespread corruption overtaking people all around him, he found favour in the eyes of God. Why? His story is told in one line: "Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6.9). His behaviour caused God to choose him as a suitable seed to start a new generation.

Abraham was no different. His faithfulness to his wife revealed his character. The same happened to Isaac, Job, Daniel, and others. They were upright men, endowed with supernatural faith to execute the will of God.

Every sin is a sin – be it small, medium or big. Because God is so Pure, Holy and True, He cannot stand any kind of sin, even if it is the most irrelevant one. He cannot be associated with sin, let alone with a person who lives in sin. As the Holy Scriptures say: *"Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the*

beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3.6-8

No matter how small a sin may be, it is enough to take a person to the lake of fire and burning sulphur. On the other hand, no matter how big a person's sin may be, the exercise of faith exclusively in the Lord Jesus is enough to purify the sinner. Except, of course, if the sin is against the Holy Spirit, which cannot be forgiven.

But there are different levels of sin. There are sins that are more serious than others, as there are different areas of a person's life affected by them. That is where the difference lies. There are sins that affect the flesh, others that affect the soul, and still those at the last level – the ones that affect the spirit.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ
for you all, that your faith is spoken of
throughout the whole world."
Romans 1.8

Chapter 3

Conditions in relation to others

Goodwill to help others is not enough for someone to do the Work of God. He must have the spiritual condition of a servant of God. If he has not been born of the Holy Spirit, he is not spirit and, consequently, he will not be able to pass spirit to others.

It is just like a person who invokes the spirit of the dead for help. How can this ‘spirit’ help the living if he could not even help himself whilst alive on earth? It is neither reasonable nor intelligent to consult the dead on behalf of the living!

Therefore, the feeling of compassion for souls only has value when it is inspired by the divine compassion that comes with the new birth. When this condition is fully satisfied, then the instruction of the Lord Jesus is: *“But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (Matthew 10.6). *“But He answered and said, ‘I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (Matthew 15.24).

A servant’s vision must be the same as his Lord’s. Otherwise, he is not a servant. The Lord said: “If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor” (John 12.26). But where is the Lord so that His servant may also be there? In the church? At home? Of course not! The Lord Jesus is among people who are suffering, desperate, hungry, homeless, imprisoned, dejected, abandoned, hopeless, sick, disappointed, drunk, drug addicts, in short, He is among those who labour and are heavy-laden. Therefore, our Lord is exactly where these people are, that is, in the slums and alleys, in hospitals and prisons, in the darkest and most undesirable places of this world.

The healthy do not need a doctor, but the sick do. The only goal of a person who serves the Lord is the lost – those who, somehow, are looking for salvation.

The Passion for Souls

Every servant of God fosters within himself the same sentiment felt by his Lord. And what sentiment guided our Lord? The Holy Scriptures say that *"Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people"* (Matthew 4.23).

The ministry of the Lord Jesus stood upon three tenets: teaching, preaching, and manifestation of power on behalf of the sick. This work started immediately after He had been baptised in water, in the Holy Spirit, and in the fire of the desert. In other words: as soon as He had been prepared by the Holy Spirit and approved, He went to the darkest and most undesirable places to rescue the lost souls.

The most evident characteristic of those who are truly converted is their thirst for souls, the burning desire to give to others what they have also received from God. All those who have been born of God, without exception, have the desire to win others for the Lord Jesus! It is the first sign shown by the born of God. And there is more: only the born of the Spirit are restless to see that there are still many people who have not yet been born of God.

The sad truth is that many preachers quickly become happy just to see people accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. But a person who has been born again knows that this is not enough. There must be sincere repentance in order for the Holy Spirit to work the new birth. Until such time, the work

is only straw. And when the heat of persecution comes, the straw is burnt and blown away like ashes in the wind.

Paul experienced this problem and said: *“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you”* (Galatians 4.19).

After his conversion, he was urged on by his faith and went in search of souls. He said:

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia.” Galatians 1.15-17

This is the spirit of those who have really been born of God. It is impossible to experience the pleasures of the coming world and yet be quiet about it. The Holy Spirit Himself drives the person to share his joy with other people.

Paul did not wait for any personal prophecy, any vision or spiritual preparation. He did not even consult anyone more experienced than him to know whether he should go and reach the Arab Gentiles or not. He said, “I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me.” He simply went to Arabia.

Who had told him or given him permission to preach among the Arab Gentiles? Apparently, no one! But full of the Holy Spirit, he departed, following the voice of supernatural faith, because this is the voice of God.

I remember how many times my spiritual leaders forbade me to preach the Gospel… And for fear of being considered a rebel, I kept on waiting, waiting… Probably, I would still be

waiting if I had not taken action and followed the voice of faith.

I believe many people who are born of God have been extremely careful to obey their respective spiritual leaders, but negatively so, to the point of hiding their talents. Thus, without realising it, they cooperate with the kingdom of darkness. But as Peter said, it is more important to obey the voice of God than the voice of men, even if the latter are extremely spiritual.

The vision we have received from God in regards to souls is this: The world is the battlefield between the children of Light and the children of darkness. The children of Light have received instruction and guidance from the Holy Spirit to rescue those who are in darkness. At the same time, the spirits of darkness instruct their children to destroy the children of Light. Only those who are permanently on the altar are able to win this battle. Those who are in the court can help those who are on the altar.

When the believer is not born of the Spirit, his heart is selfish and he does not worry about others.

But when he is born of the water and of the Spirit, his heart burns with desire to win souls for his Lord, for he understands that he was born to save.

The Primitive Church

There were as many problems in the Primitive Church as there are in the Church today. The same deceiving spirits that worked in those days are still working today, and will continue to work in the future. The only way to overcome

them is to lead people to a true and personal encounter with the Lord Jesus. But how?

In those days, the disciples made it a point to testify exhaustively about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. When people heard that Someone had overcome man's most terrible enemy – death –, they immediately became interested in knowing Jesus. And once they eagerly desired to know Him, the Holy Spirit would, in turn, reveal His Son to them. As a consequence, the Church would grow naturally upon a solid foundation.

But many hypocrites would mix together with the sincere, sowing seeds of discord, promoting false teachings and causing a series of problems to the development of the Church. This was particularly bad because, by that time, the written doctrines related exclusively to the Old Testament. The Gospels, the beginning of the Church, the apostolic letters and the Book of Revelation came only a few decades later. Therefore, the first Christians had no access to apostolic guidance as we have today. Their Bible consisted only of Jewish writings.

That was when the Holy Spirit chose Paul, a Jew, *"circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless"* (Philippians 3.5,6), to guide the new converts as to how they should behave according to the new Christian faith.

Paul's mission was similar to Moses' when he led the children of Israel. What Moses had received from the Lord to give to the Jewish people, Paul received to give to the Christians. Therefore, even though the apostolic letters

carry some of his personal opinions, most of them contain revelations coming directly from the Spirit to His Church.

The Zeal for the House of the Lord

The zeal for the house of the Lord is not just about keeping it clean, since any unbeliever can do that. It is about caring for it spiritually – the attention given to the weary and heavy-laden who enter its doors daily seeking spiritual protection, comfort, consolation, deliverance, in short, in search of faith to overcome their doubts and fears. Therefore, it is the duty of every servant of God to be ready and fully able to care for these people who are suffering.

This is exactly why God has poured out His Spirit without measure upon His servants. He knows that we can do nothing by our own abilities, but once we are sealed with the Spirit of God, there will be nothing too difficult or impossible to be solved.

The Lord said, *“Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully”* (Jeremiah 48.10). The word ‘deceitfully’ here is also translated ‘carelessly’ or ‘in a slack manner’. Eli, the priest, is an example of that. He had two sons: Hophni and Phinehas, who were also priests of the Lord. But these two used to sleep with the women who served at the door of the congregation. In short, those priests were like many nowadays, who take advantage of their spiritual authority to corrupt women in the church and lead them to sin. Eli was very old, but he knew what his sons were doing. And yet, he never took any forceful action of rebuke against them. For this reason, God punished them and there was no one else in Eli’s house to keep his name in the priesthood, which was a great privilege he lost.

That curse was fulfilled in Eli’s house, and has also been fulfilled nowadays in the house of many wicked servants, so-called men of God.

When a pastor takes advantage of a sheep and commits promiscuous acts or adultery, it is as if he did it to his own daughter. For, indeed, God gave him authority to take care of that soul in the same way parents have authority to take care of their children. Therefore, members of the church must be seen as children in faith. If a pastor behaves improperly towards them, it is as if he did it to his own children.

The zeal for the house of the Lord must be an area of constant attention. God knows the intention of our heart and He will never forget how His servants conduct themselves.

The regard a pastor has for his sheep is the same he has for the Lord Jesus. If a servant wants to check the level of his relationship with his Lord, he should check his level of care for the sheep. This is how his relationship with his Lord is measured. If he is interested in his sheep’s milk, wool and meat, this means that his work for God is just for personal benefits. He does not work for the Lord out of pleasure, but out of selfish interests.

One of the reasons most of the so-called servants of God do not succeed is simply because, deep down in their hearts, they are trying to serve the creature instead of the Creator. Their minds and hearts are worried about pleasing the leadership of the church. They do this because they have personal objectives; they want to succeed in the work in order to have material comfort. They see the souls as potential donors and tithers, and not as people rescued from hell and brought into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus. But the

Spirit of God does not slumber or fall asleep. He sees everything and takes into account the intention of everyone's heart.

A servant may even be well trained and ready to serve God, but he will never succeed if his intentions are malicious and selfish. All his work is doomed to fail. But when the intention of the heart is honourable, when there is genuine thirst to win souls for the Lord Jesus, then the work flourishes, and he succeeds naturally. Yes, because more than anyone, the Holy Spirit is interested in saving and causing people to be born again. So He directs, inspires, guides, instils a vision and, above all, leads the afflicted to that sincere servant. And even if he does not have great qualities or abilities to serve, it does not matter… If he pleases the Holy Spirit, his work will prosper gloriously.

Eli's curse is like a spirit that goes from generation to generation. Unfortunately, the Work of God has been hindered because of many evil workers with such spirit.

The question is: Who am I working for, the physical church or the spiritual church? For the UCKG or for the Lord Jesus? Your answer will determine the future of your ministry. If I seek to be the bishop's 'pet', it is because I am ill-intentioned and trying to serve man, not God… But if I am determined to save souls no matter where, then I am seeking to serve the Lord Jesus.

Wisdom in Using the Word

The best professionals are always seeking to stay on top of their field in their respective areas of work. It is no different with the man of God. The Bible is his work tool and, as such,

he must use it constantly not only for reading but also for meditating.

There is a big difference between reading and meditating on the Word of God. Whilst reading it takes the reader to events that happened thousands of years ago, meditating on it reveals the will of God. Many people work hard to gather as much biblical information as possible, and even memorise chapters and verses. But, unfortunately, they hardly ever make good use of it for their lives. That's because they read the Word of God but do not meditate on it. It is by meditating on the Word of God that one finds genuine faith and learns how to make it work in practice.

Reading of the Bible per se provides historical information about biblical events and enables one to grasp the main facts. Key words, which are the most important ones, often go unnoticed. Consequently, people acquire historical knowledge, but miss the guidance of the Holy Spirit that provides practical advice for their lives. In other words, they understand the experiences of the heroes of faith in the past, but fail to discover their secrets or how they achieved success by faith.

Reading provides an overview, but it is by meditating that one can read between the lines, thus achieving an intelligent and practical faith.

When Paul was preparing Timothy for the discipleship, he said:

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2.15

To rightly divide the Word of Truth does not mean to memorise chapters and Bible verses. It means to know its

teachings, to practise them and, after that, to share them with others, to pass on the Spirit there is in it. To be able to do this, it is necessary to interpret it rationally and as a whole. Otherwise, faith will be used without intelligence and therefore will bring no profit at all.

How many there are who know the Scriptures very well but live as if they have never heard them…

Sacrifice and Faith

Sacrifice is the materialisation of faith in God. If we want to materialise God's promises in our life, first we must materialise our faith in them. That is where sacrifice comes in.

The Lord Jesus turned to the crowd that followed Him and to His disciples and said, *"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me"* (Mark 8.34). That means: "Whoever wants to follow Me and enjoy all the benefits of My company has to deny his own will." In other words, if we want to turn the benefits of God's presence into reality, we have to sacrifice our will. One thing depends on the other.

On the other hand, if we are not willing to deny ourselves, then we cannot demand the fulfilment of the benefits afforded by His presence. It's give and take! The choice is personal. Everyone has the right to decide for himself what to do with his life. What is unacceptable is to want to enjoy the benefits of faith without paying the price, that is, without sacrificing. There is no other way to profit from the benefits of faith! Either the person sacrifices towards an

objective or he sits on the fence to watch the success of those who sacrifice.

The Bible is full of examples of the heroes of faith, all of which, without exception, had to sacrifice. But modern Christians are more laid-back in their faith and want the benefits of the cross without having to pay the price of sacrifice. Instead, they prefer to use clever arguments and say that the Lord Jesus has already paid the price on Calvary, that we no longer need to sacrifice because it is written here and there, etc. Indeed, they find lots of excuses to try to block the faith of those who are ready to pay the price.

Probably, it is the spirit of Cain that guides them, that is, the spirit of envy. Their offerings do not have blood (life) either because they have no relationship with God or because they despise Him. But the worst of all is the fact that they try to stop those who are moved by a living faith and ready to sacrifice! This kind of people should be completely ignored and kept away in order to keep the purity of faith and the communion of sincere people.

We must beware of these people because the same pharisaic spirit that worked in the times of the Lord Jesus is still working today. Here is what the Lord said about this kind of “Christian”:

“How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? – but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Matthew 16.11

We must examine the life of the heroes of faith and imitate them in order to achieve the same results they achieved from God.

Rebellion (lack of fear of God)

There is nothing more hateful to God than rebellion, because it is a direct attack on His supreme authority. Rebellion was the origin of all evil and still is the reason by which many people secure their place in hell.

Rebellion is an act of disrespect to an appointed authority. And when one opposes an authority established by God, one stands against the authority of God Himself. Hence comes the curse.

When parents – Christian or not – curse their child, the child is cursed indeed. Why? Because God gave parents authority over their children. The word they pronounce over their children will come to pass. Whether they are Christian or not makes no difference, for they have authority over their children regardless of their belief.

The father is a symbol of God inside his house, just as the mother symbolises the Church of the Lord Jesus. Both of them have authority over their children, no matter if they are Christian or not.

When Paul speaks about the wife being submissive to her husband, it does not mean that the husband is better or more capable than his wife! It only means that, biblically, the responsibility for his family weighs on his shoulders. It refers, therefore, to his God-given authority in accordance with his nature as a male.

If man’s duty is to be the head, a woman’s responsibility is to be his body. The head does not work without the body, and the body does not work without the head. They depend on each other.

The apostle Paul also says:

“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” 1 Corinthians 11.3

In this verse, we can easily trace the source of man’s authority.

We must not forget that God is Father, Son and Spirit. In other words, God is the Spiritual Family.

Consider the case of Abraham in relation to Isaac; Isaac in relation to Jacob and Esau; and Jacob to his twelve sons. Just like them, every father is a representation or symbol of God to their children. The blessing of the patriarchs passed on to their respective sons due to the authority they had. Even the curse Noah pronounced over his son Ham stood indeed because of his fatherly authority.

Now think about it. If the authority of a parent is so powerful, imagine the authority of the servants whom God called, chose and anointed!

Witchcraft is worship of evil spirits. Only those who are possessed by evil give honour to evil. The sin of rebellion is level with the sin of witchcraft: *“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry”* (1 Samuel 15.23).

Saul was the first king of Israel. He rebelled against the authority established by God when he disobeyed the prophet’s word. He became so obsessed with power that he even ignored the fact that God had rejected him. Instead of humbling himself deeply and turning to God with all his heart, renouncing the throne and keeping his relationship with Him alive, he was stubborn. He stayed as a king for a

further thirty-eight years, even though they were as hell for him. In other words, he valued his physical life more than his spiritual life. Like Esau, he also chose the stew of lentils.

Throughout the history of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, not even one of the many who rebelled has managed to survive. Not because someone cursed them... But because they cursed themselves when they rebelled against the authority established by the Holy Spirit.

Evil was not created by God. However, good became evil the moment pride entered his heart and he coveted God’s position.

Lucifer became Satan due to his rebellion against God. He became the prince of darkness and was cursed for eternity. And all those who rebel against the authorities established by God have been inspired and led by the same spirit of Satan.