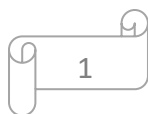


THE WALK WITH GOD

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INTRODUCTION

The Scriptures present to us several remarkable servants of God, but two of them stood out: Enoch and Noah. Unlike illustrious heroes such as Moses, Samson or David, they are not known for doing great miracles or accomplishing great things. What do they have in common? They walked with God. Enoch was the son of Jared, descendant of Enosh, son of Seth, the third son God gave to Adam and Eve after the death of Abel (Genesis 4: 25; Genesis 5: 18-25). However, the Bible does not go into great details about this account. The only thing we know is that after the birth of his eldest son Methuselah, he walked with God for three hundred years, then was taken up.

“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” Genesis 5: 24.

He is therefore the first man to ever be raptured in a way similar to what the Church is about to experience.

A few generations later, Noah followed in the footsteps of his ancestor.

“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” Genesis 6: 9.

Noah lived at a time when the depravity of manners had reached a particularly high level

The whole earth was perverted, so much so that humans had mated with the sons of God (angels having abandoned their own abode according to Jude 1: 6). This man distinguished himself from the midst of this perverse generation, corrupted by his integrity, which was the result of the grace he had found with the Lord. He was given the vision of building an ark by which he and his family were preserved from the devastating waters of the deluge. This ark was a prefiguration of the rapture of the Church which must take place before the great tribulation. Thus, to escape the anger to come, we must walk with God. But what exactly does this march consist of and what does it imply in concrete terms? The study of Psalm 1 will help us to see more clearly.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” Psalm 1: 1-6

I. THE THREE TYPES OF MEN

The Word of God declares that the man who does not walk according to the counsel of the ungodly is blessed. In this day and age, a great confusion reigns in people's minds as to what the meaning of blessing truly is. Some imagine that it is synonymous with material and financial wealth. Yet, according to the Hebrew *esher*, it means first and foremost happiness which, obviously, cannot be bought. We later learn that this blessing concerns the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, but rather in obedience to God's law. What man are we referring to here? The Scriptures present three types of men that Paul describes in chapters two and three of his first epistle to the Corinthians: the natural man, the carnal man and the spiritual man "*But **the natural man** receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But **he that is spiritual** judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.*" 1 Corinthians 2: 14-16.

The natural man

In the Greek text, the word “natural”, *psuchikos*, designates the “principle of natural life; what humans have in common with animals ; nature sensuality is subject to appetites and passions”. The natural man lives according to the vanity of his thoughts, since his intelligence is obscured by darkness (Ephesians 4: 17-19). He is foreign to the life of God because his heart has been hardened.

The carnal man

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

1 Corinthians 3: 1-3

The word “carnal” comes from the Greek *sarkikos* which means a person “having the nature of the flesh, which is to say someone under the authority of animal appetite; governed by simple human nature and not by the Spirit of God”. The carnal man is also called “child”; from the Greek *nepios* which means “child”, “a

little child”; “a minor”, “childish”, “ignorant”, “not skillful”.

The apostle Paul also uses this term in Galatians 4: 1-3: *“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world”*

Like the Christians of Corinth, many Christians are children. They have no revelation of God and are ignorant about their identity in Christ and their position in the Kingdom of God. Although they received many talents, they still need tutors and directors. They are the prey of false prophets and greedy pastors who take advantage of the fact that they have no relationship with God to abuse them materially, financially, emotionally and sexually ... They pay tithes, carry the bibles of their pastors, do their grocery shopping and house cleaning, watch their children... Rather than serving God and his Kingdom, they become slaves of these ill-intentioned men. They are like the Hebrews who worked hard to build the stores of the Pharaohs in Egypt. These Christians are dominated by the works of the flesh described in Galatians 5: 17-19 and especially by the spirit of competition, jealousy, the race for titles ... They do not walk according to the Word of God, but according to the traditions of men. Attached to earthly things and deceived by their own lust, they think

that their blessing is linked to material things. They are like Esau who sold his first born right for a simple lentils soup.

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” Philippians 3: 18-19.

The spiritual man

“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 2: 15-16.

The word “spiritual” comes from the Greek *pneumatikos* which denotes what is “relative to the human mind or rational soul”; “A part of the man in touch with God, that serves as an instrument or organ”.

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12: 2.

The spirit of the spiritual man has been “renewed”, from the Greek *anakainosis*: “renewal”, “renovation”, “complete change towards the best”. As the apostle Paul

said so well, this renewal is *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”* (Titus 3: 5).

The spiritual man knows the thought of Christ and is not influenced by the world’s school of thoughts (philosophy, religion ...), nor by his own flesh. He is on the contrary, led by the Spirit of God who is the Ultimate Guide.

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” John 16: 13.

The man led by God inevitably runs against the tide, and the trends of the present world (Ephesians 4: 17-19). Ahead of his time, he is often alone, because he is misunderstood and rejected. The spiritual man walks carefully, (Ephesians 5: 15-16), in charity (Ephesians 5: 1-2), as a child of light (Ephesians 5: 8- 14), in a manner worthy of the calling he has received from God (Ephesians 4: 1), to do the works that God has prepared beforehand for him: *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* (Ephesians 2:10). It is therefore the walk of this type of man that is mentioned in Psalm 1.

II. THE WALK

The verb “to walk” is *peripateo* in Greek; this term means “to be on the road”, “to progress”, or “to make good use of opportunities”. The Hebrew, on the other hand, uses several terms to define it:

- *Arach* means “to wander”, “to travel” (Judges 19: 17; 2 Samuel 12: 2; Job 34: 8; Jeremiah 9: 2; Jeremiah 14: 8). This reminds us that the walker is a pilgrim and stranger on earth (1 Peter 2: 11).

- *Darak* means “to tread”. The walker is, in fact, called to trample on snakes and scorpions (Judges 5: 21, Luke 10: 19).

- *Halak* means “to walk”, “way of living” (Psalm 1: 1).

As with any walk, the Christian walk implies first of all a starting point, and then a destination. It goes without saying that a person who starts off without knowing their destination, especially without a clear vision of the target, runs the risk of going astray. However, going astray for those of us who are Christians, is a danger that can prove to be fatal (2 Thessalonians 2: 11-12). The Christian walker must, therefore, ensure that God is at the core of his vision, and must strive to follow him to reach their destination: the New Jerusalem.

1) The three stages in the life of a walker

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40: 31.

Walking or rolling

This is the first step in the walker's life. The walker has just converted and starts getting to know other Christians with whom he walks for a given period of time. In aeronautics, rolling, is also called “taxi”, or the pre-take-off phase.

The race

The walker moves from the rolling stage to the race. He must seize the moment when God wants him to begin the real race. This step corresponds to the entry on the take-off runway. (Hebrews 12: 1-2, 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27).

The flight

In Isaiah 40: 31, two Hebrew words are used to talk about the take-off. The first is *alah* which means “to go up”, “raise” or “climb”. The second, *Eber*, which designates the “wing” of an eagle or a dove. The royal eagle, which

can reach up to 75 mi / h, is a bird that flies alone and not in group setting. It exploits the air currents in order to propel itself as high as possible. It hovers and lets the wind guide its race. His sight is seven times sharper than that of humans (Matthew 6: 22). Being monogamous, this eagle mates for life. He stays faithful to its mate until death. The eagle constantly rejuvenates. When he becomes old, he retreats into a mountain, becomes bald, prunes its beak, and only reappears when he has renewed his feathers. Moreover, he lives on the heights, where he feeds off of fresh meat and blood: *“Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.”* (Job 39: 27-30, See John 6: 5-56). It is also on the heights that it fights its enemies, snakes.

This means that the walker is called not only to walk and run, but also to rise to the sky on wings like eagles.

It is essential for the walker to know his true identity, which is heavenly. He must understand that God calls him to take flight like an eagle so that he is no longer afraid to make decisions that honor God, regardless of the fact that this would make him unpopular. Thus, he will not seek to please men, but rather God (Galatians 1: 10),

and refuse to associate with those who have an earthly vision.

2) The Hebrews' walk after their exodus from Egypt

For the children of Israel, the starting point was Egypt, which symbolizes the world. After the sacrifice of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12), prefiguration of the redemptive work of the Lord on the cross (John 1: 29, 1 Corinthians 5:7), the Hebrews experienced a great deliverance by the powerful hand of Yahweh. Released from slavery and the hard work imposed by Pharaoh, type of Satan, here they are on their way to Canaan, the promised land. While crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites symbolically went through water baptism in Christ, also known as the new birth or the birth from above (1 Corinthians 10: 1-2). Then, followed a long walk into the desert under the guidance of Yahweh himself who led his people through a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. This glorious manifestation of the presence of God, the shekinah glory, prefigured the Holy Spirit whose role is to lead Christians into the whole truth.

“And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from

before the people.” Exodus 13: 20-22.

Of course, this walk was not exempt from difficulties and obstacles, a topic we will be discussing further.

3) The Walker in the Tabernacle

The tabernacle consisted of three parts: the outer court, the holy place and the most holy place, also called the Holy of Holies.

The outer court was a large courtyard where the altar and the brass laver were located (Exodus 27: 9-19). They could only access the outer court through a unique

door. Israelites, who were looking to expiate a sin or desiring to give thanks to God, had to go through this door bearing an offering for the sacrifice. This unique door foreshadowed Jesus-Christ who had presented himself as the door of the sheep (John 10: 7-9).

As he walks into the outer court, the walker first reaches the **brazen altar**, which symbolizes the judgment and condemnation that Christ sustained because of our sins. One cannot therefore, start the Christian walk by neglecting the sacrifice involved in it. Christ has already shed his blood once and for all, it is up to us to take up our cross daily and follow him.

A little further out, in the outer court, the walker stands in front of a large **brass laver** made of mirrors offered by Jewish women (Exodus 38: 8). These mirrors represent the word of God, that reveals the state of our hearts (James 1: 23-2). The walker must know his spiritual state before starting the walk. Between the altar and the tabernacle, as the brass laver was filled with water; the priests had to wash their hands and feet before offering a sacrifice or

before entering the tabernacle (Exodus 30: 18-21). While the Mosaic law was still in effect , this ritual behooved to priests, since only they could enter the holy place. Under the dispensation of grace, true Christians became kings and priests, who have free access, in Jesus Christ, to the Holy of Holies (Revelation 1: 6; Hebrews 4: 16). We are therefore, also called to regeneration through the water of the Word (Ephesians 5: 26). This Word, living and efficient, acts on those who put it into practice like a sharp sword that breaks apart the works of the flesh from those of the Spirit.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4: 12.

While continuing the walk, we now enter the tabernacle,

which held the holy place and the Holy of holies. In the holy place, the walker finds on his right a **golden table on which were placed twelve shewbread** made with fine flour (Exodus 25: 23-30, Leviticus 24: 5-9). **These breads prefigured Christ, the bread of life**, in all his purity, and symbolically an invitation to participate in the Lord's supper (Luke 22: 19). In fact, by consuming the bread of life, the walker draws the strength needed to go further.

“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I AM the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”
John 6: 32-35.

Still in the holy place, on the left side, in front of the shewbread table, we also find **the lampstand made of gold** whose seven lamps fueled by pure olive oil had to burn continually (Exodus 25: 31-39; Leviticus 24: 1-4). Once again, we have here a foreshadowing of **Jesus - Christ, our light**.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119: 105.

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I AM the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8: 12.

Just like the Hebrews needed the column of fire to illuminate their walk at the night, we need the light of Christ to avoid getting lost in this world governed by darkness.

As the parable of the ten virgins teaches us, the oil, image of the Holy Spirit, is vital for the proper functioning of this lamp (Matthew 25: 1-13). Indeed, without the guidance of the Spirit, it will be impossible for us to get to the wedding supper of the Lamb.

Meanwhile, **the altar of incense** was in the back of the tabernacle, in front of the veil that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies (Exodus 30: 1-10). The walker is now close to his ultimate goal: the ark, the glory of God. Before crossing the veil, he is invited **to worship**. In order to get to this point, he would have had to offer much more than a sacrifice of praise, his own life entirely consecrated to God whom he loves above all things.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”
Romans 12: 1.

4) The march of Ezekiel into the heavenly sanctuary

The Christian walk implies a progression in which we advance from glory to glory with the Lord.

*“Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; **the waters were to the ankles**. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; **the waters were to the knees**. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; **the waters were to the loins**. Afterward he measured a thousand; **and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.**”* Ezekiel 47: 1-5.

In this passage, Ezekiel receives a vision of the heavenly sanctuary from which flowed a stream of living water. The apostle John sheds more light on this subject .

“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7: 38-39.

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Revelation 22: 1-2.

Ezekiel therefore had a symbolic vision of the Holy Spirit in the form of a river deriving its source from the throne of God. Notice that the tree of life is watered by this river which is reminiscent of the man from Psalm 1 described as *“...a tree planted by the rivers of water”* (Psalm 1: 3).

The progress of Ezekiel in these waters is done in three stages. First, he has water up to his ankles.

Water to the ankles: zeal and determination

When we begin our walk with the Lord, we first start by getting wet up to our ankles. During the first Passover,

Yahweh had ordered his Children to consume the Passover lamb as following: “*And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, **your shoes on your feet**, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover.*” (Exodus 12: 11). The feet had to be dressed which meant that the Hebrews had to be prepared and determined to leave Egypt. Yet many Christians are like Lot's wife, they start walking while being double-minded. Still attached to the things of this World, they are not ready to give up their lives to follow Christ. Also, because they often stop to look back, they end up dying spiritually (Genesis 19: 26).

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?

whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” James 4: 4.

Should we do not show any eagerness leave the world, we would not be ready to walk with the Lord.

“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Luke 9: 62.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt

about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness” Ephesians 6: 14-15.

Water to the knees: worship

As we progress in the river, the water now rises to our knees. Each time Ezekiel had a vision of the glory of God, he fell on his face. Others before and after him had the same reaction to the manifestation of the divine glory. Worship is an integral part of the child of God’s life, it is even the main reason for his existence.

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and

without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Ephesians 1: 4-6.

God desires to be worshiped in Spirit and truth (John 4: 24). In Spirit, because it is the Holy Spirit who reveals the Lord to us (1 Corinthians 2: 11-12).

In truth, which is to say with a sincere heart, truly in love with him. God seeks genuine worshipers who do not bend their knees to Baal, but who remain faithful to him in every circumstances.

Water to the loins: the transformation of heart

The Hebrews assimilated the loins to the power of procreation (Genesis 35: 11; Exodus 1: 5); to the heart, to the inner man.

“Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth:...” Isaiah 21: 3.

“I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” Jeremiah 17: 10.

The walker's loins must be continually girded up with the belt of truth (Ephesians 6: 14). This truth is not a philosophical or religious principle, but rather Jesus Christ himself (John 14: 6). *“Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.”* Psalm 51: 8.

Therefore, the water, which is also a type of the Word of God, when it comes up to the loins, has reached the heart and deeply transformed it. Once again, this transformation is the consequence of the grace of God in our lives and the direct action of his Spirit. Those who want to walk with God must therefore let the Lord reign entirely in their hearts.

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I

put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”
Ezekiel 36: 26-27.

Swimming in the Waters: Being led by the Spirit.

The more Ezekiel advanced further into the deeper waters, the more he was carried away by the current. This current is the wind of the Spirit about which Jesus said to Nicodemus: *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”* (John 3: 8).

Thus, whoever wants to walk with God must accept to be carried wheresoever the Spirit desires without resistance or seeking to know the way ahead of time. The path may seem perilous and risky, but we must walk by faith, because all things work together for the good of them that love God (Romans 8: 28). No one can see the glory of God by remaining in their comfort zone, that is to say at the place where we have a foothold (formalism, religiosity, etc.). We must relinquish control over our lives and entirely surrender to the Lord who will bring us to unimaginable levels with him.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Romans 8: 14). As a result, a true Christian is not one who openly claims to be Christ’s and who assiduously attends an assembly,

but instead one that walks in the Spirit (Romans 8: 1). These Christians are truly free. They are no longer slaves to sin, demons, the world, traditions, philosophy, religion, nor men.

Now that we have covered the requirements of the heart of the walker, we can now move on to the path that he must take.

III. THE SINNER’S PATH: THE SPACIOUS WAY

The Word tells us that men have to choose between two paths or ways: that of the sinner who leads to perdition and that of God who leads to life.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” Psalm 1: 1.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat” Matthew 7: 13.

The Lord warns us that the door that leads to perdition is wide and its path is spacious. What is critical and

disturbing is that many are moving in this direction!
Of course, this is the path taken by impious people, followers of false religions, idol worshipers, and all of those who do not believe in the God of the Bible, in general . But not only...

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Matthew 7: 21-23.

Through this warning, the Lord makes it clear that we can find ourselves on the road to perdition while being christians. Indeed, the Master only recognizes those who do his will. Yet, God's will is that we keep his commandments.

“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” Matthew 19: 17.

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” John 14: 21.

Nowadays it is not uncommon to find christians who say "Lord, Lord!" while living in sin. Likewise, Christian denominations proliferate, without being part of the true

Church which is "*the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Timothy 3: 15). The situation is critical and particularly alarming: not only evangelical churches are not totally free from the harmful influence of catholicism, but they have also exceeded the level of paganization of the latter. The Word of God has been replaced by men's commandments and traditions coming straight out of hell. Christians are taken hostage by a pyramidal system in which the pastor reigns at the top, assisted by deacons and elders, who control all of the flock's actions, and who will even dictate to them the way of thinking. Their cults are abominations in the eyes of the Lord, because they are an outrage to him, rather than bringing him honor.

"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.” Amos 5: 21-26.

“Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Mark 7: 7.

Sad to say, but most churches put christians on the path to perdition. They are run by false pastors leading their flock to follow in Cain’s footsteps, which then result in the diversion of Balaam (Genesis 4: 3-15; Numbers 22-24; 31: 8; Revelation 2: 14).

“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.” Jude 1: 11.

1) Cain’s path and Balaam’s diversion

Cain is the emblem of all religious people who think that they can honor God by providing an unclean sacrifice and a strange fire (commandments and traditions of men -see

Numbers 3: 4). It is their total ignorance of the Lord that causes them to act this way. Instead of questioning

themselves and repenting, they harden their hearts and attack God's real children. Like Pharisees who demanded the death of the Lord, they are murderers, devil's servants who cannot stand seeing disciples excel (John 8: 44; 1 John 3: 12). If they cannot kill them physically, they kill with their tongue, using threats and intimidation. Indeed , those who want to walk with God must expect to be oppressed by "christians" who often are more cruel to them than the worldly.

"And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there." 1 Kings 19: 1-3

"Then said they, Come and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words." Jeremiah 18:18

Balaam represents all of those who were once in Christ, but later were seduced by the wealth and honor that Satan offered them (Matthew 4: 8-9). But here's the thing, they

do not intend to go to hell alone, they want others to follow in their diversion. Balaam not being able to curse the children of Israel at the request of Balak, due to the blessing of Yahweh, sent foreign women their way so they would fall into fornication (Numbers 25: 1-2; 31: 16). Nowadays, sexual sin leads many christians to make enter the sinner's path, to their own misfortune.

“My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart. Say unto wisdom, Thou art

*my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman: That they may keep thee from **the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.** For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: **And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot, and subtil of heart.** She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner. So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with*

*me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I go forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. **With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.** He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. **Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.**” Proverbs 7.*

If the enemy cannot make us fall into sexual debauchery, he will strive to lead us into spiritual prostitution by sending us cunning people, who with flattery and seductive words, will try to lead us into compromise. However, compromise translates into the acceptance of false doctrines and traditions of men, that are often

demonically inspired or tolerate sin. The enemy knows that these things, even in small increments, are enough to divert the walker from the right path because it only takes a little bit of leaven to raise the entire dough (Galatians 5: 9).

2) The tare: bad companies

The sinner's path is where one meets bad companies, the tare, which sole purpose is to corrupt the true child God (1 Corinthians 15: 33).

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” Matthew 13: 24-30.

The tare is a weed; some varieties are toxic and cause effects similar to drunkenness; hence its comes from the Latin *ebrietas*, which means “intoxication”. Its Greek equivalent is *zizanion*, which gave the French word “zizanie”. Other particularities, is that it looks very similar to wheat, and both grow together. Through this parable, the Lord warns us that Satan has placed his children in areas where we are supposed to find Christians, people who truly fear God. Those are people whose fruits are bad and whose holiness is only in their appearances (2 Timothy 3: 5). The tare’s goal is clear: to create discord, scandals, and seduce to push the walker to stop at the sinner’s voice.

“And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.” Numbers 11: 4-6.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the

flock.” Acts 20: 28-29.

The tares sent by Satan will not stop tempting us to desire and love the things of this world. They will keep leading us to look back as Lot's wife (Genesis 19), they will bring us distractions (Exodus 32: 6; Galatians 3: 1) and worries related to food, drink, marriage, work (Numbers 32) ...

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” Romans 16: 18.

Yet the word is clear, although some needs can be legitimate, they should not supplant our main priority, which is the Kingdom of God. The walker must continue walking, knowing that somehow God will faithfully provide to his very needs.

“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Matthew 6: 31-34

Remember that tare means *ebrietas* in Latin, which means “intoxication”. Its mission is to intoxicate walkers so they would not reach their ultimate goal (Revelation 17).

The tare planted by Satan represent:

- **The occult:** (the word “occult”: what is hidden), they are sorcerers, magicians, voodoo priests, tarot readers, astrologers, psychics... These people practice occultism such as oriental medicine, hypnosis, magnetism, yoga etc. But God hates occultism as stated in Deuteronomy 18: 9-12. The Bible speaks of several people who were serving

Satan: Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's magicians (2 Timothy 3: 8); the fortune teller of Endor (1 Samuel 28: 7-25), Simon the magician (Acts 8: 5-25) Bar-Jesus or Elymas (Acts 13: 6-13).

- **False servants:** false pastors, prophets and apostles who hide the truth like it is said in in 2 Corinthians 11: 13: *“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”*

There are two types of agents of Satan:

- **Unconscious agents:** These are people unconsciously used by the devil, who by their dissolute life, are unwittingly serving Satan (those who are of God do not

practice sin). It's the case of pagans or unbelieving people and carnal Christians (1 John 3: 9; Matthew 16: 22-23).

- **Conscious agents:** These are people who knowingly signed a pact with the devil. Here is the testimony of two women who were consciously at the service of Satan and were freed by the Lord.

Testimony of Yolande, 33, delivered from witchcraft

While on a mission in Cameroon from November 24 to December 4 of 2011, while interviewing people, I was solicited by a woman who wanted to abandon satanism.

Here is her testimony:

“My name is Yolande and am from Cameroon. At age 15, my mother, who was the Chief Witch of our neighborhood, took me to visit all the houses in the neighborhood where we lived. Together with other witches, we were preparing food that would then be distributed to people in the neighborhood (village Bangante). I was initiated by my mother to kill spiritually and physically: I sacrificed men by turning them into animals. I did not care about who they were or what their fate was, because I was programmed to destroy everyone I hung around in my neighborhood, including Christians.

I happened to transform into a snake at times. In fact, one day I even swallowed a child. Later, my mother organized my spiritual wedding with a spirit that dictated my behavior. I had two Children in the spiritual realm with this demon.

In 2007, I made the decision to turn to God. However, I continued to participate in spiritual “Holidays”, from which I returned slaughtered and discouraged concerning the Lord. One day, a brother tried to help me break free from the bondage that held me captive, but my “spiritual husband” (incubus) fought him (fights with demons, threats). My own mother and this “husband of the night” attacked me constantly. They made me believe that I was a man so that I could become a homosexual. I was experiencing all sorts of oppressions. I then decided to confess the sin of witchcraft, and the Lord began a deliverance in me. My two spiritual children (demons) left me, then it was the turn of the husband of the night or Incubus (demon) to go. Another demon who was like his double left me too. However, as there were still some hidden areas in my life, the deliverance was not complete. I was still possessed by three spirits, a snake and an owl in my stomach, and another snake on my neck.

Tired of doing evil, I decided to give it all up and totally confess my sin. I was then completely delivered by the Lord.”

Testimony of a former young satanic woman

This young woman from the DR Congo is now 27 years old and is currently attending University.

At the age of 9, her grandmother initiated her to witchcraft using food (meat). One night, her grandmother came during her sleep to claim back the meat that she had given her to eat. The girl answered her that she could not reimburse her, so the old witch offered that the girl visit her master Satan, so she could explain the situation. While panicking, she accepted and found herself out of her body with her grandmother. They then joined Satan in the astral realm . Satan asked her in turn to pay him his due. The girl apologized saying that she did not have the means to do so, and he replied saying that in his world, forgiveness did not exist and that she would have to mystically kill someone from her own family to repay her debt. Back home, with the power she had just received from the darkness, the girl began to destroy, kill and bewitch her relatives. The first person she sacrificed was one of her family members. Her debut into satanism was sealed when she drank the blood of her victim while with other Satanists.

Satan transformed her into a true mermaid, as well as a Jezebel. He entrusted her with the mission to destroy men, especially Christians. She got married in the astral

realm where she sacrificed her virginity to Satan. She thus became the mother of two demonic children. However, she was unable to have physical children because she had sacrificed her womb to Satan.

She was involved in all areas of life: family, politics, business and of course in churches ... She then became a faithful member of one of the assemblies in Kinshasa.

When someone told her their about their life projects (wedding, travel, business ...), she did everything to make sure the projects would fail before they even started. She had pity for no one in her family, which she had financially ruined by paralyzing her father's business, nor for the young people around her, by preventing them to continue with their schooling.

When she did not want to go to school, she would bewitch her entire class to prevent her classmates from concentrating. She was jealous of one of her friends who was prettier than she was, but as she could not kill her, she cast an infertility spell on her.

Among her evil deeds, she admitted causing the failure of three people running or public office. Furthermore, the Satanist group that she worked with, tried in vain to start a war in the DR Congo during the 2011 presidential elections. She provoked fatal accidents, mystically caused

pregnant women to lose their pregnancies, sacrificed over twenty people, and initiated over thirteen children to witchcraft, two of which were her little cousins. Ten demons assisted her in her mission to destroy God's works. When she went to churches, if the pastor was just and feared God, she would make sure to leave her witchcraft outside. But if the pastor was not honest, she would destroy him together with his assembly.

For 14 years, she fought all Christians, especially those who prayed a lot. She was eager to successfully complete each one of her missions, otherwise she would be beaten up by demons.

However, she eventually started asking about God, especially the name of Yeshua. Indeed, she had noticed that in the astral or demonic world, everyone, including Satan himself, would kneel, whenever this Name would be mentioned. This intrigued her enormously. She thought that if Satan

bent his knees every time the Name Yeshua was pronounced, why not just serve the God who seemed stronger than him?

In the morning, upon waking up, she wanted to abandon witchcraft, but she did not know how to go about it. She could not find anyone to confess her crimes to. One day,

she went to a pastor to confess her sin and her desire to abandon it. But the best solution he could come up with was to propose a deliverance through sexual intercourse with her!

On February 16, 2012, I went to Kinshasa for a two-week mission. During a prayer meeting, God gave me a word of knowledge that a person practicing witchcraft was in the assembly. So I invited this person to come to me at the end of the meeting for a deliverance. The young woman then took the chance and confessed her sin. I prayed for her in the Name of Yeshua, and God totally delivered her!

What are the goals of Satan and his demons?

To maintain humans in ignorance and sin to lead them into hell with him by keeping them away from the right path (Hosea 4: 6), be worshiped in God's stead (Matthew 4: 8-10), choke the spiritual life out of Christians (John 10: 10), own men in order to destroy them, get men to practice the occult.

Since Satan and his demons are spirits, the battle that must lead the wheat or the tares is necessarily spiritual (Ephesians 6: 12).

For years I have worked with People I thought were

sincere with God and that I really liked. The message of the return to the Word has opened my eyes on them. Everything began with the denunciation of the practice of tithing. To my amazement, this caused a first wave of departures that left me in total confusion. Over time, and with each new enlightenment that the Lord gave me, other departures occurred. Often, these people gave senseless reasons or falsely accused me of wrong doing. Shocked and hurt, these brutal separations destabilized me for a while without causing me to deviate from the path that the Lord had set before me. However, it took me years to realize that they were not of God. These people gravitated around me only to satisfy their personal interests, especially to enjoy the crowds that the message attracted in order to make money. Before leaving, they indulged in a true work of sabotage behind the scenes. They resorted to lies and slander and predicted the collapse of the work that God had entrusted me with and lead unstable souls to perdition. Contrary to their malicious omens, after each wave of departure, the Lord glorified himself even more. So it was God himself who was working to separate me from bad companies so I would continue walking without clutter.

Do not suffer the friendship and cooperation of people, but go to God in prayer to learn with whom to walk, because those we rub shoulders with are not all like us (Luke 6: 12- 16). Indeed, the chaff is similar to wheat but

it is the seed of Satan (Matthew 13).

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” 1 John 2: 18-19.

Even the apostles of the first century were infiltrated by false brethren.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” 1 John 4: 1.

It is vital for the walker to understand that he must be separated from the tare, or false brothers.

Pruning or separation

While I was complaining about the rebellion of some people I helped train, the Lord gave me this passage in a vision.

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” John 15: 2.

Pruning is a major technique consisting of removing branches that are dead, diseased, damaged, fragile or dangerous on a tree or shrub. This technique promotes the

growth and beauty of the tree or shrub as well as its health since it prevents the spread of diseases. Branches that are cut are crushed or burned.

“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” John 15: 6.

This work of purification that the Father operates in each of his children’s life is to separate the Christian from false brethren and also from his own character.

Indeed, some people are like dead branches, rotten and dangerous. By slowing the Christian in his walk, they constitute for him real burdens that the Lord must remove.

Thus, I understood that if the Lord operated all these separations, it was to make me lighter and allow me to continue my walk unhindered.

Like Abraham who had to part ways with his nephew Lot (Genesis 13), do not be discouraged when the people close to you leave. Keep your eyes on the Lord and remain confident because God is pruning you.

“Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity:

therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.” Jeremiah 48: 11.

During pruning, God also purifies the walker by changing him from one character to another, one body to another. The goal of this work is to empty him from all of his dregs; the dregs being the image of sin which is hidden deep in the heart. Through this process, God takes away the smell of sin so that the walker can spread the fragrance of Christ. Nobody can be filled with God without being emptied of oneself. Indeed, God cannot fill a vase that is already filled. Blending is not an option with the Lord. As a result, transfers are very difficult to live, because during this purification process the walker must lose all gains and honors that people granted him. Thus, throughout his walk, the Christian will constantly be pruned by the Lord. This work never ceases. The goal is to move him from glory to glory. Whenever the Lord wants to promote a Christian or entrust him with a new responsibility, he will prune him in order to qualify him.

IV. THE SEAT OF THE MOCKERS

The word seat alludes to a coalition. This is a temporary gathering of people to fight against a common enemy. A coalition is also an alliance of several parties having the same goal. *“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and*

against his anointed, saying” Psalm 2: 2.

Daniel speaks of alliances between Yahweh’s enemies:

“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” (Daniel 2: 43). The seat of mockers is an alliance between people who do not like each other but who come together to fight against a common enemy.

“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.” Luke 23: 12. This is the alliance of Herod and Pilate against Jesus.

Jeremiah loved the Lord so much that he refused to sit in the seat of the mockers.

“I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.” (Jeremiah 15: 17).

The word mocker means *luwts* in Hebrew, which means “to despise”, “to speak arrogantly”, “to mock”, “to ridicule”. Mockery is a technique that the enemy uses to put pressure on and discourage the walker. His objective is to intimidate and hurt with words disguised as jokes.

“As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?” Proverbs 26: 18-19.

The walker who is not concerned with what other people say and the image they have of him, will be able to finish the race with God. So, King Saul, who had started with God, was disqualified because he surrendered to popular pressure (1 Samuel 15: 24). Conversely, the apostle Paul did not give in when King Agrippa tried to intimidate him, but rather continued to preach the Gospel according to the order that the Lord had given him

(Acts 26: 28-30; Acts 9: 15). *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Romans 1: 16).*

The other purpose of mockery is to make the walker ashamed of the Lord. But Jesus said: *“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8: 38).*

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the

second death.” (Revelation 21: 8).

The seat of the mocker is the synagogue of Satan described in Revelation 3: 7-9. It represents the current Christianity, which is completely paganized. It includes churches that are members of human federations, and accept laws inspired by the spirit of the antichrist. The synagogue of Satan is also Babylon the great, the whore from Revelation 17. Her servants sit at the table of demons to eat meats sacrificed to idols and drink the cup of demons, containing all kinds of

false doctrines that poison churches.

“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.” 1 Corinthians 10: 20-21.

The synagogue of Satan welcomes within itself the associations of false servants, disguised as servants of God (2 Corinthians 11: 13). Indeed, false prophets have always united against true ones who often walk alone. For instance, Micah and the 400 prophets of Baal (1 Kings 22), Elijah and the 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah (1 Kings 18 and 19), Jeremiah and the false prophets (Jeremiah 15 and 20), and Paul and the false apostles (2

Corinthians 11), or again Luther and Catholic priests, George Fox and the religious people of his time ...

Some Jewish leaders and even ordinary people recognized the messianity of Jesus, but refused to admit it publicly for fear of being excluded from their synagogue (John 12: 42; John 9: 22). In fact , the Lord had warned his disciples that this would happen to them (John 16: 2). Indeed, the

true children of God, who walk in the Spirit, do not fit into the mold and message of those churches. Also, they should not wait to be excluded from these apostate human organizations, but they must take the initiative to get out on their own.

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Revelation 18: 4.

Psalm 1 tells us that the man who does not sit in the seat of the mocker is blessed. The Hebrew word translated by “to sit” also means “to remain”, “to stay”, “to live”. Indeed, the walker who has been seduced forgets about his walk and settles comfortably in the seat of the mockers. Instead of pursuing the goal set by God, he conforms to the present age and ends up adhering completely to the ungodly Babylonian system.

Walkers who stop and sit end up losing sight of heaven to build their very own earthly kingdoms (Genesis 11).

Let's not forget that the Hebrews, who had experienced such a huge deliverance in Egypt, were seated at the foot of Mount Sinai and had set up their own religion. They made a golden calf serving as a divinity and worshiped it with music and dancing (Exodus 32).

V. THE COUNCIL OF THE UNGODLY

The word “council” in Psalm 1 also means “notice”, “goal”. In 1 Kings 13, we are told the story of a young man with a great calling from God on his life, but eventually died because he deviated from the vision he had received from the Lord, by listening to an old malicious prophet. However, we should not be impressed by the titles and resumes of so-called men of God, who are trying to legitimize their advice. Just because someone holds a title doesn't mean that they are approved and sent by God to work with you, or worse: dictate your conduct. The apostle Paul remained true to the vision that the Lord himself had given him without worrying about false brothers or apostles who preceded him in faith and met the Lord while he was still on earth.

“But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they

might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person: for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me” Galatians 2: 3-6.

The advice of Ahithophel (2 Samuel 15, 16 and 17)

Ahithophel, whose name means “brother of madness” was the David’s principal senior advisor. His advice was so valuable that they were often equated to the Word of God: *“And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.” (2 Samuel 16: 23).*

Why was the advice of a man whose name meant “brother of madness” put on the same pedestal as the Word of God? All because David compromised himself by committing adultery with Bathsheba and by killing Uriah, her husband in order to hide his sin. Indeed, much more than a simple counselor, Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba. Might David have taken him as a counselor in order to be forgiven? Obviously, this choice proved disastrous. Indeed, Ahithophel took part in the revolt of Absalom. He knew David very well, his actions

and combat strategies and provided tremendous assistance during the rebellion of his son. Therefore, he advised Absalom to sleep with his father's concubines (2 Samuel 16: 21) and wage war against him (2 Samuel 17: 1). But when Absalom did not listen to his advice, he committed suicide.

The spirit of Ahithophel still operates even today in the evangelical community. These advisors are potential enemies and traitors that Satan can use to destroy you.

It is foolishness to replace the Word of God by men's advice!

The counsel of the ungodly therefore, is simply men's or Satan's word. It includes doctrines and human reasoning, traditions, or philosophy.

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Colossians 2: 8.

The word “prey” in this passage literally means “to ***drive out of the way and subject to his domination***”. Whoever does not keep the command of God or his Word, forsakes the truth and becomes subject to the domination of ravening wolves. As for the word “tradition”, *paradosis* in Greek, it also means “commandment”.

From generation to generation, men transmitted commandments that often replace the Word of God in the life of Christians (Mark 7: 1-13). Among these traditions, we have the paying of tithes, ordination, the observance of Sunday as the Lord's day, the pastoral garment, Christmas, the Trinity...

“Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.” Matthew 15: 1-6.

The word “philosophy” means “love of wisdom”. All world religions contain a form of wisdom that appeals to many people and shapes the way they think, as well as their lifestyle. Moses himself, before being touched by God, had been raised in the Egyptian wisdom (Acts 7: 22). Nowadays, we can count among the worldly wisdom Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, yoga, Jewish Kabbalah,

paganized Christianity, theology ... But this wisdom comes from the world, and is carnal and diabolical (James 3: 15), has nothing in common with true wisdom, which is Jesus himself. Indeed, *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”* (James 3: 17).

The Lord said to the apostles to stay away from the leaven of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and Herod, which is to say their doctrine (Matthew 16: 6-12; Mark 8: 14-15). Leaven is also the picture of sin, particularly pride.

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Galatians 5: 9.

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” 1 Corinthians 5: 7.

The Christian, but also man in general, is compared to dough. Just a hint of leaven is enough to corrupt it completely.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but

mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? if any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's." 2 Corinthians 10: 3-7.

Numerous pastors are led astray because they are not subject to God, but rather to religious systems of men promising them wages, wealth and protection. God must be our first and only Counsellor (Isaiah 9: 5).

Of course, one can listen to the advice of men as long as they comply with the Word of God and the purpose he has for us. But we must remain firm and remember that when the Lord called us, we were alone, counselors were not there and therefore have not heard what God has asked us to do. Over the years, many people have accused me of all sorts of things simply because I refuse to follow their advice. According to them, I am stubborn and I listen to no one. But when God gives me an order, a vision of what he is expecting from me, I cannot listen to the advice that may take me away from the objective that he has in mind for me. Let's take for example Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua, the priest, and the leaders of the

children of Israel who followed God's command instead of men's advice. The enemies of the Jews wanted to participate in the reconstruction of the temple in order to discourage the people. But Zerubbabel, Joshua and the leaders refused to listen to them because they had received the strict order from the Lord not to associate with the ungodly (Ezra 4: 1-6).

Keep your vision, even at the cost of rejection and solitude. It is better to walk alone with God rather than allow bad companies to lead you away from his plans. Work for the Lord, because he alone supports his vision.

VI. STRAIT IS THE DOOR AND NARROW IS THE WAY

*“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: **Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**”* Matthew 7: 13-14.

Jesus is asking us to enter the Kingdom through the narrow door, but which door is it or what exactly is this door?

“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I AM the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I AM the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” John 10: 7-9. See Revelation 4: 1.

So then it is Jesus who is the door, but not just any door, but that of the sheep. From a historical standpoint, it was one of the doors of the walls of Jerusalem, that the sheep destined for sacrifice crossed, hence its name. It was the first door to be rebuilt

by Nehemiah and his companions on their return from exile (Nehemiah 3). Indeed, before starting God's work, we must be ready to offer ourselves up in sacrifice. According to

Matthew 7: 13, this door is narrow, thus unable to accept worldly crowds and the religious bunch who are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

The Lord declares that the road that one walks with God is “narrow”. It is interesting to note the Greek word used here is *thlibo* ; it means "squeeze like grapes", “oppress”, “a narrow path, narrow, contracted”, “distressing, disturbing, persecute”. Jesus warned his disciples by telling them they would have tribulations (John 16: 33). For his part, Paul warns “... *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*” (2 Timothy 3: 12). Thus, he who walks with God must expect a lot of obstacles, trials and struggles. The different stages of the the Hebrews walk in the desert shows us the difficulties lying ahead for walkers.

The different stations of the Hebrews in the desert

After their departure from Egypt, the Hebrews began a long walk to Canaan, made of forty-two stations. At each of step, valuable lessons are given to us on what awaits the walker who engages in the narrow path.

Ramses (Exodus 12: 37) : This is the departure.

Ramses means “child of Re” who was the Solar god of the Egyptians. The Hebrews had to face this deity which certainly influenced Pharaoh (Exodus 33: 4). The walker

must understand that Satan, who held him captive once, will certainly not remain idle. He will fight against this enemy all his life.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” 1 Peter 5: 8

Succoth (Exodus 12: 37) : This is the first station of the Hebrews. Succoth means “cabin”, “Shack”, “hut”. Yahweh had instituted the feast of Tabernacles, awaiting to be celebrated in heaven, where Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us

(Deuteronomy 16: 13-15; John 14: 2). The walker must not lose sight of this goal and not allow himself to be seduced by earthly homes that are only temporary.

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” 2 Corinthians 5: 1-2.

Etam (Exodus 13: 20) : The name of this second station means “with them”. Yahweh was really with the children of Israel in their walk, guiding them through the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. After the episode of the golden calf, Yahweh wanted to stop walking with Israel. But Moses implored him saying, “...

If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.”(Exodus 33: 15). He had indeed understood that everything that is undertaken without God is doomed to failure and is therefore not worth it. Jesus the Faithful and True said: “...and, lo, I AM with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28: 20). It is therefore up to the walker to be watchful and not sin, to ensure that God still walks by his side.

Pihahiroth (Exodus 14: 2) means “place where the bulrush grows”. The bulrush is a plant that is able to bend easily without breaking. It is the image of docility. The walker must adapt to all sorts of situations (1 Corinthians 9: 20-23).

“I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” (Philippians 4: 12).

Mara (Exodus 15: 23) means “Bitter”, “Bitterness”. Bitterness is a resentment caused by disappointment, injustice or injury. It is a mixture of sadness, bitterness and anger. The walker will meet people who are likely to disappoint and hurt them, even through slander. He must ensure that his heart is always full of love and forgiveness lest the bitterness of the grace of God.

“ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour,

and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice”
(Ephesians 4: 31).

Elim (Exodus 15: 27) means “Plants”, “Palm trees”. This is the place where there were 12 water sources and 70 palm trees. The number 12 stands for foundation and the number 7 for perfection. The Palm is a plant whose roots can go 10 meters deep. After bitterness comes perfection and depth. The Walker must be rooted in Christ who is his only fountain of living water (Revelation 21: 6).

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” (Ephesians 3: 14-19).

Red Sea or Sea of Reeds (Exodus 15: 22):

The bulrush also means "reed". This plant represents the weakness of man. In Isaiah 42: 3 and Matthew 12: 20 it says that *“A bruised reed shall he not break”* .

The walker must recognize his weakness and not rely on

his own strengths to keep walking, but rather on the grace of God. Indeed, the one who recognizes his weaknesses seeks help from the Lord (2 Corinthians 12: 10). *“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”* Matthew 26: 41

Sin Desert (Exodus 16: 1): “Sin” means “thorn”. In the parable of four fields (Mark 4 and Luke 8) the thorns represent the worries of the world today, especially the seduction of riches and covetousness. Thorns can choke the walker and prevent him from being productive. *“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”* (1 Timothy 6: 7-10).

Dophka (Numbers 33: 12) means “who strikes”. God is the one who chastises his children for their good

(Hebrews 12: 5-13). The walker is often confronted with situations that hit him hard. God allows these situations to shape his children. *“See now that I, even I, am he, and*

there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.” Deuteronomy 32: 39

Alusch (Numbers 33: 13) means “tumults or agitation of men”. The walker will often be the object of tumults or agitations. Many people will come against him, scandals will happen wherever he goes (Psalm 2; Acts 20: 1-28). All these things are normal occurrences, thus he must not let them get to him. *“Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?” Matthew 15: 12*

Rephidim (Exodus 17: 1) means “rest”, “stay”, “place of rest”. After each tumult, agitation and trouble, God also gives the walker time to rest. Now Christ is our rest, in other words, our sabbath (Hebrews 4).

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11: 28

Sinai Desert (Exodus 19: 1): Sinai means “thorny”. After the rest, the walker will have to face other problems, difficult situations, but essential to the success of his walk. In fact, it was at Sinai that the people received the Torah, the law of God. Similar to the apostles John and Paul who received great revelations in prison, it is in

difficult times that the walker will receive the most beautiful blessings. *“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* Romans 8: 18

Kibroth-Haattava (Numbers 11: 34) means *“graves of covetousness”*. During his earthly life, the walker will often be tempted by the Devil. The covetousness of the things of this world (sex, money, material, honor ...) leads many astray and drags them to the grave. (Numbers 11: 4; 2 Samuel 11: 1-27; 12 and 13; James 1: 14-15). *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”* 1 John 2: 15-16.

Hazereth (Numbers 11: 35) simply means *“encampment”*. It is a temporary stay consisting of rudimentary means. The walker must know that his final destination is heaven. All that men can offer him is superficial and transient *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”* Hebrews 11: 13.

Rithma (Numbers 33: 18) means “heath” or “broomstick”. The brush broom is a shrub with pleasantly perfumed flowers whose branches were formerly used to make brooms. This is the place where God judges evil actions in order to bring the walker to a fragrant life (1 Kings 14:10; Isaiah 14: 23). *“I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen.”* Ezekiel 20: 41.

Rimmon-Pérets (Numbers 33: 19) means “pomegranate of the breach”. This is the place where the walker will be sifted, pruned, separated from the dead branches so he may bear more fruits of the Spirit (John 15: 1-9). *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”* John 15: 1-2.

Libna (Numbers 33: 20) means: “whiteness” is also the name of the city of the Levites. The walker is washed with the water of the Word and the fire of trials to become pure (Matthew 17: 1-2, Revelation 3: 5). The white garment represents the walker's justice (Revelation 19: 6-8).

“Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.” Ecclesiastes 9: 8.

Rissa (Numbers 33: 21) means “ruin”. Proverbs 16: 18 says that “*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*” Proverbs 16: 18.

It is the place where the flesh of the walker goes through to a tough trial (2 Corinthians 12: 1-10) and where the pride of the walker is annihilated to enable him to move forward.

Kehlatha (Numbers 33: 22) means “assembly”. The walker experiences brotherly fellowship with real brothers and sisters in Christ. It is there that he will draw a part of his strength to continue his walk (Acts 2:46; 1 Corinthians 12).

“*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*” Psalm 133: 1.

Mountain of Schapher (Numbers 33: 23) means “mountain of elegance or beauty”. When the walker is transformed by the power of God, his face reflects inner beauty.

“*But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*” 1 Peter 3: 4.

Harada (Numbers 33: 24) means “worry”, “fear”. The walker will be confronted with wicked and threatening people, in such difficult situations that he will be shaken to the point of fear (1 Corinthians 2: 3). *“For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.”* 2 Corinthians 7: 5.

Makheloth (Numbers 33: 25) means “place of assembly”. The walker will once again benefit from brotherly fellowship in order to be strengthened and encouraged after difficult times. *“And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.”* Acts 28: 15.

Tahath (Numbers 33: 26) means “position”. The walker takes a stand for truth. He is more than determined to move ahead despite trials. Conscious of his position in the kingdom of God, he is not after the high ranking position man may offer.

“And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” Philippians 1: 14.

Tarach (Numbers 33: 27) means “delay”. The walker may fall behind because of people around him (family,

friends, co-workers). Terach (delay), father of Abraham, had received God's command to go to Canaan, but he did not reach the end of the vision he had received. After his death, Abraham stood up to continue his journey. The walker must pay attention to his acquaintances, because some people might soon become hindrances to him. As Abraham and Lot (Genesis 13: 1-13) or Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15: 36-41), the walker must be prepared to separate from certain people in order to continue His walk with God. “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14: 26-27.

Mithka (Numbers 33: 28) means “sweetness”. After the harsh separation, the walker will experience the sweetness of God who will comfort him (1 Kings 19: 11-12). The fig tree is particularly appreciated for the softness of its fruit and the refreshing shade it brought to the students of the Torah during their meditation (Judges 9: 10-11, John 1: 47-48).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” Galatians 5: 22.

Haschmona (Numbers 33: 29) means “overweight”. The

walker whose heart is fattened can not go far (Jeremiah 5: 28). He must therefore be carved by the Lord to become lighter. In order to achieve the expected end, the latter will need to have a life of prayer and fasting. *“Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings”* 2 Corinthians 6: 3-4.

Moseroth (Numbers 33: 30) means “hindrance”, “bond”. An obstacle is a link with a loop or a ring to limit the movement of the limbs of an animal. This can be something or someone who hinders, embarrasses or holds back the walker. It is an obstacle that must be overcome. The walker will have to separate himself from some people around him (John 15: 1-10) and watch over his feelings that may make him fall into compromise.

Ben-Jakkan (Numbers 33: 31) means “the son of the one who twists or oppresses”. On his way the walker will encounter false brothers who twist the Word of God, religious people, tares, or children of Satan (Acts 8: 5-25; who will oppress him and do anything to persuade him to give up his walk with God (Galatians 2: 1-6, Revelation 17). As the apostle Paul so aptly says, we must watch for them and continue the journey without getting distracted.

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." Philippians 3: 2.

Hor-Guidgad (Numbers 33: 32) means "cave of Guidgad". It is a place where the walker will retire to rest before continuing his journey (1 Kings 19: 9). This is the place of retreat, healing (Hebrews 11: 37-38). Every walker must have his cave or physical and spiritual cave (Psalm 91), knowing that the best retreat is Jesus Christ (Matthew 11: 27-29). "*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*" Psalm 91: 1-2.

Jothbatha (Numbers 33: 33) means "goodness", "charm", "pleasing". The walker comes out of his rest and exhales a sweet-smelling fragrance. He is full of spiritual charm, his heart is full of goodness (Psalm 45: 1). "*For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth ...*" Ephesians 5: 9.

Abrona (Numbers 33: 34) means "passage", "way". The walker receives the revelation of God on the path in which he walks. He is convinced that he is on the right road, that of truth, and therefore remains unshakeable. God then opens a door that no one man can shut (Revelation 3: 8). "*Jesus saith unto him, I AM the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by*

me.” John 14: 6.

Etsjon-Geber (Number 33: 35) means “the backbone of a man”. The ships of King Jehoshaphat were destroyed there because he was associated with an ungodly king (1 Kings 22: 48-49). It is therefore where God destroys the works made according to the flesh. The Lord does not like melting pots, compromises, or associations with false brothers. Because of these bad associations, the walker can lose years of his life, energy and money invested in projects God was never a part of.

Tsin (dwarf palm) or Kadesh (Numbers 33: 36) means “consecrated”, “holy”. Whoever wants to complete the race must totally dedicate his life to God and to his Kingdom (Revelation 22: 11), otherwise he will never be able to see the Lord. *“Seek peace with all, and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord.”* (Hebrews 12: 14).

The Mountain of Hor (Numbers 33: 37) simply means “mountain”. It was where Aaron died. It is a place of pain, tears and separations. The walker can lose people close to him. He must be strengthened in the Lord who is the resurrection and the life (1 Thessalonians 4: 13-17).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life:

he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” John 11: 25.

Tsalmona (Numbers 33: 41) means “shaded”. This word alludes to the shadow of death. David said, *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”* (Psalm 23: 4). The walker is constantly under the protection of the Lord despite death threats (2 Corinthians 1: 8-11).

Punon (Numbers 33: 42) means “darkness”, “absence of light”. The walker is threatened by the darkness that tries to blind him, but Jesus is his Light (John 8: 12). He must never take part in the works of darkness, but condemn them (2 Corinthians 4: 2-5, Ephesians 5: 11).

“...Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” 1 Thessalonians 5: 5.

Oboth (Numbers 33: 43) means “wineskins”, “hollow”, “spirit”. The walker must always be a new creation in which God can pour out the new wine, that is, his Spirit (Matthew 9: 17). He must watch over his spiritual life so as not to become an old wineskin (1 Corinthians 9: 27). *“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge*

himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.” 2 Timothy 2: 20-21.

Lije-Abarim (Numbers 33: 44) means “heaps”, “ruins of Abarim”. The walker must not focus on this world in ruins due to sin and doomed to destruction. *“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”* 1 Thessalonians 5: 3.

Dibon (Numbers 33: 45) means “overflow”, “tears”, “river”. The walker has a heart full of pain and his eyes overflow with tears (Jeremiah 9: 1). He who walks with God spends his time crying because of the sin of men.

“...And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds”
2 Peter 2: 7-8.

Almon-Diblatthaim (Numbers 33: 46) means “concealment of the two fig cakes”. The walker will meet hypocrites claiming to be Christians (1 Samuel 2: 12-17, Matthew 23, Romans 2). The purpose of these people is to use the offerings destined to the Lord, for their own advantage (Acts 5: 1-11). The walker may also be

tempted by the devil to steal money from the work of God. Thus, in order to continue the walk successfully, he must beware of greed and avarice. *“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”* 1 Timothy 6: 10.

The Mountain of Abarim (Numbers 33: 47): Abarim means “those who are beyond”. The walker must use the example of those who preceded him in the faith, and who are now in glory, to stand firm (Hebrews 6: 12 and 13: 7).

“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.” James 5: 10.

The Plains of Moab (Numbers 35: 1): Moab means “from a father”. It is the last station before the crossing of the Jordan and the conquest of Canaan. The walker camps in the depths of Moab opposite Jericho (city of palm trees), near the Jordan (the one who goes down). The revelation of the Father is the last step taken by the walker. He is like the prodigal son who humbly returns to the house of his Father (Luke 15: 11-32). “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” 1 Peter 2: 25.

A few years ago, God gave me a vision in which I saw

myself climbing with great difficulty a great mountain with steep cliffs. I felt great joy when I reached the top where the Lord was waiting for me. Having gauged the distance I had traveled, I thought that I would finally get to rest. But Jesus showed me on the horizon other mountains and asked me to climb them also. Tired because of the distance I traveled thus far, I replied: “No

Lord, I want to stay here”. The Lord said to me, “If you do not come, I will continue without you”. The Lord made me understand that the Christian walk is like climbing a mountain that takes place step by step, one at a time. At each stage the walker is tested by the obstacles and oppositions he finds along the way. His success depends on his resistance and his perseverance in the trials. At each stage it will be qualified and then raised by the Lord.

VII. THE COUNCIL OF GOD

1) Putting the Word of God into Practice

Paul told the elders of Ephesus that he had “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” Acts 20: 27. The word “advice” is *boule* in Greek, which means “advice”, “goal”, “purpose”, “decision”. In this passage, the council of God is more precisely the Word of God or His law. The council of God is also his will and plans. Here again, it is the Word that reveals to us his will and plans for men. It is worth mentioning that in Acts 2: 23, 28 it is said that Jesus was delivered according to God's predetermined plan, which proves that men have performed the counsel of God unknowingly (Ephesians 1 : 11). All those who listen to the counsel of the wicked and enter the spacious path overlook the goal that God has set for their lives. That is precisely the primary meaning of the word “sin”. Indeed, the Hebrew term *chatta'ah* means “to miss the goal”. The Greek *hamartano* term found in Romans 3: 23 is even more explicit: “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*”. This word means “to miss the mark”, “to err”, “to be faulty”, “to miss the path of righteousness and honor”, “to do evil”, “to depart from the law of God, to violate this law”. The Greek word translated as “do not reach” comes from the Greek *husterio* which means “behind”, “to come late or too late”, “to be left behind in the race, and thus not be

able to reach the goal, to fall by the goal”. Thus the walker must retain the teaching of the parable of the virgins told by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 25: the five foolish virgins arrived late for the wedding supper because of the lack of oil, which is, the absence of the life of the Spirit (Ecclesiastes 9: 8). The walker must therefore avoid at all costs falling into sin otherwise he will never reach the goal ahead of him. The Bible says that God created every human being to perform good works that he prepared beforehand (Ephesians 2:10). Unfortunately, by choosing to walk according to their own counsel or that of others, most men engage in the path that leads to perdition, thus making them enemies of God (Colossians 1: 21). As we have seen It is not only atheists or the worshipers of false divinities who take the wrong path and listen to the advice of the wicked. There are also a host of people who are part of paganized Christianity and who would rather conform to the traditions of men, to what philosophy and religion teach, than listen to what God says. This may be shocking, but the Bible says clearly that these people are cursed; What awaits them at the end of their walk is ruin.

“Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt

land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.” Jeremiah 17: 5-8.

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” Matthew 7: 24-27.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Psalm 1: 1-3.

Conversely, those who walk according to the counsel of God, that is, who listen and obey the Word of the Lord, are like:

- **Trees planted near water currents:** We have seen that symbolically this current of water represents the Holy Spirit (John 7: 38; Revelation 22: 2), but also the Word of God (Ephesians 5: 26-27). He who hears the counsel of God sees his roots grow to reach the sources of waters by which he will be more and more purified and fortified. This will result in all sorts of good fruits and good works.

- **Houses with solid foundations:** Jesus is the rock on which the Church is built (Matthew 16:18), a spiritual rock that made his people drink (1 Corinthians 10: 4), and a solid foundation upon which the apostles and Prophets were built (1 Corinthians 3: 11; Ephesians 2: 20). He that heareth the counsel of God shall not be carried away by every wind of doctrine, nor shall he go astray in the way which leads to perdition. (Ephesians 4: 14). On the contrary, he will be firm, unshakable, despite the storms provoked by the enemy to destabilize him.

Joshua understood that he should meditate on the book of the law of God day and night and act faithfully according to what was written in order to succeed in all that he would undertake (Joshua 1: 8). As for David, he compared the Word to a lamp that lit up his way.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119: 105

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Psalm 119: 11.

The whole world is under the power of darkness, if the walker wants to remain on the path that leads to life, he must constantly carry with him the lamp of the Word of God to avoid going astray (2 Peter 1: 19).

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” Isaiah 60: 1-3.

In addition to this lamp, he must learn to walk according to the Spirit and carry with him the special equipment of the fighter to face all the assaults of the devil.

2) Walk in the Spirit

“ This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Galatians 5: 16.

Walking in the Spirit requires total obedience to God and

a good sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit. Indeed, he who is born of the Spirit is like the wind: *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”* John 3: 8. The wind can change directions at any moment, therefore walking in the Spirit may seem unpredictable and unstable to the carnal man. He who walks in the Spirit cannot therefore be understood by men.

Despite the prophecies given by the disciples to warn him of the dangers threatening him if he ever went to Jerusalem, Paul kept listening to the Spirit of God. *“ And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.”* Acts 21: 10-14.

The flesh, the enemy of the walker

The desires of the flesh are likely to move the walker away from his goal, that is, heaven. To walk according to the Spirit implies therefore to oppose the flesh by carrying one's cross daily.

“And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14: 27.

“ Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27 .

The desires of the flesh or the manifest works of the flesh were enumerated by Paul in Galatians 5: 19-21:

Sexual immorality: sexual relations before marriage.

Impurity: impure thoughts, masturbation, intimate relationships with a woman during menstruation.

Dissolution: the lack of morality.

Idolatry: the practice of false religions and occultism (Yoga, transcendental meditation, astrology, the invocation of the dead ... Isaiah 8: 19). In general, idolatry consists of not being able to do without something or someone. Thus an idol is a thing or a person of which one is a prisoner.

Magic: this word comes from the Greek “pharmakeia” whose root “pharmakeus” is translated in English by “wizards”, “sorcerers” or “magicians”. *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”* Revelation 21: 8.

Witchcraft: spells, enchantments, magic, divination.

Enmities: hatred.

Quarrels: gossip, anger.

Jealousies: the desire to possess that which belongs to another or to desire to be in their stead; But also the fact of criticizing others because of their gifts, their goods, their successes, etc ...

Animosities: war, conflicts.

Disputes: lack of mastery over one's tongue (Proverbs 21: 23).

Divisions: the spirit of rebellion.

Cults: sectarianism, racism, tribalism, etc.

Envy: the desire to possess what belongs to others (gifts, ministries, spouses ...) or desire to be in their stead. But also the impossibility of doing without a thing (the cigarette ...).

Drunkenness: Being dominated by alcohol. It is debauchery.

Gluttony: bulimia. It is characterized by an irrepressible desire to eat without necessarily the feeling of hunger. For example: you fast, but when you see food, you break it automatically.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5: 17-21.

It is against all these works that the Christian must lead a permanent battle. The Lord wants Christians to walk in the Spirit in order to win the battle of “self-control”. Lack of self-control produces frustration and despair.

3) Put on the warrior's Armor

*“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**” Ephesians 6:10-20.*

Whoever wants to walk with God must be aware that he is engaged in warfare as the devil as declared war against

him (Revelation 22: 12). He is not a carnal opponent, but rather a spiritual one; the warfare is so not carnal, but spiritual. We must therefore fight the good fight of faith using spiritual weapons, avoiding carnal struggles that bring distraction (Nehemiah 4: 1, Corinthians 9:26).

- **The Belt of Truth:** The devil is the father of lies (John 8: 44), and is therefore the one who inspires all the false and seductive doctrines misleading so many people. The belt is a strip of leather or fabric wrapped around the waist to secure the garment. By dying on the cross, Christ has replaced our sin stained clothes (Isaiah 64: 5) by a garment of righteousness (1 Corinthians 6: 11; Revelation 19: 8). So that our nakedness (sin) no longer appears, the garment of righteousness must be kept up by the belt of truth. The walker must therefore speak the truth and at all times take a stand for truth which is Jesus himself (John 14: 6). This position will certainly cause him additional struggles, but that is the only way to stand in righteousness before God.

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” Revelation 3: 5.

-The breastplate of justice: More than a simple garment, the breastplate is a part of the armor made up of one or more pieces of metal or other rigid material that protect the body from the neck to the belly . The breastplate protects, among other things, the heart, a vital organ, which must be preserved above all things, for it is from it that the sources of life proceed (Proverbs 4: 23). Jesus said that many things could defile the heart of man and make him vulnerable to the assaults of the enemy: *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies”* Matthew 15: 19. Therefore, the Apostle Paul invites us not to let these things settle in our hearts: *“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice”* Ephesians 4: 31. All these bad feelings and bad thoughts must be firmly rejected in the name of Jesus Christ. The walker must remain in control of his feelings and emotions.

- Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: What must lead the steps of the walker is the Gospel, in other words the Word of God, for it lights our way to the Kingdom of God. Though fought against because of truth, the walker who remains honest and faithful to the counsel of God will have peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4: 7). Without the shoes, the walker will never reach his goal because he

will be constantly bitten by snakes and scorpions (Luke 10: 19).

- **The Shield of Faith:** The shield is a hand-held defensive weapon used to protect against blows and strikes (from the Greek *belos*: “projectile”, “dart”, “javelin”, “arrow”, “lign”). But the darts of the enemy are “inflamed”, so their main objective is to pierce and burn us, which implies, the determination of the devil to destroy us! Faith therefore completes and strengthens the breastplate of justice. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* (Romans 10: 17) The Apostle Paul tells us. Faith develops when the walker seeks the advice of God in intimacy. After being enlightened, counseled and guided by the Lord, he will be able to continue his journey with confidence (Hebrews 11: 1).

- **The Helmet of Salvation:** The helmet is a part of the armor that protects the head, center of reflection and reasoning. As we saw at the very beginning, the natural man does not have the mind of Christ, whereas the carnal man, although he knows about it, does not take it into consideration. The spiritual man who walks with God knows the thought of Christ and is led by it.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ” 2 Corinthians 10: 4-5

Philosophies, religions and traditions have erected in the minds of men real fortresses that stand against the knowledge of Christ. The helmet of salvation has the purpose of preserving the walker from their harmful action and keeping his thoughts geared towards Christ and his Kingdom (1 Corinthians 2: 2; Hebrews 11: 13-16 and 12: 1-2).

- **The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God:** The only offensive weapon, it is nonetheless of formidable effectiveness.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Hebrews 4: 12-13.

When the walker uses the Word by being enlightened by the Spirit of God, he is able to discern the enemy's plans and thus thwart them. The devil cannot deceive someone who knows the Word and who listens to the counsel of

God. Similarly, his servants, the false prophets, will not be able to resist in the event of a confrontation.

“ For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.” Luke 21: 15 .

- **The prayer made by the Spirit:** The direction of the Spirit of God makes all the difference in the effectiveness of a prayer. In fact, the Holy Spirit urges the walker to pray according to the will of God, that is, in accordance with the plans the Lord has made for us (Romans 8: 26-27; 1 John 5: 14). Prayer being an exchange, it is of course in this privileged moment that the walker fortifies himself in the presence of God and receives precise instructions to help him achieve the objectives assigned to him.

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matthew 26: 41.

Prayer also allows the walker to reach the goal while resisting sin, religious people, and the flesh. He must take the example of Elijah and Paul who faced their struggles because they were men of prayer.

“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of

Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” 1 Kings 17: 1.

Thus Elijah was able to confront Ahab because he stood before God.

As for Paul, his life of fasting and prayer allowed him to stand firm against the attacks of the enemy.

*“ In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, **in fastings often**, in cold and nakedness.” 2 Corinthians 11: 26-27 .*

The walker must pay close attention to distraction by managing his time properly. For, as the Word says, the days are evil (Ephesians 5: 16). You will understand that the armor of the walker is simply sanctification without which it is impossible to see God (Hebrews 12: 14).

4) Forget the past

Take the example of a driver driving his car. If the latter looks constantly in his rear-view mirror, he cannot see the obstacles that stand in front of him, on the road. He then becomes a danger both to himself and to others. Whoever wants to reach his goal should never look back.

“ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3: 13-14.

The walker should therefore not focus on the following things:- **Errors** The mistakes of the past must make it possible to understand the future properly. One must never lose sleep over his past.

- The riches of this world

Lot's wife loved the world so much that she stopped her walk to look behind and she turned into a salt statue (Genesis 19: 26).

-Injuries and disappointments

Many people find it difficult to move forward because of injuries and disappointments. They shut themselves up in silence, depression, paranoia, or delirium. A person whose heart or soul is not healed can do a lot of damage.

Examples of walkers who have successfully completed their walk

The walker is surrounded by a great number of witnesses who have successfully finished their race, so he has models to imitate, which in turn will enable him to complete his walk as a winner.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” Hebrews 12: 1.

Enoch

This man did not drive out any demons nor performed any miracles. But he had faith, the fruit of the Spirit, and walked 300 years with God and was taken up to heaven.

*“**By faith** Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had **this testimony, that he pleased God.**” Hebrews 11: 5.*

Joseph

This man did not have the gift of miracles, he did not heal the sick but he had the fruits of the Spirit. He became governor of Egypt, the second in command, in such a great country. He then received the royal tunic, which no one could take away or steal. For this he had to first lose the tunic received from his natural father, to receive in due time the one coming from his heavenly Father. The wisdom acquired during his training in the desert allowed him to save the Egyptians and his family from famine. Also note that he was finally able to forgive his brothers for the harm they had caused him because he understood that all these things would work for his good because he

loved God (Romans 8: 28).

Daniel

This man full of wisdom and understanding was filled with the fruits of the Spirit. Daniel had not received the gift of power to work miracles, nor that of speaking in tongues. But he refused the king's food and wine and served God until the end of his life (Daniel 1).

Paul

This man of God was in love with the Lord Jesus Christ. Despite the extraordinary miracles that God operated through him (Acts 20), he remained simple and faithful to his Master. He braved all kinds of dangers because of his love for God. And at the end of his life he declared, *“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”* 2 Timothy 4: 7.

The rewards promised to the conquerors

On several occasions in the Scriptures the Lord promises to reward all those who will end their walk while keeping faith.

“If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” 1 Corinthians 3: 14-15

This is what the Lord promised:

The tree of life, eternal life:

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” Revelation 2: 7.

No second death:

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” Revelation 2: 11.

The hidden manna, a white stone and a new name:

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” Revelation 2: 17.

Authority and governance over nations with an iron scepter, the morning star (Jesus):

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.”

Revelation 2: 26-28 see Matthew 25: 14-30

The victor shall be clothed with a white garment, his name shall never be erased from the book of life, and he shall be confessed before the Father and his angels:

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” Revelation 3: 5.

The victor will be a column in the temple of God, he will have on his forehead the name of God, of Jesus and of the new Jerusalem:

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” Revelation 3: 12.

The victor shall be seated on the throne of the Father:

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Revelation 3: 21.

The conqueror will be crowned, if he has respected the rules established by God:

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them

also that love his appearing.” 2 Timothy 4: 8

“And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.” 2 Timothy 2: 5

The crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4: 8): The walker must be righteous throughout his life.

- The crown of glory (1 Peter 5: 1-4):

The walker broken by the sufferings he endured throughout his life will be honored (2 Corinthians 4: 16-18).

- The crown of life (James 1: 12 and Revelation 2: 10):

The walker who has known death or disease will receive the crown of life.

All these crowns are incorruptible (1 Corinthians 9: 25). The victors will shine like the stars of heaven (Daniel 12: 2-3).

All these rewards must allow the walker not to be discouraged because of the trials (Hebrews 10: 35-39).

CONCLUSION

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27.

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?” 2 Thessalonians 2: 4-5.

The Christian walk is like a race at the end of which are great rewards for the overcomers. The athletes of this world race to win corruptible crowns (money, honors, glory ...). To achieve this goal, they impose on themselves, night and day, an iron discipline of dieting, abstinence, daily training, ... If these people commit themselves to such drastic rules to obtain wealth and temporary glory, how much more must the Christian athlete do the same? But we will not run for incorruptible crowns, but for our very lives. It is our eternity that is at stake.

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” James 1: 12.

To win the race, the Apostle Paul mortified his body. The Greek term translated by the verb to mortify in 1 Corinthians 9: 27 is *hupopiazō*; It means “beating” black and blue”, striking as to cause bruises and pale marks, such as a boxer who drags his body, treats it rudely and disciplines it through deprivation. Obviously, there is no question of inflicting physical injuries to oneself as some Catholic ascetics do, let us not forget that the fight is spiritual. It is question here of a total denying of self, the world and its lusts.

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from Fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God” 1 Thessalonians 4: 3-5

It is a question of living in holiness wholeheartedly or without compromise and accepting to follow Christ in the way he shows us, while picking up our cross. We do not sanctify ourselves only for ourselves, but also with the hope of saving all those who are dear to us (John 17: 19):

family, friends, neighbors, colleagues ...

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Romans 13: 11-14.

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” Ephesians 5: 14-17.

No race, no battle was ever won without sacrifice, nor while living in gluttony, distraction and drowsiness. Let us wake up from sleep, for the days are evil. Let us to pay the price, fight the good fight of faith. Let us stand firm, for the Lord walks with us and fights for us.

Just a little while longer and we will have our reward. The sufferings of the present time are not comparable to the glory that is reserved for us (Romans 8: 18). May both of

our feet remain on the right path despite persecution (Hebrews 12:13).

“ But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” Daniel 12: 13

Shora KUETU

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