

La Iglesia de Dios: De Judea a Chile



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The Church of God From Judea to Chile

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PRESENTATION

With great joy, thanks to our God Jehovah, we present below the final result of a long research work aimed at knowing the history of the Church of God for almost two thousand years of existence, as well as understanding its nature and essential doctrine. However, our historical work - which begins in the Land of Israel or spiritual Zion - focuses fundamentally on the Church of God in our distant country, Chile.

Before going through the history of our organization, we wish to point out that for many years we have had in our hands some partial compilations that describe or relate briefly and without greater historical accuracy the origins and development of our Church, but we never decided to make a profound contribution to correct such works. Therefore, we believe that this work fills a void within our community, since we have confirmed that there is a generalized lack of knowledge of the history of the true Christian people of God, both in its universal dimension and at the local level. Without a doubt, the great difficulty in carrying out this research has been the almost total absence of written sources that support oral information in relation to the history of the Church in our country.

In this instance we wish to thank all those brothers and people who contributed with their spiritual and material support for the realization of the historical work that we have produced; to those who allowed us to interview them, to those who answered the questionnaire letters, to those who provided us with documents, letters, photographs and old hymnals and Bible studies from former brothers in the faith.

Just like the evangelist Luke, who thought of writing in order the facts and stories of the life of our Lord Jesus, we have felt motivated to systematize and put in writing that past of our Congregation that was saved or preserved among many of its members. The people of God do have history, both in the world and in Chile; and those who make it up must know it, must become aware of their past, because only then will they be situated in an undeniable reality; Only in this way can he rescue the existence of a spiritual work that is not new and, above all, that is from God. In truth, unraveling that past will allow us to discover that the Church of God, our Church, is not new nor has it been founded by any man, but has been instituted by Jesus Christ himself, in Israel; and that it has existed throughout the centuries and in different regions of the Earth, with different names, it is true, but with a common central doctrine, which is the observance of the law of God through faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, putting the history of our Church before our eyes and that of others will reveal the greatness of our God, who has allowed the word of salvation and eternal life to reach Chile from Zion - and with many difficulties.

On the other hand, to review and retell history is to discover not only the past, but to open our present to the possibility of an increasingly better interpretation of ourselves as an institution and as believers, our reasons and desires; It is discovering the hand of God at every step driving and encouraging his people; It is knowing that God has been, is and will be at the side of his small Church, but faithful and obedient that we desire and must be. Furthermore, the Church must project itself into the future, since it must achieve the spiritual goal that is the eternal heavenly Kingdom of God, and for this the search for perfection must be rooted in the biblical-historical tradition, in the memory of the past, in "the ancient paths."

That is the importance of this historical work. And not only that. Let us add that the historical notion of our Church must involve new converts, young Christian-Israelites and future generations, so that they know their roots and the contribution that so many brothers made to the development and transmission of our doctrine, with errors. and successes, but with love and a spirit of service towards the Lord of Heaven. Finally, we wish to appeal to Christian-Israelites who read this work, so that they feel joyful in

reading their history as God's people and feel strengthened in faith. And for those who do not make up this people, may it constitute a call to know the redeeming truth.

CHAPTER I: ORIGIN AND NATURE FROM THE CHURCH OF GOD: THEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BASES

The Church of God exists because humanity has not been and is not happy. It is enough to observe the history of man and the environment that surrounds him to verify it. It is easy to understand then that the Church of Jesus Christ exists with an established purpose from the very days of the fall of man in Eden, and therefore, if you want to review the purpose, nature and history of the people of God, you must go back to the very origins of man's existence on this earth. There arose the need for a redeemer, there the existence of God's plan of salvation was launched, for which he created a people among whom the redeemer or the *Messiah* was manifested .

The Messiah announced in the prophecies

As noted, the Holy Scriptures reveal that the need for a Redeemer arose from the very moment that the natural parents of humanity sinned in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-20). This redemptive conception constitutes the central idea of the writings that came to form the Hebrew Tanakh and/or the Christian Old Testament. Particularly the prophetic writings describe the Redeemer as the Messiah or the Servant of God, who would be a liberator of the human race from the chains of sin, and restorer of the harmony between God and men that had been broken by human disobedience (Romans 5:12-21). The Israelite people were the channel of transmission of this messianic hope that Christians consider to have been materialized in Jesus of Nazareth and his teachings.

The Hebrew Scriptures contain many prophecies that provide details regarding the background of the Messiah, his deeds, the time of his coming, the way he would be treated, and his place in the purpose of God the Father. The various indications regarding the Messiah were thus combined to form a great picture that would help the chosen ones to identify Him.

The patriarch Jacob was the first to directly mention that exceptional being when he prophesied: “ The scepter will not be taken away from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh (He who is to be sent) comes; and to Him the people will gather” (Genesis 49:10).

This is the prophet that Moses also announced: “A prophet from among you, from your brothers, the Lord your God will raise up for you like me; you will hear him... I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers, like you; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them whatever I command him” (Deuteronomy 18:15,18).

God inspired Isaiah to write that the Messiah would be born of a young woman: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7: 14).

Likewise, Isaiah described the nature of the Messiah, of his reign: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government is upon his shoulder; and his name will be called Wonderful, Counselor , Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no limit to the increase of his empire and to his peace, on the throne of David and on his kingdom, establishing it and confirming it in judgment and in righteousness from now on and forever” (Isaiah 9:6-7). And he also wrote: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; He has sent me to preach good

news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to the prisoners the opening of the prison; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's good pleasure ..." (Isaiah 61:1-2). For his part, Jeremiah prophesied confirming that the Messiah would descend from David, writing: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he will reign as King, who will be blessed, and will execute judgment and righteousness in the land" (Jeremiah 23:5).

The birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem was announced in advance by Micah: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are small among the families of Judah, from you will come one who will be Lord in Israel" (Micah 5:2).

Zechariah announced the episode related to the last entry of the Messiah into the city of Jerusalem: "Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion; shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem; Behold, your King will come to you, just and saving, humble, and riding on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

Malachi also referred to the redemptive mission of God's Anointed One, saying: "But for you who fear my name, the Sun of righteousness will rise, and in its wings it will bring salvation" (Malachi 4:2).

Other important prophecies that detailed the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ were also written hundreds of years before they occurred: The mission of Jesus, who would preach his divine Spirit-filled message and include the Gentiles in the redemptive plan, who would know his Gospel and his Law: "Behold my servant, I will uphold him; my chosen one in whom my soul finds contentment; I have put my spirit on him, he will give judgment to the nations... He will not grow weary, nor faint, until he places judgment on the earth; and the islands will wait for his law" (Isaiah 42:1-4). A friend of the Messiah was going to betray him (Psalm 41:9). His disciples would abandon him, scattering (Zechariah 13:7). They would execute him with false witnesses; He would remain silent before his accusers (Psalm 27:12, Isaiah 53:7). He would be beaten, spat on; their hands and feet would be nailed (Isaiah 50:6, Micah 5:1, Psalm 22:16). He would be numbered with the sinners; they would divide their clothes (Isaiah 53:12, Psalm 22:18). He would be reviled when punished and given vinegar and gall (Psalm 22:7-8, 69:21). He would be pierced, but no bones would be broken (Isaiah 53:5, Zechariah 12:10, Psalm 34:20, Exodus 12:6).

All of these and numerous other prophecies about the life, sacrifice, and mission of the heavenly Savior were written hundreds of years in advance so that He could be identified. And when he came, they were all fulfilled in the Messiah Jesus.

However, there are two decisive prophecies that clearly identify Jesus as the saving Messiah: one that indicates with complete chronological accuracy the historical time that would mark his physical appearance in the world, and another that clearly describes his atoning sacrifice for the redemption of humanity. The latter is found in Isaiah 53, written about 750 years before our era, and says in part: "Who has believed our report? And upon whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed? And it will come up like a branch before Him, and like a root out of dry ground; There is no appearance in Him, nor beauty; We have seen it, but without attraction for us to desire it. Despised and rejected among men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief; and as we hid our face from Him, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He bore our illnesses, and suffered our pains; and we considered him stricken, wounded by God and humbled. But He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our sins; the punishment of our peace upon Him; and by his stripes we were healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; *but the LORD has laid on Him the sin of us all* ... When he has made his life an atonement for sin, he will see his offspring, he will live long, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand..." (Isaiah 53: 1-12).

Meanwhile, the prophecy that specifies the exact date of the birth, ministry and death of the Messiah Jesus is found in Daniel 9, revealed almost 550 years before our era, which says: "Understand therefore

the word, and understand the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon your people and upon your holy city, to finish the transgression, and to conclude the sin, and to atone for the iniquity; and to bring in the justice of the ages, and to seal the vision and the prophecy, and to anoint the Holy of holies. Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks; They will return to build the plaza and the wall in distressing times. And after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be killed, and not by himself;... And in another week he will confirm the covenant to many, and in the middle of the week he will cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease..." (Daniel 9:23-27).

The prophecy of the 70 weeks and the birth of the Messiah Jesus

The prophecy in the ninth chapter of Daniel about the 70 weeks is a prophecy that proves that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah or Christ announced in the Old Testament. First it must be understood that biblical prophecies use the principle that a prophetic day is equivalent to a literal year (see Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6). Following this principle, it turns out that the 70 weeks, or 490 prophetic days, correspond to 490 literal years.

Since when are the 70 weeks of years counted to reach the Messiah? The prophecy says: "From the going forth of the word (or command) to restore and build Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks." What order was that and when was it given? At that time, the Jewish people were held captive in Babylon, and the Persian kings gave them their release so that they could restore their capital. There were four decrees proclaimed by Persian kings for this purpose, the most important being the one issued by Artaxerxes during the seventh year of his reign, that is, the year 457 BC of the calendar used by secular historians (Ezra 7:1,7- 11) (1). The prophecy says that from that year there would be "seven weeks, and sixty -two weeks" until the advent of the Messiah (Daniel 9:25). Of course, this means 69 prophetic weeks or 483 literal years between 457 BC and the appearance of the Messiah, which was to occur in AD 27. Some mistakenly calculate 483 years from 457 BC to AD 26. This is because they do not count the year that It must be added when making the transition from the years *before Christ* to those *after Christ* . There is no year 0, so one year must be added to this calculation. Jesus was baptized and began his ministry in AD 27, not AD 26.

From this chronological data it is possible to determine the year in which Jesus the Messiah was born. To do this, we must start from the information provided by the evangelist Luke, who records that when Jesus began his ministry "he was beginning to be about thirty years old" (Luke 3:23). So, if Jesus was about 30 years old in the fall of 27 AD, his birth had to have occurred in 4 BC (2). This historical truth is confirmed by the following source:

"The Christian Era or Vulgar Era was created in the year 525, when Pope John I asked the monk Dionysius the Exiguus who tried to calculate the exact date of the birth of Christ. He established the birth of Christ... the year 753 of the (legendary) founding of Rome. The truth is that Dionysius made a mistake calculation, since it is known that Christ was born during the reign of Herod, who died shortly before the Easter of the year 751 of the (legendary) founding of Rome. Therefore, and paradoxically, the Christian Era - "nation must actually begin in the year 4 BC" (3).

Regarding the date of the birth of Jesus the Messiah, no man has known or knows exactly when it happened. The gospels say nothing regarding the day of his nativity, which demonstrates the great lack of concern that their authors had regarding the subject. It follows that if God had wanted Christians to celebrate his birth, he would certainly have revealed the exact date on which such a great event

occurred. Only the date of Christ's death is known with total accuracy, which is what is truly important for every human being, as the wise Solomon inspiredly declared: "A good reputation is better than good ointment; and *on the day of death than on the day of birth* " (Ecclesiastes 7:1). Notwithstanding the above and in light of historical and biblical information, it is possible to determine approximately the time of year in which the birth of Jesus occurred; and evidence indicates that this occurred early in the autumn season of the aforementioned year 4 BC (4) .

The Ministry of Jesus the Christ

When Jesus lived, the land of Israel was part of the immense Roman Empire. His ministry began in the year 27 AD after being baptized by John the Baptist, of whom the prophet Isaiah had predicted: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness; prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 3:3). And John the Baptist confirmed that in Jesus of Nazareth God fulfilled his promise of redemption and blessing through the seed of Abraham, when he said: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Genesis 12:3, John 1 :29).

In Jesus the announcements of the ancient prophets of Israel were realized, and He was the anointed Servant of God; That is why he received the title announced in ancient prophecies: the *Messiah* or *Christ* (for example, in Isaiah 61:1, Daniel 9:25). In general, the word Messiah denotes among the Israelites a person destined by God to accomplish great things through him, or was consecrated to some high position, destiny or dignity. In this sense, Scripture calls Saul, David, Cyrus, etc. Messiah or Anointed One (1 Samuel 24:7-11, Isaiah 45:1). An early 4th century AD ecclesiastical writer, Lactantius , wrote the following:

"Christ (Messiah) was not a proper name, but a title that denoted power, majesty. Daban the Jews gave this name to kings... That is why they were commanded to anoint those who were elevated to the saint -

pig or royal dignity... That is why we call Christ whom the Jews called Messiah, that is, anointed or consecrated king; because Jesus possessed, not a temporal kingdom, but a heavenly kingdom and eternal" (5) .

In fact, the word *Messiah* comes from the Castilianization of the word *Meschiach* , which precisely means "Anointed One," which par excellence indicates the Anointed One or Son of God (John 6:69). And this same term in the Greek language is *Khristós* , which comes from the verb " khriein " or anoint, from which the adjective *Christ is derived* . Therefore, Meschiach and Khristós have mutual equivalence and mean the same thing: the Anointed One. This is corroborated by the Scriptures themselves. In John 1:40-41 it reads: "We have found the Messiah (which means the Christ)"; and in John 4:25 it says: " The woman said to him : 'I know that the Messiah (that is, the Christ) is coming.'

In the days when Jesus Christ appeared publicly, Jews looked forward to the era of the Messiah's reign (Luke 2:25-32), but their conception of Him had changed over the centuries. Most Israelites did not believe that the Messiah died for the sins of mankind, as the prophecy of that time described. For them, liberation should not be strictly spiritual, religious in nature, but rather earthly, political. The Messiah had been taken down from his supernatural stand and turned into a human leader, politician, nationalist, warrior and charismatic and powerful man. For the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus, Messiah was a term that came to mean a descendant of King David who would usher in glorious rule for Israel (2 Samuel 7:12-13).

It was precisely in the era of Roman rule that those ideas fueled the Jewish national liberation movements and accompanied Israelite messianism. In this regard, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* observes: “They longed for the promised Deliverer of the house of David, who would deliver them from the yoke of the hated domi - Roman child and would establish his own reign of peace” (6)

Under this context, Jesus began his evangelizing and redemptive mission, when he was about 30 years old, the same as the Levites who entered the service of the sanctuary under the Old Covenant (Numbers 4:1-3,22-23,29- 30). He preached his message of salvation and the kingdom of God for three and a half years, showing himself to his people Israel full of love and mercy, healing the sick, performing miracles, raising the dead and calling for repentance and obedience to God the Father to obtain the salvation and a place in that heavenly kingdom. He confirmed the spiritual and moral precepts of the Law, gave them a new meaning under the seal of love, considering them necessary to achieve eternal life. Furthermore, Jesus promised a heavenly life to those who lived the righteousness of God.

The consummation of the 70 weeks prophecy

Jesus Christ had brought the message of salvation to his people for three and a half years , until the time came for the fulfillment of the atoning act, when he had to lay down his life to redeem from sin. He had preached to many thousands of Jews, but very few believed in Him. This was also the fulfillment of the prophecy, which determined: “You will hear by hearing, and you will not understand; and seeing you will see, and you will not look. For the heart of this people is fat, and their ears hear hard, and their eyes wink so that they do not see with their eyes” (Isaiah 6:9-10, Matthew 13:10-16). The religious leaders of Israel (Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes), meanwhile, always maintained a hostile attitude towards Christ, they refused to accept his messianism, his mission and his doctrine. In reality , that Galilean represented a real danger for them in terms of the privileges they had within Israelite society, although they also considered him a destabilizing element for the security and integrity of the nation, that is, those religious leaders materially interpreted the ministry. of Jesus and not as a factor of spiritual development or growth. It was written. Thus, very soon they began to plot the arrest and death of the Nazarene (John 11:47-50).

In the dramatic events of Easter in the year 31 AD, Jesus was arrested as a vile criminal by the Romans when he was accused by the Jews of being a troublemaker and traitor to Rome and Israel , as they claimed that they had no king but Caesar. Roman (John 18:28-30, Luke 23:1-5, John 19:14-15). The Jewish hierarchs persuaded the people to ask for his death for having proclaimed himself the Son of God, since according to them Jesus had blasphemed against the Name of the Lord, and in that case he deserved the maximum penalty (John 19:5-7, Leviticus 24:16). On the 14th day of Abib (or Nisan) of the Jewish calendar, Jesus Christ died crucified in full fulfillment of divine prophecies, including the prophecy of the 70 weeks.

In fact, we have seen the realization of the first 69 weeks of the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, but it is necessary to explain the seventieth week: In verse 26 it says that after the 69 weeks “the Messiah will be killed.” , and not for itself”, making direct reference to the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, as described in Isaiah 53:3-4,8. But how long after 69 weeks would this happen? The answer is found in verse 27: “And in another week (the last of the 70 weeks) he (the Messiah) will confirm the covenant to many, and *in the middle of the week* he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease.” Here the seventieth week is mentioned, which, as has been noted, represents seven years. If the first 69 weeks went to the fall of AD 27, these seven years go to the fall of AD 34. Then, in the middle of this week of years Christ

would cause the sacrifices and the offering that supported them to cease (e.g. tithes). As? The New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews gives the answer: “Christ was offered once to exhaust (bear away) the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:28); and Christ, “having offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sits at the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12). The blood of the animals sacrificed by the people of Israel until then could not and cannot take away sins; Therefore, the sacrifice of Christ Jesus put an end to the need for such sacrifices performed by the Levitical priests, who prefigured that supreme sacrifice (Hebrews 8:4-5, 10:1).

Christ's sacrifice caused the sacrifices to cease in the middle of the week. This part of the prophecy was fulfilled in a dual way. First, Jesus died after preaching for three and a half years (half a prophetic week), that is, from the fall of the year 27 to the spring of the year 31 AD (Northern Hemisphere). Conradi , ecclesiastical historian, confirms these facts:

“His (Christ's) ministry lasted three and a half years, for he witnessed, according to John 2:13, 5:1, 6:4 and 13:1, four Easter holidays, being crucified during the last one. His crucifixion occurred in the year

31 of our era, even though Christ was already in his (almost) 34th year of life. From our investment -

tigation we get the following: If we count sixty- nine weeks of years, that is, 483 a-

years since 457, we arrive exactly at the 27th year of our era, the year in which the promised Messiah anointed by the Holy Spirit, he began his ministry; half a week of years, that is, three and a half years since

Therefore , we arrive with the same exactness to the date of the death of Christ, from which they were abolished

the offerings of typical victims forever, for having been consummated in the substantial offering of the sacrifice of Christ, true Lamb of God” (7) .

And second, Jesus died in the middle of the literal week, that is, the fourth day of the week or Wednesday, as it is called today. The facts that confirm this reality are the following: On the second day of the week (Monday) the Jewish religious leaders planned the death of Jesus before the day they ate the Passover. Jesus said to his disciples: “You know that in *two days* (Wednesday) the Passover will take place, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified”; while the Jewish leaders “had counsel to arrest Jesus by deception and kill him. And they said, 'Not on the day of the festival, lest there be a commotion among the people ’” (Matthew 26:1-5). Jesus and his closest disciples, the apostles, ate the Passover meal and the Holy Supper was instituted between dusk on Tuesday the 13th and dusk on Wednesday the 14th of Abib (Matthew 26:20-28). It should be said that Jesus had to bring the Passover meal forward one day, since at dusk on Thursday the 15th - the time when the lamb was eaten according to the law - He would be in the tomb. In this regard, Blinzler provides Jewish testimony that a *baraíta* or passage from the Babylonian Talmud states with complete precision the execution of Jesus on the day before the Passover festival. (8) . The Messiah is arrested at dawn on the 14th of Abib ; at the sixth hour or noon of this the Jews ask for his crucifixion (John 19:14-18, Matthew 27:15-26); and at the ninth hour or three in the afternoon Jesus dies on a Roman cross. And on the eve of Passover, at sunset on that Wednesday, Joseph of Arimathea removes the body of Jesus and buries it (John 19:31,38-42). Thursday is a great Sabbath, as it is the annual Sabbath of Passover or the first day of the solemn feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:1-7, Ezekiel 20:20, John 19:31).

Below are some secular testimonies that corroborate the historical-biblical truth described above:

“James A. Walter, in an article titled 'The Chronology of Passion Week' that appeared in

the magazine of *Biblical Literature* in June 1958, mentions that numerous Catholic writers -

People for several centuries claimed that Jesus took the Passover on Tuesday night; the next -

Wednesday morning He was apprehended by the Jewish mob. Walter states: 'The references in-

found in the *Didascalía* (3rd century AD), in Epiphanius, in Victorinus of Pettau (both from the 4th century

AD)... support that the date of Passover (in which Jesus participated for the last time) was Tuesday (in the night) and the subsequent arrest of Jesus during the morning hours of Wednesday” (9)

“As Christ was crucified according to the quote (John 19:31) on the day before the Sabbath , we can understand why some have believed that Friday was the day of the crucifixion. But the Saturday that followed crucifixion of the Lord was not the weekly Sabbath, it was the great annual Sabbath, for it says that it was the ' Great Sabbath ' (John 19:31). This Saturday could fall on any day of the week.

“We believe the Scriptures indicate that in the year in which Jesus was crucified, the annual Sabbath was

A thursday . Jesus was crucified and buried on the day of preparation (Wednesday), the next day was the *great day* of the Sabbath (Thursday), then came Friday, a weekday, followed by the weekly Sabbath.

nal ... All this becomes clear to us when we understand that there were *two* Sabbaths in that week: the Sabbath - weekly and the annual Great Saturday” (10) .

“The Bible nowhere says that Jesus was crucified and died on a Friday. It is said that Jesus

He was crucified on the day 'before the Sabbath '... But there is no room for doubt as to which Sabbath he refers to -

re in this case... It is not the weekly Sabbath but the day before Easter Saturday, which fell that year on Thursday, that is , the day on which Jesus Christ was crucified was Wednesday. John makes this so clear. as the day... There is absolutely nothing in favor of a crucifixion on Friday, but all the Scriptures - These harmonize perfectly with the idea of the crucifixion on Wednesday” (11) .

In this way, the death of Jesus the Messiah came to give exact fulfillment to the promise of redemption given by God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15) and materialized each of the messianic prophecies, such as that of the 70 weeks. In the death of Jesus Christ, the Jews were the accusers and judges, and the Romans were the executioners, in whom all humanity was represented, particularly the non-Jews or Gentiles, who sacrificed in Him their own Lamb for their own redemption.

And according to the prophecy also and his own words, Jesus gave a sign that He was indeed the Messiah, and that sign was the length of time that He would remain lifeless and buried: “The evil and adulterous generation demands a sign; but no sign will be given, but the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth *three days and three nights* ” (Matthew 12:39-40). Furthermore, Jesus had predicted to his disciples: “The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; but when He is dead, He will rise again on the third day” (Mark 8:31); He had already told the Jews: “Destroy this temple (his body), and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:8-21).

Without the resurrection of Christ to defeat death there would have been no redemption (1 Corinthians 15:12-22). And the resurrection of Christ occurred exactly three days after his death, that is, at the same time but on the weekly Sabbath. Woodrow confirms this fact:

“Now, since there would be an exact time for... his death, it is not inappropriate to think that there was also - well an exact time for his resurrection. Exactly 72 hours (after his death).

“Keeping this in mind, we can understand what time of day the resurrection took place. As

Jesus was in the tomb three days and three nights (72 hours), we can think that the resurrection occurred performed at the same time of his death, three days later... The Bible tells us that Jesus died shortly after the *ninth hour* , that is, three in the afternoon” (12) .

Regarding these events, the apostles of Christ testified about their historicity: “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his Son Jesus, whom you delivered, and

denied before Pilate, He judged that he should be released. But you denied the Holy and the Just, and asked that a murderer be given to you; and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead; of which *we are witnesses* ” (Acts 3:13-15; also Acts 5:29-32).

So far, 486 and a half years of the 70 weeks prophecy have been fulfilled, that is, there is still another half prophetic week or three and a half years left. What happened in that remaining time? Daniel's prophecy says that the Messiah “will confirm the covenant for many.” Indeed, Jesus Christ confirmed the divine promise regarding the coming of the Messiah, first by preaching the *Good News* or Gospel directly to the Jews for three and a half years, and then through the apostles in the other three and a half years. But the vast majority of Jews did not accept Jesus' word. This is how now came the full fulfillment of God Jehovah's promise to Abraham, saying: “In your seed all the people of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). Through Jesus Christ, Abraham's seed in the flesh (since he was born as a Jew), the Gentile peoples would begin to participate in divine grace. Now the apostles would turn to preach the Gospel to them. And when did this mission begin? In the year 34 AD, that is, exactly three and a half years after the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah Jesus, thus completing the 490 years of Daniel's prophecy. The first proper Gentile convert to the redemptive gospel was Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and his family (Acts 10). After the apostle Peter's account of that great event, everyone “glorified God saying: 'So to the Gentiles God has also given repentance leading to life' (Acts 11:18).

From the Israelite Congregation to the Christian Church

What is the “Church”? At the same time, the word *Church* has several meanings, which have been far from its original meaning, which is why it is important to know its origin, its use and etymology, to provide clarity regarding the Church founded by Christ, the *Church of God* .

Dictionaries define the word Church as: “Religious society founded by Jesus Christ. Community formed by people who profess the same doctrine. “Building where the faithful gather.” However, the Holy Scriptures in Spanish use the words *Congregation* and *Church* to refer to people, to a religious community of faithful to God, not to a physical building. This same fact supports an undeniable historical-biblical truth: the Church of God existed and has existed long before the Messiah Jesus established the foundations of the New Covenant. That is why it is necessary to investigate the terms Church and Congregation.

Where does the word Church come from? From the English translation of the Greek word “*ekklesia* ,” whose use denoted an assembly, a gathering, a company, or a congregation of people, it is made up of two roots: “*ek* ,” which is a preposition that translates as *of* or *outside* and whose meaning is *from inside to outside* ; The other root is “*kaleo* ,” which translates to *call* . With these two words etymologically the word Church means *calling those outside* (**13**) .

Since when has the true Church of God existed ? At first glance and using the Spanish translations, I could agree with the fact that the Church would have actually begun in the days of Jesus and the apostles. For example, in Acts 2, after the apostle Peter preached the good news to his fellow countrymen, at least 3,000 of them believed that Jesus was the Messiah. In Acts 2:47 it says: “Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church every day those who were to be saved.” With this verse it would apparently be demonstrated that those who believed in Jesus became part of the recently created “Church of Christ.” Later there are many other verses in which the Church is mentioned in the days of the apostles (for example, Acts 5:11, 8:1).

However, there is a key verse that shows that the above thesis is not correct. That refers to when Jesus teaches about the exhortation that should be made to the brother who sins against his other brothers:

“Therefore, if your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him (rebuke him) between you and him alone; If I listen to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not hear you, take one or two with you, so that in the mouths of two or three witnesses every word may be recorded. And if he will not listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he does not listen to the church, consider him a useful Gentile and a publican” (Matthew 18:15). Here is a revealing fact: Jesus said that if he is not heard, let the church say so, yes, the church or the community of believers! So the Church in the time of Jesus already existed, and he did not come to found it, but rather referred to the congregation - in no way of Christians - but of his people, which is Israel.

Stephen, speaking of the patriarch Moses, says the following: “This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers” (Acts 7:37-38). Where today's Bibles translate “congregation,” the original Greek text used the word “*ekklesia*” and, of course, this verse would read like this: “This is the one who was in the *Church* in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him.” ...”. Now, why, when speaking of Moses with all Israel at the foot of Sinai, did they not translate *ekklesia* as Church? Without a doubt, the translators of Christianity have taught for centuries that there is a separation in time - beginning with Jesus - between those who lived "bound under the law" and those who are "in the freedom of the grace of Christianity." This is a deception and opposition to the truth. The Bible calls those who were with Moses “the Church.” Yes, to those who were in “legalism”, “to those who were enslaved to the law”, “to the natural Israelites”.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the same translation is found again when referring to Israel; They did not translate it as *Church* but as Congregation, why? Because with this argument the false ancestral belief that the Christian Church was founded from Jesus would be demolished. The aforementioned text states: “Saying, ‘I will announce your name to my brothers, I will praise you in the midst of the *Congregation*’ (Hebrews 2:12). This verse is very important, since it serves to link it with Hebrew, the language in which the Old Testament is written (the Jewish Tanakh), because it is a quote from it in Psalm 22:22, which says: “I will announce your name to my brothers; In the midst of the *Congregation* I will praise you.”

What word was used in the original Hebrew text to refer to the “Congregation”? “*kahal*” was used, which is a noun, and which again means *congregation*, *meeting* or *assembly*, in such a way that the word approximately synonymous with the Greek “*ekklesia*”, in Hebrew, is *kahal*, or *kehila*. (14). or Old Testament was translated into Greek in the famous translation known as the *Septuagint version* (15), written between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, the word *kahal* was also translated as *ekklesia*. Hence, every time it appears in the Old Testament, it can well be read as *Church*. Here are some other examples regarding this fact: Deuteronomy 9:10, 18:16; Judges 20:2; 21:5,8; 1st Chronicles 13:2,4; 28:8; 29:1,10,20; 2nd Chronicles 1:3,5; 6:3,12-13; 7:8; 20:5,14, 23:3, 28:14; 29:23,28,31-32; 30:2,4,17,23-25; Ezra 10:1, Nehemiah 5:7).

On the other hand, in all current biblical translations there is a book called “Ecclesiastes”, which with this fact alone refutes the belief that the Church of God began with the ministry of Jesus and his apostles, since its name also comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, only referring to the individual who presides, in the Hebrew “*kohelet*” or preacher, someone *who speaks in the assembly*.

There is much evidence that the Church did not have its origin in the first advent of Christ, but rather already existed. If people were saved through the redemptive ministry of Jesus, and not before, then what were Simeon and Anna doing waiting for the One who would come and of whom the prophets had spoken? (Luke 2:25-38). Were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon and so many others not saved? And if they were saved, it was because they had believed by faith in God and in the

future promises, then they were part of the “Church of the Anointed”, of which all those who have faith in Jesus and keep his commandments are part (Hebrews 11; John 15:15, 15:10; Revelation 14:12).

In 1 Corinthians 10:1 it reads: “For I do not want you, brothers, to be unaware that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all in Moses were baptized in the cloud and in the sea; and they all ate the same spiritual food; and they all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual stone that followed them, and the stone was Christ.” So Israel, the Jews, constituted the Church or Congregation that, without knowing it, saw the Messiah in the manifestations and wonders of God. Israel was a nation, state and church at the same time when it later established itself in the Promised Land.

But how can we reconcile this fact with the words of Jesus: “I will build my Church”? Did Jesus create another Church? Definitely not. It must be remembered that the word *ekklesia* means *to call outsiders* or *to call together* , which is why Christ meant that he would gather or call many others to participate in the New Covenant that He would establish with his blood. This divine objective is made even clearer with the words of Jesus referring to the “other sheep” (the Gentiles) who would also listen to his voice (the Gospel) so that they would join his flock (the people of Israel); and then there will be one Church or Congregation (John 10:16). The apostles Paul and Peter confirmed this *call* to the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:11-20, 1 Peter 2:5,10).

Then, the Gentiles called to grace were added to the Jews converted to Christ, giving rise to “spiritual Israel” or the Christian Church of God. The first disciples of Jesus, the apostles and the “Seventy,” were the basis of this Congregation of faith and grace (Matthew 10:1-4, Luke 10:1). When the nascent Christian community was baptized by the Holy Spirit, it already had about 120 members (Acts 1:15, 2:1-17); and soon the 3,000 converts were added after Peter's speech, and then another 5,000 (Acts 2:37-41, 4:4). But, it is necessary to note that the New Covenant Church is built “on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20).

In effect, Jesus is the stone, or rather the rock on which his Church has been founded. This is revealed in Matthew 16:13-16, which states: "And when Jesus came to the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that the Son of Man is?' And they said: 'Some, John the Baptist; and others Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He says to them: 'And you, who Do you say that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" With this, Peter recognized that Jesus was not only the Messiah, but also the Son of God, that is, that was divine. But it was not Peter's credit for what he said, but Jesus' heavenly Father had revealed it to him (Matthew 16:17). And Jesus continues saying: “But I also tell you that you are Peter, and on *this rock I will build my Church* ; and the gates of Hades (death) will not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

There is much controversy regarding this verse, since for many centuries until today it is stated that the rock on which the Christian Church was founded refers to the apostle Peter and not to Christ. However, note the true meaning, originally written by Matthew. This apostle and evangelist wrote in the Greek language; then Spanish did not exist. In the text, Peter is also called Cephas (from Greek “ kefas ”; from Aramaic “ kefa ”). John 1:40-42 tells how Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, found him and brought him to Jesus: “And Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon, son of Jonah; you will be Cephas (which means *stone*)” (verse 42). The Spanish word “stone” comes from the Greek “ pétros ,” which means a tiny stone. Also the Greek word “ kefas ” means the same, a small stone, definitely referring to a human. But when Jesus said, “On this rock I will build my Church,” the original Greek word written by Matthew was not *kefas* nor *pétros* , but “petra,” which means a large massive rock, denoting greatness, solidity, firmness (Another passage where the same Greek word *petra* is used is Matthew 7:24, in which Jesus spoke of the man who built his house on the rock). Therefore, the Greek word *petra* cannot refer

to the human Peter, but to the glorified Christ. In simple language, then, *petros* or *kefas* It was Simon Peter, but the *petra* was Christ. In the Scriptures there is other evidence that the Messiah Jesus was and is the rock, great stone or rock on which he is making the spiritual building that is the Church grow, such as this passage: “For no one can lay another foundation than that which is place, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11; see also Isaiah 28:16, 1 Corinthians 10:4, 1 Peter 2:3-8).

The Catholic theologian and writer Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430) once considered Peter to be the “stone” of Matthew 16:18, but later in his life he stated another opinion when examining the evidence, saying:

“Since then I have often explained the words of our Lord: ' You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church', to the effect that they must be understood as a reference to Him to whom I confide -

It was Peter when he said: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'... For what was said (to Peter) It was not 'You are the rock', but 'You are Peter'. But the rock was Christ” (**16**) .

Consequently, the Church of God has understood that although the kingdom - the fold or people of Christ - is the congregation of Israel (Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 1:30-33, John 10:14-16, Matthew 10:5-6, 1 Corinthians 10:1-4), God has also determined to incorporate the Gentiles into that kingdom, fold or Church through the atoning blood of his Only Begotten Son, grace and faith (John 3:14- 18). Meanwhile, the Old Covenant people (the Church or Congregation of Israel) and the converted Gentile people (the Christian Church) follow different but parallel paths with the same “pure and undefiled religion” that has existed from the beginning (James 1: 27) and by which “the ancients obtained testimony” through faith (Hebrews 11:2); the same “faith that was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3); since, it is argued, why would God have a different religion for those who lived before Christ and for those who came after him? Until now, only faith in Jesus Christ is what separates both Congregations or Churches; but the Scriptures announce that in the future such difference will disappear and both peoples or flocks will be united under one Shepherd (John 10:16, Ephesians 2:14-15).

GRADES

(1) Conradi refers to the decisive decree in the following terms: “ And the elders of the Jews built and They prospered, according to the prophecy of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo . So they built, and finished, by the

commandment of the God of Israel, and by the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia (Ezra 6:14). Cyrus was the one who issued the first decree in 536 BC, and the one who made it easier for the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and who

He secured help for the rebuilding of the house of God (see Ezra 1:1-4). But like the enemies of the Jews, according to Ezra 4, hindered the completion of the works for many years, Darius issued another decree in 519 BC (see Ezra 6:1-12). In the seventh year of his reign, that is, in 457 BC, Artaxerxes sent Ezra to Jerusalem with a new decree. This decree is recorded in its entirety in Ezra 7. In the 20th year of the reign of the same king, that is, in 444 BC said king commissioned Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem (see Nehemiah 2)... The question arises as to which of These dates designate the desired starting point... This research allows us to assume that the return of Ezra to Jerusalem in 457 BC can be considered the starting point of the seventy weeks. In this they agree not only men like Newton, Calov , Buddeus , Prideaux , Gausson , Daechsel , etc., but the wonderful development of all The events mentioned remove room for all doubt” (*The seers and the future* , pages 170-171)

(2) This work does not deal with the calculation of the years of the Jewish civil calendar, according to which this would be the year 5767 from

the creation. This date is not biblical and only corresponds to one of the many Jewish traditions. This is confirmed by the rabbi

Stephen Veghazi , who wrote: “The first chronological book in Jewish literature is the *Seder Olam* , mentioned already in the Talmud and awarded to Rabbi Josef ben Halaffa (2nd century CE)... The *Seder Olam* it is the first book

which uses the expression 'since the creation of the world', and for this date defines the year 3762 using biblical chronology and *tradition oral* and having as a key point the destruction of the Second Temple, which he puts in the year 68 of the common era. So, correcting this error, the year of the 'creation of the world' would be 3760 (before the common era). This calculation was accepted in the Age of Media... The first Jewish scientist who expressed his doubts in writing about this was Osaria de Rossi (17th century). From the 11th century this opinion is the dominant one although other chronological systems have existed, *and out of respect for tradition*

This calculation is also in vogue in modern times. Thus, the year 1984-1985, when adding 3760 years, corresponds to the Hebrew year 5745" (*The Word Israelite*, September 28, 1884, p. 13; art. "Why 5745")

(3) *World Almanac 1980*, p. 554

(4) Regarding the approximate date of the nativity of Jesus, there are two pieces of evidence, among others that are complemented by the 70 weeks prophecy. These are:

1° The periods of time that the Levitical priests served in the Temple: when these fixed periods are compared with certain references in the New Testament, the season in which the birth of Jesus took place can be deduced. In Indeed, in the time of Christ, the Aaronic priesthood was organized into 24 individual divisions (1 Chronicles 24: 6-19). Each division (called "group," "class," or "lot," 1 Chronicles 23:6) had a chief priest. This He was chosen by lot to represent the entire division in the Temple for a week. This head priest He was to offer the morning and evening sacrifices, as well as the incense offerings. Well, in the gospel From Luke it is found that a certain priest named Zechariah was performing his service in the temple of Jerusalem when, suddenly, something wonderful happened. The angel of God revealed to him that his wife Elisabet, who was already advanced age, she was going to conceive and give birth to a son, whose name would be Juan. According to biblical data available, Zechariah belonged to the class of Abijah (Luke 1:5), so he was serving at the prescribed time for that class, that is, in the ninth week of the religious calendar, or, the first week of June of the Roman calendar. There the revelation of the angel took place. And when he had completed the days of his ministry, he went to his

home; shortly after, Elisabet became pregnant, that is, in mid-June of the year 5 BC (Luke 1: 23-24). The normal human gestation period is 9 months and 10 days, so if added to the time of conception this period of gestation, it turns out that John (the Baptist) was born at the end of March of the year 4 BC, at the beginning

of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. And since the gospel says that Jesus was exactly six months younger than John (Luke 1: 26, 36), indicates that her divine conception was revealed to Mary six months later, at the end of December of the year 5 BC, and that Jesus was born near mid-to-late September, in the early fall of the year 4 BC

2° The census carried out in Judea by imperial order: The gospel of Luke mentions the census that motivated the Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem. Regarding its historicity, there is the following evidence about its historicity: Juan Malalas was a historian from Antioch (Syria) who lived around 491-578 AD. *Chronicle of Juan Malalas*, translated by Matthew Spinka (1940), says: "In the 39th year and the tenth month of his (Augustus') reign, he sent the promulgation of a census of all their lands, including all those held by the Romans during the consulship of Agrippa II, and Donatus. And the whole world under the Romans was recorded by Eumenes and Attalus, Roman senators."

Using the October-October calendar of Malalas, the year 39 falls in the month of October in the year 6 BC, and the promulgation of the census decree in July 5 BC Suidras, another reliable authority, and many others, have contributed information about the decree of Emperor Octavian Augustus, proving that the census was promulgated in Judea the following year, that is, 4 BC, the same year in which Jesus was born (*On what days did the crucifixion and resurrection?*, H. Armstrong and H. Hoeh, p. 26)

(5) *Divine Institutions*, book IV, c. 7

(6) vol. 8, p. 508

(7) Louis Richard Conradi, p.172

(8) 43rd Sanhedrin, cited in Josef Blinzler, *The Trial of Jesus*, p. 93

(9) *The Crucifixion Did Not Happen on a Friday!*, Herman L. Hoeh, p. 3

(10) Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon, Religious Mystery*, pp. 221-222

(11) TA Torrey, *Difficulties of the Bible*, pp. 104-109; cited in Woodrow, p. 224

(12) The hours of the day are divided in the Bible into four parts, beginning at sunrise and ending at sunset. The third hour would be approximately 9 in the morning, the sixth would be 12 noon, the ninth would be 3 in the afternoon and

the twelfth hour would be 6 in the afternoon; Woodrow, p. 217

(13) The word “Church” comes from the Greek “ekklesia”, a word that represents the legislative assembly of citizens, similar to what a modern political Congress is. When the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek in the version called *Septuagint*, the word “kahal”, meaning *congregation or assembly of Israel* or *brotherhood religious of the chosen people*, “ekklesia” was used as the closest thing, although it did not have strictly the same meaning. “Let us remember that Hebrew is a sacred language, while Greek is a pagan and political language of another idiosyncrasy. Trying to translate everything exactly is very difficult. Another word used in the *Septuagint* for assembly or

congregation was 'synagogue'” (www.messianictimes.com)

(14) At the same time, the word “kehillah” is frequently used within Orthodox Judaism and of course within Messianic Judaism, but not to identify a physical site, but to denote the people who congregate.

This word appears only twice in Scripture (Deuteronomy 33: 4, Nehemiah 5: 7)

(15) The *Septuagint* or *Version of the Seventy* is the most important of the early versions of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the first true written translation from Hebrew. Its translation began around 280 BC, according to tradition, by about 72 Jewish scholars from Alexandria (Egypt), and was completed during the 2nd century BC Served as Scriptures for the Jews

Greek language, and was used extensively until the time of Jesus and the apostles. In the New Testament most of the 365 direct quotations and approximately 375 references to the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament are based on the *of the Seventy* (*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, p. 306

(16) *Retractions*; cited in *The Fathers of the Church – Saint Augustine, Retractions*, Mary I. Bogan, book I, p. 90

CHAPTER II: THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF GOD: ITS EARLY HISTORY

As has been argued in previous lines, it is important to know the doctrinal foundations of the Church of God of the first century of the Christian era in order to identify that “ little flock” - as it was and has been for almost two millennia - until the present era. Likewise, it is necessary to have historical-biblical notions of its development in the years that the apostles lived and of the distinctive doctrinal base that supported it. In such a context, it can be seen that the Church of God that exists in the world today has hardly innovated in terms of convictions with respect to the original apostolic Church of God.

From a Jewish Church to a Gentile Church

The Church of God, it can be said, is *the kingdom of expectation* towards a better world: the heavenly Jerusalem, the one that the patriarchs of Israel looked at and waited for from afar (Hebrews 11:13-16). Its doctrinal essence is the *Gospel* , a word that comes from the Latin “ evangelium ”, which in turn is derived from the Greek “ euaggélion ”, which means *good news* , that is, the Gospel corresponds to the good news of salvation brought by Christ Jesus to humanity, so that it would possess the spiritual means to achieve salvation and eternal life in the future kingdom of God.

The preaching of the Gospel among men began in Jerusalem. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus had told his disciples that they must be witnesses of what he had been in the world, witnesses of his words and his redemptive work; and they would give this testimony not only in their native land, but they had to go beyond the limits of Judea and Samaria and go to all the peoples of the world, to the ends of the earth, to preach the Gospel to every tribe and in every language, “beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-48, Acts 1:8). With this, the prophecies about the incorporation of the Gentile nations into the people of Israel through faith in Jesus Christ began to be fulfilled. And from Israel, precisely, the Gospel and the law of God had to go out to the world. The prophet Isaiah had written: “And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the head of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and *all nations shall flock to it* .” And many people will come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us in his ways, and we will walk in his paths.' Because of *Zion (Israel) will go forth the law, and from Jerusalem the word of the Lord* (or the Gospel of Christ)” (Isaiah 2:2-3). And also, speaking of the Messiah, the Scriptures say: “He will not grow weary or faint until he places judgment on the earth; and the islands (nations) *will wait for his law* ” (Isaiah 42:4).

On the other hand, Jesus had ordered his disciples that they should remain in Jerusalem to be previously invested with divine power (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-5,8). Luke, who relates this dialogue, says that Jesus, having said these things, was taken up, and a cloud received him and took him out of the eyes of the apostles.

In the course of waiting, about 120 followers of Christ gathered for exhortation and prayer. In one of these meetings the apostle Peter led the election of a replacement for Judas Iscariot in the ministry and apostolate of the nascent Church. That was an exceptional fact and not a permanent practice regarding having twelve apostles in the ecclesiastical organization. It was necessary that the apostolic ministry be constituted of twelve members so that the prophecy regarding the *twelve apostles* who are to “judge the twelve tribes of Israel” and whose names will be inscribed in the twelve foundations of the New

Jerusalem can be fulfilled (Matthew 19:28, Revelation 21:14). At the election, the appointment fell to Matthias (Acts 1:20-26).

It should be noted that among Jesus' first disciples were his adoptive mother, Mary, and his brothers (Acts 1:14). Mary, undoubtedly a widow at the time, was a woman of great humility, obedience, piety, faith and spiritual knowledge, who had once recognized the need for personal salvation (Luke 1:47). That is why she participates as another member of the Christian Congregation that was being born, this being the last biblical appearance of Mary. No other New Testament writing mentions her for the simple reason that her role had already been fulfilled within the plan of salvation established by God, and she would not have a new role in the future of the Church. It is not known with certainty what happened to her later, but according to one tradition, Mary would have moved to the city of Ephesus following the apostle John (John 19:25-27). Regarding the fleshly brothers of Jesus, who had not previously exercised faith in Him, they had a change in their convictions and now also persevered in the faith of Christ, even one of them, James (James), came to have a high position in the Jerusalem congregation (Matthew 13:55-56, John 7:1-5, Acts 12:17; Galatians 1:19, 2:9):

“Barclay comments : 'It is interesting to note that the brothers of Jesus are here in the company of the disciples. During Jesus' life, they had been among his adversaries (Mark 3:21), but it seems that for them as for many others, the death and resurrection of Jesus opened their eyes.' Robertson adds: 'Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5), but since Jesus had appeared given to his brother James (1 Corinthians 5:7), now the happy family of believers included his *mother - dre and his brothers* "(literally, they are half brothers of Jesus) " (I) .

They remained together for a week, men and women of faith, praying and watching, and prepared to celebrate the feast of Pentecost according to the law of God, fifty days after the Passover in which Jesus died (Leviticus 23:9-22, John 19:30-31). When they were in solemn worship, the Holy Spirit came from heaven with a miraculous manifestation that had not been seen before and was not seen again after: Tongues like fire rest on those who were present and they begin to speak in different languages. "God's wonders". The crowd gathered to observe the exceptional event was perplexed. Then, Peter speaks, explaining that this outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurs in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32), and that Jesus Christ, now resurrected and exalted to the right hand of God, “has poured out this which you see and you hear.” He then exhorted repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins, which promoted the conversion of many Jewish pilgrims from various countries who had seen the divine manifestation. There were about 3,000 of them who sincerely repented, believed in Christ and were baptized. This occurred in the year 31 of the Christian era (Acts 2:1-41).

The incorporation of new members into the Church led to the formation of a fairly large community of believers in Jerusalem. The life of this congregation is narrated by Luke with these words: “They continued in *the doctrine of the apostles*, and in the communion, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. And every person was afraid; and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all who believed were together; and they had all things common; and they sold their possessions and distributed them to everyone, as each one needed. And continuing with one accord each day in the Temple, and breaking bread in their homes, they ate together with joy and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added daily to the Church those who were to be saved” (Acts 2:42-47).

The nascent Christian Church was, as can be seen, a community that learned doctrine by listening to the teachings of the apostles; a congregation of faithful who lived in communion, who still attended the temple of Jerusalem, just as they had done before their conversion, and who practiced brotherhood by

allowing the poorest to share in the goods of the most fortunate. In external activity this Church did not cease to witness to the unconverted, and the power of God was manifested by daily working conversions that increased the number of those who made up the brotherhood of the New Covenant. In this Church it is seen in a concrete way: religious life, in its dealings with God; fraternal life, in its dealings with brothers of the faith; and missionary life, in its dealings with the world.

It was necessary to bear witness in the city that had requested the death of the Son of God. Adolfo Monod has said:

The enemies (of the Church) boasted of having Christ banished forever and ever; but I have to- here that reappears on the scene; He walks through the streets, visits the Temple, heals the sick and forgives sins" (2) .

In fact, the apostles perform miracles "in the name of Jesus of Nazareth," and call on the people to repent and convert to the *Author of life* , "for the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord will come" (Acts 3:1-19). The tests designed to intensify the fervor of the new converts would not be left waiting long. As a result of being lame from birth at the gates of the Temple, and the preaching that followed this miracle (Acts 3:1-26), Peter and John are imprisoned, and the next day they have to appear before the Sanhedrin. This was a Jewish court that operated in Jerusalem and which the Romans had respected. It was made up of 71 members, from among the elders, scribes and priests, under the presidency of the high priest. It was the same court before which Jesus had appeared. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke to this body, and there he raised up the Christ, announcing that "there is health (salvation) in no one else; for *there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved* . " The Sanhedrin told them to remain silent, forbidding them to speak in the name of Jesus, to which they responded - establishing a golden rule for the Church of God - that it was not right to obey men before God , and that they could not stop talking about those things they had seen and heard (Acts 4:1-21).

Having been released on that occasion, the apostles continued their evangelizing work: "And by the hands of the apostles many miracles and wonders were done among the people... but the people praised them greatly. And those who believed in the Lord increased more, a large number of both men and women. So much so that they threw the sick into the streets, and put them on beds and couches, so that when Peter came, at least his shadow would touch some of them. And even from the neighboring cities crowds flocked to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those tormented by unclean spirits, all of whom were healed" (Acts 5:12-16).

While they were in the company of Jesus before the ascension, the disciples had relied on a common purse that depended on contributions (Luke 8:2-3), and this was used for food and alms (John 4:8, 6: 5-7). Judas was in charge of managing said common fund. Later, during the early days of the Church, the economic system was the same. There was a common treasury, to which everyone who wished to contribute and with whatever amount they wanted contributed. The ability of the Congregation to provide its own means to support itself through its members placed it in a position to no longer depend economically on the Jewish community. The Church was self-sufficient.

However, several difficulties arose due to the distribution of goods. The account about the day of Pentecost says that many Jews who were not from Judea – " pious men from every nation under heaven" called *Hellenists* or *Greeks* – joined the Congregation. Among these were widows who soon complained that they did not receive sufficient help from the common fund. The complaints were insistent, which worried the apostles regarding their work for the spiritual good and progress of the Church. It was then proposed and decided that seven men of good reputation should be chosen to

manage the material affairs of the Church. Thus was born the *diaconate* (deacon, in Greek, means *minister* or *servant*).

According to the above, it can be seen that after a year has passed after the death of Jesus, the Church is taking shape and acquiring an organization based on the gifts given to its members under the direction of the Holy Spirit. In this way the *ministry* is established . In this administrative body the so-called *ministry of the word* can be distinguished from the *daily ministry* , as can be seen from Acts 6:1-4. The first was absolutely dedicated to spiritual activities, to the dissemination and teaching of the Word of God (apostles, evangelists); while the daily ministry in charge of the deacons, created by the apostles, was to be dedicated to material affairs, specifically the administration of goods (collecting donations, supervising purchases, keeping records, taking care of the needs of the poor, etc.). The first deacons that the Church consecrated were: Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicholas (Acts 6:5-6).

“Judging by the names, which are Hellenistic, they were not Jews from Palestine (Judea). At least one, Nicholas, was evidently a Gentile (Judaized), for he is called a 'proselyte' (Acts 6:5)” (3) .

Of those seven men, some were not limited to a material work within the Church, but later became determined evangelists. Stephen was active in evangelizing in the synagogues of the Hellenistic Jews of Jerusalem (Acts 6:8-10). He argued effectively and persuasively. But he aroused intense opposition, and the Jews became so angry with Stephen that he was sentenced to death by the Sanhedrin , falsely accused of blasphemy “against Moses and against God”; In fact, they put in false witnesses to say that Stephen had spoken “against the law,” something he had not really done (Acts 6:11-14). Stephen was stoned while receiving approval from a young Jewish man who was watching: Saul of Tarsus (Acts 7:51-60).

Stephen's martyrdom was the first sign of a violent persecution that devastated the Jerusalem church. Its members, except the apostles, were scattered throughout the lands of Judea and Samaria. This time the persecution was general and serious. As can be seen, the violence with which it occurred gave the Church a great opportunity to manifest in a broader territory the power received at Pentecost and to put into practice more fully the commission that her Lord Jesus had given her.

Among those who spread the Gospel to other lands was the deacon Philip who, as an evangelist, preached in the despised Samaria which, as is known, was inhabited by mestizos of pagan-Israeli origin since the time of Assyrian predominance (2nd Kings 17:27-33). Many Samaritans converted to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so it can be said that Philip was the first to integrate converts who were not strictly racially Jewish into the Church of God (Jesus himself did not consider the Samaritans as part of the people of Israel, according to Matthew 10). :5-6; although they cannot be classified as gentiles either). The series of conversions in Samaria included a certain character who will have a disastrous role in the future of the Church: Simon Magus (Acts 8:5-13). Upon learning of Philip's work in Samaria, the apostles who were in Jerusalem sent Peter and John so that the new believers could receive the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. Simon Magus, although baptized by Philip, in his heart of hearts had not been willing to give up his prestige and the influence he had exercised as a magician over the Samaritans. He was so impressed by the power of the apostles that he asked for their power, offering to buy it with money. Peter severely rebuked him and separated him from the community of believers in the hope that he would repent (Acts 8:14-24). From there arose the concept of “simony”, that is, the illicit purchase or sale of spiritual and/or sacred things. And from what ecclesiastical history and traditions convey, this Simon Magus moved to Rome years later, where he sowed division in the Christian congregations that were emerging in the West at the time.

And as the Messianic Gospel continued to spread through Samaria, Philip headed toward the regions southwest of Jerusalem, where he encountered a eunuch, or official of the royal court of Ethiopia, traveling to the Jerusalem Temple to worship. Without a doubt, according to biblical information, he was a circumcised Jewish proselyte or an Ethiopian Jew, since according to the law of Moses the entry of uncircumcised people into the Congregation of Israel and into the Temple was prohibited (Exodus 12:48-49 , Leviticus 24:22). Philip converted this man to the faith of Jesus, immersing him in water for the forgiveness of his sins. With this, it can be stated that the eunuch was the first Christian in Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-39).

Around those same days in the year 32 AD, Saul of Tarsus began to stand out as the leader of the persecuting movement of the Church that sought to put an end to the new and growing “sect” of the *Nazarenes* , as the Christian Congregation was considered. Saul was a fervent and zealous Pharisee who had studied under the great theologian Gamaliel. The Jewish leaders expected a lot from him, as he showed that he was a cruel persecutor of the followers of Jesus (Acts 8:3; 22:2-4,19-20; 26:10-11; Galatians 1:13-14). And while Christians “were everywhere announcing the Gospel,” Saul obtained a letter from the Sanhedrin for the Jewish leaders of Damascus to authorize him to lead the persecution in that Syrian city. When he was near Damascus to fulfill the mission, the heavenly voice of Jesus spoke to him and advised him to change the course of his life. And even more , Jesus said of Saul: “This is a chosen instrument for me, to bear my name in the presence of the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel; for I will show him whatever it is necessary for him to suffer for my name” (Acts 9:1-18, 22:5-16, 26:11-18). However, it was several years after his conversion before Paul rose to eminence as a leader of the Christian movement and a tireless missionary evangelist.

A period of temporary peace for the Church followed, and the apostles in Jerusalem made good use of that opportunity (Acts 9:31). Peter, who had helped Philip in Samaria, arrived in Joppa during his itinerant work. The Christian community was there mourning the death of Tabita (Dorcas), one of the women who served in the congregation; However, Peter resurrected her and many accepted the Gospel (Acts 9:38-42).

While Peter remained in the port of Joppa, staying in the house of a disciple named Simon, he had a divine revelation of great significance, consisting of a large sheet descending from heaven and containing every type of animal imaginable. Peter was perplexed by the presence of it. Then, to his greatest astonishment, God ordered him to kill and eat those beasts, which the apostle refused because they were unclean animals. However, the heavenly voice told him: “What God has cleansed, do not call common .” And this happened three times (Acts 9:43, 10:9-16). At the same time that Peter was reflecting on the vision, three men appeared looking for him at the request of a certain Cornelius to visit him in Caesarea (Acts 10:17-23).

Cornelius was a centurion or Roman officer, an uncircumcised Gentile who, in the eyes of the Jews, was to be considered an unclean person. But God looks at the heart. Cornelius was a kind and God-fearing man despite being a Gentile; For this reason the Lord allowed him to communicate with Peter (Acts 10:1-6,22). And when the apostle arrived at Cornelius' house he understood the vision of the canvas full of animals: “ God has shown me that I should call no man common or unclean” (Acts 10:24-29). Without a doubt, God did not cleanse that group of unclean animals but the Gentile men, previously considered abominable by the Jews. The people of Israel had been forbidden to associate with them because of their abominations and practices that offend God; but now that wall of spiritual separation had been torn down and salvation was extended to the Gentiles. Peter was able to understand that “God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he is pleased with him who fears him and does justice,” proceeding to baptize Cornelius and his family and closest friends (Acts 10:34-35,44- 48).

When Philip had evangelized among the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch there was no question, even the apostles Peter and John went to Samaria to lay hands on the converts. But why did Peter have a different perception when it came to the conversion of Cornelius and his people? Simply because the Samaritans were considered semi-Jews and the Ethiopian was a converted Jew, like the deacon Nicholas; while Cornelius and those close to him were uncircumcised Gentiles with no approach to Judaism, nor proselytes. That is why these are strictly considered the first Christians from Gentiles. Furthermore, when the report reached Jerusalem that Peter had allowed Gentiles to enter the Christian Church through baptism, he was recriminated and had to answer to the other apostles in Jerusalem for what he had done. When recounting the events and explaining that the Holy Spirit had descended on the new converts, the apostles had nothing to question but justified what Peter had done and concluded that “God has also given the Gentiles repentance leading to life” (Acts 11: 1-18). It was the year 34 AD and the Church of God had had a new victory, since from then on the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles began and the incorporation of them into the people of Israel as co-heirs of the future kingdom of God, which at the beginning It was not easily understood by circumcised or Christian Jews.

Until then the Gospel of the Messiah Jesus had been preached outside Judea only among the Jews. For approximately eight years (32-40 AD) it had been preached in regions near the land of Israel by those believers who had fled the great persecution that occurred after the martyrdom of Stephen. In the territories of Phoenicia and Cyprus and in the city of Antioch (Syria), important communities of Christians had formed. In the latter the preaching was very intense, announcing the Gospel even to the Greek-speaking Gentiles who had had no previous relationship with the Jewish religion. When the Jerusalem congregation heard of this remarkable progress, they sent Barnabas to encourage and confirm the new converts. Because Barnabas was a Greek-speaking Cypriot Jew, he was the ideal man for this assignment. He rejoiced at what he found in Antioch, and after a time he went to Tarsus in search of Saul and persuaded him to come and help him in his ministry in Antioch (Acts 11:19-25). Both were in that city for a year, teaching the converts and trying to win others, having excellent results.

Until that time, the transmission of Jesus' preaching, generally accompanied by more detailed accounts of episodes from his own life (anecdotes, miracles, parables, maxims, final sacrifice, etc.), had been oral. Those oral teachings, necessarily repeated, were recorded and became normative. But around the year 41 AD, an event of great importance occurred within the Church in Judea: One of the apostles, Matthew or Levi, taking advantage of his ability as a scribe, wrote a text with his memories about the life and work of the Lord Jesus. His work was written in the Aramaic language (popular Hebrew of the time) for Christians of Jewish origin, which today is known as *the Gospel according to Matthew* . In this way the composition of the “New Testament” of the Christian Bible is inaugurated. The following source confirms this advance of the Church of God:

“Matthew wrote his story in Palestine (Judea). The exact year is not known, but the notes signed to end of some manuscripts (all after the 10th century) say that it was in the year 41 AD There is evidence - ces indicating that Matthew originally wrote his Gospel in the popular Hebrew of the time and later he translated it into Greek” (4) .

At the beginning of the year 44 AD, a new persecution broke out against the Church, this time led by King Herod Agrippa I, eager to obtain the support of the Jews after having been appointed king of Judea by the emperor Claudius. The apostle James (Jacobo), son of Zebedee and brother of the apostle John, also met his death there. He was executed with a sword, thus becoming the first of the apostles to die as a martyr (Matthew 10:2, Acts 12:1-2).

As that action pleased the Jewish leaders, and to further ingratiate himself with them, Herod Agrippa also arrested and imprisoned Peter when the Unleavened Feast was being celebrated. Then, the angel of God frees the apostle, who goes to the house of John Mark (future editor of the *Gospel of Mark*). Peter asks that James and the other members of the church be informed about this event. This shows that by that date (AD 44) Jesus' full brother named James or James already had prominence in the Jerusalem congregation (Acts 12:5-17). Shortly after, Herod Agrippa dies tragically due to divine intervention (Acts 12:20-23); while the Gospel continued to spread, as “the word of the Lord increased and was multiplied” (Acts 12:24).

Through the apostolic writings and Luke it can be seen that they refer to the Congregation with the name of the *Church of God*, however in their early years the disciples of Jesus were called “Nazarenes”. This appellation originated from Nazareth, the city of the Messiah's nativity, where he grew to manhood (Matthew 2:23; Acts 2:22, 3:6, 4:10) (5). And in Acts 24:5 Paul is referred to as a member of the “sect of the Nazarenes.” However, it was in the city of Antioch where the followers of Jesus were called “Christians” for the first time (“*khristianoï*”, in Greek), around the year 40 AD, in reference to Christ or *Khristós* :

“The church of Antioch rose to such prominence that it was there that for the first time

The followers of Christ were known as 'Christians', a name applied not by the Jews, but by the Greeks, and which is found three times in the New Testament (Acts 2:22, 24:5) (6) .

Apparently, according to later historical evidence, the adjective *Nazarene* continued to be used by Jewish Christians, since they were identified with that name in the post-apostolic period . On the other hand, the word *Christian* is the historical name of the Gentile converts, both the true and the false followers of Jesus the Christ. This is how Vila and Escuin recognize it :

“It was not long before the external profession of Christ became separated from the true faith in Him in the great mass that bears the name of *Christian* in the world, and in practice this great mass lives not to be anything but a follower of Christ, as evidenced by the Scriptures and history” (7) .

For ten years and more, Jerusalem had been the directional center of the nascent Christian Church. Now, with the conversion of the Gentiles to the Gospel, Antioch began to share that position as the first center of Gentile Christianity. Thus, while the mother church of Christianity remained the Jerusalem congregation, Antioch was the base of the missionary work of the time among non-Jews:

“In the first 38 years of the Church, as they multiplied, the congregations frequently - They often appealed to the authority of the mother church of Jerusalem” (8) .

Of all the apostles, the one who deserves special attention is Saul, whose Roman citizen name was Paul (Acts 13:9). After his conversion in 32 AD, Paul shared with the disciples of Damascus for some time and preached in the city, affirming that Jesus “is the Christ,” now that he was the victim of the persecution of the Jews. He then spent some time of spiritual study and reflection in Arabia; He returned to Damascus, but with difficulty escaped with his life. Three years had passed in all these vicissitudes (32-35 AD). Finally, he went to Jerusalem, where Paul spent fifteen days sharing with the apostle Peter; with James, the brother of Jesus, and other disciples, many of whom did not believe that he was converted to the faith of Jesus. However, Barnabas' mediation finally allowed Paul to be confidently accepted into the Nazarene community. While in Jerusalem, Paul spoke openly about Jesus, and when the other Christians learned that for this reason the Greek-speaking or Hellenistic Jews tried to kill him, they took him to Caesarea and then to Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:19 -30; Galatians 1:17-23).

After ten years of his visit to Jerusalem, it is observed that in the Antioch congregation there is a group of prominent disciples who had the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially those of prophecy and teaching. In that group are Barnabas and Saul, along with Simon Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manahén, all of whom were driven to plan a much broader missionary program than the Church had hitherto attempted. Spiritually inspired, they appointed Saul and Barnabas for such a mission. His ordination and preparation for the apostolate was accomplished in the usual manner by the laying on of hands and prayer as a sign that authority came from God. It is the same thing that the Church of God does today when a minister is ordained (Acts 13:1-3).

This is how Saul began his apostolate, and from this mission he began to use his name as a Roman citizen: Paul. Likewise, God's plan regarding his apostolic participation began to be fully fulfilled: "This is a chosen instrument for me to bear my name in the presence of the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15). This was later recognized by Paul himself, when he wrote: "I am an apostle to the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13). He carried out his laborious Christianizing mission through three trips through regions of the Roman Empire, preaching preferably in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Macedonia. According to Varetto, "There is no exaggeration in the words of the historian Schaff when he says that Paul was 'the man who has exerted the greatest influence on the history of the world' (after Jesus)"

(9).

On the first evangelization trip (45 to 49 AD) he preached on the island of Cyprus, in Perga (Pamphylia), Antioch (Pisidia) and in three cities of Lycaonia : Icon, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 13 and 14).

The second apostolic journey (between AD 50 and 52) covered Syria, Cilicia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, Macedonia and Greece. In the latter country, specifically in Corinth, Paul wrote to the Thessalonica congregation his first epistles to Gentile believers, which later became known as *First to the Thessalonians* (written at the beginning of the year 51 AD) and *Second to the Thessalonians* (written in the middle of the same year) (Acts 15:40-41 and chapters 16, 17 and 18:1-22).

In the third evangelical mission (between 53 and 58 AD) Paul visited Phrygia and Galatia and arrived at Ephesus; later he leaves for Macedonia and then for Greece again (Acts 18:22-23 and chapters 19, 20 and 21:1-17).

The ecclesiastical historian Juan Varetto makes an accurate summary of the missionary work of the apostle Paul, with its lights and darkness:

"...Lucas gives us an account of his daring, long, and frequent trips. In complete submission to the Lord, Paul went from city to city, preaching Christ crucified. Sometimes your stay in one place was a matter of days, sometimes entire years. Barnabas, Silas, Mark, Timothy, Luke and others accompany him

- They participated in these missionary expeditions. We find it in Thessalonica, in Corinth, in Athens, in Ephesus,

in Jerusalem, and finally in Rome. The synagogues of his compatriots, already at that time number -

s in all the large population centers, presented him with the opportunity to announce, 'to the first Jew - merely, that not having been able to be justified by the works of the law, they could now believe in the Messiah who had been crucified, the just for the unjust, and to be justified by faith. But co- _

my apostle of the Gentiles, from the synagogue he went to the streets, to the houses, to the markets,... and announced-

ba that perfect salvation that he preached by divine command. The whippings, the prisons, the riots, The angry mobs did not make him faint, and as if defying all these obstacles, he remained faithful.

mind in his mission, knowing that it was God who had entrusted him with that task, which made him excl - mar: 'Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel! 'The power of God accompanied his preaching, and the souls

They gathered around him to hear the truth that he defended so vehemently. Many Jews converted, breaking the yoke of the law (ritual), and many Gentiles threw... their silver idols and gold to convert and serve the living and true God and wait for his Son from heaven. For all churches were organized in places, which Paul cared for from afar through his prayers and the teaching that he communicated to them in the epistles that he sent through his faithful collaborators.

No man has ever known how to be in so many places at the same time and extend his influence to regions so dilated ” (10) .

The Church of God - in the middle of the 1st century AD - was already composed of natural Jews and spiritual Jews (converted Gentiles). Peter led the apostolate among those who were circumcised, while Paul led the evangelization of the uncircumcised. And with the entrance of many Gentiles into the Church the question arose as to whether the latter were to be circumcised in the flesh and obliged to keep the physical precepts of the law of the Old Covenant, or should abstain from them. Precisely, around the year 49 AD, certain Christian Jews had come down from Judea to Antioch, preaching that Gentile converts should be circumcised to be saved and observe the entire law of Moses. Between them, the *Judaizers* , and Paul and Barnabas a great dissension arose, which was finally dissipated in the apostolic assembly of Jerusalem.

The transition from Judeo-Christianity to Jewish Christianity

Objectively, the historical context in which Christian theology and doctrine developed shows a clearly Jewish Church. The first disciples did not believe they belonged to a new religion. They had been Jews all their lives, and continued to be. This is true, not only of Peter and the other apostles, but also of the seven deacons, and of Paul himself. In this regard, two similar opinions on this undeniable truth are presented below:

“The first Christians and their leaders were all Hebrews and spoke Hebrew or Aramaic. How- When they became followers of Jesus, it never occurred to them to think about being them- themselves anything other than being Jews. In fact they thought of themselves to be the remnant of Israel of the last days. At no time did they consider themselves apostates from their Jewish heritage, as They didn't reject it either. They saw Jesus as the fulfillment of Judaism, and not its negation - tion ...The early Christians were eager to prove to their Jewish brothers that they were good Jews. Apparently they succeeded, since Luke writes that they 'had grace with all the people' (Acts 2:47)” (11) .

“Unlike a major faction of Hellenized Judaism, Paul never broke with his roots.” Hebrew and rabbinical, and will remain unwaveringly faithful until death to Elohim (God) and the people of Israel. As in the case of Iéoshua (Jesus), he was sentenced to death by the Romans in tandem.

What a rebellious Jew. Despite his anti-legalism (ritual and rabbinic)... Paul was a Jew all his life fervent and practicing. He found a general welcome in the Jewish communities of the Diaspora - open you. The chronology of his travels is set according to the Jewish holidays. The resistance that fa- riseos , when they can , oppose their action, was normal in the general confrontation between sects (ju- days) of his time...” (12) .

Accordingly, it must be recognized that the faith of the first generation of Christians did not consist of a denial of Judaism (that is, of the teachings of the Tanakh), but rather consisted of the conviction that the long-awaited messianic age for the Hebrew people, had arrived. As Paul expressed it to the Jews in Rome toward the end of his career, “ I am bound by this chain *for the hope of Israel* ” (Acts 28:20).

That is, the reason why Paul and the other disciples are persecuted is not because they oppose the religion of their ancestors, but because they believe and preach that in Jesus the promises made to Israel have been fulfilled (Acts 3:12-20 , 13:22-27; 4:1-2,15-18).

“At first, most of the people who joined the new faith were followers of Judaism, to whom his doctrines represented something new, not in the sense of something completely new and distinct, but in the sense of being the continuation and fulfillment of what God had promised to Abraham , Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, from the beginning Christianity manifested a dual relationship with the Jewish faith: a relationship of continuity and at the same time of realization, of antithesis, and also of signature (*13*) .

For this reason, the disciples of the nascent Church in Judea did not separate from the Jewish community, since they considered themselves a reforming element of Judaism under the belief in Jesus the Messiah. Those Jewish Christians (or Nazarenes, as they were known at the time) did nothing that would offend their religion and ancestral customs. They continued to attend synagogues, they went to worship God in the Temple, they circumcised their children; They kept the Sabbath like any pious Jew, observed the solemn festivals and obeyed the law of food. Years after that day of Pentecost in AD 31, Peter was able to declare that he had never eaten “anything common or unclean” (Acts 10:14). Stephen did not speak against God's law as the unconverted Jews falsely testified (Acts 6:13-14). Paul described Ananias, in whose hands he was baptized, as “a pious man according to the law, having a good report among all the Jews who lived there” (Acts 22:12). On Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, James and the elders of the congregation said to him: “You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who have believed; and all are keepers of the law” (Acts 21:20).

Therefore we must forget the argument that arose in later apostate Christianity that the early Christian Jews had stopped persevering in the teachings of Moses, had abolished the Ten Commandments, had changed the days of worship, abandoning the practice of Sabbath rest . weekly and annual festivals. The writer Robert A. Morey recognizes that:

“The mere thought that the early Jewish Christians could have changed the day of worship - tion from the seventh day to the first of the week, without having fallen into a controversy with the Judaizers, is so stupid that it refutes itself” (*14*) .

It is indeed very difficult to find a Bible dictionary, or competent scholar of the history of the early Church, that does not recognize that the first Christians, the Hebrew or Aramaic-speaking believers, continued to observe the law of God given to Israel through Moses. In Brimsmead 's work there are several paragraphs that agree with this reality:

“Their leaders attended Temple services and generally behaved like believing Jews, enjoying popular affection” (*15*) .

“They accepted Jewish institutions and presented themselves as the Israel of the last days” (*16*) .

“Just as the Jewish Christians still offered their sacrifices in the Temple (Matthew 5:23) and paid the Temple tax (Matthew 17:24-27); and they also kept the Sabbath in obedience to the law ” (*17*) .

“Apparently they continued to observe the law without doubt, and without interpreting the traditions of the words of Jesus nor his actions, in a way that showed hostility towards the law” (*18*) .

It is quite clear that the Nazarenes or Christian Jews maintained their fidelity to the religion inherited from their fathers. However, it is also necessary to point out that this religion is not of human but divine

origin. Its roots go back to the days of the patriarchs before and after the universal flood, and it took the form of a legal body in the days of Moses. Later, the doctors of the law and rabbis added countless precepts and customs that gave rise to the “rabbinic laws.” All of this came to form the so-called *Judaism post-Babylonian exile*, which made a religion even more complex and difficult to practice (19). That rabbinic Judaism – “the tradition of the elders” – was what Jesus the Messiah rejected, expressing: “Thus you have invalidated the commandment of God by your tradition. Hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying: ‘This people honors me with their lips; But his heart is far from me. But in vain do they honor me, *teaching the doctrines and commandments of men*’” (Matthew 15:1-9, Mark 7:1-13); and also: “On the seat of Moses sat the scribes and the Pharisees; So whatever they tell you to keep, keep it and do it; but do not according to his works; because they say and do not do. Because *they bind heavy burdens that are difficult to carry, and put them on the shoulders of men*; but they do not want to move them even with their finger” (Matthew 23:1-4).

(This historical work is interested in Judaism based on the codified law, originally given to the people of Israel in the time of Moses. That is true Judaism. The rest corresponds only to human traditions.)

Well, it was inevitable that, as soon as the Church of God undertook universal missionary work, a serious problem arose among its members. While the first Christians were Jews who maintained the Jewish faith as the only and true one, and the God who was worshiped in it as the only true God, there was no contradiction - nor has there ever been - between faith in the Messiah Jesus and Mosaic Judaism. They were fully convinced of the inspiration and spiritual authority of the Scriptures they had received from their parents.

Jews generally knew what it was like to proselytize or incorporate Gentiles into the Jewish community and faith, with the understanding that such converts had to comply with all Jewish ritual and ceremonial demands. But how should the Jewish Christians proceed towards the Gentiles converted to the faith of Christ? Jesus had based his work and his teachings on the Scriptures, that is, the Christian Old Testament, and, as we have seen, he had criticized the additions of tradition, the formalisms and the appearances and hypocrisies of the religious leaders he encountered, but he insisted that he had not come to change or abolish either the teachings or instructions of the law or the prophets, but to make their teachings an effective spiritual reality in the lives of men and women (Matthew 5:17-19). Jews who followed Christ Jesus wrongly concluded that those who believed in his Gospel must follow the physical practices and rituals of Judaism. If they became members of the Christian community, they must also become members of the greater religious body of Judaism. The Judean disciples did not immediately understand that “the works of the law” had concluded with the death of the Messiah; It was the Greek-speaking disciples who were the first to be inspired by the Holy Spirit that the Gentile Christians did not inherit Judaism in its entirety.

Indeed, from biblical and secular history it is known that the Israelite people of the days of the Apostolic Church were divided between the Jews of Judea (or Palestinian Jews and Jews of the Hebrew-Aramaic language) and Jews of the Diaspora (or Hellenist Jews). or Greek language). The latter differed from the former not only by language, but also by their culture. They were less conservative and had a more flexible attitude towards Jewish customs. They were more adept at accepting Greek culture and were relegated to the level of non-ideal Jews by their conservative Judean brothers. In the New Testament they are mentioned, for example, in John 12:20-21 and Acts 9:29. In the nascent Christian Church there were also *Hellenistic converts* (Acts 6:1), and several prominent Christians were, such as Stephen (his name is Greek), Barnabas (born on the Greek island of Cyprus), Paul (born in Tarsus of Cilicia, had Roman citizenship and was knowledgeable about Greek culture), Timothy (born of a Jewish mother and Greek father) (Acts 6:5; 4:36; 21:39, 17:28; 16:1). Well, these Hellenistic Jews were the first to

understand that the coming and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ profoundly changed the nature and meaning of the law of God. Thus, dissension regarding the requirements for Gentile converts would occur immediately as they entered the Christian Congregation in large numbers. The milestones of this spiritual confrontation occurred in the conversion of Cornelius and his followers, and in the apostolic assembly of Jerusalem. In them the central theme was: first, the communion between the Jews and the pagan Gentile converts; and second, circumcision.

The Jewish tradition of that time imposed by the rabbis and teachers of the law, and which Christ fought, imposed absolute separation between a Jew and a Gentile. Edersheim explains:

“According to the Old Testament, it will be easily understood that all contact with paganism and idolatry latria was to be avoided and also all Levitical contamination that arose from the use of what was 'common or unclean'. But Pharisaism went much further than this. For example, entering a pagan's house
It polluted until the evening (John 18:28), and all friendly relations with the Gentiles were prohibited .

them (Acts 10:28). So terrible was the intolerance that Jewish women were even forbidden to help !
give to her pagan neighbor when she was about to give birth! Milk milked from a cow by gen-
tools and the bread and oil prepared by them could be sold to foreigners, but not used by
the Israelites. Of course, no pious Jew would have sat at the table of a Gentile. If a pay-
was not invited to a Jewish house, he could not be left alone in the room, otherwise he would become

He considered all articles of food or drink on the table to be impure. If you bought them -
kitchen tiles, had to be purified with fire or water... It would be easy to show how these regulations -
“Those permeated all human relationships” (20) .

This is how we understand when Peter went to the house of the centurion Cornelius and said: “You know that it is abominable for a Jewish man to associate with or associate with foreigners; but God has shown me that I should call no man common or unclean; Therefore, being called, I have come without doubting” (Acts 10:28-29). That was the meaning of the vision the apostle had had in Joppa (Acts 10:9-16). Now the Christian Jews were not to consider any man unclean or common, like the Gentiles; but the vision had nothing to do with a change or abolition of the law of clean and unclean foods of Leviticus 11. This remained in force for the New Covenant Church. And as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius, his relatives and friends, Peter reacted by saying: “Can anyone prevent the water from being baptized, so that these who have received the Holy Spirit also like us will not be baptized?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 10:44-48).

Thus it became evident that God Jehovah had accepted uncircumcised Gentiles into his Church just like any Jew, but without having to be circumcised. The incorporation of Gentile converts into the people of Israel had begun, as the apostle Paul would later explain (Romans 11:16-21). It was Peter whom God used to be the first to open the door of salvation to non-Jews.

Of course, news spread like wildfire that Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit without being circumcised and were admitted as members of the Congregation. In Jerusalem, the other apostles and members were astonished; They immediately wanted an explanation from Peter before it was misunderstood by the Church and the Jews. They questioned Peter, asking him, “Why have you entered uncircumcised men and eaten with them?” (Acts 11:1-3). Note that the controversy here is not about biblical foods, but only about entering a Gentile's house and eating with him. This had to do with the rabbinic laws of ritual contamination by touching things or eating unpurified foods from a Gentile. But after his account of the divinely inspired events, the members of the congregation fell silent and glorified God, concluding that: “So to the Gentiles also God has given repentance leading to life” (Acts 11:4-18).

With this great event the Church, predominantly Jewish, began to have clarity regarding its treatment of Gentiles. However, a second problem still remained: How to accept an uncircumcised Gentile as a member of the Church. Did Gentile converts have to be circumcised to be part of the Congregation of Jesus Christ?

Until AD 49 there is no information that there was controversy over the incorporation of pagan Gentiles into the New Covenant Church. We must remember the conversions of Cornelius and those of his house, of the Greeks of Antioch, etc. (Acts 10:24,48; 11:20). But when Paul and Barnabas undertook their extensive evangelistic journeys, the question of the treatment of Gentiles who became Christians became very important. Barnabas and Paul baptized pagans, thus making them members of the Church of God. Should these pagan believers submit to the ancient sign of belonging such as circumcision of the flesh, a sign of loyalty to the Israelites' covenant with God that came from Abraham "the father of faith"? Should they offer Jewish sacrifices and rites to express their faith in salvation? Paul and Barnabas believed that the answer to these questions was a definitive and emphatic no; but some Jewish Christians in Judea believed with the same certainty that the answer must be yes; They are those classified as "Judaizers" (Acts 15:1-2). This was the background and occasion for the apostolic assembly of Jerusalem recorded in the book of the *Acts of the Apostles* .

It is not clear how broad the representation of the various congregations gathered in Jerusalem for this assembly (congress or council) was. Paul and Barnabas, it may be said, were delegates from Antioch, and also represented the doctrinal interests of the newly emerging churches in the distant Roman provinces which they had visited on their first missionary journey. The "elders" mentioned perhaps represented various congregations scattered throughout Judea (Acts 15:4-6).

The debate was full and exhaustive, and perhaps passionate. There were members of the Church who sympathized with the ideas of the Pharisees and insisted that it was "necessary" to circumcise Gentile converts and "command them to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5). This position is what has been described as *Judaizing* ; That is *Judaizing* , putting emphasis on the *works of the law* to join Israel and obtain justification and salvation.

After the debate had continued for some time, it fell to Peter to speak, and his words had good effect. He remembered the case of Cornelius, how the Holy Spirit had descended on him and his house before he received the baptismal rite. Peter knew that God "made no difference between us (the Jews) and them (the Gentiles), purifying their hearts by faith," further adding : "Now therefore, why do you put God to the test, putting on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our parents nor we have been able to bear? But by the grace of the Lord Jesus we believe that we will be saved, as they also" (Acts 15:7-10).

Then Barnabas and Paul presented a full report of the work they had done on their recent missionary tour, and described the miracles that God had given them the power to do. It must have been a convincing presentation, as the assembly was ready to make a decision.

James (James), the brother of Jesus who led the Jerusalem congregation, presented the final discourse, and inspiredly came to decree a decisive order that confirmed the point of view of Paul and Barnabas. He declared that the prophets had spoken of the rebuilding of David's kingdom so that people of all nations could call on the name of the Lord Jehovah. And he said, "Wherefore I judge, that they that are converted to God among the Gentiles, shall not be troubled; but to write to them that they should depart from the defilements of idols, and from fornication, and from strangulation, and from blood" (Acts 15:13-20). While the Jews had made the law an annoying and frustrating burden by adding countless regulations to the ceremonial and ritual law, James agrees with Paul, Peter, and Barnabas in their arguments for the freedom of Gentile converts from the Mosaic ceremonial and physical law. Of those laws that regulated religious purity, recorded in the book of Leviticus 17 and 18, only four were

confirmed as valid, since they were those that the Gentiles were prone to violate and that they had to keep to remain pure before God.

So in response to this suggestion from James, a letter was written highlighting the fact that although there were some who had insisted on Judaizing regarding the Gentiles, the Jerusalem brotherhood commanded no such thing. For this reason Paul and Barnabas would return to the congregations carrying the decision of the apostolic conference, accompanied by Judas Barsabas and Silas. In part the aforementioned letter said: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, not to impose any burden on you other than these necessary things: That you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, and from drowning, and from fornication; from which things if you keep yourselves, you will do well" (Acts 15:22-29).

An exhaustive analysis of this assembly and the final agreement shows that it was transcendental for the Church of God, since it established the bases of the doctrine of justification and the path to salvation. His final decision left believers free to grow spiritually without national or racial obstacles that would prevent the Gospel from reaching all men and women, since Gentiles would be accepted without the rites of circumcision or purification. But something very important that posterity will distort: the spiritual law that defines sin - the Ten Commandments -, the law of worship - the observance of the Sabbath and other solemn festivals - and the law of sanctification such as that of food, were not abolished.

"Here it is made clear that the ministerial conference in Jerusalem is not about whether Gentiles should keep or not the commandments of God, but rather whether they should keep the laws of God related to the rites and ceremonies and interpreted by Pharisee traditions. The answer is no, the Gentiles are accepted into the Church for the faith they express in Jesus as their Savior and must only keep the laws biblical traditions as found in the Old and New Testaments, with the exception of circumcision .

tion , the rites and ceremonies, which are applicable only to the converted Jewish people" (21) .

This put an end to the controversy regarding circumcision. God had made a change in his law, as only He can do. He transferred the rights of circumcision to belong to his people to baptism. As Paul said in one of his epistles: "In Him (Christ) you were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in putting off the body of the flesh, in circumcision . *of Christ* ; buried with Him in *baptism* " (Colossians 2:11-12). Likewise, in parallel, the apostle of the Gentiles taught that all Mosaic ceremonies that have to do with justification are replaced by the sacrifice of Christ. Hebrews 10:1 speaks of these ceremonial laws: "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the actual image of things, can never , by the same sacrifices offered continually each year, make perfect. those who approach." Paul divided the *ceremonial* and *spiritual laws* into two broad categories when he explained: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, *but keeping the commandments of God* " (1 Corinthians 7:19).

Without a doubt, the Jerusalem assembly makes it evident that the early Church kept the spiritual law contained in the writings of Moses and that it was very clear that it was the physical-ritual aspects of the Mosaic law that did not justify man and, therefore, yes they were abolished. On that occasion the observance of the Ten Commandments, the weekly Sabbath and the other festivities of worship were not denied ; These commandments were not part of the issue that was being elucidated there, but rather the ritual law of circumcision, which was a totally different law. He only mentioned four prohibitions and they were also not to observe the physical aspects of the law of Moses, which were a shadow or symbol of Christ's sacrifice. Note that James noted that "Moses from ancient times has had someone in every city preach to him in the synagogues, *where it is read every Sabbath* " (Acts 15:21), which means

that the law of God given to Moses was taught in the synagogues. or places of worship every Saturday. The apostles wrote only those four points because the Gentile converts attended the religious service on the Sabbath to be instructed; They had listened to the law of God that sanctifies and its explanations every Sabbath and did not need further instructions. This shows that the Gentile Christians had begun to keep the Sabbath, and attended church on that day.

With this it is clear that the abolition of “the works of the law”, which entail circumcision and the ritual-ceremonial laws of the precepts, did not mean the end of the law of the Ten Commandments and the solemn festivals; The food law did not end either. Historically, the Church of God will be identified by such observances.

Consequently, between the conversion of Cornelius (34 AD) and the assembly of Jerusalem (49 AD) the Church of God was moving from a strictly *Christian-Judaizing character towards a Christian-Judaic essence* , that is, it gradually assumed the New Covenant. under faith in Jesus Christ without the physical works of the law, but under the observance of the moral, spiritual, sanctification and worship commandments of the law of God. In this context, the Gentiles were incorporated into spiritual Israel. The apostle Paul, through his epistles, mentions the spiritual goods that had belonged to Israel - "the adoption, the glory, the covenant, the date of the law, the worship and the promises" - but the Gentiles Converted and ingested in that town, they became heirs and “participants of their spiritual goods”; so that by faith in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are “surely *the seed of Abraham* , and according to the promise the heirs,” and are no longer “strangers and foreigners, but citizens together with the saints and householders (natural children) of God.” ", since he is no longer a Jew who is one in the flesh, but rather "he is a Jew who is one inside; and circumcision is that of the heart, in spirit” (Romans 9:3-4, 11:16-17, 15:27; Galatians 3:28-29; Ephesians 2:19; Romans 2:28-29). This is the spiritual Israel, this is the Christian-Israelite Church.

Some distinctive characteristics of the apostolic Church of God

The Church of God will suffer apostasy in the near future, a movement that will distort the Gospel of Christ. And since then the belief has been held that the Christian Church replaced Israel in God's plans. But such a position is absolutely false, as has been demonstrated according to the Scriptures. The Church of God constitutes the spiritual Israel originally formed by the Jewish remnant who believed in Jesus the Messiah and, since the year 34 AD, by all the Gentiles who have endeavored to follow the path of holiness under faith in Christ, being grafted in God's natural Israel (Romans 11:16-21, Ephesians 2:11-20). Hence it must be understood that original Christianity is not a new religion, but consists of the religion of ancient Israel but *reformed* and *renewed* by the blood of Christ, it is a *Christianized Judaism* . Or in other words, the true Church of God is governed by the same commandments and laws coming from the Old Covenant, but without “the works of the law” and the Jewish traditions, but under the seal of grace, spirituality, of faith and love, and above all under the belief in Jesus the Savior, High Priest and King.

its universal history has gone through three stages according to God's plan of salvation, as the parable is interpreted. of Jesus who says: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto yeast that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until everything was leavened” (Matthew 13:33):

"1. The Church of God represented by the 'Congregation of the Firstborn' mentioned in the apostol Paul in Hebrews 12:23, is the result of 'leaven' (the knowledge of the Truth), for-
ta in the first measure of flour (humanity from Adam to Abraham).

"2. The Church of God represented by Israel, the 'Desert Congregation' (Acts 7:38), is the fruit -

to of the Word of God exposed to society from Abraham and his descendants to the minister
They of the Lord Jesus Christ

"3. The Church of the New Covenant, finally, will be the consequence of the extension of divine knowledge. came to all humanity (the third measure of flour), after the death of our Lord" (22) .

An impartial source confirms this last assertion with biblical basis:

"The *International Bible Encyclopedia* says of the New Covenant: 'The early Church... not in - interpreted the 'New' Covenant as a different covenant, but as the true continuation of the Old Covenant. According to the new interpretation of Scripture, the qualities of love, grace, and forgiveness of God are the most important thing. This is because the good news about the suffering and redemption of Christ are understood as the central message (t.4, page 884)" (23) .

During the apostolic century there were no essential doctrinal differences between Judaism and Jewish Christianity. Proof of this is that not even the Roman authorities realized that they were two trends that were moving separately. One author, referring to the freedom that Rome had assured the Jewish religion, states that:

"For about thirty years, Christianity also enjoyed that freedom, not because freedom was lost - biera granted in a conscious way, but because neither the government nor the people distinguished between Christianity and Judaism" (24) .

For his part, the French philosopher Voltaire wrote something similar:

"Christians, whether Greek, Assyrian, Roman or Egyptian, everywhere regarded them as semi-Jews " (25) .

In any city or place of the Roman Empire there was no distinction between Jews and Christians, at least until the first persecution of the Roman State in 64 AD. The Christian Church was a community of believers that is mentioned twelve times in the New Testament with the name "Church of God": They refer to it as the body of Christ as a whole, as a local congregation, or collectively of all local congregations combined. These are the references:

- Acts 20:28: This verse is instruction to the elders to "shepherd" the *Church of God*
- 1 Corinthians 10:32: "Do not be a stumbling block to Jews or Gentiles or to the *Church of God* . "
- 1 Corinthians 11: 22: "...do you despise the *Church of God* , and shame those who have nothing?"
- 1 Corinthians 15:9: Paul wrote the same thing to two congregations: "Because I persecuted the *Church of God* "
- Galatians 1:13: "I persecuted the *Church of God* "
- 1 Corinthians 1:2: "The *Church of God* which is in Corinth"
- 2nd Corinthians 1:1: "The *Church of God* which is at Corinth"
- 1 Timothy 3:5: Paul refers to an elder in the local congregation: "For he who does not know how to govern his own house, how will he care for the *Church of God* ?
- 1 Timothy 3:15: "...conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the *Church of the living God*"
- 1st Corinthians 11:16: "...We have no such custom, nor do the *Churches of God* "
- 1 Thessalonians 2:14: "For you... became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea"
- 2 Thessalonians 1:4: "So much so that we ourselves boast about you in the *churches of God* . "

Consequently, the New Testament Scriptures mention the Christian people with that name, and even Paul identifies them as *the Israel of God* (Galatians 6:16).

As the work of making disciples spread, congregations were formed in various parts of the Roman Empire, first within Judea and then outside of it (Acts 8:1, 9:31, 11:19-21, 14:21-23). During the apostolic era - until 70 AD - the Jerusalem congregation constituted the mother church or headquarters. Representatives of other local churches came there and were often confused and controversies and disputes arose on certain points of faith. Jesus had given his representatives the keys to the kingdom of God and the authority to guide the Church through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They could “bind,” or prohibit certain things; and they could “unbind,” or allow certain things. He also gave his ministers the authority to make *binding decisions* based on God's revelation and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in order to preserve the unity of the Church in love and truth (Matthew 18:18-19). Dugger and Dodd point out that congregations outside Judea were organized according to the model of the mother church of Jerusalem:

“It is worth noting that the apostle Paul wrote practically all of the epistles to the Gentile churches - them: to Corinth, Rome, Philippi, etc. He wrote almost no letters to Jewish Christians. For this reason, the great care

One of his last days was to unite the Gentile churches of Europe with the Christian churches of Judea. Jan - _ fact, he made sure to this end, in which he lost his life...In this way, the apostle Paul used the churches of E-lohim (God) of the land of Judea as an example or model by which the Gentile churches would be built - fied. He said to the Thessalonians: 'For you brothers have been imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus who are in Judea, for you also have suffered the same things of your nation, as they also of the Jews' (1 Thessalonians 2: 14). Nowhere all the writings of the apostle Paul where he taught Christians to follow of the Gentile churches, nor to the church of Rome, nor of Corinth, Galatia, Thessalonica, or any other place. Because? No doubt because these were not convenient models, while the churches of Judea, full of Christian Jews, were organized, governed and shaped by the will of the Master, they were organically and doctrinally correct” (26).

At that time it is possible to verify the position that the apostle Peter occupied in the Church of God. Despite Peter's participation in some key events of early Christianity and the prominence and respect he had within the Congregation, he did not exercise primacy over it or over the other apostles by virtue of any appointment. Several mentions of him confirm this assertion. First, when Philip's work in Samaria came to fruition, the account says that the apostles - apparently acting as a body - “sent Peter and John” to Samaria with a commission, thus indicating that Peter was not of more importance than the other apostles (Acts 8:14). On the other hand, Peter did not remain permanently in Jerusalem, as if his presence were essential to lead the Church (Acts 8:25, 9:32, 12:1). And when he was miraculously released from prison, he ordered that what had happened be reported to “James and the brothers,” thereby indicating the prominent authority of James, not Peter alone (Acts 12:17). Likewise, Peter did not allow Cornelius to bow at his feet, claiming that he too was a man (Acts 10:25-26). Several years later, when he wrote his first universal epistle, he noted that he was an elder just like the other elders and that Christ was the “Prince of Shepherds,” meaning that Peter was not a head or supreme authority of the Church. but just like the other ministers and that the Lord Jesus is the head of the Congregation (1 Peter 5:1-4). For his part, the apostle Paul, referring to the Jerusalem assembly of the year 49 AD, said that James, Peter and John “seemed to be the pillars” among the Jerusalem Christians, that is, Peter was *one* of the pillars among the apostles. and not *the* boss of all (Galatians 2:9). And one last piece of evidence: After the Jerusalem assembly, Peter personally went to Antioch in Syria and associated with the Gentile Christians; But when certain Jewish Christians from Jerusalem arrived, he, probably embarrassed or fearful of what they would say, separated from the Gentile converts, acting against the

evangelical spirit, even dragging Barnabas towards the same attitude. Noticing this, Paul courageously rebuked Peter in front of everyone— “ I resisted him to his face,” he wrote—since his conduct was condemnable and detrimental to God's work among non-Jews (Galatians 2:11-14). Consequently, Peter was not infallible, he acted wrongly and was also criticized.

In this way it is confirmed that there is no sign that one of the apostles had the primacy or *primacy* of the Christian Church in general or that Peter predominated in the direction of the entire Congregation. What is clear is that the church of Jerusalem was under the direction and pastorate of James or James, who has already been stated to be one of Jesus' brothers on his mother's side of Mary; therefore he should not be confused with any of the apostles of that name (Matthew 10:2-3). At that time it was common for a younger brother to take the place of the older brother. James, after his conversion, had shown by his fruits that he was worthy of being an apostle and the leader of the Jerusalem congregation, which he led until his death in 62 AD. He is considered the first bishop or pastor of that city, although the title was just emerging at the time. Around AD 35, when Paul first visited the Christians in Jerusalem, apart from Peter he saw “no other apostle except James (James), the brother of the Lord” (Galatians 1:18-19), For this reason, his pastorate began early. And when Paul went to Jerusalem for the last time, he went to visit James again, and the elders gathered at his house (Acts 21:18). James enjoyed great prestige and authority and had a reputation for being very pious among the Jews. Therefore, in his epistle, Jude only has to mention it to identify himself: “Judas, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James (James)...” (Jude 1:1). According to Varetto , James “never renounced the rigorism of the Mosaic law from which he did not consider himself completely detached although he had embraced the Christian faith ” (27) .

The “rigorism of the Mosaic law” that Varetto refers to regarding James is the false concept that has been had about the law of God in force in the Church of God. James wrote in his epistle: “Was not Abraham our father *justified* by works , when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? Do you not see that faith worked by his works, and that faith was perfect by works? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says: 'Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him to righteousness, and he was called the friend of God. You see, then, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so also *faith without works is dead* ” (James 2:21-26). While Paul wrote: “Knowing that a man *is not justified by works of the law* but by faith in Jesus Christ, we also believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works.” of the law; for *by the works of the law no flesh will be justified* ” (Galatians 2:16). Did James and Paul contradict each other? In no way, in reality they are on the same side, defending the same truth, but against two different adversaries. Paul had to combat the Pharisaic heresy that taught that keeping the law was sufficient in itself to justify oneself before God and be saved, without the need for the sacrifice of Christ; or it contradicted the position of the Judaizing Christians that justification was achieved through belief in Christ Jesus but maintaining circumcision and keeping the sacrifices and rituals of the law of Moses. Instead, James was attacking those who wished to abolish God's law by saying that grace was sufficient, keeping nothing. It says that faith, or belief in God and His Word, has to be accompanied by Christian works or else it is a vain faith. But James well knew that keeping God's law is not sufficient in itself, but rather the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is needed for the forgiveness of sins (James 2:1). The *New New Testament Commentary* confirms this:

“The simple truth is that Paul and James were dealing with different facets of the same topic. While that Paul, by teaching on justification, was combating *Jewish legalism* , James was attacking when *antinomism (or the belief that one does not have to keep God's law to be saved)*. That is to say, They were not antagonists facing each other, but rather they were collaborators who stood, back to back.

palda , confronting different adversaries of the Gospel” (28) .

According to what has been stated so far, it is necessary to emphasize that one of the characteristics of the Church of God in the moral and spiritual sphere is its observance and practice of the spiritual law that summarizes the will of God: the Ten Commandments. At that time, people of various ethnicities and social classes entered the Congregation, and the apostles had to define for these people the Christian approach to the law. Remember that Jesus himself had confirmed the validity of this and summarized it in two: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (it is related to the first four commandments of the Decalogue). ; and “love your neighbor as yourself” (related to the remaining six commandments); and affirmed that on these commandments (the Decalogue) depend or are the basis of all the remaining moral law and the teachings of the prophets (Matthew 22:36-40, 19:16-19; 5:17-19). For this reason, both Jesus and the apostles taught in the Christian Church the validity of the Decalogue, either implicitly or explicitly, as verified below:

- God is one: “We have no more than one God (1 Corinthians 8:4-6) and “You believe that God is one; You do well” (James 2:19).
- Against idolatry and images: “Those made with hands are not gods” and “flee from idolatry,” because idolaters “shall not possess the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:26, 1 Corinthians 10:14, 6:9).
- Do not take the name of God in vain, nor swear in his name: “Let not the name of the Lord be blasphemed” (1 Timothy 6:1), and “ do not swear , neither by heaven nor by earth;... but your yes be yes, and your no be no” (James 5:12).
- Rest on the holy day Sabbath: “There remains therefore a rest (Saturday rest) for the people of God. For he who has entered into his rest (Saturday), he also has rested from his works, as God has rested from his” (Hebrews 4:9-10).
- Honor father and mother: “Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise” (Ephesians 6:2).
- Do not commit murder: “You shall not kill” (Romans 13:9); “The law is not established for the righteous, but for the unrighteous... for father-killers and mother-killers, for murderers” (1 Timothy 1:9-10).
- Do not commit adultery: “You shall not commit adultery” (Romans 13:9); “Do not be mistaken, for neither fornicators... nor adulterers... will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9).
- Do not steal: “You shall not steal” (Romans 13:9); “Let him who stole steal no more” (Ephesians 4:28).
- Do not lie: “You shall not bear false witness” (Romans 13:9); “Therefore, putting away lies, speak the truth each of you to your neighbor” (Ephesians 4:25); and James admonishes regarding the careless use of the tongue (James 1:26, 3:6).
- Do not desire or take what belongs to others: “You shall not covet” (Romans 7:7, 13:9).

James calls the spiritual law of God “the law of freedom,” since only through it is there knowledge of sin and it frees man from offending the will of God (James 2:10-12, Romans 7:7). And Paul taught Christians of his day that “he who loves his neighbor fulfilled the law. Because: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet, and if there is any *other commandment* , in this sentence it is summarily understood: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Charity (love) does not harm others, so the fulfillment of the law is charity.” Therefore, the Ten Commandments were current in the doctrine and practice of the Apostolic Church, since they summarize the spirit and divine intention, which is love between men.

The Scriptures that emerged in the early Church refer to the Gospel of the kingdom of God in several ways. For example, in them are the expressions “Gospel of God” and “Gospel of Christ” (Romans 1:1, 15:19). Does the *Good News* come from or come from God or come from Christ? In the first Christians

there was clarity regarding Divinity: what God was, who God was and what his nature was; and of course, the divine inspiration that the apostles received also gave them understanding regarding the divine nature of Jesus the Messiah.

The people of Israel stood out in ancient times for their monotheistic character, that is, they believed in the one true God. The great heir of this belief will be spiritual Israel or the Christian Church, which conceives of God as an infinite Being, uncreated and therefore without beginning or end; the beginning and origin of the entire universe. Jesus Christ, who established the foundations of Christianity, also taught to recognize the existence of a single Deity through these words: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Mark 12:29, Deuteronomy 6:4).

“The Christology of the (New Testament) does not deny but rather confirms the monotheism of the Christians - as primitive... According to the Gospels, Jesus himself enhances the monotheistic confession” (29) .

However, Hebrew monotheistic theology had continuity and change in the theology taught by the apostles, since while the first conceived a God in strict rigor, that is, God is one Spirit, one essence and one substance, the second revealed that Divinity is a unity in which the Father and the Son have communion (1 John 1:3, 2:24). The Holy Spirit was not conceived as a third divine entity, but was understood as the power and manifestation of God among men (Isaiah 42:1, 44:3; Ezekiel 36:27, Joel 2:28, Matthew 10: 20, John 3:34, 1 Corinthians 2:11, 2 Corinthians 3:17, Romans 8:1; Isaiah 11:2, Acts 2:4).

“The first Christian formulas of faith are, as in the Jewish scheme, very brief. But, going from his - I the faith in the only God, they insist on what is specific that Christianity contributes in relation to Judaism - mo : Christ (the Son of God)... on the other hand 'the Spirit' is not individualized... in a divi - na ..., but is sometimes identified with Christ (2nd Corinthians 3:17), the oldest confessions of faith They are binary - 'one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, for which are all things, and we are through him' (1 Corinthians 8:6) - or, more often, purely -'but the same Lord is (Jesus)'-...“ (30) .

The concept of God in the apostolic Church was broader. Jesus himself claimed that he was the Son of God and that he is *one* with the Father when Philip asked him to show him the Father: “ Have I been with you so long, and you have not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father, how then do you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?... Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me” (John 14:8-11). Furthermore, Jesus stated categorically: “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). But first century Christian theology recognized that in the Supreme Divinity the Father is superior to the Son in authority. Paul refers to Him as the One “who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see,” as Jesus also revealed by jointly acknowledging that the Father is greater than Him (1 Timothy 6:14-16; John 5:37, 14:28). Meanwhile, the Son or the Word is the image, voice and executor of the will of his heavenly Father, who was incarnated to appear among men to die for the sins of humanity and undo the works of the Devil (John 1 : 1-3, Philippians 2: 5-8, Colossians 1:15-17, 1 John 3:8), therefore in the apostolic Church there was full understanding and acceptance of the prophetic and apostolic teachings that reveal the divinity of the Messiah Jesus (Isaiah 9:6; John 5:18, 10:33, 20:26-28, Titus 3:13), who now stands at the right hand of the Father as mediator and advocate for those who believe in Him (Romans 8: 34, 1st John 2:1, 1st Timothy 2:5) (31) .

That same God had instituted for his people the law of worship ordered in Leviticus 23, as are his *holy convocations* and which were part of the cult that before the coming of Christ only belonged to the people of Israel (Romans 9:3-4) . And while the Christian Church was made up only of Jews, for a

couple of years, they continued to keep the sacred festivals, from which it is clearly deduced that during the three and a half years in which Jesus taught or completed his spiritual teachings to the apostles, or in the forty days after the resurrection (Acts 1:3; Luke 24:36,44-45), he did not reveal to them that those festivals had been abolished or eliminated under the New Covenant. Nor did the inspiration of the Holy Spirit enlighten them that the festivals of God ended with the death of Jesus. Consequently, the Apostolic Church, Jewish first and predominantly Gentile later, continued to observe those annual festivals of worship of the Creator, which are: Weekly Sabbath , Passover and Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement and Booths. These are the “ Sabbaths ” or days of rest of God that Paul mentions in his epistle to the Colossians (Ezekiel 20:20, Colossians 2:16). One scholar on the subject wrote:

“ We are in the middle of the first century. The Church is approximately two decades old. That did they believe at that time? It is not difficult to find out from the Scriptures themselves. At that time The Bible tells us that all Christians kept the Sabbath , as was the custom of Paul himself. In Acts 17:2 and 18:4 he tells us: 'And as was his custom, Paul went to the synagogue, and for three Sabbaths He reasoned with them from the Scriptures... And every Sabbath he reasoned and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks'... Furthermore, It is easy to verify that all Christians at that time kept God's holy festivals. In the li - Book of Acts, Luke tells the story of the early decades of the Church. From the beginning until- At the end of his story he always mentions as something normal that Christians and not just Jews keep “ban the solemn festivals...” (32) .

In fact, the first time that one of the solemn feasts celebrated by the apostolic Church is mentioned is found in Acts 2:1: “And when the days of *Pentecost were fulfilled* , they were all with one accord together.” This occurred in the spring of the year 31 AD (Northern Hemisphere).

Later, when Luke writes the book of Acts to the *Gentile Christians* , he mentions the death of the apostle James (James), brother of John (Matthew 4:21), and the subsequent imprisonment of Peter that occurred in the year 44 AD taking as reference the feast of the *Passover* and the days of *Unleavened Bread* (Acts 12:1-4).

It is reported over and over again about the apostle Paul that in the cities where he was on his missionary trips he went to the synagogue on the *Sabbath* . No doubt he did it not only to evangelize the Jews and Gentile proselytes, but also to worship on the day of the Lord (Isaiah 58:13-14). On his first evangelistic journey, when he attended the synagogue on the Sabbath in Antioch of Pisidia (AD 46 or 47), he spoke to those who were there, and then the Gentiles of the city asked him to preach to them *on the following Sabbath* . And Paul did not meet with them on another day but preached to them again on the following Sabbath (Acts 13:14-16,42-44).

In the apostolic assembly of Jerusalem (49 AD), as will be remembered, the final decision regarding the controversy that arose at that time was given by James, in which he emphasized four prohibitions and that the physical works of the Church should not be kept. Law of Moses. There, the observance of the Ten Commandments was not prohibited, including the Sabbath or other solemn holidays. Furthermore, the remaining commandments and spiritual instructions were found in the law of Moses, which were taught in the synagogues and meeting places where Gentile converts also attended the Sabbath service , according to James (Acts 15:19-21). They had heard God's law and its explanations every Sabbath and needed no further instructions.

In Philippi, on his second missionary journey (AD 50-52), Paul is seen for the first time in Europe on a *Sabbath day* (Acts 16:12-13). In Thessalonica “Paul, as was his custom, went in to them (the Jews), and disputed with them for three *Sabbaths about the Scriptures*” (*Acts 17:1-2*). In Corinth, where Paul

stayed 18 months, he earned his living working at his trade, making tents, together with his companions Aquila and Priscilla; but “he argued in the synagogue every Sabbath , and persuaded Jews and Greeks” (Acts 18:1-4), that is, Paul worked from the first to the sixth day and rested and taught the Gospel on the Sabbath.

When Paul wrote the epistle to the Corinthian congregation in the year 55 AD - *First to the Corinthians* - he said to them: “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be new dough, as you are unleavened; because our Passover, which is Christ, was sacrificed for us. So *let us celebrate* , not on old leaven, nor on the leaven of malice and wickedness, but on *unleavened bread* of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). These words are evidently a New Testament order to keep the Passover festival and the respective days of Unleavened Bread. And this order was given to a mostly Gentile church.

In another part of that same epistle to the Corinthians Paul alludes again to the Passover festival *declaring* : “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ”; and immediately added: “I praise you, brothers, because... you retain my instructions... I received from the Lord what I have also taught you: That the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and having given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'Take, eat; This is my body that is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:1-2,23-24). These comments to Jews and, mainly, Gentiles would not have made any sense if they had not been observing the festivals ordained by God and which he also taught. At the end of the aforementioned epistle, Paul announces that he will visit the congregation, but first, he says, “I will be in Ephesus until *Pentecost* ” (1 Corinthians 16:7-8).

It is evident that Paul never tried to persuade Christians to stop observing the Sabbath and the other biblical festivals; For him, this would have been inconceivable (Acts 24:12-14, 25:7-8, 28:17). On the contrary, the history of Paul's ministry shows time after time that God's feasts were very special occasions in his life and that they even marked his work in the work of evangelization. For example, perhaps at the beginning of the spring of the year 52 AD, he said to the Christians of Ephesus: “In any case, he must have *the coming feast* in Jerusalem (Acts 18:21), that is, the apostle of the Gentiles desired to keep the festival of the Passover and Unleavened Bread in Jerusalem, a desire that was fully fulfilled (Acts 18:22-23). Six years later, at the end of the third missionary journey (early 58 AD), Paul kept the *Passover* and *Unleavened Bread* and again hastened to celebrate the feast of *Pentecost* in the mother church of Jerusalem: “And we, after the days of the *Unleavened Bread* (Unleavened Bread), we sailed from Philippi and came to them at Troas ... (Later) we arrived at Miletus. Because Paul had decided to go on to Ephesus, so as not to stop in Asia; for he made haste to celebrate the day of *Pentecost* , if it were possible, in Jerusalem” (Acts 20:6,16), that is, Paul and his companions kept the Passover in Philippi and fifty days later they celebrated Pentecost in the holy city, so that in both cases (52 and 58 AD) the apostle programmed his itinerary so that on both occasions they could be in a certain place to observe the Leviticus festivals still in force for the Church of the New Covenant.

The above shows that such festivals were not only for the Jews, and if Christians supposedly no longer had to keep them, they certainly would not have been mentioned as something important to the evangelical apostle and his brothers in faith. It is the same case in Acts 27:9. The writer Luke tells Christians that on Paul's journey as a prisoner to Rome, navigation was already "dangerous, because the *fast was already over* " (60 AD). This was written for the Church then dominated by Gentile converts, and they understood it to refer to the Day of *Atonement* , which is observed in the fall of each year (in the Northern Hemisphere), when weather conditions deteriorate. This holy day could not have already passed for Christians, that year, if it had not been in force. The inspired Luke could not have recorded that fact if the biblical Day of Atonement (Fast) of Leviticus 23 had not been in effect.

In 62 AD Paul writes to the congregation in Colossae an epistle that makes it even more evident that Christians were keeping the law of God, as he tells them: “Therefore let no one judge you in food (in the original Greek, *way of eating*), or in drink (Greek , *way of drinking*), or in part of a festival (Greek, *way of observing it*), or the new moon, or the Sabbath; which *is the shadow of the future*; but the body is Christ's” (Colossians 2:16-17). There Paul was refuting a local heresy. Some false teachers were introducing a religious philosophy based on “traditions of men” and “rudiments of the world,” not the Word of God. These false teachers were teaching their own rules and regulations regarding what they considered appropriate conduct (Colossians 2:8,20-22). Foster adds in this regard:

“The false teachers in Colossae rejected the physical – the perishable things they could touch, taste or drive (verses 21-22) - particularly when it had to do with worship. His philosophy invited neglect of the physical needs of the body in order to increase spirituality. However , the reality

The fact is that the religion that they had imposed on themselves did not achieve that, it did not even help them to

overcome your own human nature. As Paul wrote, these things 'are of no value against the appetites of the flesh' (ver. 23). The Christians of Colossae obeyed God. They kept the Sabbath and the biblical festivals and rejoiced in them, following the biblical instruction (Deuteronomy 16:10-15).

“Note that the false teachers did not question the validity of the biblical festivals themselves; they They criticized the members of the congregation in Colossae for *the joyful way in which they kept them* . Is That is, the Colossians, like all those who obey God's instructions in this regard, sought -

“They should eat and drink something special on such days” (33) .

In short, what Paul was recommending to the Colossians was that they should ignore the criticisms and attacks of such heretics about the pleasant and joyful aspects of eating and drinking at God's festivals. Only the Church - which is a body - has the right to criticize and correct when those festivals are not kept in accordance with the Word of God, affirms the apostle. And furthermore, it confirms that the biblical festivals “are the shadow of things to come” (Colossians 2:16-17); It does not say “ *they were the shadow...*”; Consequently , they still symbolize the stages of the plan of salvation, as explained in previous lines. Incidentally, the letter *to the Colossians* confirms that just over 30 years after the death and resurrection of Christ, mostly Gentile Christians were observing God's “ Sabbaths” (Ezekiel 20:20). Finally, Paul wrote the epistle known as *to the Hebrews* in the year 66 or 67 AD in which he clearly alludes to the validity of the weekly Sabbath day under the New Covenant. He wrote: “For in a certain place he said thus of the *seventh day* (*Saturday*): 'And God rested from all his works on the seventh day.' And here again: 'They shall not enter my rest.' Therefore, it remains that some must enter into it... Therefore, *there remains a rest for the people of God* . For he who has entered into his rest has also rested from his works, as God has rested from his works” (Hebrews 4:4-9). In the original Greek text, verse 9 says: 'Therefore there remains a *sabbatism* (or Sabbath rest) for the people of God.' The *Anchor Bible Dictionary* assures that “ *sabbatismos* ” refers to “the celebration of the seventh day,” making it clear that the New Testament affirms that the Sabbath rest was still valid for Christian spiritual Israel.

For its part, the *Commentary on the Whole Bible* says the following about Hebrews 4:9:

“This verse indirectly establishes the obligation to keep the Sabbath still, since the figure remains until it replaces reality... (Like the millennial rest) it will not be reality until Christ...comes...the earthly day of rest must continue, as a figure, until then.”

(3. 4) .

Although there is no direct biblical record regarding the observance of the remaining solemn festivals in the apostolic Church - Trumpets and Cabins - , it is obviously understood that they were also celebrated.

The testimony of secular history confirms that first-century Christians were observant of the law of worship through the practice of the festival cycle, as the *Encyclopedia Britannica asserts* :
“The early Christians continued to observe the *Jewish holidays* , although with a new spirit” (35) .

In passing, it is important to clarify once again that the aforementioned holy holidays are not “Jewish”, but from God, and that the natural Jews did not invent them nor were they created for them alone, but rather they received them first and then the “spiritual Jews” . Here are other secular sources:
“Judaism has always observed the seventh day of the week: the Sabbath . This practice was the same manner kept by the first Christians” (36) .

“The early Christians kept the seventh day as the Sabbath , just as they did the rest of the Jews” (37) .

“While the Christians of Palestine (Judea), who kept the entire Jewish law, celebrated of course -
To all the Jewish holidays, the Gentile converts (also) observed... the Sabbath , and in memory of the last scenes of the life of our Savior, the Passover, although without Jewish superstitions” (38) .

“The Church around the year 80 was an uncomplicated organization... The assemblies... met in houses
They met in private homes on Saturday ” (39) .

Regarding the last historical testimony, regarding the meeting places of the early Christians. It should be said that these had the habit of congregating both in public places and in private homes. The first because they continued to participate in the Temple and in the Jewish synagogues (Acts 2:46, 9:20, 13:5, 19:8-9), but when the definitive separation of Mosaic Judaism began, as a distinct group, they began to form assemblies (*ekklesia*) and with a spirit, doctrine and guidelines guided by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Many times they met secretly in specially equipped rooms (such as the “upper room”, of Acts 1:13, 9:37 and 20:8, which was nothing more than an upper room in Hebrew houses) or in private homes (Acts 12:2, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Romans 16:3- 5, Colossians 4:15, Philemon 2). Obviously, these were usually enclosures with little capacity and located in sectors far from the control of the local Roman guard. In this way the Christian “church” emerged (in relation to its organization and the physical meeting place). An exception to the rule were the congregations of Rome and other cities, where worship ceremonies and preaching were carried out mainly in catacombs or underground galleries that were nothing more than funerary tombs authorized by the State. However, in any case there were specific houses in Rome where they participated in worship and fraternal communion. Robertson says:

“The early Christians did not have buildings of their own in which to meet, and the Christian Romans probably
“Mindly they had houses where they met (See Romans 16:3-5,11,14-15)” (40) .

The Christian Church inherited Israel's spiritual goods, such as legislation and worship (Romans 9:4). It follows that among the features that the Christian assemblies adopted from the synagogues are the liturgy, worship, the reading of portions of the law and the prophets, as well as the psalms and their interpretation; prayer and singing religious hymns in praise of God; the preachings and the reading of the apostolic letters, which together with other inspired writings would later form the canon of the Christian Bible. Precisely Luke 4:16-20 and Acts 13:14-16 have been taken as a basis for organizing Christian worship, but there are also other apostolic writings that give some indications of other aspects of worship in the Church of God. For example, Acts 2:1-40, 42; 1st Corinthians 14: 18-40. In this last

text Paul says: “When you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a doctrine, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation; let everything be done for edification (1 Corinthians 14:26).

Likewise, we must consider the prophetic words of Jesus when he said: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth” (John 4: 23). In such a way that

The ancient animal sacrifices that were made in the Temple have now -under the New Covenant- been replaced by spiritual sacrifices:

“The Christian is exhorted to present his body as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which constitutes its rational worship (Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 8:5, Philippians 4:18). With this he offers Christ the sacrifice of praise to God, and the acts of kindness and communicating of one 's own to others are holy - sacrifices pleasing to God (Hebrews 13:15-16, 1 Peter 2: 5)” (*41*)

The apostles also promoted praise to God through hymns and psalms in meetings. Ephesians 5:19 reads: “Speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts” (see also Colossians 3:16 and James 5:13).

End of the apostolic era of the Church of God

Returning to the thread of events surrounding the development of apostolic Christianity, it is necessary to return to the prominence of the apostle Paul. When he returned from his third trip to Jerusalem in mid-58 AD, he had to face his true enemies, the unconverted Jews. In the holy city he was the victim of a furious attack, resulting in his arrest and imprisonment, and his subsequent transfer to Rome, as he appealed to Caesar in his capacity as a Roman citizen (58-61 AD) (Acts 21:26 - 26:32). In the imperial capital, while Paul was waiting to appeal to Caesar, one of his disciples who accompanied him, Luke, finished writing the gospel that bears his name; and very soon he began the writing of a second treatise, which came to be known as the *Acts of the Apostles* and which does not exactly correspond to a narration of all the acts, deeds and sayings of the apostles of Jesus, but rather aims to present the work of God through some of them and the history of the beginnings of Christianity. Luke most likely completed *Acts* towards the end of AD 62 or at the latest AD 63, since his account ends with Paul waiting to appeal to the emperor, which did not occur before then (Acts 28:30).

Meanwhile, in the eastern province of Judea, homeland of Christianity, the oppressed Jews try to overthrow Roman authority, breaking out in the year 66 AD a general revolt challenging the military power of the Empire of the Caesars. This was the beginning of the events that would fulfill Jesus' words regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, when he said to the Jews: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:38) . And also: “Oh if you too knew, at least on this day of yours, what concerns your peace! But now it is hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, that your enemies will surround you with a bulwark, and will surround you, and will make you a strait from every side, and will bring you down to the ground, and your children within you; and they will not leave one stone upon another upon you; because you did not know the time of your visitation” (Luke 19:42-44). That was the price that the people of Israel began to pay physically for their rebellions, sins and unbelief (Leviticus 26: 14-16,31-35; Deuteronomy 8:5, Hebrews 12:5-8, Matthew 27:24-25).

That was the abomination also predicted by the prophet Daniel (Daniel 9:26). The Christians remembered the words of the Master, who had warned them, saying: “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know then that its destruction has come. Then let those who are in Judea flee to

the mountains; and those who are in the midst of it, let them go; and those who are in the fields must not enter it” (Luke 21:20-21).

After the Roman soldiers, under the command of General Cestius Gallio, had surrounded the city, they suddenly abandoned the site in an unexpected manner, and this when everything seemed to favor an immediate assault. With hope of being able to resist the attack now lost, the besieged were about to surrender, when the Roman general withdrew his forces for no apparent reason. Without a doubt, the events were arranged this way by God's designs. The sign had already been given to the Christians who were awaiting the fulfillment of Jesus' words, and at that moment they were offered the opportunity that they should take advantage of to flee, according to the instructions given by Christ. The events developed in such a way that neither the Jews nor the Romans could have prevented the flight of the believers. Cestius having retreated, the Jews made a sortie to pursue him, and while both forces were thus confronted, the Christians were able to leave the city, taking advantage of the fact that the surroundings were clear of any danger that would block their way. In fact, the historian Eusebius, based on information from the writings of Hegesippus (2nd century AD), says in his *Ecclesiastical History* that the Christians left Jerusalem and fled to a safe place, in the vicinity of the city of Pella (Perea), east of the Jordan.

“The flight of the Christians was not without difficulties, but they managed to leave and gather in Pella, a city of the mountainous region of Perea, where they were able to remain free from the evils that plagued Jerusalem. The flight took place in the year 68 AD. The Church lived almost miraculously sustained, and continued its work in the entire transjordanian region ” (42) .

“In the fall of Jerusalem, if some Christians perished, they were few. Christians received warning of the prophecy pronounced by Christ, escaping from the doomed city and taking refuge in Pella, in the Jordan Valley” (43) .

Finally, in 70 AD, the Roman general Titus conquered Jerusalem, burned the Temple and razed its foundations. The city was devastated; Some 600,000 Jews lost their lives in the massacre and several thousand were sold into slavery. It was the beginning of the dispersion or *diaspora* of the Jews beyond their land and their millenary sufferings. Christians had escaped such a dramatic chapter in history, but great tribulations await them in the following centuries in other parts of the world.

The death of the great Christian teachers Paul and Peter, which occurred two years before the destruction of Jerusalem, left the leadership of the Church of God under the apostle John, at least in the congregations of the eastern part of the Roman Empire. Regarding the life, evangelistic work and death of the other apostles of Christ, it is generally unknown. A series of legends have been woven that lack a solid documentary basis for their historical corroboration. In any case, it is evident that the other apostles spread out in the cities and Jewish colonies of the known world announcing that the Messiah predicted by the prophets had come to free humanity from sin and make heirs of his kingdom. The evidence indicates that they were faithful until death.

Below is a summary of the information collected, all of it based more on traditions, but which can constitute an approximation to the reality experienced by the other apostles:

Andrew, Peter's brother (John 1:35-41, 6:8, Luke 6:14) is said to have preached the Gospel in many Asian nations, such as Scythia and Thrace, north of Greece; and that he was crucified in Edessa (44) .

According to one tradition, Matthew (Luke 5:27-31 6:15; Matthew 9:9) would have been in Parthia and Persia, and it is deduced from it that he did not die martyred (45) .

Matthias, chosen to take the place of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:16-26), is said to have preached in Cappadocia, north of Cilicia, and to have died a martyr (first stoned and then beheaded) perhaps in Jerusalem (**46**) .

Mark, author of the gospel that bears his name, is said to have preached in Egypt and to have founded the church of Alexandria. He would have been dragged and torn to pieces by the people of that city in the pagan solemnity of Serapis, his idol, ending his life very old in cruel hands (**47**) .

Nathanael or Bartholomew (John 1:45-49, 21:2; Luke 6:14) is believed to have preached in various countries either in Arabia, or in the vicinity of present-day Ethiopia. He would have been crucified upside down in one of the provinces of Armenia (**48**) .

Tradition says that the apostle Philip (John 1:43-45, 14:8-9) would have preached in Phrygia, where he would have preached, being scourged and put in prison and then crucified, in the year 54 AD (**49**) .

Of Simon the Zealot (Luke 6:15, Matthew 10:4) it is maintained that he would have preached in North Africa (Mauritania), and even in Brittany, where - according to one source - he would have been crucified in the year 74 AD (**50**) . But another tradition affirms that he would have been martyred in Judea in the time of Domitian (**51**) .

Tradition places Thomas (Luke 6:15 ; John 11:16, 20:24-28) in Parthia and Persia, and in his later years in Edessa, where he is said to have been martyred. However, there is also a tradition according to which Thomas preached the Gospel in India, where, arousing the anger of the pagan priests, he would have been martyred and then pierced with a spear (**52**) .

Judas Thaddeus or Lebeus , brother of Jacob (Luke 6:16, John 14:22, Matthew 10:3) would have been crucified in Edessa in the year 72 AD (**53**) .

Luke the Evangelist (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, 2 Timothy 4:11), according to tradition, is supposed to have been hanged from an olive tree by the idolatrous priests of Greece (**54**) .

Of Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37, 13:2) it is unknown how he ended his days, but tradition has transmitted that it occurred in the year 73 AD (**55**) .

As for the apostle John, little is also known about his apostolic actions. Perhaps he lived for some time in Judea with Mary, the mother of Jesus (John 19:25-27), until she died. Later, leaving his land, he certainly went out to travel other regions to preach the Gospel, until settling in the city of Ephesus (Asia Minor), where he carried out his ministerial work until the end of the 1st century AD.

GRADES

(1) Mario Seiglie , *The Bible under the lens of science* , no. 266, p. 2

(2) Cited in Juan C. Varetto , *The March of Christianity* , p. 11-12

(3) *Fundamental Electronic Library of Hope* , Seventh-day Adventist Church , “Comments” section Biblical”, vol. 6, 'General Articles: the early Church'

(4) *All Scripture is inspired of God and profitable* , Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; p. 176

(5) “We read in Matthew 2:23 as follows: 'And he came and dwelt in the city called Nazareth, that the things might be fulfilled, which was said by the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.' It is not strange for this reason that the Church at the beginning

was known by the name of *Nazarenes* , as the prophet said long before his birth, that Jesus would be given this name of national distinction. The people of Nazareth spoke the Aramaic language, therefore, this was the language native of our Savior. The name Nazareth, or 'Nazarenes', is their national name, like...Ethiopians, Russians, etc. Of In no way was it the Lord 's intention to give this name to His Church, or He would never have given the name to the church. 'Church of God' twelve times, as it did in the writings of the New Testament” (A. Dugger and C. Dodd, *A History of the true Church* , pp. 17-18)

(6) Jesse Hurlbut , *History of the Christian Church* , p. 28; cited in Seiglie , *History of the True Church* , no. 1, p. 1

- (7) *New Illustrated Dictionary* , art. “ Christian ”, p. 194
- (8) *The Church They Could Not Destroy* , pamphlet published by the Worldwide Church of God, p. 2
- (9) *The March of Christianity* , p. fifteen
- (10) idem, pp. 18-19
- (11) Robert D. Brinsmead , Re- examining the Sabbatarianism , art. “The way of life in the Church of the apostles”,
www.marktab.org./ebrins4 and www.quango.net/verdict/index.
- (12) *The Bible Chouraqui , Lettres de Paulo* , André Chouraqui , French Orthodox Jewish rabbi, Bible translator (both the Old and the New Testament) in the Jewish version; cited in www.cristianismo-primitivo.org/siglo I
- (13) *History of Christianity* , www.ucatolicamz.edu.co
- (14) *Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath?* , Baptist Reformation Review 8, no. 15, 1979; aforementioned in Brinsmead , *Re-examining ...*
- (15) FF Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* , p . 64; aforementioned in Brinsmead , *Re-examining ...*
- (16) Joseph R. Taylor, *A Study of Early Christianity* , p . 278; aforementioned in Brinsmead , *Re-examining ...*
- (17) Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* , p . 127, cited in Brinsmead , *Re-examining ...*
- (18) James Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* , p . 127; aforementioned in Brinsmead , *Re-examining ...*
- (19) See note 29, chapter II
- (20) Seiglie , *The Bible under...* , no. 272, p. 3
- (21) idem, no. 276, p. 3
- (22) Francisco Ulloa W., *The footprint of the true Church* , page. 3
- (23) Mario Seiglie , *What does the New Covenant consist of?* , p. 1
- (24) R.H. Barrow, *The Romans* , p. 181
- (25) Francois -Marie Arouet, *Philosophical Letters and Other Writings* , p. 156
- (26) *A History of the True Church* , p. 10
- (27) Varetto , *The March*, page 32
- (28) Seiglie , *The Bible under...* , no. 287, p. 1
- (29) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* , vol. III, p. 102; cited in *God is* , pamphlet published by the Church of Universal God, p. 27
- (30) *The first Christians* , p. 44
- (31) However, in the future there will be no clarity about the divinity of Christ among those who apostatized; even in the Church of God confusion will arise , emerging currents ranging from absolute Jewish monotheism to adoption of trinitarianism , passing through binitarianism , adoptionism, etc.
- (32) Mario Seiglie , *What is Galatians about?* , p. 5
- (33) *The Good News* , November-December 1998, p. 16; art. “Should we keep the same festivals that he kept Jesus”, Roger Foster
- (34) Jamieson, Fausset & Brown; cited in Roderick C. Mederith , *What is the Christian Sabbath?* , p. 27
- (35) 11th edition, 8: 828; quoted in Seiglie , *What is it about...?* , p. 6
- (36) *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* , George Arthur Butrick , 4:135; art. “Sabbath”, J. Morgenstern; in Brinsmead , *Re-examining*
- (37) *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* , James Orr, 4: 2631; art. “Sabbath”, John R. Simpey ; cited in Brinsmead , *Re-examining ...*
- (38) Lewis HS & S., *Church History of the Apostolic Age* , p. 135; cited in Dugger and Dodd, *A History...* , page 20
- (39) Solomon Reinach, *Orpheus. History of religions* , p. 228
- (40) Cited in Seiglie , *The Bible under...* , no. 305, p. 2
- (41) Vila y Escuin , *New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* , p. 1,038
- (42) Varetto , p. 35
- (43) Hurlbut , *History of...* , pp. 41-42; cited in Dugger and Dodd, p. 16; and in Seiglie , *History of the True Church* , No. 3, p. 1
- (44) *Electronic Library...*
- (45) ditto
- (46) Andrew Dugger and Clarence Dodd, *A History of the True Church* , p. 24
- (47) *Electronic Library...*
- (48) ditto
- (49) Dugger and Dodd, page 24
- (50) idem, p. 26
- (51) *Electronic Library...*

(52) Dugger and Dodd, p. 26; *Electronic Library*... According to this last source, there is currently a group of indigenous Christians of that country who call themselves “Christians of Thomas”

(53) Dugger and Dodd, p. 26

(54) ditto

(55) idem, p. 27

CHAPTER III: APOSTASY IN THE EARLY CHURCH ORIGINATED FALSE CHRISTIANITY

The apostles had spread the doctrine of Christ Jesus with great success; Later, Christianity expanded slowly but continuously, despite the problems it had to face at that time. At the end of the 1st century AD there were important Christian communities in all the main ports of the Mediterranean Sea. According to Walter Göetz :

“Christian communities until the second half of the second century were formed almost without exception on the base of Jewish communities ; That is why the expansion of Christianity did not exceed the limits of the Diaspora Jewish, that is, the limits of the Greek language” (1) .

The historian Gibbon attributes this rapid spread of Christianity to several causes, among which he points out “the pure and austere morality of Christians” and “the union and discipline” of the nascent spiritual community (2) . In fact, nothing could so impress a world in a state of decadence as that holiness and clean customs of the people who were mostly observant of the law of God under faith in Jesus.

It is difficult to calculate how many Christians had reached at that time and in the following centuries, but history has preserved enough data on the number of countries or regions where they existed, and from some expressions of writers of that time, it can be inferred that The numerical growth was astonishing. Apart from Judea, Asian Christian congregations existed at that time in Samaria, Syria, Asia Minor, Galatia and Mesopotamia. There are also signs of Christian life in Persia, Media, Parthia and Bactria. Shortly afterwards it was seen that the Gospel had reached Arabia and some provinces of India. In Africa, Egypt was the first country that learned of the Gospel, and from there it spread to Cyrenaica, Ethiopia and other surrounding regions. In Europe, imperial persecutions indirectly favored the spread of Christianity. In Italy, the congregations were innumerable, and in Spain and Gaul (present-day France) there were also churches. Likewise, in Germania (present-day Germany) and Brittany, Christians were found in the middle of the 2nd century AD. In the regions where the apostles had worked, the churches continued to prosper: in Athens, Philippi, Thessaloniki, etc. (3) . The proto-Catholic witness Justin Martyr, writing in the second century, said:

“There is not a single race of men, whether barbarians or Greeks, or by any other name, nomads wandering shepherds or shepherds living in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not made in the name of the crucified Jesus” (4) .

It should be noted that at the end of the apostolic era there were no branches of Christianity, nor denominations , such as those that exist today; However, a historical-doctrinal analysis between the end of the 1st century and the beginning of the 2nd century AD provides certain information to verify that the seeds of the great apostasy, divergences and large-scale divisions exist within the Christian Church. In the early decades, the Jerusalem church led the Christian world, and as they multiplied, congregations frequently appealed to the authority of the Jerusalem parent congregation. But then a period arose in which that initial fervor waned and a different Christianity emerged within the original Christianity. The ecclesiastical historian Johann von Mosheim reveals that at the beginning of the 2nd century the original primitive teaching was generally maintained, but this later changed:

“The Christian system , as it was taught until now, preserved its beautiful original simplicity... This venerable simplicity it did not have, truly long duration; Its beauty was gradually eliminated by the

laborious force of human wisdom and the dark subtleties of an imaginary science” (5)

Therefore, some 70 to 150 years after Jesus' ministry, the simple message of his Gospel was already being forgotten and God's law underestimated and outdated. In this context, the basic doctrine of all current denominations of Christianity, classified as *Catholic* , *Orthodox* , *Protestant* and/or *schismatic* in general, emerged.

Based on what was previously stated, it is necessary to recognize that early Christianity suffered the attack of two enemies: one of an external nature, related to persecutions; and another internal one, corresponding to the apostasy and heresy promoted by the same Christians who distorted evangelical teachings. Both enemies acted simultaneously and for a long time.

The first persecutions of Christianity

The Church of God was to be persecuted; It was predicted. Jesus said to his disciples: “If they have persecuted me, they will also *persecute you* ” (John 15:20). Later, the apostle Paul warned for years about impending persecutions. He reminded the Church of the words of Jesus saying: “All who want to live godly in Christ Jesus *will suffer persecution* ” (2 Timothy 3:12). In truth, the world is not a comfortable place for authentic Christians, and as Jesus himself had declared, “the doors of the grave (death) will not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18), that is, no one or nothing can eradicate the Church of God.

The persecutions against the followers of Christ were started by the Jews, so they began very early. In the days of the apostles “there was a great persecution among the church that was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the lands of Judea and Samaria” (Acts 8:1).

The Jewish leaders had rejected Jesus from the beginning. After having him killed, they also rejected his followers; This is why Christianity was not considered legal within the Jewish context, even though Christians of Jewish origin initiated the concept that Christianity was a religious reform movement within Judaism and not outside of it, a leaven of salvation that ultimately would permeate the entire Jewish people and redeem them. But the majority of Jews did not share that view. Thousands of them accepted the Christian faith, but the vast majority of the Israelite nation officially disapproved of it for reasons that are clearly presented in the gospels and *Acts* . Therefore, this explains why the Jews created difficulties for the Nazarenes or Christians at every opportunity they had, persecuting them . as far as they could in Judea and the surrounding area, and in other places stirring up the mob to rise up against them. There are several examples of this in the book of *Acts* . But the worst persecutions that were committed against the early disciples of Christ were carried out by the Roman emperors.

In fact, until the middle of the 1st century AD the Romans had not risen up against the Christians because they understood that they constituted a Jewish sect, and since Judaism was legal, they found no reason to bother the new religious movement. But things soon changed direction.

The Roman historian Tacitus blames Nero for having burned Rome, but Nero, to remove the accusation from himself, placed the blame on the Christians. A large number of members of the Church of God were burned alive in the imperial capital. Some of them were used as torches to light the nocturnal orgies in Nero's gardens (64-68 AD). The persecution undoubtedly spread somewhat throughout the provinces, although little has been recorded of this. As noted, both Paul and Peter perished in the city of Rome due to such persecutions.

It can be stated that the first attacks by the Roman authority against Christians were sporadic; They were not legally decreed, but were due to the whim or resentment of the emperors. These are the cases of the anti-Christian persecutions of Nero - who set the cruel precedent - and of Domitian (around 95 AD).

As has been noted, at first the Roman people and authorities did not distinguish between Judaism and Christianity because the religion of both was practically the same, except that the Jews practiced Mosaic rites and rabbinic traditions and the Christians believed in Jesus the Christ and rejected such practices. Remember what Voltaire declared:

“Christians, whether Greek, Assyrian, Roman or Egyptian, everywhere regarded them as semi-Jews” (6) .

If until the second half of the 1st century the Roman government did not distinguish between Judaism and Christianity, the people did not take long to do so because they understood that something more “insolent and dangerous” than Judaism had emerged . After the persecutions of Nero, the government only realized this, because, according to its enemies, Christianity deserved to be given official surveillance, since it did not satisfy the conditions under which Rome granted religious tolerance. There was something in Christian teachings that made their situation difficult before the Roman government. Christians affirmed from the beginning that they belonged to the only true religion, they declared that they had a worldwide message, they invited everyone to join them in walking in righteousness and holiness if they met the conditions of obeying the law of the true and only God. , and they insisted on preaching that “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved,” but the name of Jesus. All other religions were thus declared worthless.

In reality the distinction between the Christian people and the Jewish people was based on false interpretations of Christianity. For example, the historian Tacitus (55-120 AD) in his *Annals* wrote phrases like this:

“Those who made themselves hateful for their abominations and whom the crowd called Christians... This abominable superstition later grew not only in Judea, where the evil originated, but also in Rome, where everything that is detestable and shameful in the world flows” (7) .

According to Teresio Bosco, in *The Persecutions Against Christians* :

“Christians were, therefore, also considered by Tacitus as despicable people, capable of crime - horrendous things . The most infamous crimes attributed to Christians were ritual infanticide (as if in the renewal of the Lord's Supper, in which they fed on the Eucharist, killed a child and eat it!) and incest (a clear distortion of the embrace of peace that was made "between brothers and sisters." nas »). These accusations, born from the gossip of the mob, were thus sanctioned by the authority of the emperor, persecuting Christians and condemning them to death . From that moment (we to - Tacitus witnesses) a new crime was also added to the imputation against Christians: hatred contra the human race. Pliny the Younger, ironically, will write that with a similar accusation he would have been able to condemn anyone to death from now on ” (8) .

For his part, Suetonius , also a Latin historian at the end of the first century AD, considered Christians “a class of men full of new and dangerous superstitions” (9) .

“There is a new race of men born yesterday, without homeland or traditions, associated with each other against all odds.”
religious and civil institutions, persecuted by justice, universally covered in infamy, but “ro glorifying themselves with the common execration: they are the Christians” (10) .

Thus begins, around the year 178 AD, *The True Discourse Against Christians*, a work written by the Greek philosopher Celsus, which will be the ideological foundation of some of the harshest persecutions against believers in Christ Jesus, which will take place over the years following.

That was the view of some intellectuals of the time, but ordinary Romans were more explicit: It seemed to them that Christians hated the human race. They looked forward to the coming advent of Christ when all but themselves would be destroyed by the fire of their wickedness. Christians, according to pagan perception, were dangerous and enemies of civilization and the Roman state, and therefore deserved contempt. That was such a partial and misleading view. Christians were God's people formed according to his own design, striving to live according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In almost 250 years (64-305 AD) there were numerous persecutions against Christianity, and spiritual conviction was really required to be a disciple of Christ in those times. Apart from the aforementioned Nero and Domitian, the most terrible persecutions broke out under the emperors Trajan (98-117 AD), Hadrian (117-138), Antoninus Pius (138-161), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), Septimius Severus (193-211), Maximinus (235-238), Decius (249-251), Valerian (253-260) and Diocletian (303-311). In those persecutions, both true Christians and apostate Christians and heretics were martyred.

Apostasy in the apostolic Church

The Christians of apostolic times were not inclined to conform to the interests of the unconverted world, nor to erase a letter from the doctrinal system entrusted to them. They considered their life on this earth as a pilgrimage; All his thoughts and desires were concentrated in the heavenly kingdom, and his supreme ambition was to reign there with Christ Jesus. However, later many Christians lost sight of these pure goals and spiritual aspirations; They distorted the path of holiness and began to look mainly at the external appearance of the Church; The spirit of compromise gave way and gave way to the corruption of the doctrine of the Messiah.

This unfortunate story corresponds with what Jesus and his apostles predicted would happen after his departure. They announced that there would be an apostasy, that is, a deviation, a turning away from true doctrine and worship (The word "apostasy" comes from the Greek and literally means *to turn back*, *to fall back*). And not only would there be apostasy, but deception, division and false "Christianity."

Regarding that day, Jesus Christ warned by declaring: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ, and many will deceive'..." (Matthew 24:4-5), that is, there would not be a few who were to be deceived, but many. It was the minority, the few who would become true Christians. This same condition Jesus described when he said: "Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and there are *many* who enter through it. For narrow is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life, and there are *few* who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Barely twenty years after the death and resurrection of Christ, the apostle Paul, in one of his first inspired letters (AD 51), warned Christians not to be deceived by false preaching or by false letters attributed to the apostles: "Let no one deceive you in any way; for it will not come (the day of Christ at his second coming) without the *apostasy coming first*" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Furthermore, Paul knew that apostasy would increase, for this reason he said inspired: "I know that after my departure ravenous wolves will enter among you, not sparing the livestock; and of yourselves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to take disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30; see also 1 Timothy 4:1-3).

The apostle Peter, for his part, also wrote about this apostasy: "There will be false doctors (teachers) among you, who will secretly introduce heresies of destruction" (2 Peter 2:1). He even realized that already in his day there were teachers who were distorting the teachings of the apostle Paul when he

wrote: “And have the patience of our Lord as salvation, as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has also written; almost in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, among which there are some difficult to understand, *which the unlearned and fickle people distort* , as well as the other Scriptures, to the destruction of themselves” (2 Peter 3:15-16).

However, the apostasy began while the apostles were still alive and leading the Church of God. The Scriptures show how Paul and John, for example, had to face this serious problem for the spiritual integrity of the Congregation. In the year 54 AD he wrote very concerned to the church of Galatia : “I am amazed that you have so quickly turned from him who called you from the grace of Christ, to another gospel; not that there is another, but that some trouble you, and want to pervert the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6-7). And in the Epistles to Timothy, Paul reveals the apostasy of Hymenaeus and Philetus , who denied the future resurrection, saying that it had already taken place (1 Timothy 1:20, 2 Timothy 2:17-18). At the same time, some internal divisions were already occurring in some congregations, as the apostle of the Gentiles wrote in the year 57 AD: “I say that there are dissensions among you; and in part I believe it. For there must be even heresies among you, so that those who are tested may be revealed among you” (1 Corinthians 11:18-19). Seven years earlier he had declared to the Thessalonians that a conspiracy was being hatched to supplant the truth: “For the mystery of iniquity is already at work,” he had written to them (2 Thessalonians 2:7). And he told the Corinthians that some were already preaching “another Jesus” and “another gospel,” whom he called false apostles and ministers of Satan (2 Corinthians 11:4,13-15).

Just as the apostle Paul said, after his death some Christians began to stray from the truth or renounce the faith of Jesus Christ altogether. They constitute a minority, but they gradually lead others astray, becoming easy prey to doctrinal “innovations.” This fact emerges from the latest New Testament writings. Towards the seventh decade of our era, Judas, one of Jesus' brothers, denounced: “Some men have crept in secretly, who before were ordained to... condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into debauchery (debauchery).), and denying God...” (Jude 4).

The planned great apostasy was slowly making its way at the end of the first century AD; It is only relatively stopped by the apostle John, who, after the death of Paul and Peter (68 AD), leads the Church of God in the east of the Roman Empire. The congregations under his direct supervision and that of the elders who assist him have remained steadfast in their observance of God's law and their acceptance of the truth revealed “once unto the saints” (Jude 3). However, when he lived in Ephesus and was of advanced age, John protested about the apostasy that was already taking place in the Christian Church; but as can be seen in his second and third epistles - written between 96 and 98 AD - his authority was disputed. Both contain warnings against doctrinal deviations; and as 3 John 9 indicates, the leaders of a certain congregation refused to accept the apostle's messengers. In short, the apostates in question had been members of the true Church: “ *They came out from us, but they were not of we* ; because if they were ours, they would have certainly remained with us; but they came out so that it would be revealed that *they are not all of us* ,” he wrote (2nd John 2:18-19).

The apostasy that the Church had to suffer from the last third of the first century AD, therefore, was expressed in the erroneous teachings of false ministers, teachers and theologians who were distorting the nature of the Son of God and the meaning of the Gospel, leading to the extreme the observance of God's law (e.g., the Ebionites) or by compromising with it (e.g., the Christians of Rome and Alexandria). Although the apostate movement gave rise to some heretical sects in the second half of that apostolic century, it cannot be asserted that it manifested itself universally in the Church of God, but only at the end of that century. However, it is possible to confirm the fact that the heresies that existed at that time can be classified into two large groups: Judaizing heresies and Gnostic heresies. Likewise, despite this

classification, it is necessary to point out that it is relative since many of the heretical movements are based on principles that can participate in either of the two groups, that is, they usually rely on Judaizing or Gnostic principles, or well in both simultaneously, but in general one of them predominates, giving it the fundamental characteristic that allows it to be assimilated to one or another of the heretical groups.

The first of the heretics was Simon Magus, the same one who practiced magic in Samaria, whom Philip baptized and who Peter later separated from the Church for offering money in exchange for the same powers that the apostles had (Acts 8:18- 24). This occurred perhaps around the year 32 or 33 AD According to Kelly:

“Simon left without having been truly converted. They did not lay hands on him and he did not receive the Spirit Holy. But he realized the power of attraction exerted by this new Christian doctrine and this new lifestyle . _ To his hodgepodge of religious philosophies, Simon added something new: words and practices.

Christians. The latter, naturally, were twisted and distorted, and he mixed them with cere -

Jewish monias , Babylonian superstitions , Greek mythologies and Persian mysteries. Imitating the true - “Three apostles..., Simon carried his message from city to city until he reached the capital, Rome” (*11*) .

There are testimonies that prove the historicity of Simon Magus and his heretical work, particularly the writings of proto-Catholic authors of the 2nd and 4th centuries, as verified below:

“When Justin Martyr wrote his *Apology* in 152 AD, the sect of the Simonites seemed formidable is undoubtedly the one from the book of Acts. Mention that

He was a Samaritan and was a great magician. He says that he arrived in Rome in the days of Emperor Claudius Caesar.

(45 AD) and who caused such a sensation with his magical powers that he was honored as a god, and a statue was raised in the Tiber River with the inscription “To the holy god Simon ” (*12*) .

Irenaeus, in his work *Against Heretics* written around 190 AD, adds that:

“Simon taught that the commandments of the law and the prophets were inspired by angels to reduce - send the man into slavery, but those who believed in him and his consort Helena, as they were delivered from the tyranny of the law, they were free to do as they pleased since they were saved by grace” (*13*) .

But Simon and his followers were not the only heretics in apostolic times. Another of the first apostate movements that developed among the primitive Christian communities was that of the Judaizers, that is, Christians who tried to put the “Mosaic law” before the teachings of the grace of Christ Jesus. Such heretics asserted that it was “necessary to circumcise (the Gentile converts) and command them to keep the law of Moses” (Acts 15:5). When the apostle Paul uses the verb “judaize” he means precisely to observe and practice the physical and/or ritual aspects of the original law of the Old Covenant. That is why the *Exegetical Commentary* explains: “Judaizing means keeping the *ceremonial customs* of the Jews” (*14*) . In other words, Paul saw that they were again raising *the ritual barriers* of Leviticus, or the “works of the law.”

Among the Jewish Christians of the first century, the heretical movement of the *Ebionites* arose , a name derived from a Hebrew word that means *poor* , since that is how they designated themselves. It is very possible that they already existed as such in the time of the apostle Paul, since the epistle *to the Hebrews* could have been written so that the Judeo-Christians who were willing to listen to him would remain faithful in accepting Jesus Christ as the Savior and High Priest, in opposition to the group of Judaizing Christians who insisted on maintaining their connection with the Levitical priesthood and its rituals. Consequently, the Ebionites preached the strict observance of the “law of Moses” as necessary; and although they recognized the promised Messiah in Jesus, they denied his divine character, so that

they considered him only as a man, the son of Joseph and Mary. For them, the apostle Paul was an apostate; and later they will come to recognize as authentic the writings that today are called the New Testament; In its replacement they came to have a gospel very similar to that of Matthew. At the end of the 1st century they spread to Syria and only persisted until the 4th century.

Gnosticism developed . This name comes from the Greek word “gnosis”, which means the knowledge of hidden things; Therefore, it refers to a set of philosophical and theological systems that believe they have an intuitive, speculative and mysterious knowledge of divine things, not through faith and revelation.

“The Old Testament speaks of knowing God (Jeremiah 9:23-24), but it is not a knowing - speculation, but rather a deal with God that results from accepting by faith what He reveals about Himself. The New Testament also refers to a spiritual 'gnosis' or 'knowledge', but it is not an abstract philosophy. First of all it is something practical, a spiritual knowledge of God, based on his own revelations and acting on the experiences of Christians...The true Knowledge (gnosis) is subject to the authority of the Scriptures, and is a kind of faith developed and perfected. The false 'gnosis' was presumptuous and arrogant. I pretended to be intellectual and to be very above the reach of the common people. It was propagated not by logical proof, but by asserting its authority intuitive” (15) .

Gnosticism was the product of a religious syncretism characteristic of the Hellenistic world. It is clearly seen that he took his pronounced dualism from Eastern thought, which maintained the existence of a perpetual struggle between light and darkness. Gnosticism's disdain for the corporeal and the material recalls certain elements of Greek Platonism.

According to Gnosticism, Christianity was not capable of completely resolving on its own some problems and questions regarding the salvation of man. That is why they developed theological-philosophical systems where they mixed Christian beliefs with speculations coming from Greco-Roman philosophy (e.g., the contempt for the material and the corporeal), from Persian Zoroastrianism (e.g., the pronounced dualism that sustained the perpetual struggle between light and darkness) and Jewish tradition. From this arose the attempt of Gnosticism as a means to obtain a deeper and more rational knowledge of dogmatic truths and to make the doctrine of Jesus an esoteric cosmology, in which some basic ideas stand out: Dualism raises *the* opposition between the two principles: the Supreme Being (God, goodness) and matter (evil). Docetism attributes an apparent body to Jesus (Logos or Word), since if it comes from the Divinity, it cannot *be* united with matter. The *asceticism Physical* involves exhausting the body to achieve spiritual perfection; To this end, abstinence from the world or excessive sexual life had to be practiced. The *theory of the aeons* or emanations of the Supreme Being supports the idea that these are the intermediaries between God and the world; one of these eons rebelled, causing evil. The *theory of the Demiurge* raises the idea that the world was created by an aeon known as the active principle of the universe, who in the Old Testament would be Jehovah, promoter of the lordship of bad matter. Finally, according to Gnosticism, the *redemption of the human soul* consists of freeing the spirit from matter, which was achieved by Jesus and only through his doctrine. As a consequence, some considered that the sacrifice and death of Jesus was only an appearance, while others proposed that the man Jesus received the aeon-Christ at the time of baptism, but that he abandoned it immediately before the crucifixion, having accompanied during his preaching (16) .

These Gnostic ideas, so far removed from the teachings revealed in the Scriptures, came into opposition with the simple truth preached by Jesus and the apostles.

In reality there was not *a* Gnostic sect, but rather tendencies towards Gnosticism presided over by leaders who sometimes had few followers, and on other occasions many. Gnosticism was not so much a

movement as an apostate way of thinking regarding the New Testament writings. It did not have an organization that encompassed the entire movement, and its followers were not aware that they could form a unity. It is evident that it became a problem for the leaders of Christianity in the last years of the apostolic era, and was faced until the end of the third century, particularly by Catholic theologians (17) .

As there were many forms of Gnosticism within heretical Christianity, each was headed by a corresponding leader. It is believed that the first Gnostic linked to Christianity would have been the aforementioned Simon Magus. Towards the end of the first century, the apostle John would have had a confrontation with another famous Gnostic-Judaizing heretic, Cerinthus , if the testimony of Irenaeus from the 2nd century AD is to be believed. He proclaimed himself a teacher and taught that the world had not been made. by the Supreme God, but by the Demiurge, who was different from the Supreme God, inferior to Him and was unaware of His existence. He maintained that Jesus had not been born of a virgin, but was truly the son of Joseph and Mary, although he had distinguished himself among all men for his virtue, knowledge and wisdom. At his baptism, Christ in the form of a dove descended upon him from God. In the end, the Christ left Jesus, otherwise he could not have died. Cerinthus also taught that redemption could not be effected through the sufferings of Jesus. Likewise, he considered that the Mosaic law was obligatory in its entirety for Christians.

The Bible does not name Cerinthus , but the concerns expressed by John in his gospel and epistles undoubtedly refer to the teachings and influence of that heretical character, as when he reveals the true divine nature of Jesus or denounces the existence of false Christian teachers (John 11-3, 1st John 1:1-2, 2nd John 7).

Nicolaitans , or followers of a certain Nicholas (95 AD) does appear in John's writings . How corrupt their doctrine and conduct must have been, as may be seen from the revealed words, "which I also hate," and from the fact that the Lord particularly praises the church of Ephesus for having hated the acts. of the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:6). However, in the congregation at Pergamos there were some who held their doctrine and they were urged to turn and repent (Revelation 2:15-16). Apart from what is written in the last biblical book about the Nicholas sect, nothing else is known.

According to Townsend, while the apostle John lived, such heretics (Ebionites and Gnostics):
“were very discouraging, and those who embraced their feelings were always considered clearly different from the Christian Church. But without a doubt, they called themselves *Christians* , and This is what all heretics do, for obvious reasons; and for the same reasons, all those who offer the fundamental principles of the Gospel, should not have the right of appeal” (18) .

It is necessary to emphasize that those heretical movements did not have the widespread reach to have completely affected the Christian ecumene . They were only focused tendencies that both true Christians and those who were already innovating under another theology rejected. The latter are the ones that will cause the true and widespread apostasy within the sub-apostolic Christian Church since the end of the 1st century, whose validity has lasted to the present.

The half century of darkness over the early Church

Today it is assumed that Christianity as we know it differs little or nothing from the Christianity of the first century, that *Christians* of the present era profess the same beliefs, teachings and customs of Jesus and the apostles. However, the Bible says that not all who accept the name of Christ are true Christians. The New Testament reveals that there would be two spiritual paths or “Christian” religions, but they

were clearly opposite. One, the Church that Jesus Christ established, would remain faithful to the teachings of the prophets and apostles (Ephesians 2:19-22). The other, guided and influenced by another spirit, would accept the name of Christ but distorting his teachings and creating a persuasive counterfeit of the Church of God.

But when did the false Church begin to take shape ? At what point did pseudo-Christianity begin to take shape from the confluence of radical changes in doctrine and practice ? Remember that even before the death of the apostles many congregations began to deviate from what they had received from them; and the New Testament writers urged the churches to reject the false doctrines that had begun to circulate (see Jude 3, Galatians 1:6, Romans 16:7, Titus 1:14). It has also been seen that at the end of the first century, John, the only apostle still alive, lamented the spiritual state of one of the Church's congregations (3 John 9-10).

If these were some of the adverse conditions and bad influences that came upon Christianity while some of the apostles were still present, even more so in the second century there were many conflicting doctrines, teachings, practices and divergent opinions.

In general, the ecclesiastical history of the early Church narrated by Catholic, Protestant and other historians is very incomplete and distorted with respect to the so-called *subapostolic period* . Likewise, normally, to mislead researchers, most commentators of that stage mention that the developed apostasy only refers to the Judaizing and Gnostic movements. It is true that both groups of renegade “Christians” emerged in apostolic times, but in reality they were not a great threat to the Church, because they did not transcend at that time (Only the Gnostics later became a major problem). But before that time (70 AD), what truly threatened the Church of God was a system much closer to true Christianity, since Gnosticism was easy to identify. This other, however, was cunningly disguised to deceive many Christians . **It consisted of a movement developed within Christianity but outside it; He took advantage of his Gospel but manipulated and distorted it ;** It did not constitute a heresy, but a great apostasy. As the apostle John said: “ *They came out from us, but they were not of us* ” (1 John 2:19).

Objective ecclesiastical historians recognize that there is an “almost total mysterious gap” of information from the early Church after the death of the apostles Paul and Peter, that is, except for the epistolary manifestation of Judas and John, from the year 70 AD they are very scarce background and around the presence of the true Church. It can be deduced that from approximately that year onwards, the preaching of the authentic Gospel began to gradually be suspended and the historical traces of original Christianity were lost. Neutral historians precisely recognize that in the period from the fall of Jerusalem until almost the middle of the second century AD there are some events in the early Church that are only blurred, as if they were hidden behind a thick fog. Although not all researchers agree exactly on the temporal location and duration of that stage or “gap”, it can be approximately determined that it occurred between the years 70 and 140 AD. Here are some testimonies that corroborate this state of affairs:

“The little and suspicious information that exists about the history of the Church almost never allows us to dis-clear the dark cloud that hangs over the first age of the Church” (*19*) .

“The 30 years that followed the destruction of Jerusalem and the closing of the New Testament canon They are certainly the darkest in the history of the Church. When we emerge into the second century, we find - sections largely in a changed world” (*20*) .

“During this period of transition, which follows immediately after the era properly called a-postolic , there is a great darkness” (*21*) .

“The remaining 30 years of the first century are shrouded in a mysterious darkness, illuminated only mind by the writings of John. It is a period in sacred history about which we know the least and that we would like to know more” (22) .

“After Luke and the other biblical writers, for a time in the Church there is only silence. Seems as if Christianity were inside a tunnel, still active, but hidden” (23) .

“ We call the last generation of the first century (from 68 to 100 AD) the 'Age of Shadows.' partly because of the dark clouds of persecution that hung over the Church, but mainly because it is the historical period about which we know the least. We no longer have the guide you provided us - The clear light of the book *of Acts was born* and there was no author of that time who filled that void in history . toria . We would like to read the continuation of the book *of Acts* written by companions of... Paul as Timothy, Apollos and Titus, but neither of these nor of the other friends is mentioned after the death of the apostle. For 50 years after the life of... Paul the curtain falls on the Church, curtain across the which we try in vain to look at; and when it finally rises, around the year 120 AD, with the writings of the (called) first fathers of the (Catholic) Church, we find a Church in many aspects *very different*. ferent of that which existed in the time of... Peter and... Paul” (24) .

In fact, if you look carefully through the darkness, you begin to glimpse what was happening in Christianity from the period 70-140 AD, and the little that is known about it allows us to determine the roots or origins of apostate Christianity or modern Christianity. , that Christianity that has predominated for almost two thousand years and predominates in the present world, which is the result of the great apostasy developed at that time and subsequently deepened with contact with the pagan world. The first form of false Christianity was the *Catholic system* , which arose precisely in that age of darkness that overtook the early Church.

Origin of the Roman Catholic system

In previous pages it has been pointed out that authentic Christianity, that of the apostolic years, was not and cannot be considered a new religion in the strict sense, but from the beginning it was seen as a Jewish branch by both Jews and Gentiles. Furthermore, the only major difference between Judaism itself and Christianity is that it is a form of Judaism under faith in Jesus Christ, therefore heir and observant of *the spiritual goods of* natural Israel. However, as has also been stated, such a Judaic characteristic of original Christianity was gradually diluted with the passage of time under the apostate inspiration that finally led to the emergence of the Catholic Church at the end of the first century or the first years of the following century. Therefore, it is not possible to conceive that it was established or instituted after apostate Christianity was related to the emperor Constantine the Great, in the first half of the 4th century.

Below are the causes of the emergence of Catholicism:

1. Paul's teachings regarding the Law were distorted

The controversy over God's law began to arise in the Church when the first Gentiles were converted, that is, those who were neither Jews nor proselytes of Judaism. Some Jewish believers wanted to force

these people to be circumcised and submit to other physical-ritual practices; They insisted that Gentile converts had to be circumcised in order to access salvation.

In this context, Paul must have referred several times to the issue related to the law of the Old Covenant and the state regarding its validity. Thus, he wrote phrases that confused many early Christians or led them into misunderstanding. On the one hand he pointed out: “For the hearers of the law are not righteous with God, but the doers of the law will be justified”; “Is the law a sin? In no way... So the law is truly holy, the commandment holy and just, good”; “We know that the law is spiritual... So I myself serve the law of God with my mind...” (Romans 2:13, 7:7,12,14,25). And on the other hand he wrote: “Will we sin, Because we are not under the law, but under grace? “For the end of the law is Christ” (Romans 6:15,10:4); “Man is not justified by the works of the law”; “You are empty of Christ who are justified by the law; you have fallen from grace” (Galatians 2:16; 3:11,13; 5:4).

How to understand these opposite phrases? Either Paul was contradicting himself, or he was using the word *law* in different senses. It should be remembered that according to experts the word *law* cannot be used indiscriminately in Paul's writings; We must look at the context to determine how Paul used the term *law* . In this regard, GE Ladd declares:

“Most scholars of Paul emphasize that he does not explicitly distinguish between the *ethical* and *ceremonial* aspects of the law. This is true, but *the implicit distinction is inevitable* and de- be taken into account. Although circumcision was a commandment of God and part of the law, Pa - blo makes a separation between circumcision and God's commandments when he says: 'Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God' (1 Corinthians 7:19). Al ha - To do so , he separated the ethical from the ceremonial, the permanent from the temporary” (25) .

However, Paul was already distorted in his time. In the year 68 AD the apostle Peter wrote an epistle to the Jewish and Gentile Christians of Asia Minor in which he emphasized denouncing the false teachers who were in the Congregation. He recognized that in the epistles of the apostle Paul there were things that were difficult to understand, and for this reason they were being subject to distortion and incorrect interpretations. Textually, he said: “...which the unlearned and unstable twist,... to their destruction” (2nd Peter 3: 15-16). Obviously, false teachers took advantage of some of Paul's expressions about grace, faith and law to "twist" them and try to convince others that the *entire* law of the Old Covenant had been abolished by the death of Christ, since He would have fulfilled the law “ for us ”.

Of course, the apostles rejected both the Judaizers and those who invalidated the validity of the law. They rejected the demands of the former and noted that Moses had taught that what interested God was circumcision of the heart and sacrifices of the lips (Deuteronomy 30:6, Romans 2:29, Colossians 2:11-12). They also preached that it was no longer necessary to offer rituals and animal sacrifices (Acts 15:5-11, Hebrews 9:1-15), because they were part of a cult that consisted “only of meats and drinks, and various washings, and ordinance concerning the flesh, imposed until the time of correction” (Hebrews 9:10). But the apostles never considered God's spiritual laws, summarized in the Decalogue, to be in the category of “works of the flesh” or “ordinances concerning the flesh.” They always taught the need to obey God's commandments. Paul said it clearly: “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but *keeping the commandments of God* .” Furthermore, in another of his epistles he said: “Do we then make void the law through faith? In no way, but *we confirm the law* ” (Romans 3:31).

Just as Jesus had prophesied, unscrupulous individuals twisted the teachings of Paul and the other apostles by distorting their real meaning (2 Peter 3:15-16). By distorting these teachings, first about grace and then about “ordinances about the flesh” that were no longer necessary, they found a way to excuse their wicked behavior, as Jude denounces in his epistle written no later than the year 80. AD In

this way, a strong Judaizing spirit of some Christians moved towards a powerful anti-legalism or opposition to keeping the current laws of the Word of God. Consequently, the twisting of apostolic teachings - particularly those of Paul - will generate a “Christian” doctrine without the original law of God.

2. The change in ethnic composition of the early Church separated it from the roots of the judaic christianity

At first the apostolic Church of God was made up only of Jews, but from the year 34 AD the gradual incorporation of Gentiles took place. The zeal and spiritual hardness of the rest of the natural Jews - in accordance with prophecy (Isaiah 6:9-10, Matthew 13:10-15) - left the vast majority of the people of Israel on the margins of Christianity, which is why The apostles concentrated on evangelistic preaching among non-Jews, as the Scripture says: “Then Paul and Barnabas, using their liberty, said: 'It was necessary for you (Israelites) to be told the word of God; But since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, *we return to the Gentiles*’” (Acts 13:46).

This fact, perhaps, marks the beginning of the decline in the conversion of Jews to Christianity, but, conversely, it was the starting point of the majority entry of Gentiles into the Church. An essential aspect must be considered regarding their origin: They come from different nations although they have Greek culture in common; They have been pagans, which implies that they practiced polytheism, idolatry, superstitions and had various customs and beliefs at odds with the revealed truth. But his conversion implied the abandonment of such religious practices and convictions and assuming the Gospel of Christ, thereby meaning living under Jewish conditions, that is, seeking holiness through obedience to the law of God, observing the festivals of worship of the true God. and abstain from eating unclean things. That was the reality, at least, of the years in which the apostles lived.

However, that first Jewish-Gentile generation of the early Church was replaced by an essentially Gentile generation, that is, after the death of the apostles Paul and Peter, it is observed that Christians with a non-Jewish past have numerically surpassed the Jews. Christians. And this is a generation no longer so fervent in terms of observing those things linked to Judaism revealed by God, which generated conflicts between Christians faithful to apostolic teachings (including Judeo-Christians) and the numerous Gentiles without roots or disconnected from the Jewish people. This fact was confirmed by Samuel Bacchiocchi in his research, maintaining that:

“Many times this caused conflicts between Jewish Christians and their more numerous Gen- helpful on matters such as the law...salvation through obedience to the law and respect for others.

holy days, and restrictions of (the) diet... Discussions on such matters, as these, gave a cause probable for the early break between Gentile converts and the Judeo-Christians...” (26) .

In fact, at the end of the 1st century AD it can be seen that two options coexisted in the early Church: Christians faithful to Judaism renewed with Christ and Gentile Christians detached from the original faith. Both communities lived under faith in Jesus Christ, but while some believe in the validity of the divine and spiritual precepts given before the coming of the Messiah, the others - the vast majority - are convinced that Jesus abolished all "the old law", because Jesus would have fulfilled them.

Consequently, an important cause of the departure of most early Christianity from its Jewish roots was the change in the ethnic composition of the Church that took place profusely in the second half of the first century.

3. The revolts in Judea promoted the distancing of Jewish traits of original Christianity

As has been noted, the nascent Church was presented as the consummation of Judaism, its most pristine heritage, its legitimate continuation. Christianity emerged from Judaism; Jesus was Jewish; Its leaders were Jews, like its first followers and its cult. In principle this could have been a reason for brotherhood and, in fact, the first Christians - whether they were natural Jews or converted Gentiles - were considered members of the "Israel of God" (Galatians 6: 16), and - except for the violent Jewish zeal of the early years of the Church - it cannot be said that there was such serious antagonism between the two communities while the Jewish State existed.

However, the events of 70 to 135 AD in Judea resulted in a complete dispersion of the Jewish people throughout the Roman world and progressively broke the bond that united Christianity in general with the mother Church of Jerusalem; and even more so, starting in the year 70, a great theological-doctrinal gap began to emerge between Judaism and Christianity, with a tendency towards apostasy. The political-war conflict between Jews and Romans, or between Jewish nationalism and Roman imperialism, directly affected the development of sub-apostolic Christianity that finally gave rise to Catholicism.

What was that process like? The Jewish revolt between 66 and 70 AD to free themselves from Rome angered Rome, and its legions under the command of General Titus completely defeated the Jews and completed the ruin of Jerusalem and its Temple. It was the fulfillment of divine prophecies (Daniel 9:26, Matthew 24:15-20, Luke 21:20-21). The Sanhedrin and the priestly office were abolished; Worshiping at the Temple site (which had already been destroyed) was prohibited. "The fall of Jerusalem was cited as proof that God hated the Jews " (27) . From the year 100 AD the Jews were attacked with even greater force because it was claimed that they subverted the lower classes and introduced new and destructive ideas, an accusation that would be repeated in the course of time. So there were constant disorders in the cities of the Diaspora, especially during the years 115-117. Meanwhile, conflict between Old Covenant Jews and Judeo-Christians persists in Judea.

"After AD 70 the Jews became hostile to their fellow believers in Jesus.

They began to throw them out of their synagogues" (28) .

Indeed, the true Christians living in Judea were Jews who continued to observe the laws of God that many Gentile converts had begun to abandon, such as those relating to the Sabbath and the other festivals. And those Judeo-Christians continued to attend synagogues. This observance is confirmed by the so-called "Curse of the Christians" (in Hebrew, *Birkath -ha- Minim*), a prayer against "heretics" introduced into synagogue prayers by the rabbinic authorities of Judea around 80-90 AD to prevent clandestine Christians from participating in Jewish services. The fact that Judean Christians continued to participate in synagogue worship has great significance:

"because it proves that the authentic Christians and the Jews had the same theology, only that the Christians believed that the Messiah had come in the person of Jesus, but the Jews were still

waiting for the Messiah to come; Therefore, their religion was the same: the same Sabbath, the same

"We have holy days , God himself, etc." (29) .

A second Jewish revolt occurred between 132 and 135 AD, which brought greater Roman hostility against anything Jewish and the radical dissociation between Judaism and Christianity with a tendency

towards apostasy. In fact, by the time of the uprising of 132, predominantly Gentile Christianity and the Jews were seen as open antagonists, and even enemies:

“Certainly, the Christian communities of (Judea) requested the Roman authorities to con- they gave up a religious status separate from that which corresponded to the Jews; and the Christian (Catholic) writer

Justin Martyr (100-165 AD), who lived in Neapolis (Nablus), reported that Simon's supporters bar Kochba massacred the Christian communities as well as the Greek ones. In this period the controversy - anti-Christian ca is beginning to appear in Jewish biblical commentaries” (30) .

The Roman emperor Hadrian finished crushing that Jewish uprising led by Simon bar Kochba (Kocheba) (31) . Jerusalem became a Roman colony and was renamed Aelia Capitolina. Jews (including Judeo-Christians) were expelled from the country, and prohibited from entering Jerusalem, under penalty of death. Hadrian promulgated a series of provisions prohibiting the practice of Judaism, and in particular the observance of the Sabbath throughout the empire. In addition , the Jews were forced to pay taxes that other races were exempt from paying. This discriminatory practice became a general Judeophobic viewpoint that made everything related to Jews and Judaism not very popular or profitable. In fact, Christians were directly harmed by this situation:

“Christians were understood by the Roman Treasury as this class of people. But like many of They would refuse to be confused with the Hebrews, and therefore to pay such tributes, Domitian, who fa-

Easily carried away by his misgivings, he ordered the destruction of what *he considered an* impious *Jewish sect.*

and rebellious to his commands. Therefore, the condemnations of Christians were resumed (around the year 95 AD)” (32) .

This same fact came to drive another consequence such as the total and definitive separation of Judaism and apostate Christianity, the latter already underway. The false Christians did not wish to be identified with the Jews, and not only did they stop observing divine commandments that they described as “Jewish practices,” but they also began to refer to the Sabbath and other biblical festivals as ridiculous Jewish institutions, thus preparing to give up. It passed to other days that emerged from tradition and took its place. Hiley H. Ward, for example, maintains that Sunday did not arise in “approximation” to the Sabbath , but “in opposition to it,” in the period from the first to the second Jewish anti-Roman war (AD 70-135). For him, one of the factors that favored the move from Sabbath worship to the first day of the week was “convenience,” that is, the practical need that wavering Christians felt to dissociate themselves from the Jews at a time when Rome had adopted repressive measures against them because of their continuous uprisings (33) . This anti-Jewish repression favored the emergence of a genre of “Christian” literature *against the Jews* (“ adversus "Judaeans ") and proto-Catholic theologians Judeophobics , which recorded the separation and condemnation of Judaism. Meanwhile, as Johnson says in his *History of the Jews* , the main current of Christianity of that time - Judeo-Christian - began to wane and barely survived as an inferior sect, which in time was declared heretical. (3. 4) . However, from this Christian-Jewish current arise all the Christian communities that preserved the true apostolic Gospel throughout the centuries, until the present.

4. The apostate church of Rome led the changing and anti-Jewish doctrine

At the end of the 1st century AD, Christianity was widespread in almost the entire Roman ecumene, in such a way that Christian nuclei could be found in all the cities around the Mediterranean Sea. This, without a doubt, made it more difficult for John, the only apostle still alive, and the ministers who followed his teachings, to supervise all the congregations. Doctrinal innovations had practically divided the Christian Church into two regions with theological divergences: one corresponding to the congregations of the East, particularly those of Asia Minor, which preserved the practices and beliefs of the apostolic-primitive Church; and the other region was the western one, based in Rome, where the bishop (later to be called "Pope") was gaining influence and power. From there a different Christian doctrine was already radiating that will give rise to the largest apostate sect that predominates in Christianity today.

And how did the congregation in Rome come to have preeminence and influence? It must be remembered that in first generation Christianity, the Jerusalem church held a position of great authority. But the course of events described above soon changed that direction. The Jerusalem congregation with all its ministers had fled to Pella in AD 68 to escape the predicted catastrophe over the city. That meant that that church had to function in exile; but gradually ceased to exercise significant authority and influence throughout Christianity: this void was eventually filled by the apostate church of Rome. The factors that favored this fact seem to be, according to the available background, as follows: Rome was the capital of the empire and the center of the Greco-Roman world, and many Christians understood that the Roman congregation should naturally be the empress of the universal Church. Furthermore, the largest community of Christians in the entire known world lived in Rome. And the apostles Paul and Peter had ended their ministry and their lives in that city.

Although it cannot be verified or substantiated that in the course of the sub-apostolic era the bishop of Rome already had primacy over the rest of Christendom, at least there is evidence that demonstrates that some Christians considered that minister to be a prominent figure within the Church. end of the 1st century and first decades of the following century. For example, Clement (Roman bishop between 88 and 97 AD) intervened in the conflict that arose within the congregation of Corinth (Greece) following the expulsion of its bishop by a group of believers, a minister who turned to his equal. Rome on appeal, so Clement used his ministerial powers and reinstated him in the episcopal office. Likewise, Clement left an epistle to the Corinthians that was read publicly in churches some years later.

Undoubtedly, the primacy of Rome in Christendom gained ground as the tradition strengthened that the apostle Peter had been the first bishop of Rome, and that his authority had passed to his successors, the first of whom would have been directly designated and that according to the list given by Irenaeus (at the end of the second century) would be that disciple mentioned by Paul as Lino (2 Timothy 4:21). But these interested speculations correspond only to traditions without apostolic or historical basis.

However, the reality is that already at the beginning of the subapostolic era the congregation of Rome was in a position to impose doctrinal changes on the other churches of the nascent apostate Christianity. In fact, at the beginning of the second century, that church showed two very clear tendencies: The first, that of advising; and not only that, but to give guidelines to other churches. And the second, to promote an *anti-Jewish position* and *the eradication of Jewish "things"* that were part of the beliefs and practices that Christianity still preserved, particularly in the east of the Roman Empire. In this regard, Brimsmead states:

"It did not take long for (Rome) to begin issuing decrees in which Christians had to fast.

and on what days of the year and Christian calendars the acts of redemption carried out should be celebrated. out for Christ" (36).

The Roman hostility towards the Jews in the period 70-135 AD, as has been seen, distanced apostate Christianity from Judaism and Judaic practices so as not to be confused with the Israelite people. These circumstances, in addition to the problems already existing between Jews and Christians, favored the appearance of anti-Jewish “Christian” literature and the development of a theology of rejection and contempt for everything Hebrew. One of the practical consequences of this situation was the elimination of the biblical festivals inherited from Israel and their systematic replacement by others, such as the Passover and the weekly Sabbath. In this regard, it is concluded that all discrimination against Jews was directed at a Judeophobic idea within the church of Rome. This anti-Jewish view became the impetus for apostate Christianity to abandon Israel's inherited spiritual goods, such as God's law and the festivals of worship.

The proto-Catholic authors and writings that mark the beginning of the false Church

After the so-called “dark years” of the late 1st century and early 2nd century AD, where little or nothing is known about the collaborators of the apostles such as Timothy, Philemon, Barnabas, Apollo, Titus and many others, of whom we speak abundantly in the New Testament, there arise some characters whom Christianity has called “apostolic fathers”, since they supposedly would have known some of the apostles and/or authors of the New Testament writings in life and would have been taught directly by them. Hurlbut, ecclesiastical historian, refers to this period :

“We call the last generation of the first century, from 68 to 100 AD, the 'dark age,' in part because that the darkness of persecution was upon the Church; but with specialty, because of all the sins throughout history, it is the one we know the least about. We no longer have the clear light of the book of *Acts* to

to guide us; and no author of this era has filled the gap in history. We would like to read about the further work of Paul's helpers, such as Timothy, Apollos, and Titus, but of all of these and the other friends of... Pablo, upon his death, are left out of the record. After the death of... Pablo, and for fifty years, a curtain hangs over the Church through which we strive in vain .

we look to look; and when it finally rises approximately in the year 120 AD, with the records of the early fathers of the Church, we find a Church very different in many aspects from that of the days of...Peter and...Paul.

“The loss of apostolic authority made an election of new leaders necessary. The great founders of the Church, Peter and Paul, James, the brother of the Lord, and John, the last of the apostles, had died without leaving men of their own ability to succeed them. After the death of...Peter and...Paul, and for fifty or sixty years, the history of the Church is in white. What such men as Timothy, Titus, and Apollos did we do not know; but a generation later new names appear as bishops with authority over different dioceses” (37) .

For their part, Dugger and Dodd refer to this same fact in the following terms:

“The first century ended with the death of the last of the apostles and writers of the New Testament, the apostle John . As soon as the apostles and disciples, who were with Jesus, slept, a new - “An order of different kinds of writers arose and began to write religious epistles” (38) .

In fact, and as has been argued, in various works of ecclesiastical history - of Catholic, Orthodox and/or Protestant origin - mention is made of such writers from that period that must also be called " proto-Catholic ." (39) . Christianity interprets the existence of such characters in the following way: “Everywhere, the apostles and disciples of the first hour transmitted to others what they had

they had received , thus giving rise to the living Tradition of the Church. The first links of this long chain dena that reaches our days are the apostles; From them hang, as immediate links, the pa - writers and writers of the late 1st century and first half of the 2nd century, usually referred to as *apostolics* for having personally known those first” (40) .

To those supposed "apostolic fathers", such as Aristides of Athens, Justin Martyr, Tatian and Irenaeus of Lyon, we must add several proto-Catholic works of a theological nature, such as the *Didache* , the *Epistle of Barnabas* , *The Shepherd of Hermas* , *Second Clement* and the *Epistle to Diognetus* . It is necessary to point out some references to such writings and works to later understand the allusions that will be made about them:

The *Didache* or *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles* is the oldest proto-Catholic writing , although there is no total agreement regarding the date of its writing. It is dated between the end of the 1st century (perhaps around 90 AD) and the beginning of the following century, and its origin is possibly Syrian. Of her, Halley writes:

“It was written from 80 to 120 AD, and probably around the year 100. It is not a genuine work of the apos - toles, but a statement, by some unknown author, of what *he understood to be the teachings of e - them* ...The primitive writers denied their canonicity” (41) .

The *Epistle of Barnabas* , perhaps written between 130 AD and 135 AD, according to Samuele Bacchiocchi (44) . It was formerly attributed to the companion of the apostle Paul, but Moliné states that:

“It is certainly not his, and it is not properly a letter but a theological treatise. Nothing is known about his author, but Alexandria is thought of as his place of origin or training” (45) .

The Shepherd of Hermas , written around 100 or 140 AD, is attributed to a convert named Hermas. According to Halley, that “the author was the same Hermas who mentions Romans 16:14 is mere supposition” (47) .

The *Second Epistle of Clement* , addressed to the converts of Corinth, was written between 120 and 140 AD, is actually a sermon or homily, and was not the work of the Roman bishop Clement (48) .

The *Epistle to Diognetus* , written in Athens around 130-150 AD, also belongs to that subapostolic era . This is an exhibition addressed to a certain Diognetus .

Justin Martyr, proto-Catholic theologian who lived between 100 and 167 AD He was a Greek philosopher who after his conversion became an apologist or defender of the Christianity that he received. In fact, he wrote two *Apologies* addressed to Emperor Antoninus Pius and the Roman Senate around the year 150. He also wrote *Dialogue with Trypho* , a discussion with a Jew about the messianism of Jesus.

Also included within that context and that list of subapostolic writers are Papias , bishop of Hierapolis (Phrygia), and Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, both from the first half of the 2nd century. But their situation is different, since they belong to the doctrinal orthodoxy inherited from the apostles, since they were direct disciples of John and, therefore, faithful observers and disseminators of what they learned from their teacher. Papias and Polycarp are included within the line of the true Church of God .

aforementioned proto-Catholic writings are considered sub-apostolic because they were supposedly the link that would unite the apostles with the subsequent history of the Church, that is, they would have not only chronological but also spiritual closeness with the New Testament texts; Therefore, they would represent an authentic and immediate picture of the life, feelings and ideas that would have circulated among the first Christian communities. The works of those specific and anonymous figures even came

to be held in such high esteem that in some places and for some time they were considered part of the Scriptures.

In truth, it must be recognized that many of the passages in the works and writings of the aforementioned authors possess great spiritual beauty and profound evangelical content, but they constitute authentic links that lead towards Catholic apostasy. In them, for example, the apostolic inspiration in other themes is not fully perceived, such as those that mark the distinctive seal of the true Gospel. For example, there is no positive or systematic allusion to the Ten Commandments, the observance of the Sabbath, the millennial kingdom, the role of Israel in the plan of salvation, etc. On the contrary, reading it raises questions like these: How is it possible that in a few decades the language and content of Christian doctrine has changed in such a way that a somewhat unrecognizable Gospel appears? How did the teaching given by the apostle Paul to ministers indoctrinated by himself, such as Titus and Timothy, change so much? How in 30, 40 or 50 years did the vision regarding the Jewish people, the validity of the moral law, the festivals of worship of God, among other related topics, radically change in a sector of Christianity? How could so many differences have arisen between what the apostles preached about the law, grace, baptism and other evangelical elements, and what the *Didache*, Ignatius of Antioch, the *Epistle to Diognetus* and Justin Martyr spread? How was it possible that those who are said to have personally known the apostles or who were their disciples have had and spread a Gospel so different from the original? Marshall has summarized this situation with respect to proto-Catholic writings :

“When one dedicates himself to reading the (sub-apostolic) scriptures... he will begin to notice several things:

“The emphasis that Jesus is the Savior and the importance of believing in Him; those who believe are saved; to what -

Those who don't are condemned...

“The lack of any instruction regarding the observance of the Sabbath and holy days, of keeping the law ...

“The condemnation of those who keep the law and the Judaizers

“That the commandments of God and Christ are fulfilled through actions of love, such as helping the poor -

men (widows and orphans); wives showing love towards their husbands and educating themselves in their marriage -

demons, ending dispute and conflict in the body; the believer subjecting himself to the Church; abstaining-protect yourself from all forms of evil.

“The weekly Sunday worship by the authority of the resurrection of the Lord.

“Man has an immortal soul.

“The (dead) believers...go to heaven” (49) .

The above text reveals a changing theology in early Christianity that only recognizes part of the Gospel and discards the marks that distinguish the Church of God. Next, the transition towards a different, apostate Christianity will be verified with greater historical-doctrinal specifications:

- While the Word of God says that “the soul that sins will die” (Ezekiel 18: 4), that when physical death occurs “the dust returns to the earth, as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.”, because “those who live know that they must die, but the dead know nothing...because their memory is forgotten” (Ecclesiastes 12:7, 9:5); and “no one ascended into heaven, but he who came down from heaven, the Son of man” (John 3:13), the writings of the “apostolic fathers” affirm and teach that men have an immortal soul and the righteous die. They go to heaven immediately, as Marshall sums it up:

- The Scriptures teach that the Old Covenant Passover or “Jewish Passover ” was replaced by the Lord’s Supper or the Lord’s Supper (Exodus 12:1-27, Luke 22:1,13-20), therefore the latter It must also be celebrated once a year, “in its time” as the commandment says: “Therefore to , you will keep this rite (the Passover or Holy Supper) in its season from year to year” (Exodus 13:10),

“for our Passover , which is Christ, was sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8); and the apostle Paul kept the Passover and Unleavened bread annually. Meanwhile , the “apostolic fathers” and Literature proto-Catholics point out that the “Eucharist” (from the Greek, *thanksgiving*), is equivalent -

encourages the Holy Supper or Communion to be celebrated as many times as necessary to remember the death of the Lord: Here is the evidence:

“But allow the prophets (teachers) to offer thanksgiving *as much as they wish* ” (51) .
 “Make every effort to gather together *more frequently* to celebrate the Eucharist of God and glorify Him” (52) .

- The teaching and practice of Jesus and the apostles regarding baptism is that it should be by immersion, in running water, in which the baptizer publicly expresses his faith in the redemption of his sins, which will be figuratively taken to the bottom of the sea (Micah 7:19). However, the *Didache* opens the possibility of another type of “baptism”, promoting only sprinkling. Textually it teaches: “Concerning baptism... you will be baptized... in living (running) water.” But if you do not have running water, then be baptized in other water; and if you can't do it in cold water, then do it in hot water. But if you have neither one nor the other, then *pour water on the head* three times” (53) .
- The Scriptures say that “God blessed the seventh day (Saturday) and sanctified it, because in it he rested from all his work” (Genesis 2:3); that “if you withdraw your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your will on my holy day, and call the Sabbath pleasant, holy, glorious of the Lord;...then you will delight yourself in the Lord; and I will make you ascend upon the heights of the earth...” (Isaiah 58:13-14); Jesus claimed that He was “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27-28), and Paul confirmed that “there remains a rest (or Sabbath) for the people of God,” but proto-Catholic authors “during the second century (Justin Martyr) , and anonymous literature, such as the *Epistle of Barnabas*) wrote against Sabbath observance. The writings of these men cover the period from AD 98 to AD 160. They gave a variety of arguments against Sabbath observance” (54) .
- One of those writers wrote against Sabbath observance and in favor of Sunday : “ Those who lived according to the old order of things have passed on to the new hope, *no longer observing the Sabbath* , but the Lord's day (Sunday) in which our life is blessed by Him and by His death” (55) .
- While the Scriptures reveal that the people of Israel or the Jews constitute the blessing for humanity (Genesis 12:1-3), since they are the descendants of Abraham according to the promise and from them comes salvation (John 4: 22), from whom the Gentile Church has inherited citizenship and its spiritual goods (Romans 9:4, 15:25-27; Ephesians 2:12-13) and who will achieve great blessings in the future (Romans 11:11-12,25- 28; Hebrews 8: 8-12), the nascent Catholicism was born Judeophobic or contrary to the Jewish people and everything related to it, as proven by the following testimony from those who

have investigated the topic: “Anti-Semitism acquired a mystical character with the advent of (Catholic) Christianity, claims Carmichael . Images of Jews as inhuman, evil and satanic were spread by the early (‘ sub-apostolic ’) fathers of the (Catholic) Church” (57) .

- In a lecture given by Klaus Wengst , he argued that Catholic Christianity would have a birth defect: “being anti-Jewish. And this is how it behaved in practice for centuries.” For this he gives some objective reasons:
 “In non-testamentary writings, from the first third of the second century, it can be clearly seen how A separate Christian (proto-Catholic) identity emerges through the formation of specific rites that contrast with the exclusive rites of Judaism.
 “Fasting. The oldest rule of the (Catholic) Church, which preserves the *Didache* or *Teaching of the Apostles* , stipulates in 8 :1 that fasting should not be practiced on the same days on which hypocrites fast .
 tas. 'Do not fast with the hypocrites, who fast on the second and fifth day of the week. TO-yunad the fourth and that of preparation which is the sixth.' Monday and Thursday are the Jewish fasts. If they say that one should not fast together with 'the hypocrites' on those days, they are calling the hypocrites hypocrites.
 Jews as a group...
 “ The Sunday celebration ...occurs in the *Epistle to Barnabas* (15:8).
 “Each of these points may seem of little weight, but taken together, they show that they produce actions aimed at differentiating themselves from Jewish identity ” (58) .
- There were also heretics who emerged from Catholicism who promoted a Judeophobic position , as is the case of Marcion (around 140 AD), of whom Baron writes: “Marcion of Pontus (Asia Minor), who had vast philosophical and theological training... His hatred against the Jews and Judaism drove him to the point of attempting to eliminate the Old Testament from Christian Scripture (to quote Irenaeus)(From Epiphanius, *Against the Heretics* ; xxxix , 9; from Irenaeus, *Against the Heretics* , I, 27, 2), 'shamelessly blaspheming against him, whom the law and the prophets proclaim God, saying that he is the author of evil and a lover of wars...'. The Jewish God, whom he calls ' Cosmocrator ' (*ruler of the world*),... was only a 'maker' of this imperfect world, full of infamy and corruption; Above him stood God, the Father of Christianity” (59) .
- According to Marcion's main doctrine, the *God of love* revealed by Jesus Christ is very different from the *God of law* revealed in the Old Testament. Christianity, according to him, is not the fulfillment of Judaism, but rather its replacement. He wanted to dispense with the Old Testament with the pretext that the New had made it obsolete. By rejecting the Creator God of the “Jewish” Old Testament, he also rejected Creation.
- In his *Dialogue against the Jews* (better known as *Dialogue against the Jew Trypho*), around 160 AD, Justin Martyr expresses a bitter attack against the Jews and Judaism, another anti-Jewish sign of the writers of the 2nd century AD and later, inaugurating the Catholic Judeophobia, along with the *Epistle to Barnabas* - “Finally, he tells them: 'I cannot stand your new moons and your Saturdays.' See how he says: 'Your Sabbaths are not acceptable to me'...” - and the *Epistle to Diognetus* -“ It is not necessary for me to inform you about their scruples (of the Jews) regarding food, their superstition regarding the Sabbath, their glory in circumcision and their pretense in matters of fasts and new moons: all "Those are ridiculous things and unworthy of consideration." The same anti-Jewish resentments emerge from the

Didascalia Apostolorum (from the 3rd century AD) which, by urging the Catholic faithful to fast on Easter Friday and Saturday “because of the disobedience of our brothers (the Jews)... because then the people *destroyed themselves* by crucifying our Savior” (60) .

The Scripture teaches that the Gentiles would also worship Jehovah God, for He said that “my house (Zion) will be called a house of prayer of all people” (Isaiah 56:6-7), and announced that: “I will call him who it wasn't me people (the Gentiles), my people” (Hosea 2:23, Romans 9:24-35); Jesus Christ, meanwhile, revealed that he had other sheep (the Gentiles) that are not of this fold (Israel) and that they will also hear his voice, and there will be one flock and a shepherd” (John 10: 16). For his part, Paul declared that the Gentiles have been made close and integral to the people of Israel by the blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:11-18) and that their conversion allows them to be grafted in Israel compared to a good olive whose root is Christ (Romans 11:16-24); That is, the conversion of the Gentiles makes them spiritual Jews and also children of Abraham (Romans 2:28-29, Galatians 3:28-29). However, early Catholic theologians spread “replacement theology,” that is, they conceived the idea that Christianity had been created to be separate or divorced from Israel, or that the Christian Church had been called to replace, or displace. or replace the people of Israel before God:

“In a passage from the *Letter of Barnabas* , we can perhaps see the motive behind this demarcation (of nascent Catholicism with respect to Judaism), when he states that he does not want Christians to appear as -
mo those that 'were added later'. Having been added later was evidently seen as a defect ...

I believe that we must accept with all modesty and enormous gratitude the role that the author of the *Letter of Barnabas* so emphatically rejected: being those who were added later. The Christians of the Church provide -
Gentiles can accept and confirm that they came to the one God , the God of Israel, as a-
those to whom Paul exhorted: 'Gentiles, rejoice together with his people!' (Romans 15:10)
(62) .

“In the middle of the first century AD, Justin Martyr became the first person to explicitly identify the Church as 'the true spiritual Israel ' (*Dialogue with Tryphon* 11). Robert L. Saucy observed that Justin represented 'a developing tendency in the church to appropriate the attributes and prerogatives previously belonged to historical Israel'... This would open the floodgates for others in the church to make declarations.

similar tions . Clement of Alexandria (c. 195) stated that Israel “denied the Lord” and thus “lost the place of the
the
true Israel' (*The Pedagogue*). Tertullian (c. 197) declared, 'Israel is divorced' (A Reply to the
Jews)” (63) .

And although this was never official doctrine of the Catholic Church, it became deeply rooted in Catholic sermons and theological works. This is how the aforementioned “replacement theology” is inaugurated, as confirmed by the following source:

“It is in (these texts)... where we can say that he does what has been called by many the e-
'replacement theology', that is, after the coming of Israel's Messiah, the Jewish people have rejected him.
ized , for which it has ceased to be 'God's people', and in its place, the Gentile Church has become the
'Israel of God'. This totally contradicts the teachings of the apostle Paul in chapters 9, 10 and 11
from the Epistle *to the Romans* , where it is taught that it is precisely because the people of God have rejected-
given to the Messiah for a certain time, that we Gentiles have been able to participate in the citizenship of Israel,
and
be grafted into the trunk of the olive tree that is the people of God” (65) .

Biblical Scripture reveals that “the law will go forth from Zion (Israel), and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2), that “the islands will wait for his (Messiah's) law”; and Jesus confirmed that he did not come to abolish that true and eternal law (Matthew 5:17, Psalm 119:142); Paul taught that God's law is spiritual, that it defines sin, and therefore is “holy” (Romans 7:7-14); James called it “the law of liberty” (James 2:10-12), and John finally confirmed that “every sin is a transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). However, early Catholic writers and theologians spread anti-legalism , which is equivalent to denying a vital part of the Gospel; Furthermore, this position explains why they have considered, for example, the original Ten Commandments to have been abolished by Christ and replaced by another “Decalogue.” In short , until now Christianity has a different concept regarding the law of God:

“With the spread of anti-Judaism in the (early) Church came a wave of *anti-legalism* , due in part to a misrepresentation of certain statements by Paul (1 Peter 3: 15-16). This made the (apostate) Church, especially in the West, was ready to put aside the weekly Sabbath and to neglect other teachings of Scripture. This lasted in the (early) Church as long as necessary. to do harm... Due to the pressure of anti-Judaism, the weekly Sabbath gradually lost its importance ... (And it was understood that) once the evangelical dispensation began, the celebration of these (solemn) celebrations no longer made sense” (66) .

And in the *Epistle to Diognetus* what was given by God through Moses is degraded, stating: “But, furthermore, his scruples regarding meats, and his superstition with reference to the Sabbath and the vanity of his circumcision and the dissimulation of his fasts and new moons, I believe that it is necessary that you learn through me, that these are ridiculous things and unworthy of any consideration” (67) .

Consequently, in the period between 70 and 140 AD, a changing theology developed that was apostate or distant from the Gospel of the Messiah Jesus. The original Church of God was oriented towards Israel and its spiritual goods, its identifying signs. The New Testament shows a community of believers in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. But, as time went by, their option - living together in non-Jewish conditions - meant that this did not continue. Jewish religious spiritual practices, worship and identification became less and less frequent in the daily life of Christianity in that period, and this new fact gave way to Christianity , the first form of which had to be called “Catholicism”. In this context, the “apostolic fathers” and anonymous literature emerged, such as the *Didache* , among other works. They were responsible for eliminating “ Jewish things” from the nascent Christianity and therefore the content of their writings - although they preserve part of the Gospel centered on Jesus - they deny or omit another essential part of the truth that sanctifies: the law of freedom, as He called her Santiago. In short, little is known about the development of the true Church from the period 70-140 AD, but it is certain that dissident religious teachers weakened the authority of God's law in their efforts to distort the teachings of the apostles, particularly Paul. .

When , how and why the apostate Church abolished the signs of the Christian people of God

The apostolic Church of God observed the law of worship expressed in the biblical feasts of Leviticus 23, that is, the first generations of Christians continued to obey the commandment that had originally been exclusively for the people of Israel. The Gentiles who began to be *grafted* into this town automatically inherited their spiritual goods through baptism and also kept the solemn feasts. In this regard, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* recognizes this reality:

“The first Christians continued to keep the Jewish holidays, although in a new spirit,

as a commemoration of events of which those festivals had been a figure” (68) .

However, as has been confirmed in the historical analyzes of previous pages, during the time of apostasy in the early Church, the observance of such festivals was gradually lost, either by abolishing them or changing their nature. For example, the Sabbath was changed to the first day of the week; and Easter and Pentecost were modified, the dates on which they should be celebrated and separated from the original meaning. The other festivities were completely abandoned by the vast majority of Christians.

Next, to delve deeper into the topic of the identification festivals of the people of God, the factors that explain more precisely the process described above from the end of the 1st century AD will be analyzed.

1. *The abolition/transformation of God's festivals did not occur in the Judean church*

Were the congregations of the Land of Israel the first to abolish the solemn festivals? Was it in the mother church of Jerusalem that Sunday was first observed instead of the Sabbath ? Throughout the history of apostate Christianity it has been believed that the first century Church stopped meeting on the weekly Sabbath and annual Sabbaths, but this is not correct. In the book *of Acts* it is noted that Paul's last visit to Jerusalem (58 AD) (Acts 21), with the mention that he “was in haste to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, if possible.” (Acts 20:16); that “the days of Unleavened Bread” had passed in Philippi (Acts 20:6) and “navigation was now dangerous, because the Fast (Atonement) was already past” (Acts 27:9), makes it clear that the liturgical calendar of solemn festivals was observed by Christians, as confirmed by the following source:

“Just as Christ and the other apostles..., Paul observed the festivals just as we have seen in (the book of the facts). In Acts 27:9 there is also reference to the Day of Atonement, as the fasting or *nesteian* , the which was a meteorological turning point in the Middle East. Therefore , Paul did not abolish the festivals - God's blessings, and he certainly couldn't... Although Paul tried to return to Jerusalem for the feast mentioned in Acts 18:21, 19:21..., Acts 20: 6 shows that Paul observed the days of the Pa - unleavened men in Philippi, being delayed. He then tried to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 20:16). So clearly the church at Philippi kept the festivals” (69) .

What happened in Jerusalem is especially revealing. James, pastor of Jerusalem, and the elders not only informed Paul that thousands of converted Jews were “zealous for the law” (Acts 21:20), but they pressed him to prove them—by undergoing a purification rite in the Temple - that he himself continued to “keep the law” (Acts 21:24). In light of this strict obedience to the law, it is very difficult to conceive that the church of Jerusalem dared to abrogate one of the most important precepts due to its character as a sign between the people and their God Jehovah - the observance of the Sabbath and other festivals. - , replacing them with the veneration of Sunday and other festivals arising from tradition. Furthermore, the influence of James and his adherence to the law is known (James 1:25, 2:10-12).

Based on this background, then, it is practically impossible that it was the church of Jerusalem that promoted the violation or changes to God's law regarding consecrated festivals. And the situation could hardly change after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, since it was composed and led by Jewish Christians, described as “zealous defenders of the observance of the law of God.” Thus, historical data prevent us from making the Jerusalem congregation the initiator of an innovation in matters of worship law or holy festivals.

2. *The conflict between the Jews and the Roman Empire developed a divergent trend from*

Judaism and the observance of biblical festivals in apostate Christianity

The Romans were tolerant of other religions. As they expanded their territorial conquests and acquisitions, they accepted the gods of their new subjects, greatly increasing the pantheon they already possessed.

The Romans tried to be liberal even with the Jews, determined and tenacious in their monotheistic religion. But they could not understand why they opposed and rebelled when the Roman gods were introduced into Judea. They could not understand how the Jews could worship a God whom they could not see. That seemed to them a form of atheism. They mocked the weekly Sabbath obedience; for them it was just an opportunity that the Jews gave themselves to be idle. They resented the Jews' refusal to worship Rome and its emperor. They knew that there was a relationship between certain dogmas of the Hebrew faith, especially its messianism, and its negative civic stance under Roman rule. Considerations of this nature, added to the rebellious spirit of the Jews and their provocative acts, finally produced the wars that almost destroyed the Israelite people.

As is known, starting with the first Jewish uprising against Rome (66-70 AD), it imposed several repressive measures to contain the resurgence of Jewish nationalism. According to historians of the time, more than a million Jews were executed in Judea alone between the two wars (AD 70 and 135). Vespasian abolished the Sanhedrin and the Levitical high priest. After the suppression of the revolt of 135 AD, Hadrian banned the practice of Judaism, and in particular the Jewish holidays, such as the Sabbath :

“These repressive measures were felt intensely in Rome, as can be seen from the comments.

anti-Jewish rivers of writers such as Seneca 8m.65 AD),... Petronius (around 66), Quintilian (35-100), Marcial (41-104), Plutarch (46-119), Juvenal (around 135) and Tacitus (55-120), all of them residing in Rome...

In his writings, Jews are denigrated in their social and cultural particularities, ridiculing especially -

especially the observance of the Sabbath and circumcision, as examples of degrading superstition” (70) .

All these circumstances, in addition to the problems between Jews and Christians, favored the divergent attitude of many Christians towards Judaism and the Judaic features that original Christianity had. On the one hand, they developed a theology of rejection and contempt for everything Hebrew embodied in anti-Jewish proto-Catholic literature (“apostolic fathers” and anonymous authors). On the other hand, anti-Judaism fueled apostasy within the Christianity of the time, since One of the practical consequences of that situation was the replacement of all the holidays in Leviticus 23, such as Easter and the Sabbath, with new holidays such as Easter and Sunday. Furthermore, a considerable part of Christianity could not present itself to the Gentile-Roman world as a Jewish “sect,” since that meant risks and dangers:

“After Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70 and later, when the last of

the Jewish apostles (John), a divergent trend of Judaism developed among the communities

Gentile Christians. So, in the year 135 AD... this movement diverging from Jewish customs

intensified as a result of a second, failed Jewish revolt against Rome... Many believe -

Gentile people no longer wanted to be identified with the Jewish people or culture and deliberately disassociated themselves .

(the) holidays, (Jewish) customs...So, instead of worshiping on the traditional day of the Sa-

bat ., as the Jewish people, including the Messiah Yeshua and the apostles, had done for millennia

He chose the first day of the week, the 'day of the Sun'" (71) .

3. The abolition and/or changes of the solemn holidays was a slow and progressive process after from the year 70 AD

Some of the theological questions that were subject to twisting and innovation after the death of the apostles Paul and Peter (68 AD), as indicated, were mainly related to the doctrine of law and grace, the observance of biblical festivals and the nature and divinity of Christ. This situation produced the existence of two large regions with different positions: that western region in which the observance of Sunday as a day of central worship and the eradication of “Jewish things” were well received; and the eastern region, where a large part of the churches preserved the practices of the Apostolic Church regarding the weekly Sabbath, solemn festivals and the correct interpretation of the law, among other aspects. However, over time the position of the Western Church was imposed, which led to the elimination of certain festivities and/or modification of the nature of others. To graph that process, the change from Saturday to Sunday will be taken as an example.

First of all, some authors confirm that the observance of the weekly Sabbath was widespread at the end of the 1st century AD:

“According to Church history, the seventh-day Sabbath was observed by the early Church, and no other day was observed as a day of rest for the first two or three centuries... However, *gradual - Mind you*, the first day of the week came in as an additional day, but eventually the authorities... ecclesiastics made them a required act of observance” (72).

“A careful study of the historical sources existing in the 1st to 5th centuries reveals the surprising fact - Since the transfer of sanctity from the true biblical Sabbath to Sunday was a long process. go and *gradual*” (73).

According to the historian Salomón Reinach, “the church around the year 80 was an uncomplicated organization... The assemblies... met in private homes, *on Saturday at first*, then on Sunday” (74), that is, The gradual change towards Sunday observance occurred after the year 70 or 80 AD. It is not possible to specify when or who began the custom of meeting both on Saturday and on the first day of the week, but it is clear that the first specific references to this This event occurred in Rome and Alexandria (Egypt), cities where they first rejected the “Jewish Sabbath.” In this regard it is said: “Rome and Alexandria were capitols of the Roman (pagan) system. Towards the end of the first century, Gentile Christians in these two cities feared being identified with the Jewish nation that was in rebellion with the Roman authority. (To avoid) the contempt associated with being a Jewish sympathizer, they adopted a system of two days of worship, keeping the Sabbath and Sunday, and saying: 'We are not Jews, worship - we go to the Savior. They mistakenly called Sunday 'Lord's Day'. This was done without the authority of Scripture” (75).

Indeed, it is clearly documented that the factors that motivated the change from Saturday to Sunday were historical, human, not scriptural or divine. By the way, at first Sunday did not immediately replace Saturday; and when Sunday emerged among Christian circles, it continued to be a work day, but included a worship service in honor of the supposed resurrection of Jesus on that day. That is what has been believed since then, at the end of the 1st century, until the present. Catholic-Orthodox-Protestants explain the substitution of the Sabbath of God (Isaiah 58:13) for the first day of the week in this way:

“Sunday has replaced in the Christian world the Sabbath feast of the Old Covenant... The Church (Catholic), when instituting Sunday, the first day of the Christian week, he mainly took into account the cult - divine __ hence its name ' dies dominica', day of the Lord. Now, when establishing as a dedicated day given to worship and rest on Sunday, the Saturday festival was, at least implicitly, abrogated.

Who abrogated it?... It is not easy to determine... it is naturally explained that the faithful, even those of the first - mitive Church, granted preference... to Sunday..., but the capital fact of having been chosen by the divine Redeemer to verify in him his glorious Resurrection... and also chosen by the Spirit

Holy, to descend (on the apostles on the day of Pentecost), provided a biblical foundation to the Church to replace Saturday with Sunday, considering it as the official day for the celebration of divine worship” (76) .

After the process described above, and also recorded by “official” ecclesiastical history, finally the vast majority of Christianity began to give preference to Sunday over Saturday for religious worship, since the false tradition that Jesus had risen was imposed. on that day, in such a way that it received the name “ dies dominica”, in Latin, *day of the Lord* . That is what the word “Sunday” means, which is not properly found in the New Testament, it only appeared for the first time in an apocryphal or spurious gospel called *Gospel of Peter* , written around 150 AD Furthermore, Sunday observers believed they found arguments in the gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and in some writings of the apostle Paul. Of the first, the Catholic priest Humberto Muñoz states:

“ The fundamental argument comes from Jesus' own resurrection. The four evangelists with-
remember that *it took place on Sunday* : Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1 and John 20:1,19. This is already highly significant. But the second appearance to the apostles, with Thomas already present, took place .
ca 'After eight days' (John 20: 26), that is, also on Sunday. And this is even more suggestive” (77) .

For his part, another defender of Sunday observance assures:

“ We have very early evidence (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:7) that Christians gathered together -
They went on Sunday to worship. This was not as a practice bound by any law, but as appropriate of the great event of the resurrection. It is an *apostolic custom* , not a transfer from the Sabbath to God. Sabbath keepers should not be afraid to examine Luke's reference to a Sunday meeting in Acts 20:7, nor the New Testament practice of saving money for collect 'every Sunday' (1 Corinthians 16:2). There is no biblical text that reports that the church (as distinguished -
synagogue) gathered on the Sabbath to worship. Acts 20:7 testifies of a church meeting in Sunday, and it is notable that Paul, being at Troas for seven days, waited until Sunday before meeting join with all believers (Acts 20:6-7). “Why was there no church service on the Sabbath ?” (78) .

Notwithstanding the above , it is historically proven - according to the oldest documents - that the observance of Sunday arose to commemorate the resurrection of Christ, but the early Church annually commemorated the atoning death of the Messiah, not his resurrection. Samuel Bacchiocchi has exhaustively researched the topic, and even though he is a Protestant, he has recognized the following:

“My personal analysis of the sources has shown me that this idea is based on fantasies and not on facts.
Not a single text can be found in the New Testament that indicates or suggests that the resurrection -
tion of Christ was commemorated with a special day . In fact , in the New Testament Sunday
It is never called 'the day of the Resurrection', but simply ' the first day of the week'. In nin -
Nowhere in the New Testament is it said that the Holy Supper was celebrated on Sunday or that it served
to commemorate the resurrection of Christ. Paul, who intends to transmit what he had 'received from
Lord' (1 Corinthians 11:23),... speaking of the celebration of the Lord's Supper he says that its function is
announce 'the death of the Lord until He returns' (1 Corinthians 11:26). What Paul mentions is the
sacrifice of Christ, and not his resurrection. The oldest explicit references to the observance of the
Sunday we find them in *Bernabé* (around 130) and Justino Mártir (around 150). Both authors cite the
resurrection as an important, but not predominant, reason for Sunday observance, rele -
placing it in a second or third place (This does not prevent, over time, the resurrection of Christ from
becoming
already become the main theological argument for Sunday observance)” (79) .

As can be seen, the above reasons contradict the thesis that the origin of Sunday observance is found solely in the supposed and erroneous idea that Christ was resurrected on that day. The actions of the Church of Rome and the proto-Catholic writings and the pagan influence contributed decisively to abolishing Sabbath observance and replacing it with Sunday observance, a process developed from the last decade of the first century of the Christian era.

4. The church of Rome promoted the replacement of Saturday with Sunday

The abandonment of the holidays established by God and the introduction of new religious festivities, including Sunday, Easter and others, took place in Rome first, since it had very soon broken its ties with Judaism, Judeo-Christianity and the Judaic Christianity that predominated, or predominated in the East. Furthermore, the church in the imperial capital acted with its own powerful authority that led the rest of Christianity towards apostasy. As has been seen, Alexandria also embarked early on this changing doctrine. And the church of Jerusalem could do nothing to prevent it; nor could the apostle John in the last years of the first century AD

The proto-Catholic theologian Justin, writing from Rome in the mid-second century AD, “distinguishes between two types of Sabbath- keepers . Some forced everyone to observe the Sabbath and others did not.” This clearly implies that “the observance of the Sabbath in Rome was in force in the middle of the second century, although... they were already a minority” (80) ; That is, in Rome the Sabbath had been observed without impediment, but it was gradually abandoned due to the following factors: a) The congregation of Rome was dominated by Christians of Gentile origin, who had been converted from paganism to Christianity and had no ties with Judaism and the observance of solemn festivals; Therefore, there was an early break between Gentile converts and Jewish Christians in the church of Rome; b) the actions of the Empire against the Hebrews (70 and 135 AD) made everything related to the Jews very unpopular, and since the Romans mocked Sabbath observance , the decision of the Christians of Rome to stop keeping it was a pragmatic action; c) the church of Rome “made the Sabbath a day of fasting. This changed the very nature of Sabbath observance . It was not a practice of the Jews to fast on the weekly Sabbath” (81) . The Roman church's insistence on making the Sabbath a day of fasting achieved two objectives: first, it made Sabbath observance less attractive; and second, it caused a vast difference between the way the Sabbath was observed in the West and how it was observed in the East between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians (82) ; d) several references support the position that Sunday began to replace Saturday at the end of the 1st century and the process was gradual in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. This means that Sunday was observed together with Saturday , but at the same time “it does not mean in any way that Sunday was kept as a day of rest. It appears that the (Sunday) Christians went about their regular duties after morning worship. Some time passed before the (Catholic) Church sought to convert Sunday into a day of rest. Tertullian suggested, around the year 225 AD, that secular matters should be avoided on Sunday; but the first record of a true attempt in this direction was not made until the 4th century AD (83) ; and e) the change from Saturday to Sunday was also due to the fact that Rome encouraged the distancing of the Christian Church from its Jewish roots and practices (84) ; or as another source says:

“It also influenced the fact that Christians (apostates) wanted to distance themselves from their Jewish roots, partly so as not to suffer along with the Jews the vilification of which they were subjected. Be that as it may, In the middle of the second century many Christians observed Sunday weekly, especially in Rome. ma... Sunday observance was common wherever the influence of (the church) extended. of) Rome” (85) .

5. Early Catholic theologians and writings rejected the observance of biblical festivals

The apostle John wrote the gospel and the three epistles that bear his name in the last years of the first century AD. Some authors, such as Paul Johnson, have wanted to see in such writings a certain degree of Judeophobia when saying:

oldest Christian writings adopt the hostile tone with which Jewish sectarians treated each other.

When the rupture between Christianity and Judaism became unbridgeable, the only form of relationship between them was the controversy ... In John , 'the Jews' apparently means many different things..., but also the town. The most common sense is that of 'opponents of the teaching of Jesus'. The gospel of John is simply a polemic about (Jewish) heresy” (86)

Likewise, the fact that John refers to the “feast of the Jews” to mark the Passover (John 2:13, 5:1, 6:4, 11:55, 19:42) and the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2), has suggested to some apostate Christians that in such words there are indications that the feasts of Leviticus 23 were no longer kept in the Church at the end of the first century. However, precisely because the moral law and the law of worship of God were being abandoned at that time, the elderly apostle John had to dedicate himself to counteract the wave against the “Jewish things”, writing inspiredly that “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4), and “by this we know that we have known him, if we keep his commandments. He who says, 'I have known him,' and does not keep his commandments, he is a liar, and there is no truth in him” (1 John 2:3-4). Recall that Jesus himself had categorically stated that he had not come to abolish the law or the prophets (Matthew 5:18-18); and John had to reinforce the concept of the validity, for example, of the Ten Commandments (see also John 3:22-24; 5:2-3,16-18). Furthermore, he referred to the “Jewish festivals” because, certainly, the biblical festivals that Jews celebrate are different in substance and meaning from those kept by true Christians. But they are valid. Paul had written to New Covenant Christians: “Let us celebrate.”

Notwithstanding the above, the small chronological distance between the last surviving apostle and the authors of the ecclesiastical works already cited was not an obstacle for proto-Catholic theologians to preach against the observance of the Sabbath and the remaining sacred festivities. In fact, the so-called “apostolic fathers” and proto-Catholic works - since the end of the 1st century - spread teachings adverse to the observance of such biblical “sabbaths”. The works of the aforementioned authors cover the period from 80 - 90 to approximately 175 AD, and give a variety of arguments against those who keep such holidays or sabbaticals, particularly against the weekly Sabbath. And as Bacchiocchi says , “they largely reflected on their anti-Semitic (Judeophobic) point of view” (87) . Here are the early testimonies in favor of Sunday and/or against the holidays of God:

- The *Didache* or *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles* , of unknown author (90-120 AD), says in part: “And on the *day of the Lord come together* and break bread and give thanks, after first confessing your transgressions, so that your sacrifice may be pure” (88) .

According to Catholic-Orthodox-Protestants, two elements are recognized in these words: the confession of sins and the recommendation of the Eucharist or Mass on Sunday.

- The *Epistle of Barnabas* , written within a period from 130 to 135 AD , teaches in part: “...If you bring me fine flour, it is a vain thing; Your incense is an abomination to me , your new moons and *your Sabbaths I cannot endure* . Now, the Lord made all this void, so that the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is not subject to the yoke of necessity, may have an offering not made by human hands.

“ Finally , he says to them: ' I cannot endure your new moons and your Sabbaths ' : See how he says: 'Your Sabbaths now are not acceptable to me, but the one I have made, the one in which, making all things rest, I will make the beginning of an eighth day, that is, the beginning of another world'. That is precisely why we also celebrate the eighth day (Sunday) with rejoicing, because it was the day on which Jesus rose from the dead and, after being manifested, ascended to heaven” (89) .

Here, the author of this spurious epistle relies on the text of Isaiah 1:13-14 to openly declare that the Sabbath has been made invalid by the Lord, “as incompatible with the new law of Jesus himself... In addition to the argument already Knowing that on that day (supposedly) the Lord was resurrected, a new one is advanced: The Sabbath was kept because on that day the Lord rested from the work of Creation; but the resurrection is 'the beginning of another world', and that is why he calls it the eighth, as a successor to the seventh day, which was the Sabbath ” (90) .

However, the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* has omitted the context in which the chapter of Isaiah was written. God rejects Israel's festive celebrations because their spiritual state was decadent, they were in great sin. In the same text God tells Israel “your solemnities are iniquity” (Isaiah 1:13) and then urges the people to cleanse themselves and put away their iniquity (Isaiah 1:16-17); and even more, through the same prophet he calls to do his will on his holy day Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13-14). The anonymous author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* undoubtedly distorted and manipulated the Scriptures.

The *Epistle to Diognetus* (130-150 AD) , an anonymous contemporary work of the previous ones, is also clearly anti-Jewish and contrary to the observance of the annual Sabbaths, saying:

“But, furthermore, their scruples (of the Jews) regarding meats, and *their superstition regarding about the Sabbaths* and the vanity of their circumcision and the dissimulation of their fasts and new moons,

I

I think it is necessary for you to learn from me that *they are ridiculous and unworthy of any consideration*

...

that Christians are right, therefore, staying away from the folly and common error of the

Jews,... I consider that it is something in which you are already sufficiently instructed” (94) .

The priest Humberto Muñoz, in his work *Saturday or Sunday ?* , recognizes that in the previous text “the Sabbath is placed alongside circumcision and other Jewish practices, and they are all declared 'ridiculous and unworthy of consideration' ” (95) . Surely, it is not possible to imagine a true Christian speaking in this way against God's Sabbaths , which He revealed as “holy convocations” (Leviticus 23:2). It is rather the reaction of an apostate Christian against the Judaic-Christianity that still existed in the early Church at that time, according to the original Gospel.

The *Dialogue of Trypho* , a work written by Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century AD, consists of a long argument against the Sabbath and other solemn festivals of God. Trypho is a Jew who dialogues with Justin himself, and he maintains:

“In conclusion, as circumcision began with Abraham, and the Sabbath , sacrifices and offerings and festivals in Moses, and it has already been demonstrated that all this was commanded to you because of the hardness of heart of your people;

Thus, by the Father 's design , *everything had to end in Jesus Christ ...* And He is Jesus Christ, the eternal law and the

new testament that was announced to the whole world that was to come...” (96) .

Justin also wrote, “The law that now comes has abrogated the former and the New Covenant has abrogated the Old,” using the idea from Galatians 3:17 (97) . Therefore, he concludes that the Sabbath expires along with the other festivals, circumcision, sacrifices and offerings. And, he adds, everything

ends in Jesus Christ, author of the New Covenant. However, Jesus had stated that He did not come to abolish the law, and that “whoever breaks one of these least commandments (spiritual 'law of Moses'), and teaches men so, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever *does them and teaches them* , he will be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:17-19). The Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments and the law of worship related to biblical festivals is in force; Only the physical-ritual precepts were abolished, as confirmed by apostolic history. Justin has argued that “Christians should not observe the Sabbath because it is a Mosaic ordinance given exclusively to the Jews...as a sign of their wickedness to mark them with the punishment they deserve” (98) . But the Scriptures say that God gave Israel the Sabbaths as a sign between Him and His people, and Jesus declared Himself “Lord of the Sabbath” (Exodus 31:13,17; Ezekiel 20:20; Mark 2:28).

The *Apologies of the Christian Religion* were also written by Justin, around the year 155 AD. In the first of them he maintains that Christians should gather on Sunday to commemorate the creation of light on the first day and the resurrection of Jesus. Here are their reasons:

“On the day called the Sun (Sunday) a meeting is held of all those who live in the city - or in the fields, and there the 'Memoirs of the Apostles' or the

writings of the prophets. Then, when the reader finishes, the president, orally, makes an exhortation

and invitation to imitate these beautiful examples. Then we all get up together and raise our prayers, and these finished, as we already said, bread and wine and water are offered, and the president , according to

his strength, he also makes his prayers and thanksgivings rise to God, and all the people exclaim saying : 'Amen'.

“And we celebrate this general meeting *on the day of the Sun* (Sunday) because it is the first day, on which God, trans-

forming darkness and matter, he made the world; and the day also when Jesus Christ, our Savior,

rose from the dead; Well, it is known that they crucified him the day before Saturn, and the next day of Saturn, which is *the day of the Sun* , appearing to his apostles and disciples” (99) .

This description shows how the first generation of Catholics observed Sunday, which is equivalent to the pagan day of the Sun, and describes the Sunday mass.

In fact, both the *Dialogue with Trypho* and the *Apologies* make false and meaningless denunciations against the solemn festivals, as if they were a sign of Jewish evil, but the Scriptures say that God gave Israel the Sabbaths as a sign between Him and His people, and Jesus declared himself “Lord of the Sabbath” (Exodus 31:13,17; Ezekiel 20:20; Mark 2:28). This great contradiction of Justin is nothing more than a desperate effort to remove Christians from the Sabbath practice that existed at the time.

The *Gospel of Peter* , written around 150 AD, is one of the many “legendary and spurious” apostate and heretical texts that began to appear in the middle of the 2nd century AD. This is the first that refers to Sunday *with* this name, and according to Halley it was written to promote anti-Jewish doctrines (100) .

Part of the text says:

“And very early in the morning, at dawn on the Sabbath , a great crowd came from Jerusalem and from its neighborhood to

see the sealed tomb. But during the night that preceded *Sunday* ... *On Sunday* morning , Ma-Mary Magdalene, disciple of the Lord...” (101) .

The *Epideixis* or *Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching* , by Irenaeus of Lyon, was written perhaps around 170 AD. In it the author exposes the overcoming of the law and the abandonment of the Sabbath, saying:

“Therefore, we do not need the law as a pedagogue... No longer will (God) command to keep a day of

I tire the one who observes the Sabbath every day, that is, the one who worships God in the temple of God which is the body of man and always practices justice” (102) .

Consequently, the abolition and/or changes of the solemn festivals, particularly the Sabbath, was a process that arose rather from the misinterpretation of the Scriptures and the tradition of Gentiles with Judeophobic positions , such as the theologians and anonymous writers of the proto-Catholic environment , a process typical of the end of the 1st century and the beginning of the following century, coinciding with what has been called a dark period or “lagoon” in which the true Church almost disappeared from the history of early Christianity.

6. The pagan influence as another factor promoting the replacement of God's holy days for other religious holidays

Until now, it has been historically demonstrated how the original festivals of the Christian people of God were abolished and/or changed. To the previous factors we must add another: the pagan origin of the converts in some way influenced the development of apostasy. Otherwise, how can we explain that the “apostolic fathers” believed, for example, in the immortality of the soul? At the level of religious festivities, the “signs” that identify the people of God were being supplanted by others based on tradition and pagan influence. Proof of this is the establishment of the observance of Sunday as “the Lord's day”, and the festivities of “Holy Week” and Resurrection Sunday or Easter; Lent and Christmas, all of which arose during the second century AD. All of them were practically promoted by the church of Rome, which triumphed by imposing its position of commemorating the death of Christ on Friday and the resurrection on the following Sunday, giving This is the origin of “Good Friday” and Easter or Resurrection Sunday, which the Roman bishops Anicetus and Victor defended so much during the second century. That marked the origin of the so-called “Holy Week” of Catholicism, a holiday that has no basis in the apostolic Gospel. Associated with this festival is “Lent” or a period of abstinence, fasting and reflection that was instituted in memory of the forty days that Jesus fasted in the desert, to “properly celebrate Easter”, although it also has a pagan precedent. (103) . Meanwhile, Christmas has its antecedent in the Roman bishop Telesphorus, who instituted it in the year 130 AD, although it was celebrated on various dates, since the exact day of Jesus' birth was unknown. Regarding Sunday, there is also a clear presence of paganism at the origin of its observance, since at that time there was a great diffusion of solar cults. To verify this historical truth, a summary of the research carried out by Samuel Bacchiocchi is presented below :

“Recent research has shown that 'since the beginning of the 2nd century AD the cult of Sol Invictus dominated in Rome and other parts of the Empire'. Until the end of the 1st century AD, the Romans worshiped their

own 'Sol natal-Sol indiges ', the name under which it appears in several ancient Roman texts. But in the 2nd century the oriental cult of the 'Invincible Sun - Sol Invictus ' was introduced in Rome through different routes: u-

non-private through the Sol Invictus Mitra, and other public through the Sol Invictus Elagabal . By Tertuliano (150-230 AD) we know that in his days the Circus Maximus in Rome was 'specially consecrated to the Sun, whose temple rises in the center...'. The emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD) had himself represented in their coins identified with the Sun'...

“There are several factors that contributed to spreading the cult of the Sun. One of the most important was the identification of the emperor with the Sun-god, as well as his cult, favored by political considerations

and by religious traditions related to the cult of the 'Sun-King', very popular in the East. The le-
 Roman gionaries , who had come into contact with the traditions...of Sol Invictus ...and Mithraism,
 They were the main propagators of the solar cult in the West. Another factor to highlight is the climate of sin-
 cretism of the time...

“The spread and popularity of the solar cult produced a transcendental change in the sequence of days.”
 of the week. The seven- day week had been adopted by the Roman Empire in the 1st century AD In a-
 that time the names of the planets were given to the days of the week (which they still preserve). He
 Saturn day (Saturday) was originally the first day of the week, while the
 day of the Sun (Sunday) was the second. But in the second century, because of the preponderance
 Sun cult , a change occurred: the day of the Sun (Sunday) was advanced from its position of second day
 from the week to the *first day* (and all the other days were moved so that the seventh day was con-
 poured on the day of Saturn). It is difficult to determine the exact date when the supremacy and prestige of
 the
 day of Saturn were transferred to the day of the Sun. It must have occurred around the middle of the second
 century, according to an
 dedication of the famous astrologer Vettius Valens. In his *Astrology* , written between the years 154 and 174,
 he says
 specifically: 'And this is the order of the planetary stars in relation to the days of the week: Sun,
 Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn'... The primacy of the day of the Sun in the series of the days of
 The week is also confirmed by statements by Justin Martyr and Tertullian, by various docu -
 ments Mithraic , as well as by the decrees of Constantine (March 3 and July 3, 321). Temple-
 that the predominance of the day of the Sun over that of Saturn must have occurred at the beginning of the
 second century, at
 At the same time as the adoption of Sunday observance instead of Saturday , one wonders if the
 changing the day of the Sun to the position of the first day of the week would not also influence the Christians -
 Those who wanted to distinguish themselves from the Jews adopted and adapted the new day for their weekly
 worship.

“ There are numerous indications... that confirm this hypothesis : the frequent condemnations of 'worshipping'
 Christians
 dores' of the Sun that we find in patristics (Catholic theologians from the 3rd to the 5th century); the adoption of
 the
 solar symbology to represent Christ, both in art and in Christian (Catholic) literature pri -
 mitiva _ the change of orientation of the places of prayer, which were directed towards Jerusalem and then
 will be towards the East, and the adoption of the pagan festival of the *dies natalis Solis Invictis* to celebrate the Na -
 -
 Christian (Catholic) activity .

“ More direct proof comes from the frequent use of solar symbolism to justify the observance of the
 Sunday. Justin Martyr (100-165 AD) highlights that Christians gather 'on the day of the Sun...
 because it is the first day in which God, transforming the initial darkness and matter, created the world -
 do'. The link that Justin establishes between the day of the Sun and the creation of light on the first day is not pure
 coincidence, since we find that same connection in the writings of many other Fathers
 (Catholics)...” (**104**) .

An ecclesiastical historian gives another testimony that proves the convergence of apostate Christianity
 with paganism, regarding the observance of Sunday:
 Mosheim story of the first century tells of a sect of Christians who met on the first day
 of the week, with their faces turned towards the Sun to pray and sing in honor of the sun and the Moon. They
 taught
 that Christ was in both, and that the soul after death first went to the Moon to be cleansed of

external sins, then towards the Sun to be purified from within, and finally flew towards the stars to shine forever and ever” (105) .

This mixture of Christianity with paganism was not new, since already in the time of the apostle Paul there were Christian converts who continued to participate in Gentile-pagan customs, as the apostle declares in his letter to the *Galatians* : “Indeed, in former times, not knowing God, you served those who by nature are not gods; But now, knowing God, or rather, being known by God, how is it that you return again to the weak and poor rudiments, to which you want to enslave yourselves again? You keep the days, the months, the times and the years. I fear for you that he has labored with us in vain” (Galatians 4:8-11). This apostolic denunciation is due to the fact that at that time the pagan world was plagued with superstitions about “good” and “bad” days; Therefore, some believing Gentiles were still following these wrong practices, and had returned to some ancient beliefs regulated by superstitious days and by the stars.

Consequently, to the distortion of the gospels and apostolic teachings, and the persistent abandonment of the Judaic features of original Christianity, the pagan influence of the solar cult must be added as determining factors that expired the widespread observance of the solemn festivals of God. during the sub-apostolic era . It is presumed that the spiritual ministers of Gentile origin of that time understood that the best way to convert other Gentiles to their faith was to frame the evangelical message in the context of their cultures, of their beliefs. Thus, instead of eradicating certain pagan practices, “they thought that the kingdom of God would be better served by introducing and integrating the Messiah into those practices” (106) . That same conclusion has another source:

“The Sun was the main day of the pagans... As they worshiped the Sun on Sunday, the leaders of the Church (protocatholic) could see that if they changed the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday, they could - day to achieve many things. First, this would separate them from the Jews who were hated by the Romans and who, like the Lord Jesus (Luke 4:16), had worshiped on the Sabbath from the beginning...

Second , this would make it much easier for pagans to enter the Church if Christians (Catholics) gathered on the same day as them” (107) .

The apocryphal works, although rejected in the second century, nourished Christianity and promoted the canonization of the New Testament

Within the process of the gradual and growing development of apostasy, the Christian system that was taught with biblical simplicity was combined not only with anti-legalistic , Judeophobic literature and with an incipient pagan influence, but also with apocryphal literature that emerged in the course of time. from the 2nd century AD, literature that was disastrous and contradictory with respect to apostolic truths.

Apocryphal texts are those writings that in early Christianity were rejected for having no evidence of having been inspired by God. “Apocryphal”, in the Greek language, means *hidden* , *of secret origin* . Therefore, those books had a mysterious, unknown origin and could not be included in the canon of the Holy Scriptures. Furthermore, their own content excluded them from the biblical canon.

Most of the apocrypha related to the New Testament were published in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, and their purpose is said to be to provide information that the inspired books deliberately omitted, such as the activities and events surrounding the life of Jesus from his birth to the time of his ministry. They also try to provide support for doctrines or traditions that have no basis in the Bible or that contradict it.

In truth, as the canonical gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) contained very little information about Jesus in points that could seem interesting, the imagination began to work very early - already in the second century - and was always increasing. Thus, information about Mary, Joseph and Jesus emerged based on fantastic inventions. But the most serious thing about this fact is that the apocryphal books constitute the basis of many beliefs and dogmas of apostate Christianity, as Funk and Wagnallis recognize :

“They have been the fruitful source of sacred legends and ecclesiastical traditions. It is to these books that
"we must turn to find the origin of some of the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church."
(108) .

The apocryphal books of the New Testament constitute about thirty, a third of which are *gospels* related to the life and words of Jesus; but there are also *acts* , *epistles* and *apocalypses* , of which some are mentioned:

Gospels: *Of the Hebrews* , *of the Ebionites* , *according to the Egyptians* , *of Peter* , *Protoevangelium of James* , *of Thomas* , *of Matthias* , *of Philip* , *of Judas* , *of Bartholomew* , *of Nicodemus* and *History of Joseph*.

Acts: *Of Peter* , *Preaching of Peter* , *of Paul* , *of John* , *of Andrew* and *of Thomas*.

Epistles: *Letter from Abgar to Jesus* and *from Jesus to Abgar* , *from the Apostles* , *from Paul to the Laodiceans* and *Correspondence between Seneca and Paul*.

Apocalypse: *Of Peter* , *Paul* , *Thomas* , *John* , *Bartholomew* , *Stephen* , among many other apocryphal works.

Several of these spurious writings were of Gnostic origin, but many others had an apologetic objective to justify or strengthen new religious-popular beliefs and customs. Precisely in them and not in the canonical New Testament are found, for example, the names that today designate the parents of the “Virgin Mary” and the “wise men”; In them they want to prove the perpetual virginity of Mary, mother of Jesus, and the donkey and the ox appear that today they place next to the Christmas manger; and others support certain Marian dogmas and the cult of the “Virgin” (*Protoevangelium of James* , *Arabic Gospel of Infancy* and *Armenian Gospel of Infancy*) .

To confirm the invalidity of such apocrypha, note the following statements by modern authorities on this matter:

“It is not that someone has excluded them from the New Testament: they have done it themselves.”

“mos ” (109) .

“We only have to compare our New Testament books together with other literature of that class to understand how wide the gap is that separates them from it. It is often said that the Non-canonical gospels are actually the best evidence for the canonical ones” (110) .

Towards the end of the second century AD, refuting the apocryphal gospel *of Peter* , composed around the year 150 AD, the bishop of Antioch, Serapion , says that it is false, since it was not received from the apostolic tradition. His words transmitted in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius of Caesarea (4th century), prove that the majority of Christendom was alert to the existence of those spurious texts. Serapion wrote like this:

“Brothers, we receive Peter and the other apostles as Christ (Matthew 10: 40), but the false writings put under his name, we are on notice to repudiate them, for we know that we have not received such a thing from him” (III) .

proto -Catholicism He denied the inspired or canonical character of the apocryphal works, but with the passage of time the Catholic Church accepted them for their “historical” character, as if their stories

were true and in accordance with biblical truth. Consequently, many false conceptions and popular religious traditions of Christianity are due to the apostate Church, which in turn was partly nourished by those spurious texts, and which later nourished the Orthodox-Protestant-schismatic branches.

The situation described above and the testimonies that come from the 2nd century AD explain why a decision arose regarding the books that should be included in the canon of Christian Scriptures.

Indeed, until the middle of that century it was clear that the Old Testament was divinely inspired, but there was not yet what is called the *canon* or official catalog of the New Testament, therefore each Christian-apostolic book was a complete work in itself. Baron says about it:

“Still... (in the) second century none of the writings of the New Testament had been canonized , and Theophilus of Antioch could not yet consider that only the Old Testament comprised the Scriptures - official tures of the Church” (*112*) .

There were several factors that led to the canonization of the New Testament Scriptures. The first, without a doubt, is the appearance of heretical literature - such as that of Marcion and Montanus - the apocryphal writings cited above and the uninspired writings made the Christian Church in general put more effort and diligence in determining the true and complete canon of the Holy Scriptures, particularly of the New Testament (since, as said, the canon of the Old Testament was defined). To oppose the error of the heretics, the canon of inspired New Testament books had to be established for the benefit of believers.

Another factor was the fact that the group of believers in the Roman Empire began to unite even more and have more communication with each other, indirectly allowing the recognition of the apostolic books to be homogenized to essentially configure the same New Testament that exists. at the moment.

Today the Roman Catholic Church claims responsibility for the decision as to which books should be included in the canon of the complete Bible, and for this reason it has issued expressions such as these:

“The (Catholic) Church is the one that recognized among the books of the Jews those that form the Ancient Will. He also recognized the 27 books that make up the New Testament and that were written - all in the century of the apostles” (*113*) .

And to support his position, reference is made to the councils of Hippo (393 AD) and Carthage (397 AD), where catalogs of books were formulated. However, the opposite is true, since the canon, even the list of books that make up the Christian Scriptures, was already defined by then, not by the decree of some council, nor by order or systematic action of some ecclesiastical authority or a particular institution within early Christianity, but rather the New Testament canon was shaped by the practice or usage of Christian congregations in general throughout the ancient world. An authority on the subject says:

“It is a known fact that the Church, considered as the entire body of believers, created the *canon* ...it was not the opposite; It was not imposed from the top, whether by bishops or synods” (*114*) .

It is clear, then, that the canon of the New Testament was formed in the sub-apostolic era , to be practically fixed in the second half of the second century AD, without interference from the organization called the Catholic Church. The most resounding proof that the New Testament canon existed early and long before the Catholic councils is an ancient manuscript or catalog discovered in the 18th century by Ludovico Muratori . This catalog, currently called the *Muratori Fragment* , dates from the year 160-170 AD, being the oldest known list of the books of the New Testament to date. The first lines are missing from it, which explains why no references are found to the gospels of *Matthew* and *Mark* , and it does not include the epistle *to the Hebrews* , that of *James* and the *Second of Pedro* because they were still

little known in the West. And in honor of the truth, it should be mentioned that the *Muratorian Fragment* mentions the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Wisdom of Solomon* as being part of the New Testament canon, and *The Shepherd of Hermas* is mentioned, recommending it as private reading, but denying that had canonicity or divine inspiration. This gives clues to evaluate the character of Christianity at that time.

The “Catholic Church”, the “fathers of the Church” and the tradition of the Catholic Church

Official history, both from the Catholic, Protestant and even Jewish spheres, recognizes - from its perspective - that between the end of the 1st century AD and the first third of the following century "there was a total separation between *Christianity* and Judaism as a religion, cult and form." of life" (*115*). It has also been argued that it was Paul who actually “founded” Christianity “by freeing Gentiles from the burden of Jewish precepts and making it easier for them to accept his version of a Christianized Judaism” (*116*). On the other hand, it is believed that the “radical break is detected in the Gospel according to John..., in which 'the Jewish idea of God was replaced with the basic conception of the Trinity, the Jewish vision of the Messiah (son of David) with the notion of the incarnate Logos and the Pauline program of his universal mission, with a revised orientation that does not give the Jew preference in any aspect” (*117*).

The historical-biblical-ecclesiastical analysis of this work has shown that the previous conclusions are erroneous: Paul really Christianized Judaism, but he did not create a new religion. Nor did the apostle and evangelist John promote the Catholic-Protestant dogma of the Trinity. And both Paul and John were inspired to reveal that the Messiah was incarnate and was Jesus of Nazareth. On the other hand, it is true that there are incompatibilities between biblical Judaism and Christianized Judaism, such as the Church of God, but it preserves the Judaic heritage that comes from the divine revelation given to Moses, that is, the apostolic Church and the Later true Christianity remained faithful to biblical spiritual law. What really happened in the period of transition to total apostasy is that an important sector of Christianity promoted a process of rupture and total split with respect to Judaism, cutting all connection with the Jewish root. The effort of anonymous proto-Catholic thinkers and authors to eliminate everything Jewish from Christianity finally translated into an aversion to Judaism and the Jewish people visible since the sub-apostolic era.

That process of forming a Christianity that was different and distant from the Christian essence that emanates from the New Testament writings not only entailed apostate elements of anti-legalism, anti-Judaism and anti-biblical, but there were also Judaizing (Ebionitic) and syncretistic elements (Gnosticism and pagan traditions and beliefs). Proof of this is that various trends and/or sects that claimed to be Christians emerged early on. Historian Will Durant paints a picture of divided Christianity “in a hundred weak parts due to different intellectual tendencies, disloyal heretics,

of ecstatic prophets or brilliant characters. Celsus himself (opponent of Christianity, who lived for

2nd century) had sarcastically noted that Christians were 'divided into multiple factions'.

tions, each individual wanting to have his own group'. Around the year 187, Irenaeus listed 20 varieties - facts of Christianity; and around the year 384, Epiphanius counted 80. From all points the ideas

"Foreign religions were invading Christian beliefs, and Christians were joining new sects."

(*118*).

For his part, the ecclesiastical historian Johann von Mosheim said:

“The (apostate) Christian Church was formed when reformers came to various places who
They were not satisfied with the simplicity of that religion taught by the apostles, *intro* -
They brought about changes in doctrine and mode of worship ” (119) .

Consequently, as a product of the distortion of the evangelical and apostolic Scriptures and/or the introduction of pre-Christian religious beliefs , numerous apostate and/or heretical characters and sects emerged, of which only those most representative of the 2nd century: the Ebionites (Judaizers); Cerinthus , the Nicolaitans; the Docets, Elkesai and the Elkesaites , Basilides , Tatian , Saturninus, Valentinus, Bardesanos and Carpocrates ; the Ophites and the Encratites, all of them from the first half of the second century of our era; Marción and Montano, from the middle of the same century; and the Monarchians , with different and successive “masters”, such as Theodotus , Corianus, Theodotus Cambista, Artemas , Pablo de Samosata and Sabelius , all from the second half of the 2nd century.

For this historical work it is not important to refer to those heretical characters and movements - the majority of which had a Gnostic tendency -, which were quickly diluted and had no major impact on the apostate movement of the 2nd century. But it is necessary to delve into the origin and development of the largest dissident movement of original Christianity.

Indeed, considering all the information collected regarding the doctrinal changes produced within early Christianity in the aforementioned subapostolic period , it is clear that the birth of the largest sect of Christianity has been witnessed: *Catholicism* . The literature of the time demonstrates this. From his perspective, Escrivá de Balaguer says:

“In the second century, *Christians* defined the Church as Catholic , to distinguish it from the sects that, using
“given the name of Christ, at some point they betrayed his doctrine” (120) .

The name “Catholic Church” comes from the beginning of the 2nd century AD. The first time that the term “Catholic” applied to all of Christianity - as a legitimate concept or name - appears in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, in the year 107 AD, because this bishop professed the true Christian faith. In his letter *to those of Smyrna* , he says:

“Where the bishop is, there is the crowd just as where Jesus Christ is there is the *Catholic Church* ”
(121) .

The term “Catholic” is of Greek origin and means *universal* , therefore, the first Christian faithful understood that the true Church of Christ was *Catholic* , because it extended throughout the known world, and such character was equivalent to the Church constituted the true, authentic Congregation of Christ.

During the Roman persecutions of the first centuries, when Christians were asked what religion they belonged to, the vast majority of them said they belonged “to the Catholic”, because in the first centuries, the term “universality” and “orthodoxy” were practically synonyms. Therefore, “the Church from its beginnings has been called 'Christian' and 'Catholic' interchangeably” (122) . However, in the following centuries, this name came to exclusively distinguish the predominant false Christianity, which emerged particularly in the city of Rome. For this reason, Paciano of Barcelona (375 AD) said: “ Christian is my name, and Catholic my surname” (123) . Meanwhile, Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386 AD) maintained that “the Church is Catholic because it is spread throughout the world” (124) . In the year 381 the name of the Catholic Church was made official, and after the West-East schism in the year 1054, the Latin or Western Church continued to be called “ Catholic ” in an exclusive manner, but with the surname “Roman”; while the Church of the East adopted the name “Orthodox”.

For almost two millennia it has been believed that the Catholic Church is the successor of the apostolic Church, which contains the doctrine that saves men. Both Christians of various persuasions and non-Christians, including Jews, have believed that Christianity is represented by Catholicism and that the Catholic Church is *the Church*. Thus, some references such as these are common: “The *Church* and the Roman Empire”, “the *Church* and Constantine the Great”, “the *Church* predominated during the Middle Ages”, “the alliance between the *Church* and the Catholic Monarchs”, “the *Church* suffered a division with the Reformation”, “there is a gap between the *Church* and the Synagogue”, “the *Church* created the Inquisition”, “the *Church* promoted the Crusades”, “the *Church* persecuted the Jews”, “the liberals They promoted the separation of *Church* and State”, etc. In each of these examples, as in countless others, the *Church* is equivalent to the Roman Catholic Church, as if it were “the Church” par excellence or excellence. And when the authors refer to Christianity as a religion, they refer to “the Church”, that is, Roman Catholicism, as if this were the authentic Christianity outside of which there is no salvation. Even Protestants refer to Catholicism as “the Church,” and Jews erroneously fall into the same conception. And what happens to Christian currents outside Roman Catholicism, particularly that which is the true successor of the apostolic Church of God?

During the first two centuries of Catholicism, it did not exist as a systemic and organized institution, but rather it was a general and theoretical concept, since in fact local churches or congregations maintained a degree of independence from each other. Only from the relationship established between Catholic Christianity and the Roman Empire, under the government of Constantine the Great in the 4th century, was the concept of “the Church” officially imposed to refer to the great mass of those who called themselves *Christians* . , although not all of them had a common doctrine. Historian WJ Mc Glothlin confirms this assertion, saying:

“The independence and significance of the local church succumbs and is lost in the dominance and power of the churches of the big cities, and these in turn are confused in the concept of a Universal Church - salt (Catholic) that contains all Christians and *many unworthy people* . It is considered as an entity in itself, independent of its members, holy, indivisible and inviolable, no more like a community of the saved, but as an institution that saves, outside of which there is no salvation.”
(125) .

If the Roman Catholic Church emerged from a process of blatant apostasy, how can it be considered “the Christian Church” par excellence? Within itself, an important group of writers and theologians or ecclesiastical figures emerged from the 3rd and following centuries who developed or systematized the theology-doctrine that the Catholic faithful profess today. Together they are called “fathers of the Church” (of the Catholic Church, obviously), the best known being the following: Tertullian (150-220 AD), Clement of Alexandria (d. 215), Origen (185-254), Cyprian (200-258), Lactantius (d. 325), Eusebius of Caesarea (260-340), Athanasius (295-373), Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386), Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390), Gregory of Nyssa (335-394), Ambrose (339-379), John Chrysostom (354-407), Augustine (354-430) and Jerome (340-420).

Many of those theologians were bishops and many others have the adjective “saint” before their names. His teachings are considered by the Catholic Church as the foundation of “orthodox Christian” doctrine. Already in the 4th century the title “fathers” was used to refer to those Roman Catholic teachers. Basilio, who lived in that century, wrote:

“What we teach is not the result of our personal reflections, but rather what we have attached to *parents* ” (126) .

Those “fathers of the (Catholic) Church” produced comments and writings that, on the one hand, transmitted the Catholic doctrine collected from the “apostolic fathers” and, on the other, came to swell the exegetical and theological body called the “Tradition”.

Indeed, from the Catholic perspective, the “sources of revelation” were not only the Bible, but also Tradition (from the Latin verb “ tradere ”, which means *oral transmission of a doctrine , news or custom of past generations until today.*); and for Catholics, Tradition is “the set of revealed *truths* that look at faith and customs and that are not contained in Holy Scripture, but are transmitted orally by God *to his Church* ” (127) . In other words, the Bible is the Word of God, but not *the* complete Word of God; It is just a part of God's message; The other part - according to Catholics - “the Church” speaks for God through Tradition. And the teachings of the “fathers of the Church” are an essential part of Tradition. This is corroborated by the clergyman Humberto Muñoz:

“Catholics believe that divine revelation is not contained only in the Bible taken in exemplary form.”

clusive , but in the Bible completed or continued by Tradition. This belief is based on two facts.

chos : first, that the Bible, according to its own statement (John 20:30, 21:25), is incomplete; and according - do, that *the Church* is a living organism, assisted by the Holy Spirit in its mission to teach. That is why those ecclesiastical writers, who meet the conditions of sanctity and seniority, are called Fathers of the Church, in the sense that they founded it and are faithful witnesses of the most ancient - ancient tradition” (128) .

Notwithstanding the above , the so-called "fathers of the Church", being the support of the Catholic Tradition, constitute a worthless reference when many of their comments, exhortations, teachings and/or doctrines openly contradict the Word of God. Dugger and Dodd say of them:

“After the death of the apostles ..., the history of the early Church is limited to the writings of the so-called 'Fathers of the Church', who wrote their epistles, perhaps with sincerity, but *not under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit* , as the apostles did. As we consider the e- guns of these first writers from the historical point of view, we cannot consider them as a basis of doctrine or faith, because their opinions vary, contradicting each other” (129) .

For his part, Lamson says of these writers:

“Many of them were educated, but few knew how to apply their education to a good end...

The theology of most of them exhibited a strange and unnatural union of Christian doctrines with the (pagan) philosophy taught in the Platonic schools of Alexandria, the most unworthy task is always-

peculative to the understanding; and they were, almost without exception, addicted to the most imaginative forms of information.

interpretation , and particularly the allegorizing spirit characterized by the schools themselves..." (130) .

In truth, as stated above, these “fathers” of Catholicism are the ones who created the theology and exegesis of apostate Christianity. They taught God's truth in a distorted, incomplete way, and distorted the rest of it. It is true that some of their writings confirm that some fundamental truths of the Gospel remained in force for some time, or that certain erroneous dogmas or beliefs were promoted by them. For example, some opposed the worship or making of images, or were unaware of the Trinitarian doctrine; while others attacked Sabbath observance, or expressed a Judeophobic spirit . On the other hand, Catholics currently recognize that “not all the writings of the fathers are orthodox, but only those in which there is common agreement among them” (131) .

To verify the degree of apostasy of such characters, some of their teachings contrary to the divine Scriptures are set out below :

Tertullian, a writer from the late 2nd century and early 3rd century, is known for his paradoxical or contradictory statements, such as when he wrote: “God is especially great when he is small”; “(The death of the Son of God) is an event that we must believe because it is absurd”; “(Jesus) was buried, and rose again; This fact is certain because it is impossible” (132) . And while he sought to prove the divinity of Jesus through another theory, he coined the formula “one substance, three persons.” Using this concept, he tried to show that the Father, his Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons existing in a single substance. In this way, Tertullian was the first to apply the Latin word “trinitas” (*trinity*) to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The book *The Theology of Tertullian* states: “(It was) a curious mixture of legal and philosophical ideas and terms that allowed Tertullian to pre-establish the Trinitarian doctrine in a formula that, despite its limitations and imperfections, was the basis of the doctrine that was later presented at the Council of Nicaea” (133) .

Consequently, Tertullian's formula - three persons in one divine substance - played an important role in the spread of religious error, of pagan origin, throughout Christendom. Likewise, he was a promoter of the idea that solemn festivals were abrogated for Christians. In his work *Against Marcion* , Tertullian wrongly asserts from Galatians and other passages that God despised Sabbaths and festivals, arguing: “You observe the days and the months, and the times and the years (Galatians 4:10), the Sabbaths , suppose - go , and 'the preparations' (...John 19:31)... and the fasts, and the 'holy days'. For the cessation of even is-cough, no less than circumcision , was designated by the decrees of the Creator, who had said by Isaiah: 'Their new moons, and their Sabbaths , and their feast days I cannot endure; their fasting, and festivals and ceremonies are abominable to me' (Isaiah 1:13-14). Also for Amos 'I hate, I despise his holidays. tives , and I will not smell in their solemn assemblies' (Amos 5:21). And again by Hosea, 'I will cause it to be suspended all their rejoicing, and their festival days, and their Sabbath , and their new moons, and all their solemn assemblies' (Hosea 2:11). The institutions that He Himself instituted, you ask , Did He Himself later destroy? Yeah, instead of any other. Or if He destroyed it, He only assisted in the Creator's purpose, removing what He had condemned. But this is not the place to discuss why the Creator *abolished his laws* . It's sufi - It is important for us to prove that He intended such abolition, so that it may be affirmed that the apostle tol did not determine anything to the prejudice of the Creator, since the abolition itself comes from the Creator” (134) .

On the other hand, Tertullian falls into error when he argues against the heretic Marcion regarding the Sabbath . Not understanding that the Messiah was also the Angel of Jehovah of the Old Testament, he assumes that they are separate identities and alleges that both - both Jehovah of the Old Testament and Christ in the New Testament - hated the Sabbath . Using the quote from Isaiah 1:14 and reasoning for Christ that: “ Even if He were not the Christ of the Jews, He (that is, Christ of the New Testament) held a hatred against the most solemn day of the Jews. He professedly only followed the Creator, like his Chris - to (Messiah), in this same hatred of the Sabbath ; for He exclaims through the mouth of Isaiah: 'His new moons and *His Saturdays my soul detests* ” (135) .

When reading Tertullian it is evident that he does not understand the true issues behind the statements in Isaiah, Amos and Hosea. In these texts the festivals observed by Israel and Judah, as seen, were contaminated. The problem was the lack of justice and righteousness (Amos 5:24), which is evident even by a superficial reading of the texts. In another portion of his work *Against Marcion* , Tertullian wrote:

“Concerning the Sabbath , I also have the following to say, that this question could not have arisen.”
ged if Christ had not publicly proclaimed Himself the Lord of the Sabbath ” (*136*) .

By this he meant that Christ had full authority to change from Saturday to Sunday the features that make it the day of rest for God, since all his lordship enabled him to do so. This is one of the arguments of apostate Christianity sustained to the present and that has its roots in the Western Church, where the anti-legalism and Judeophobia of the Church of Rome predominated. And finally, Tertullian concluded at the beginning of the third century:

“We (Christians, supposedly) have nothing to do with Saturdays , new moons and holidays.”
in which God was once pleased” (*137*) .

Eusebius, bishop of Rome and Catholic ecclesiastical historian, wrote in the same direction around 354 AD:

“We do not take into account circumcision, nor observe the Sabbath, because such things do not correspond -
give to Christians” (*138*) .

But he also recognized that the change from Saturday to Sunday as a sacred day was not divinely instituted, but by ecclesiastical tradition, when he said:

“We (Catholics) have transferred to Sunday, the Lord's Day, all the things that should be done.
be held on the Sabbath ” (*139*) .

Augustine of Hippo, who lived at the end of the 4th century and the beginning of the 5th century, was one of the theologians who contributed most to forging Catholic doctrine. In his youth he had immersed himself in the thoughts of the Greek philosopher Plato, who in his work *Phaedo* had pointed out the concept of the immortality of the soul, that is, that with death only the body decomposes, but not the spirit (which he calls “ soul”). This and other related ideas were taken by the “fathers of the (Catholic) Church”, such as Augustine, and developed the dogma that teaches that people continue to live after the death of the body, and go to heaven or hell, or the intermediate place of torment in which the souls of those who have not deserved eternal damnation are to be punished for their sins, and from where, once cleansed or purged of impurity, they are admitted to heaven. It is the doctrine of “purgatory”, already enunciated by Origen at the beginning of the 3rd century and clearly formulated by Augustine, as confirmed by Reinach:

“Saint Augustine had admitted, between future happiness and damnation, an intermediate state and expectation, that of the purification of souls by fire. It is the Orphic doctrine (Greek religion) and virgiliana (from the Roman poet Virgil) of purgatory, not a word about the matter is read in the E -
Gospels ” (*140*) .

The acceptance of the immortality of the soul, or rather, of the spirit in its conscious state after death, facilitated the development of the invocation of the saints and martyrs of Catholic Christianity, and the cult of the mother of Jesus, especially from the end of the 4th century .

In another theological area, Augustine of Hippo also apostatized against the Ten Commandments within the general context of Catholicism. In fact, in the course of the 4th century , both the worship of images and the observance of Sunday were *legalized* , which found support in the *flagrant modification of the Decalogue, of the fundamental commandments recorded in the Old Testament and confirmed in the New*. (Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5:17-19, 19:16-19, 22:36-40; Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 3:4), that is, to crown his sacrilegious work, The Catholic Church dared to erase from the law of God the second

commandment, which prohibits the worship or veneration of images or idols; Likewise, the fourth commandment, which orders rest and sanctify the Sabbath day, was definitively abolished by decree; and the tenth and last commandment was divided into two to preserve the number of these. The author or authors of the desecration of the Ten Commandments cannot be specifically determined, but Augustine was the one who shaped the final wording of the “Ten Commandments” that Roman Catholicism accepts to the present. This is recognized by the following Catholic source:

“Since Saint Augustine, the 'ten commandments' have occupied a predominant place in the catechesis of the future baptized and the faithful... The division and numbering of the commandments has varied in the course of history. The present catechism follows the division of the commandments *established by Saint Augustine* and that has become traditional in the Catholic Church” (**141**) .

Since then, the Catholic Church and all the branches that emerged from it have observed a spurious Decalogue, not the one that God transmitted to men through Moses. Note the differences between both Decalogues:

Nº de mandamiento	Decálogo de Dios	Decálogo católico
1	"No habrá para ti otros dioses delante de mí	"No tendrás otro Dios más que a mí
2	"No te harás escultura ni imagen alguna ni de lo que hay arriba en los cielos, ni de lo que hay abajo en la tierra, ni de lo que hay en las aguas debajo de la tierra. No te postrarás a ellas ni les darás culto, porque yo soy Yahveh, tu Dios..."	"No tomarás el nombre de Dios en vano
3	"No tomarás en falso el nombre de Yahveh, tu Dios	"Santificarás las fiestas
4	"Recuerda el día del Sábado para santificarlo	"Honrarás al padre y a la madre
5	"Honra a tu padre y a tu madre	"No matarás
6	"No matarás	"No fornicarás
7	"No cometerás adulterio	"No hurtarás
8	"No robarás	"No levantarás falsos testimonios ni mentirás
9	"No darás falso testimonio contra tu prójimo	"No desearás la mujer de tu prójimo
10	"No codiciarás la casa de tu prójimo, ni codiciarás la mujer de tu prójimo" *	"No codiciarás los bienes ajenos" **

(142, 143)

Augustine, although he was a Sunday man, believed in the spiritual and mystical Sabbath of Creation. In his work *Confessions* he expressed the following prayer:

“O Lord God , You who have given us everything, grant us also peace, the peace of the Sabbath, the peace no sunset! Because this beautiful order of things will pass when it has fulfilled the purpose it you have pointed them out. All of them were done in one morning and one afternoon. But the seventh day has no evening, because you have sanctified it so that it lasts forever. Your rest on the seventh day

After completing your works, announce to us through the voice of your Book, that we too, when let us finish our works by your grace, on the Sabbath of eternal life we will rest in you” (**144**)

This spiritual and eschatological interpretation of the Sabbath shows the deep appreciation that Augustine had for its meaning, but he did not accept the literal observation of the fourth commandment. He did not believe that Christians should keep the weekly Sabbath, and his conviction was expressed in the final wording of the Catholic Decalogue .

At the beginning of the 3rd century, Origen, the Alexandrian theologian, testifies that the Sabbath was still observed in his city. This reference to such a practice in Alexandria is important since two centuries later, two historians of the Catholic Church, Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomenus , report that the custom of meeting on Saturday was practiced everywhere, except in Rome and Alexandria (*145*) . . However, Socrates Scholasticus promoted the rejection of the observance of God's festivals, including the Sabbath , writing:

“The Savior and the apostles made no fixed rules for the observance of days... nor did the Evangelios and the apostles threatened us with some penalty, punishment or curse for rejecting them. (fixed dates of festivals), as the Mosaic law does to the Jews... the apostles' point was not point to the holidays, but to teach an upright and pious life” (*146*).

The “fathers of the (Catholic) Church” were not only anti-legalists , but also Judeophobic . They encouraged rejection of all that was Jewish and Judaic, just as some of the early Catholic writers had done; and several promoted hatred towards Jews.

Augustine of Hippo was no exception within that anti-Jewish spirit that was systematized through the writings and preachings of the majority of the Roman Catholic teachers of those centuries. He wrote at the end of the 4th century or the beginning of the following century:

“Judaism, since Christ, is a corruption. Indeed, 'Judas is the image of the Jewish people'; their understanding of the Scriptures is carnal; *They bear the blame for the death of the Savior* , because Through their parents they killed Christ. The Jews arrested him; the Jews insulted him; the JU-God bound him, crowned him with thorns, dishonored him by spitting on him, scourged him , heaped up abuse - you are about him; They hung him on a tree, they pierced him with a spear” (*147*)

Did the Jews do all this and of their own free will? The truth is that Augustine's knowledge regarding the crucifixion of Jesus the Messiah seems to be sadly empty, whether due to ignorance or bad faith. In his *Treatise against the Jews* , Augustine also wrote: “The Jews, in their degradation, are testimony to their error and to our truth” (*148*) . And in his work *The City of God* he places the Jewish people outside “Christian” society. (*149*) .

Jerome (331-420 AD), author of one of the most famous versions of the Bible, the *Latin Vulgate* , received teachings from the Jewish doctors of the law precisely to write his biblical work. Despite this , he also had great animosity towards the chosen people. Seller says about it:

“ And yet, even though he was taught by Jewish teachers, who taught him the 'Hebrew truth' of the Bible,... Jerome did not find the way to the 'elder brothers'. To those who one day They reproach their Jewish studies, considering them as heresies, they convince them of their orthodoxy, they assure - that: 'When it is necessary to despise the Jews, individually and as a people, *I detest them with unspeakable hatred* ' ” (*150*) .

Indeed, Jerome's words show no compassion when he describes the humiliations of the Jewish pilgrims in Jerusalem, when he says:

, perjured inhabitants (Jews) who murder are prohibited from entering Jerusalem.

They spoke to the servants of God and above all to the Son of God. They are only left to lament. They must com -

buy with money the permission to be able to mourn the destruction of his State... one can see how the des-
said people (Jews) come here, how the old women and the elderly come en masse, dressed -
two of rags, so that in their external appearance and in their clothing *the punishment of*
God ...; a people pursued by misfortune weep over the ruins of their Temple; a town that, no
However, *he is not worthy of compassion* ” (151) .

Other important and influential men within Catholicism at that time had their own version of the great
hatred towards the Jews. Ephraim called them “circumcised dogs.” Gregory of Nyssa, giving a homily
on the resurrection, said that the Jews were “adversaries of grace, enemies of God, the Devil’s
advocates, the spawn of vipers, the Sanhedrin of demons.” (152) .

But it was John Chrysostom (354-407 AD), archbishop of Constantinople, the greatest of the
Judeophobic “fathers of the (Catholic) Church . ” In the entire history of Catholicism he has no equal or
parallel in his hatred towards the Hebrew people. And, being in a high position, he used his powers of
oratory to complete the foundation of much of the anti-Judaism of the Catholic Church. In one of his
homilies, he said:

“How can Christians dare to 'hold the slightest conversation' with Jews, 'the most
wretched of all men', men who are '...concupiscent, rapacious, avaricious, perverse bandits -
fidios'. Are they not 'murderers, destroyers, demon-possessed men' to whom the
life and drunkenness have given over to the customs of pigs and the lustful goat. They
They only know one thing: satisfy their guts, get drunk, kill and ruin...
"The synagogue? It is not only a theater and a house of prostitution, but a den of bandits, a
'reparation of wild beasts', a place of 'shame and ridicule, the domicile of the Devil, as well -
so are the souls of the Jews.' Truly the Jews worship the Devil; their rites are 'criminal and
unclean'; their religion is 'a disease'. Their synagogue, again, is 'an assembly of criminals...
a den of thieves... a cave of demons, an abyss of perdition... I also hate
the synagogue'.
“ *God hates the Jews and always hated the Jews. I also hate the Jews* ” (153) .

But what caused his great hatred towards the Jews? In Chrysostom's own words:
“His hateful 'murder' of Christ... *for this decide there is no possible atonement* , nor indulgence, nor
sorry; *only revenge that has no end* ” (154) .

Thus Chrysostom contributed to cementing in the minds of apostate Christianity its own stereotype of a
Jew; “murderers of Christ”, and the guilt of the people of Israel: “decide”. Regarding this, the Jewish
historian Heinrich Graetz was not wrong when he wrote in the 19th century:

“This profession of faith involving hatred of Jews was not just a particular point of view of one state.
critor , but became an oracle for all of Christendom, who assimilated the writings of the pa -
dres of the (Catholic) Church venerated as saints, considering them as revelation. This profession
of faith he later armed the kings and the plebs, the statesmen and the monks, crusaders and
ecclesiastics against the Jews and has induced them to invent instruments of torment and to light the
bonfires” (155) .

Catholic) Church fathers is too long for our present purposes. Suffice it to say that one rarely finds one
who was truly sympathetic to the Jew. And the ferocity of the anti-Semitism (anti-Judaism) of the (Catholic)
Church did not subside with the passage of time” (156) .

After this brief historical examination of the “fathers of the (Catholic) Church”, as well as some of
their teachings, it can be clearly seen that they transmitted errors and horrors that came to constitute the

“Catholic-Orthodox” Tradition, which in some way It was also transferred to the Protestant branches. True Christianity, which developed parallel to that Christianity, did not share or accept such teachings. First, Jesus Christ himself prohibited the use of the religious title “father” by saying: “Do not *call anyone* on earth your father; because one is yours Father, who is in heaven” (Matthew 23:9). Using this term to designate a religious or spiritual figure was not and has not been a biblical practice or of the Christian Church of God. Second, the Word of God, the Bible, was completed around 99 AD with the writings of the apostle John. Therefore, true Christians should not turn to other figures for inspirational revelation or interpretation. From the beginning, spiritual Israel sought not to invalidate the Word of God by following human traditions (Matthew 15:6). It is spiritually deadly to allow man's traditions to take the place of God's Word: “If the blind lead the blind,” said Jesus, “they will both fall into a pit” (Matthew 15:4).

The existence of Catholic Tradition – represented by the teachings of the “fathers” – attacks the Scriptures themselves. The apostle exhorted: “All Scripture (Bible) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect” (2 Timothy 3:16- 17). Consequently, the early Church of God and of the following centuries did not need any other revelation apart from the words of God contained in the Holy Scriptures. The book of Revelation warns against adding anything to the inspired account (Revelation 22:18).

The Catholic Church becomes paganized and worldly

Until now, a large part of the factors that promoted apostasy within early Christianity have been analyzed in order to highlight the contrast between the authentic Church of God and Christianity (represented by the Catholic Church and all the branches detached from it). . We must remember the distortion of the apostolic teachings already denounced by the apostle Peter; the change in the ethnic composition of the Church in which the majority of Gentile origin was disassociated from Judaism; The Jewish revolts defeated by the Romans promoted the distancing of the Judaic features that characterized original Christianity; The gradual transfer of authority and influence from the congregation of Jerusalem to that of Rome caused the leadership of the latter to promote a changing and anti-Jewish doctrine, abolishing the festivals of God and imposing others; The first Catholic theologians and proto-Catholic literature gradually gave rise to a theology different and contrary to the Judaic features of early Christianity; The incipient pagan influence contributed to the introduction of new religious festivals that replaced the authentic biblical festivals; The apocryphal works nourished Christianity with new beliefs and traditions in false Christianity; and the erroneous teachings of the “fathers of the (Catholic) Church” consolidated the doctrinal “Tradition” of Roman Catholicism. But two last decisive factors in the formation of Roman Catholicism still need to be specified: the alliance with secular power and the strong pagan influence on its dogmas and customs.

sub-apostolic Christianity was taking the first steps in adopting pagan religious beliefs and practices, whether of Babylonian, Persian, Greek or other origin. This is explained because the world in which Jesus Christ established his Church of the New Covenant was the world of the Roman Empire that extended from Britain (present-day England) to the last confines of what is now Turkey, encompassing peoples of diverse origins and different cultures under the same system of government. Within that framework the apostles and other missionaries preached the Gospel; and when Christianity spread beyond Judea, among the Gentiles, it began to clash with the followers of the pagan, idolatrous and

superstitious religions of Babylon, Persia, Greece and other regions. Under these circumstances the authentic Gospel began to wane as the teachings of false ministers and teachers, strongly influenced by those religions, persistently infiltrated the congregations. Little by little, first covertly and secretly, and then more openly as it gained strength and control over the badly converted Christians, the spirit of apostasy and heresy made its deceptive and blasphemous work progress. But not only the leaders introduced the apostasy of pagan origin, but also the faithful themselves. Here is the historical evidence: Although in the second half of the 2nd century AD there was a desire to observe the second commandment of the true Decalogue (Exodus 20: 4-5), and pictorial and sculptural images of a religious nature were severely prohibited, there were already Christians who began to openly represent to God and biblical characters and scenes; and even to associate some of their ancient pagan beliefs with those they professed before their conversion. This apostate attitude is well reflected in the catacombs, which sheltered the Christians of Rome. In many of its scenes pagan mythological characters are represented, among which are: Orpheus, Greco-Roman hero and demigod; Cupid and Psyche, who represent the fate of the soul in the current life and the next, etc. On the other hand, there are some epitaphs that reflect contrast to biblical teachings, other inscriptions reflect the idea that the dead can help the living or communicate with them: "Remember your husband and your children", "Pray for us", "I pray for you", "I am at peace" (157) . In short, this mixture of Christian and pagan ideas demonstrates that the "faithful" of Rome were no longer acting completely in accordance with the evangelical knowledge transmitted by the apostles of Jesus; That is, the Christianity of some converts was already soaked in pagan ideas.

All those who claimed to be Christians, whether they were from the East or the West, whether they were true Christians, Catholics or other minor currents, apostates and heretics, all had to endure trials and tribulations in those times of intolerance and Roman persecutions. Despite such difficulties, Christianity in general was growing quantitatively, but qualitatively it was weakened through the introduction of pre-Christian dogmas and traditions. The simple truths of the Gospel continued to be subject to distortions and changes. For example, the practice of baptizing children was imposed under the justification of "original sin"; Representations of the cross began to appear; the use of pictorial images with religious content began to become widespread; the concept of purgatory originated; the development of the Trinitarian dogma about God began; The cult of martyrs began, and along with the first monastic communities, celibacy was systematically imposed.

The 4th century AD brings great changes in the Roman imperial world, which will directly affect both the Church of God and Christianity. As has been said, both sectors had been undergoing trials and suffering for almost 250 years, and at the beginning of that century no change was seen. However, Constantine's assumption of imperial power in Rome marked the inauguration of a new era for Christianity in general.

Emperor Constantine, son of a Catholic mother, knew the extent that Christianity had taken, despite the persecutions undertaken by the Roman State. He understood that he could no longer be stopped, it was useless to pursue him, and that the situation had to be considered. With political skill, rather than religious convictions, Constantine decided to rely on Christians to give unity and stability to the Empire. A peace agreement was then reached between the State and Christianity until then clandestine, which was later followed by an alliance: with Emperor Constantine the evolution of Catholic Christianity into a State religion began. In this regard, a historian states:

"With a view to obtaining political advantage - and not because he had converted, he continued to worship to the Sun almost all his life, and he was not baptized as a Christian until twenty-five years later - he thought - achieve some political benefits by sponsoring the Christian religion. He believed that with the renewed popu -

larity of the now altered Christianity, this would become the religion of the future” (158) .

In the year 313 AD Constantine issued a proclamation called the *Edict of Toleration* or *Edict of Milan* , in which freedom of conscience was assured to all citizens of the Roman Empire, Christianity was accepted as an official religion in the Empire and on an equal footing with other religions. For Christians, the imperial decree represented the great change they had long desired: their religion had officially achieved equal rights with paganism. Furthermore, the edict particularly favored Christianity: all its property was restored, even at the expense of the imperial treasury. And at the same time Emperor Constantine declared himself a “Christian” (actually, Catholic), although he was not baptized as such until just before his death (337 AD). He retained the title of Pontiff Maximus and, without persecuting paganism, definitively tipped the balance of neutrality in favor of Christianity.

But with what sector of Christianity did the pagan emperor come into contact and link up? Undoubtedly it was not true Christianity, that which the world had lost sight of and which was weak, persecuted and rejected. No, that authentic Christianity was still hidden, while Catholic Christianity, now powerful, influential and completely different from the apostolic Church, was now united to earthly power. This one, who accepted the doctrine of grace but turned it into licentiousness, began to proselytize among the pagan Gentiles:

“Once recognized by Constantine, this Church launched with new vigor into the preaching of its message . His teachers and preachers traveled to all corners of the Roman Empire with their message. about Christ. Thousands, perhaps millions, heard this gospel and believed it, but it was not the Gospel. gelio that Christ had preached” (159) .

Now came the worst in this gradual process of union between Catholic Christianity and paganism, whose consequences are related, on the one hand, to external actions and, on the other, to doctrinal positions. In the first case we see a Catholic Church that, from being persecuted, became a persecutor of those who were dissidents of its religious position; He also became worldly by surrendering to the way of life of the Gentile world. And in the second case, the conversion of large masses of pagans resulted in a deepening of their influence on Catholic dogmas and customs during the 4th and 5th centuries AD. That was the worst tragedy that early Catholicism experienced and that affected directly to dissident Christians, including the Church of God.

The union of the Catholic Church and the Roman State meant that apostate Christianity became part of this world, even though Jesus had warned his followers that they were not part of the world (John 15:19). Until the 4th century those who claimed to follow Christ had been separated from the Roman civil world in many ways, despite the growing apostasy within Christendom. However, the union between Catholicism and the Roman world had serious consequences. Here are some historical testimonies:

“Church (Catholic) and world would be confused... so the Church (Catholic) would lose its purity, and, although she seemed to conquer, she herself would be conquered... Identified, or almost identified (now), Catholic) Church deeply suffers from the degrading influence of life” (160) .

Catholic) Church – through its representatives, the bishops – passionately joined the State and gave him a lot” (161) .

“Many ecclesiastics left their positions to undertake more lucrative things; others search

They spent their fortune on the court, which knew very well how to misuse the spiritual for worldly purposes; Many broke the laws of the (Catholic) Church without shame, they had maids at home or accused.

they hoarded treasures ; many times the sermons were sterile because the preacher's life was counterproductive” (*162*) .

“**With the imperial officialization of the (Catholic) Church** it became worldly and institutionalized, to be a congregation forever, eternal like the Empire” (*163*) .

“**And when in the 4th century the (Catholic) Church merged with the Empire**, everything in it was taken away. any part had been considered honorable and holy” (*164*) .

"As soon as (Catholic) Christianity felt itself master of the Empire, it began to persecute not only the pagans, but to the dissident Christians” (*165*) .

Catholics came to call Constantine “the Great,” because of the favors granted. In this political-religious relationship there were two linked milestones to the development of the people of God: one, regarding the observance of the Sabbath, and another to Catholic Judeophobia.

Although since the end of the 1st century AD, preference had been given to Sunday over Saturday as the Lord's day, for Christian rest and divine worship, in the time of Constantine the Great, this practice was not yet official within Christianity. It was this still pagan emperor who intervened directly in the consecration of Sunday as a “Christian” day of rest, since there was no homogeneity in this regard as there were many communities that kept the biblical Sabbath . In the year 321 AD a law relating to this matter ordered:

“Let all the judges, and all the inhabitants of the city, and all the merchants and craftsmen *rest - on the venerable day of the Sun*. However , let the farmers attend with complete freedom to the cultivation of the fields, since it often happens that no other day is so suitable for sowing grain or to plant the vineyard; hence the favorable time granted by heaven should not be missed” (*166*) .

Thus, Constantine was the first to officially and rigorously order the observance of Sunday as a day of rest, he was not the one who replaced Saturday with Sunday. But why did Constantine promulgate this law? Interested in the unity of the Empire, based, according to him, on the unity of Christianity, also led him to intervene from the first moment in strictly religious matters to ensure doctrinal homogeneity. According to historical information, the bishop of Rome at that time, Eusebius, a close friend and flatterer of Constantine, asserted to him that Christ had transferred the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday. Eusebius himself will later recognize that this was a falsehood, when he said:

“We have transferred to Sunday, the Lord's day, all the things that were to be done on Saturday - bado ” (*167*) .

On the other hand, the case of the Jewish people is dramatic. Initially, the edict of tolerance of Milan, promulgated in 313 AD, had also included the Jews, which only ratified what had already been legally established within the Roman Empire for a long time: the acceptance and tolerance of the Jewish religion. . Judaism was, as before, a “licita religion” (*permissible religion*), and would therefore continue to enjoy the same rights that had been granted to Christianity. However, shortly after, the Judeophobic spirit of Catholicism emerged, prompting Constantine to promulgate the first two anti-Jewish edicts in the year 315 AD. Catholicism put all its effort into breaking divine prophecies by trying to convert them. The Jewish religion was declared a “sacrilegious cult” of a “condemned and blasphemous people” and its supporters were judged as “deicides” or murderers of Christ. He was prohibited, under penalty of being burned alive, from gaining followers for his religion among the “Christians” or from trying to recapture Jews who had converted to Catholicism. When the Council of

Nicaea (325 AD) declared that the ancient Christian Easter, celebrated on the 14th of Abib in the afternoon, should be abolished as Judaizing, and decreed that Easter should be celebrated on the Sunday following the 14th of Abib, that is, The Sunday after the full moon and following the March equinox, it was determined that it would never be celebrated on the same day as the Jews.

The argument that was considered to make that decision regarding Easter has been preserved, which literally says:

“It would be undignified if in the celebration of this holy festival we followed the custom of the Jews who They stained their hands with the most enormous crime and were spiritually blind. From here on -

lante *We no longer want to have anything in common with the Jewish people*, who are our enemies, because our

Redeemer has shown us another way... It would be paradoxical to allow the Jews to boast of that we are not capable of celebrating the Passover festival without their instructions” (168).

In his history of the Church, Bishop Eusebius, main speaker of the aforementioned Catholic council, puts those words in the mouth of Emperor Constantine, which were in accordance with the views of the apostate Church. And she knew how to make her will accepted.

But, at the same time that Catholicism became worldly by relating to secular power, the conditions were met for pagan influence to grow on it between the 4th and 5th centuries. In that period a series of customs were introduced that deepened the apostasy. For example, birthday celebrations, Christmas celebrations, New Year celebrations; special forms of worship consecrated to Christ, the mother of Jesus and the saints; the veneration of the “Virgin Mary”; the widespread cult of images and saints and their relics, etc. To objectively graph that process, some impartial texts from historians are presented who agree in demonstrating how false Christianity became paganized, in such a way that it is difficult to recognize the apostolic Church in that “form of Christianity”:

“... the simplicity of the Gospel was corrupted; ostentatious rites and ceremonies were introduced; HE They conferred worldly honors and emoluments on the teachers of (Catholic) Christianity, and the kingdom of “Christ to a great extent was converted into a kingdom of this world” (169).

“...the rulers of the Church from early times were prepared to adopt, imitate, or sanctify tion, if the occasion arises, the existing rites and customs of the populace, as well as the philosophies Sofia of the educated class... The use of temples, and these dedicated to particular saints, and ornamented sometimes with tree branches; incense, lamps, and candles; votive offerings to the king recover from illnesses; holy water; ... holidays and seasons, the use of calendars (religious), processions, blessings over the fields, priestly vestments, the tonsure..., the vol - seen towards the East, images some time later, perhaps the ecclesiastical song, and the kirieleisón, They are all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the (Catholic) Church” (170).

“We would have to close our eyes to the evidence to deny pagan survivals in the Christian cult.” (Catholic)... It is certain that the bishops, individually and in councils, fought as best they knew how against adaptations and comebacks... The concessions or transfers that had to be allowed They show very well the strength of the customs that the new converts could not abandon.

“ They imposed certain holidays. The Saturnalia ritual influenced... Popular faith imposed the conservation of sacred places, including fountains, forest places, etc. He imposed the angels, the images - genes, amulets and the development of the cult of martyrs and their relics.

“Finally, to address multitudes from now on, the cult of a triumphant religion could no longer celebrate be like that of small groups forced into hiding due to persecution. This represented u - a broader separation between the faithful and the clergy. Above all, he surrounded himself with the splendor that his life allowed him.

wealth of the Church (Catholic). He multiplied, enlarged and beautified the basilicas. Adopted a liturgy more thorough; He associated an external ceremonial with prayer, reading aloud and communion. of gestures, songs and music suitable to sustain and exalt all the fervors, those of the minorities exalted as well as that of the humble.

“In this way, by the splendor of their divine dwellings, by the nobility of their rites and the magnificence - ity of its festivals, (Catholic) Christianity gave its believers as much and more than paganism” (*171*)

“Also in other spheres, ancient tradition (paganism) has been mixed with Catholicism in the I- imperial church The cult of saints, relics and images, the calendar of festivals and - clesiastics and some elements of ecclesiastical ritual and ceremonial come from conceptions and customs of the ancient religion prior to Christianity and actually prolong what they intend to sustain. title _ Thus, in the 4th century, in Rome, the usual winter solstice festival (December 25) was a- adopted by the Church (Catholic) as the festival of the birth of Jesus Christ and then passed and spread throughout

everyone. The ecclesiastical buildings surpassed in sumptuous offerings of all kinds and in the most rich artistic ornament to the ancient temples and had, like these, fixed altars instead of primitive moving tables used by the first Christians. Candles and incense, the use of which by pagans we are mocked by the ancient Christian (Catholic) apologists, but who soon found employment in the circles - Gnostic Christian asses, exalt and exalt the mysterious element of the cult, carried out by the sa - piglets wrapped in rich clothes full of symbolic meaning. Already in the early days it was celebrated the memory of the martyrs, as the confessors of the spirit whose testimony was watered by the holy gre ; From then on they were considered, as well as the bishops and holy friars, as effective intercedents . heavenly sores and auxiliaries. Also the apostles, Jesus, his mother and other people from sacred history - They cease to be simply heralds and examples of the faith and become objects of veneration.

religious tion . A multitude of miracles relate not only to the lives of the saints, but also to the graves - ra and sanctuaries, as well as relics. Processions and pilgrimages are established in the days and in the places consecrated to them; great popular festivals with festival foods and all kinds manifestations of joy serve to honor his memory. The cult of images is still an object of great attacks; but this itself shows that it was prevailing everywhere. In all this the purpose and effort of the directing spirits were straightened and the ancient custom was infused with a sense of new idea and to fill the traditional forms of popular customs with 'Christian' content." (*172*) .

“But, like this, the victory was too quick, too complete. Those flocks of pagans, first robbed hands, then barbarians , pushed by choice or force into the lap of the (Catholic) Church, degraded and and altered Christian sentiment. These crowds surreptitiously reintroduced into the christianis - mo (official) superstitions and polytheism, which caused him so much horror. However , not to such an extent - so that the cult of the saints was the cult of the pagan gods, disguised under a name different. The examples... (of) cases of substitution must have occurred without the notice of the clerics, who - nes perceived with a very subtle sense of smell every smell of paganism. But those masses too quickly insufficiently purified hearts to the (Catholic) Church , in those in which the pagan germs, poorly stifled, were reborn with vigor. Paganism is the weed that re lives incessantly in Catholicism” (*173*) .

A final text, which summarizes the central idea of the previous evidence and descriptions, belongs to Will Durant, who adds:

“(Catholic) Christianity did not destroy paganism; rather he adopted it” (*174*) .

Another of the doctrinal principles of the Catholic Church that gained ground in the course of the 4th century was that of the primacy of the bishop of Rome among all other bishops and over all of Christendom.

Towards the middle of that century, Catholicism had achieved a solid federal structure based on several metropolises or large cities headed by an autonomous episcopal authority. These cities, with their respective constituencies, were: Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Ephesus, in the East; and Rome, Milan, Aquileia and Arles, in the West. The metropolitan bishops or patriarchs, considered “successors of the apostles,” had acquired authority in these localities and also authentic public and civil powers, that is, they assumed earthly functions.

However, since the Council of Serdica (343 AD) the idea that the bishop of Rome was the first among his peers gained ground, with which, from then on, the federal structure of the Catholic Church was yielding to the opportunity to move to a monarchical structure. The bishop of Rome himself, who would later be given the exclusive name of “Pope” (from the Latin, *father*), aspired to have authority and priority over all Catholicism. It was based on Rome's status as the capital of the Empire and on the fact that Paul and Peter had been martyred in the city. However, he based his authority on the belief that Jesus had supposedly named Peter head of the Church (Matthew 16:18), a topic that has already been clarified. Therefore, Peter was considered the first bishop of the imperial city, and his successors in this office were to inherit his authority and powers. Even Bishop Damasus (366-384 AD) took the title of “Maximum (Sumo) Pontiff”, a pagan title that future Catholic Popes will hold (until the present).

Later, at the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) it was decreed that the Patriarch of Constantinople would have authority over all the churches of the East and his position was equated to that of the Roman pontiff, who was only recognized as an honorary primate. However, the Roman bishop Leo I reacted by not ratifying that decision, causing the bishops gathered on that occasion to respond to the pronouncements of the Roman pontiff with the words: “Peter has spoken in León; Let him be anathema who believes otherwise.”

The doctrine that the bishop of Rome was the successor of the apostle Peter began to take firm root in Catholicism, even more so when in that same year 451 Leo I made a blunt declaration, which in part said:

“I will revive government once again upon this Earth; not by bringing back the Caesars, but by declaring a new theocracy, by making myself vicegerent of Christ...No I will wear a diadem, but a tiara, symbol of universal sovereignty, before which barbarism disappears - will disappear and happiness will be restored” (175).

During the Middle Ages, the Pope came to represent the very denial of the teachings of Jesus and the apostles and an open offense to God, since he assumed titles proper to Divinity. He was called “Lord God the Pope,” and it was declared that the Roman pontiff is “the vicar on Earth, not of a mere man, but of God himself.” A Catholic encyclopedia says: “The Pope possesses such a great and exalted dignity that he is not merely a human being, but as if he were God, and the Vicar of God... It is as if he were God on earth” (176). . Pope Leo XIII said in 1894: “We hold on this earth the place of the almighty God ” (177) . Filii Dei, in Latin, meaning *Vicar or Representative of the Son of God* , which has been accepted and used by the Popes. In this regard, the following testimonies are presented:

“When Lucio Ferraris - says Urías Smith - wrote his elaborate theological work around 1775, he gave ba - jo the article 'Pope' the title Vicarius Filii Dei, and cited as authority on the matter the revised canon law - sada , expanded and published in Rome in 1890, the document and the title continued in it” (178) .

“Regarding the title Vicarius Filii Dei, the Catholic magazine *Our Sunday Visitor* , April 18, 1915,

reported in response to the question: What are the letters that are supposed to be on the Pope's crown ?
...The letters inscribed on the Pope's miter are these: Vicarius Filii Dei, which is Latin for Vicar of the Son of God..." (179) .

In truth, the Roman Catholic Pope is nothing more than the leader of the great apostate sect predominant in Christendom, which persecuted the Church of God.

The apostasy that began at the end of the first century AD has been consummated.

The Roman Catholic Church abolished God's law... and so did its “daughters”

According to what has been explained so far, apostasy or deviation from true doctrine and worship began increasingly at the end of the 1st century AD, giving rise to various trends within what is appropriately called *Christianity* . Within this process, Catholicism took shape, which - initially persecuted as was the true Church - came to join the Roman State in the 4th century , and ended up consolidating itself as the religious norm throughout the Roman Empire: paganism began to disappear and The dissident Christian sects and communities were placed outside the law with the first universal councils.

Catholicism early began to distinguish itself from the Church of God because - inspired by the erroneous interpretation of the Scriptures and by the other factors examined - it denied the validity of God's spiritual law, abolished the festivals of worship of God and modified the original law. “once given to the saints,” because he understood that the grace established by the death of Jesus the Christ nullified the *entire* legal system of the Old Covenant. He believed he had all the authority and power to do so, but he only weakened God's authority when he strove to fight against the apostolic teachings regarding the law and sign of God, such as the biblical festivals. In this regard, the *Roman Catholic Library Prompta* is cited , which recognizes that the “Pope (the Roman bishops) has such great authority and power that he can modify, explain or interpret divine laws.” (180) . On the other hand, anti-biblical Christianity uses a *Catechism* to teach common people, according to which:

“the law of God is modified, so that the second commandment that prohibits

image gilding . The fourth is truncated, so that it can support the observance of the first day of the week (Sunday), instead of the true Saturday . The tenth is divided into two, in order to restore the number of commandments to ten” (181) .

God had appointed the Sabbath and the other festivals of Leviticus 23 as the sign between Him and His people, first Israel and then extended to the Christian Church, but the apostasy abolished the latter and generally maintained the observance of the Sabbath alongside Sunday for some time. time, until it is eradicated very soon. Coleman confirms this fact:

“During the early days of the Church (the first day of the week) was never titled 'the Sabbath '.

This word was limited to the seventh day of the week, the Jewish Sabbath , which we already said continued observed for several centuries by converts to Christianity” (182) .

This information is made clearer in the way this historian admits that Sunday was nothing more than a human ordinance:

“No law or precept appears to have been given by Christ (concerning) the institution of the 'day of the Lord' (the which Coleman refers to Sunday in error) or the substitution of the first for the seventh day of the week.

na . The observance of the ' Lord 's day ' (Sunday) was ordered while still on the Sabbath... continued: Sabbath was not suspended until Sunday acquired the same solemnity and importance as in

The beginning belonged to the great day that God originally ordained and blessed...But before long,
Since the 'day of the Lord' was fully established (in the Roman Catholic Church), the observation -
The validity of the Sabbath ...was gradually discontinued and was finally denounced as heretical” (183) .

During the Middle Ages (5th to 15th centuries), especially in the second part of that historical period, dissident movements emerged from Roman Catholicism, but although they rejected many of its dogmas, they maintained animosity towards the law and the sign of God. This is the case of John Wyclif (in England) and John Huss (in Bohemia) and their followers. And all the Protestant Churches detached from Catholicism since the 16th century carry the same imprint. They preserved certain beliefs and customs of the apostate Church and, by the way, their rejection of the literal validity of the Decalogue and the sign, the Sabbaths of God. It could be said that the conglomerate of “evangelical” or Protestant Churches are a kind of “daughters” that maintained, and maintain, the mark of their “spiritual mother.” The following sources refer to this fact:

“There is a great false religious system that the Bible calls 'Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and abominations of the earth' (Revelation 17:5) that are disguised as 'Christian'. She is identified as a 'mother of Iglesias' who has 'Protestant daughters ' who abandoned her previously, but they are still part of your same system. This system has carefully falsified ified (almost) all the hundreds of doctrines of God” (184) .

"We now have what is known as the Protestant Church... He was born of his own mother, the harlot of Babylon, and indeed she preserved many of her pagan mannerisms (traits), rituals and customs. celebrations and festivals, such as commemorating the birth of the god Mithras every December 25 and every Sunday.

Truly, the Protestant Church did not fall far from its mother, the whore of Babylon; that's why called 'Protestant', because it protested against *some excesses* , not because it was a different Church” (185)

“Because ... paganism was mixed with Christianity, the true Babylonian origin of the apostate Christianity hid itself becoming a mystery, 'Mystery, Babylon the Great'...
“We have seen how the (Protestant) Reformation rejected a certain amount of the pagan element of Romance. nism , but retained part of it. And so we end up clarifying that today most of what which is called *Christianity* is still in an apostate state as a result of the apostasy of the centuries III and IV, from where the world has been deceived. And as for this apostate system that is known as - mo 'Mystery of Babylon', God has said: 'Come out of her, my people, lest you be partakers of their sins ’” (186) .

At the end of this chapter, it is necessary to clarify that the examination of the development of the apostasy has had the objective of determining the moment and the circumstances that caused the apostolic Church to divide into two divergent spiritual currents or paths: one possessor and transmitter of the Jewish heritage , according to the prophecy, and another distant and contradictory to it, impregnated with paganism. This element of judgment will allow us to distinguish the Church of God over the centuries, up to the present.

GRADES

(1) *Universal history* , vol. II, p. 560

(2) Cited in Juan C. Varetto , *The March of Christianity* , p. 43

(3) Varetto , pp . 43-44

(4) idem , p . 44

- (5) Christadelphian Biblical Mission , *Yours is the kingdom. The message of original Christianity* , chap. 8; www.labiblia.com/vtuyo
- (6) Francois -Marie Arouet, *Philosophical Letters and Other Writings* , p. 156
- (7) *Annals* , 15:44:2-3; cited in www.meta-religi3n.com/Religiones_del_mundo
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- (10) JPV, *Christianity of the first four centuries*, “Introduction”, www.cristianismo-primitivo.org/net
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- (12) Mario Seiglie , *History of the True Church* , no. 2, p. 1
- (13) idem, p. 2
- (14) Mario Seiglie , *What is Galatians about?* , p. twenty-one
- (15) *Fundamental Electronic Library of Hope* , Seventh-day Adventist Church , “Comments” section “Biblicals ”, vol. 6, 'General Articles: the early Church'
- (16) Luis Castillo, *Brief history of early Christianity* , chap. VIII
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- (18) William Townsend, *A Brief History of the Church* , pp. 57-58; cited in Dugger and Dodd, *A History of the true Church*, p. fifteen
- (19) Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* , p. 260
- (20) Samuel G. Green, *Handbook of Ecclesiastical History* ; cited in *The Pure Truth* , July-August 1986, p. 23
- (21) William Fitzgerald, *Lectures on Ecclesiastical History* ; cited idem, p. 24
- (22) Philip Schaff , *History of the Christian Church*; cited idem
- (23) William Mc Birnie , *The Search for the Twelve Apostles* , p. fifteen; cited in Seiglie , *The Bible under the lens of science* , no. 292, p. 1
- (24) Jesse Hurlbut , *The History of the Christian Church* , pp. 37, 55; cited in Seiglie , idem
- (25) *Theology of the New Testament* ; cited in Seiglie , *What is it about...?* , p. 13
- (26) Bible Advocate Express, ministry of the Seventh Day Church of God; www.cog7.org ; art. “ The origin and Saturday change ”
- (27) Paul Johnson, *History of the Jews* , p. 156
- 28) Robert D. Brimsmead , *Re-examining Sabbatarianism* , chap. II; www.marktab.org/ebrins4
- (29) *The Messianic Time* , www.ezboard.com ; art. “ Who was the apostle and what did he teach the Jews and Gentiles?” Manuel Rojas
- (30) Johnson, p. 152
- (31) For three years (132-135 AD) hundreds of thousands of Jewish fighters fight against the Roman legions, being defeated only after both sides had suffered heavy casualties . Judea was devastated. The men who who had participated in the rebellion were orthodox Jews who tried very hard, despite the desperate circumstances, to observe the Mosaic law; for example, the Sabbath, festivities , obligations priestly and levitical. There is no evidence that Simon claimed the character of Messiah, anointed one or leader. spiritual in any other sense (Johnson, p. 148)
- (32) Antonio Romero, *The Triumph of Christianity* , p. 26
- (33) *Sunday in the Space Age* , p. 70-71; cited in Samuel Bacchiocchi , *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, Appendix - From Saturday to Sunday', p. 213
- (34) Johnson, pp. 149-150
- (36) Robert D. Brimsmead , *Re- examining ...* , chap. II; www.marktab.org/ebrins4 and <http://www.quango.net/verdict/index>
- (37) *The history of...* , pp. 37, 55; cited in Seiglie , *History of the true...* , no. 3, p. 2
- (38) *A History of the True Church* , p. 27
- (39) *Early Church. Fundamental Theology* , www.mercaba.org/DicTF/TF_iglesia
- (40) Enrique Moliné , *The Fathers of the Church*, www.mercaba.org.TESORO
- (41) Henry H. Halley, *Manual Compendium of the Bible* , p. 661
- (42) ditto
- (43) idem, p. 660
- (44) *Introduction to the Bible* , p. 43
- (45) Moliné , *Los Padres...*
- (46) Varetto , p . 52; Halley, p . 660
- (47) *Manual compendium...* , page. 661
- (48) Moliné , *Los Padres...*
- (49) Kelly Marshall, *TrueOriginal Church/Faith Once Delivered*; home.datawest.net/esn-recovery
- (51) *Didache* , 10; teleline.terra.es
- (52) *Letter of Ignatius of Antioch to the Ephesians* ; www.mercaba.org/TESORO/l-antioquia
- (53) *Didache* , 7; teleline.terra.es
- (54) *The Origin and Change of the Sabbath* , Seventh Day Church of God; www.cog7.org/Literature
- (55) *Epistle of Barnabas* , 15:8; cited in www.cristianismo-primitivo.org
- (57) Joel Carmichael , *The Satanization of the Jews*; www.beitshalom.org/Articulos

- (58) Klaus Wengst , *When did Christianity begin?* , www.jcrelations.net/es/index
- (59) Salo Baron , *Social and Religious History of the Jewish People* , pp. 181-182
- (60) *Doctrine of the twelve apostles* , 14, 19; cited in Bacchiocchi , *Divine Repose...* , p. 223-224
- (62) Wengst , *When did it start...?*
- (63) What should we think about Replacement Theology?, Michael J. Vlach , <https://evangelio.blog/2019/07/22/que-deberiamos-pensar-sobre-la-teologia-de-reemplazo/>
- (65) ditto
- (66) *Electronic Library...*
- (67) IV, 1
- (68) 11th edition, 8: 828; quoted in Seigle , *What is it about...?* , p. 6
- (69) *The holy days of God* , Christian Churches of God; www.logon.org/spanish/s/
- (70) Bacchiocchi , *Divine Repose...* , p. 219
- (71) Shema Congregation Yisrael , www.shema.com/modules.php
- (72) *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* , vol. IV, p. 2,633; cited in *The Origin and the...* , Church of God of the Seventh day; www.cog7.org/Literature
- (73) Mark Finley, *The Sabbath Through History* ; [www.contestandotupregunta.org/elsabadoen history](http://www.contestandotupregunta.org/elsabadoen%20historia)
- (74) *History of religions* , page 228
- (75) Charles H. Cléber , *The Mark of the Beast* , www.revealed.org/mark
- (76) European- American *Encyclopedia* , Ed. Espasa-Calpe, t. XVIII, pp. 1835-1836
- (77) *Saturday or Sunday ?* , p. 28-29
- (78) Anthony Buzzard , *The Law, the Sabbath , and New Testament Christianity* ; www.mindspring.com/anthonybuzzard
- (79) Bacchiocchi , *Divine Repose...* , p. 213-214
- (80) *Dialogue with Tryphon* , 47; Dixon Cartwright, *En Transition* newspaper , April 22, 1996, p. 7; art. “Adventist scholar and general pastor of the IDU face each other again”
- (81) “The role played by the church of Rome in favor of Sabbath fasting is well documented in texts of the Bishop Callistus (217-222 AD), Hippolytus (170-236), Sylvester (314-335), Pope Innocent I (407-417), Augustine (354-430) and Cassian (360 - 435). This fast not only had the mission of renewing the *Christian 's sorrow* for the death of Christ, but also, as he wrote clearly Bishop Silvestre, to demonstrate his contempt for the Jews (' exsecration judaeorum '). The displeasure and discomfort resulting from fasting were intended to spare Christians ' the appearance of keeping the Sabbath like the Jews', and help them enter with more eagerness and joy into the observance on Sunday” (Bacchiocchi , *Divine Repose...* , page 220)
- (82) *The origin and the...* , Seventh Day Church of God; www.cog7.org/Literature
- (83) *Electronic Library...*
- (84) *The origin and the...* , Seventh Day Church of God; www.cog7.org/Literature
- (85) *Electronic Library...*
- (86) *History of...* , page. 151
- (87) *The origin and the...* , Seventh Day Church of God; www.cog7.org/Literature
- (88) *Didache* , 10; teeline.terra.es; and in Daniel Ruiz Bueno, *Apostolic Fathers* , p. 81
- (89) *Epistle of Barnabas* ; in JPV, *The Christianity of...* ; www.cristianismo-primitivo.org/net ; art. “The opinion of Early Christianity on some doctrinal issues - Saturday or Sunday?”
- (90) Humberto Muñoz, *Saturday or Sunday ?* , p. 41-42
- (94) JB Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* , scriptures.tripod.com/bibliography
- (95) Muñoz, *Saturday or... ?* , p. 42
- (96) *Dialogue with Tryphon* , 43; quoted Muñoz, *Saturday or... ?* , p. Four. Five
- (97) Quoted in Seigle , *What is it about...?* , p. 10
- (98) Cartwright, *En Transition* newspaper , April 22, 1996, p. 7; art. “ Adventist scholar ...”
- (99) *First Apology* , Justin Martyr, cap. 67; cited in Muñoz , *Saturday or...?* , p. 43-44
- (100) *Manual compendium...* , page. 658
- (101) *The Apocryphal Gospels* ; cited in Muñoz , *Saturday or...?* , p. 46
- (102) section 96 ; cited in JPV, *The Christianity of...* ; www.cristianismo-primitivo.org/net ; art. “Irenaeus of Lion: A desire for orthodoxy and the Gospel”
- (103) Alexander Hislop reveals the pagan origin of Lent, saying: “ The forty-day abstinence of Lent was copied directly from the worshipers of the Babylonian goddess... Such a forty-day Lent was observed in Egypt... was celebrated expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediator god... It seems that between pagans this Lent was an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection (of the god) Tammuz ” (*The Two Babylons* , pp. 104-105)
- (104) Bacchiocchi , *Divine Repose...* , p. 228-230
- (105) Dugger and Dodd, *A History of...* , p. 30
- (106) Shema Congregation Yisrael , www.shema.com/modules.php
- (107) *Historical identification of the Apocalypse and the Beast* ; www.geocities.com/Heartland
- (108) *New Standard Bible Dictionary* , p. 56
- (109) *The New Testament Apocrypha* , p. Xii
- (110) G. Milligan, *New Testament Documents* , p. 228

- (111) Cited in Tuya and Escuin , *Introduction to the Bible* , p. twenty-one
- (112) Baron , *Social History...* , p. 82
- (113) *New Testament* , Pauline Editions, p. 625
- (114) Kurt Alland , *The Problem of the New Testament* , p. 18
- (115) *Church, anti-Judaism, Inquisition* ; www.conoze.com/doc.php
- (116) ditto
- (117) ditto
- (118) *The History of Civilization* , Part III: "Caesar and Christ"; cited in *The Passover of the New Covenant* , booklet published by the Universal Church of God, p. 6
- (119) *Ecclesiastical History* , vol. 1, part 2, chap. 5; quoted in *A Restoration of Truth* ; www.earthlink.net/iptandy
- (120) *Loyalty to the Church* , www.fluvium.org/textos/documentacion
- (121) 8:2; cited in *Catholic /Catolic* , www.corazones.org/diccionario/catolico
- (122) ditto
- (123) *Letter to Simpronianus* , cited idem
- (124) *Catechesis* , 18:23; cited idem
- (125) Cited in Barreto, pp. 150-151
- (126) *Small Library* , art. "Fathers of the Church"; www.corazones.org/dictionary/parents
- (127) *The Tradition of the Church* , www.churchforum.org/info/Iglesia
- (128) idem, p. 39
- (129) *A story of...* , p. 31
- (130) *The Church of the first three centuries* , pp. 331-332; cited in Dugger and Dodd, p. 31
- (131) *Little Library* , idem
- (132) Quoted in *The Watchtower* , May 15, 2002, p. 29
- (133) idem, p. 31
- (134) Quoted in *The Holy Days of God* , Christian Churches of God; www.logon.org/spanish/s/
- (135) ditto
- (136) Cited in Muñoz, *Saturday or... ?* , p. Four. Five
- (137) *Of idolatry* , cap. 4, sec. 4; cited in *Help Understanding the Bible* , Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, p. 1,457
- (138) Cited in Buzzard , *The Law, the Sabbath and...* ; www.mindspring.com/anthonybuzzard
- (139) Quoted in Elena Gould, *The Great Controversy* , p. 631
- (140) *Orpheus. History of religions* , p. 238
- (141) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* , Editrice Bookstore , p. 518
- (142) Exodus 20:1-17, *Jerusalem Bible*
- (143) Extracted from JA Larraya, *Religions and beliefs* , p. 476
- (144) *Confessions* , XIII, 35-36; cited in Bacchiocchi , *Divine Repose...* , p. 46
- (145) Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* , vol. 5, 22; Sozomen , *Ecclesiastical History* , 7, 19
- (146) *Ecclesiastical History* , vol. 5, 22; cited in Buzzard , *The Law, the Sabbath and...* ; www.mindspring.com/anthonybuzzard
- (147) Quoted in Ramón Bennett, *When day and night cease* , p. 200
- (148) Quoted in Werner Keller, *History of the Jewish People* , p. 127
- (149) ditto
- (150) ditto
- (151) idem, pp. 126-127
- (152) Quoted in Bennett, *When they cease...* , pp. 200-201
- (153) idem, pp. 199-200
- (154) idem, p. 200
- (155) Cited in Keller, *History of...* , p. 127
- (156) Bennett, *When they cease...* , p. 201
- (157) *Wake up!* , August 8, 1995, pp. 16-20
- (158) Mark E. Petersen, *Which Church is True?* , p. 17
- (159) *The Plain Truth* , July-August 1986, p. 25
- (160) Augustus Neander , *General History of Religion and the Christian Church* , t. 2, p. 161
- (161) Ferdinand Lot, *The End of the Ancient World and the Beginning of the Middle Ages* , p. 42
- (162) Cardinal Hergenroether , *History of the Church* , vol. I, p. 435
- (163) *Acta Academic Magazine* , Autonomous University of Central America; art. "A chronicle of Christianity", www.uaca.ac.cr/acta/1991
- (164) Dr. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* , cited in Louis R. Conradi , *The seers and the future* , p. 333
- (165) Reinach, *Orpheus. History of...* , page. 235
- (166) *Justinian Code* , lib. 3, tit.12, para. 2; cited in *the Hispano-American Encyclopedic Dictionary* , Ed. Montaner and Simon , ed. 1969, vol. XXVI, page . 32, art. "Sunday"; and in Gould, *The Conflict of...* , p. 739

- (167) Quoted in Ellen Gould, *The Great Controversy* , p. 631
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- (170) John Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* , pp. 371-373
- (171) Maurice Crouzet , *General History of Civilizations* , vol. 2, p. 630
- (172) Walter Goetz , *Universal History* , vol. 2, pp. 617-618
- (173) Ferdinand Lot, *The End of the Ancient World* , p. 44
- (174) *Caesar and Christ* , p. 595
- (175) Cited in John Lord, *Beacon Lights of History* , t. III, pp . 244-245
- (176) *Prompta Bibliotheca* , art. "Papa", vol. VI, pp. 26-29; www.libros1888.com/eb13
- (177) ditto
- (178) Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse* , vol. 2, p. 25; cited in Miguel Cabán, www.fadu.net/studies
- (179) *SDA Bible Commentary* , p. fifteen; cited at www.revealed.org/vicario
- (180) Ferraris , *Prompta Roman Catholic Library* , vol.VI , p. 29; quoted in *The Counterfeit of the Lord's Day* , les.mundivia.es/buena/buenosnuevas
- (181) Cited idem
- (182) *Ancient Christianity Exemplified* , chap. 26, sect. 2; cited in Dugger and Dodd, *A History of...* , p.54
- (183) ditto
- (184) David C. Peck, *Where is the True Church of God?* ; www.thercg.org/es/brochures/truechurch
- (185) Julio Dam , *Is Renewed Messianic Judaism part of Christianity?* ; www.beitshalom.org/articulo.aspx
- (186) Ralp Woodrow, *Babylon, Religious Mystery* , p. 256

CHAPTER IV: THE HISTORICAL FOOTPRINT OF THE TRUE CHURCH OF GOD (1ST TO 19TH CENTURIES)

Until now, the theological and historical bases of the development of the Church of God have been examined, exposing its origin and nature, as well as the factors that caused the authentic Christian Church to divide into multiple currents, the Roman Catholic Church being the largest, powerful and influential of all, but divergent from the original doctrine as a result of the process of apostasy already analyzed. Meanwhile, the successor to the apostolic Church continued to exist, but as a “small flock”, almost unnoticed in the world and very little known by later historians.

Before beginning to corroborate the historical development of that Church through the centuries, it is necessary to indicate some considerations to understand that process:

First, the Church of God is almost lost in the historical testimonies of Christianity of the first four or five centuries. As Palma says, “after (the apostolic era) the Church is lost in the shadows of time, as Israel is lost in Egypt after the death of Joseph until the advent of Moses.” (1). Except for mentions of the community of Nazarenes and information on the ministry of Polycarp and Polycrates, in the second century AD, there is no further direct information on *Christian* congregations - *judaicas* _ However, through references to certain “Judaizers”, as they are generally called, in epistles or works of the first Catholic theologians, or in the agreements of Catholic councils and synods, it is possible to indirectly deduce the existence of dissident Christians. related to Judaism.

Second, the Church of God - through the centuries of the common era - never was and has never been a powerful ecclesiastical organization that had influence over the world. On the contrary, after the period of apostasy the true Gospel was diminishing, and consequently the presence of the apostolic Church was also considerably reduced within the context of Christianity (this term being understood as the set of heterodox currents of Christianity), becoming quantitatively insignificant. In this regard, Samuel Vila wrote:

“In certain centuries, the spiritual darkness is so intense that the testimony of the evangelical Truth pa - It seems to have been almost turned off. In these times there were many sincere souls who knew without doubts Christ as his personal Savior ; They worshipped him sincerely and groaned for the corruption of the pseudo-Christians of their century” (2)

Third, the Church of God developed through a continuous chain of congregations that kept the Ten Commandments, including the observance of the weekly Sabbath ; and many of their beliefs and practices were contrary to the dominant Church system because of their attachment to the Scriptures. The book of Revelation refers to the Church whose members “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). This is where the essential difference between worldly Christianity and the remnant of God lies; Those who are part of the first group opposed keeping “Jewish things.” Doug Ward, by contrast, argues that in the 17th century “Sabbatists were often labeled as 'Jews ’” (3) ; and even in the medieval Catholic Church - during the persecutions against those it called *heretics* - “the imputation of *Judaizing* was frequently used against dissidents.” (4) , a relative criterion if one considers that the majority of them did not belong to the Church of God. Anyway, That fact caused true Christians to be rejected as heretics, ridiculed for clinging to God's law and persecuted by their enemies.

Fourth, historians interested in reconstructing the history of authentic Christianity have found it difficult to do so, since much information about it corresponds to unreliable testimonies coming precisely from its enemies. For example, Christians who were not Christians are abused as Judaizing or *Manichean heretics*, just as information regarding the Church of God established in Chile and Mexico is distorted today (5). The ecclesiastical historian Johann von Mosheim said that history had always been written by the victors, and in the case of the history of the Christian Church it was no different (6), which is why they distorted reality with respect to true Christians. To confirm this fact, the following opinion is presented:

“All in all, it is difficult to distinguish who had such heretical tendencies and who were really evangelists, since the documents of his persecutors usually mix the names of the supposed heretics, rejecting calling them 'Manicheans, Cathars and Waldenses', and we know that the latter never had any Manichean statements ...it is always difficult to judge a person or a doctrine by listening to its opponents. “ When studying medieval dissident groups,...let us remember that the historical information we have We come almost entirely from his inflexible opponents. If we had the true story it is very possible that our evaluation was more favorable' (HH Muirhead)” (7)

Fifth, at the core, the communities of the Church of God had a relative doctrinal uniformity, although it must be recognized that not all links in the Christian-Judaic chain maintained, for example, the observance of all the biblical festivals, a fact that It can be explained by the incomplete reception of the doctrine, by the reinterpretation of the Scriptures, by the lack or limited communication of Sabbatarian groups, etc. In other cases, there were congregations that went to the extreme of wrongly practicing physical circumcision as a result of deep Jewish sentiment or because of the strong bond they felt toward the people of Israel (e.g., the Pasagians). There were also Sabbatarian Christian movements that came to fuse the truth with some theological errors (e.g., certain groups of Bogomils); Finally, many of the religious movements that Catholicism considered heretical, in reality were not so, but rather corresponded to links of the Church of God (e.g., the Paulicians).

Sixth, in each century there were Christians who strove - according to their understanding - to obey the will of God and considered the Bible as the only valid authority to base their convictions. Long before the Catholics who became *reformers emerged* in the 16th and 17th centuries, there were small but numerous Christian-Judaic communities that rose up against the abuses and errors of Catholicism, among which the Paulicians , the Waldenses, the Pasagians and the sabbatical lollards . However, Protestant sects have claimed the right to consider such groups as links in the so-called Reformation movement, although they had the sign of God: the Sabbaths .

Seventh, due to the difficult circumstances in which it developed, the Church of God in general traveled under various names through the centuries, at least until the 17th or 18th century, but it always maintained the biblical pattern. He had various names, sometimes that of a preacher, sometimes that of a doctrine, on another occasion that of the region where he was located and on another occasion he was identified with some biblical expression. That small remnant was made up of only a few individuals, or scattered families, or a few congregations and, exceptionally, a few thousand members. They were a small religious movement almost ignored, but often identified as “Judaizing” and therefore persecuted: “There have always been people in the Christian Church who observed the Sabbath of Creation (Sabbath - do), and in the days of persecution not a few had to give their lives for their faith” (8)

In this way, the seed of the apostolic Gospel spread from Judea to other continents, until reaching America. There was no organization or purpose of men in this; Jesus' words were fulfilled that his Church would be his witness, first in Jerusalem and then in Samaria, and to the ends of the Earth.

The Nazarenes, first link in the Church of God

The Church of God in Jerusalem was the mother church or headquarters of Christianity until shortly before the year 70 AD, a time when Jews and Romans clashed. It should be remembered that under the government of Vespasian Rome declared war on the Jews for their repeated revolts, and General Titus besieged the city of Jerusalem that year. According to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, more than a million Jews perished and thousands of them were taken captive on that occasion, after a six-month siege; but the Church escaped the horrors experienced there, following the instructions of Jesus (Matthew 24:15-20, Daniel 9:26).

In fact, around the year 68 AD the Christians received notice of the prophecy announced by Jesus and escaped from the doomed and besieged city of Jerusalem. Other congregations in Judea also did so, reaching the town of Pella, northeast of Jerusalem and on the other side of the Jordan. Bennett estimates that “more than 60,000 Jewish believers fled to Arabia and found refuge in and around Pella” (9).

The year 70 AD marks the beginning of the decline of Christianity. James, the brother of Jesus and respected minister of Jerusalem, had already been killed by the Jews. Paul and Peter had died in Rome. The rest of the apostles were dispersed or had already died. Only the elderly apostle John, established in Ephesus perhaps around the decade of the year 80 AD (10), survived and it was his responsibility, as far as possible, to combat the nascent and growing apostasy and heresy. The church of Jerusalem had moved to Pella and its authority as the central seat of Christianity was progressively diluted.

Pella's congregation still called itself the “Church of Jerusalem.” Its chief elder remained the “shepherd of Jerusalem,” who was in exile as a result of the Jewish wars against Rome (11). In Pella, Simon (one of Jesus' brothers, mentioned in Mark 6:3 and Matthew 13:55) was left in charge of the congregation that history calls “of the Nazarenes.” The Catholic ecclesiastical historian Eusebius, around the year 330 AD, refers to him saying:

“Simon, a relative of the Lord ... a 120-year-old man was crucified. The Church (in Pella) continued until that moment *as pure and incorruptible as a virgin* ... but when the sacred choir of the apostles became extinct and the generation of those who had the privilege of listening to them also disappears, Then false teachers arise who, with a combination of fraud and deception, teach error” (12).

Hurlbut , for his part, adds:

“Simon, the successor of James as head or bishop of the church in Jerusalem, and like him this one also - He was well a younger brother of our Lord; He is said to have reached an advanced age. He was crucified by order of the Roman governor of Palestine in 107 AD, during the reign of Trajan” (13).

It is worth remembering that since the end of the apostolic era it is possible to verify the existence of several currents within Judeo-Christianity, such as the Ebionites, the Elkesaites , the Cerinthians and the Nazarenes. The *Ebionites* were Judaizers who emerged in the time of the apostle Paul and who are referred to in the letters *to the Galatians* and *the Romans* . They were adversaries of Paul and considered him an apostate; On the other hand, they considered Peter to be a true apostle. They did not adhere to the Christology represented by Paul and John because, although they accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah, they did not consider him as the Son of God born of a virgin. They observed all the physical rites of the Law of Moses and insisted that the entire Church, whether Jews or Gentiles, must conform to it. “Eusebius notes that the Ebionites observed... the Sabbath... Some evidence indicates that the Ebionites had Gnostic tendencies” (14). Brimsmead refers to them, adding:

“The most serious heresy of the Ebionites was their failure to recognize the full divinity of Jesus Christ -

to . Furthermore, although they believed that Jesus was sinless, they taught that he possessed a human nature .
mana and sinful like the rest of humanity (*Opponents of Paul* , Gunther , pp. 90, 104-105;
The Theology of Judeo-Christianity , Danielov , pp. 55-63)” (15) .

All these characteristics make the Ebionites a sect disconnected from the central trunk of the doctrine of the Church of God and, therefore, it is considered heretical. There are no historical traces of them after the 4th century AD. For their part, the *Cerinthians* , or followers of the heresiarch Cerinthus , existed at the end of the 1st century AD and the beginning of the following century in Asia Minor. They were defenders of Judaic practices, but they also taught that the world is not the work of God but of a demiurge (spiritual being between God and the material world), an idea clearly contrary to the orthodox Judeo-Christian concept of God the Creator and of evident Gnostic origin. Furthermore, Cerinthus maintained that Jesus had not been born of a young virgin, but was truly the son of Joseph and Mary, although he had distinguished himself among all men for his virtue, knowledge and wisdom; and salvation could not be effected through the sufferings of Jesus; The Mosaic law had to be observed in its entirety by Christians. And the *Elkesaites* or disciples of Elkesai , a Judeo-Christian who appeared in Arabia, near Judea at the beginning of the 2nd century. He preached that his doctrine had been revealed to him by an angel, who would have communicated to him that Jesus was a superior aeon humanly born of Mary and subjected to the transmigration of souls ("Aeon" is a creative genius, emanating - according to the Gnostics - from the Supreme Divinity). Finally, the current of the *Nazarenes* is the one that corresponds to the line of the true Church of God. In fact, the Jews called the followers of Jesus of Nazareth "Nazarenes," and they continued to call those who had taken refuge in Pella by that name. It can be affirmed that this is the first secular name by which the Church of God was known in the outside world, as the New Testament also relates (Acts 24:5); and it is a key name to identify the true Church in that region until the 4th century.

The Church made up of Nazarenes kept the Ten Commandments, the solemn festivals and the law of food, in short the moral law, that of worship and sanctification, although they did not stop persevering in the Jewish lifestyle and continued to practice circumcision in their quality as natural Jews, but "they maintained that Gentiles must accept salvation through Jesus Christ by faith and that they did not need to pay any attention to Jewish ritual" (16) .

The Christian-Nazarene community of Pella in Transjordan, according to Mario Saban , was not composed entirely of natural Jews, but there were also a number of Gentile converts (17) . This explains why they were always led by Jews of lineage, and it would not be until the year 130-140 when the first Gentile, Marcos, assumed the leadership of the Judeo-Christian group of Pella (18) .

It is interesting to note that among the testimonies of the time, even the Catholics themselves do not find heresies or errors in the Nazarenes. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says the following:

" *Nazarenes* , an obscure Jewish-Christian sect that existed in the time of Epiphanius (370 AD) in

Coele -Syria, Decapolis (Pella) and Besantis (Cocabe). According to that authority , they date its establishment -

ment in Pella of the time of the flight of the Christian Jews from Jerusalem, immediately before of the siege in 70 AD; They characterized themselves as nothing more nor less than Jews, pure and simple, but he adds

who recognized the New Testament as well as the Old, and believed in the resurrection, in one God and in his Son Jesus Christ... Jerome (*Ep* . 79 to Augustine) says that they believed in Christ the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was resurrected. But he adds that, wishing being Jews and Christians, they were neither one nor the other'. They used the Aramaic revision of the Gospel of sane Matthew, which they called the *Gospel to the Hebrews* , but they adhered as closely as possible to the law

of Moses, observing the Sabbaths, meals, etc. And they did not refuse to recognize the apostleship of Paul or the rights of Gentile Christians (Jer ., *Common _ In. Isa. 9:31*)” (**19**) .

Richard Watson, in his *Biblical and Theological Dictionary* , presents a testimony similar to the previous one:

“ *Nazarenes* . ” Name given to Christians in general because Jesus Christ is from the city of Nazareth, but In the second century the term was limited to certain Judaizing Christians who combined Christianity - nism with Judaism.

“They believed that Christ was born of a virgin and that she was somehow united with the divine nature. Re- They refused to abandon the ceremonies (not here meaning the rituals and sacrifices) prescribed by the law of Moses. They rejected what was added to the Mosaic institutions by the Pharisees and the doctors of the law and accepted the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

“The fathers (of the Catholic Church) frequently mentioned the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* (Ma- teo) preserved in its original purity. Some Nazarenes were still alive in the time of Jerome (342- 420 d. C.), who does not find any errors in them” (**20**) .

Edward Robinson, in his work *Comprehensive Encyclopedia and Criticism of the Bible* , adds:

“ *Nazarenes* . ” One can question the idea that the Nazarenes mentioned in the history of the Church in the first centuries were considered heretics. It is more likely that they were the descendants - teeth of the original Christian Jews.

“It seems that they were well known to Jerome (historian of the late 4th century), who lived many years in Judea and who describes them in various parts of his work. He mentions them as Hebrews who believed in Christ and who were rejected by the Catholics because they clung to the ceremonies of the Jewish law as well as the Gospel of Christ. 'They receive Christ to the point of not rejecting the rites of the old law'. It also describes the Nazarenes as people who 'believed in Christ the Son of God, who was born of the virgin Mary ’” (**21**) .

Another ecclesiastical writer, Epiphanius, mentions that the Nazarenes still existed in his time (370 AD) in and around Pella:

“Jewish Christians, excluded by the Jews, continued to observe the Sabbaths, circumcision (which they said was not obligatory for a Gentile) and other Jewish holidays (the biblical festivals) . Gentile Christians (apostates, obviously) resented this group, so they ended up being isolated and without support from others. In the 4th century and later, small churches of ju- Christian gods in Syria... But the Orthodox Jews could not forgive them for being Christians and the majority Gentile church of the (apostate) Church did not understand his continued attachment to the observance of the laws and customs.

tombs of Judaism. Gradually, these groups lost their importance. But they were still a force notable in the times of Justin Martyr, since he speaks several times about them... From the time of Irenaeus (190 AD) Jewish Christianity is considered a *deviant sect* of Christianity rather than a form of Christianity that has *the best claim of being the continuation of the early Church* in Jerusalem” (**22**) .

In the previous text it is seen that the Nazarenes had “the best claim” to be the authentic continuation of the true Church. But all his writings “disappear” and only documents that support Catholic beliefs remain. In this regard, the following is noted:

“About these sects and so-called heresies, the difficulty of understanding them arises from the fact that his own writings no longer exist; and to formulate our concepts about them we depend on those who wrote against them, and undoubtedly these were inspired by prejudice.”

(2.3) .

“With respect to the remnant of the Christian Jews, their later history is almost unrecorded” (24) .

From the testimonies collected regarding the Nazarenes, it should be highlighted that they were perfect representatives of the original Church of God. They kept the “ Sabbaths ,” that is, the feast days of Leviticus 23, as also stated by Eusebius, who wrote of the early Church saying that they observed the Lord's Supper on the same date that the Jews observe the Passover, that is, on the 14th day of the first month called abib :

“ Mosheim 's (ecclesiastical) *History* speaks of the first century Church as a community of Christian guilders , who were made poor by the destruction of Jerusalem, and who kept all the commandments given by the great giver of the law” (25) .

As noted in the previous chapter, the true Church would soon be supplanted in the rest of the territories surrounding the Mediterranean Sea by the impostor Church. In Pella, the work of the Church would be seriously limited by Jewish and Roman hostility. It only covered a few Jews who had achieved conversion. In 132 AD the Jews rebelled again in Jerusalem. This time the Romans, after defeating them, founded a new city in Jerusalem called Aelia Capitolina and only Gentiles could enter it; and the territory of Judea and the surrounding area was called “Palestine.” From then on, the spiritual authority of the Nazarene Church of God over Christianity declined markedly, while the nascent apostate Christianity began to impose itself with its headquarters in Rome.

The Church of God in the Near East

The death of the other apostles, or the loss of contact with them, led to the leadership of the Church falling on the apostle John. This one, perhaps, lived for some time in Judea (Palestine) with Mary, the mother of Jesus (John 19:25-27), until she died. Later, leaving Judea, he certainly went out to travel the world to preach the Gospel, until settling in the city of Ephesus (Asia Minor), where he carried out his ministerial work until the end of the 1st century AD. It is interesting to note that the place where the church was located The city of Ephesus today in the Turkish language is called Ayassoluk , which is a corruption of the Greek words *John, mouthpiece of God.* (26) .

Ephesus had a congregation that had been founded by the apostle Paul and became a focus of Christian activity in Asia Minor. When John assumed leadership in Ephesus, the importance of that center must have increased further, especially after the Jerusalem church had to flee beyond the Jordan. Regarding what happened subsequently after that event, the historian Eduardo Burton states:

“While some became true disciples of Jesus, it is possible that others, as in the case of the spread of new opinions, have learned the true doctrines of Christianity imperfectly, or that they have perverted them through ignorance” (27) .

Due to this situation, Christianity was divided into two regions with profound theological-doctrinal divergences at the beginning of the 2nd century AD. In the West, based in Rome, the bishop of that city was considerably increasing his power and influence and promoted the belief that one could live under grace without the need to obey the law of God which, according to Western Christians, had been abolished by Jesus, as would have been the solemn festivals and other “Jewish things.” On the other hand, in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, particularly in Asia Minor and Judea, Christian communities generally still preserved the teachings of the Apostolic Church and strove to conform to

the original Gospel, keeping the law of God with fear and respect. , his moral commandments, worship and sanctification. In this regard, some historical testimonies corroborate what has been stated:

“While the Christian Jews of Palestine retained the entire law of Moses, and consequently the (biblical) festivals..., Gentile Christians also observed the Sabbath and Easter (1st Corinthians 5:6, 8)” (28) .

“Eusebius, who wrote about the Church of the first centuries, speaks of the Church observing the Supper of the Lord on the same date that the Jews observed the Passover, that is, on the 14th day of the first month, Nisan (abib)” (29) .

Among the leaders of Asia Minor, at that time the main depository area of the faith, Polycarp stands out for being the best known as a result of the historical-doctrinal situation of the 2nd century AD. Catholicism includes him among the “apostolic fathers”, appropriating a character who rather represents the continuity of the line of the Church of God; In fact, all the news that has come from him coincides with a faithful minister of the Gospel, champion of the purest apostolic tradition.

Polycarp was a disciple of the apostle John and for many years was bishop of the congregation of Smyrna, north of Ephesus. And if he was personally instructed by John, he undoubtedly followed faithfully in the footsteps of his intercessor. An epistle sent by him to the church at Philippi has been preserved to the present. There he urged the Philippians saying “gird up your loins and serve God with fear and truth, abandoning vain and empty talk and the *error of many* ” (paragraph 2); and exhorted us to do the will of God: “Now he who raised Him from the dead will raise us also, if we do His will and *walk in His commandments* and love the things that He loved...” (idem). Polycarp, as we see, taught the coming resurrection of the dead, and also the truth about the coming world of tomorrow under Christ (paragraph 5), the fact that the saints will judge the world (paragraph 11), and government in the Church of God (paragraph 6). He repeatedly cited John, mentioning “love toward God and Christ and toward our neighbor. For if a man takes care of it, he has fulfilled the commandments of righteousness; because he who loves is far from all sin” (paragraph 3). This is precisely what John taught until the end of his life, when he said: “Little children, love one another...For if you do this, it is enough.”

Perhaps the most important event in Polycarp's ministry was his struggle to preserve the faith that had once been given. The Western Church, led by the bishop of Rome, began to impose the custom of celebrating the resurrection of Jesus on the Sunday following the biblical Easter, instead of commemorating the death of the Messiah according to God's law, as they did. Polycarp and most churches in Asia Minor and Judea on the 14th day of Abib of the sacred calendar. In this context, the conflict over Easter arose, which became known as the “Quartodeciman Controversy” (because it is the 14th) or “Easter Complaint.” According to Epiphanius (4th century), the conflict over the biblical and pagan Easter of Rome began in 135 AD:

“The controversy over Easter arose after the exodus of the circumcision bishops (135 AD) and has continued to the present day (370 AD)” (30) .

Polycarp, seeing all the false doctrines that were emerging, especially in Rome, undertook a trip to the imperial capital in 155 AD - although he was already over 80 years old - to discuss the matter with the bishop of that city, Anicetus. (155-166 AD). Eusebius (4th century), quoting Irenaeus, wrote of this struggle between Polycarp and Anicetus:

"But Polycarp had also not only been instructed by the apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but who had also been appointed, by the apostles of Asia, bishop of the church of Smyrna... It was he who, upon coming to Rome in the days of Anicetus - bishop of Rome al-

around the year 155 AD - caused many to turn from... heretical (postures) to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and only truth from the apostles... While he was in Rome, Polycarp discussed with the Roman bishop the question of the introduction of the pagan holiday of the Resurrection, instead of Easter..."

Note that Irenaeus states that he "caused *many* to turn from... heretical (postures) to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and only truth from the apostles." Polycarp, a disciple of John, although pressured by the growing church of Rome, refused to accept the change. Eusebius goes on to quote Irenaeus:

"Because not even Anicetus (the bishop of Rome) could persuade Polycarp not to observe it (the Passion). (cua) because he had always observed it with John the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles, with whom he associated; nor did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, since He said that he was obliged to follow the customs of the presbyters who preceded him" (31) .

Note once again that Bishop Aniceto did not have biblical bases to impose his criteria, but was only guided by the will to follow "the customs" of men. For its part, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* says of Polycarp:

"The continued progress of the heretical movement in spite of all its opposition was the cause of the great sadness that Polycarp had in the last years of his life, where he always exclaimed: 'Oh , good God, what times have you let me live that I have to tolerate such things '" (32) .

Polycarp returned to Smyrna deeply dismayed, but continued to exercise his leadership among the Eastern churches that preserved the apostolic doctrine, until a short time later he was apprehended and a mob burned him at the stake, thus ending the life of one of the first leaders. of the post-apostolic Church of God .

A second character who provides a clear testimony of the evangelical truth in the second century is Papias , bishop of Hierapolis, a city in Phrygia (Asia Minor). "This is a minister who from all indications is, along with Polycarp..., a true servant of God . " According to Irenaeus (end of the second century), he would also have heard the apostle John preach and around the year 130 AD he wrote five books, of which only a few references remain from one of them, but they are enough to confirm that he believed the same truths of the Church of God (33) .

What is known about his works is in some quotes and allusions found in the *Ecclesiastical History* , by Eusebius of Caesarea (4th century), and in *Against Heretics* , by Irenaeus. According to them, Papias believed in the biblical teaching of the Temporal Millennium, which Catholicism early considered a heresy. Also of special interest are the news contained in the Papias passages about the early apostolic tradition and the composition of the gospels. Below are some testimonies related to Papias , starting with those of Eusebius:

"At this time there flourished in Asia Polycarp, a disciple of the apostles, who had received the obis - of the church of Smyrna at the hands of *witnesses and ministers of the Lord* . At this time it was distinguished - guided Papias , who was himself also bishop of the diocese of Hierapolis" (34) .

"There are five books of Papias , which have the title of *Expositions of the Sayings of the Lord* . Of is - Irenaeus also mentions these as the only books he wrote, with the following words: These things he testified Papias , who was hearer of John (the apostle) and companion of Polycarp, a man - old dignified man , writing in his book room. Because there are five books composed by him" (35) .

About the rejection of the customs and commandments of men, Papias wrote:

“ I'm not like many who like to listen to those who talk too much, but I just like this-
listen to those who *teach me the truth* . I do not listen to those who teach *strange commandments* but
those that were given by the Lord to his followers who received the truth itself (the Word of
God).However , if I meet someone who was with the elders, I ask them about what
said Andrew , or Peter, or Philip, or Thomas, or James, or John, or Matthew, or any of the other dis-
disciples of the Lord ... Well, I don't think I get as much benefit from what the books say as from the words.
“ living and lasting fibers ”

Then Eusebius adds:

“This same Papias , of whom we speak, claims to have received the instructions of the apostles... He
mentions that there will be a Millennium after the resurrection and that it will be a literal reign over the earth -
ra ” (36) .

About the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Christ and the Millennium on earth:

“ The blessings mentioned undoubtedly belong to the time of the Kingdom when the righteous were
resurrected .

They will reign and reign, when the Creation will be renewed and freed from slavery... All these things
are true to those who believe...! These things Papias , who listened to the apostle John and was com-
Polycarp's clothier, testified in his fourth book, since he wrote five books” (37) .

An ecclesiastical history has also managed to compile some testimonies that demonstrate that in the
second century of the current era there were Christian communities that religiously observed the
Sabbath . Mark Finley, in his work *The Centuries Tell Their History. The Almost Forgotten Day* collects
the following evidence regarding said century:

“The early Christians had great veneration for the Sabbath , and used to spend the day in devotion and
sermons. And we do not doubt that this practice derived from the apostles themselves, as appears in several
passages applied to this purpose” (*Dialogues on the Lord's Day* , T. H. Morer , 1701, p. 189).

“The Sabbath constituted a strong bond that united them with the life of the entire town, and by keeping the
On the Sabbath they followed not only the example, but also the commandment of Jesus” (*Geschichte
des sonntag* , pp. 13-14).

“The Gentile Christians also observed the Sabbath ” (*Church History* , Giesele , vol. I, p. 93).

“The early Christians kept the Jewish Sabbath ; Therefore all Christians join

They were meant to keep the Sabbath, on which some portions of the law were read; and this continued until
time of the council of Laodicea ” (*The Whole Works* , J. Taylor, vol. IX, p. 416; Heber, p. 416).

“It is a fact that the old Sabbath remained and was observed (by Christians of the Church or -
riental), for more than three hundred years after the death of the Savior” (*A Learned Treatise of the
Sabbath* , p. 77) (38) .

The proto-Catholic writer Justin Martyr, in the mid-second century, speaking of those Sabbath-
observant Christians who did not force others to keep that day, said:

“I think that we should relate to them and consider them in everything as friends and brothers”
(39) .

For his part, Wade Cox reveals that in an area where Sunday had been imposed as “the Lord's day,” there was at least one Sabbatarian congregation that supported the Quartodecimans in the controversy over Easter:

"The churches in Gaul seem to have been facilitated (their development) by the strong concentration of Jews around Marseille and Genoa in the period 100-300 AD These communities obviously They were in contact with a strong concentration of (Christians)... in Ephesus and Smyrna... So There was a Sabbatarian church established in Lyon before the persecution of Marcus Aurelius in 177 AD Lyon was the center of the churches in Gaul when Irenaeus was bishop. The churches of Gaul They wrote to Rome about the Quartodeciman controversy (see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* , V, 23) in support of the bishops of Asia (Minor) regarding the introduction of the (pagan) Easter” (40) .

Around 197 AD the issue of the date of Easter once again generated controversy between the church of Rome and the churches of Asia Minor. This time the leadership of these congregations was in the hands of Polycrates, a minister of Ephesus, who also had a long and productive life in the service of Christ. In what was almost a repetition of Polycarp's trip to Rome, Polycrates also traveled to the imperial capital to discuss with Bishop Victor I the issue of the biblical Easter and Easter Sunday according to tradition. This time the controversy developed in a less peaceful spirit, since the power of the Roman bishop had reached such a point that he considered himself to have sufficient authority to demand that the Christians of the East abandon the Easter commemoration on the 14th of Abib and welcome Easter Sunday. Victor threatened to excommunicate them if they did not do so. Polycrates, naturally, refused to give in and vindicated the truth of God by replying as follows, according to the historian Eusebius:

“As for us, then, we scrupulously observe the exact day, without adding or subtracting. Because In Asia great luminaries have gone to rest, which will rise again on the day of coming - day of the Lord, when He comes with glory from heaven and gathers all His saints... I mean Happy pe, one of the twelve apostles... John, who, more specifically, reclined in the bosom of the Lord... Then there is Polycarp... All of these observed the Passover on the 14th day of the month, according to the Gospel, without never deviate from it, but keep it to the rule of faith... Better people than me have said: 'It is "It is necessary to obey God rather than men. " (41) .

The following authors summarize the “Quartodeciman Controversy” developed at the end of the second century:

“It is a notable fact that the first time the bishop of Rome attempted to govern all the churches - Sias went with a decree in favor of Sunday. It was a custom of all the churches to observe the Passion. same but with this difference: while the churches in the East observed on the 14th day of the month of bib , no matter what day of the week it fell, churches in the West kept Easter on the following Sunday, that is, the Sunday following Good Friday. Victor, bishop of Rome in the a- In 196, he assumed the task of imposing Roman custom on all churches, that is, of forcing them to keep Easter on Sunday. The churches of Asia Minor informed Victor that they could not follow your orders. Victor then, angry, sent letters of excommunication to the bishops of Asia Minor. But none of them followed his example. Nobody paid the slightest attention to his letters. Victor was left complex by not receiving any obedience and his successors were careful not to renew the controversy; of In this way the churches of Asia Minor continued calmly in their ancient observance until the concil - lyus of Nicaea, who to please the Emperor Constantine, ordered that Easter be observed at manner of the custom of Rome” (42) .

“Victor's intervention from Rome was successful in the sense that his point of view at the time final was the one that prevailed. But it took a long time for those who kept the Passover on the day

14 of Abib (called Quartodecimans) disappeared. This group still existed in the 9th century, although far from the censures of the (Catholic) ecclesiastical councils. It was impossible to let divergences on a doctrinal point. There is no doubt that the Quartodecimans were right in stating that they had preserved the most ancient custom that came from the apostles. They had converted - considered heretics for the simple fact of having fallen behind the prevailing fashion” (43) .

Through previous historical testimonies it has been proven that both Polycarp, Polycrates and the majority of the congregations of Asia Minor defended the unrestricted observance of the law of worship of God. The aforementioned characters came from the region in which the apostle Paul spent most of his time and in which the apostle John dedicated his ministry in his later years, particularly among the Gentiles. This confirms that there were still Christians loyal to the apostolic faith , and they observed the biblical festivals “in their times.”

The observance of the biblical Sabbath in the 3rd century

Those Christians who continued to observe Easter did so respecting the biblical precept and the way of ministering it according to the Passover introduced by Jesus and instructed by the apostle Paul (Matthew 26:26-28, 1 Corinthians 11:20-34), taking bread and wine instead of sacrificing and eating a lamb. In this regard, Seiglie points out:

“After the year 200, the true Church remains mainly in Asia Minor and the members are called 'quartodecimans'. It is the name the world gave them because they continued to keep Easter on the 14th day of the month of Abib , as well as observing the Sabbath and the other commandments” (44) .

The 3rd century AD was a dark century for the true Church, threatened by Roman intolerance and persecutions and by the growing internal threat of apostasy and paganism. The simple and clear truths of the Gospel continued to be subject to distortions and changes; while the world lost sight of the authentic community of believers, and there is practically no news about the Christians who maintained the Gospel in its state of integrity. This is due, on the one hand, to the fact that they were numerically meager, and for this reason they are lost in the records of ecclesiastical history; and on the other hand, the intensification of the persecutions of these few Christians were forced to seek refuge in catacombs, caves, mountains and other hiding places, naturally confusing themselves with Christians of other currents .

Notwithstanding the above , isolated historical testimonies have been collected that confirm that the observance of the weekly Sabbath rest was widespread not only within the Roman world, but far beyond its borders. Finley, in relation to the 3rd century, exposes the following reference:

“The seventh day Sabbath was... solemnly celebrated by Christ, the apostles and the *early Christians* - *tives* until the council of Laodicea (AD 365), which in a sense abolished the observance of it (*Dissertation on the Lord's Day* , 3.33.44) (45) .

According to Dugger and Dodd, the Sabbath was observed even in some heretical sects that arose in that century, such as the Novatians:

“Novacian, who wrote about 250 AD, prepared a treatise on the Sabbath , the one that does not exist. There is no reference to Sunday in any of his writings. He makes the following observation:

surprising statement regarding the moral law: 'The law was given to the children of Israel for this purpose, so that they may take advantage of it and return to those virtuous ways, which, although they received

of their fathers, had corrupted them in Egypt, because of their relationship with barbarian peoples. Final-Mind you, too, those Ten Commandments on the tables teach nothing new, but they remind you of what that they have forgotten, that righteousness in them, which has been put to sleep, may revive again, as It was adhered to the law, in the form of a fire (almost extinguished)” (46) .

Sabbath observance would have extended beyond eastern Judea, even to India and then to China. The introduction to India caused a controversy in Buddhism around 220 BC According to Lloyd, “The Kushan dynasty of northern India called a famous council of Buddhist priests at Valsala to bring uniformity among Buddhist monks regarding the observance of their weekly Sabbath . Some - We had been so impressed with the writings of the Old Testament that we had begun to keep the holy Sabbath” (47) .

And Mingana complements the above, writing:

“As early as 225 AD there were already great bishoprics or conferences of the Eastern Church (Sabbath keepers) who went from Palestine to India” (48) .

The biblical Sabbath was also observed in Egypt, as corroborated by the Oxyrrinchus papyrus , dated between the years 200 and 250, which states:

“Unless you make the Sabbath a real Sabbath (*sabbatize* , the Sabbath in Greek), you will not see the Father.” (49) .

Even Origen (185-254 AD), a Catholic theologian, contradictorily ordered to keep the Sabbath :

“After the festival of continual sacrifice (the crucifixion) the second festival of the Sabbath is set , and it is worthy of anyone who is virtuous among the saints to also keep the festival of the Sabbath. There remains therefore a *sabbatismus* , that is , an observance of the Sabbath for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9)” (50) .

Finally, the *Constitution of the Holy Apostles* , from the 3rd century, declares:

“You shall keep the Sabbath , because of Him, who ceased his work of creation, but did not cease his work of clairvoyance It is a rest for meditation *on the law* , and not for laziness of the hands” (51) .

While the Catholic Church is on top, the Church of God is fleeing again

The 4th century AD brought great changes in the Roman imperial world, which will directly affect Christianity and the Church of God. Both Christian groups had been enduring trials and tribulations for almost 250 years, and at the beginning of the 4th century there was no change in sight; On the contrary, Roman persecutions continued. In fact, in the year 303 AD, the last and perhaps the most cruel repression against Christianity in general broke out, promoted by the emperor Diocletian. Halley describes that time, saying:

“Diocletian (284-305). The last imperial persecution, and the most severe; co-extensive with the Empire. For ten years Christians were searched in caves and forests. They were burned, thrown into the festivals. and killed by whatever torture cruelty could invent. It was a determined and systematic attempt - Attician to abolish even the name of Christian” (52)

“On February 23, 303...an edict went out declaring that all churches were to be destroyed; all Bibles confiscated (and burned), all sacred objects handed over, and all meetings of prohibited worship ... from the year 304, all citizens of the Empire had to offer sacrifices (to Caesar) or die... there was a bloodbath in Asia Minor due to the massacres. In February 313 Emperors agreed in Milan to declare freedom of religion for all” (53)

Although that time was perhaps one of the most difficult, it is possible to find the trace of the Church, guardian of the commandments of God. For example, as a result of Roman persecution ordered by Diocletian, thousands of Christians were imprisoned and subjected to torture, including those in North Africa. Varetto relates the following:

“In a town in Numidia , a group of Christians were surprised while they were meeting at home. of a reader of the Scriptures... They were taken to Carthage, and on the way they did not stop singing him - us to the Lord... One of them in the midst of his sufferings fervently cried out : 'Oh, Lord, we - ' We are Christians, we are your servants, You are our hope.' While I was praying like this, the proconsul (Roman authority) observed that he should have obeyed the emperor's law, to which He resolutely answered that he respected no *other law but that of God* and that because of it he was ready to obey. die...” (54) .

There is also a testimony that in Spain there were observers of the law of God and they respected the sanctity of the seventh day Sabbath. Canon 28 of the Council of Elvira, held in 305 AD, said: “Concerning fasting every Saturday : Resolved, that the error of fasting every Saturday be corrected” (55) .

That conciliar resolution was in direct opposition to the regulations that the Church of Rome had implemented in the second century AD, of imposing a fast on the Sabbath day in order to humiliate it and make it appear disgusting and unattractive to the people so as not to keep it. There are other historical testimonies that verify the permanence of the observance of the Sabbath in other areas of the Roman Empire, despite the fact that Sunday was increasingly being imposed within Christianity. In fact, the majority of them kept Saturday along with Sunday, except in Rome and Alexandria, as attested by two ancient ecclesiastical historians:

“Because almost all churches around the world celebrate the sacred mysteries (i.e. the eucha - Catholic rística) on *Saturday of each week* . However, the Christians of Alexandria and Rome, a - sane with some *ancient tradition* , they have ceased to do so. The Egyptians living near Alexandria "dria and the inhabitants of Thebes have their religious assemblies on Saturday " (56) .

“The people of Constantinople and almost all other places gather on the Sabbath, as *does the first day of the week* , a custom that does not occur in Rome or Alexandria” (57) .

These historical revelations demonstrate, then, that Sunday did not replace Saturday. immediately ; “The seventh day was kept by many around the world, almost until the 5th century. At first, Sunday observance... coexisted side by side with the true Sabbath for almost 200 years, when both days were kept simultaneously (100- 300 AD)” (58) .

Below is other historical evidence regarding the validity of the Sabbath in some areas:

“It was the general practice of the Eastern churches, and some of the Western churches... because in the church - sia of Milan (Italy)... it seems that the Sabbath was held in high esteem...It was not because the churches oriented - such, or any other who observed that day leaned towards Judaism; but they met together Saturday day to worship Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath” (59) .

“The early Christians were very careful in observing the Sabbath, or the seventh day... It is clear that all the Eastern churches, and most of the world, observed the Sabbath as a na festival ... Athanasius (295-373 AD) also tells us that they held religious assemblies on the Sabbath, not because they were infected with Judaism, but to worship Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath -

bado _ Epiphanius (315-403 AD) says the same” (60) .

In 313 AD a fundamental event occurred for all of Christianity: Emperor Constantine stopped the religious persecutions that the Roman State had promoted until then, promulgating the “ Edict of Toleration” in Milan. Constantine came into contact with the Catholic Church, became its protector and favored it, practically turning it into the state religion of the Roman Empire . Constantine considered himself head of the Catholic Church.

From now on, the one who will decide the future of Christianity is the church of Rome . This leads to the decisive years of 321 and 325 AD, “where the true Church faces the combined wrath of Emperor Constantine and his favorite, the Catholic Church” (61) . It was Constantine who *made official by law* the religious observance of Sunday or "Day of the Sun" ("Lord's Day" as Catholics called it), a custom that had been practiced perhaps since the end of the 1st century and with greater force from the 2nd century onwards. , as has already been analyzed on previous pages. In general, many Christians combined the observance of Saturday with that of Sunday, and particularly in Rome and Alexandria the weekly Sabbath had already been definitively rejected. Here is part of Constantine's words in the decree of the year 321:

“Constantine to Elpidio. All judges, residents and artisans will rest in the *venerable day of Sun* (Sunday). But the farmers can continue with their agricultural work” (62) .

Another step contrary to the doctrine of the Church of God was taken at the council held in the city of Nicaea (Asia Minor), in the year 325, whose final decree determined to keep Easter or Resurrection Sunday, and never celebrate it on the same day. than the Jews and Quartodecimans. The Catholic historian Eusebius, who lived in the days of Constantine, testifies to the facts mentioned above, saying:

“But before that another extremely virulent disorder had taken place that afflicted the Church during long time ; I mean the difference relative to... Easter Sunday. Because while that one party held that the Jewish custom (the date of Passover, the 14th of Abib) should be adhered to . da, the other (didn't want to). Therefore, people everywhere being thus divided in this respect... No one appeared who was capable of devising a remedy... because the controversy continued to be divided impartially between both parties...Constantine seemed to be the only individual on earth capable... He called a general council” (63) .

After the Council of Nicaea concluded, Emperor Constantine sent the following letter to all the churches:

“In this assembly the question concerning Easter Sunday was discussed...First of all, It seemed an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this... festival we should follow the practice of the Jews... Let us therefore have *nothing in common with the Jews* ... It has been determined by the common failure of all, that the... feast of Easter Sunday be observed on one and the same day” (64) .

Then, the council of Nicaea decided, under the authority of Emperor Constantine, that Easter had to be celebrated on a Sunday and that the Easter instituted by God had to be prohibited. Not everyone accepted the decrees of the Nicene Council that , for the first time, established Catholicism as the State religion, and to those who did not adhere to the State Church, among them the true Christians, the Emperor addressed an official letter in the following words:

“Victor Constantine, Maximus Augustus to the heretics:

“Talking about your criminality in the terms it deserves demands more time and leisure than the one that I can give ... Why not immediately attack the root, so to speak, of such great harm?

(he was referring to the truth of God) through a public display of displeasure? (in other words - bras , inciting persecution).

" For the rest, then, since it is no longer possible to endure your pernicious errors, we warn by this statute that hereafter none of you intend to meet in asam - Bleas . We have ordered, therefore, that you be stripped of all the houses in which you live - you want to celebrate your assemblies, and we prohibit the celebration of your superstitions and your assemblies, not merely in public, *but in any private house or any other place ...* To - mad the much better course of entering the Catholic Church...We have commanded...that you be positively - you are deprived of any meeting point for your superstitious assemblies; I mean to - give the houses of prayer... and that these be transferred without delay to the Catholic Church; that the others places be confiscated for public service and that no facilities at all be left for future meetings... Let this edict be made public knowledge” (65) .

As a result of the first laws decreed by Constantine in favor of Catholicism, the true Church was forced to flee the authority of the new political-religious order. In effect, the Church of God would no longer be persecuted by the Caesars, but by a Church that now had a “throne,” that is, civil power. And the Catholic authority under which the new flight of God's people began is Sylvester, bishop of Rome (*Pope* , according to Catholics between 314 and 335 AD). Many dissident groups that emerged or were exposed to the light of history during the medieval centuries had their starting point at that time of the Silvestre bishopric. Here is some historical evidence. LR Conradi , first of all, wrote:

“ Of course to these dissidents their own *sect* seemed to be the true Church. HE- According to them, since the (false) donation made by Constantine and Pope Sylvester...he was the Antichrist” (66) .

For his part, the inquisitor of Passau , in the 13th century, traced the origin of the Church of God known secularly as the “Waldenses” also in the time of Sylvester:

“Among all the sects that exist or have existed, there is none more pernicious to the Church; and this for three reasons: The first, because of its antiquity, since some say that the Waldenses were re- They ride at the time of Sylvester, and there are even those who claim that at the time of the apostles” (67) .

Wade Cox confirms the fact that the Waldenses were not a Christian community founded by Peter of Valdo in the 12th century, but that he converted to the doctrine professed by them, which constituted a link in the apostolic Church that also had to flee from the Catholic sphere in the 4th century and reappeared in the sight of the world in the middle of the Middle Ages:

“The city of Sabadell, in northeastern Spain, near Barcelona, traces the name of the sabbata - ti or waldenses (vallenses). The age of the name and the antiquity of the *sabbatati terms* and *insabata - ti* mitigates the case (or eliminates the possibility) that Valdo had founded the Waldenses; rather... He was converted by them and took his name from them, as we will see” (68) .

The following quote reinforces the previous testimonies regarding the antiquity of the Waldenses, their consolidation coinciding with the 4th century:

“The method which (the ecclesiastical historian) Allix has followed in his *History of the Churches of Pied - mont* , shows that in the ecclesiastical history of each century, since the IV, which he considers a period - done early enough for the investigator, after the apostolic purity of doctrines, there are clear proofs and doctrines... they were maintained by theologians of northern Italy until the period when the Waldenses were in the news for the first time (in the 12th century)” (69) .

Edwards, in his *History of Redemption*, adds something more about that people who later will be called Waldensians:

“Some of the papist writings themselves say that this people never submitted to the Church from Rome. One of the Papist writers, speaking of the Waldenses, says: 'The heresy of the Waldenses - ses It is the oldest in the world. It is assumed that they fled to this place among the mountains, where the woman fled into the wilderness from the presence of the serpent (Revelation 12:6, 14)... The people who settled there, his descendants continued (there, in the valleys) from generation to generation; and being as it was, by natural walls, as well as by the grace of God, separated from the rest of the world - do, and they never took part in the overflowing corruption” (70) .

Those who later became known as *Waldenses* were not the only Christians of the Church of God who had to flee the cities and territories dominated by Catholic political-religious power. Also fleeing to the valleys and mountains of Europe, Asia Minor, and parts of Africa were the *Quartodecimans* and *Hypsistarians*, other names for the persecuted remnant of the Church of God. A good part of them fled to the east, to the valleys protected by the Taurus Mountains. They were not far away and it was a civilized but not very policed area called Armenia (what is now the region of eastern Turkey). Regarding the Quartodecimans and Hypsistarians, historians reveal the following:

“The genuine followers of the apostolic doctrines were called ' Audians ' (or Quartodecimans), because they rejected the decree of the council of Nicaea on the date of Easter, which was not biblical... Also, the genuine followers of the apostles' teachings received the name 'hip-systarios', that is, 'the worshipers of the Most High God', because they were obedient to the doctrines apostolic” (71) .

“The Audians (a sect that rejected the decree of the council of Nicaea on the dates of Easter) and who believed they were following the example and authority of the apostles by observing the Passover on the 14th of Nisan (abib)” (72) .

Another name given to them is hypsistarios, a name that comes from “ hypsisto ”, a Greek word that means *most high*. According to the *Encyclopedia Judaica Castellana*, they constituted a community that is located in the first centuries of Christianity in Asia Minor and on the shores of the Black Sea; “they observed many Jewish laws, but they were not circumcised” (73) . The ecclesiastical historian Joseph Bingham gives another testimony about them:

“There was another sect, the Hypsistarians, that is, the worshipers of the Most High God, whom they worshiped with -

I am one person, just like the Jews. They observed the Sabbaths (the biblical holidays), kept the laws regarding clean and unclean meats (food), although they did not consider circumcision . Gregory Nazianzus (AD 329-390), whose father was one of this sect, gives the narrative of them” (74) .

In this way, the authentic Church of God is known, in truth, by many names of human origin, but among them strenuously holding part or much of the pure doctrine preached by the Christian disciples of the first century. The persecution and flight of this people towards the mountains and valleys has been compared by Conradi in the following terms :

“The Lord brought Israel out into the desert from ancient times, on the one hand to protect them from Pharaoh, and on the other hand

another part to quietly reveal Himself to them, purify them of their idolatry and sanctify them, and to bring them to Him. In the same way and for similar reasons He was also going to be hidden in the desert *the Israel of the New Covenant* so that the Lord would feed it for the space of (centuries)...with the heavenly manna-tial of his divine Word” (75) .

In another eastern region, Persia, churches that kept the Sabbath were also subjected to persecution for forty years under the rule of Shapur II (335-375 AD), precisely because they kept the biblical holiday. The popular complaint against such Christians was:

“They despise our Sun-god, Zoroaster does not; the holy founder of our beliefs divine institutions instituted Sunday a thousand years ago in honor of the Sun and supplanted the Sabbath of the Old Testament.

ment . However, these Christians have divine services on Saturday ” (76) .

As noted in previous lines, the majority of those who professed to be Christians had complied with the decrees of the Council of Nicaea. They are the great mass of Christianity and as such the world accepts them. But others refuse and are forced to flee, among them the Arians (77) and the Church of God, who for opposing official doctrine were branded and worthy of punishment. His attack at the next council was intended against that group of faithful Christians. Indeed, in the year 365 the provincial synod of Laodicea (Asia Minor) met to consider the issue of the Sabbath . Canon 29 of the aforementioned synod said:

“Christians must not Judaize or be idle on the Sabbath, but must work on that day; but on the Lord's Day (Sunday) they will honor it especially, and, as Christians, they will not do, if it were possible

- sible , work on that day. If they are found *Judaizing* , they will be separated from Christ” (78) .

This decree shows that at that time there were still Christians observing the Decalogue of God within Catholic jurisdiction. The resolution aimed to transfer the solemnity of Saturday to Sunday, creating a law parallel to that of God; and incidentally, ridicule Sabbatarian Christians (he calls them “idle”). Anyone who did not comply with the order was “anathema of Christ” and was placed outside Roman Catholic legality. William James complements this analysis, saying:

“At the council of Laodicea , held in the year 365, where several hundred bishops met, A law was issued prohibiting Judaizing Christians, that is, resting from their work on the Sabbath. like the Jews do. This law was taught by the bishops. It was necessary because of the rapid advantage of the observance of the Sabbath by all the churches of the East” (79) .

Those areas that were free from Catholic jurisdiction still retained weekly Sabbath observance at the end of the 4th century, a fact confirmed by the following documented testimony:

“In the last half of that century,... Ambrose of Milan officially stated that the bishop of Abis - nia , Museo (which kept the Sabbath), had traveled practically everywhere in the country of Seres (China). For more than seventeen centuries the Abyssinian church continued to sanctify the Sabbath as the holy day of the fourth commandment” (80) .

In fact, Museo also traveled preaching the law of God through Arabia, Persia and India in 370 AD. Cox further reports that the churches that were established in Persia and in the Tigris-Euphrates valley kept the Sabbath . (81) . Likewise, the “Christians of Thomas”, in India, were never in communication with Rome, and “were Sabbatarian as were those who broke communion with Rome after the council of

Chalcedon (451 AD), that is, the Abyssinians, Jacobites, Maronites, Armenians and Kurds, who kept the laws of food and denied confession and purgatory ” (82) .

Despite the “ anti-Judaizing ” tendency and contrary to “Jewish things” practiced by the Church of God, it is still possible to find among certain Catholics the veneration for the seventh day of the week, a reminiscence of the ancient observance. Cox gives a testimony about it:

“Ambrose (339-397 AD), the famous bishop of Milan, is said to have kept the Sabbath in Milan and on Sunday in Rome. This gave rise to the saying: 'When in Rome, do as Rome' (Peter Heylyn , *History of the Sabbath* , 1612). Heylyn identifies the 4th century Milan church as the center of Sabbatarians in the West (idem, part 2, para. 5, pp. 73-74). It is not surprising that the sabbatati tu - saw his school there, as is recorded under the Vallenses at the time when Pedro de Valdo joined with them. The Sabbath had been observed in Italy for centuries.

“There was then (4th century) a nucleus of Sabbatarian tradition in Europe between Milan and Lyon that became - zo the center of... a section of the sabbatati or insabatati , later called by the term ' valden - ses ' ” (83) .

History shows that despite the policy contrary to the biblical Sabbath , the Church of God persevered in its obedience and sanctification:

“The events of various councils during the 4th and 5th centuries established that the observance of the pri - first day of the week through ecclesiastical authority, and in the great apostasy that followed, On the rival day he emerged victorious. However, during the following centuries, there were always witnesses of the ver- Sabbath, although they underwent great persecution. And so in various lands, the knowledge of the true Saturday Sabbath has been preserved” (84) .

The Church of God in the century of transition to the medieval period

During the 4th century AD it was still possible to identify the existence of the Church of God among those who kept the Sabbath and/or the other biblical festivals. There is greater evidence of Sabbath observance, it is true, but that perception should not lead to the error that they did not observe the other biblical festivals. Regarding Saturday , it is highly corroborated that its sanctification was in force for a long time, however, some considerations must be indicated:

First, despite the almost widespread observance of the Sabbath within the limits of the Roman Empire, the vast majority of Christendom continued to regard Sunday as the Lord's day under the age of grace, that is, both Saturday and Sunday. They were venerated together, but the first day of the week was to be regarded as the Christian Sabbath, although in fact it was still a working day. Only in the cities of Rome and Alexandria did they continue to reject the observance of the Sabbath. Historical testimonies describe this situation:

“Therefore, with the exception of evening and night worship, (in Gaul, present-day France) there is no public services among them during the day, with the exception of Saturday and Sunday” (85) .

“The people of Constantinople, and in almost all other places, gather on the Sabbath , as well as the first day of the week, a custom that is never practiced in Rome or Alexandria” (86) .

“In the days of Jerome (420 AD) the most devout Christians generally worked on Sunday.” (87) .

“It is a fact that previously it was a custom in the East to keep the Sabbath as a day of Lord and have sacred meetings; while on the other hand, the people of the West, containing in

As for the day of the Lord, they have been negligent in celebrating the Sabbath” (88) .

“There are several cities and towns in Egypt where, contrary to established usage elsewhere, the people meets you on Saturday afternoons, and although they have eaten previously, they practice the rites of the Church” (89) .

According to the background presented, it can be determined that the decrees of Constantine (321 AD) and the council of Laodicea (365 AD) did not have immediate effects when they promoted the end of weekly Sabbath observance. Likewise, it is notable that in Christendom there was still memory of the biblical Sabbath , but - as Coleman says - “with a gradually decreasing rigor and solemnity” (90) from a Catholic perspective and together with the Catholic-pagan Sunday.

However, the authority of the Roman bishop insisted on making the religious meaning of the Sabbath disappear . Just as Pope Sylvester (314-335 AD) was the first to systematically order churches to fast on Saturday , Pope Innocent (402-417 AD) transformed it into a law for Catholics to obey in order to make that the Sabbath would be repudiated: “Innocent, indeed, ordered that on the Sabbath always fasting,” Heylyn maintains. (91) .

Second, the scattered remnants of the Church of God kept the Sabbath according to biblical precepts and the example of Jesus and the apostles. At the beginning of the 5th century, John Chrysostom (354-407 AD) - considered the most illustrious of preachers and the most eloquent of those who have taught in the Catholic Church - not only consolidated Catholic Judeophobia, but with disgust noted how great it was still the “Jewish temptation” among the people and many followers of the Catholic Church frequently sympathized with the followers of Judaism (92) . In truth, Chrysostom saw in those Christians a Judaizing tendency due to the fact of observing the biblical practices that had first belonged to the Jews. The historian Bingham confirms this fact in his work *Antiquities of the Christian Church* : “Much later, at the beginning of the 5th century, in Asia Minor, Bishop Chrysostom deplored that men - brothers of the Catholic Church, upon learning the truth imparted to them by the scattered remnants of the Church of God, they repented of their ways and began to observe the Sabbath and the feast of Trumpets, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of the Great Day of Atonement” (93) .

Augustine of Hippo, also at the beginning of the 5th century and whose testimony is very important for being a devoutly observant of Sunday, “also deplored the fact that in the case of two adjacent churches in Africa, one observed the seventh day Sabbath, and the another fasted on that day (following the order of Innocent)” (94) .

For his part, Orchard describes the situation of Christianity in the Near East in the middle of the 5th century AD, saying:

“The innumerable Christians of the East, who were not in communion with the Greek Church or with the Romans, can be divided into two classes. The first consists of what in past times differed from the Greek Church and formed similar hierarchies, which still exist independently of each other, as well as the Greek and Roman communities. The second class consists of those who were not of no hierarchy and that they *always retained their original freedom* (that is, they were not under a self-hierarchical and systematicity , like Catholicism). The number of such Eastern Christians is not very large, because they lived scattered throughout Syria, Arabia, Egypt, Persia, Nubia, Ethiopia, India, Tartary and other eastern countries. It is notable, says Robinson, that although they differed as Europeans on speculative points (about) the Divinity, even everyone administered baptism by immersion, and there is no example to the contrary” (95) .

In the second group mentioned by Orchard were, without a doubt, the small communities of the Church of God. It is the same conclusion as Dugger and Dodd:

“Among these (dissidents), under various names of men, was the Church of God, still holding the true faith, even observing the Sabbath with the law of God as well as the unadulterated faith of Jesus” (96) .

Indeed, we must remember that after the Council of Nicaea and Laodicea , the faithful followers of the Church of God had to flee to safe places. One of them was the region of Armenia (east of Asia Minor), whose Christian community received the secular name of “ Paulicians .” Historian AH Newman described the places where these true Christians were hiding:

“It was the enormous concavity or circular dam formed by the Taurus mountain range that offered a re - relatively certain where this *ancient form of Christianity* could dwell ” (97) .

Meanwhile, the political-religious context will undergo changes in the second half of the 5th century, when the Roman Empire comes to an end. That's right, this empire had been in clear decline since the 3rd century AD. The barbarian peoples of German origin began to gradually invade it and, at the beginning of the 5th century, the city of Rome was already moribund. Finally, the Germans entered the Western Roman territories en masse and in the year 476 AD the barbarian warrior Odoacer dethroned the young and last emperor, Romulus Augustulus. With this event the Western Roman Empire definitively ends and, at the same time, the historical period called *Antiquity* or *the Ancient Era* comes to an end . It is followed by an era of transition to the modern world traditionally known as *the Middle Ages* .

The medieval period (5th to 15th century) was a “long night” in the history of the known world, most particularly for the Church of God. Although it was a theocentric era, that is, all human development was inspired or directed by religion, such spirituality in no way responded to the foundations established by the authentic Gospel. This is evident in the facts; and one of the factors that explains that dramatic reality is that, after the fall of the Roman Empire, the city of Rome was left without an emperor, and his successor became its bishop. In this way, Catholicism took a momentous step to proclaim the supremacy of the Roman bishop over apostate Christianity and institutionalize the Papacy, while allowing the Catholic Church to become the great heir (not the restoration) of the Roman Empire and the strongest, most influential and intolerant religious institution of the medieval era, persecuting and punishing all religious groups that dissented from “its” orthodoxy, including the Church of God. An ecclesiastical source describes that period:

“Throughout the Middle Ages there were many groups of dissident Christians, thousands of which

They kept the Sabbath. They were the ... Waldensians, Lollards , Moravians , Cathars,... Anabaptists (among the

which were the Sabbath- keeping Baptists), etc. It was a dark time in history, when

Popes and prelates, allies of the highest government authorities (the civil power), imposed their of - decisions and restricted the reading of the Bible. Only at the cost of massacre of (thousands) of guards of the Sabbath, during that long period of history, when Sunday observance became a

widespread custom of (Christianity). Yet, in the midst of all this apostasy, God always

preserved a people who remained faithful to his Word, and the keepers of the true Sabbath , the Sabbath -

Because Jesus taught, they continued to testify according to the historical accounts, despite all opposition. position on the part of the dominant civil and religious authorities” (98) .\

Observers of the biblical Sabbath in the first medieval century

It should be noted that true Christians throughout the centuries always considered that salvation was obtained through faith in Christ Jesus, but spiritual holiness was only possible through obedience to the law of God, the same one that Jesus confirmed with his teachings. This is why the Church of God, or individuals, families or congregations, can be identified among those who observed the biblical festivals, particularly the weekly Sabbath.

That is the case of the Irish Colombano (n. 543). In Britain early Christianity had taken root very early; and the Gospel received by the inhabitants of that country in the first centuries had not been corrupted by the apostasy of Catholicism. However, Roman-pagan persecutions prompted many Christians to flee from England to Scotland; from there the truth was taken to Ireland. In this country there was a character called Colombano, of whom Leslie Hardinge wrote:

royal descent from his mother, Elthne . Seems to be
that Colomba renounced the throne for the cause of Christ... maintained that the Bible was the only basis of
our faith. He placed special emphasis on the need to manifest loving obedience toward

He believed in the Ten Commandments, which he called 'the law of Christ.' The Spirit of God worked in for -
ma powerful through Colomba. He founded a Christian school and created a missionary center near
off the British coast, on the small island of Iona, around the year 563 AD According to Dr.

Leslie Hardinge in his outstanding work on the Celtic church, one of the most outstanding characteristics -
tes of the Celts (Christians) was their sacred regard for the biblical Sabbath .

“The last hours of Colomba's life are recorded in this way : Having continued his la-

bor in Scotland for 34 years, he clearly and openly predicted (foreshadowed) his death, and on a Saturday ,
the 9th

June, said to his disciple Durmit : 'This is the day called Saturday , that is, the day of rest, which

It will be for me too, because it will put an end to my labors ” (**99**) .

Samuel Vila, in his work *Evangelical Christianity through the centuries* , confirms the simplicity and authenticity of the Irish and Scottish Christians of that time, saying:

“The doctrines and methods of these missionaries from Ireland and Scotland of the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries represent

The type of life of the early Christians was much better than that of the Roman Church of that time.
period at the beginning of the Middle Ages. It seems that they had no idea about the worship of saints
nor of the dogmas added to the Christian (Catholic) faith, such as confession, purgatory, etc. They had,
however, ideas regarding Christian ordinances similar to those of (primitive) Christians” (**100**) .

Andrew Lang, writing the history of the Celtic church, says:

“They worked on Sunday, but kept the Sabbath in a Sabbath manner” (**101**) .

In his *Religious History of Scotland* , written with chronological prolixity, Moffat reveals in this regard:

“Synthesizing, we must say that it was customary in the early Celtic churches -

pos , in both Ireland and Scotland, keep the Jewish (biblical) Sabbath as a day of rest from their
regular work. They obey the fourth commandment literally, that is, on the seventh day of the
week” (**102**) .

At the end of the 6th century there is other historical evidence that under the continental jurisdiction of the Papacy there were still Christians preserving the Sabbath . For this reason, Pope Gregory I (590-602) had to write a letter addressed to the Catholic people against that practice and for parishioners to beware of such *heretics* . These were his words:

“Gregory, bishop by the grace of God to his beloved children, the Roman citizens: It has come to my ears that certain men with a perverse spirit have spread depraved things among you. given and opposed to the holy faith, so that they prohibit doing anything on the Sabbath. ' What else could I call these but preachers of the Antichrist'...” (103) .

The Paulicians represent the Church of God in the East

As the medieval centuries progressed, there was a pronounced decline in the faith, life and customs of Christianity. Meanwhile, "everywhere, it is true, cries of protest are heard, which prove that true Christians still exist, and that 'the faith once delivered to the saints' has a large number of witnesses and defenders." ardent ones that do not succumb under the weight of the new circumstances created by the great apostasy” (104) .

It was from the 6th century that the Church of God was even more oppressed by the State religion clothed in civil power and completely powerful, and spread over the valleys and mountains in all parts of the world. Therefore, from now on we will analyze a few testimonies from reliable historians that show “how the true followers of Jesus were truly sent to the 'desert', where they took refuge in rocks, caves and dens of the earth, still rejoicing because they lived in humble obedience to the will of God, being fed by Him with His word” (105) . One of those Christian communities was that of the “ Paulicians ”, of whom Varetto has written:

“In the midst of the corruption that characterized this period (first centuries of the Middle Ages) there is no lack - They were witnesses of the truth, who maintained with relative purity the doctrines and customs of the New Will. The torch of the Gospel was never completely extinguished, and among those who made it shine in these truly dark days, the Paulicians deserve to be mentioned .” (106) .

In previous lines it has also been argued that one of the main obstacles for those who study the ecclesiastical history of true Christians is the absence or scarcity of original writings of those; and most of the material available from such Christians outside the large dominant Churches comes from persecutors, sources which can hardly be trusted. Precisely these sources have distorted the truth and constitute the basis of many historians and scholars who spread a history and doctrine divergent from the truth regarding the Paulicians . Here are some examples:

- Some authors claim that its founder could have been Constantine Silva, from a village near Samosata (6th or 7th centuries).
- Others claim that it is a heterodox doctrine that took its name from Paul of Samosata, a heretic from the 2nd century AD, its founder.
- The vast majority affirm that they are a sect of Manichaeism ideas (107) and that they rejected the Old Testament.
- It has been described as an essentially political-religious-military group.

However, as Varetto declares , these speculations are due “to the fact that almost everything that their contemporaries have said about them was written by their worst enemies, directly interested in discrediting them” (108) . However, in 1898 there was an amazing discovery. Fred C. Conybeare , scholar and theologian, discovered Paulician manuscripts dating to the 7th or 8th century that were kept in an Armenian monastery. This incredible discovery was titled *The Key of Truth , and its contents allow us to learn about many Paulician customs and beliefs* .

As noted above, the Paulicians were those disciples of Christ who had fled to the region of Armenia. According to Seiglie , in the year 553 they were attacked by Nerse II, bishop of Constantinople; and when he died the following year, they continued hiding in Armenia (*109*) . So, those who claim that the Paulician movement had its origins in the 7th century are making a mistake. What happened in that century is the conversion of Constantine of Mananalis , who would give a great boost to the Paulician church from then on. Consequently, several authors recognize them as older, such as those cited below: Paulician churches were of apostolic origin, and were planted in Armenia in the first century”

(*110*) .

“It is quite reasonable that they (the Paulicians) should be considered as the representatives of the survivors of a very primitive type of Christianity” (*111*) .

“It was the enormous concavity... formed by the Taurus mountain range that offered a relatively secluded place. “I wonder where this ancient form of Christianity could dwell” (*112*) .

“Through Antioch and Palmyra the faith must have spread to Mesopotamia and Persia; and in a- which regions became the basis of the faith as it spread into the Taurus Mountains to Armenia. This was the early form of Christianity. The churches in the Tauro mountain range formed an enormous enclosure... into which the early Paulician faith flowed to be collected and maintained for centuries. glos , so to speak, a backwater from the main flow for centuries” (*113*) .

“It can be declared with considerable historical certainty that the Paulicians originated long before of the seventh century. They claimed for themselves an apostolic origin” (*114*) .

The Paulician churches emerged for the world to see in the middle of the 7th century. As previously indicated, around the year 653 a cultured and learned man named Constantine, who lived in the city of Mananalis, in Armenia, emerged as leader of the scattered remnant of the Church of God in Armenia and also in Cappadocia . He revitalized his people and spread the Gospel with the help of other trained missionaries, finding such abundant conversions that tens of thousands of Catholics were added to the evangelical truth.

These congregations were called by their enemies “ atingani ”, that is, *those who understand prophecy*. (*115*) , but they were generally known as *Paulicians* due, probably, to the high appreciation that Constantine of Mananalis had for Paul's writings and his constant effort to imitate the churches founded by that apostle. Even the Paulician pastors assumed the name of some of Paul's collaborators; Thus, Constantine was called Paul (*116*) and others took the name of Timothy, Luke, Silvanus, Titus, etc.

Rumors circulating about the doctrine of the Church of God were defamatory and false. False Christians living among God's people were often confused with the true Church. “Those who attribute Manichean dualist beliefs to him have fallen into an obvious error,” says Varetto . (*117*) . Other testimonies that refute the farces spread:

“The Paulicians condemned the writings and opinions of the Manichean sect and complained of the injustice of having that hateful name applied to them, humble followers of Christ and of...Paul” (*118*) .

“The Paulicians ...were not dualists as their enemies have implied, because it was common practice of the official Church to associate them with the Manichaeans; This was another (heretical) sect of the early Christians.

tians who compromised the hope of Jesus with the dualistic philosophy of the... worshipers of the

go that they followed Zoroaster” (119) .

“(The Paulicians) survivors of an ancient and pure Christianity . People devoted to God who They clung to the Gospel and rejected later superstitions , were slandered by their opponents .
nents ... The books were burned, and all who followed the teachings were condemned to death” (120) .

Despite the circumstances described, the beliefs and doctrine that the Paulicians professed have transcended time, and thanks to the discovery of *The Key of Truth* - probably the greatest authority on this Church - it is possible to know them today.

The Paulicians believed that the foundation of the Church was built on Jesus Christ, the apostles and prophets. A quote from the book *The Key to Truth* says:

“ Let us then humbly submit ourselves to the holy universal Church and follow the works of those who

They came with one mind and one faith and taught us, so they still receive us in the only season appropriate (perfection) the holy and precious mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ and the heavenly Father , namely, at the season of repentance and faith. Just as we learned from the Lord about the universal Church and apostolic; Thus we proceed and establish in perfect faith those who until then have not -

nen holy baptism , that is, the Latins, the Greeks and the Armenians, who have not been baptized; No, they have neither tasted the body nor drunk the holy blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, according to the Word of the Lord, we must first bring them to faith, lead them to repent, and give - it” (121) .

The Paulicians ' form of worship was very simple and the government of the Church was modeled as in apostolic times. (122) . They did not recognize any human authority over their churches, as the Catholics had. “These people were called acephalous, that is, *without a head* .” These say that only Jesus Christ is the Head of their churches (123) .

The Paulician teachers and ministers were distinguished only by their biblical names, by the modest title of *fellow pilgrims* , by the authority of their lives, their eagerness for knowledge and the belief in some extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. They did not desire, and in any case did not have, the wealth and honors of the Catholic priesthood. They ardently censured that anti-Catholic pride. Their leaders were chosen according to their knowledge of the teachings of Jesus, but there was no hierarchy of high and low clergy . His ministers were married and had children.

They lived the same way that Jesus' closest disciples had lived. They preserved apostolic customs that Jesus revealed to his people. “Some historians have said that the Paulicians rejected the Old Testament, but that is not true.” They made constant use of both the Old and New Testaments (124) . They practiced New Testament baptism , therefore they followed the example of Jesus' baptism and did not practice infant baptism, which was never taught by Him. “They maintained that men should repent and believe, and then, when they are mature in age , ask for baptism, the only requirement for entry into the Church” (125) . Pedro Allix adds:

“It is evident - says Mosheim - that they reject infant baptism. They baptized and re- They baptized (Catholics) by immersion” (126) .

The Paulicians did not at all join the pagan-Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and even the word “trinity” was completely foreign to their teachings. They rejected the doctrine, considering it unbiblical and taken from the Platonic (Greek) system of philosophy (127) . They were also characterized by their profound monotheism, since they obeyed the Ten Commandments. “They believed that a Christian is one who

knows the Lord Jesus Christ and keeps his commandments.” For them, the first commandment is a clear affirmation of Divine unity (128) .

The Paulicians respected Mary, mother of Jesus, and believed in the immaculate conception, but they did not believe that she was the “mother of God.” They never said that Jesus was born on December 25, since this belief had originated in Rome around the 4th century, when the celebration of his birth was assimilated to one of the ancient pagan festivals (129) .

In accordance with the second commandment of the Decalogue, they protested against many practices of Catholicism and the honor they gave to saints, relics and images. “They opposed the worship of images, which was practiced by the Roman Catholic Church. The miraculous relics were a heap of bones and ashes, destitute of life and virtue” (130) .

The Key of Truth has come to shed much light on the doctrine preached by the Paulicians regarding the biblical festivals, a doctrine that cannot satisfy the interpretative demands of modern-day Christianity. Indeed, the Paulician Church of God also obeyed the annual holy days and the Sabbath as in apostolic times. Fred Conybeare , who discovered and translated Paulician's work , revealed that: “Possibly they kept the Sabbath , and there was no special observance on Sunday... They continued to keep They celebrated the Passover on the 14th day of Nisan (abib) , but they observed the Sabbath and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Yeast” (131) .

For his part, Pedro Allix , in his *Ecclesiastical History* , complements the previous information by saying:

“Constantine Mananalis , 650 AD... Sergius, Simeon... follow Paul... Not only do they keep the Passover the 14 of Nisan (abib) , also the Sabbath and the other festivals” (132) .

Below is a summary of Paulician beliefs , according to various records:

- They believed they were the only true Christians
- They insisted on the right to freely study the Scriptures; They were very diligent in studying the Bible
- They did not believe in erecting buildings for the church, because they thought that the church was a group of believers and not a physical place
- The meetings were private and those who helped the apostles and ministers were called *collaborators*
- They taught that man could become a child of God
- The only way to be baptized was by immersion and not in a font, and only after study, prayer, faith, repentance and practicing the right way of life
- They obeyed all the Ten Commandments, including the weekly Sabbath
- They kept the Passover on the 14th of Abib and the days of Unleavened Bread and “the other festivals”
- They condemned the war (133) , and their moral conduct was impeccable
- Although Christ was crucified for humanity, he did not command that the cross be worshiped
- They did not pray to the saints or to Mary, whom they did not consider to have been a perpetually virgin
- They rejected the sacraments, masses, communion, confession, purgatory, crosses, images and the incenses
- They rejected the clergy, the Papacy, religious clothing and oaths.

Without a doubt, as Conybeare concludes , “the general impression that his study leaves us is that in it (the Paulician community) we have a form of Church not far removed from the primitive Christianity of Palestine” (134) .

Over time, the Paulician communities grew rapidly, and had a great impact on their time. To eliminate the movement, the Byzantine emperor Constantine Pogonato sent a certain Simeon to kill Constantine of Mananalis and end the supposed *heresy* (680 AD). Samuel Vila describes this fact:

“After 27 years of tolerance and constant development of his evangelical work, Constantine fell victim of persecution. A Greek priest, named Simeon, appeared invested with legal power

to kill the great evangelical (leader) of the 7th century and restore the lost sheep to the Catholic fold - you give! To top off his cruelty, he wanted the pastor to be executed by his own faithful, but they

They returned the sword with dignity, preferring to suffer any punishment rather than commit such a crime . mineable crime. Only one traitor could be found, who carried, as an ironic paradox, the name of Fair. He, fearful of the threats from the royal envoys, murdered his pastor and denounced others.

Paulicians not known to the persecutors” (*135*)

However, from then on an event as unexpected as it was unprecedented occurs. Ecclesiastical history says that the example of the Paulicians who were faithful and especially of the pious martyr Constantine so moved the persecutor Simeon that he embraced the doctrine that he had been ordered to persecute. Something similar to what happened to the apostle Paul happened to him and he renounced his previous life along with his honors and wealth to work as a zealous missionary of the evangelical faith for some years. Simeon soon became a leader and minister among the persecuted Paulicians (*136*) .

Evidently, the repercussions of the Paulicians were great. Although gathered and hidden for several centuries there in Armenia, the people of God had no small influence on the world of the time.

The region where the Paulicians lived and mainly carried out their evangelistic work was invaded by the Muslim Arabs, which allowed them to live protected from the Catholic emperors of Byzantium. But around the year 750, Emperor Constantine Copronymus reconquered the upper region of the Euphrates River from Armenia. Byzantine repression caused a significant number of Paulicians to abandon the Gospel by taking up the sword to oppose the authority of Constantinople, whom they fought alongside the Arabs. Pike wrote about it:

“The Paulicians allied themselves with the Saracens (Muslims) against the Byzantine emperor, and therefore For some time they had great power in Asia Minor; but in the end they were defeated and in the year 752 great “A number of them were deported to Bulgaria (Thrace)” (*137*) .

The Paulicians who were transferred to Thrace, a northern region between Bulgaria and Greece, were only a remnant of the main group, which was spiritually weak as they mixed with the world, refusing to trust in "the sword of the Word of God" and taking the human sword to defend oneself. Jesus had preached the principle that “all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52). Subsequent events would demonstrate the validity of this sentence. Mario Seiglie summarizes the subsequent development of the Paulician movement :

“Not everyone took the sword, so the Paulicians divided into groups. From its headquarters in Mananalis there was infighting among the leaders.

“It was then that another strong leader (rose) to keep the Church clean. His name was Sergio and For 34 years he guided the Church faithfully. He wrote: 'I have walked from the north to the south, from the po - 'nent to the east until my knees have grown tired from preaching the Gospel of Christ.'

"However, with the next attack of Emperor Leo V, called 'the Armenian' (813-820) against The Paulicians brought a (new) uprising of arms. Sergio condemned this attitude of fighting, but But many Paulicians were already accustomed to 'fornicating' or mixing in world politics, so they didn't pay attention to him. After the death of Sergius, the Paulicians who had obeyed him - acid also joined the wars. Only the faithful remnant remained in Thrace and Bulgaria...

“The Empress Theodora (829-867) pursued the persecution with great zeal. The apostate Paulicians seek

They took the Muslim caliph as an ally. The sword of destruction was approaching. The Paulicians were 's forces killed more of 100,000 of them" (**138**) .

Indeed, between the years 840 and 860, the Empress Theodora martyred some 100,000 or more Paulicians , and many others were tortured. During the two centuries of repression there were some in the Church of God who went to the extreme of disguising being Catholic to avoid persecution. However, the faithful remnant of the Paulician congregation would have to move. Established in Bulgaria, from there it emigrated to the southeast of Europe and then to the west, until it converged with the ancient remnant of faithful Christians that existed in the rest of Europe.

The permanent allusion to the Sabbath commandment in the Middle Ages

Although the identification of the Church of God is focused on continental Europe, it is also possible to find vestiges of the observance of the Decalogue, the Sabbath in particular, and the other biblical festivals, in other places, in the vicinity or outside that continent. For example, in the year 692 the Byzantine emperor Justinian II convened the sixth general council meeting in the city of Constantinople, as the imperial order of Rome. In this regard, a source reports:

Sabbaths were condemned . Let us note that in this (seventh) century there has been

Many Christians observed *the weekly Sabbath as well as the festive Sabbaths* (i.e. the biblical festivals), to such an extent that this council found it necessary to legislate against this" (**139**) .

Likewise, the council of Liftinae (Belgium), held in the year 745, ordered similar measures:

" The third address of this council warns against the observance of the Sabbath, referring to the creed of the council of Laodicea (365 AD)" (**140**) .

Schaff and Herzog note that the dissident community of Catholicism known as "Nestorians" spread to Persia, India, and even to more eastern regions and other surrounding areas in the 8th century, and they brought with them Sabbath observance:

"Widely extended and constant was the custom of observing the Sabbath among the believers of the Church in the East and that of the church of... Thomas in India, which were never connected with Rome (Catholic). This custom was also maintained among those religious bodies that had become of Rome after the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), among whom were the Abi -

Sinians (Ethiopians), the Jacobites, the Maronites and the Armenians" (**141**) .

Furthermore, both authors add:

"The Nestorians do not eat pork and keep the Sabbath . They believe neither in auricular confession nor in purgatory" (**142**) .

Respect and observance of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue has also been one of the characteristics of many Christian churches in Africa. Richard Nickels has argued that "historically, Ethiopia and many other parts of black Africa have been strongholds of Sabbatarianism. Their isolation, for centuries, from the corrupt influence of (Catholic) Rome has allowed Africans to maintain much spiritual independence" (**143**) . And not only geographical isolation favored African Sabbatarian Christianity; Starting at the end of the 7th century, Muslims invaded all of northern and part of central

Africa, creating a true shield for such churches from the influence of the apostate Church. This is corroborated by Ellen Gould:

“In countries that were outside the jurisdiction of Rome (Catholic) there existed for many centuries groups of Christians who remained almost entirely free of papal corruption. Surrounded by paganism, over the years they were affected by their errors; nevertheless they continued considering the Bible as the only rule of faith and adhering to many of its truths. They believed it - Christians in the perpetual character of the law of God and observed the Sabbath of the fourth commandment - to . There were in central Africa... churches that maintained this faith and this observance” (*144*) .

The history of the Ethiopian (Abyssinian) church is especially significant. In the midst of medieval intolerance, the Christians of central Africa were lost to European eyes, who, forgotten about the rest of the world, enjoyed complete freedom in the exercise of their faith. Ethiopian Christians have denied that they kept “the Sabbath in imitation of the Jews, but rather in observance of Christ and the apostles,” as Cox reveals (*145*) . However, that independence lasted only until the 17th century.

In the 13th century there is another testimony in favor of the biblical Sabbath . The delegates of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) in Constantinople were invited to discuss with Nicetas who - in Bower 's words - was “at that time one of the wisest men in the East” and who maintained “that the Sabbath should be sanctified.” and allow priests to marry” (*146*) .

In northern Scotland, meanwhile, the ancient church founded by Columbanus and his followers, and far removed from direct papal influence, still kept the seventh-day Sabbath in the 11th century. About this congregation, Andrew Lang says in his *History of Scotland* :

“They worked on Sunday, but kept the Sabbath in a Sabbath manner” (*147*) .

Skene, in his *Celtic Scotland*, says of these Sabbath keepers :

“It seems that they followed a custom of which we find traces in the early monastic church of Ireland and according to which they had Saturday as a day of rest, in which they rested from all their bores” (*148*) .

and Ratcliffe Bamett, in his book about the fervent Catholic Queen of Scotland, Margaret, wrote:

“In this matter the Scots had perhaps adopted the traditional usage of the old Irish church - sa, which observed Saturday instead of Sunday as a day of rest” (*149*) .

But neither in Margaret's native land of Scotland nor in Wales had the observance of the Christian Sabbath been completely eradicated . In reference to 12th-century Wales, Lewis notes:

“There is much evidence that the Sabbath universally prevailed in Wales until 1115, when the first Roman bishop sat at Saint David's. The ancient Welsh churches, keepers of the Sabbath, Even then they did not kneel before Rome, but fled to their places of hiding” (*150*) .

In the 13th century there were still Sabbatarian congregations, and the Roman Catholic authorities strove to force them to keep Sunday. Morer says that in both Scotland and England it was possible to make Sunday better respected by mixing it in part with the ancient Sabbath ; but the time that should be kept sacred varied. An edict from the King of Scotland declared that “Saturday should be considered holy from noon onwards,” and that from that time until Monday no one should engage in worldly work” (*151*) .

There is no doubt that in every place where the observance of the biblical Sabbath was present, the apostolic Gospel had been preached, it follows that some or all of the other biblical festivals were

observed, and after several centuries there was still memory of the practices of the early Church. . And within that context, there always remained a remnant of God's true Christian people. In this way, the facts or examples cited above allow this general principle to be applied.

The Bogomils , heirs of the Paulicians , move to the West

In the same century that the Paulicians suffered cruel Byzantine repression, evidence of Sabbath observance still remains in Bulgaria. Proof of this is that Pope Nicholas I (858-867) and the council of Bulgaria sent the response to the Bulgarian prince Bogaris regarding the Sabbath , according to the following sources:

“Question 10: One must stop working on Sunday, but not on Saturday ” (152)

“Pope Nicholas I, during the 9th century, sent the prince who was ruling Bulgaria a long document in which he indicated that he had to stop working on Sundays, but not on Saturdays . The Head of the Greek Church, offended by this interference of the Papacy, declared the Pope excommunicated.” (153) .

In those same years, after the defeat of the apostate and warlike Paulicians and the disappearance of Paulicianism in Asia Minor, the remnant of them, those who represented the true Church of God and were established in the region of Thrace, emigrated towards the Balkan Peninsula, more specifically the aforementioned Bulgaria, dominated by the Byzantine Church.

The Paulician Church established in Bulgaria since the year 870 began to gain converts and soon its members began to be called “ bogomils ” or “ bogomils ”, names that have several explanations. According to one theory, it would come from Bogomil , a community leader who lived in the 10th century. Another states that bogomilo would be derived from the Slavic words “ bog ” . milui ”, which means *God have mercy* . But the most accepted explanation is that the name comes from “ bogomil ” or *friends of God* . Historian Raymond Edeman wrote in *The Light of the Dark Ages* :

“The story of the Bogomils , the 'friends of God' in Thrace, Bulgaria and Bosnia, as well as in other parts of Europe, is even more difficult to trace than that of their predecessors the Paulicians . They left very few written traces and these were almost completely erased by his usual enemies . Later,

The latter wrote their odious interpretation of those simple and pious disciples of the Paulicians in the Balkans, whose way of life was a reproach to their contemporaries” (154) .

Just as the Paulicians were for centuries discredited for their beliefs, attributing to them a heretical-dualistic character, the Bogomils have generally been considered a sect that “mixes Gnostic, Manichaeism and early Christian ideas ” (155) . As an example, the idea has spread that this Church taught that God gave birth to two sons: Satanael and Logos; that Christ is Logos born of the virgin Mary; who practiced an ascetic life, rejected marriage and sexual relations within it, prohibiting procreation, since this perpetuated the empire of matter that was the creation of the evil god or Satanael , and abstaining from the consumption of meat for the same reasons (156) . It has also been claimed that the Bogomils rejected the books of Moses, who believed that the story of Christ was symbolic of high knowledge; that in the monotheistic concept that the three names of God (according to them) - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - are applied to the Father; that the chosen cannot die; that John the Baptist was a servant of the Jewish god Satanael ; that they did not accept water baptism but only spiritual baptism (by the laying on of hands), etc. (157) .

However, as Wade Cox maintains, those and other supposed Bogomil beliefs come from unreliable sources, “it is written by the orthodox 'enemies', and therefore is somewhat altered in relation to the

biblical structure that they seek to explain...The concepts currently they are more in accordance with what we already know about the cosmology (doctrine) of the first century” (158) .

It is true that his writings were perhaps burned in the 12th century, and that there is no complete certainty about his beliefs; and although Hallam states “there seems to be sufficient evidence to say that...they claimed to follow the writings of the apostles” (159) , there is a possibility that some scattered Bogomil communities did not keep the apostolic doctrines pure. However, a remnant of the Church of God that maintained fidelity to the law of God under faith in Jesus must have been preserved among these groups. In fact, they were successors of the Paulicians and these of the early Christians. Below are some objective testimonies about the beliefs of the Bogomils :

“Spiritual heirs of the Paulicians ... the Bogomils rejected the Christian sacraments (catholic , obviously), they protested the cult of the Virgin, the saints and the images, and affirmed that The miracles attributed to them were the work of the devil” (160) .

“His main doctrines were about the origin of evil and separation from God . They believed that man - man had distanced himself from God and that this was the main cause of humanity's error. was the cause of war and everything bad about man because humanity had turned its back on God, on laws of God and his way... They resembled the Paulicians ” (161) .

One of the most outstanding examples of zeal and devotion of that period is the story of a Bogomil missionary named Basileo. He acted with such determination that the Byzantine emperor Alexius Komnenos (1081-1118) decided to take action on the matter. It seems that the growing work of Basileo and his collaborators worried Alexius. Following the example of the early Church, Basileus had twelve fellow ministers with him. The emperor figured out a way to catch Basileo. First he arrested one of the Bogomil leaders , who confessed that he was the leader of the movement:

“Signifying that he wanted to delve deeper into the teachings of Basileus, the emperor had the emperor brought Bogomilo chief to his palace with great praise. He had him served a splendid dinner and then asked him to tell him his many doctrines. The emperor listened attentively as Basileus explained the mysteries of the Word of God.

“But everything was plotted. With a triumphant gesture , the emperor drew back a curtain and revealed the presence of a scribe who had recorded every word. Basileo had said nothing other than the truth as

He perceived it, although it was contrary in several points to the official creed. His own words had condemned.

“Alejo gave the order to burn all the Bogomils who refused to recant . Among them Basileo, one of the many faithful who were willing to give their lives for their convictions that they professed” (162) .

Bogomila Church of God was visible to the world mainly between the 10th and 12th centuries. As has been seen, she did not tolerate the dominant religious system and that is why she was also persecuted by civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Likewise, such persecutions contributed, perhaps, to some Bogomil congregations falling into certain doctrinal errors that their enemies took it upon themselves to exaggerate. History says that some hid their beliefs by attending Catholic or Orthodox-Byzantine services:

“They considered the worship of images as idolatry and described the Catholic churches as - no places where evil spirits dwelt. Despite this, the Bogomils did not have problems when attend Catholic services and they justified it by quoting Matthew 23:3: 'So whatever they tell you keep it, keep it and do it (they added the word 'outwardly)' (163) .

Regarding the tribulations that the Bogomils had to suffer, here is an example to illustrate it: “This group gave great importance to fasting but rejected the fasts prescribed by the Church (Catholic or Orthodox). At the beginning of the 11th century, the Eukites attracted the attention of the government. But

A century later, the same beliefs were taught by the Bogomils, only in a more detailed form.

developed and more opposed to the Catholic Church. Emperor Alexius Comnenus gave the Bogomils two alternatives: two pieces of wood were set on fire and one of them had a cross on top. He The emperor urged them to at least choose the tree with the cross and thus die like 'Christianity'.

us'. Those who accepted the cross were later forgiven. The others were convicted of life” (164).

Although they developed in the Bulgarian region, the Bogomils also felt pressure from the Arabs who continued to conquer territories on the borders of Europe. This led them to move westward, to Switzerland, France and northern Italy, sowing the truths of God, and most likely they would have encountered generations of descendants of those true Christians who fled to the interior of Europe after the Council of Nicaea, in the time of the Roman bishop Sylvester, and which came to form the Vallensian or Waldensian congregations. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* confirms this fact:

“The Bogomils were undoubtedly the link between the so-called heretical sects (in the eyes of their followers) of the East and the West. They were, furthermore, the most active agents in the dissemination of teachings in Russia and among all the nations of Europe. It is possible that in some places there already found ready-made ground in the ancient (Christian) beliefs that had been preserved despite the persecution” (165).

The world was mired in the religious dark ages, a time in which education was restricted and stifled by intolerance, and writings such as the Bible were rare and prohibited. The persecutions, however, failed to eradicate the Church of God. Of the bogomils states the following:

“The pontiffs in Rome, while leading the crusade against the Albigensians (around the year 1100), they did not forget their counterpart in the Balkans and recommended the annihilation of the heretics... The bogomils spread to the West and settled first in Serbia (which was part of Yugoslavia); but at the end of the 12th century the king of Serbia, Stephen Nemanja, persecuted them and expelled them from the country. Many of them took refuge in Bosnia, where they became known as Parnes or *patarini*” (166).

The time when the Bogomils fought to preserve the Word of God was the darkest of the Middle Ages. But new contingents of Christians would come to light to spread the Gospel and the law of God.

In the great medieval evangelical movement there was the Church of God

For many centuries there were hidden places where the faithful servants of Jesus Christ took refuge, while an apostate religion dominated outside, corrupted and degraded by the vices and ambitions of its leaders. However, in the middle of the Middle Ages, and especially in the 12th and 13th centuries, an important evangelical movement developed that spread throughout France, Italy, Spain and other European countries. It was made up of numerous characters and communities of Christians who dissented from the papal Church; Some had emerged to “restore” purely *evangelical* Christianity, while others – the Church of God – brought to light the Gospel that had been transmitted since apostolic times.

It must be remembered that one of the first groups that emerged from the Paulicians and moved to Europe were the

bogomils . And it is possible that the influence of the Bogomils , who gave new strength to the Christian-Sabbathist movement, has impacted many new Catholic souls:

“It is likely that the teachings came from Bulgaria, where the Paulicians had arrived... The opinions Paulicians and Bogomils included literal adherence to all the instructions of the Sermon of the Monte, and despite their great spirituality, they placed great emphasis on fasting and prayers... During the 12th century they rapidly grew in followers, and spread to different countries” (167) .

The geographical area that the Pauliciano-Bogomils covered coincides precisely with the regions in which many preachers of the Gospel appeared before the world, denouncing apostasy, calling for repentance and calling to do the will of God transmitted in the Holy Scriptures. In this context, several leaders emerge who direct the work of God, some of whom had even been Catholic clerics:

“The Church of God, still hidden, was expanding towards the West. Although I was small and I chased - Yes, he obeyed God's commandments. And they had different names, sometimes assigned by someone.

some leader, other times by that of some doctrine and other times by the region where he was located... It would be

isolated groups represented a faithful descendant of the Church -

apostolic sia . But among those persecuted groups the true creed survived” (168) .

Herman Hoeh complements the previous testimony, indicating:

“As a result of the evangelization carried out in the regions of the Alps by the Paulicia -

And the Bogomils of Bulgaria, names applied to the people of God, rose up in great numbers.

ministers and congregations of faithful around the year 1000” (169) .

There were three preachers and leaders of apostolic Christian movements that emerged in the 11th century: Peter of Bruys , Henry of Lausanne and Arnold of Brescia.

Peter de Bruys was “the first leader to emerge from the teachings of the Bogomils in the south of France ” (170) . He began his adult life as a priest in the Alps in southeastern France, but soon learned the evangelical truth and abandoned the priesthood when he understood the falsehood of the Catholic system. After being expelled from his diocese he began to preach directly to the people of southern France, in Languedoc and Provence, starting in the year 1104. Among his doctrinal principles we must mention the following: Based on the New Testament, he declared that no person she had to be baptized until she reached the full use of reason; that it was a vain superstition to build churches, that is, those immense and expensive buildings for the service of God; Instead, he said that God accepted sincere worship wherever it was offered and that there was no special sanctity in consecrated buildings. Crucifixes were to be rejected, as they were instruments of idolaters and superstition. The true body and blood of Christ were not in the Catholic Eucharist, but were representative in that holy arrangement by the elements and symbols. The dead do not benefit from the prayers, oblations and good works of the living. On the other hand, he rejected sacred (Catholic) songs and music, as well as ecclesiastical celibacy. He taught marriage even in the clergy and that it was one of the noblest parts of the religion. He also rejected the official fasts of the Catholic Church. Finally, Peter de Bruys observed the divine Decalogue, including the weekly Sabbath :

“For (about) twenty years Pedro de Bruys shook the south of France. He specifically emphasized a day of worship that was recognized at that time by the Celtic churches of the British Isles, among the Paulists (Paulicians)..., that is, the seventh day of the fourth commandment” (171) .

De 's preachings Bruys found success in Provence, Gascony and Narbone . In 1126, finally, he was murdered in Saint-Gilles du Gard, on Catholic “Good Friday” by a mob enraged by his sermons, who then threw him onto the same bonfire of crosses and crucifixes that he had prepared in the town square for , in it, boil and stew the meat in disregard of the custom of Catholics during that date. The movement he promoted became known as “ Petrobrusian ” and continued vigorously for two decades under the guidance of Henry of Lausanne, another former priest.

In fact, Henry of Lausanne was originally from Italian Piedmont and is known by that name because he began his evangelistic work in that city in Switzerland; He is also historically known as Henry of Cluny, because he was a monk in that other city. He adopted Petrobrusian teaching in 1116. His fundamental teachings were: the rejection of the doctrinal and disciplinary authority of the Catholic Church; He held that the Bible was the only standard for faith and worship and that there was a right to base faith on the free interpretation of the Gospel. He condemned the baptism of infants, the eucharist of the sacrifice of the mass, the communion of saints, prayers for the dead and rejected the liturgy. His teachings were very successful in the south of France. Regarding the end of his life and ministry, Schaff and Herzog write:

“Henry adopted the beliefs of the previous one (Peter de Bruys). He continued his ministry... in the south of France.

cia in the year 1119 and continued preaching until the death of his colleague in 1126. Henry managed esca - pair of fate Bruys and fled to Gasconia , but a few years later he risked entering the diocese.

cess of Orales, France, where he was captured by the archbishop and imprisoned by Pope Innocent II... He escaped a few years later and returned to Languedoc, where his influence grew for several more years...The Archbishop of Toulouse arrested him and he died in prison around the year 1149” (*172*) .

In the year 1136 Arnold of Brescia, a former friar like the previous ones, moved his native Italy, France and Switzerland with his powerful eloquence based on his deep Christian convictions. His teachings contrasted with the doctrine of Roman Catholicism. When comparing the first Christian congregations, the Church of the apostles, with the Roman Church of his time, he was scandalized to see the antithesis between the two; That is why he urged the dominant Church to divest itself of its worldly riches and return to the simplicity of the early Church. He affirmed that communion or the Lord's Supper was only a memorial rite and combated the dogma of transubstantiation; He affirmed that the ministers of the Church should marry; He rejected the baptism of children. He insisted that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world. Arnold's ideas gained more and more ground in the territories in which he preached. He was finally captured by a mob and died in Rome in 1155, crucified and burned at the stake. However, the influence of his doctrine continued for many generations.

As can be seen, Peter, Henry and Arnold had been priests, but the knowledge of the true Gospel transformed their lives, and they wanted to spread the idea that Christianity in general should recover its original purity and simplicity. Most ecclesiastical historians and other scholars of the subject claim that these and other apostolic Christian figures and movements arose spontaneously after studying the Bible, however Powicke notes that there was a general progression of beliefs coming from Eastern Europe. “We have seen that this source was the Paulicians who settled in Thrace. These churches, no doubt, united with sympathizers (believers) who existed in the west” (*173*) . That is why those preachers also observed the law of God, as Pedro Allix recognizes in his historical work:

“About the year 1000, Peter de Bruys , Arnold and Neri were accused of being faithful to the entire law of God and to observe the Sabbath ” (*174*) .

In the century in which those ministers preached and gave their lives for the evangelical cause, other Christian-Judaic movements emerged in Western Europe. The historian Mosheim admits that the congregations of the Church of God, in the 12th century, had “an idea that the observance of the law of Moses, in everything except the offering of sacrifices, was obligatory upon Christians... and they abstained from those meats whose use was prohibited under the Mosaic law, and celebrated the Jewish Sabbath . The second dogma that distinguished this *sect* was its opposition to the doctrine of three persons in the divine nature (Trinity)” (175) . That was the case, for example, of the Pasagians and Waldensians.

The Church of God represented by the Pasagian and Waldensian movements

The ministry of the preachers mentioned above had caused a widespread spiritual awakening in much of Europe, but it was spectacular in the valleys of southern France and northern Italy, that is, in the region of the Alps and its surroundings, particularly causing the strengthening of the Church that was a refuge from the religious intolerance of the time.

It should be noted once again that the Church that emerged in Judea was spread to other lands, and its identifying characteristic was its attachment to trying to follow as faithfully as possible the instructions of the Bible as far as they understood it, and for that reason - as the *Encyclopedia Judaica* - “the accusation of *Judaizers* was frequent against dissidents” by the dominant Church (176) .

It has even been wrongly maintained that the dissident movements related to biblical Judaism were inspired by Judaism or by the contact of dissident Christians with the Jewish community, which was numerous , rich and respected by the rulers and the people in those days. regions. That was the belief of the Catholic Church, as noted in the *Encyclopedia Judaica Castellana* : “The Inquisition accused the Jews of having instigated medieval heresies” (177) . Nothing could be further from the truth, since the development of the history of the Church of God exposed up to this point has shown that the Christian people who have honored the true faith and observed the biblical commandments had a successive chain of diverse links in the Near East and in Europe since apostolic times, and was called by different names by the secular world: Nazarenes, Quartodecimans, Paulicians , etc., and in the middle of the Middle Ages denominations such as Sabbatarians, Sabatatis , Insabatatis , Pasagians and Waldenses emerged, all related to the observance of the Ten Commandments and the weekly Sabbath. For the apostate Church, all of them were “Judaizers”, but in the strict sense they were Christian heirs of the imprint of Judaic Christianity of the first century. The *Encyclopedia Judaica Castellana* refers to them:

“These active (Christians) from the first hour of Catholicism (that is, from the beginning of the century from the 2nd century AD) reached, starting in the 10th century, threatening proportions for the Roman faith. To - of the great *heresies* (according to Romanism) that maintained a struggle with the (Catholic) Church life and death in France, Italy and Central Europe, they used the Bible in its authentic form as an arsenal of weapons, although not all of them were 'Judaizing ’” (178) .

In fact, when the text says “not all of them were 'Judaizers ’” , it is revealing that among all those dissident groups there were Christians who preserved the Judaic features of the apostolic Church. That is the Church of God. But there were other movements that rejected any relationship with the moral law and the law of worship of God; for example, the Cathars or Albigensians, who, in addition to uniting primitive Christian morality with a touch of Manichean philosophy, “did not accept the Mosaic law or its fundamental rites such as... the sanctity of the Sabbath, etc.”; in fact, the Cathars were “frankly hostile to Judaism” (179) .

In short, the true Church has been preserved, as Jones says in his *History of the Church* :
"Indeed, from the borders of Spain to the south of France, between and under the Alps, along of the Rhine and even to Bohemia, thousands of disciples of Christ, as we will show hereafter , They found themselves even in the most terrible times preserving the faith in its purity, adhering to the simplicity of Christian worship , patiently carrying the *cross* of Christ, distinguished men for their fear of God and obedience to his will, and persecuted only for the love of justice" (*180*) .

Within the general paucity of historical references to the Church of God, the abundant citations related to its development between the 11th and 14th centuries in the Alpine regions and surrounding areas are an exception. Among those quotes mention is made of the Sabbatarians, of whom JN Andrews writes:

"Some of these Christians were called *satati* , *sabatati* , *insabatati* and even more frequently, *inzabatati* . Some, being guided by the sound without adhering to the facts, say that this is what they called the Hebrew word *Sabbath* , because they kept Saturday instead of Sunday.

"Another says that it was because they rejected all the Roman festivals, or Sabbaths in the vulgar sense." from Latin, which the Catholic Church guarded with such zeal.

"A third opinion says that the word came from *sabot* or *zabot* , a shoe, because they used as a sign some shoes with a special buckle"

Since it is not very logical that a town would risk its life by coming down from its mountains to face the fury of the inquisitors by putting a sign on its shoes, and because the shoes of that region were famous and were called *sandals* , this last theory must be discarded. completely. That is why Andrews concludes:

"They were called *insabatati* (actually) not because they were circumcised, but because they kept the Sabbath." Jewish" (*181*) .

Spicer adds other information regarding medieval Sabbatarians:

"Among the numerous *sects* of southern Europe, and of the Alpine valleys, to which so much persist - In Rome (Catholic), there were at least some who saw and obeyed the truth of the Sabbath . Thus, from one of these denominations, the historian Goldasto says: 'They were called *insabatati* , not because they were-circumcised , but because they kept the Sabbath according to the Jewish law ' (*Deutsche Biographie* , t. IX, art. ' Goldast ', p. 327)" (*182*) .

One of those Sabbatarian communities ("Judaizers", according to their Catholic enemies) was that of the " *pasagianos* " or *Pasaginos*), which emerged in the 12th and 13th centuries in Lombardy (northern Italy). Regarding his name, the *Encyclopedia Judaica Castellana* gives the following explanations:

"The origin of the name ' *passagii* '... Some derive it from the Provençal voice ' *pasaca* ' (*to stroll*), he stated - He commanded that the *Pasaginos* were called *walkers* because of their itinerant and wandering way of life. Others,

They believe that the name is a distortion of a Greek word meaning *most holy* , alluding to the life of perfect holiness of the *passagii* . Finally, there is another quite plausible explanation, according to which The *passagii* would be *those who observe Pesach* " (*183*) .

It is very likely that the arrival of the Bogomil Christians from Eastern Europe promoted the development of this movement, since they had a similar doctrine, as can be seen from the following documented testimonies:

"The ecclesiastical historian Mosheim says that they appear to have been a remnant of the Nazarenes (a through Paulicians and Bogomils). They had certain distinctive doctrines: 1) That it was obligatory for Christians keep the law of Moses in everything , except the presentation of sacrifices; 2) that Christ was the

God's first creature and the purest" (184) .

“(The Pasagians)... probably had their origin in the east and took their name from their lives there -
mades , since its name derives from ' passegori ', birds of *passage* ... They observed the law of Moses,
circumci-
sion , the Sabbath , the difference between clean and unclean foods... The Pasaginis leaned on the
Old and New Testament for their beliefs” (185) .

Indeed, the Pasagians believed in Jesus and the New Testament, but, like the Apostolic Church, they complemented their Christian convictions with the Old Testament. The Bible was for them the exclusive authority of their doctrine. They taught that the Trinity was an error and rejected the so-called “fathers of the (Catholic) Church. ” They kept not only the Sabbath, but also the annual solemn festivals. This is corroborated by the following sources:

“The papal author , Bonacurso , wrote the following against the Pasagians : 'Not a few, but more
Well many know what the errors of those called Pasagini are ... First, they teach that
The Sabbath must be obeyed . Even more, to increase their error, they condemn and reject all the Fathers.
of the Church, and the entire Roman Church' (D'Achery , *Spicilegium* 1, 22-214; Muratori , *Antiquities
medieval* , 152; Hahan , 3,209)” (186) .

“His doctrine prescribed the literal observance of the Mosaic law: of circumcision, the dietary laws,
the holidays, etc.; but they rejected the sacrifices... They accepted Jesus and the New Testament, which
They tried to harmonize with the Ancient... It was the general opinion among the Pasagians that 'the law of the
judiciary'

God is better than the law of Christians (refers to Catholic-Orthodox Christianity)'. Of course,
They repudiated the dogma of the Trinity. Thus,... Bonacurso declared: 'They (the Pasagians) say that...the Father,
The Son and the Holy Spirit, the three persons of the Trinity, are not one God, nor one substance.
(187) .

The Pasagians spread beyond northern Italy, preaching and adding new members in France, Germany,
Hungary, England, and central Italy. Referring to this fact, Hahn wrote:

“How the heresy has spread at this time seems almost incredible. From Bulgaria to the E-
bro , from the north of France to the Tiber, we find them everywhere. Many countries are
fected , such as Hungary and the south of France; and they abound in many other countries; in Ale-
mania , in Italy, in Holland, and even in England their efforts are evident” (188) .

Along with these Christians faithful to God's law of sanctification there was a parallel movement of
greater geographical scope, influence and historical prominence, which the world called “Waldensian”.
Most historians have tried to link the origin of the Waldenses with Peter of Valdo , the main leader of
the movement in the 12th century, and even claim that he was its founder; However, this did not give
rise to the Waldensians, but rather they are closely linked to the Judaic Christians who have been
mentioned in the previous lines. The Waldensian historian Emilio Comba starts from the following
base:

“Nowhere in the Old Testament Scriptures do we find that the light of truth and
of holiness has never been completely extinguished. There were always men who ca-
They faithfully undermined the paths of justice. Their number was sometimes reduced to a minimum, but
It was never entirely lost. We believe that it has been the same case from the time of Jesus Christ until
now; and that it will be like this until the end. Because if the Church of God was founded, it was for the purpose of
that it would remain until the end of time... We do not believe that the entire Church of God fell away

absolutely from the path of truth, but a portion surrendered and, as is commonly seen, the majority were led towards evil” (189) .

In fact, historical evidence only confirms that the flight of dissident Christians in the times of the Roman bishop Sylvester (4th century AD) generated a movement that took refuge in the valleys, mountains and other places to preserve their faith in Jesus. without impediments. There are the roots or origin of all evangelical groups obedient to the divine commandments. To remember this process, it is enough to cite some historiographic testimonies:

Peter Allix , in his *History of the Churches of Piedmont* mentions the name “Church of God”, and observes that the people called *Waldenses* throughout the world left Rome towards the valleys of Piedmont . (190) .

“The Waldenses were very ancient, dating their creed and practice from 300 AD” (191) .

Grantz , in his *History of the United Brethren* , speaks of the Waldenses as follows: “These ancient Christians date their origin to the beginning of the fourth century” (192) .

Meanwhile, Dugger and Dodd, in their work *A History of the True Church* , add:

“Christian refugees who escaped the wrath of the Roman Church and State founded an asylum and southern France, although they fled to all nations -

nes where they could find entry and protection from the persecutions of the Papacy” (193) .

Gilly, in *Excursions to the Piedmont* , speaks of the ancient “valley dwellers” who fled the wrath of the Papal Church in the early centuries that were still in the 13th century. “They occupied a region in the mountains... and even from this remote place they disseminated the doctrine and their influence was felt over the most refined and civilized part of Europe... They professed to constitute the remnant of the pure and primitive Christian Church” (194) . Regarding this, Dugger and Dodd comment the following:

“From the aforementioned testimony, we conclude that the Vaudois (Vallenses , Waldenses) inhabited these same we valleys for more than a thousand years, and who proclaimed the right that cannot be disputed, which was- They were the remains, the remnant, of the true Church of God that fled into the wilderness. It should also be noted -

Well , no history can show that these saints of God were involved with the Church - Catholic Church , but remained separate, letting their light shine in the darkest hours of the medieval times” (195) .

“ Beza affirms that the Waldenses were the primitive Christian relics... Pablo Perrin is right that The Waldenses were in unremembered times in Italy and Dalmatia, and were descendants of the ...who were persecuted and left Rome in the year 400 or 413 and who for purity in the community - nion were called Puritans (pure)” (196) .

“ The antiquity of the Waldenses or believers is supported by their friends and corroborated by their enemies. migos ... Reiner Sacco speaks of the Lionists as a sect that flourished in the five hundred years (before of the 750); and mentions notable authors among them who traced its antiquity to the A-era.

postolic . Teodoro Belvedro , a papist monk, says that *heresy* was always in the valleys. In it preface to the first Bible in French, the translator says that they (the Waldensians) always had the complete joy of the heavenly truth contained in the Holy Scriptures, since they were enri - loved by the apostles themselves” (197) .

“The views of the Waldenses were therefore not new to Europe in the 11th and 11th centuries.

XII, and there is nothing improbable in the tradition that the subalpine Church preserved in its integrity in an interrupted course since the first preaching of the Gospel in the valleys” (198) .

It is understood that with the passage of time, in the 8th and 9th centuries, the migratory movement of the Paulicians , first, and the Bogomils , later, towards western Europe caused the interrelation between the latter and the remnant of the Church of God who inhabited the valleys of central Europe. Both communities had doctrinal affinities. Strong confirms this fact, saying:

“In the 8th century, a considerable group of Paulicians withdrew from the persecution of the emperors - Greek (Byzantine) emperors to the area of Thrace and Bulgaria. Upon being expelled by the people of those regions , they traveled west until they reached the Alps mountain range, where they found people similar to them and settled there” (199) .

Finally, the almost millenary antiquity of the Waldenses in those Alpine valleys is corroborated by themselves, since AW Mitchell offers the following quote of what they thought about their movement:

“This religion that we profess is not ours alone, nor has it been invented by man in years recent, as falsely claimed; but it is the religion of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, and of other ancestors of ours even older, and of the blessed martyrs, confessors, prophets and apostles... The Word of God will not perish but will remain forever; therefore, yes our religion is the true Word of God, as we are persuaded, and not an invention of man - “breaths , no human force can extinguish it” (200) .

Several authors agree that the name of the Waldenses was derived from the valleys they inhabited for centuries. For example, Jones says: "The words simply mean 'valleys,' valley-dwellers, and nothing more... Whatever local name they bore, the Catholics called them all *Vaudois* , or *Waldensians* ." (201) . For his part, Mosheim declares: “ We can affirm with the learned Beza that this town derived its name from the valleys that lived here” (202) . Meanwhile, Dugger and Dodd state that:

“These people were numerous in the valleys of Piedmont . Hence the name *Vaudois* or *Vallenses* it was given to them, particularly to those who inhabited the valleys of Luverne and Argorgne . A southern mistake -

Based on the similarity of names, Pedro de Valdo was the first founder of these churches. Because the name *Vallenses* , being easily changed to *Waldenses*, the Romanists increased this natural error to an argument against the antiquity of these churches, denying that they had no existence until the appearance of Valdo ” (203) .

According to Varetto , the name “ valense ” appears for the first time in the year 1180. “The primitive form of this name, ' valenses ' excludes the idea that it could derive from Pedro de Valdo ” (204) . Consequently, he did not found the Waldensian movement, nor did he give it the name, but rather it was the result of the renewal of the name of the Church of God due to historical-geographical circumstances. In any case, Valdo converted to its doctrine and became its maximum leader and the promoter of the mission of preaching it.

Pedro de Valdo was a rich merchant from Lyon (France). Being a devout man and practicing Catholic, but also a diligent student of the Bible, which he had translated into French. Desiring to put into practice Jesus' advice to the rich young man, he distributed his wealth among the poor and also among those from whom he had acquired it, and took vows of poverty (year 1176). Their example was followed by many people in the city and together they started to form a group that became known as “the Poor of Lyon”, which dedicated themselves to teaching the Bible in the language of the common people. This lay preaching incited the ire of the Catholic clergy. In 1179 Pope Alexander III forbade Valdo and his

followers from preaching without the permission of the local bishop. As expected, Bishop Bellesmains of Lyon refused to give his consent. Historical records indicate that, faced with this ban, Waldo responded to the ecclesiastical hierarchy using the words of Acts 5:29: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."

Waldo fled from Lyon, and his disciples followed him, coming into contact with the Vaudois or Vallenses. Dugger and Dodd confirm these circumstances:

"Some of his followers... *joined the Vaudois* of Piedmont, and the new translation of the Bi-

blia was undoubtedly a rich access to the spiritual treasures of the people... Success attended his works, and the

The doctrines that he preached turned out to be very much in harmony with those of the Vaudois, who they and their people

They were from then on *considered the same*" (205).

Another author maintains a similar testimony:

"These dissidents (the followers of Waldo) of the 11th century took refuge in the Alps and throughout the south from France, and they taught the Bible as they went from place to place. No doubt they ran into others dissident groups, such as the followers of Peter de Bruys and Henry of Lausanne. When crossing the defile - slopes of the Alps towards northern Italy, *they encountered groups of dissidents who were already*

They existed in the valleys of Piedmont and Lombardy. These groups of biblically oriented dissidents, ...then they became known throughout Europe as *Waldenses*" (206).

It should also be noted that although the Waldenses occupied a geographical space coinciding with the Cathars (Albigensians), they were not doctrinally related as some authors claim. The Catholic inquisitors persecuted them, confusing them as a single movement. However, the dualistic Manichean beliefs of the Cathars were not part of the doctrine of the Waldensian Church of God. Here are some historical statements about it:

"Unfortunately, Catholic writers include under the name of *Albigensians* all those who in this

At that time they protested against papal rule, giving them that name. A lot of confusion arises from this" (207).

"The Manichean dualists known as Cathars or Pure... were a heretical sect that eventually -

The persecution of the Vallenses or Sabbatati attracted you. The Manichean dualists were different from the Vallenses, and the Cathar-Vallianse distinction is recognized ... The biblical laws were continually kept in mind by the Sabbatati ...we know that they kept the Sabbath and the degree (type) of worship is i-

dentified from the Sabbatati (Sabatarian) branches of the East (that is, from Paulicians and Bogomils)" (208).

Likewise, it is necessary to point out the relationship between related Sabbatarian communities. Thus, for example, Vedder says that the "doctrines of the earliest Waldensians are substantially identical to those of the Petrobrusians, their persecutors being witnesses" (209).

Below are various ecclesiastical historians who describe the beliefs of the Waldensian Church of God:

"In a confession of faith, one of the members of the Waldenses declared... saying that they offered the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments included in the apostles' creed, and that admitted the sacraments instituted by Christ and the Ten Commandments, etc." (210).

"...The Waldenses who constituted the true Church and who were still upholding the name of the

Bible, 'the Church of God', observing the true Sabbath according to the commandment. Also in- they signaled the literal kingdom of Christ on earth, and celebrated the Lord's Supper annually" (211).

“ They can say part of the Old and New Testament from their heart. They despise decretals (papal), the stories and expositions of holy men, and they only adhere to the text of Scripture... Say- believe that the doctrine of Christ and his apostles is sufficient for salvation, without any ordinances or statutes of Churches. That the traditions of the Church (Catholic and Orthodox) are not better than the traditions of the Pharisees; and that the great strength is placed in the observance of human traditions than in keeping the law of God. Why do they break God's law with their traditions? They condemn - given the ecclesiastical customs that are not read in the Gospel, such as the observance of Candlemas, Palm Sunday, the reconciliation of penitents, the adoration of the cross, Good Friday... It is -

They claim to be the successors of the apostles to have apostolic authority and the keys of binding and loosing.

They maintain that the Church of Rome is the harlot of Babylon, and that all who obey her are con-

The detainees , especially the clergy who have been subject to him since the time of Pope Sylvester ... maintain that

none of the ordinances of the (Catholic) Church that have been introduced after the ascension of Christ must be observed, because they have no value; festivals, fasts, orders, blessings, church services, etc. they totally reject” (212) .

“The primary principle of this Church was: that we must believe that the Holy Scriptures, alone, con- they have all the things necessary for our salvation, and that nothing should be received as an article of faith, but what God has revealed to us. Wherever this principle dwells, from the heart, expel the superstition and idolatry. That the worship of one God, through one mediator and by flow of the Holy Spirit, is practiced sincerely . The dreams of purgatory, the intercession of saints, the worship of images, dependence on relics and austerities, cannot be before the doctrine of the Scriptures” (213) .

“The doctrines professed by the Waldenses were based on the principle that the Word of God was indispensable and was above all other authority and that it was infallible and the only rule of faith and practice - ca... They adhered to these principles so strongly that their Roman Catholic attackers accused them of having made a *dad* of the Bible...(The) knowledge through reading the Scriptures should be free for the clergy and members” (214) .

Jones adds that the Waldenses “can recite by heart large sections of the Old and New Testaments...Almost any child you meet can give an intelligent explanation of what he believes” (215) .

Regarding the ministry, they were also guided by the New Testament model:

“The biblical positions in Christ's ministry were restored. The fruits showed that Valdo He held the position of apostle; Although he did not wish to be called more than the general pastor, the catholics The Greeks used the title for him of Apostle of the Waldenses. Many elders and deacons were ordained two. Some were called bishops by Catholics, but to them they were simply old men. To the- some would be like church pastors. Some as evangelists carried the true Gospel to other countries.

“The Waldensian ministers were later nicknamed 'beards' (uncles) to hide their true identity . tity ...

“Few of the ministers married because of the dangers they constantly ran. But condemna- ban the rule of celibacy of the Roman clergy...

“They always traveled in pairs, a young man with an older one... In this way, the youngest received the opportunity to benefit from the veteran's experiences.

“Due to the scarcity of Bibles and the danger of being found with one, each candidate for the ministry has I had to memorize a large part of the Scriptures, in addition to being able to explain them . Many learn -

“They came to speak at least three languages” (216) .

“Roman Catholic writers before the year 1350 attributed the following errors to the Waldensians:

1. They allege that the doctrines of Christ and the apostles... are sufficient for salvation... 2. They say that Baptism is not helpful for small children, because they are not capable of really believing.
3. They affirmed that only they are the Church of Christ and the disciples of Christ. that they are the successors of the apostles” (217) .

The Waldenses observed the biblical Decalogue and, of course, the weekly Sabbath ; They also kept the New Testament Passover once a year. Among the books and edification treatises they wrote, there is one precisely called *The Ten Commandments* ; another, titled *The Noble Lesson* , is an exposition of the three laws given by God: the natural law, the Mosaic law, and the evangelical law (218) . In reality, they had a high appreciation of God's law:

“According to Deuteronomy 4:2: 'You shall not add to the word that I send you, nor diminish from it,' The Waldenses declared that ' the true law of God is of itself sufficient for the salvation of the human race , is a Law of perfect freedom, to which it is not lawful to add or subtract anything; there is no any kind of good that is not sufficiently included in that His law” (219) .

There are several historical quotes that mention that the Waldenses kept the biblical Sabbath :

“This is the testimony of Visabecius in his report on the Waldenses. The same author tells us that Louis XII sent two respectable people to Provence to inquire about the Waldenses. Warns you- They found out after they visited their meeting places and that they had no statues or Roman ceremonies, but They were unable to discover any evidence of the crimes of which they were accused. On *Saturday was strictly observed* , children are baptized according to the rules of the early Church. Teach-

They followed the doctrines of the Christian faith and the commandments of God. Louis XII, upon hearing the reports of-

He clarified : 'They are better people than me and my people ’” (220) .

“The Waldenses kept *the seventh day of the week* according to the commandments” (221) .

“Among the documents , originated by the same people, we have an explanation of the Ten Commandments, dated 1120 by Boyer. *The observance of the Sabbath* is enjoyed by the cessation of all - “you do worldly tasks” (222) .

“They say that the blessed Pope Sylvester was the Antichrist, of whom mention is made in the epistles of.. Paul as *the son of perdition* . (They also say) that *the observance of the Saturday* ” (223) .

“The inquisitors... (declare) that the sign of a Vaudois , judged worthy of death , was that he followed to Christ and tried to obey the commandments of God” (224) .

“Waldenses. 'That we should worship one God, who can help us, and not the saints who must disappeared ; that we must *keep the holy Saturday* ’” (225) .

“About the year 1404... Waldenses - Church of God, their enemies admitted... they baptized and obeyed the law of God... After a period of persecution, only a few faithful remained who preserved “They kept the faith, *they kept the Sabbath and the annual festivals of God* ” (226) .

The Waldenses, a Church made up of Gentiles, projected the Christian-Judaic doctrine of apostolic times. The *Encyclopedia Judaica Castellana* says about them:

“ The Waldenses considered themselves the *true Israel* or, in the expression of their leader Muston , *the Israel of the Alps* . Comba and Muston speak of the exodus and dispersion of believers. Pedro de Val- is the 'Moses of that little town that came out of the land of bondage', and 'the father, the Abraham of Israel of the Alps before becoming their Moses'. The Waldensian *barbas* (masters) sent missionaries to Italy 'to preach repentance and feed the scattered sheep of Israel' perse - guided in the valleys of the Alps ” (227) .

But the Waldenses were not only concentrated in the region of the Alps, but also spread to other distant areas as a result of the itinerant preaching they practiced. They settled in much of Europe, especially in France, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, England, Italy and even Spain. Regarding the latter country, the expansion occurred especially in the northern provinces, in Catalonia, Aragon and Old Castile, where the Waldenses had "patiently sown the seed that was beginning to sprout and that promised an abundant harvest." Two sources confirm this fact:

“Encouraged by their missionary zeal, the Waldenses toured southern Germany, Switzerland and France, taking - going to Spain, where they formed groups of dissident Christians from Rome (Catholic) in the provinces of the north , and especially in Catalonia. The fact that two councils and three kings have dealt with expelling them from (Spain)... shows that their number had to be considerable” (228) .

“According to (Perrin's story)... many of the Waldenses, fleeing from persecution, settled 'in Catalonia and in the kingdom of Aragon. This is what Mateo Paris points out, when he says that in the time of the Pa -

By Gregory IX (1227-1241) there were a large number of Waldenses in Spain, and by the year 1214, in time of Pope Alexander IV, who complained in one of his bulls that they had been allowed to take root so much, and that they had not been bothered to multiply as they had done” (229) .

Due to the teachings they professed and the missionary work carried out by the Waldenses, they began to be persecuted by Catholic religious and civil authorities . Pope Lucius III declares persecution at the council of Verona, in 1184; and in the year 1190 the bishop of Narbonne condemned them as heresy. With the decree of the Council of Verona, the most shameful period of the Roman Catholic Church began , using violence to eliminate dissidents and organizing terrible religious-military campaigns called “crusades” against them. Those directed against the Waldenses were concentrated between the years 1208 and 1223, but Catholicism persecuted the Waldenses until the 16th century.

Thus, in the midst of the darkness that reigned over the earth during the long period of papal supremacy, the Waldensian Church of God was, together with other groups of true Christians, a light that could not be completely extinguished, despite the intolerance and the chases. They preserved faith in Jesus Christ as the only priest and mediator between God and men, recognizing the Bible as the only rule of life and honoring only the commandments of God.

Some remnants of the Waldenses: the Lollards and the Anabaptists

There was always a remnant of the Church of God in Europe, the continent on which this story has been concentrated. The work of God in the 14th and 15th centuries had a prominent role among those congregations that came from the Waldenses saved from the massacres promoted by the Papal Church: the Lollards in England and the Anabaptists in Germany.

At the beginning of the dynamic 14th century, the Christian group called “ Lollard ” transformed into the transitional Church from the Waldensian era. It was developed in both Germany and the Netherlands:

“The English Sabbatarians trace their roots to the Lollards of Holland. The Lollards , in turn, are derived of the Waldensian Sabbatians dating back to before the 11th century in the Alpine regions of France and Italy. (230) .

“ Lollards . ” A religious *sect* that is distinguished in many ways from the Church of Rome. Arises from Germany at the beginning of the 14th century” (231) .

Regarding the name of the Church of God, it is generally believed that it comes from Walter the Lollard , one of its greatest ministers. Others think that *Lollard* was not a surname, but a term of reproach applied to all *heretics* who hid what was considered an error under the appearance of piety. However, it is also possible that that name comes from the word “ lollen ”, which means *to sing in a quiet (paused) voice* ; and therefore, lollard means *a singer* or *one who usually sings* ; and in the language of the common German it indicates a person who spends his time praising God with song or singing hymns in his honor. (232) .

"On the other hand, in the Netherlands (now Holland) the Waldenses began to be known for their enemies as ' lollards ', a word that comes from the Flemish word lollen or lullen, which means *sing or speak quietly* , as well as *mutter* . This name is derived from the practice they had These people memorize the Scriptures in the vernacular language , whispering them and repeating them u- “nations to others” (233) .

These “errant and hypocritical types,” as their Catholic enemies used to call them, were seen in Holland around the year 1309. In 1315 a Waldensian minister, a native of Metz (Germany) traveled to England to preach the truths of God. It was the aforementioned Walter the Lollard along with his brother Raimundo. It has been said that these two missionaries spread the Waldensian doctrine throughout insular England. Walter was famous for his eloquence and writings, and his preaching flourished an evangelical movement that took deep root for a time until the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century.

“ The historian Fuller tells that during the reign of Edward III of England, around 1315, Walter the Lollard was a German preacher. The historian Perin adds in his history of the Valden - You know that Walter the Lollard was one of the renowned Waldensian ministers who came to England and that he gained so much fame that... his followers were called in England by the name of *Lollards* ” (2. 3. 4) .

From now on we will no longer hear of the Waldenses in England, Holland and Germany, but of the Lollards or Lollards . Through the preaching of Walter and others, thousands of individuals repented. “Thousands learned for the first time that baptism means *immersion* , that the religious holidays the world called 'holy' had originated in Popery, and that Sunday was not the Sabbath of God.” (235) . Walter the Lollard , when he returned to Germany, was arrested and burned at the stake in the city of Cologne in the year 1322. Many like him were victims of the same punishment for their biblical doctrine until 1520. BB Edward says that the Lollards were He also called them “ Petrobrusians ” (after Peter de Bruys), and in Italy and Flanders “ Arnoldists ” (after the famous Arnold of Brescia); and thus the Waldensian Christians bore the name of Lollards for many generations. (236) .

The beliefs of the Lollard Church of God are the same as those found in Waldensian history and doctrine. They were radically opposed to many beliefs and practices of contemporary Christianity. They denied the authority of the Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy, they did not swear and they did not accept war or capital punishment; Likewise, they rejected the sacrifice of the mass and transubstantiation, extreme unction and doing penance for sin, since for them the suffering of Christ Jesus was enough; and they did not practice the baptism of children. They rejected the celibacy of priests, exaggerated ecclesiastical ornaments, images, holy water, prayers for the dead, pilgrimages and pilgrimages, paid masses, auricular confession, etc. And, obviously, they observed the law of God basically represented by the Decalogue. In the work of Dugger and Dodd we read the following synthesis about the Lollards : “Walter the Lollard ,... became an eminent shepherd among them...Moreland correctly states that he had great reputation among the Waldenses for having carried their doctrines to England, where they prevailed over the kingdom...Walter was united in points of doctrine and practice with the Waldenses (Orchard, *History Baptist* , p. 332)... Benedict (*History of the Baptists* , p. 308) speaks of distinct and separate *societies* . *lollard Sabbath - keeping societies ...* ” (237) .

Samuel Vila, in his work *Evangelical Christianity through the centuries* , recognizes that: “This very complete program... presented by the Lollards seems to confirm the hypothesis that the Englishmen had been instructed in the 'heresy of Truth' by the Waldenses of the continent, who proclaimed identical principles, and this speaks in favor of the continuity of the evangelical movement of protest since the first centuries of Christianity” (238) .

The Lollards suffered persecution by the English Inquisition in the 15th century. At the beginning of that century, Henry IV of England openly declared himself protector of the Catholics and began to persecute the Lollards , having Parliament adopt a law by which an investigation was ordered to be carried out to discover all the Lollards of the kingdom and hand them over to their disposal. of the bishops of their respective dioceses, who should judge them and hand over those who were stubborn to the civil authority to be executed (239) .

“After a period of persecution there remained only a few faithful who preserved their faith, kept the Sabbath and the annual festivals of God,” Cox declares (240) . Many Lollards joined John Wyclif, one of the precursors of the Protestant Reformation; and for this reason secular history often wrongly considers them, indeed, as “disciples of Wyclif” or “Wiclipites .” Perhaps the confusion was due to the bull of Pope Gregory IX, in which he called Wyclif's disciples Lollards . (241) .

Lollard movement was growing in strength in England, in Germany and Bohemia (territory of the current Czech Republic) another link of the Church of God also emerged from the ancient Waldenses, which ecclesiastical history would call the “ Anabaptists .” This name means *to baptize again* or *rebaptize* , since they emphasized that the new converts had to be baptized again as the first baptism, of Catholic origin and administered to children, was not considered valid (242) . In that sense, all the links in the Church of God were Anabaptist when they converted people who professed beliefs from other Christian currents.

There is much evidence that the Waldenses later became known as Anabaptists . During the time of the Reformation (15th and 16th centuries) it was possible for those to come to light and they came to be called by the general name of *Anabaptists* . In relation to them, Vedder says:

“It is a curious and instructive fact that the Anabaptist churches of the period of the so-called Reformation (or late Middle Ages) were most numerous precisely where the Waldensians of a century or two previous ones had flourished more... That there has been an intimate relationship between the two movements, which

Only very few among those who have studied this period and its literature doubt it. The torch of the truth was passed from hand to hand from one generation to another” (243) .

Christian expresses himself in a similar way:

“In those places where the Waldenses flourished, there the (ana) Baptists took root...Many pre-
Skilled preachers of the Waldenses became widely known as ministers (ana) bautis -
tas. Many details marked the Waldenses and the (ana) Baptists as being of the same origin.
gene” (244) .

Vedder , raising the idea of the ancient existence of the Anabaptists , makes the following comment:
Anabaptist churches did not develop gradually, but appear completely for -
ed from the beginning... complete in practice, correct in doctrine, strict in discipline.
It would be impossible to explain the existence of these phenomena without the assumption of a long- existing
cause .
tension ” (245) .

The doctrine of the Anabaptists , in general, were very similar to those of the historical Church of God. Firstly, they were strongly anticlerical; They considered the Bible as the only source of knowledge about the plan of salvation; They considered the doctrine of the Trinity to be in conflict with the Bible. God is one and Jesus “was rewarded for his perfect obedience by being exalted to divine majesty and invested with the authority to judge the living and the dead.” The Holy Spirit is only the power of God. Man is mortal by nature. “There is no original sin but there is original evil and a hereditary inclination towards sin.” The life and doctrine of Christ pointed the way to moral perfection. Conversion requires personal effort but cannot be completed without the help of the Holy Spirit. The Anabaptists , obviously, declared that there is neither command nor example of infant baptism in the New Testament, and that before baptism the faith and instruction of the convert is required (246) .

Notwithstanding the above , it must be clarified that not all Anabaptists who emerged from the Waldensian movement remained completely in the inherited doctrine, since not all groups were observant of the divine Decalogue, but the vast majority of them did not keep the biblical Sabbath in the time when the Protestant Reformation began. Those groups that did maintain the Sabbatarian belief were precisely called “ Sabbathist Anabaptists ”, one of whose leaders was called Andrés Fischer. Seiglie refers to him, saying:

“Andrés Fischer was born in Austria in the year 1480. He was a cultured man who wrote a book defending -
the observance of the Sabbath day. He desired to revive the faith and practice of the apostolic Church. Predi -
có in the regions of Austria and Czechoslovakia. He was arrested along with his wife. He had to present
He believed her death by drowning while he was hanged from the wall of a castle. However, he-
He managed to escape and continued preaching the truths of God until his death” (247) .

Fischer preached the truth not only in Austria and Czechoslovakia, but also in northwestern Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and even England, where the Anabaptists had many problems for what they preached, since they clearly departed from traditional Christianity (248) . Other historical testimonies from the 14th and 15th centuries demonstrate that the Church of God was in force throughout various geographical points of central and western Europe, and was represented by diverse groups of Sabbatarian congregations:

“We write of the Sabbatarian in Bohemia, Transylvania, England and Holland between 1250 and 1600” (249) .

“In 1310, two hundred years before Luther's thesis, the Bohemian brothers constituted a quartet - of the population of Bohemia, and these kept in contact with the Waldenses who abounded in Austria, Lombardy, Bohemia, northern Germany, Thuringia, Brandenburg and Moravia. Erasmus (from Rotterdam) points out that the Bohemian Waldenses were strict keepers of the seventh day” (250) .

There is evidence that in the distant Scandinavian country of Norway there were Sabbatarian Christians, as reflected in the following documentary sources from the 15th century:

“The first issue had to do with observing the Sabbath as holy . had reached heard from the bishop that *people in different parts* of the kingdom had ventured to keep the Sabbath as a holy day. It is strictly prohibited (determined) in the laws of the (Catholic) Church. that anyone observe or adopt as holy festivities other than those established by the Pope, the arch - bispo, or the bishops” (251) .

“We have been informed that some people in different districts of the kingdom have adopted and observe Saturday as a day of rest. It is strictly prohibited (in the canon of the holy Church) to - two to observe other days than those ordered by the Pope, the archbishop, or the bishops. The observance Saturday will not be allowed under any circumstances in the future, according to what is indicated in the canons of the Church (Catholic). Therefore, we advise all friends of God throughout Norway - those who want to remain obedient to the holy (Catholic) Church, let them leave aside the damned ob - Sabbath service ; and we prohibit *the rest* under penalty of severe punishment by the Church (Catholic) that they keep Saturday as a holy day” (252) .

Meanwhile, Erasmus of Rotterdam , a prominent humanist philosopher of the 16th century, recognized that there were Sabbatarian Christians in Bohemia:

“Erasmus testifies that even in 1500 these Bohemians not only observed the seventh day scrupulous - mind, but they were called Sabbatarians” (253) .

Just as it is proven that among those Sabbatarian groups the Church of God was preserved in Western Central Europe, there was also a presence of it in the East, as will be analyzed below.

Emergence of a Christian-Judaic movement in Russia

At the end of the 9th century, Catholic Christianity was introduced to Russia, and spread to the colder lands of Lapland and Finland in subsequent centuries. According to one source, one of the first dissident groups of Catholicism that arrived in that country was that of the Bogomil Christians , in the 10th century, who -despite the persecutions- were able to preserve their doctrine in hidden form for centuries. (254) .

In the 15th century, a Christian-Judaic movement within the scope of the Eastern Orthodox religion appeared in the Russian city of Novgorod , under the government of Grand Duke Ivan Vasilievich III, which gave rise to several definitively Judaizing sects. They had in common believing in the only God and denying the divinity of Jesus Christ and the Trinity. They rejected the veneration of icons and images, monasticism , the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church and its religious ceremonies. They believed that the law of Moses must be strictly observed until the coming of Christ (255) .

Due to the lack of background and historical evidence, it is not possible to establish a doctrinal relationship between that Christian-Judaic movement and the Bogomils , as the Russian historian Servitsky concludes :

“We have tried to find... where this heresy came from... Carefully considering all the sources, we come to the conclusion that there is no clear beginning to them” (256) .

Referring to these “heretics,” another Russian historian, AI Klibanov , says that they “appeared even before the 13th and 14th centuries” (257) . Because its theology was rooted in the Bible, the movement was not affected by Byzantine Christianity. As the adherents to the current were not too numerous, its activity continued to develop quietly throughout the centuries, to revive and reach its greatest magnitude in the 14th century (258) . In the 15th century the group consolidated and found support in both the upper and lower classes. Volozky , the main opponent of the Novgorod -Moscow movement of that time, wrote bitterly that in every city people talked about the Reformed faith, in every possible place. In the city of Pskov, for example, they discussed the dogma and traditions of the Orthodox Church when they met at the Veche (259) for other secular matters. Gennady Gonozov , another prominent opponent of that movement and the founder of the Russian Inquisition, wrote in a letter to Bishop Prohov Sarsky that “temptation, here, spreads not only in the cities, but also in the villages.”

Although there may have been certain differences and deviations among the proponents of the movement reclaiming the Holy Scriptures, which led the Russian Orthodox clergy to call its promoters “Judaizers,” such differences should not distract attention from the central teachings of the movement that with the At one time it received the name “sabatarians” for its observance of the biblical Sabbath . The literature published by those Sabbatarians provides the following summary of their theology and teachings :

- "1. The Holy Scriptures are the maximum authority for the believer, and are above traditions .
tions of the Church. The observance of the Sabbath and the Lord's Supper and other similar beliefs are deduce directly from this supreme belief
- "2. Monasticism , icons, holy relics and other traditions not found in the Bible are inventions of priests and should not be followed or venerated
- "3. The Bible is the historical and prophetic guide that unites the past, present and future
- "4. The Christian should pray to God without human mediators, such as priests or saints. The Scriptures can be understood and explained without the help of the clergy
- "5. Believers should keep all of God's law (the Decalogue), including the Sabbath
- "6. The death of Christ was the atoning sacrifice for the sins of humanity
- "7. Human beings are monistic and non-dualistic creatures. There is no such thing as survival a soul outside the body; the soul is not immortal
- "8. Each person is free to choose and practice what they believe. Freedom is vital in religious faith and practice - giosa
- "9. True religion and science are not in mutual opposition” (260) .

By the end of the 14th century, the ideas and practices of the Russian Sabbath movement initiated in Novgorod and Moscow had spread throughout Russia and were observed by all social classes. The Orthodox Church (equivalent to the Roman Catholic Church in Western Europe) saw its power clearly threatened and decided that it must act without delay. For this reason, the council of 1490 decreed a resolution against the *heretics* , many of whom were tortured to death in the Novgorod prison . The majority of Christian-Judaics, however, continued to profess the accepted teachings.

It is true that the repressive measures of the civil and religious authorities reduced the expansion of the missionary activity of the Sabbatarian Christians, but, as the *Encyclopedia Judaica Castellana* says : *Judaizing* tendencies , however, never disappeared among the Russian people and occasionally mind manifested themselves, centuries later, in a way that would alarm the imperial government” (261) .

For its part, the weekly *Mundo Judío* mentions the fact that the Christian-Judaic movement of the 15th century gave rise to the “Christian sect of Sabbatarians” or “subotniki ” (262) , which emerged in the 18th century.

The Church of God in the context of the Protestant Reformation

Within the conventional division of universal history, the Middle Ages conclude in the 15th century to give way to the period called the Modern Era, which in turn will extend until the 18th century. The respective characteristics of both historical periods are opposite, since while the medieval era had been predominantly religious under the absolute dominance of the Roman Catholic Church, in Western Europe, and the Orthodox Church, in the East, the religiosity of modern man, instead, it will be enveloped in a new mindset. He wanted other forms of religious expression, for religion to be more spiritual and of free biblical interpretation, to speak to the heart and brain, as historians say. Modern man wanted a purer, more vital and more human religion, since the dominant Church related closely to the world under a scheme of intolerance and complexity. In other words, the gulf that existed between the dogma and practice of the official Churches, on the one hand, and the simple truth of the Gospel that so many dissident Christians had preached for centuries, on the other, became evident to many sincere Catholics.

It is those religious circumstances (among others, political and social) that made some Catholics feel the need to renew the Christianity they professed, leading to a great movement called the “Protestant Reformation” developed fundamentally in the 16th century and part of the 17th century. . This religious process had some precursors, notably the Englishman John Wyclif and the Bohemian (Czech) John Huss . Although these are not directly related to the true Church of God, it is necessary to make a reference to their doctrinal thinking.

The scholar John Wyclif (1320-1384), professor at the University of Oxford, began a movement in 1370 whose purpose was to suppress the abuses of the official Church. He maintained that the Church should be purely spiritual, without hierarchy, without priesthood and almost without sacraments. He preached against the spiritual tyranny of the clergy and the authority of the Pope. He considered the Bible as the only rule of salvation and defended the right of the people to read it and translated it from Latin into English. He attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation, purgatory and the invocation of saints, and considered that the true leader is the one whose teachings and whose life follow most closely that of Christ, whose kingdom is not of this world. Curiously, in a bull by Pope Gregory IX he called the followers of Wyclif “ Lollards ”, probably due to a confusion, since that was the name of the English Sabbatarians of the 14th century.

Filled with excommunications by Catholic religious authorities, but loved by thousands of disciples, Wyclif died peacefully in 1384. His influence was a factor that paved the way for the Reformation of Catholicism, as his thought extended beyond his own. country. It was especially felt in Bohemia. John Huss was the most faithful of Wyclif’s disciples, following his teachings almost literally.

John Huss (1369-1415) was also a scholar, professor at the University of Prague, and eloquent preacher. He attacked the vices of the clergy and the corrupt state of the Roman Church. He is radical towards the Papacy, considering that Christ is the only possible head of the Church. He condemned the sale of indulgences; He rejected purgatory, the adoration of saints and worship in a foreign language; It elevated the Scriptures above the dogmas and ordinances of the Catholic Church. Tried as a heretic, he was burned alive in 1415. Despite being condemned for not accepting transubstantiation, his own words contradict this: “The priest, as minister of Christ, does with the power and words of Christ what Christ

does with his own power and his own words, transubstantiating the bread in his body and the wine in his blood” (263) .

Wyclif and Huss prepared the environment in which Martin Luther (1483-1546) sparked the Protestant Reformation at the beginning of the 16th century. That day, October 17, 1517, when the Augustinian monk posted his 95 theses on the door of Wittenberg Cathedral in imperial Germany , he could not imagine what was going to happen. Luther was not setting out to start a new schismatic movement, he was simply rejecting certain practices with which he did not agree, such as the sale of indulgences. But, intentionally or not, it began a religious revolution and with it the birth of “Protestantism.”

Strictly speaking, the adjective *Protestant* was given in 1529 to the German Lutheran princes who vigorously protested the annulment of the edict of the first diet or assembly of Speyer (1526). This diet had achieved the agreement of territorialism "whose region is, such will be the religion" which established that according to those who lived in such region, the religion of the majority would be the official one in it. This harmed the interests of the Roman Church, and since Emperor Charles V was Catholic, he annulled the edict of the Diet of 1526. From then on they began to be called Protestants, a name that was later extended to all reformist groups opposed to the dirigisme of Catholic Rome and who abandoned it.

Luther's "innovation" consisted of having as a basic premise that "the just will live by faith" and not by works, that is, salvation is received through complete trust in God through Christ and not by rituals, sacraments or penances of popery. For the same reason, he opposed the sale of indulgences or reduction of the pains of purgatory (a remission of the punishment of sin). This fact led him to attempt to reform his Church, but he was censured and excommunicated by Pope Leo Gustavus Vasa, in Sweden (1523); and John Knox, in Scotland (1555), who were joined by the English king Henry VIII (1531) for personal interests. Christianity would never be the same from then on.

After the schism of 1054, in which the Eastern Orthodox Church departed from Western Romanism, the Protestant Reformation produced a new great division among Catholics, separating almost all of northern Europe from the Papacy. Initial Protestantism, through its evolution, ended up crystallizing into four groups of beliefs: Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, Anglicanism and Sunday Anabaptism . From these four mother branches of Protestantism all the countless “evangelical” sects subsequently emerged with different derivations and deviations, doctrines, denominations and organizational structures, as analyzed in Chapter I of this historical work.

The reformist movements had emerged as a reaction against the established religious system, but they did not completely restore the truths that it denied. For example, “Wyclif revered the Decalogue, but his interpretation of the rules on the Sabbath applied to Sunday.” (264) . “ Huss manifested a devotion to the Decalogue similar to that of his mentor” (265) , but he held “the concept of the abrogation of the Mosaic law in Christ; prohibits the...celebration of the Sabbath” (266) . Luther had been amazed because the Waldenses “meditated on the law of God day and night” (267) ; and Luther himself is said to have “believed and practiced the observance of the seventh day (Saturday) , although he did not prescribe it in his articles of faith for his followers... However, it has been said that, in his original thesis, Luther advocated (for) the observance of the seventh day, but that his colleagues objected on grounds that it was an unpopular doctrine” (268) . Luther in one of his works had written of his belief in the biblical Sabbath , as follows:

“ The Sabbath was before the law of Moses came, and has existed since the beginning of the world. especially have the devotees who have preserved the true faith, congregate and invoke God in this I give you” (269) .

John Calvin, for his part, recognized that the Sabbath had been instituted by God in Creation. In his *Commentary on Genesis 2:3*, written in 1554, he stated:

“So first of all God rested; then he blessed this rest, so that it would always be sacred - do among men; Therefore he dedicated every seventh day to rest, so that his own example was a perpetual law” (270) .

However, despite recognizing that the Sabbath was given as a perpetual statute, he then says that " later the law gave a new provision regarding the Sabbath, which was to be for the Jews especially and only for a time." Calvin described the Jewish Sabbath as “typical” (symbolic), that is, “a legal ceremony anticipating that true spiritual rest, which would be manifested in Christ: the Christian Sabbath, for him, is Sunday (271) .

Although the religious leaders who emerged from the Reformation declared that their respective doctrines were derived from the Bible since they wanted to restore the primitive Gospel, in reality they denied the law of God, stating that the original Decalogue was no longer in force; and they denied the validity of the biblical festivals that are the sign of the people of God. Both Luther and Calvin, main exponents of Protestant theology, even flagrantly violated the Scriptures with their actions:

“(Luther had a) changing position... vis-à-vis the Jews, whom the reformer first courted, pa -
" to attract them to the new faith, and then slandered in order to neutralize their influence on dissident souls."
(272) .

“In the Munster *Peasants' War* , where 5,000 (Anabaptists)... lost their lives , many were immolated, falsely accused of sedition. Luther himself claimed full responsibility saying: ' I , Martin Luther, I have shed the blood of the rebellious peasants; since *I ordered them to be killed* . His blood indeed be upon my head'; and in a blasphemous manner he added: 'but I have placed it on the head of the Lord God, by whose command I spoke "' (273) .

“The antitrinitarian doctrine of the Spanish Miguel Servetus (1509-1533) occupies among the heterodox of the Reformation place...His denial of the Trinity of God...made him odious to both the Roman Church and the moderate reformers, such as Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. The latter had Michael Servetus *burned alive* in Geneva” (274) .

The Reformation is seen as a movement of great proportions that would have reaffirmed fundamental truths of Christianity; However, in their effort to rectify the Catholic Church, Protestants not only failed to get rid of all Catholic-pagan beliefs and practices, but they continued to believe and practice them; and even a large part of Protestantism did not separate itself from the Catholic imprint regarding its participation in acts of intolerance, slavery and war. And in the doctrinal sphere, the Reformist Churches maintained contempt for the spiritual law of God delivered under the Old Covenant; They supported the observance of Sunday, the belief in the Trinity and the immortality of the soul, the celebration of holidays of clear pagan origin such as Easter Sunday, Christmas and New Year, etc.:

“Martin Luther, a... leader of the Protestant Reformation, led a movement to return to the ' Bible so - regret', in opposition to the 'tradition' of the (Catholic) Church; but in his arguments he lost one who refers to the same..., he still maintained the Catholic tradition of *Sabbath Sunday* . Carlstad , one of the bravest reformers, Sabbath keeper and contemporary of Luther, recommended that he include -

It was the Sabbath in the Reformation; but Luther - prone to that truth - hesitated, arguing that the dominion would attract a greater number of people to the Protestant cause... With that attitude the demonstration will bring ... *preference to follow the tradition of men* , instead of the clear teachings of the Word of God” (275) .

The reform movement was so strong in some regions of Europe that it ended up absorbing the majority of the Waldensians and Anabaptists . In the case of the Waldenses, the 14th and 15th centuries were tragic due to the persecutions and deaths inflicted by Catholic armies. In 1380, an army of inquisitors invaded those lands and many Waldenses took up arms to expel them. There was fighting throughout the next century and the Waldensians almost disappeared from those regions. Those who did not participate in this fight fled to Germany and Bohemia. But in this last region the Waldensian movement was soon absorbed by the religious awakening that Huss had promoted . Later, in the 16th century, as the Reformation became successful, many members of the ancient Waldensian Church of God were attracted to groups of believers who came out of the Roman Catholic system by reformist ideas, leaving their main dogmas of faith, so revered by the Waldensian churches and that were the seal that had identified them for centuries (276) . In 1526 the Barba or Waldensian pastor Martín Ginin began contacts with the reformist movement in Switzerland and Germany; Four years later (1530), the Waldensians of Provence entered into personal relations with the closest reformers, from whom they received all the doctrinal explanations they desired. Finally, in 1532, the pro-Reformation Waldensians held the synod of Chanforan , at which they agreed on some of the following points:

“1° Institution by the Waldenses of a public cult, instead of the secret meetings held until
so

“2° Explicit and absolute condemnation of the simulation by which some believed they could attend the Roman cult.

no, although reproving it internally, in order to avoid further persecutions

“3° Adherence to the ideas of the reformers on the following articles: Predestination, the good

works, the oath, the confession made to God alone, the Sunday rest, the non- compulsory fast -
gatorio , free marriage for all, the two sacraments (baptism and Holy Communion)” (277) .

Later, in that synod, the assembled Waldensians voted to join the Protestant Reformation. The heirs of the Church of God - who for centuries had practiced biblical principles - had now assumed a doctrine that was new in several aspects and, therefore, contradictory to the Word of God. This is what Seiglie recognizes :

“With this background, the subsequent history of the Waldenses shows how the great majority united in 1530 to the Swiss Reformation. But one must always remember that before they allow themselves to be corrupted, they validate them -

The originals had no connection with the Protestants of the 1500s. The Lutheran doctrine of salvation 'by faith alone' is not found in Waldensian doctrines. The Protestant spirit was completely alien to them, as it has been to the Church of God at all times” (278) .

“Later, in the year 1517, the Catholic-Protestant Martín Lucero appears challenging his Church for its indulgences and other sins; Many Waldenses joined Lucero for his revolutionary ideas. By That is why many evangelicals (currently) say they are *Waldenses* ; but they have nothing to do with the Church of God” (279) .

The *Baptist Encyclopedia* recognizes that:

“In 1530, according to Du Pin, the Waldensians united with the reformers, and were persuaded to re-
announce certain peculiarities that they once held and receive doctrines that until then had
been strangers to their creed” (280) .

Although the majority of the Waldenses ended up apostatizing from the faith, there is always a faithful remnant that continues the work of God. Otherwise the continuation and validity of the true Church could not be explained.

Regarding the Anabaptists , it has already been pointed out that they, for the most part, did not continue the path of the pure Gospel that had originally been preserved by the Waldenses, from whom they emerged in the 13th or 14th centuries. A minority prevailed by observing the Sabbath sign, while the rest followed a different story. Muñoz refers to this fact, saying:

“Already in the historical field, the Anabaptists appear in the 16th century in Luther's Germany... They do not accept that they come from Luther or any of the great reformers of the 16th century... they already existed or-
cults, and with the new climate of the Reformation they came to light. And in fact they were fought by Luther. TO As a result of these persecutions they went to Holland..., and from there to England” (281) .

The Anabaptists who were absorbed into the Protestant movement in the 16th century soon dropped the prefix “ ana ” and became simply “Baptists,” as they have since been known. These, currently, do not want to be classified as *Protestants* in the sense that they come directly from the Reformation, which is true in part for the historical reasons given, but those Anabaptists who observed Sunday as the Lord's Day later adopted several doctrinal principles of the Protestantism, apart from the aforementioned Sunday worship; For example, they usually celebrate the Lord's Supper on one Sunday in the month; They believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, and do not believe in the validity of God's law as explained in this work. Likewise, they coincide in the celebration of holidays of pagan origin inherited from Catholicism, such as Christmas and others.

While most of the Waldensians and Anabaptists deviated from the doctrine that had guided them for centuries, the true Church of God continued to exist. Jesus had promised his Church that “the gates of hades (the grave, death) will not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). The Church that Jesus established in Israel and as part of that people was promised that it would have a *continuous history* through the centuries. This promise has been true and has been proven so far, regardless of what men say. Dugger and Dodd reaffirm this biblical-historical truth, stating:

“The 16th century is the period of the Reformation of the Roman Church. During this century, Martin Luther knew

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He left the Roman system, and with him many of the leaders of the Reformation in various countries. Many stories

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writers , in error, trace the history of the true Church of God from the days of the apostles to the apostles -
tasia , after the death of apostles and disciples; They then assume that the 'Church' was in-
back in the Roman Church (Catholic) until the time of the Reformation, without knowing that God protected the faithful

Church and kept it separate and distinct from the apostate system throughout the entire Middle Ages, the time of the government of the apostate Church” (282) .

In the same line as above, Wade Cox adds the following:

“From a study of the history of the Sabbath churches we can obtain important conclusions from it, and we can also see the system of observance that teaches that the biblical pattern established by Christ has never ceased. There are a number of important examples that show a historical sequence of Sabbath churches throughout the Christian world and in Europe, before the Middle Ages. You are with-

They continue within the Reformation and continue (after it)” (283) .

That the true Church was present in the days of the Reformation and was distinct from the Protestant movements is a fact. And when the Reformation broke out, there were Sabbatarian congregations or communities throughout Europe; for example, “in Bohemia, Moravia, Germany, Holland, England, Finland, Transylvania, Scandinavia, and even in Russia” (284) .

For the apostolic Church of that time, the main danger was not the weakened power of the false Church, but the mixture with its offspring, the Protestant Churches. Although these promoted religious freedoms, in the 16th century the Church of God had to suffer intolerance and persecution. Indeed, Protestants themselves were active persecutors of God's remnant, although in no way similar in magnitude to the atrocities that were committed by the Catholic Church. To demonstrate that the two groups killed each other, something that the Church of God never carried out, it is suggestive to see how the Protestants justify each other:

“Protestantism can be attributed a few hundred martyrs, or at most *a few thousand* ; but Those killed by Rome number untold millions” (285) .

“It is true that the Protestants also persecuted, even to the death; but generally his motive was political rather than religious” (286) .

Of course, the Church of God is proud of the fact that it does not have to justify having participated in conflicts in that bloody 16th century between Catholics and Protestants, who claimed to be Christians but there were “religious wars” between both sectors.

Among the Christians who suffered persecution at that time were the Anabaptists , particularly those who kept the weekly Sabbath , one of whose leaders was the Austrian Andrés Fischer, to whom reference had already been made in previous pages and whose ministry was exercised at the beginning of the 16th century.

Two historical sources mention the connection between the Waldensian Sabbatians, who still remained at that time, and the Anabaptist Sabbatarians, and how some of them found refuge in England:

“The history of the Sabbath during the early years of the Reformation (1520s) is scant. They descend - teeth of the Waldensians in Bohemia, Holland, and other parts of northern Europe seem to be the ones formed the basis of the Church that kept the Sabbath when the first flashes of light during the Reformation illuminate the long night of the apostate Papacy. These Sabbath keepers were baptistas and were classified with the despised Anabaptists ” (287) .

“ Anabaptists . ” Name given to a group of anticlericals at the time of the Reformation, who emerged from northwestern Germany, Holland and Switzerland... Some of them traveled from Holland to In-England around 1525 and formed the nucleus of a sect that brought many problems to the government English” (288) .

Samuel Bacchiocchi mentions another prominent Anabaptist Sabbathist:

“Osvaldo Glait , former Catholic priest turned Lutheran pastor and later Anabaptist , began to successfully propagate his Sabbatarian ideas among the Anabaptists of Moravia, Silesia and Bohemia in 1527.

He was supported by the scholar Andrés Fischer, also a former priest and Anabaptist . Glait wrote a *Treatise about the Sabbath* , dated around 1530, which has not survived to us. From the refutation that Gaspar Schwenckfeld made it clear from Glait 's work that he defended the unity between the Ancient and the New Testament, accepting the validity and importance of the Decalogue for Christians. Glait right - supported the thesis of his critics that the Sabbath commandment is a ceremonial prescription of the same type than circumcision. 'The Sabbath was ordained and kept from Creation ,' he said . God taught to 'Adam in Paradise to celebrate the Sabbath '. Therefore 'the Sabbath... is forever a sign of hope - ranza and a memorial of Creation...an eternal covenant...that is in force as long as the world exists.' Glait had to suffer exile, persecution and finally death, drowned in the Danube” (289) .

The death of Glait , perhaps the most outstanding leader of the Sabbatarians of that century, did not stop the expansion of the doctrine of the Sabbath . “Sabbatarians” was the most common designation for those

who observed the weekly Sabbath . Bacchiocchi confirms that recent studies have shown that Sabbatarians or Sabbatarians constituted a respectable group at the time of the Reformation, especially in Moravia, Bohemia, Austria, Silesia, Holland, Germany, France, Hungary, Finland, Sweden, Turkey and Russia (290) . Below are the historical testimonies that support this reality:

Erasmus of Rotterdam , at the beginning of the 16th century, mentions the Sabbatarians of Bohemia: “Now there has appeared among the Bohemians (Czechs) a new class of Jews, whom they call *sabbatarii* , and who keep the Sabbath with great *superstition* ” (291) .

Luther confirms the existence of Sabbatarian groups in Moravia and Austria when he said: “In our time there is a group of fools who call themselves Sabbatarians and who affirm that the Sabbath must be kept according to Jewish custom.” “I have learned that in Austria and Moravia certain *Judaizers* support the Sabbath ...; If they continue with such audacity, not allowing themselves to be warned by the Word of God, they will certainly cause many evils” (292) .

For his part, Stredovsky of Bohemia, in his list of the eleven main sects, puts the Sabbatarians in third place, just after the Lutherans and the Calvinists (The list was published by Josef Beck in *Sources of the Austrian Kingdom* , in 1853) . GF Hasel , in his work *Sabbatarian Anabaptists* , concludes by saying: “These ancient enumerations (lists) seem to indicate that Anabaptist Sabbatarians were considered a numerous and strong group” (293) .

Referring to the Sabbatarians of the 16th century, ecclesiastical historians declare: “Sabbathists, so called because they rejected the observance of the Lord's Day (Sunday) because it was not so commanded in the Scriptures; They considered only the Sabbath as holy, because God rested on that day and commanded that they keep it and rest on it” (294) .

“Around the year 1520 many of these Sabbath keepers found refuge in the state of Lord Leo-
hardt of Lithuania, since the prince of Lithuania maintained the observance of the true Sabbath” (295) .

“(In Germany, 1523, Eck, *Refuting the Reformers* :)’ However, the (Catholic) Church has transferred the observance of Saturday to Sunday of its own power, without the support of Scripture” (296) .

“(In Holland and Germany) Barbara of Thiers, who was executed in 1529, declared: 'God ordained rest on the seventh day .' Another Christian martyr, Cristina Tolingerin , is mentioned as follows
way: Regarding the holy days and Sundays, she says: 'In six days the Lord made the world, the seventh day He rested. The other holy days have been instituted by the Popes, cardinals and bishops -
pos ” (297) .

“(Norway, 1544) Some of you, contrary to the warning, keep the Sabbath. You should be severely punished. Anyone found keeping the Sabbath must pay a fine .
ten marks ” (298) .

“(Finland, 1544) Letter from King Gustav Vasa I of Sweden to the people of Finland: 'It has been a long time that we have heard that some people in Finland have fallen into the great mistake of observing the Sabbath -
scam called Saturday ’” (299) .

“(Sweden) This zeal for the observance of the Sabbath continued for a long time; they punished themselves even
"what few facts could strengthen the practice of keeping the Sabbath " (300) .

“(Switzerland, 1592) The observance of the Sabbath is part of the moral law. It has been kept as a holy day since the beginning of the world” (301) .

“(Liechtenstein, 1599) The Sabbatarians teach that we must take care even in the appearance of the Sabbath. AND-

They say that Sunday is an invention of the Popes” (302) .

As can be seen, in such different and distant regions of Europe it was possible to find individuals and congregations that respected the law of God and preserved their Sabbath sign. Even in regions outside Europe there were Sabbatarian communities, such as in Africa. There, in ancient Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia) there was a testimony of that reality, when an Abyssinian delegate said before the court of Lisbon:

“It is not an imitation of the Jews, but by obedience to Christ and his holy apostles that we observe - We are going that day (Saturday)” (303) .

“Sixty years later, in 1604, the Jesuits induced the Abyssinian king Zadenghel to submit - “throw down the Papacy and prohibit worship on the Sabbath under severe punishment” (304) .

In Eastern Europe there was also a presence of the Church of God through the emergence of Christians who bear the imprint of the apostolic Gospel. In the known case of Russia, Sabbatarianism existed there long before the Reformation. Precisely, that Christian movement was condemned at the Council of Moscow, held in 1503:

“The accused (Sabatistas) have been summoned; They openly recognized their new faith (sic), and They defended her at the same time. The most prominent of them, the Secretary of State, Kuritzyn , Ivan Maximov , Kassian , and the archimandrite of the Novgorod monastery , were sentenced to death. and publicly burned in a cage, on December 27, 1503, in Moscow” (305) .

Sternberg further notes :

“But the majority (of the Sabbatarians) moved to the Crimea and the Caucasus, where they remain in their true doctrine despite persecution up to this present time (1873). People call them - man *subotniki* or sabbatarians” (306) .

In Hungary, Judaic and anti-Trinitarian Christianity developed strongly, particularly in the region of Transylvania; and was a branch of the Vallenses or Sabbatati . The minister who had led the Church of God there, Francis Davidis , was imprisoned in Deva Castle and died in 1579. He was succeeded in the leadership of the Congregation by Andreas Eössy , who was knowledgeable in ecclesiastical history and completely mastered the Ancient and the new Testament. Cox says of that Church:

“We know from well-documented history... that they were not just Unitarians, but they kept the Saturday, holy days and new moons . The Feast of Trumpets was celebrated in the hymnal as a new Moon and the hymns for the new Moon prevailed rather as special hymns for - ra Trumpets as a (day of) celebration” (307) .

In 1579 the Unitarian Church of God divided into two groups: a Sunday group and a Sabbatarian group. The latter was the one led by Eössy , distinguishing itself from the traditional Churches by being anti-Trinitarian, not baptizing children, considering Jesus inferior to the Father and keeping the law of God, including the weekly Sabbath and annual festivals. Below are two compilations on the beliefs of the Hungarian Church of God from the late 16th century. The first of these belongs to Bacher , in his work *The Sabbatarians of Hungary* :

“In 1600, followers compiled a hymnal with many references to the Sabbath . There were eleven him -

us dedicated to the Passover, six to the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), six to the Feast of Tabernacles, three to the Feast of Trumpets and one to the Day of Atonement. They kept the dietary laws... and they did not exi

-
circumcision . The Sabbath for them had capital importance, probably for the following -

You are right : that it totally distinguished them from the rest of Christianity... they commented that by keeping these

These beliefs, they were following the example and teaching of Jesus. 'He who does not keep the Sabbath he will have no portion in the inheritance of Christ.' They kept the Passover of Israel according to the orders of Christ" (308) .

The hymnal was prepared by Eössy and other members of the Church, and included a total of 102 praises, which also included 26 hymns for daily purposes.

- "1. They practiced adult baptism
 2. They observed the Ten Commandments
 3. They kept the Sabbaths and the (other) holy days, including the Passover and the days of the Azi Bread - mos , Pentecost, Atonement, the Booths and the Last Great Day, and... the new Moons. Trumpets
It is not found separately in the hymnal and appears to have been celebrated with the hymns of the New Moon
 4. They used God's calendar, based on the new Moons
 5. They observed health laws (no food of blood, pork and strangled animals)
 6. Christ was the greatest of prophets, the holiest of all of all creatures, the 'Lord crucified ', the 'Supreme Head and King of the royal believers, the lovingly loved and holy Son of God'
 7. They believed in the thousand-year physical Millennium , at the beginning of which Christ will return and gather together again.
Judah and Israel
 8. They taught that there will be two resurrections: one to eternal life at the coming of Christ, and another for the Judgment at the end of the Millennium
 9. They taught salvation by grace, but that the laws still had to be kept
 10. They maintained that God calls people to his Truth, and that the world in general is blinded"
- (309) .

By way of summary, Andrews and Conradi describe the state of Sabbatarian Christianity in the 16th century:

"Even very eminent men, such as the princes of Liechtenstein, adhered to the observance of the true Saturday . When persecution finally dispersed them, they had to sow the seeds of truth in the different parts of the continent that they visited... We have found them (the observers of Saturday) in Bohemia. They were also known in Silesia and Poland. There were also them in Holan - day and in North Germany... There were at that time Sabbath observers in France... 'among among whom was Mr. De la Roque, who wrote in defense of the Sabbath against Bossuet, bishop Catholic of Meaux '.The Sabbatarians reappeared in England at the time of the Reformation, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1533-1603), as testified by Dr. Chambers in his encyclopedia (art. 'Sabbath')" (310) .

Indeed, the development of Protestantism in England during the second half of the 16th century created favorable conditions for the work of God to emerge, or rather, re-emerge there. Many Christians from the continent found refuge there, and Sabbatarian Christians also went there, who were also included among the Protestants. Piwoska wrote:

“Thousands of Protestants from Germany, Alsace and the Netherlands emigrated to England in the reign of Henry VIII, and the Church of the Outsiders under Edward VI also contained French, Walloons, Italians and Spaniards” (311) .

The Protestant Reformation came to England under the reign of Henry VIII. There were events that sealed the fate of England never to become Catholic. In the years 1586-1587, when Mary Stuart, Catholic Queen of Scotland, was convicted and executed for being found guilty of conspiracy against Queen Elizabeth of England, an Anglican Protestant; Thus all possibility of Catholic dominance of the English throne was eliminated . The second event took place in 1588, when Philip II of Spain attempted to conquer England with a large navy - the “Invincible Armada” - and thus impose Catholicism by force. But the Spanish navy was devastated by a violent storm, becoming a great setback for the Spanish Empire and the advance of Catholicism.

That was the last Catholic threat that England had to face. From now on, there would be religious freedom in that country that would not be found anywhere else in the world. And it is now that the observance of the Sabbath begins to be discussed openly and without fear of going to the stake. This process occurred under the government of Queen Elizabeth I (1568-1603). The *Chamber Encyclopedia* says about it:

“In the reign of Elizabeth I, it occurred to many conscientious and independent thinkers, such as

It had happened before to some Protestants in Bohemia, that the fourth commandment was to be observed, that is, keeping the seventh day of the week and not the first, with its corresponding rest - I view all work as a service to God. Others meanwhile were of the opinion that the day had been altered by a divine authority, although work should be stopped on the first day of the week. The first group, those who strictly kept the seventh day, became sufficiently numerous during

The following century they had a considerable impact in England under the name *Sabbatarian* , a term that was later changed to *Seventh-day Baptists ...*” (312) .

The Sabbatarian Church of God moves from England to America

Note how a historian traces the history of the true Church along the same routes that have been outlined in this historical work, until reaching England:

“There has never been a time since the time of Christ when there were not Christians who kept the Sabbath...Keeping the Sabbath has continued in the Western Church until the 5th century and in the East - such until the 15th century and even later. Since the Sabbatarians rejected the authority of the Church organized (Roman) were persecuted as heretics by papal power.

“ Their ancient history passed through the hands of enemies and has been distorted or destroyed.

As the Eastern Church approached papal power, the dissidents became known by the names

bres de *Nazarenes* ,...e *Hypsistarians* , who were designated as Judaizers. They were later known like *vaudois* ,... *Talucians* , *Petrobrussians* and *Waldensians* . Not everyone had the same doctrines.

“They formed an irregular but never broken chain between the New Testament and the *Baptists of the Modern Seventh Day* ...

“During the Reformation in England, Sabbatarians were part of the history of those years. His writings and the sufferings form an important point in the history of those years” (313) .

Indeed, certainly Christians who kept the Sabbath in England all began to be commonly noted in ecclesiastical history under the religious tolerance of Elizabeth I, and even books urging observance of the seventh day began to be published. But, at the beginning of the 17th century, it became dangerous to belong to any group other than the Anglican Church.

At that time religious issues began to be openly debated. One of these topics was the observance of the Sabbath. Joseph Belcher wrote:

“The controversy over Saturday as a day of rest began in England towards the end of the century.

XVI. A certain Nicholas Bound , of Norton, in the county of Suffolk, published a book in 1595 in which raised the modern concept of the Christian Sabbath , namely, that it is a perpetuation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, but that the day appointed in that commandment has been changed by authority divine from the seventh day to the first day of the week. This doctrine was very striking, as if it were He cried at a time when a great need was felt to maintain greater rigidity regarding the day of rest.

“According to a learned author of the time, 'in a short time it became the most fascinating and the most welcome spell ever adopted by the people of England ’” (314) .

Bound 's book was suppressed by order of Archbishop Whitgift in 1599. But the suppression led to the publication of a multitude of works in which all kinds of opinions were expressed. In this context, several defenders of the seventh-day Sabbath emerged. One of the defenders of Sabbath observance was John Traske at the time when the *Book of Sunday Sports* was published under the direction of the Archbishop of Canterbury and King James I, in 1618:

“Juan Traske , Guillermo Hillyard , Cristóbal Sanda , Reverend Wright and Veden were some of the most prominent from 1600 and 1630. Traske was whipped and imprisoned under the infamous court... The His wife was imprisoned because she refused to teach school on Saturdays. Fifteen passed years in prison for standing firm to the idea of keeping the Sabbath . It was a great example of suffering - she lied, and finally died in prison and was later buried in an open field.

“The influence of the Sabbath Baptists was an important factor in the change that the Puri made - “Let us observe Sunday with the rigor of the Sabbath rest” (315) .

Another notable example is Theophilus Bradbourne , a scholarly Sabbatarian minister of the Gospel who wrote a book published in 1628, in which he maintained that “the Lord's day is not Sunday by divine institution” but that “the Sabbath or seventh day maintains its validity.” now". There being no response to this book, he published another in 1632 entitled *A Defense of the Most Ancient and Sacred Ordinance of God: the Sabbath Day* . For this reason he had to appear before the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury and the Court of High Commission to give explanations (316) .

Although it aroused hostility in the dominant Church, the Sabbath issue was being raised before the highest rulers of England. The little Church of God had emerged from anonymity; But to begin his work within society he had to go through great difficulties. Other defenders of the Sabbath attracted attention in that 17th century. People like Felipe Tandy, Santiago Ockford and Francisco Bampfield spoke out in favor of the same biblical truth.

Bampfield (1615-1683) had been an influential minister in the Anglican Church and canon of Exeter Cathedral; but later he became pastor of a congregation that observed the Sabbath. Calamy said of him:

“He was one of the most famous preachers in the west of England, and greatly admired for his o-yentes, until he accepted the Sabbatarian ideas, of which he became a zealous supporter” (317) .

He was arrested while preaching at his pulpit, dying of privations in 1683 because of the Sabbath . Thomas Bampfield , his brother, who was Speaker of the House of Parliament, in the time of Oliver Cromwell (1653-1660), published a book in defense of the biblical Sabbath. He was also imprisoned for it (318) . It is a fact that many published in this way about the validity of the divine Decalogue, with the seventh day included, and that many theologians and even bishops wrote in reply to them. Of the English Sabbatarians, Bacchiocchi wrote:

“In the 17th century its presence was particularly noticeable in England. RJ Bauckham observes that ‘an important series of Puritan and Anglican preachers strove to combat the seventh day... Their efforts are tacit proof of the attraction that such a doctrine exerted in the 17th century; the Seventh-day observants were treated with great rigor by the Puritan and Anglican authorities.’

(319) .

The concern caused by the Sabbatarian movement in England also generated a discussion about the grounds for observing Sunday. In 1647, King Charles I wanted to know why Sunday was to be kept; and while in that year he was questioning the members of Parliament on this subject, he wrote the following:

“There is no passage in the Scriptures that says that the observance of the Sabbath should not be kept - give more, or which has been replaced by Sunday; Therefore, it must be the authority of the Church (official) the one that changed one and established the other” (320) .

The statesman poet John Milton, also an Englishman, wrote at that time a manuscript that publishers were afraid to print, because it said:

“If we who obey the Gospel are to regulate the time of our public worship by the prescriptions of the Decalogue, it will certainly be much safer for us to observe the seventh day, according to the express commandment of God , than to adopt the first under the authority of mere conjectures - human tures” (321) .

While the king of England, intellectuals and ecclesiastics debated, here and there, there were believers organized into congregations to obey the Word of God and follow the example of Jesus and the apostolic Church in observing the Ten Commandments and the weekly Sabbath.

“ Several Sabbath Baptist churches were organized between 1600 and 1700. Three of them were in the county of London,” says Sanford . (322) . One of those congregations was Mill Yard, the best known and most decisive in the history of the Sabbath Church. According to one source, it would have been established in 1617 (323) , coinciding with the arrival of Juan Traske in that year:

“We know that in 1617 Traske was in London and that he taught obedience to the fourth commandment, resting on the seventh day and working on the other six days. He also taught obedience to dietary law and is said to have defended the Christian observance of the days of Unleavened Bread.” (324) .

Another source says:

“In 1618, King James I published a declaration of freedom for the county of Lancaster. to play sports (on Sunday). Very soon afterwards a sect of sabatis appears - tas who were called by the name of their first teacher, John Traske , and became known as the *men of the seventh day*” (325) .

At the end of 1617 Traske and several disciples were arrested. Traske professed to “be the promoter of a *Jewish faction* ” and trainer “of the people of God... as small as that of the Jews.” For this he was whipped and capped, and his forehead was branded with iron with the letter “I” (for “ Iew ”, as “ Jew ” was spelled *Jew* in English at that time). He was also sentenced to prison where he maintained a meatless diet (instead of eating the pork prescribed by the Court). Eventually, circumstances caused Traske to apostatize from his Judaic Christianity and he recanted what he had preached (1619); but the seed had already been sown (326) .

Although the Sabbatarians of England had as their antecedents the Anabaptists who immigrated from the European continent, by the middle of the 17th century they no longer considered themselves as such, but rather called themselves the “Church of God” (It should be noted that those Sabbatarian Christians are identified in historical sources as “Seventh-day Baptists”, but this denomination did not emerge until 1818, in the United States). In 1649, Santiago Ockford published a work in defense of the Sabbath , mentioning the true name of the Church; Bampfield did the same :

“The humble petition, etc., of several Churches of God in London, which are falsely called ' ana - Baptists ’” (327) .

Dugger and Dodd provide further testimony that the Churches of God in London were incorrectly called Anabaptist . Even this name was changed to “ anti-Baptist ”, used by enemies as a mocking term. This was because:

“The Church of God during the *wilderness* experience and after the days of the Reformation, was teaching against substitute and common forms of baptism. Consequently, all Converts to the truth, (from) the Catholic Church, were rebaptized or *immersed* . The Church - sia was thus known to be opposed to the universally practiced form of Roman baptism. at that time. For this, they were called ' anti-Baptist ' . The word 'anti' means *against* , so They were called by their enemies ' anti-Baptists ' , and later ' Anabaptists ' .

“The Anabaptists in London were called the 'Church of God,' according to EB Underbill , who is - created in 1649; and the following extracts from trustworthy sources later proved that these Churches of God observed the Sabbath , as well as upheld the personal kingdom of Christ in the earth during the Millennium.

“Many, not all, of the Anabaptists observed the seventh-day Sabbath. Dr. *Francis White* (*Tra - state of the day Saturday* , page. 132), says: 'Those who kept the Sabbath as a day of rest, fulfilled they join with the Anabaptists .

“ Russen (*About the Anabaptists* , London, 1703, p. 79), speaking of heresies, says: 'Under this ca - beza I can conclude some of them, under those of the Anabaptists , who have inclined to this kingdom personal of Christ, and have embraced the seventh-day Sabbath.

"James Ockford , whose book on the Sabbath was 'sharply refuted with fire'" in 1642, e - was called Anabaptist ” (328) .

“The Pinneis Hall Sabbath Church...was organized by Francis Bampfield , who was a notable au - tor and a talented teacher... He is the author of a book titled *Shem Acher* , and on page 28 he mentions the 'Church of God', referring to its congregation. Later he adds that the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the Church...

“On page 29, it says: 'The final cause or great end or ends for which Jehovah has formed his Church... Again, on pages 58 to 60 he talks about the relationship of the 'Church of God' to the Sabbath . He uses the term of Jehovah and Elohim alternately, when speaking of the Old Testament Church and manifests the evidence to show that the Church of God on that day (1677), as of the Sabbath, is a continuation of the Old Testament Church of Jehovah.

“It says on page 59: 'The Churches of Elohim had in all ages those talented calls to the office of preaching the Word'. Later it says: 'Melchizedek was a priest of the Church of Elohim ' or the Church of God'...

“It is evident from this able and talented author that the Church of God, functioning in the year 1677, was the same Church organized by Moses, spoken of in *Acts* chapter 7 as 'the Church in the desert'. It was his sincere belief, *that there was never a time when the Church of God had not existed - that the Sabbath and other similar truths then protected by the Church, were also believed given and defended as truth in every era*” (329) .

Another testimony related to the beliefs of Sabbatarian churches:

“Sabbatical Baptists. A denomination *formerly called Sabbatarian* . They believe in immersion only believing adults (this is why they were called 'Baptists', and not because they were connected to the Sunday Baptists) and in the observance of the Sabbath . They declared that since the institution of Saturday In the week of Creation and the formation of it in the Sinai covenant, there has always been a chain an interrupted group of men who kept the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath. since time of the apostles was observed by the Church..." (330) .

Members of the Church of God considered the Bible to be the sole authority for their faith and practices. They saw the Sabbath established at Creation and confirmed as part of the eternal moral law of the Ten Commandments. They recognized Sabbath observance as the custom of Jesus and the early Church, and saw no biblical authority abrogating or changing the Sabbath . They valued the Sabbath as a memorial to Creation and an advance proof of the eternal rest of the kingdom of God. On the other hand, English Sabbatarians did not see Sabbath observance as a means to gain salvation, that is, Sabbatarianism was considered an appropriate response to God's grace, not as a means to obtain salvation and eternal life (331) .

In a Judeophobic European culture , Sabbatarian Christians were truly brave to profess a religion linked to biblical Judaism. In fact, “Sabbatists were often labeled as 'Jews'!... In the early 17th century, there was a small Jewish community in London, but it kept a very low profile. As a result, most people have probably never encountered a Jew, and those who embraced 'Jewish practices' will have seemed strange and threatening to many” (332) .

By 1650 there were again sufficient numbers of Sabbath- keeping believers to establish local congregations, both in England and Wales. In the rest of Europe there were also churches of the same faith; in Holland, Germany, Poland; groups in Finland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and other countries. Also, around 1661, the number of Sabbath keepers in London had increased even further. In that year, John James was pastor of a considerable congregation meeting in the east part of London.

The government of Charles II (1660-1685) hoped to bring greater peace and stability to his kingdom, giving strength to religious uniformity. In 1662 he introduced the *Act of Uniformity* which excluded from parishes all ministers who did not lead according to the “Book of Common Prayer” of the Anglican Church. And in 1664, the government instituted the *Council Act* (A “council” is a private religious meeting), by which it prohibited any worship service not conducted according to the “Book of Common Prayer,” which involved five people other than family. of the house. Anyone caught violating this rule could be banished to the East Indies (Asia). Ball describes the precautions taken by a member of a Sabbath congregation during that time to avoid arrest under the *Act of Conciliation* . This congregation met on Saturday afternoons in a roadside cottage near the village of Stalham , in the county of Norfolk. According to Ball:

“John Woolstone , who at that time lived four or five miles away from Walcott, frequently He arrived disguised as a cattle merchant to lead the cult and carrying a whip to avoid suspicion - chas. The large, lower room of the cabin was set up as a dining room, and Woolstone would preach from a seat at the table to a congregation gathered in the upper rooms. On other occasions, The meetings were held in a barn at the back of the cabin, and some victors were stationed. gias at external strategic points to warn of the approach of whistleblowers... It was a typical situation of many dissident communities (of Anglicanism) throughout the country in that mo - ment ” (333) .

As a result of this new wave of religious persecution against those who dissented from the Anglican Church (branch of the Catholic Church), “at that time laws were enacted according to which it was not lawful to hold religious meetings on the Sabbath” (334) . About the same time, in 1661, Pastor John James was arrested while preaching to the Mill Yard congregation; He was tried and convicted on the false charge of treason, a common procedure in those times to eliminate people whose religious ideas could not be tolerated. Finally, he was hanged and quartered (335) .

Despite the persecution, Sabbath keepers increased in number. In a certain letter by Eduardo Stennet , written between 1668 and 1670, it is stated:

“Here in England there are about nine or ten churches that keep the Sabbath , besides many disciples - scattered pules , which have been miraculously preserved in this age of decay, in which many “Some once flourishing churches have disintegrated” (336) .

Probably, due to those difficult circumstances, some Sabbatarians emigrated to America, specifically to the northern subcontinent, where there were thirteen English colonies, which from 1776 gave rise to the United States of America.

The history of the United States as a religious refuge had begun in 1620. The “Puritans,” a group of dissidents from English Anglicanism subjected to persecution, established the first successful settlement in North America. They are followed by other harassed religious groups that establish themselves in different places under the protection of a certain tolerance to profess their faith. But the only colony that was based on complete freedom of religion was Rhode Island, founded in 1636 by Roger Williams, a Baptist who at the end of his life would meet the Sabbath Church, which also will arrive to that land.

Around the year 1660 in England there were two new converts who began to keep the Sabbath : Stephen Mumford and his wife Anne . Until then they had been members of the Baptist Church. The Baptists of the 17th century had several beliefs in common with the Sabbatarians, although an important difference between them was that the latter observed the biblical Sabbath instead of following the widespread custom of celebrating Sunday worship, as did the Protestant Baptists.

In 1664 the Sabbatarian congregation of Bell Lane, London, sent Stephen Mumford as a missionary to New England to explore the new territory, seeking religious freedom and tolerance. A few years later, 1668, there was a political revolution that ended religious persecutions in England; and for this reason, the Sabbatarians stayed there.

Esteban Mumford landed in Newport, Rhode Island, with his wife and son of the same name. There were two established churches in the town : the Quaker Church and the Baptist Church. At first, Mumford and his family joined with Sunday Baptist members in worship, but continued to keep the Sabbath at home. A few years later, eleven Baptist members also began keeping the biblical Sabbath . John Clarke, Baptist minister and close friend of Roger Williams, preached that they had “returned to Moses.” The harmonious relationship between Sabbatarians and Baptists was definitively broken in 1669. Thus, the Mumfords and the other believers signed an agreement to establish themselves as a Church. To confirm this event regarding the development of the Church of God in America, the following source is presented:

“Seventh-day Baptists in the United States begin their history at the same time as The brothers in England begin the organization of established churches.

“ Esteban Mumford was one of the oldest. He came from England to Newport, Rhode Island, in 1664, and brought the teaching that the Ten Commandments as given on Mount Sinai were

They are valid and serve to guide one's morals. He said that an anti- Christian power , eager to change

By changing times and laws, he had moved the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week.

“He first associated with the First Day Baptist Church in Newport and quickly won over

some to their point of view. They continued meeting with the Baptist Church for a while until Difficulties arose due to statements made against them, such as that the Ten Commandments given to the Jews had no validity towards the Gentiles and those who kept the Sabbath. On the seventh day they had turned away from Christ and followed Moses . In December 1671 they arrived at a public separation. Stephen Mumford, William Hiscox , Samuel Hubbard, Roger Haster and three brothers

Others entered into a covenant to found a church, and thus formed the first Church... of the Seventh Day in America. William Hiscox was chosen and ordained as the pastor, a position he held until his death. death in 1704 at the age of 66” (337) .

That Newport church is the oldest organized congregation keeping the Ten Commandments in all of America. Before that there never existed a group of Gentile Christians subject to divine law. It is evident that this church was related to the Sabbatarian congregation of London, which gave it moral and doctrinal support. Stephen Mumford returned to London for a brief visit in 1675; This resulted in William Gibson and his family, of the Bell Lane congregation, joining the Mumfords in Newport. Gibson later successfully succeeded William Hiscox , pastor of that church.

Under Hiscox and Gibson the Newport Sabbatarians grew up in Rhode Island. There were 37 members in 1678 and 76 in 1692. In thirty years, beginning in 1671, the Church of God grew slowly, until other congregations were added. Finally, it should be noted that the work begun by Mumford was the first step in the development of the Church of God in America, and practically all the Sabbath Churches that currently exist on this continent must trace their origins to 1671, since directly or indirectly They are part of the same spiritual lineage of people obedient to God.

Sabbatarian Christianity in the Old and New Worlds

It has been seen that Eastern Europe was the distant home of some of the small and solitary believers in Christ Jesus and observers of his commandments, such as the Paulicians and Bogomils . Wherever they went, Sabbatarian or Sabbatarian Christians were persecuted, but at the same time they clung tenaciously to their apostolic or historical creed. Many times they were confused with natural Jews, or labeled “Judaizers” for their attachment to God's law.

The Sabbatarian Christians, spreading towards the north, reached Russia, as has been analyzed in previous pages. During the 15th century, sabbatarians emerged in that country, who in the 18th century were known as “ subotniki ,” that is, *sabbatarians* , who were branded *shidovstvuyushchiye* (Judaizers, in Russian). Of them, the *Jewish Quarterly Magazine* says:

“As for the Russian sabbatarians, the so-called sobotniki or subbotniki , they are few and very fragmented.

The news we have of its origin and current condition is very good . They belong to the Russian *sect* of the Molokani

... kani ..., one of many that emerged during the 16th century in those southern Russian provinces which were at that time under the supremacy of the Polish Crown. These sects showed a certain Judaizing tendency.

“The Molokani , according to information from a Russian chronicler, kept the Sabbath and made circumcisions for their children... In the second half of the 18th century, their number under the aforementioned government had risen.

... given to 5,000 people. But by keeping their doctrines secret, they avoided persecution until they were betrayed in 1769 and had to suffer the oppression of the State” (338) .

Also in the 18th century, but in Bohemia a Christian but strongly Judaizing community called “ Abrahamites ” or “ Nový ” emerged. Bydov – Israelites.” Of them, the *Encyclopedia Judaica* says:

“They revered the Old Testament, rejected the Trinity, abstained from pork and They were tired on Saturday . Some members practiced circumcision. The existence of the sect Nový region Bydžov . Then, a commission investigated
ra was established and proceeded against 60 Abrahamites , which lasted until 1748, when the leader, Jan Pita, a tailor, and three others were executed ... The sect continued in hiding until the decree of toleration Rancid of Non-Catholics was issued in 1781, when the Abrahamites came out of hiding.
However, since they refused to obey an official order to declare themselves Christians (ca-
tolics) or Jews, were deported to the garrisons on the Hungarian border... As a consequence, the sect disintegrated” (339) .

Religious circumstances were difficult for Sabbatarian Christians in Bohemia and Moravia in the mid-18th century. Adolfo Dux described the period from 1635 to 1867 like this: “The condition of the Sabbatarians was terrible. All his books and writings had to be sent to the Karlsburg Town Hall to become a prey to the flames” (340) . Wade Cox also describes that state of affairs:
“The suppression of Sabbatarians continued in the areas of Romania, Czechoslovakia and the Balkans. In 1789 was continued and the decree of tolerance of Joseph I was not applied to the Sabbatarians, some of the four -
They lost all their possessions. The Catholic priests, aided by soldiers, forced the Sabbatarians to accept Roman Catholicism, working on Saturday and attending services on Sunday -
go (until 1867)” (341) .

In Germany, at the beginning of the 18th century, there is the case of Tennhardt of Nürnberg , according to the information provided by Mark Finley:
“He remains strictly faithful to the doctrine of the Sabbath , because it is one of the Ten Commandments”
(342) .

“(He himself said) It cannot be shown that Sunday has taken the place of Saturday (p. 366). He Lord God has sanctified the last day of the week. The Antichrist , on the other hand, has pointed out the pri -
mer day of the week” (343) .

Sabbath- observing churches , mostly independent, prospered in England in the 17th and 18th centuries” (344) . And at the end of the 17th century, the Frenchman Henri Misson published a book titled *The Memoirs and Observations on His Travels Around England* as a result of his extensive trip to the island country in the 1690s. In it he commented on various religious groups that he encountered. in England, apparently making a strong impression on him about the Sabbatarians, because he explains details about them in 1698 that are valid for the 18th century:

“Here and there you meet a millenarian; but I know that there is a particular society, although They make little noise, of people who, although they go by the name of Sabbatarians, make a profession of
operate the kingdom of a thousand years without participating in the other opinions that are ascribed to the ancient millennia.
ristas . These sabbatarians are so called because they do not transfer the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday -
go . They finish their work on Friday afternoon, and are very rigid observers of the Sabbath . Just ad -
They minister baptism to adults...Most of them do not eat any pork -
no blood , nor strangled things... For the rest, their morality is severe, and their conduct exte -
rior is entirely pious and Christian. However, regarding the observance of the Sabbath, this is a
absolute belief” (345) .

Misson 's text describes a group of people who believed in a future millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ; they performed baptism biblical, they scrupulously kept the weekly Sabbath, observed the biblical

dietary law, and were generally orthodox Christians with a high regard for the standards of biblical morality. “Not all English Sabbatarians fit into every part of this picture; but overall , it is a good description of them and many of their spiritual descendants exist to the present day” (346) .

In North America, meanwhile, the Church of God continued to develop. Until 1707 Stephen Mumford exerted great influence on the fledgling Sabbatarian congregation of Rhode Island. On the death of Hiscox , William Gibson became the second pastor of the Church (1704). There is no record of Mumford's ordination as a minister, but some documents refer to him as a “minister” or “missionary” of the faith.

At the beginning of the 18th century, a second congregation was formed in Westerly (also in Rhode Island), which was also called Hopkinton . This came to keep the official records of the Sabbatarian Church and became its leadership. In the year 1800 it reached 764 members. Meanwhile, in 1705 a third church was established, in Piscataway, belonging to the colony of New Jersey.

The Church lacked an official name. In an early book of minutes the Church is referred to as “The Church of Rhode Island and Westerly .” By Rhode Island he meant the island that bore that name, not the entire colony; and by Westerly it indicated the towns of Westerly , Hopkinton , Charleston and Richmond. Sometimes it was also simply called “the Church”, other times “the Congregation”, but it had no official name, although several times in the old minutes the name “Church of God” is cited. That is the case of the first record in the ancient book of the Piscataway church, specifically in the founding document, where apart from the indicated name, many important truths are revealed:

“The Church of God that keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ in Piscataway , in Hopwell , in the province of New Jersey, meets by common consent in the house of Benjamin Martin, in Piscataway, August 19, 1705. ..

I. We believe in one God, the Father, and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the mediator between God and others.

Humans. We declare that the Holy Spirit is the holy spirit of God (1 Corinthians 3:6, 1 Timothy 2:5, 2nd Timothy 3:6, 2nd Peter 1:21)

II. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given under inspiration, are the Word of God (2nd Peter 1:19-21, 2nd Timothy 3:16, Mark 7:13, 2nd Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 4:29, 31) and serve as the rule of faith and practice

III. We believe that the Ten Commandments written on the two tables with the finger of God are still valid as -
m rule of justice for all men (Matthew 5: 17-19, Malachi 4: 4, James 1: 21; Romans 7:25 , 3:21 , 13:8-10; Ephesians 6:2)

IV. We believe that the six doctrines set forth in Hebrews 6:1-2 are the basis of faith and practice

V. We believe that the Lord's Supper should be administered and received by all Christian churches (Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

SAW. We believe that all Christian churches should have offices such as elders and deacons (Titus 1:5, Acts 6:3)

VII. We believe that all people who accept the above points should be baptized in water by immersion after confessing faith in these beliefs (Mark 1:4-5; Acts 2:38, 8:37; Romans 6:3-4 , Colossians 2:12)

VIII. We believe that such a group of sincere people by following these principles of faith and putting them into practice

practice constitute the Church of Christ (Acts 2: 41-42)

IX. We give ourselves to the Lord each one to be guided and governed by the Word of God (1 Corinthians 8: 5, Colossians 2:19; Psalm 84:1-2, 4-10, 133:1) (347) .

For much of the 18th century the North American Church of God remained pure of Christian-apostate influence. Its members firmly believed in water baptism only for adults and through immersion and the

laying on of hands. They also believed in the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Some sections of several of these churches practiced mutual foot washing "on appropriate occasions." They rejected the title of *reverend* for their ministers, observing that according to the Scriptures only God is worthy of such a title. On the other hand, pointing out some doctrines of the Church, the ecclesiastical body had taken measures against intemperance, war, slavery, secret societies and the like, all in favor of great moral reforms and enterprises. charities of the time. Chamber has noted the Judaic character of Christian-Sabbathist beliefs:

"The settlers of North America planted in that distant soil a rigid Sabbathism that still exists.

"he lives in the states of Connecticut and Massachusetts, *retaining his Jewish peculiarities*" (348) .

During the 18th century Sabbatarians numbered in the thousands and for a time were the majority in the state of Rhode Island. By the late 1700s, more congregations were organized in New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, and Pennsylvania ; In addition, some members moved to other parts of the country founding other churches. "This was a period of great growth, although the War of Independence (1776-1781) slowed development and tested the strength of the Church to the limit, because some took part in it" (349) .

Dugger and Dodd provide other background information related to the name of the Church, dating to the second half of the 18th century:

"We have previously given a record where the Church in Shrewsbury, New Jersey, were called to themselves the 'Church of God'.

"The record of the history of this Sabbath church in Shrewsbury begins as follows:

'This is a book of records of the establishment and proceedings of the 'Church of Christ,' kept-commandments of God , particularly the holy Seventh Day, with the rest of the commandments - God, and believing and practicing the holy ordinances of the Gospel of Christ and the doctrines of these (Randolph, *History of the Seventh-day Baptists* , pp. 11-12).

"A later record reads like this:

'The Church of Christ at Shrewsbury and Middletown , in the observance of God's holy Sabbath... We believe that a group of sincere people can truly claim to be the 'Church of God' (idem , p. twenty).

"It was the Shrewsbury church that in 1789 emigrated to Salem, West Virginia. The town of Serbury founded the town of New Salem,... now Salem, West Virginia.

"Although we know from cited records that the Shrewsbury church was called 'Christ Church,' and 'Church of God' while in New Jersey, it is a fact that when the church was reorganized-in Salem , the biblical name was dropped, and the members called themselves 'Baptists of the Seventh Day' (when they entered into apostasy), a name that is held by them to this present day" (350) .

Indeed, the Church of God was not exempt from the spirit of error at that time. It had grown quantitatively, but went into decline qualitatively and spiritually. Already by the year 1800, Protestant doctrines were taught in congregations that observed the Sabbath , including the doctrine of the Trinity and the immortality of the soul through Williams Davis and his descendants.

In 1818, Sabbatarians who accepted Protestant doctrines organized under the name "Seventh Day Baptist Church." But the faithful remnant resisted that denomination and those false teachings, and continued to call themselves the Church of God. The following sources describe what happened to the Churches that followed two different doctrinal paths and that only had Sabbath observance in common:

"In 1818, a general conference adopted the name 'Seventh-day Baptists' instead of 'Saturday Baptists'.

tists ' as a title for their denomination" (351) .

“Ten or twelve congregations - just in the regions from Pennsylvania to Rhode Island - do not unite - ron to that denomination of men at the beginning. Even in 1828, only 16 to 20 congregations were represented at the meetings of the Seventh-day Baptists. They spoke with contempt of the other 'fanatics and unworthy Sabbath-observers' ” (352) .

"As always, a few had refused to join and remained faithful to the name and doctrine of the Church of God" (353) .

Churches that did not follow those who apostatized were established in other regions and states, such as West Virginia:

“Some of the churches in West Virginia believe in the washing of feet at the appointed time, but what most distinguishes them are the beliefs in the Sabbath and baptism. Regarding Easter or the Lord's Supper, at least in one assembly of ancient Sabbatarian people in West Virginia,

The following serves as an example: On March 21, 1853, it was voted at the meeting that the communion service

It takes place every twelve months on the 14th of the first Jewish month, on the afternoon of Passover.

“The dietary regimen of some of the early Sabbatarians of West Virginia may be known.

cer from the following extract from Hughes River Church , South Side, in 1842: 'In his efforts to To follow the commands of the law of Moses, eating pork was prohibited. Instead of butter, use I knew the beef bait for cooking. A few more prosperous people used olive oil... in-

Among them were leaders who opposed the group of Sabbatarians known as the Sép Baptists - timo Day. It is recorded of these other Christians that they taught obedience to the ceremonial law and contra- ers to the Seventh- day Baptists , they abstained from certain meats, had a certain way of dressing and They advocated for the government of the church exclusively at the hands of the elders” (354) .

The Seventh Day Baptist Church in the United States had just over 1,100 members in 1802, and reached 9,000 in 1892; but they already dropped to 8,000 in 1905 and in 1907 to 7,000. They still exist in the United States (355) . Meanwhile, the Church of God was smaller, but they continued to be called *the Church of God* , obeying the Ten Commandments, the Passover festival on the 14th of Abib and the dietary law, among other various doctrines. Although there is no certainty that all of them observed the other biblical festivals, with the course of the 19th century some congregations of the Church of God came to understand their validity, as will be confirmed later. Meanwhile, a third group of Sabbatarians would soon emerge, driven by the doctrine of the second advent of Jesus Christ, who would be closely related to a sector of the true Church.

A remnant of the Church of God is linked to the Adventist movement

As has been noted, after the apostasy of the Seventh-day Baptists - who became Protestants - there remained a part of the Church of God that remained faithful to biblical truths. For this reason, it is necessary to place emphasis on this kind of historical rule of the Christian people of God: there is always a faithful remnant that continues to proclaim the biblical teachings of God. In this regard, Dugger and Dodd point out:

“From the above records, we feel justified in saying that they are sufficient to convince the most skeptical of our readers that the Lord was *not left without witnesses* during the centuries

following the colonization of America, but to all the places that these saints of God were carried with them the truths zealously held by the 'Church of God', in all ages and ages.

preserved to this day for us” (356) .

John Kiesz confirms the fact that independent Sabbatarian groups existed outside of Seventh-day Baptists before the Adventist movement emerged in the mid-19th century (357) .

Religiously speaking, the 19th century in the United States was a century of revivals . Methodists and Sunday Baptists competed in their spiritual visions and experiences; and in that environment, characters appeared who founded new sects according to their own experiences that obviously, they claimed, came directly from divine inspiration. This line includes Joseph Smith, prophet of the Mormons (1830); Mary Baker Eddy, the Christian Science prophetess; and Ana Lee's tremblers, among others (358) . At that time - the beginning of the 19th century - there was a renewal of interest within the Protestant sphere in the second coming of Christ to earth and the end of the world; and in fact, there were different opinions on this eschatological issue. Within this context, the prominence of Guillermo Miller arises, who promoted a movement that focused on the return of Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of a literal Kingdom. This message was totally different from the hitherto accepted Protestant doctrines.

William Miller (1782-1849) was a Baptist pastor from the state of New York, therefore he professed a Protestant doctrine; He did not believe in the validity of the law of the original Decalogue, he observed Sunday, he was a Trinitarian and he believed and preached so many other teachings at odds with biblical truth. However, he was a dedicated student of the Bible, devoted particularly to the prophetic periods recorded in the book of Daniel and the Revelation. Between 1818 and 1823 he concluded that he had obtained the exact date of the second coming of Christ and the final judgment. To do this, Miller merged two passages: Daniel 8: 14 and 9: 24, understanding the first to refer to the coming of Christ to earth to “purify the Sanctuary” supposedly existing on earth. The “2,300 days of evening and morning” represented prophetic days, that is, each day represents a year. Thus, the 2,300 years should indicate the date of the next advent of Christ, which should be counted from the year 457 BC, the year in which the fulfillment of the prophecy of the 70 weeks also begins (Daniel 9). From what those prophetic writings say, Miller finally came to the conclusion that Christ would return to earth on March 21, 1843, bringing the end of the world through purifying fire. Convinced that he had discovered the key to the interpretation of what he called “the mathematics of God,” Miller felt he must warn the world of the Savior's soon coming. This is how in 1832 the proclamation of such a great event began on a large scale throughout various states of the United States (New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Illinois and Michigan, and even in southern Canada). For eleven years he preached in conferences and sermons what he considered an inevitable truth, both in small churches and in the open field with thousands of believers who became known as “Adventists.” He himself assured: “I have now given, since 1832, 3,200 speeches” (359) . Miller's preaching was developed primarily among various Protestant churches that observed Sunday, such as Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and other “many denominations” (360) . Among these “many denominations” was also the true Church of God, although it could not be determined whether as a whole or just some congregations. A source assures:

“By the middle of the 19th century we find these remnants of God's people in fellowship with people who...were part of a great Adventist movement” (361) .

In 1833, Miller wrote his interpretations in the book entitled *Evidence from Holy Scripture and History for the Second Coming of Christ about 1843* . In that same year his theory supposedly received great support, when a shower of aerolites (shooting stars) took place in the Earth's atmosphere, which early Adventists interpreted as the fulfillment of Matthew 24:29.

Before the expected year arrived, William Miller met the demand of briefly but clearly stating the beliefs of the Adventist movement, especially regarding the time in which the coming of Christ should occur. Consequently, at the end of 1842 he published a synthesis of his beliefs of that time, which is set out below:

" 1 . I believe that Jesus Christ will return to this earth. Proof: John 14:3, Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Revelation

lipsis 1:7

" 2 . I believe he will come in all the glory of his Father. Proof: Matthew 16:27, Mark 8:38

" 3 . I believe it will come in the clouds of heaven. Proof: Matthew 24:30, Mark 13:26, Daniel 7:13

" 4 . I believe that he will then receive his kingdom, which will be eternal. Proof: Daniel 7:14; Luke 19:12, 15; 2nd Tim. 4:1

" 5 . I believe that the saints will then possess the kingdom forever. Proof: Daniel 7:18,22,27; Matthew 24:44, Lu-
cas 12:22, 9; 1 Corinthians 9:25, 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4

"6 . I believe that on the occasion of the second coming of Christ the body of every deceased saint will be resurrected to

likeness of the glorious body of Christ. Proof: 1 Corinthians 15:20-29, 1 John 3:2

"7. I believe that the righteous who are living on earth when He comes will be transformed from bodies mortals into immortals, and together with those who have risen from the dead they will be caught up to the with the Lord forever . Proof: 1 Corinthians 4:14, Ephesians

5:27, Colossians 1:22, Jude 24, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 1 Corinthians 1:7-8

"8 . I believe that when Christ comes the second time, he will come to end the controversy of Zion , to deliver his children from all bondage, to defeat his last enemy, and to deliver them from the power of the tempter, What is the Devil? Proof: Deuteronomy 24:1 ; Isaiah 34:8, 40:2.5; 41:10-12; Romans 8:21-23, Hebrews 2:13-15; 1st Corinthians 15:54,56; Revelation 20:1-6

"9 . I believe that when Christ comes, he will destroy the bodies of the living wicked by fire, like those of the world

ancient were destroyed by water, and will shut up their souls in the abyss, until their resurrection of damnation-

tion . Proof: Psalm 50:3, 97:3; Isaiah 66:15-16, Daniel 7:10, Malachi 4:1

" 10.I believe that when the earth is cleansed by fire, Christ and his saints will take possession of it and dwell for -
always in it; then the kingdom will be given to the saints. Proof: Psalm 37:9-11, 22-34; Proverbs 2:21, 22; 10:30, Isaiah 60:21

"11 I believe that God has appointed a time when these things will happen. Proof: Acts 17:31; Job 7:1, 14:14

"12. I believe that God has revealed time. Proof: Isaiah 44:7-8, 45:20-21; Daniel 12:10, Amos 3:7, 1 Thessalon

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Nicensis 5:4

"13. I believe that many professed believers and preachers will never believe nor know the time until I arrived. Proof: Jeremiah 8:7, Matthew 24:50, Jeremiah 25:34-37

"14. I believe that those who are wise, who will shine like the firmament (Daniel 12:3), will understand the time. Proof: Ecclesiastes 8:5, Daniel 12:10; Matthew 24:43-45, 25:6-10

"fifteen. I believe that time can be known by all who wish to understand it and be ready for its coming. And I am fully convinced that at some time, between March 21, 1843 and the 21st March 1844, according to the Jewish way of computing time, Christ will come and bring all his saints with him, and that he will then reward each one according to his works. Proof: Matthew 16:27, Apo-
calypse 22:12" (362) .

Likewise, on January 1, 1843, Miller addressed a letter to Adventist believers, in which he said:

"This year, according to our faith, is the last year that Satan will reign on our earth. Jesus Christ will come and

It will crush his head... Let us dedicate our best energies to this cause; and try each of us - us , by persuasion and by the help and grace of God, to obtain that at least one of our friends - gos accept Christ in this last year of redemption... The world will watch to see if we falter. No He can admit that we believe what we say, because he considers our faith strange; and now we have Be careful not to give him an advantage over us... May you be patient in all tribulation, and endure until the end and let this year be crowned with immortality and glory..." (363) .

Another characteristic of the Adventist movement was the extensive use of the press from the beginning. Newspapers were published in all important centers for a time. Books were printed and sold from house to house, and in many cases they were given as gifts by followers of the movement. Treatises and pamphlets were written by different Adventist authors, and were put into circulation by the millions. And as the date established by Miller approached, expectations grew and interest and the number of those who believed in his message increased, "until there were between 50,000 and 100,000 people who were preparing for the end of the world." (364). Many disciples of the prophet Miller stopped sowing the land, abandoning it; They did not send their children to school for fear of not being with them at the worst moment; They gave up their jobs because it made no sense to continue in them if the end of the world was near, and many others said goodbye crying to their loved ones whom they did not expect to see again.

In truth, the date established by Miller was broader, since the second coming of Christ was to occur during the Jewish year that ran between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. And the first date arrived; The Jewish year also completely passed, and Jesus Christ did not come, he did not appear anywhere. Seeing their hopes frustrated, their astonishment, confusion and bewilderment were indescribable. Still, the Adventist movement did not suffer the collapse that its enemies had predicted. One of Miller's disciples, Samuel Snow, reviewed the prophecy and said that the error was that the "prophet" began counting from the spring of 457 BC; but in reality it was to count from the autumn of that year, when the word went out to restore Jerusalem. For this reason, another date was set for the advent of Christ, October 22, 1844, and it also failed. Those thousands and thousands of Miller's followers - who had left families, friends and property, and were dressed in white robes, ready to receive Jesus - again did not see the materialization of the great advent, and returned to their homes disappointed; They also returned to the Churches from which they had left; some lost faith and became atheists (365) ; others, without losing faith, did not want to return to their old congregations because of the scandal that was created. The set of errors remained in the annals of ecclesiastical history with the qualification of "the Great Disappointment" or "the Great Disillusionment."

William Miller, after the Great Disappointment, demonstrating his sincerity and honesty, simply confessed that he had made a mistake in his system of biblical interpretation. Although he did not want to renounce his fundamental beliefs about the future return of Christ, he continued forward, but his figure faded, dying in 1849.

Miller's disciples continued to study the prophecies, and one of them, Hiram Edson, said that he had had a "revelation" that would have told him: "The Sanctuary mentioned in Daniel 8:14 is in heaven," thus understanding that Miller did not I was wrong about the last date, but about the place. He said that Christ had entered the heavenly Sanctuary on October 22, and not the earthly one, to purify it; Likewise, Christ would have begun his work of "Investigative Judgment" preparatory to cleansing the earth with punishing fire.

The Adventist movement was not a homogeneous group of believers. It was made up mostly of Protestants, observant of Sunday, although there was the presence and participation of members of the Church of God that kept the biblical Sabbath . Kiesz 's testimony says in this regard:

“It is evident that there were groups of independent Sabbath keepers in addition to the Baptists of the Seventh Day, *before and during the time* that William Miller preached and predicted the end of the world in 1844. Elder (pastor or elder) Gilbert Cranner , of Michigan, wrote in his memoirs that he received - shed its first light on the Sabbath in 1843. An article in *Midnight Lament* , a publication Millerista , written by JC Day of Ashburhan , Massachusetts, and S.C. Hancock of Forestville , Connec - ticut , also defended the doctrine in the same year” (366) .

So, it can be stated with certainty that the Adventist movement was initially Protestant-Sunday, but there were also Sabbatarian Christians from the Church of God who believed in Miller's Adventist message, therefore the thesis of official history is not valid. that the observance of the Sabbath was completely unknown among the first Adventists, and that it would have been introduced in the following way:

“ In the spring of 1844 the truth of the Sabbath was first brought to the attention of the Adventists when Mrs. Rachel Preston, who was a Seventh-day Baptist, went to the little town of Wa - shington , state of New Hampshire, to visit his daughter... from the church of the Adventist church. She He fervently believed in the validity of the biblical Sabbath, and brought with him a supply of literature . Seventh - day Baptist church ... Within a few days, almost the entire family of 40 members left - He decided on the biblical Sabbath. Thus was born the first Seventh-day Adventist congregation ... The first Adventist preacher to accept the Sabbath was Frederick Wheeler, of that church in Washing - ton, formerly a Methodist minister,... in March 1844, when he kept the first Sabbath” (367) .

The official history goes on to say that Elder Joseph Bates, who would have been prominent at the time of the Miller -Adventist movement, had also been attracted to Sabbath observance, and in 1845 he began to hold this truth and then spread it among the people. rest of the Adventists. Elder James White and his wife Ellen, who became prominent figures in the Adventist movement, also accepted the biblical Sabbath soon after.

In light of the above background, and in honor of historical truth, it must be recognized that a remnant of the authentic Church of God was present in the Adventist movement, and its members were the only keepers of the Sabbath ; and only when Wheeler, Bates and the Whites accepted Sabbath observance did this practice become widespread in nascent Adventism. There the coexistence of true Christians and originally Sunday Adventists is confirmed. Seiglie reaffirms this fact, saying:

“In 1844, a woman of the Seventh-day Baptists ...caused the attention of some Adventists that she open on Saturday. But it was not until two years after the Great Disappointment that knowledge of the Sabbath

It was generally transmitted among Adventists. The vast majority of the group agreed to keep the Sabbath - do. However, they did not join the Seventh-day Baptists. Instead, *they began meeting with the true remnant of the Church of God* with whom they had come into contact. This is demonstrated due to the fact that Adventists stopped believing in the immortality of the soul, the Trinity, etc., doctrines Seventh- day Baptists still believed. They began to call themselves by the biblical name Church of God” (368) .

In effect, the Adventist movement that was emerging in the middle of the 19th century took on characteristics closer to the apostolic Gospel than to Protestant sectarianism; it had the spirit and doctrine to become fully a Church according to the rule upheld by the original Church of God. First,

early Adventism retained the New Testament name “Church of God,” since it initially held that name. For example, at the Adventist conference (congress) in Albany, held on April 27, 1845, it was agreed to give a congregational organization with that name:

“We consider any congregation of believers who habitually gather to worship God and observe the evangelical rites as *the Church of God ...*” (369) .

In reality, the first Adventists were dispersed believers, with autonomous communities without a formal organization, but “they called themselves... the 'people of God' or the 'Israel of God', the 'Church of Christ' or the 'Church of God ' ' ” (370) . This Church of God was independent of the communities that had the same name but that had remained distant from the Adventist movement and came from the line founded by Mumford. That fact must always be kept in mind in this story.

The Church linked to Adventism began to publish *The Adventist Magazine and the Sabbath Herald* ; and in 1855, James White published a hymnal called *Hymns for Those Who Keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus* . In the Prologue of the hymnal it was read: “This work has been prepared for the use of the *Church of God* scattered abroad... To the *Church of God* that awaits the Coming and Kingdom of Christ this Book is dedicated” (371) . Even the prominent Adventist Ellen Gould, White's wife, recognized the authenticity of the name “Church of God”:

“That the name of the Church at this time was 'Church of God,' is evident from the early writings and experiences and perspectives of Mrs. Ellen G. White, editor of the Church newspaper, men - mentioned above. She wrote numerous volumes called *Spiritual Gifts ...* in which frequently mentioned the name 'Church of God ' ” (372) .

Dugger and Dodd provide another testimony to the biblical name of the Adventist movement:

“On page 40 of the Church newspaper, dated December 18, 1860, we find the following ba -
jo the title of 'Resignation' ...' Brother Smith, I will be grateful for the privilege of saying through the *Magazine* , to
my Sabbath- keeping brothers and sisters , who have poorly filled the office of a minister of Jesus Christ, in my ministrations... in the *Church of God* for over eleven years... Signed by FW Rhodes, Habbardsville , NY, December 8, 1860'.

“This good brother, due to his declining years, resigns from his active work as a minister of the Church of God', a position he says he has held for eleven years . This would carry the name (of the Church) to the year 1849” (373) .

Despite the initial consensus regarding the name of the Church, over the course of almost two decades (1844-1863) there was a controversial coexistence between those who represented the doctrine largely faithful to the apostolic Gospel and those who followed the leadership and teachings of the James couple . White and Ellen Gould.

The Adventist Church of God and the Seventh-day Adventist Church they take divergent paths

It must be insisted that in the mid-nineteenth century there were three Sabbatarian branches in North America: the Seventh-day Baptists, of Protestant doctrine; the congregations of the true Church of God scattered throughout the United States; and the Church of God formed with the remnants of Miller's Adventist movement, with doctrines closer to the second. It is important to know the history of the

Adventist Church of God because it gave rise to the mother branch of several current Sabbatarian denominations, which are related to the Chilean Israelite Church of God.

It should be noted that the Sunday Baptist William Miller was not the founder of any Church, but was only an individual lacking divine inspiration who started the Adventist movement, within which they shared two groups of divergent biblical formations, and whose differences were deepened by the prominence of the White couple.

James White and Ellen Gould Harmon were married in 1846. Both had participated in the Adventist movement before 1844. Ellen Gould White (1827-1916) had at first resisted accepting Sabbath observance, but soon reported having had a vision " during which he saw, in the heavenly Sanctuary, the tables of the law, and on those tables the fourth commandment surrounded by a resplendent halo." This vision would have occurred in 1847, and only from there did the consecration of the Decalogue and Sabbath observance become some of the foundations of the doctrine of whoever became the prophetic of a sector of Adventism.

Parallel to the Adventist movement, there were Sabbatarians who formed autonomous congregations with respect to the Seventh-day Baptist Church and Adventism. Kiesz reports that "when White traveled the country to recruit and organize, they found many *independent Sabbath keepers*." (374) . Those, without a doubt, must have been the remnants of the Church of God that remained distant from the apostate line of the Seventh-day Baptists since they took on the Protestant character at the beginning of the 19th century.

After Miller's death in 1849, the White couple became the undisputed leaders of Adventism. In her eagerness to reinterpret or complement Miller's teachings, Mrs. White turned to the supposed spiritual gift of prophecy, through which, she said, she perfected biblical teaching and perfected believers. At the same time that she transmitted her beliefs through books and territorial tours, Ellen White was introducing new and different doctrines. Those who maintained a doctrinal line similar to the original Church of God generally did not follow its "testimonies", causing a distancing from it and its followers, and finally schism.

Among the doctrines of Ellen White that a sector of the *Adventist Church of God* did not accept as biblical and true are related to: a) the issue of the development of spiritual gifts manifested in prophetic revelation and the angelic messages that the "prophetic" said receive from God, that is, to be part of the ecclesiastical body one had to believe in Mrs. White's visions; b) maintenance of the prophetic interpretation on the purification of the heavenly Sanctuary and the concept of the Investigative Judgment; c) the teaching of the "closed door" concept, which held that after the year 1844 the time of salvation for sinners ceased (he later repealed this belief to allow new members to enter the movement); d) the vision that supported the idea that Jesus was crucified on Friday and resurrected the following Sunday; e) White's intention to change the name of the Church of God to "Seventh-day Adventist Church"; f) his writings consider Israel a people rejected by God; g) its previous Methodist origin made it introduce the quarterly Holy Supper; and finally, h) White did not initially discard pork as edible meat. Those beliefs were not accepted by Adventists who were subject to biblical teachings; Therefore it is possible to conclude that:

"However, those Adventists (followers of Ellen White) were never of the Church of God. It has been-

They had been associated for only a time. Later, most continued to pursue a woman whom some believed She was a prophetic. In 1854 they began to put a price on religious literature and sell it, even though

"Christ says to his true ministers 'give grace' (Matthew 10:8)" (375) .

The first sign of opposition and divergence from White's doctrine was the publication of the *Messenger of Truth* beginning in 1853 in Jackson, Michigan. Its promoters and leaders were Hiram Case and CP Russell, who were determined to unite “the indisposed spirits” around this body. This was the origin of the “Messenger party,” as the Whites called their opponents:

“*The Messenger of Truth*, it seems, revolutionizes the Sabbath Adventist movement completely, as indicated by the strong refutations given in the *Review and Herald* (*Revista y Herald*), from January 1854 to June 26, 1855). The position of the opposing brief... (may) have held or - “follow doctrines than those of the White Party” (376).

The Messenger of Truth was published until 1858, and is considered the predecessor of the magazine *The Hope of Israel* that the Church of God would later spread. Likewise, said newspaper brought together all those who formed the Messenger party, which was also the direct - although not organic - precursor of the Seventh Day Church of God.

The opponents of the White ministry permanently maintained two fundamental principles that produced the irremediable division of Adventism: the rejection of the visions of Ellen White, and the name of the institution should be “Church of God.”

Ellen Gould of White would have had her first vision after the Great Disillusionment of 1844, when she was only 17 years old. According to her supporters, the visions of the prophetess were for the perfection of the Church, but her detractors considered that they were “faked to allow the Whites to gain authority in the Church.” (377). According to DM Canright, a former close to the Whites, “(Mrs. Ellen's) revelations always favored Elder White and her” (378).

As for the second principle, as has been proven above, the Whites and their followers unquestioningly used the name *Church of God* to refer to the Adventist movement; However, over time they opposed that biblical denomination. Loughborough, an Adventist historian, reports that she had a vision that the movement should be called “Seventh-day Adventist.” Around 1860 there was a heated controversy about this; even the White faction called “those who supported the name of the *Church of God ridiculous*” (379). Below is a recurring argument for the use of the name “Seventh-day Adventist”:

“We receive the name *Seventh-day Adventist* because it contains the two fundamental principles - such of our faith: First, the second coming of our Lord; and second, points out the fourth commandment - to . On the other hand, the name 'Church of God' is not appropriate, because there are several Churches with that name and so many with the same name would cause confusion” (380).

Those who decisively defended the biblical name “Church of God” also expressed themselves through *Revista y Herald*, saying:

“I do not believe in Catholicism, nor do I believe in anarchy; but in the biblical order, in discipline and government - not of the *Church of God*” (381).

“I think it is not difficult to determine what name they (Adventists) should have, when we consult Revelation 14:1, 'They had the name...of their Father written on their foreheads.' Chapter 3:12, 'I will write about him the name of my God'. And the apostle Paul agrees with this in all his epistles. They are directed to the *Church of God*: Acts 20:18; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 10:32, 11:22; Galatians 1:13, 1st Tim. 3:5” (382).

Finally, Adventist supporters of the Whites held a general conference in the city of Battle Creek, Michigan, from September 28 to October 1, 1860, to debate the legal organization of the movement. An

overwhelming majority of those present rejected the name *Church of God* and adopted the “Seventh-day Adventist Church” as a name descriptive of their beliefs, a name promoted by the White couple. This is how the Seventh-day Adventist Church came into being. In her *Testimony for the Church* , Mrs. Ellen G. White wrote:

“No name that we could adopt would be appropriate, except that which is in accordance with our profession, and expresses our faith, and marks us as peculiar people.

“The name Seventh-day Adventist displays the characteristic truths of our faith and agree - will wax to the inquiring mind...

“It was shown to me that almost every fanatic who has risen up, who wishes to hide his feelings from the possibility of leading others astray, claims to belong to the Church of God. Such a name will awaken you - breasts immediately; because it is used to hide the most absurd errors” (383) .

Presumably the above makes the apostle Paul a fanatic, because he called the Congregation “the Church of God.”

Adventist conference was held in an effort to reorganize local congregations. In it the new ecclesiastical organization made the following agreement: “We, the undersigned, associate as one Church, adopting the name of Seventh-day Adventists.” (384) . Finally, according to the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* , “the denomination was organized May 21, 1863.” (385) .

When this new name was imposed by force on the congregations, in the Adventist publication *Revista y Heraldo* , of April 9, 1861, the following letter appeared under the title “Separation”, expressing:

“Brother Smith: We have concluded from current aspects that the name 'Seventh-day Adventist' Day' is becoming obligatory on our brothers. Without greater light, Ohio cannot submit to name 'Seventh-day Adventist', either as a test, or as an appropriate name for the people of God.

“Having appointed a finance committee at the last conference, and now having at hand the means to carry out the cause of Ohio, we could not consciously expend these means in nothing else but the progress and extension of *the truth and the 'Church of God'* ...

Signed by J. Dudley, LE Jones, JP Flemming. Ohio Finance Committee” (386) .

The events described above remind us of other similar situations in the past, as happened in the 16th century with the majority of the Waldensians who joined Protestantism, leaving only a remnant retaining the apostolic doctrine. The same thing happened in the Church of God in the United States at the beginning of the 19th century, when the Seventh-day Baptist Church split and only a faithful remnant remained that resisted Protestant teachings. Now, starting in 1860, the majority of Adventists rejected the name *Church of God* and adopted the denomination promoted by Ellen White and her teachings, and again, as before, there remained a few faithful to the biblical teachings. In reference to the Seventh-day Adventists it can be concluded that “this group was never a spiritual part of the Church of God. They had been associated for a while” (387) .

In light of the background information collected, a truth unknown to official history, both ecclesiastical and secular, has emerged. Please read the following text carefully:

“God's church. This *is a branch* of the Seventh-day Adventists, from which they split in 1860 because its members denied that Mrs. Ellen Gould White was an inspired prophetess” (388) .

In general, “official” history states that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the natural continuity of the Adventist movement that emerged almost in the middle of the 19th century, and that the Church of God - later called the *Adventist Church of God* and later *the Church of God of the Seventh-day Adventists*” (389) . However, historical evidence shows that the reality is different: the Adventist movement

constituted a group of believers who had in common the observance of the law of God and the Sabbath and believed - with divergent points - in the future coming of Christ Jesus and the establishment of his kingdom with the righteous. And all those gathered around the name of the *Church of God* . But, when the followers of the prophetess Ellen White assumed her doctrines under the name of the *Seventh-day Adventist Church* , being the majority within the Adventist movement, they abandoned the Church of God. Dugger and Dodd refer to this historical but unacknowledged truth in considering the Ohio congregation's letter titled "Separation," transcribed above:

"The above is ample proof of the origin of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is a *rama of the original Church* , the Church of God, and came into existence as a separate group in October 1, 1860. However, the Church of God continued to uphold the standard of truth, *as he has done it since the days of Jesus*" (390) .

According to the above, the aforementioned historians emphatically confirm that the Sabbath-keeping Adventists were originally known as the *Church of God* , and that those who in October 1860 formed the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Battle Creek, Michigan, "are a branch from (and withdrew from) the original Church, the 'Church of God'" (391) .

In history after 1860, both ecclesiastical denominations have been in diametrically opposed positions; Likewise, the organizational development and growth of their respective works were dissimilar: while the Adventist Church quantitatively expanded its membership in the world through strong proselytism, and remained more or less monolithic due to the iron discipline and centralism impregnated by the Whites. , the Church of God always had an almost total lack of growth within and beyond the borders of the United States; Likewise, its history was and has been mired in controversy and divisions due to doctrinal causes or clashes of leadership, to such an extent that currently there is a great diversity of branches, although they maintain the central doctrine relatively in common, such as the obedience of the law of God under faith in the only Savior who is Christ Jesus.

The remnant called the *Adventist Church of God* , later of the *Seventh Day*

While the Seventh-day Adventist Church led by the Whites emerged in 1860, only a few believers - mainly from the states of Michigan, Ohio, Iowa and Missouri - did not continue with them and remained as the *Church of God* . Two years later, it formally established a national headquarters in the city of Stanberry , Missouri. In 1861 the congregation in Battle Creek, Michigan, began editing a publication initially called *The Remnant of Israel* . They decided on this name because they considered themselves the remnant of spiritual Israel, the few left after the apostasy. This publication changed its name to *The Hope of Israel* when it moved to Hatford . Dugger and Dodd refer to this fact, stating:

"Although this was a great blow to the work, there were still many strong men, full of strength. spirit , who soon launched another newspaper and were strengthening the work that remained, gathering to other communities of believers, as it pleases God to add to his Church" (392) .

The Hope of Israel came to declare some distinctive fundamental principles of the Church, such as: "the Bible and the Bible alone" contains the complete moral law and all the commandments necessary to govern the people of God in every age, without adding any other human creed or article. of faith; that sin is known by the law and "sin is the transgression of the law," which is the law of the Ten Commandments; that death is the total extinction of the human being; that God is preparing his millennial kingdom on earth, in which Christ will sit on the throne of David, and the twelve on the

twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel; and other controversial beliefs, such as that the reward of the righteous and the wicked will be on earth, and the beauty and Edenic glory of the earth will be restored (393) .

Michigan congregations began to extend their influence into the eastern and central United States through *The Hope of Israel* . Many of those Sabbath churches that rejected Seventh-day Adventist doctrines began to unite around this publication, and also to support it. During the following years, the magazine changed names and places of publication. In 1866 he settled in Marion, Iowa; and in 1888 he moved to Stanberry , Missouri. And at the beginning of the 20th century the name was changed to *The Bible Lawyer* .

For almost two decades (1865-1884) there was discussion regarding the formation of a general conference that would unite related Churches; The sense of organizational unity only crystallized on October 5, 1884 when the “General Conference of the Adventist Church of God” was established, the name by which it was known until 1923, although historically it was known as “Church of God of the Seventh Day”, later name:

“ Few know that before 1923 the Seventh Day Church of God was officially known as 'Adventist Church of God ’” (394) .

“Those who refused to call themselves ' Seventh-day Adventist Church ' chose the name 'Church of Adventist God'. Among the members of this new organization were members of the churches of Salem, West Virginia, and Denver, Colorado” (395) .

The common doctrines among the Adventist Church of God congregations of the late 19th century can be summarized as follows:

- The Bible and only the Bible is the rule of faith and practice
- The duty of humanity to observe the biblical Sabbath along with the other commandments of God
- The Sabbath must be observed between sunset on Friday and the following sunset
- The Ten Commandments are still in force
- Jesus was in the tomb for three literal days and three nights
- Annual observance of the Lord's Supper on the 14th of Abib with foot washing included
- Pork should not be consumed
- Until 1881, tithing was not generally defended or practiced.
- Rejection of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul due to its origin in pagan philosophy
- Belief that the death of human beings means being in an unconscious state
- Rejection of the dogma of the Trinity due to its pagan origin
- The Jews will return to Palestine and Israel will be restored again as a State
- Rejection of the link between the prophecy of the 2,300 mornings and evenings and the prophecy of the 70 weeks
- The concept of the second coming of Christ is something real, visible and personal
- Jesus Christ will not reign in heaven, but on earth for a period of a thousand years, the Millennium
- The earth will be restored to its original glory and prepared as the abode and future inheritance of the redeemed and the kingdom of God

In another area, the Adventist Church of God, gathered in *The Hope of Israel* , clearly stated its conviction in conscientious objection during the American Civil War (1861-1865), in the sense that killing one's neighbor is a sin. Some Sabbatarian groups attempted to purchase draft exemption for their male members. Eli Welsey , of Hartford, spent about four months in prison “for refusing to fight with carnal weapons” (396) . Frequent news articles about the progress and costs of the war were published with the exhortation to the faithful to have no connection with “war, revenge and murder.” (397) .

On the other hand, at the end of the 19th century the Church of God began a proselytizing campaign beyond the borders of the United States to expand the evangelical work. Dugger and Dodd describe that process:

“As time passed, the work made its way into foreign fields, and the precious truth in-

It found its way in many countries and islands of the sea. Hundreds of thousands of brochures were printed and

distributed along with many books, and for a period of 72 years, from 1861 to 1933, the Church continued -

“He continued sending the true doctrine” (398) .

As a result of this missionary process, not massive but well-intentioned and in accordance with the commandment of Jesus (Matthew 28: 18-20), the markedly apostolic Gospel expanded towards Latin America starting at the end of the 19th century.

Conclusion: The observance of the biblical Sabbath was the continuous sign of the Church of God through the centuries

Through this chapter it has been possible to verify that throughout the centuries, from apostolic times to the end of the nineteenth century, there was and always has been a remnant faithful to the commandments of God under faith in Jesus the Messiah. Be these the Nazarenes, Quartodecimans, Hysistarians , Paulicians , Abyssinian Sabbatians, Bogomils , Petrobrusians , Pasagians , medieval Waldensians, Lollards , Sabbath Anabaptists , Euro-Eastern Sabbatians, Russian Subbotnikis , English Sabbatarian Christians of the 17th century, or faithful of the Church of God contemporary, all of them are links in a chain of congregations that have in common the preservation of God's sign: the biblical Sabbath .

It would be expected that all the links mentioned would have a continuous doctrinal line from the primitive Church of God, but it is not possible to document it, that is, it must be recognized that there was no common, unique and homogeneous line of the evangelical message preached and practiced by the referred Christian communities. Perhaps this was because not all links in the Church of God accessed the complete truth, or because they received or adopted distorted beliefs, others had practices abolished by Christ, or because they did not have a full understanding of the Scriptures, etc. This explains why in the history of the Christian people there are some communities observing the weekly Sabbath and Easter, but not the other biblical festivals. The doctrine of the divinity of Christ was also subjected to various interpretations, such as adoptionist unitarianism (399) . There were Sabbatarian groups that in some way were affected by certain heretical beliefs, such as extreme Judaizing beliefs (who practiced circumcision), Manichaeism, etc. José María Ríos has reached certain conclusions that describe and explain this historical truth:

- “When I read the story it is clear that (some Christians) observed all or some points of doctrine - trinals ; I verified that the work of the Lord continued to be carried out and some groups reached greater knowledge than others, therefore the practice of each one.

- “The Church, whether called Waldensian, Church of God or any other name, kept all or some of the (solemn) holidays...

“I do not believe that we will find a straight line of continuity of the Church of the Lord or of

all its practices, for several reasons:

“The persecutions were terrible, to the point that certain groups were eliminated en masse.”

“The preachers carried out their task quickly, that is, many announced to the people and continued their journeys escaping persecution.

“The true Church of the Lord, in the period when it escaped from the inquisitors, could only announcing that the holidays should be kept, but doing it as we do today was impossible...” (400).

To the above it should be added that communications were poor and written media were scarce at a time when, in addition, there was no complete freedom of religion and expression. These and other factors undoubtedly hindered the smooth transmission of the true Gospel. On the other hand, the lack of spiritual wealth of some ministers did not allow them to achieve full knowledge of the Gospel, or caused them to deviate from certain principles of faith. But, despite this, the essence of the Gospel of Christ was fulfilled in all those Christians: They kept the spiritual and cultural commandments of the law of God inherited from the people of Israel and had the true testimony of Jesus the Christ (Revelation 12: 17).

GRADES

(1) Letter from Emisael Palma to the author, 1990, p. 2

(2) *Evangelical Christianity through the Centuries* , 2nd edition, p. 18

(3) Doug Ward, *Our personal thanksgiving story (Our Thanksgiving History)* , www.godward.org/archives

(4) *Encyclopedia Judaica* , 1972-1978 edition, vol. 10, p. 397; art. “Judaizers”

(5) It has been common to identify the Chilean Church of God with indigenous communities or that its membership is mostly indigenous. For example, in 1966 the Jewish-Argentine magazine *Rimón* referred to Chilean immigrants of the Israelite Church in Argentina in the following terms: “The expression on his face...testifies his racial belonging as a descendant of the Araucanian Indians.” In 1986, the Chilean Nazi Miguel Serrano wrote in his book

National Socialism, the only solution for the people of South America : “ The rabbi based in Chile will have pointed out the

case of the Araucanians, among whom the secret rituals of Jewish converts would have been rediscovered... and who were known as ' Sabbathists '... It is these *calcu* (black sorcerers) that today the Jews would have

handed over the address of a Jewish temple in Pucón, with the name of 'Israeli Church of the New Covenant '..." (pp. 56-

57). Juan Guillermo Prado, meanwhile, alludes to the *Jewish Indians* when he says that “in America there are only two communities

cryptojews . In Mexico and Chile”, the latter in relation to the Church of God (*Las Últimas Noticias* , December 17 1987, “La Semana” supplement, page. 7, art. “ Jews in Araucanía”). Finally, we must refer to the report appeared in the Israeli magazine *Masa Ajer* “about the small community of Jewish Indians in the Arauco region ,” according to describes *Jewish World* at Christian-Israelite churches of Cunco and Curacautín (December 28, 2001, page 8)

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(8) Ellsworth Olsen *Origin and Progress of the Adventist Movement* , p. 82

(9) Ramón Bennett, *When day and night cease* , p. 216

(10) *Sacred Calendar 1999-2000* , United Church of God, p. 2

(11) *The Church They Could Not Destroy* , Universal Church of God, p. 2

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- (66) Louis Richard Conradi , *The Seers and the Future* , p. 551
- (67) JPV, *Christianity of the first four centuries* , art. “Peter Waldo and the Waldenses”; www.primitive-christianity
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- (75) *The seers and...* , pp. 547-548
- (76) O' Leary , *The Church and the Syriac Fathers* , pp. 83-84; in *The Triumphant Truth* , p. 170; cited in Cox, *Distribution...*
- (77) Arianism was a heretical movement that owed its name to Arius, a Catholic priest of Alexandria, who held around the year 320 “that Jesus was not properly God, but the first creature created by the Father... his nature is not equal nor consubstantial with the nature of the Father” (*Dictionary of Heresies* , www.encuentra.com)
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- (79) *Sacraments and Sabbath* , pp. 122-123; cited in Dugger and Dodd, *A History of the...* , p. 46
- (80) Migne, *Latin Patrology* , vol. 17, pp. 1131-1132; cited in Finley, *The Sabbath Along...*
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- (95) Heylyn , *History of the Sabbath* , p. 416; cited in Finley, *The Sabbath Along...*
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- (97) *A history of the...* , p. 52
- (98) *Manual of ecclesiastical history* ; quoted in Ronald Kelly , *The History of the Church of God* , series published in *The Good News* , November-December 1990, p. 22
- (99) *Brief historical exposition to respect the Batistas do Sétimo Día* , study of the Igreja Batista do Sétimo Día, batistasetimodia .com.br/ quem -somos
- (100) Leslie Hardinge , *The Celtic Church in Brittany* , pp. 80-89; cited in Finley, *The Sabbath Along...*
- (101) pp. 139-140
- (102) *History of Scotland* , vol. 1, p. 96; cited in Finley, *The Sabbath Along...*
- (103) p. 140; cited in Finley, *The Sabbath Along...*
- (104) *Epistles* , b.XIII : 1, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* , vol. XIII, page. 13; cited in Spicer, *Our Century...* , p. 174
- (105) Varetto , *The March of...* , p. 175
- (106) Dugger and Dodd, *A History of the...* , p. 55
- (107) *The march of...* , page. 200
- (108) Manichaeism was a heretical sect that emerged in the 3rd century AD; spread throughout the east and into many parts of the

- Roman empire. “The Manichaeans - like the Gnostics and the Mandaeans - were dualists , they believed that there was a eternal struggle between two opposite and irreducible principles, good and evil, which were associated with light (Hormuz) and the darkness (Ahriman). According to them, God is the creator of all that is good and Satan is the creator of all that is evil. Later some Manichaeans distinguished the God of the Old Testament (evil) from the God of the New Testament. (good)” (es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manicheism)
- (109) *History of the true...* , no. 7, page. 3
- (110) J. T. Christian, *History of the Baptists* , pp. 76-77; cited in *Baptists Under Other Names* , jameshgage.tripod.com/edificio9.htm
- (111) Adeney , *Greek and Eastern Churches* , p. 217; cited idem
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- (113) Edward Gibbons, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* , t. VI, p. 543; cited in Paul Goodwin and Roberto Frazier, *Baptist Churches in All Ages* , jameshgage.tripod.com/todos
- (114) Goodwin and Frazier, idem
- (115) Herman Hoeh , *The True History of the True Church* , p. 24
- (116) This gave rise to the confusion of granting credit for the promoter of the Paulician movement to Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch and heretic of the 3rd century AD, as Constantine lived at Mananalis , near Samosata, and changed its name to Paul's
- (117) p. 201
- (118) Vila, p. 142
- (119) *History of the genocide... of the Unitarian Christians* , chap. 8: “The first Paulicians ”; www.webislam.com/BEI/historiageno
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- (122) Kuntz , *History of the Church* , p. 423; cited in Seigle , *History of the true...* , no. 7, p. 1; Goodwin and Frazier, jamesha-ge.tripo.com/todos
- (123) Goodwin and Frazier, *Baptist Churches...* , jameshage.tripo.com/todos
- (124) idem, and *History of the genocide...* , www.webislam.com/BEI/historiageno
- (125) ditto
- (126) Cited in Goodwin and Frazier, *Baptist Churches...*
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- (128) ditto
- (129) ditto
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- (131) Quoted in Kelly, *The History of the Church...* , series published in *The Good News* , November-December 1990, p. 23; and in Hoeh , *The True Story...* , p. 25
- (132) pp. 168-169; cited in Loje , *Treatise of the Seven...* , page. 27
- (133) Therefore, the Paulicians who participated in the wars against the Byzantines in the 8th and 9th centuries apostatized from the faith
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- (135) *Evangelical Christianity...* , pp. 143
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CHAPTER V: THE CHURCH OF GOD IS INTRODUCED IN CHILE (1896-1897)

The Christian-Sabbathist Church of God in the United States spread to certain Latin American countries, and in this way the biblical doctrine it spread reached Chile at the end of the 19th century. That is a positively verifiable and proven historical fact. And the first branch that emerged in this country will become known as the Israelite Church of the New Covenant.

Notwithstanding the above, there is a controversial thesis conceived by some Jewish intellectuals - also assumed by certain Catholic and Protestant authors - according to which the origin of the Israelite Church would be linked to the presence of crypto-Jews in America and Chile since the times of the Conquest and the Colony, and until well into the 19th century. Given this, it is necessary to categorically point out that this interpretation is absolutely contradictory with the background and the specific historical facts available, as is demonstrated at length in the Annex chapter of this work (I). Before exposing the events that allowed the introduction of the Apostolic Gospel in Chile, the religious panorama of the country during the 19th century will be described, particularly at the end of it, also highlighting the link that existed between the early history of the Church of God in Chile and the also nascent Seventh-day Adventism.

Religious context of Chile in the 19th century

In the era before the existence of the Christian-Sabbathist Church of God in Chile, there was no religious freedom in its territory, as was also the case in the rest of the Spanish colonial Empire. There was a long way to go before the conditions of freedom of conscience were finally met.

It must be remembered that when America was discovered, the Spanish had just achieved the religious unity of the Iberian Peninsula: they had defeated the last Muslims of the kingdom of Granada and expelled the Jews from the peninsula (1492). Furthermore, they managed to remain immune from the Protestant Reformation, and Spain became a leader of the Counter-Reformation with Emperor Charles V and promoter of the agreements of the Catholic Council of Trent. In this regard, Humberto Muñoz concludes the following:

“We are not surprised, then, that they (the Spaniards) *hermetically* closed the doors of their nascent colonial empire to all Protestant (or dissident) infiltration. In fact, *there are no traces of any non-vador (reformist) who has entered Chile*, although many Jews are known (Günther Böhm, *Los Jews in colonial Chile*)” (2).

In fact, during the Conquest and the Colony there were no Christian currents other than Catholicism in Chile, and there were no Muslims either. But it is absolutely proven that there were crypto-Jews, or Jews who publicly showed themselves as good and fervent Catholics but who in their intimate lives practiced the religion of the Tanakh or Old Testament. And when Philip II assumed the Spanish throne, who, as is known, was willing to extirpate from his kingdom any heretic, schismatic, Jew or Muslim that fell into his hands, practically the Jews were the only ones affected, unleashing the cruelest persecution against them. Alfonso Stephens corroborates this fact, stating:

“The fact that in the Spanish and Portuguese possessions of America - it must be remembered that Philip II was also king of Portugal - there were no Protestants or Moors (Muslims), he made all the

weight of the implacable arm of the Holy Inquisition on the few Jews who had managed to reach the continent” (3) .

It should be noted that since Martin Luther translated the Bible into the common language in Germany, this sacred book became the first weapon against the Catholic Church. Hence, it was determined to keep both the Bible and the teachings of the Reformation out of the Spanish-American colonies. The only Protestant presence in Chile was indirect. On the one hand, the English or Dutch pirates and privateers who devastated the coasts of the territory professed some of the reformist variants, and their aggression against Spain not only had a political, economic or military purpose, but also a religious one. Although they were rude and ambitious men, they also professed a deep faith, and by attacking the Spanish territories, they believed they were attacking Catholicism and serving God. On the other hand, only in the 18th century did English and German Protestant merchants arrive in Chile. In 1809, when the colonial governor Francisco García Carrasco carried out a census of foreigners in the country, only 79 of them were counted, and of which only 4 were not Catholics.

As can be seen, at the dawn of the emancipation process Chile was a predominantly Catholic country. The only “infidels” were the indigenous people engaged in a constant fight against the *whites* . However, the advent of the new political order, after the fight for national independence, allowed the conditions to be met so that Protestants could enter and develop evangelization within Chilean territory. Contributing to this was, on the one hand, the mentality of the patriots who, due to their education or their travels, were supporters of the liberal ideas of the enlightened philosophers of the 18th century, Bernardo O'Higgins particularly standing out; and on the other hand, the new political and economic measures attracted small groups of immigrants, mainly English and American, to the coasts of Chile. Precisely, under the O'Higgins government the first official meeting between Chile and Protestantism took place , through the Scottish Baptist James Thompson, teacher and agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, who was entrusted by the Supreme Director to organize popular schools. , in which the Bible served as the main text (1821). In reality, this operation was a system of evangelical propaganda that was soon counteracted by the Catholic clergy. The obstacles increased to such a point that Thompson had to abandon the attempt. Thus, this was the first active exponent of the non-Catholic faith to arrive on Chilean soil who, supported by the government, had the opportunity to spread biblical teachings.

At that time, world trade was dominated by England, and it was inevitable that the first Protestant groups to arrive in Chile were the Anglicans. In 1825, Tomás Kendall organized the first regular services for those who professed that creed in Valparaíso.

The first tolerant attempts of the O'Higgins government in religious matters were for the most part transitory. Catholic religious sentiment prevailed over new liberal ideas. All the Political Constitutions that Chile had during the first decades of the Republic declared the country *Catholic, apostolic and Roman* and, with the exception of the short-lived Constitution of 1828, the rest of the Fundamental Charters spoke of “exclusion of any other worship”.

With this context it is understood why the practice of faith of the Protestants who arrived in Chilean territory was not very favorable. They were allowed to enter the country and participate in commercial and industrial activities without great difficulties, but in the aspect of religious tolerance they were not favored. Protestants did not have the right to practice their worship either in public or in private; Furthermore, the Catholic Church controlled the cemeteries, the public schools gave Catholic religious instruction, marriage was monopolized by the dominant Church; and soon the problem of mixed marriages arose. The only cemetery available to religious dissidents was in Valparaíso and was due to

the personal decision of Bernardo O'Higgins (1819): "The bodies of Protestant foreigners who died in Santiago were transported to Valparaíso, or secretly buried in the Santa Lucía hill. It was only in 1853 when an article was adopted that recognized foreigners the right to have cemeteries" (4) .

In 1845, the Congregationalist pastor and missionary David Trumbull arrived, the initiator of Protestant work in Spanish in Chile. In 1847 the Union Church (English-speaking Interdenominational Church) was organized , and in 1855 it was authorized to build a chapel, "as long as it had no bell or steeple and was behind a wooden fence" (5) . This would be the first Protestant temple in Chile and on the western coast of South America. Trumbull's work was eventually transferred to the Presbyterian Church (1873). The first Protestant Germans residing in Valparaíso and Santiago attended English-speaking religious services. But it was the German colonization of the lake area, in southern Chile, that introduced the presence of the Lutheran Church to the country in 1852.

Trumbull, for his part, carried out a campaign through the newspapers of the time to obtain greater legal concessions, taking advantage of the growing liberal sentiment in the country's intellectual and political circles. Thus he achieved greater religious tolerance for non-Catholic foreigners residing in Chile.

The law on dissenting marriages (1844) had freed Protestants from the obligation to marry according to the Catholic rite. In 1865, as a result of the disagreements between the Conservative and Liberal Parties on the relations between the Catholic Church and the State, the Constitution of 1833 was reformed and included the authorization to dedicate themselves to religious cults that were not Catholic, but in a form private. This event marked a milestone, since it inaugurated an era of greater tolerance in the country that will lead to the enactment of other laws to reduce the power of Catholicism and open the doors to non-Catholic groups. In 1883 the law on secular cemeteries was passed, and in 1884 the law on civil or secular marriage was approved.

In 1877 the Methodist Church was established in Chile through the work of William Taylor. His work was developed among Chileans; and at that time the Spanish Jesuit Juan Canut de Bon joined Methodism , who attracted numerous followers to the ranks of Protestantism. It became so popular that evangelical Protestants in Chile came to be known as "canutos," a term generally used in a pejorative sense, until today. Later, in 1909, the Methodist Church suffered a schism, since a group of faithful - in order to seek a reform within it - split, forming the movement called "Pentecostal", which is currently the largest non-Catholic religious denomination.

Although the aforementioned James Thompson was the first Baptist on Chilean soil, he cannot be considered the originator of the Sunday Baptist Church here. The first members of this creed arrived in Chile in the decade of 1880-1890, following numerous German immigrants who professed it. It was the brothers Germán and José Lichtenberg , who began to organize the first congregations with Chilean converts.

Closing the Chilean religious framework - to which the Sabbatarian Church of God was introduced - is the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which deserves special attention due to a certain historical link that both denominations had in the 19th century and due to some doctrinal affinity that brings them closer.

The origin of Seventh-day Adventism in Chile occurred in a period of ten years (1885-1895). In 1885, French immigrants Claudio Dessignet and his family arrived in the country with the purpose of colonizing the Araucanía region. They had been professing the Adventist faith from their country, and became the first Adventists to set foot on Chilean and South American soil. They soon carried out a proselytizing action, and over time several of their neighbors became convinced of their beliefs and began to keep Saturday as a day of rest.

Nowlin , the first official Adventist missionary in Chile, arrived in Valparaíso from Argentina as a colporteur , that is, a traveling propagandist, seller of religious literature (books, treatises, pamphlets).

Because he did not have many fruits of his work, he decided to return to Argentina at the same time that the colporteurs Federico Bishop and Tomás Davis arrived in Valparaíso in 1895. They later came into contact with the Designets . And during that same year, the first pastor ordained by the headquarters of Adventism in the United States, Granville, arrived in the country. Baber , who made a first tour to the north, where in Iquique he organized the first Adventist congregation in Chile, and in the process gave official existence to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in this country and ordained the first Chilean pastor, Julio Ocampo (1896). At the same time, Bishop and Davis - established in Santiago - converted a Baptist pastor of Spanish nationality, Enrique Balada, and his wife to the Adventist message, being the first in Chile to preach in Spanish in front of a congregation about the validity of the law. of God and the observance of the biblical Sabbath . Two Swiss Lutherans were soon converted, the brothers Eduardo and Víctor Thomann , and the Chilean Methodist pastor Martín Ávalos, from San Felipe. The latter remained at the head of the congregation of that city made up of eight members (December 1896). Nuclei of believers also emerged in Santiago, Angol, Mulchén, Los Angeles and other places that soon became organized as congregations.

Between 1896 and 1904, the Adventist Church was consolidated in Chile, a period in which other figures stood out in the direction of the institution, such as Carlos Kriehoff , one of the first converts from the Victoria sector and promoter of the educational area; Alfred Ogden, who replaced Baber in 1901 as head of the newly created West Coast Mission; Herman Ketring , who assumed the general ministry in 1903; and Francisco Westphal, who arrived in Chile in 1904 to replace Ketring . Starting in 1901, the *Adventist Magazine began to be published* .

It should be noted that three of the aforementioned characters - Víctor Thomann , Martín Ávalos and Herman Ketring - were later related to the history of the Sabbatarian Church of God in Chile. Likewise, it is necessary to recognize that the presence of Adventism in the country facilitated the introduction of the Christian-Israelite message, particularly in the area of Araucanía at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. As will be seen in the following pages, the first converts of the Church of God came fundamentally from Adventism, so it is evident that the first Christian-Israelite congregations were made up of Adventists who accepted other biblical truths and renounced the teachings promoted by Ellen White.

The link of the Church of God in the United States that passed to Chile

The Church of God, or also the Church of Christ, has always existed, and can be identified by the description given by the Holy Scriptures: “She who keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 12:17, 14:12). And according to God's purpose, it reached the American continent in the 17th century.

The link of the Church of God that arrived in America is related to Stephen Mumford, who in 1664 was sent from the London congregation of Bell Lane to Newport (Rhode Island), in the current United States. His ministry was the first stone of the entire Sabbatarian Christian movement that later developed in this part of the world.

The Church of God established in North America evolved without major problems during the rest of the 17th century and throughout the 18th century, but in 1818 most of it deviated doctrinally by accepting Protestant beliefs and took the name of the Seventh-day Baptist Church. Only a remnant remained faithful to the name and doctrine of the Sabbath Church of God. However, the great Adventist movement that emerged almost in the middle of the 19th century absorbed many of its members, who found themselves associated with adherents of other denominations. However, the early Adventist

movement, after the Great Disappointment, took on biblical doctrinal characteristics, which under the leadership of the White couple it distorted. Naturally, within this *new* Church of God doctrinal discrepancies occurred that finally led to a schism that dragged the majority to form the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The minority that did not accept the principles of faith of Ellen White and The new ecclesiastical organization came to constitute the Adventist Church of God, which is historically known as the Seventh-day Church of God (6) . (In this work the latter name will be used, as it is historically more generalized).

It has traditionally been accepted that the first branch of the American Church of God that arrived in Chile - currently called the Israelite Church of the New Covenant - came from the Seventh Day Church of God, as indicated by the following sources:

Mario Seiglie , former representative of the Universal Church of God in Chile (under the era of Herbert Armstrong, current United Church of God), expresses the following:

“We consider from history and doctrine that the United Church of God and the Israelite Church of the New Pact do have a common origin. The 'mother branch' is the Seventh Day Church of God...” (7) .

In a study document of the former Sabbatarian Universal Church of God, when referring to the missionary process carried out by the Church of God at the end of the 19th century, it maintains:

“During this time, the ministers of the Seventh-day Church of God began a type of work missionary in Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Philippines, etc.” (8) .

In an article published by Wade Cox of the Christian Church of God there is, without a doubt, a reference to the Israelite Church when he writes about the continuity of the Seventh Day Church of God, saying:

“The Church of God (Seventh Day) was a Unitarian Sabbatarian biblical system that generally did not keep holy days (biblical holidays), but they have been known to be observed in some areas (for example, Chile)” (9)

However, despite the previous and similar expositions, it is not possible to historically confirm the thesis that links the origin of the Israelite Church of the New Covenant with the aforementioned American Church. The main argument that refutes this possibility is that the Seventh Day Church of God, from the beginning, has only kept two solemn festivals, the weekly Sabbath and the Lord's Supper on the 14th of Abib , but has not recognized the observance of the remaining festivals. annual. There was only an exceptional period that began in 1937, when it also began to keep Pentecost and the Booths. But in 1962 he put an end to that biblical observance (10) . For this reason, Wade Cox recognizes that the “Church of God (Seventh Day)... generally *did not keep the holy days* ” (11) , that is, it did not keep the set of festivals ordered in Leviticus 23.

If the Seventh Day Church of God is not the mother Church of the Chilean Israelite Church, what is the Church from which it was separated through the missionary who brought the doctrine to Chile with the observance of the biblical festivals? Of the other Sabbath -observant denominations that existed in the United States at the end of the 19th century, the Seventh-day Baptist Church and the Adventist Church must be immediately ruled out, for obvious reasons. There is only one valid alternative: the independent and contemporary Church of God that came from the line of Stephen Mumford. Here is the background: After the schism experienced by the Church of God in 1818, which meant the formation of the Seventh Day Baptist Church, there were a remainder of members who did not join the new denomination. Subsequently, as has been noted, many of that remaining group were in fellowship with Christians of the Adventist movement promoted by William Miller (12) . And again there was a remnant of the original Church of God that preserved the Gospel intact and that in general did not join the great

Sabbatarian denominations existing in North America, from which it was distinguished by keeping the annual festivals. John Kiesz refers to that community in the following terms:

“It is evident that there were many Sabbath-observant groups (independent) in addition to the bau -

Seventh Day scholars , *before* and *during* the time that William Miller preached and predicted the end of the world, in 1844...

isolated groups had arisen in various areas, it is said, before the Great Disappointment of 1844, es-

That is, *local groups of Sabbatarians , as well as isolated* individuals . This can be clearly determined of things that were written by Elder James White (and by others) about their various journeys that they made.

They joined groups they tried to incorporate. When the Whites toured across the states of the East and Midwest in the early 1860s ... , they found *many Sabbath congregations.*

tists . Many of them associated (later) with the Seventh-day Adventists, while o-

Others began to join and cooperate with those later known as the 'Church of God'.

Some of the groups remained independent of all general organizations ...

“Some of the earlier independent groups did not join the Seventh- day Baptists, or the the Seventh-day Adventists, *nor even to the Church of God (Seventh Day)* ” (**13**) .

For his part, Richard Nickels also mentions groups of Eastern “free Sabbatists” from the 1860s who did not join the Adventist Church, but were not linked to the Seventh-day Church of God either (**14**) . Consequently, at the end of the 19th century the Seventh-day Church of God was not the only ecclesial organization that observed “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” in North America, since in both the United States and Canada there were dispersed, isolated groups. and independents who had Christian-Judaic practices. Some of those congregations observed the set of biblical festivals, according to the following testimony:

“Several determined families provided a tenuous continuity to the Church of God. These families

They settled mainly in Missouri , Oklahoma (central states) and Oregon (western states).

USA). *Some retained some knowledge of God's holy festivals* ” (**15**) .

The current Israelite Church of the New Covenant comes from one of these branches of the Church of God, making it impossible to determine exactly the origin of the missionary who arrived in Chile with the Christian-Israelite message.

Indeed, at the end of the 19th century there was a general desire among the Sabbath Churches to promote an intense process of propagation of the Gospel beyond the borders of the United States. In the historical work of Dugger and Dodd there is a description of the missionary activities of the Stanberry Sabbatarian congregation , when the aforementioned century concluded:

“As time passed, the work made its way into foreign fields, and the precious truth

It found its way into many countries and sea islands. Hundreds of thousands of brochures were printed and

They were distributed along with many books...” (**16**) .

Another source, dating from 1964, reports on the expansion of the Church of God towards Latin America, confirming in passing the link of the Chilean Israelite Church with that religious organization:

“During this time, the ministers of the Church of God...began a type of missionary work in Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Philippines, etc. A few thousand converts and their descendants remain valid until today. Some congregations in Chile and Argentina keep the holy days of the (a-

ños) 1890s to the middle of the 20th century (they still do it)” (**17**) .

Within that context, then, the mission to Chile of the evangelist Federico Segesser took place , probably sent from the United States in the mid-1890s by some of the congregations faithful to the Gospel of

Jesus and observant of the commandments of God. The Peruvian Christian-Israelite pastor José Alfredo Loje published a theological treatise in which he reveals what that event was like:

“In the books of Pastor Martín Ávalos (he is Chilean) it is recorded that in the year 1897 (in reality it was around 1896) a missionary colporteur named F. Segesser , coming or having been sent from Estados Unidos if perhaps around 1890, he arrived in Brazil, where he remained for a time, later moving to Uruguay.

cool, then further south to Argentina. After a while, he wanted to move to Chile through the province of Temuco (Cautín) and neighborhoods (in the Araucanía region), where he remained an instructor - going to the parishioners who accepted the doctrine” (18)

The evangelizing mission of Federico Segesser in Chile

The Chilean region in which the missionary Federico Segesser concentrated his work is what has historically been called *Araucanía* , which had not long ago been incorporated into national development.

In fact, after the period of Independence, it was up to the Republican government to penetrate Araucanía, a process not without difficulties due to the presence and resistance of its native population, the Mapuches or Araucanians. In reality, that region became the Chilean “Wild South”, equivalent to the American Far West, since it constituted the conflictive border between the “Huinca” world and the Mapuche territory. After the repression of a large indigenous uprising that broke out in 1878, the aborigines submitted to the republican authorities, who began the colonization of the territory. In February 1881, the city of Temuco was founded, inaugurating the settlement with Chilean and foreign settlers between the current provinces of Malleco and Cautín. Thus, other urban locations emerged, several of which became the scene of the history of the Chilean Church of God.

Segesser arrived in southern Chile, specifically to the lake area where settlers of German origin predominated , since an Adventist historical source mentions him for the first time when he was in the city of Puerto Montt:

“At the beginning of November 1896, Brother Segesser , a Swiss convert to Adventism, who He was in Puerto Montt selling publications with the Adventist message, writes to the pastor Baber telling him that he has problems with the priest, who urges people not to buy the advertisements . cations and having trash thrown at him and insults. He even went to the police to ban him - ran 'the sale of those dirty books'. Faced with this situation, Segesser showed these facts to the authorities - town authorities , who rebuked the 'holy father' severely. In this way he could finish their work in the city” (19) .

This text deserves some clarifications: 1° Although it shows Segesser as a missionary linked to the Adventist Church, he certainly did not belong to that current. sabbatarian The same author of the aforementioned work, Leopoldo Zambra, reaffirms this truth by saying:

“ Segesser was not an official canvasser or an official worker for Adventism. No, he rather came with ideas (adventists, that is , preached about the second coming of Christ and the observance of the Decalogue) and that was what it spread in the south... My sources go back to around 1918-1920... And there it figure the reports sent to the United States, mention Segesser but in that activity that

I just mentioned, with those doctrines, *and they do not say that he is an Adventist member* , but rather that he proclaims -

ma Adventist doctrines” (20) .

Adventist doctrines should be understood as the strict observance of the Ten Commandments and the emphasis on the coming advent of Christ, principles typical of the Church of God and related to Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. In other words, Segesser found among Adventists a fertile field to preach the true Gospel, since there were more principles of faith common to them than to the rest of the Protestants.

2° Although Segesser was not an Adventist member, he was closely related to the Adventist community in Chile. GH Baber was Superintendent of the Adventist Mission in this country since 1896, and he communicated with him by letter. The Adventist Church includes Segesser among preachers with Adventist ideas, but they do not mention the fact that he taught the observance of biblical festivals and the role of the people of Israel in God's plan. Precisely in a letter sent by Baber to Segesser he confesses that he had met Ellen White and had witnessed the moments in which she went into ecstasy when she received visions (Letter of June 15, 1899). To this, Segesser makes the following comment about Mrs. White, comparing her to the Catholic Pope:

“So, as the infallibility of the Roman Church is chosen by the greats of said Church, thus

This other infallibility is also chosen by the doctors of the Adventist Church, united to spiritualist doctors. Thus fulfilling the fourth temptation prophesied in the Word of God, that is, the blind angel, or the number of his name or a Papacy in the last Church, against which is our “must fight and win before being sealed (Revelation 13:17; 3:14-17,21; 15:2)” (21) .

3° Zambra's text clearly shows that when Segesser preached in Chile there was no impediment to doing so; There was no inquisitorial persecution or official religious intolerance in the country. On the contrary, the aforementioned Catholic priest who tried to stop his missionary work was reprimanded by the local authority.

Federico Segesser was indeed of Swiss nationality, but his canvassing was subordinated to the Church of God in the United States. Like many preachers of the past and in other latitudes, he dedicated part of his life to traveling to these distant lands to proclaim the message of the small remnant of Jesus, thus fulfilling his order: “And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, *and to the ends of the earth*”; “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:19). Loje refers to the evangelization carried out by Segesser :

“This shepherd had entered Chile through the province of Temuco (Cautín) and surrounding areas, where he remained -

He spent some time instructing the parishioners who accepted the doctrine he was teaching, having For this reason he established some congregations in all those places, as if teaching the festivals - tas and their observance, of the Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles as well as the Sabbath” (22) .

Certainly they were not large congregations that Segesser managed to form , but only small groups of believers, and those that were established in Victoria (or Curacautín) and Gorbea can be clearly identified. In this last town the couple Avelino Aldea-Clarisa Garrido and their daughter Clorinda Aldea were converted; the couple Juan de Dios Pulgar-Delfina Barriga and their young sons David and José Pulgar and others. José Pulgar, later residing in Lastarria, would become one of the prominent ministers of the first half century of the Church in Chile. Meanwhile, in Victoria (or Curacautín) the most prominent convert was Martín Ávalos towards the end of 1896 or 1897, who became the first minister of the Church of God in Chile.

After having stayed in Chile between 1896 and 1897, Segesser headed to Argentina to continue evangelization. Emisael Palma adds that “he preached in the south of Argentina and left some members or congregations, but there were no leaders or authorized ministers left” (23) . Conrado Saller ,

undoubtedly a disciple of Segesser , wrote a letter in 1930 to another of his disciples describing his work on the other side of the Andes, stating:

“Around the year 1900 I met Segesser in Buenos Aires among the Adventists. In the same year I saw -

It was in Nueva Palmira, Republic of Uruguay, and where I had my residence. As in this Palmi-

They had founded a church not long ago..., I had just been received and baptized by Pastor Le-

land , the meetings were held in my place that I provided, so Brother Segesser decided to stop in

my house, and so he spent about a year of cash with me, not counting his trips in which he came and went,

until-

So in 1902 he said goodbye, going to Switzerland, to the city of Basel ...

“From Switzerland he often wrote to me, sending me brochures in German and English, which I distributed through En-

tre Ríos, in the German colonies...

“Thus we were in constant communication until 1916 or 1917. Since then I have not heard from him.

In 1916 he wrote *Der Weltkrieg* (*The World War*), from which I received a sum” (24)

It is presumed that Federico Segesser died in Switzerland, around the year 1920, since around that date and from that country his last letters addressed to Chile are also known. To this day, a couple of theological treatises are preserved that allow us to know his understanding of the Scriptures, and to which reference will be made in subsequent pages.

The Church of God did not exist in Chile before 1896

All the historical background available allows us to objectively determine that the Church of God was not introduced in Chile before 1896, the year Federico Segesser entered the territory . However , there are certain approaches that contradict this absolutely proven fact. Without considering the unsustainable thesis of the crypto-Jewish origin of the Israelite Church, there is another position as unsustainable as it, which affirms that the Christian-Israelitic Church would have existed since colonial times (25) . Likewise, another senior leader - upon observing a photograph from 1911, which shows around thirty members keeping the Feast of the Cabins - concludes that that congregation was numerous, which would imply that the work of evangelization should not have “been for a few years.” ” (that is, between 1896 and 1911), but “from longer.” In other words, the Church of God must have been developing long before 1896, perhaps not congregations, but rather there were families “with Israelite principles” (26) . Regarding those and other similar opinions, it must be said that it is impossible to make them compatible with the available historical evidence. For this there is only one possible explanation: oral tradition has distorted the historical truth, has distorted the facts, contrary to real and documented history. Another tradition transmitted orally for generations that clearly reflects this conclusion is the case of two characters about whom the only certainty is the knowledge of their surnames: Tricot and Schuster.

“Although the history of the Israelite Church of the New Covenant is quite clear regarding the time and the space in which his doctrine was introduced, as well as the missionary who sowed in Chile the semi-

lla of the evangelical truth of Christ, there is a very nebulous fact around two characters of the which we know little or nothing with certainty. We are referring to the missionaries named Schuster and Tricot ”

(27) .

Traditionally and officially the Israelite Church - both orally and in some cases in written documents - begins its history in Chile with the evangelistic work of those two missionaries supposedly coming from

the United States; However, there are several contradictory antecedents regarding such enigmatic characters, such as those stated below:

According to a former pastor of the Church, Federico Segundo Martínez, Tricot and Schuster would have had a time in Chile “very fleeting, therefore *They did not establish anything positive* regarding the (Christian-Israelite doctrine) in our country” (28). However, another prominent leader, Emisael Palma, appeals to tradition to maintain that they did carry out missionary and ministerial work, saying: “ Some foreigners *brought the message of truth to Chile, one with the last name Tricot and the other Schuster*” (29). As can be seen, there is a contradiction between both testimonies: Did they preach in Chile or not? On the other hand, the dates given to the questioned mission of Schuster and Tricot are also completely contradictory in the testimonies of tradition; Even the same source has divergence in this aspect, as seen below: Emisael Palma alludes to the tradition that Schuster and Tricot developed their mission around 1850 (30), and Federico Segundo Martínez affirms the same (31). In another document, Palma says that they were between 1860 and 1890 (32). An unofficial document asserts that those characters would have brought the doctrine to Chile around 1850-1893 (33). Then, Heber Palma, according to the story of his father Emisael , says that Schuster and Tricot would have been his contemporaries during his childhood (second decade of the last century) and that he would have even “known them” (34). So, when would Schuster and Tricot have actually developed their evangelistic work ? 1850?, 1860-1890?, 1850-1893?, or at the beginning of the 20th century?

According to another thesis, all the missionaries mentioned so far - Tricot , Schuster, Segesser and also Saller - knew or met each other, but from the few documentary sources it can be concluded that only the last two were contemporaries, knew each other and even had close contact. ministerial.

There is also a theory according to which the *Israelite Church of God* would have been formed from two missionary lines that later converged in the Araucanía region: one in the north, with Federico Segesser -Martín Ávalos (Chilean prime minister of the Church), and another to the south, with Schuster and Tricot (35). However, this position is irreconcilable with the documented testimonies, since Segesser actually entered Chile from the south, not from the north; He moved and preached between Puerto Montt and Araucanía, and then went to the trans-Andean city of Buenos Aires.

Based on these and other elements of judgment stated so far, the following conclusions can be reached: 1° Both Segesser and Ávalos are definitely historical figures. They can be located in time in space, and there remains positive evidence of their respective ministries in Chile. But Tricot and Schuster only exist in oral transmission originating among former members of the Church. Emisael Palma, when referring to them, recognizes this fact with the following phrases: “As a matter of *tradition* (36) _ and, “all this is just *tradition, nothing written* ” (37). Meanwhile, *The Voice of Truth* , a Christian-Israelite publication, acknowledged regarding Tricot and Schuster that “it has been picked up from *tradition* ” (38).

Tricot and Schuster cannot be ruled out , it is also not possible to determine with historical evidence their exact temporal -spatial location and the prominence they would have had in the development of the Chilean Church of God. They are not mentioned in any objective document of the time. Both Segesser , Saller and Ávalos are mentioned in reliable testimonies of the time, and their writings are preserved today, but there is nothing about Schuster and Tricot . José María Ríos reports that *Israeli* researchers in North and Central America have “no knowledge” about them (39).

The only thing clear about them is that they did not appear in Chile before the arrival of Federico Segesser , an event that occurred in 1896. The Christian-Israelite movement or *Israelite Church of God* only began to develop from his missionary work. Any other thesis other than this positively proven fact is only speculation or a distortion of reality.



Within the history of the Israelite Church of God, two enigmatic characters emerge, with the surnames Schuster and Tricot . Until now it is impossible to determine if they were really in Chile, and if they did, it is not possible to refer to them positively, since they are only known through oral transmission, and the versions about the period in which they would have been in Chile are contradictory.

If they were in Chile, it is likely that they did so long after the establishment of the Israelite Church of God in the country. In the photograph above, from approximately 1929, Atanasio Navarrete appears with his son Ezequiel in his arms. Next to them is a German minister named Schultt . Perhaps this is the same character Schuster, whose surname has been distorted by oral tradition.

Below are some testimonies that - two or three years apart - confirm Federico Segesser as the manager of this unique Congregation:

José Cecilio Palma, a former minister of the Church, wrote his memoirs towards the end of the 1910s, in which he confirms the above by saying: “This man (Martín Ávalos) received this (evangelical) knowledge from Segesser” (40) .

For his part, Roberto Feldmann , in his rabbinical thesis, concluded - with an error of about three years - that the “Israeli Church appeared in Curacautín in 1894, long before other Churches or missions” (41) .

Teresa Martínez, along with other researchers, disseminated the following information: “Already in 1895, the first Cabañas festivities were celebrated (in reality, in that year Segesser was not in Chile)” (42) .

Sergio Águila, who was a disciple of another of the oldest and most renowned members of the Church, has given the following testimony regarding the antiquity of the Israelite Church: “The evangelist Federico Martínez (father...) informed me that the message with solemnities to make them was an American brother, Segesser , who in 1896 arrived in Chile to disseminate knowledge...” (43) .

And as a definitive conclusion, Ester Pulgar, daughter of one of the first ministers of the Church of God, José Pulgar, has stated categorically: “Here (in Chile) our Church did not exist... If someone says that it was from this religion before (Segesser), lies... because this religion (Christian-Israelite) was born with brother Segesser . He was the first to bring this doctrine to Chile” (44) .

The ministry of Conrado Saller

A character called Conrado Saller also appears in the early history of the *Israelite Church of God* , about whom little is known but of whom there are no doubts about his historicity.

Indeed, through the information received from Peregrina Wesphal , an elder of the Argentine Israelite Church who died around the year 1960, we know of the foreign evangelist Conrado Saller . He would have worked for a time in Chile (details of his missionary work are unknown); Then he moved permanently to Argentina, specifically to the province of Entre Ríos, where he organized some congregations. Martín Ávalos communicated by letter with Saller , and from that correspondence the letter cited in previous pages has been preserved, in which Saller mentions part of Segesser 's work among Argentine Adventists; but he also describes part of his own evangelistic task, saying:

“Around the year 1900 I met Segesser in Buenos Aires among the Adventists. In the same year I saw -

It was in Nueva Palmira, Republic of Uruguay, where I had my residence...

“From Switzerland (Segesser) often wrote to me , sending me pamphlets in German and English, which *he dis-I lived in Entre Ríos* in the German colonies (Russo). In 1911 I went in person to the Stations with these pamphlets and gave lectures attended by hundreds of Adventists and Protestants in each village. So the pamphlets were distributed with which the spirit of the majority who read those hopes...

“Thus we were in constant communication (with Segesser) until 1916 or 1917. Since then I didn't know about him...” (45) .

It can be seen that Saller preached among the Adventists and Protestants of Entre Ríos (Argentina) to convert them to the Christian-Israelite faith of the Church of God, using the same strategy applied by Segesser in Chile. But, when his death occurred, there were no other ministers really prepared to continue leading the Church, which finally ended up dissolving (46) . A letter from Emisael Palma to José Alfredo Loje , from Peru, certifies that fact:

“Brother Conrado Saller went to the north of Argentina, to the province of Entre Ríos. There were con- numerous congregations , but upon his death he left no ministers to shepherd the flock. A

member of those congregations went to Italy, returned apostate, and dedicated himself exclusively to destroying

to the Church that Brother Saller had built . This was told to me by Sister Peregrina Wesphal , the

The last survivor of those congregations in Entre Ríos was in 1957, having thus de- similar to the Church in the province of Entre Ríos, in Argentina” (47) .

The doctrine that Federico Segesser preached in Chile

Segesser was in Chile between 1896 and 1897, and from his canvassing there have remained some doctrinal texts written by himself that testify to the principles he carried with him. This important material was particularly preserved through one of the first converts of Segesser, Martín Ávalos. Proof of this is that he was preaching in Peru, and as a result of the evangelistic work in that country, the work titled *The Eternal Gospel* was preserved. Two other texts by Segesser, also of a prophetic nature like the previous one, are *The Mystery of Iniquity* and *The Consummation of the Mystery*. That proselytizing material certainly had some teachings that are inconceivable today, but most of its content prevailed over time and currently constitute some of the fundamental principles of Christian-Israelite doctrine.

In the work *The Mystery of Iniquity*, you can read the following:

“In the time of the apostle Paul, some members of the Thessalonian congregation believed they had to wait, already in their lives, for the coming of Christ and the end of the world. But the apostle Paul does not approve of this belief, saying: 'We beseech you therefore, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering to him, that you be not easily moved from your feelings, nor be dismayed either by spirit or by word, nor by letter like ours, as that the day of the Lord is near. Let no one deceive you in any way; for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of sin, the son of perdition, is revealed, opposing and exalting himself against everything that is called God, or that is worshiped; both that which sits in the temple of God as God, making itself seem like God. Don't you remember that when I was still with you, I told you this? And now you know what hinders, so that it may be revealed in due time' (2 Thessalonians 2:1-6).

“Paul believed it was his duty to inform the congregation of the faithful regarding the time when the coming of Christ could be expected. The prophets of God had spoken of an undesirable event that was to precede the day of Judgment, and until this day was fulfilled, there was no reason to wait for the end... And this intermediary event is the great apostasy, the appearance of a certain perverse man, despiser of the law of God, whose manifestation was still prevented at that time by an obstacle in his path. The same source that Paul used to preach about future events is within our reach, and it is appropriate for each of you to carefully search it to understand it.

“Paul wrote at a time when Rome had dominion over all the peoples of the then known world (in the West). Rome was the fourth empire, and according to Daniel's prophecies, the fourth empire was the last one that was to dominate the world. This fourth empire was to be divided, and as a divided empire it was to last until the end of the centuries, and only after the dissolution of the universal dominion of Rome could, according to Daniel 7:8-24, that pervert, the author of the great apostasy which Paul calls *the man of sin*, but which is more generally known under the name of the Antichrist.

“It was therefore the unity of the Roman Empire that prevented its coming in Paul's time. But when that empire fell apart some centuries later, at the time of the barbarian invasion, it was divided into ten parts as God's prophecy had predicted, and thus the impediment was removed. From the divided empire there actually emerged a sovereign whose government was different from that of the other ten, that is, a spiritual dominion (Daniel 7:25, 2 Thessalonians 2:4). By this new power three of the other ten had to be subjected or humiliated.

“Among the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman Empire was divided, no spiritual government has arisen other than the Papacy. If popery is the author of this great apostasy, the characteristic signs that have been predicted must also have been fulfilled in it.

“The prophet Daniel says of the one who saw the ten kingdoms come out: 'he will think about changing the times and the law (of the Most High)' (Daniel 7:25). We confront what the Catholic catechism calls the Ten Commandments with the law that God gave on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20), we see that the commandment regarding the worship of images has ordinarily been changed considerably. The Roman Church boasts of being the author of this change, and considers it a sign of the power it exercises over the ten commandments of the Decalogue. In this very serious matter it is convenient to hear from the same Church that gives the necessary testimony in its approved scriptures: 'since the (Catholic) Church has changed Saturday into Sunday of its own power, without authorization of Scripture' (Dr. Erc ., *Of the authority of the Church*)...

“Although his person (that of the Pope) is not adored and honored by all, nevertheless all those who have not taken the word of God as a constant rule, follow the great mass, whether by habit, by force or by worldly considerations. adhering to some of his religious commandments, especially the celebration of Sunday. And such a service to God is considered to them like the worship of the beast of Revelation 13, because because of the Pope's commandments they despise the will of God, because they pay the homage and adoration that are due to God alone, to his manifest adversary. Still another sign follows: 'Let him who has understanding count the number of the beast; for her number is man's, and her number is six hundred and sixty-six' (Revelation 13:18). The number of the beast is to be counted from the letters of the title that the representatives of the papal dignity have given themselves. It is to be a name of blasphemy (Revelation 13:1), a heavenly title taken by a man without permission. All these conditions are brought together in the title that on solemn occasions shines on the heads of the Popes as an inscription on the pontifical tiara, and whose letters added according to their value give the indicated number:

V	i	c	a	r	i	v	s	F	i	l	i	D	e	i	
5	1	100						1	50	1	1	500	1	=	666

That is, representative of the Son of God, a man who escorted himself over God and made himself look like God. In the Papacy and in it alone we find together all the signs of the biblical Antichrist” (48) .

In *The Consummation of the Mystery* , Segesser teaches regarding the solemn festivals and the law of God, particularly about the divine Decalogue, expounding:

“In Daniel 7:25 it was prophesied of popery: 'And he will think that he can change the times and the law.' If he only said, 'he will think to change the law,' it would be enough to indicate the work of the Papacy concerning the weekly Sabbath , which is an inseparable part of the law in question. But since something else is written outside the Decalogue, which must have been changed, this thing is (or are) 'the times of the Most High'. Consulting the original text, we find that 'those times' mean the annual festivals commanded by God in Leviticus 23. Eberfield 's translations , in German, thus render the word. We read that these are the holy festivals (times) of the Lord that you must celebrate at their times. Then, according to the weekly Sabbath classified along with the annual Sabbath commanded to be celebrated on the 1st, 10th and 15th of the seventh month of the Jewish year.

“The changing of these times is placed in charge of the Papacy, as an anti-Christian abomination, therefore it should naturally follow that those festivals have in this dispensation an importance equal to the weekly Sabbath, and must be restored. I call chapter 4 of Malachi as a witness. That chapter, which applied to the present time, has a message, not to the unbelieving world, but to those who have heard the

third message and fear the name of the Lord, because the time of their judgment has come. To the same people God says: 'Remember the law of Moses my servant, to whom I entrusted in Horeb ordinances and regulations over all Israel' (Malachi 4:4).

“This is an admonition not so much to keep the Decalogue, which they already keep, but something else in addition that they do not keep it. The Decalogue was given for man (Ecclesiastes 12:13). The Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27). But the law mentioned here was not given to man, nor made for his sake, but it was given to Moses, and it was made for all Israel, not only for the Jews of the Old Covenant, but also expressly included the remnant of the people of Israel (Romans 11:25). This law does not affect those far from the republic of Israel. For example, because of it the Israelites were commanded to celebrate the Passover, but no uncircumcised person would eat of it (Exodus 12:48). This law declared ordinances, sacrifices and judgments, but the wicked would not celebrate them, nor take them into their mouths (Psalm 50:16), but the people of the Concert of God (the spiritual Jews), in the last days are emphatically commanded to keep them, as well as the Sabbath to sanctify it” (49) .

Finally, in his work *The Eternal Gospel*, among other topics, he critically analyzes spiritual Babylon, particularly the doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventists. Below is the transcription of some of his approaches:

“The word 'Babylon' is from 'Babel', which means *confusion* (Genesis 10:10, 11:9). The Lord does not denote with this term the moral attitude of the intended Church, but rather its condition of division and confusion.

“...How is the condition of the religious world manifested in the present time in the fulfillment of the prophetic word? Answer: The so-called Christian Church is divided into numerous denominations, which instead of drinking all their teachings, doctrines and commandments only from the word of God, mix this divine word, certain and true, with the word invented by the spirit of error, establishing laws, commandments and doctrines without basis or foundation in the word of God. Thus, each of the different denominations that make up 'Great Babylon' are divided among themselves by false teachings. There is no term that could more aptly describe the condition of the intended Church of Christ in this century than Babylon, *confusion* ...

"1. The Adventist Church teaches that the verses of Colossians 2:16 and Ephesians 2:14-15 refer to the abolition of the law of Moses or the ceremonial law..., but the word of God teaches that only the part of that law that Christ fulfilled was no longer torn away, but the rest will subsist as long as this heaven that covers us and this earth that we walk on remains (Matthew 5:18). Well, the Lord himself orders us to remember the law of Moses, *if we truly want to be Israelites* (Malachi 4:4).

"2. The Adventist Church teaches that the six shadow feasts of which the Lord speaks to us in the law of Moses were also nailed to the cross when Christ was crucified (Colossians 2:16-17, Ephesians 2:14-15). .. But the word of the Lord says the following: 1st 'The Passover lamb symbolized the death of Christ' (1st Corinthians 5:7). 2nd The Feast of Firstfruits symbolized the resurrection, since Christ was firstfruits of those who slept (1st Corinthians 15:20). 3^a The feast of Pentecost symbolized the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples... (Acts 2:1-5). 4^a The Feast of Trumpets means the proclamation and announcement for the preparations for the great Sabbath of Atonement, whose fulfillment is sealed in the seven thunders of Revelation 10:3-4, which are the voice of God. 5th The Feast of Atonement symbolizes the final day when Christ enters the Most Holy Place to do the last work (Revelation 15). 6^a The Feast of Booths symbolizes the harvest or harvest, or end of the world (Matthew 13:39, Revelation 14:14-16, Matthew 24:30-31). If all these festivals had been nailed to the cross, as the Adventist Church teaches, the following would have happened that same day that Christ died: (all the symbols of the festivals would have been fulfilled in a single day)...

“17. The Adventist Church teaches that verse 24 of chapter 44 of Ezekiel refers only to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment that true teachers must practice and teach... But that verse shows us very clearly that it not only speaks of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment of the eternal law of the holy God, but also of the law of Moses, which contains rights, decrees and solemnities for the people of God, which must be kept in the parts that have not yet had their fulfillment (Malachi 4:4, Leviticus 23:23-44. See also Deuteronomy 23:19, Nehemiah 5:7; Ezekiel 22:12-14, 18:4-32)” (50) .

The message introduced to Chile by Federico Segesser became the basis of the principles of faith of the *Israelite Church of God* in this country, a doctrine that explained in a more authentic way the plan of salvation contained in the Scriptures.

Although Segesser was in Chile for a short time, he established ties with some members of the nascent Church; Proof of this is that he communicated by letter with Martín Ávalos and sent him theological treatises from Europe, such as *The Eternal Gospel* published in 1908. Likewise, there is evidence that indicates that the Swiss evangelist also communicated by letter with José Cecilio Palma, from Gorbea (51) .

, Segesser 's work succumbed to the lack of consolidation of the groups he managed to form; Proof of this is the testimony of Emisael Palma, who wrote:

“The same thing that (Saller) happened to brother Federico Segesser , who (also) acted in the south of Argentina . He left no one to shepherd and guide the flock, or the few brothers who were willing . people in the enormous Argentine Patagonia. (He withdrew) and the evangelistic work was finished” (52) .

While that was happening in the trans-Andean territory, in Chile the seed sown by Segesser quickly bore fruit, and under the leadership of Martín Ávalos and José Cecilio Palma, the Church of God was developing, the link of the apostolic Church in the last corner of the Western world. .

GRADES

- (1) See “Annex: The history and nature of the Church of God has been distorted”
- (2) *Our evangelical brothers* , p. twenty-one
- (3) *Jewish World* , August 11, 1955, p. 10, art. “The extraordinary case of the sabbatarians”
- (4) Juan Guillermo Prado, *Youth sects in Chile* , p. 10
- (5) idem, p. 14
- (6) Richard Nickels , *The Church of God- Adventist !* , www.giveshare.org/churchhistory/sda/COGAdventist ; *Similarities and differences between Sabbatarian Churches* , www.giveshare.org/BibleStudy/163.sabbatariansimsdiffs . According to one source, the name of Church of God of the Seventh Day was officially taken over in 1884 ; However, Nickels ' research refute that statement. In fact , in 1884 several scattered groups in the states of Michigan, Missouri and Iowa who did not had followed the Whites united in an association called the “ General Conference of the *Church of God* ” (Nickels , *History of the Seventh-day Church of God* , subtopic “Some Sabbath Groups Spread”; www.giveshare.org/churchhistory/historysdco/
- (7) Letter to the author, February 10, 2004
- (8) *Bible Correspondence Course* , lecc . 53, p. 9-11; cited in Mario Seiglie , *History of the true Church...* , no. 17, p. 5
- (9) *The historical role of the fourth commandment in the Sabbath Churches of God* , www.ccg.org/spanish/S/P170.html - 190k
- (10) *History of the Church of God (Seventh Day) in Mexico* , published by the Church of God (Seventh Day), pp. 61, 63
- (11) *The historical role of the fourth commandment...* , www.ccg.org/spanish/S/P170.html - 190k
- (12) *The Church They Could Not Destroy* , Universal Church of God, p. 5
- (13) *Some history of the Church of God (Seventh Day)* ; www.giveshare.org/churchhistory/cg7histKiesz

- (14) Nickels , *History of the Seventh Day Church of God* ; www.giveshare.org/churchhistory/historysdcoq/
 (15) *The Church They Could Not Destroy* , p. 5; *Bible Correspondence Course* , lecc . 53, p. 10-11, cited in Seiglie ,
true story _ Church... , no. 16, page. 5
 (16) *A History of the True Church* , p. 181
 (17) *The Church They Could Not Destroy* , p. 5
 (18) *Treatise of the seven words of Wisdom* , José Alfredo Loje , pp. 27-28
 (19) Leopoldo Zambra, *With his Spirit* , page. 107
 (20) Testimony, May 14, 2003
 (21) This is the case of the Adventist historian Leopoldo Zambra, who mentions it alluding to his communication with the leadership
 Adventist in Chile and his *Adventist message* , but does not reveal that he preached the observance of biblical festivals. Just your
 personal testimony acknowledges that Segesser did not belong to the Seventh-day Adventist Church (May 14, 2003)
 (22) *Treaty of the seven...* , page. 28
 (23) Letter to the author, s/f, page. 3
 (24) *Biography of brother Federico Segesser written by a brother who knew him* , transcribed by Martín Ávalos, from a
 letter he received from Conrado Saller , from Gualeguaychú, Entre Ríos (Argentina), August 19, 1930
 (25) Minister Juan Espinoza, for example, has pointed out: “An elderly brother (without identifying him) tells me that they were
 coming
dating back to colonial times, but they were not known. Even the Cabins only remembered them, because they did not
 they could do openly (Testimony, July 20, 2003)
 (26) Heber Palma, letter to the author, July 18, 2004
 (27) Ricardo López, *Schuster and Tricot : An enigma in the history of the Israelite Church in Chile* , page. 1
 (28) Letter to José Alfredo Loje , August 1973, pp. 1-2
 (29) idem; and letter to the author, 1990, p. 3
 (30) *History of the birth of the Israelite Church in Chile*
 (31) Oscar Pereira, *Israelite Church of the New Covenant: A case of symbiosis between Judaism and Christianity* , p. 7
 (33) Simón Cifuentes, *Reports compiled from the Israelite Congregation of the New Covenant in Chile* , page. 1
 (34) Testimony, July 21, 2003
 (35) Letters from Heber Palma to the author: February 18, 2003, p. 1; March 18, 2003, p. 2; May 2003, pp. 1-2
 (36) Letter to José Alfredo Loje , August 1973, pp. 1-2
 (37) Letter from Emisael Palma to the author, 1990, page. 3
 (38) April 1994, p. 5
 (39) Letter to the author, June 10, 2005, p. 3
 (40) *Memory. History of the Chilean Christian Reformation* , p. 13
 (41) *The Jews of the Fourth Corner: a Mysterious Community in the Land of Chile's Mapuche Nativs* , thesis presented in it
 Hebrew Union College Jews Institute of Religion , Cincinnati , United States, unpublished
 (42) Letter to the author, August 2003, p. 1
 (44) Testimony, December 19, 2003
 (45) *Biography of Brother Federico Segesser ...* Conrado Saller , from Gualeguaychú, Entre Ríos (Argentina), August 19,
 1930
 (46) *The Voice of Truth* , Israelite Church of the New Covenant, March-April 1994, pp. 5-6
 (47) August 1973, p. 2
 (48) Federico Segesser , text included in the work of José Cecilio Palma, *Memoria. History of the Reformation...* , pp. 15-16, 18-
 19
 (49) pp. 7-9
 (50) pages 19, 39-41, 47
 (51) The available antecedents confirm this epistolary communication: The evangelist Emisael Palma wrote: “From brother
 Federico Segesser saw in Gorbea one or some letters that are preserved in the possession of the Palma Muñoz sisters” (Letter to
 author, 1990, p. 3). These sisters are the daughters of José Cecilio Palma (Luzví , Sara and Juana Palma Muñoz). One of the
 His grandsons, Nehemías Palma, gave the following testimony: “The aunts always remembered that he (their father)
 He wrote with Segesser . And what did the aunts say: 'My dad corresponded so much with Segesser ... So much wasting time
 with that man and he could never understand... And we told him: And why do you write so much with him?'. That was what
 I heard from the aunts” (Testimony of July 2003). Although José C. Palma did not know Segesser personally , it is
 It is probable that Martín Ávalos was the link, and everything seems to indicate that those letters were not preserved.
 (52) Letter to José Alfredo Loje , August 1973, p. 2

CHAPTER VI: DEVELOPMENT OF THE *ISRAELITE CHURCH* OF GOD IN THE FIRST DECADES (1897-1942)

The Church of God began to be organized in 1897 based on evangelistic work from the United States. The first members declared themselves “Israelites” or “spiritual Jews” from the first moment. In this regard, Juan Guillermo Prado, a Catholic researcher on religious groups, has concluded the following in his book *Youth Sects in Chile* :

“Its origins (are marked)... by the preaching of missionaries in the Araucanía region; HE They formed congregations that were later abandoned . Its members , all Chilean and without connection with the Jewish religion... they declare themselves 'spiritual Jews' ...” (1) .

This chapter presents a review of the development of the Church of God during the first four decades of its existence in Chile.

Martín Ávalos, the first convert and first pastor of the Church

The fact that Martín Ávalos was one of the first members of the *Israelite Church of God* in Chile is absolutely recognized; Furthermore , he was the first convert of Federico Segesser in this country. Its original religious root was Methodist, or Presbyterian according to another source (2) , but in 1896 he joined the also nascent Chilean Adventism. In his historical work on the Adventist Church in Chile, Leopoldo Zambra refers to him saying:

“Saint Philip, another congregation organized

“At the beginning of the month of December, Baber and Balada, after returning from Iquique, traveled to San Felipe, where eight people were baptized, giving rise to another congregation of Adventists.

“Martín Ávalos was elected elder of this group and like Ocampo (Iquique) had been predicted - Protestant church and was eager to continue teaching the Gospel he had learned from the recent winds ” (3) .

“Martín Ávalos, first convert in San Felipe

“He was a fervent Methodist preacher who converted to Adventism in San Felipe. As that Ocampo had some experience in preaching and directing believers, therefore the organization -

When the congregation of San Felipe was founded , Ávalos was ordained an elder. His wish was to continue teaching

the Gospel and was eager to spread the learned biblical message” (4) .

Martín Ávalos lived in the city of San Felipe, but traveled frequently to the south of Chile, both for his work activity - he was a lumber businessman - and for his quality as a spiritual instructor of the Church, since he gave talks at some Adventist congresses (5) . . Under these circumstances, towards the end of 1896 or during 1897, Ávalos met Segesser in the Araucanía area and converted to the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, teaching him that - in addition to the Decalogue and the weekly Sabbath , which he observed - had to keep the biblical festivals. Ávalos became the cornerstone of the nascent Israelite Church of the New Covenant, which is the Church of God. The testimonies that corroborate this fact are numerous, some of which are presented:

In his work *Treaty of the Seven Words of Wisdom* , José Alfredo Loje reports the following towards the middle of the last century:

“From the evangelization of Pastor Segesser , Pastor Martín Ávalos and others remained who, continuing the work they wrote some books” (6) .

The testimony of Pastor Federico Segundo Martínez says in this regard:

“ Segesser ... was a missionary of the *Israelite doctrine*. This was the year (1896 or 1897)... he met a Adventist pastor named Martín Ávalos and gave him the message... and took him out of the Adventist Church. Martín Ávalos, convinced of the truth, began preaching and organized the first *Israelite church* , keeping the solemn festivities in (San Felipe)... Already in 1902 he had organized the second church - sia in the city of Victoria. This is how the Israelite Church was born in Chile” (7) .

Martín Ávalos himself, in a letter to José Cecilio Palma dated December 22, 1913, confirmed the above by stating:

“You ask me to tell you from what year the three festivals of Leviticus 23:23-44 have been kept. Do 16 or We kept them for 17 years (it was in 1897), *being the first in Chile to receive this message ... to obey him and make him known*” (8) .

Elder Elsa Pulgar (b. 1912) and others also testify about the relevance of Ávalos as the first member and minister of the Church of God on Chilean soil:

“Martín Ávalos, who was an Adventist pastor, also understood (the observance of the solemn holidays). So he remained as a pastor in the Church later” (9) .

“The (Christian-Israelite) work organized as a Church began in San Felipe” (10) .

“A man named Martín Ávalos was the one who translated some treaties... This was from English to Spanish and began to form groups” (11) .

“The evangelist Federico Martínez...informed me that the message with solemnities for to make them was (brought by) an American brother, Segesser , who in 1896 arrived in Chile..., and received the message... brother Martín Ávalos” (12) .

“Pastor Federico Martínez... told us that. After these missionaries left (refers to Segesser , actually) Brother Ávalos continued studying and began to study with other people, tell them what had to be done, what the Bible said; and so little by little the pri began to form - mer little group” (13) .

Federico Bishop , one of the colporteurs who in 1895 established the definitive foundations for the emergence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Chile, delivered in 1919 the following testimony regarding Ávalos's conversion to Adventism and then to the Church of God:

“Yes, I am the one who came to Chile with another brother (Tomás Davis)... Mr. Martín Ávalos was presby - Terian when I arrived in Chile, and the day after I entered his house he began to believe in the Sabbath ; and *After a year* (in 1897) he began to guard the Cabins, and now he will have another belief” (14) .

According to the background set forth above, it is established that Ávalos had a short time in the Adventist Church, since he joined it in mid-1896 and during 1897 he abandoned it, keeping the Feast of the Cabins that last year for the first time, probably in San Philip. He himself reveals that event. Furthermore, Ávalos became a true apostle by dedicating time and resources to preach the Gospel that

he received. His ministerial work was mainly concentrated in the Araucanía region. The second congregation was organized in Victoria (15) , but he also organized those in Curilén and Pitrufulquén, although his preaching allowed the appearance of “Israelite” groups in Perquenco, Lautaro, Curaco and Quepe (16) . According to some testimonies, Ávalos was recognized for his fervent spirituality and wisdom. José Cecilio Palma wrote that in 1903 “Pastor Martín Ávalos from San Felipe came , because I met him and was able to understand his spirit and his biblical wisdom. The people who heard him believed that he knew the Bible by heart” (17) . For her part, Elsa Pulgar adds that she never did anything contrary to the doctrine, she was always faithful to the faith, as it was transmitted to her (18) . Ávalos had to travel to southern Chile for the holidays, during which he performed baptisms. Likewise, he was the one who at the beginning consecrated ministers so that they could also baptize (19) . According to the testimony of JC Palma, the congregations he formed called themselves “Israelites” (20) , consequently Ávalos considered himself *an Israelite* as well.

The evangelistic work of Martín Ávalos was also characterized by spreading the biblical Gospel through a profuse literature that he himself ordered to be printed and financed, both hymnals and doctrinal treatises, several of which are preserved to the present. Emisael Palma confirms this situation, indicating:

“Brother Martín Ávalos, a timber industrialist from San Felipe, dedicated himself to working in the Evangel - mess in Chile. He printed hymnals and treatises , which are still preserved in the possession of children of ancient brothers” (21) .

Among the treatises he published, the following titles are preserved: *Solemn and last message of grace sent by Christ to the angel of the church of Laodicea* , *God and his laws of love* , *God destroys this world* and *Seas of shadow here on earth and real and effective seas in the sky* . In this last work he included the calendaring of three festivals of Leviticus 23 (Trumpets, Atonement and Cabins), that is, he published the dates of their respective celebrations "according to the lunar months" between the years 1913 and 1934. The elderly Elsa Pulgar (n . 1912) remembers that during his childhood and adolescence, the Lastarria congregation was guided by that calendar:

“And that brother Martín Ávalos made many treaties, very good... He also made a treaty that had the dates for (several)...years to keep the holidays; and the last year that the celebrations ended - tions for that treaty was there in the year 1932 (actually, it was the year 1934)” (22) .

Pastor Ávalos was also the disseminator of the literature and hymnals left or sent later by Federico Segesser , printing the treatises *The Consummation of the Mystery* and *The Eternal Gospel* and songs from the *American Hymnal* , which will be referred to later.

The work of Martín Ávalos extended beyond the borders of Chile. He later traveled to Peru in the '10s or early '20s, where he laid the foundations of the Church of God in that country, according to the testimonies of Loje and Palma. The first wrote around the '40s or '50s:

“Pastor M. Ávalos spoke with several, organizing a small group of eight people in Peru - yentes, one of whom, Brother Teófilo Sifuentes, who is still alive, testifies to all these things and preserving the works of Brother Martín Ávalos, including one by Pastor Segesser (Refers to the treatise *The Eternal Gospel* , of 1908)” (23) .

Meanwhile, Emisael Palma confirmed this fact in 1990, stating:

“From Peru, many years ago, Pastor Loje told me that he knew one of the last members of the congregation that the brother (Ávalos) formed” (24) .

There is no certainty regarding the end of Pastor Ávalos' ministry, which, without a doubt, ended with his death. The source that mentions it for the last time is the letter by José Cecilio Palma addressed to an Argentine Jew in 1919. In it, when referring to those Sabbatarians who called themselves “ Israelites,” he states: “This congregation *is directed* by Mr. Martín Ávalos , from San Felipe” (25) . A former Christian-Israeli leader maintains that according to the information he had, “Brother Martín Ávalos... was there until 1925, more or less” (26) .

The ministries of David Pulgar and José Cecilio Palma

Gorbea, a town located south of the city of Temuco, was also one of the first places where the evangelization of Federico Segesser bore fruit . There another group of Seventh-day Adventists converted to the apostolic faith, among which is the family formed by the marriage of Juan de Dios Pulgar and Delfina Barriga, whose children David and José became one of the first leaders of the Church. , as an internal publication recognizes: “A great memory in the memory of former members of the congregation are the (brothers with) Pulgar surnames, where José and David occupied a relevant place...” (27) . The work *One Hundred Years Between Volcanoes and Araucarias* also corroborates this by saying that among “the first members of the Congregation... were José and David Pulgar” (28) . Another fundamental figure of the early Chilean Church of God is José Cecilio Palma (b. 1870). Also with Adventist roots, he learned about the apostolic faith in the year 1900 through David Pulgar; and only after 1903 did he become a member in full communion. He was the author of the invaluable document entitled *Memoria. History of the Chilean Christian Reformation* , a plotted historical overview of the Church of God that specifically covers the first twenty years of its history. The text is the result of his concern to organize his memories and put them in writing, perhaps averaging around the '20s. In it he recounts his entry into the Congregation:

“ In the year 1900 I learned of the Gospel through David Pulgar, in Curilén... I became an adherent in the year 1903 (date

of the Roman calendar)... At that time, when I began to profess the Christian faith, the minister The one who taught Saturday and the three festivals that I mentioned above was Mr. Martín Ávalos, from San Felipe.

...“ I was incorporated into this institution in 1903, in October. This party was celebrated on the shore of the Cautín River, in Pillanlelbún , in the province of Cautín, this is on the southern border of Chile... In the year 1903 was when I was able to find out what the Cabins were” (29) .

Soon David Pulgar and José Cecilio Palma became consecrated pastors by Ávalos to minister baptisms to the new converts who came to the Church in the south. Palma himself recounts the consecration, saying:

“In the same year that I appeared in the Congregation *cabañista* , as the other women called her. nominations, Pastor Martín Ávalos from San Felipe came, because I met him and was able to understand his spirit and his biblical wisdom... And gathered in Curilén, in said meeting he remembered to appoint a brother to -

baptize on the southern border of our country, because when someone converted , they had to Mr. Ávalos is coming from San Felipe. The brothers determined that I could do this work. I

I knew very little, because I had no instruction from competent men, and I made it known, But they said that he could baptize and that another could speak in the act of baptism; and they chose for this service to Mr. David Pulgar. In this sense they accepted the ministry. Mr. Ávalos , im -

laying his hands on us he prayed to the God of lights so that we would administer according to the God's word. After the ceremony my partner David Pulgar asked : In cases that I don't

If someone wanted to be baptized, if he could make the same sacrifice. Mr. Avalos

He said he could do it too. We all agreed, but since I knew very little, I left him to He would do the service as he did for us, because I wanted to study and deepen the Holy Es - creatures ” (30) .

Elsa Pulgar, niece of David Pulgar, reaffirms the above by pointing out that “the first pastor in the Church was Brother Martín Ávalos,... (and) Uncle David was named pastor.” However, he adds, “he fell short” and “could not move forward” (31) . JC Palma's version corroborates the fact:

“In the year 1906 of the Roman calendar, my companion in the service of the Lord (David Pulgar) fell in fatal misfortune of drunkenness and fornication, and I had to preside over those whom I also recognized - “The holidays were over” (32) .

It was these circumstances that made it possible for Palma to remain in charge as the sole minister of the church of Gorbea, until his dissidence in 1916.

From his writings it is inferred that José C. Palma quite liked to write and communicate with other people for spiritual reasons. Some letters appear in his *Memoir* , such as the one he wrote to Samuel A. Levy, of Buenos Aires, dated October 12, 1919; or the one he received from Federico Bishop , one of the first Adventist colporteurs in Chile, on October 29, 1918. He also received epistolary correspondence from Martín Ávalos, such as that entitled *Biography of Brother Federico Segesser , written by a brother who knew him* , or the letter he received from him on September 22, 1913 (33) . Likewise, it is stated that Palma maintained correspondence with Federico Segesser . Emisael Palma maintains in this regard:

“Yes, in the year 1931, the one who subscribes, I was talking with a former minister of the Church, who is already sleeping

in the Lord (that is, José C. Palma himself), and he told me that he corresponded with Brother Segesser , and that on some doctrinal points they did not agree (I do not know if these communications were from the date on which we spoke, or from previous years)” (34) .

José C. Palma was a great self-taught Christian-Israelite. His studies of the Holy Scriptures allowed him to understand some biblical truths that led to the perfection of the doctrine brought by Segesser . But this was not without conflicts, since he became a controversial member of the rest of the Church's ministry due to his doctrinal discrepancies; For example, he was the one who discovered in the Scriptures that the biblical festivals of Unleavened and Pentecost should also be celebrated; He applied a different accounting to calculate the feast of Pentecost compared to that used by the rest of the Congregation (he began counting from the Sunday after the weekly Sabbath, within the week of Unleavened Azimos); and when the Zionist movement began to take shape within the Church, he did not accept it and criticized it.

In the mid-1910s, Palma split from the Church and began autonomously leading a small congregation in Gorbea, but “he was always an Israelite (Christian) and his children (Luzví , Amador, Sara and Juana) continued in the church.” Church; They did not go to Adventism, nor was it Adventist (later)” (35) .

Christian-Israelites celebrate the first Cabañas festivals in Chile

Considered themselves “Jews at heart,” the first Chilean converts began to keep the biblical festivals, perhaps the solemnity of the Cabañas being the one that most distinguished this peculiar Christian community.

Perhaps it was in 1897 the year in which Pastor Martín Ávalos publicly celebrated the Feast of the Cabins or Tabernacles, certainly in the city of San Felipe, where he resided. That opportunity constituted the first occasion in which the commandment of Leviticus 23 was fulfilled in Chile. Ávalos himself, in a letter to José C. Palma dated December 22, 1913, confirmed this historical milestone, stating:

“You ask me to tell you from what year the three festivals of Leviticus 23: 23-44 have been kept. Do
16 or We kept them for 17 years (it was in 1897), being the first in Chile to receive this message...
to obey him and make him known” (36) .

Likewise, the available information admits that the first Cabañas celebrations in southern Chile date back to 1899. The historical work of José C. Palma once again provides background information on that momentous event:

“In 1903 was when I was able to find out what the Cabins were. The custom of observing festivals of the Cabins was to keep them in the fields, on the banks of the rivers. I asked the year 1912 to some people who first kept the feasts of the Booths: 'How many years had they kept before 1903?'. An old man from Temuco answers me: 'I tell you the following: we keep the first festival in Lautaro; The festival began on October 18, 1899, and two festivals followed in Perquenco and the fourth in Quepe.

“Another from Loncoche tells me the following: ' As for what you are asking me, about the Cabañas festival. ñasas , I will tell you that the first parties were in Lautaro, in the work of Don José del Carmen Aldea. Total of people : the Guzmán family, three from Santiago, Don Martín Ávalos, from Lautaro, a widow Ríos with the daughter; Clara, wife of Acuña de Curaco ..., three families with a total of nine people from Temuco and the villages . The second cabins were in Perquenco, in the daughter of Don Carlos Vorghal , with a total of 52 people and the assistance of Martín Ávalos, and with a harmony and endearing brotherly love. no The third party in Quepe. The number was, between adults and children, more or less 80. Was the most beautiful, both for the beautiful waters of the Quepe and for the flowers, nalcas, branches, and the visits of the little town, then very small;... with very good preachers, Machuca, Acuña, Sanhueza, Guzmán, Alborno, Villagrán. The fourth party in Perquenco...'

“All these data are what I have been able to have until now regarding the time that Saturday is kept - bado and the three festivals that are kept in the seventh month, which was propagated by Mr. Martín Áva - the... This man received this knowledge from Segesser ” (37) .

Thus, due to the fact of observing that solemn festival, the communities of the Church of God early began to be called “ cabañistas ”, a name given at first by the Adventists and later by the remaining Catholic-Protestant Churches. With this, the false concept that the Congregation of Christ called itself “ Cabañista Church ” is absolutely discarded, a name lacking biblical and historical basis and which does not denote its belonging to God. Note what Palma wrote of his memories of 1903:

“When I entered the Cabañista Church , well with this name They designated the Congregation by ob - serve the Feast of Tabernacles, but they (its members) called themselves *Israelites* ” (38) .

Within this context, it is interesting to refer to the research carried out by Juan Guillermo Prado regarding the early relationship that those “Jewish” Christians felt with the people of Israel. Before that, it should be noted that - according to a Jewish source - towards “the year 1910 in all of Chile there were only 20 to 30 Jews, and in Santiago about 10 to 15” (39) ; For this reason, the number of Jews who

appear in the old department of Mariluan , according to the censuses of 1907 and 1920, is striking. Here is Prado's analysis and conclusions on the suggestive information:

“In 1920, a general population census was carried out in the department of Mariluan , whose name is Victoria, where Curacautín is located, in the province of Malleco, Araucanía Region. It was determined that 44 Jews lived there; Of them, 4 men and 2 women were foreigners; the rest, 21 men and 17 women, were of Chilean nationality. They, without a doubt, belonged to this singular and insular Congregation (*Population Census, 1920* , General Directorate of Statistics, Census of the Republic - War of Chile, raised on December 15, 1920). Curiously, in the previous census, correspond - only 6 Jews were registered , 4 men and 2 women, all foreigners (Census of 1907), and no Chilean Israelites were registered” (**40**) .

So, it is easy to deduce that in the 1907 consultation the members of the *Israelite Church of God* in Mariluan did not choose to identify themselves as Jews, but in 1920 the biblical concept was already assimilated that one who is racially Jewish is no longer a Jew, but By faith in Jesus, and by baptism, Christians are also Jews, “spiritual Jews” or “Jews at heart.”

The first Christian-Israelite congregations

During the first ten or fifteen years of the Israelite Church of God, it did not constitute an organic institution, but spontaneously and without any plan of evangelization it began to take shape; Thus, various groups of converts and believers emerged in small towns around the city of Temuco. As Cifuentes wrote, “Ávalos... began to form groups in Victoria... and other (places)... Later, these groups formed other groups, and thus the Israelite Congregation grew” (**41**) ; or as a Church publication says: “Martín Ávalos, who is recognized as one of the first members in Chile, publicly celebrates the first solemnity of the Cabañas. Later, and without there being a consolidated organization, groups of *cabañistas* appeared in San Felipe, Victoria, Perquenco, Lautaro, Curaco , Quepe, Pitrufrquén, etc. ...(Then) the sprouts of the seed of truth appear in Gorbea, Quitratúe , Pucón, Cunco and later Cumpeo ” (**42**) .

Martín Ávalos, without a doubt, had formed the first *Israelite congregation* in the city of San Felipe, otherwise the available sources would not mention Victoria as the place of the second congregation. However, there is no precedent that allows us to determine when the church of San Felipe existed, since it did not remain in time like many others that Ávalos formed in Araucanía around the year 1900. On the other hand, it must be remembered that Segesser left some converts in the Gorbea- Quitratúe area , south of Temuco. From there José Pulgar later left for Lastarria, where he organized an important congregation; His evangelistic work also promoted the formation of congregations in Cunco and Toltén. Below is a list of the Christian-Israelite communities that were spread throughout the Araucanía area in the first decade of the last century, as recorded in the work of José C. Palma. The year in which their existence is recorded is recorded in parentheses (not the year in which they were organized):

Lautaro (1899), Temuco (1899), Curilén (1900), San Felipe (1900), Perquenco (1900), Quepe (1901), Pitrufrquén (1904), Victoria (1905), Gorbea (1907), Quitratúe (1907) , Pucón (1907) and Curacautín (1907).

Palma also records the existence of converts in several dispersed localities, saying: “In 1913... it was agreed that those who came from the province of Valdivia (Gorbea) would celebrate festivals in the coming years in their respective towns” (**43**) ; and when referring to the participants in the first celebration of Cabañas in the south in 1899, there were faithful from “Temuco and the villages” (**44**) .



The Church of God in Chile was introduced in 1896 through the evangelistic work of Federico Segesser , a missionary of Swiss origin from the United States. The first conversion was that of the Adventist minister Martín Ávalos, at the end of that year or during 1897. It is likely that in that same year the first Cabañas festival was celebrated in the city of San Felipe, since in the south it was observed for the first time in Lautaro in 1899.

The first members of the Church called themselves “Israelites”, but Catholics and Protestants – especially Adventists – called them “ Cabañistas ” precisely because of the observance of that biblical holiday.

The photograph is from 1911 and shows the oldest graphic testimony of that spiritual practice, celebrated in Pillanlelbún , a town located 15 km away . north of Temuco.

The doctrine of the Church of God at the beginning of the 20th century

The Christian-Judaic missionary who introduced the Apostolic Gospel to Chile, those missionaries who may have come later, undoubtedly did not preach or spread the doctrine fully. This is explained because - unlike the missionaries of Christianity - those preachers remained in the country for a short time and did not establish a relationship with the mother Church from which they came. As Prado has rightly argued, “congregations were formed that were later abandoned” (45) . This was the case of Federico Segesser , who spent a short time in Chile. From then on, the Chilean Church of God developed doctrinally autonomously. A similar conclusion has Mario Seiglie , minister and researcher of the United Church of God, stating:

“We consider that the Israelite Church in Chile developed *independently* after losing the trail with the (American) Church of God” (46) .

For his part, the aforementioned researcher Juan Guillermo Prado complements the above by stating: “The truth is that in Curacautín... and other nearby towns they preached, in the second half of the century past (late 19th century) some missionaries..., who emphasized the observance of the Sabbath and Old Testament practices, such as the festivals and prescriptions contained in the li -

bro of Leviticus. There they achieved some conversions and then moved away from the area. The faithful, in their orphanhood, *they reworked (complemented) the doctrines they received ...*" (47) .

Thus, isolated but deeply spiritually motivated, the Chilean disciples began to investigate the Scriptures and discovered other biblical truths that had been observed - to a greater or lesser degree - by the various links of the Church of God throughout the centuries and everywhere. where it existed. In truth, if the Israelite Church of God in Chile is the terminal link in this part of the world, it is concluded that it must also have the doctrine preached by the prophets, Jesus and the apostles. Therefore, it can be stated that missionary work from abroad introduced the evangelical message, and those who received it were inspired to perfect it. That is also the thought of some converts:

“ After these missionaries left, Brother Ávalos continued investigating and began to study with other people, to tell them what to do, what the Bible said” (48) .

“They were Adventists who were converted to the Israelite doctrine, studying the Bible and being guided - two by the Holy Spirit... They had the concern, something was missing, and reading (the Bible) they came to the Israelite doctrine” (49) .

“ The Israelite doctrine (at the beginning) was not as complete as it is now, because they had to continue dressing ...” (50) .

The ministers who led the process of consolidation of the Christian-Israelite doctrine were Martín Ávalos and José Cecilio Palma. The first had directly received the doctrinal bases and the second was the first to notice that the Scriptures taught other truths; It can be stated that Palma was the one who began the “perfection” of the Church's beliefs.

Below are some essential principles of faith of the Christian doctrine that Martín Ávalos preached and disseminated, which have been extracted from one of the hymnals that he published in his own printing press that he had in San Felipe, entitled *Canticos del Israel de Dios* . It should be noted that this hymnal contains praises coming mostly from the *American Hymnal* , perhaps brought or sent by Federico Segesser from the United States or Switzerland and from which a set of beliefs foreign to any Catholic-Protestant sect can be extracted. These are some of the points of faith that Pastor Martín Ávalos spread (the verses that biblically base each hymn are indicated in parentheses):

- Belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ:
“Christ on his Throne , *God* and Savior/ is already coming in the clouds, his voice resounds.... (1 Chronicles 16:35-36)” (51) .
“Jesus Christ is the way of light / He teaches us love and truth / Sublime Shepherd of grace and virtue / *Blessed Jehovah / Blessed God of Love / The King of glory and eternal God ...* (John 14:6)” (52) .
“Jesus *blessed God / Eternal Father and Savior / And his love is infinite / In your children, oh! Lord / With your blood you bought us / We are yours God of love ...* (Mark 11:7,9,11)” (53) .
- Jesus is the divine Creator:
“ Remember the day/Said Christ the Savior.../For in six days I made/ *I Jesus the Creator /The sky, the earth and the sea...(Exodus 20:8-11)*” (54) .
- God is not a trinity, nor is the Holy Spirit a third divine person. The Holy Spirit also proceeds - good of Christ:

“ In the crystalline waters of love/ With Jesus blessed buried I am.../ All my sins Jesus forgave/ And his Holy Spirit from Him I receive... (John 3:3,5; Matthew 3, Romans 6:2-5) ” (55) .

In this regard, it is worth adding the testimony of Emisael Palma that Martín Ávalos never taught the Catholic-pagan dogma of the Trinity, when he referred to it saying:

“In Chile, one of the champions of the Gospel who taught to keep the solemnity of the Cabañas and e- he recited a hymnal; In this hymnal the word trinity does not appear, because that brother was monotheistic - “ta or unitary, believed in one God, in Christ, who is one with the Father (John 10:30, 17:11,21-22)” (56) .

➤ Jesus and his redemptive work:

“I trust in Jesus / And in his great love / Christ is the way / Light and salvation / *He died for me* / Life I received / And *with his grace that he gave me* / Glory he offered me (Psalm 125:1-2, Jeremiah 17:7)” (57) .

➤ Trust in the Bible as the Word of God and only Truth:

“Holy Bible I am here/ Rich pearl for me/ *You contain in truth / The Lord's will ...*(2 Timothy 3:15-17, 1 Peter 4:11, Psalm 119:105, Revelation 10)” (58) .

➤ Divine grace and obedience to God's law save:

“The Eternal Gospel / Ordained by God / *Is salvation by grace* / To the soul *that obeyed* / This Eternal Gospel / Or *the laws of God* / Or the holy messages / Is all salvation (Revelation 14:6-12, 18:1-4 , Matthew 24:14; Hebrews 8:10,16,28, Revelation 10)” (59) .

“The Holy Laws of the God of love/ Are the light of life to the sinner/ The very Throne of my Lord/ Is faithful justice, glory and honor.../ Beloved brother, worship God/ And follow Christ with all love/ *Keep your laws of great value / Do not despise them, they are salvation ...* (Matthew 7:21, Luke 6:46-49, Hebrews 8:10)” (60) .

➤ Celebrate the solemn festivals of God (Saturday , Passover, Trumpets, Atonement and Booths):

“In the Fourth Commandment / Of the law of our God / The eternal *Sabbath* is found / That Christ never changed / This day of rest / That was kept in Eden / It is a sign among his people / That in his Concert he ordered... (Exodus 20:1-17, Isaiah 58:13-14)” (61) .

“ *Saturday* day / Delights of the Creator / Center of the eternal Law / Justice and Sign of God / Sabbath seventh day / Blessing of the Holy God / *Symbol of the thousand years* / Of the reign of the Lord... (Exodus 20:1-17, Isaiah 58:13-14, Exodus 16:23, 31:13-17; Ezekiel 20:12,20)” (62) .

“With his voice today he invites us / To his Supper and to the Lord / He gives us the bread of life / And wine of salvation... (John 6:54-58, 13:1-17, 1 Corinthians 11:23- 29)” (63) .

“It is a solemn and holy day/Feast of Salvation/Let us always keep with faith/ *Trumpets* of the Lord ...(Leviticus 23: 23-25)” (64) .

“Oh! solemn day, day of *Atonement* / Christ the Priest cleansed his people / His precious blood gave them whiteness / And to the righteous and holy, his people called... (Leviticus 23:26-32, Daniel 7:9-10,13 -14)” (65) .

“Feast of *Tabernacles* / They are glory of the Lord / You announce the coming / Of the King of salvation / With glorious angels / The Savior will come / To lead his people / To the kingdom of love (Leviticus 23:33-44, Nehemiah 8:14- 17, Zechariah 14:16-19)” (66) .

➤ Baptism is by immersion for the forgiveness of sins:

“Now *buried in the waters* / I am going to do with my Lord / My sins confessed / Already through Christ I have found forgiveness... And to his Church I belong / And I am a son of the Lord ... (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16)” (**67**) .

- Israel has not been rejected by God. Christ loves his people Israel:
“My people Israel/ Be brave, and fear faithful/ Your God Jehovah/ Will love you forever/ I guided you / With love and holiness... (Revelation 7:2-4, 14:1-5; John 3: 16-17)” (**68**) .
- Eternal life is in heaven, not on earth:
“Blessed Jesus is coming now/ The King of salvation/ His faithful children to take/ To the kingdom of Love.../ He with his children is now ascending/ To the heavenly kingdom ... (John 14:1-3, 17:24)” (**69**) .

Martín Ávalos also spread the doctrine through various theological treatises. In some of them you can read:

“In what way are these commandments of God (first and second of the Decalogue) disobeyed and broken? You only have to look at each Church that calls itself Christian and you will see in its halls and cult precincts the worship of false gods and images made with the sinful hands of men, gods and images that have eyes but will not see; They have a mouth but they will not speak...Whose teachers, from the Pope at the head to the last of their faith, instill and teach the world to practice such disastrous idolatry. Also Protestantism as a branch of the same tree (the Roman Church or Romanism) worships the same Roman power, accepting, practicing and teaching doctrines and commandments invented and established by the same Roman Church, whose commandments and doctrines are prohibited by God in his faithful word of truth... Also the same Adventist Church at the head of it, the false prophethess worships the creature, the Pope of Rome, instead of worshipping the Creator. For the Adventist Church also accepts, practices and teaches doctrines and commandments belonging to Romanism, thus rejecting what God commands in his truth (e.g., the solemn feasts)” (**70**) .

“In addition to keeping the Decalogue, what else will the people of God remember to obey it as the Lord commands, as the great final destruction of this world approaches? 'Remember the law of Moses my servant, to whom I entrusted in Horeb ordinances and regulations over all Israel (Malachi 4:4...).

“Who is all Israel whom the Lord commands to keep not only the moral Law or the Decalogue, but also the festivals ordered in the law of Moses? 'For I do not want you, brothers, to be ignorant of this mystery, so that you may not be arrogant towards yourselves; and the hardening in part has taken place in Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles entered. And so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, ' The Deliverer will come from Zion and will turn away ungodliness from Jacob' (Romans 11:25-26)” (**71**) .

In the prophetic sphere, Pastor Ávalos correctly interpreted the prophecy of the 70 weeks, since in the same hymnal mentioned above he included an annex entitled “Explanations of the reformed dates according to the Word of God”, in which he expresses:

“The departure of the word to begin to build Jerusalem..... 457 (BC)
End of seven weeks or 49 years..... 408
End of 62 weeks or 483 years. Baptized Jesus begins his ministry..... 27
Middle of the week. Crucifixion of Christ..... 31
End of the 70 weeks or 490 years. The rejected Jews (temporarily),
the Gospel to the Gentiles..... 34” (**72**) .

As may have been noted in the previous doctrinal points, Pastor Martín Ávalos preached the compatibility between law and grace, the validity of the observance of the Sabbath, the Holy Supper (Passover) and the three autumn festivals of Israel (Trumpets, Atonement and Cabañas), but he did not understand that the feast of Unleavened (along with Easter) and Pentecost should be celebrated. José Cecilio Palma gives a testimony about it:

“In the year 1900 I learned about the Gospel...I became an adherent in the year 1903 (date of the Roman calendar). However in

The Congregation knew only three annual festivals (without considering Easter); there was the party of the Trumpet, the Feast of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. These three festivals are celebrated in the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar which is named etanim or tishri, since the Hebrew year begins with the month

of abib, or what is also called nisan. This is the sacred year, and the civil year begins with the month etanim or tishri” (73).

Ávalos believed that the festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread and Pentecost, in their Old Testament form, had been consummated with the death of Christ on the cross, with the subsequent resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, according to his treatise *Solemn and last message of grace sent by Christ to the angel of the Church of Laodicea* (74). Then he said:

“ Which shadow Sabbaths have not had their fulfillment, which correspond to the... of Christ, and Do they have to be observed while the time of grace lasts? The Trumpets (Leviticus 23:23-25), the Atonement - tion (Leviticus 23:26-32) and the Booths (Leviticus 23:33-44) (75).

Within this context, the contribution of José C. Palma arose, since he was the first to understand that the remaining biblical festivities should be celebrated. The process of perfecting this doctrinal principle began in 1903, as stated in its *Report* :

“When I entered the *Cabañista Church* ... I knew about the festival of Unleavened Bread that was held.

ce on the Moon or in the month of abib, which begins on the 14th in the afternoon. I was convinced that it is-

This holiday Paul said should be held among the Gentile Christians, since the apostle was writing to the church of

Corinth at that time, around the year 55 of which we are telling: 'Clean out the old leaven, so that you may be new dough, as you are without yeast; because our Passover, which is Christ, was a sacrifice gives for us. So let us celebrate, not in the old leaven, nor in the leaven of malice and evil-

'dad, but in spirits of sincerity and truth'. In that style the apostle spoke to the Corinthians in a letter -

Paul, because the Corinthians are Gentile Greeks and are in Europe so far from Palestine, which is the pa -

tria Hebrew,... in Asia. Thus, the apostle's words were what makes one believe that the feast of the Unleavened Bread had not come to an end, and that nothing but the Passover sacrifice and all sa -

sacrifice had reached the death of Christ; but on holidays, the apostle Paul says: 'Let us do the party'. Also Luke, who is the author of the book of the *Acts of the Apostles*, says in chapter 20:

6: “And we, after the days of Unleavened Bread.” This proves that the Gentile converts

They kept all the festivals; that Lucas and his companions spent the days of the festival in the company of the Gentiles converted and then continued their missionary journey, to join Paul in another. These

Two passages from the Bible, in the New Testament, convinced me. However, I did not dare to put them in practice, because I said to myself 'it may be my ignorance', since the high men in theology de-

They claimed that the festivals instituted by God in the sacrifice of Christ had been consummated. But I said or

I believed that nothing more than sacrifices...

“And in the year 1904 I alone kept (the festival of Unleavened Bread)... I had written to him (to Martín Ávalos) on the particular of the festival of Cenceñas (Ázimos) and Pentecost. These parties he

believe confirmed in the sacrifice of Christ...

“The year 1905 was the year that for the first time I kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread with Mrs. Amelia Matus de Garcés in Victoria, at Manuel Maturana's house, since he had also said that he -

I knew that this festival was in force and that nothing more than the sacrifice of the paschal lamb had been consummated in the death of Christ; and so we made our first communion at night when we ate the paschal lamb; the three of us participated...

“In 1906 we celebrated the Cenceñas festival in the house of José Gertrudis Pulgar. They were co -

There were 25 to 30 who accepted the festival of Cenceñas and Pentecost, but at this time there was a dis - no small cordia ” (76) .

As has been noted, the understanding of the remaining biblical festivities was spreading among the members of the Church of God. Likewise, José C. Palma - in his capacity as minister of the Congregation - was giving the theological bases of the Christian-Israelite doctrine that believes in the validity of the law of God given under the Old Covenant, but that the Church of Christ inherited without the Levitical sacrifices. That was for him “Judaizing”:

“Reading the Bible, we understood the doctrine of the first Christians in Judaism. Studying the letters of the apostle Paul, we read in his letter *to the Romans* , chapter 3:1-2: 'What then does the Jew have most? What is the benefit of circumcision? A lot in any way. The first thing, certainly, is that the word of God has been entrusted to them.' Again in his letter *to the Galatians* , chapter 2:12-14, rebuking the apostle Peter, he says the following: 'For before some came from Jacob they ate with the Gentiles; but after they came he withdrew and separated himself, because he was afraid of those of the circumcision. And the other Jews also participated in their simulation, in such a way that even Barnabas was also carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not walking rightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of everyone: 'If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like a Jew, why do you force the Gentiles to Judaize?' If the Pope of Rome were a Christian, he would teach Judaization , as the apostle Peter did, as stated in the question that Paul asks Peter. From this statement by the apostle Paul we understood that this was the doctrine of Jesus and the apostles. When Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, he said to her: 'You worship what you do not know, we worship what we know, because health comes from the Jews'...' (77) .

Despite the common points of faith of the Christian-Israelite congregations, by 1918 there was still no complete homogeneity doctrinal difference between them as a result precisely of the particular studies of the Scriptures. In this way, for that year the existence of two currents is confirmed, differentiated by the number of festivals they celebrated. Note the following story from Palma:

“ The Sabbatarians in Chile are divided: some keep nothing more than the Sabbath (the Adventists of the Seventh day); There are others (the Ávalos current) that keep three annual festivals in addition to keeping on the Sabbath according to the law, that is, leaving everything cooked for the Sabbath day and not lighting a fire on the Sabbath day. The three festivals that the latter keep are the festivals that are kept in the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar of the sacred year. These call themselves *Israelites* to keep the Israelite festivals, but the others call them *cabin-goers* . Sabbath-keepers also obey not to eat the meat of animals that the Bible declares to be unclean. They also tithe everything, even the daily wage: these are the Adventists, who are the first that I named and who keep nothing more than Saturday . Also those who call themselves Israelites: this congregation is led by Mr. Martín Ávalos, from San Felipe” (78) .

From the previous text the following is extracted: First, Martín Ávalos still had prominence in the Congregation around 1918; Second, José C. Palma names the Seventh- day Adventists and the *Israelite current* of Ávalos that observed the solemn autumn festivals (in Israel), but omits the majority current, which did keep all of the festivals of Leviticus 23 Both Adventists and *Israelites* kept the dietary law,

but only the former kept the tithe, that is, the Church of God, as an institution, did not practice the validity of the law of tithing in the first decades of the last century, although it was an issue that produced discrepancies due to lack of clarity. It follows that Segesser did not teach it, but since many members came from Adventism, they retained the belief that they should tithe. This is reflected in the testimony of José c. Palm:

“I, for my part, told (in 1904) Mr. Ávalos regarding the tithes that I knew according to the Holy Scriptures nothing more than what the earth produces and animals, as the law names them , but

He believes that the day laborer or every profit in business should be given a tenth for service of the Lord; Furthermore, I had written to him about the particular celebrations of Cenceñas and Pentecos - you” (79) .

That happened in 1904; However, in Quepe the Christian-Israelites preached against the tithing practiced by the Adventists. Its leader Carlos Krieghoff reported this in 1905 when he reported the following:

“The enemies of the truth work hard in these places, to disfigure and disfigure the truth. So A *cabañista* teaches that every Adventist who does not pay the tithe of good will will have his their property and the shepherds take the tithe from them by force. Our interested parties did not tell me none of this until I had taught them the need according to the Bible to also obey this commandment” (80) .

As can be seen, the so-called “ cabañistas ” of Quepe contradicted the observance of the tithe; and since in 1918 Palma stated that only Adventists practiced it , it is clear that the early Christian-Israelites did not include the law of tithing in their official teachings and practices. Despite this , many members gave it voluntarily, according to their understanding and generosity towards the Congregation.

The Judaic features - not *Judaizing* , according to the sense of the Old Covenant - of the Church of God established in Chile should not make us lose sight of its essentially Christian character, as has also been demonstrated in the principles of faith that the two disseminated. prime ministers of the institution. Those Christians complied with the baptismal formula expressed by Christ Jesus to integrate the new spiritual “citizens” into the people of God, as recorded in the *Memory* of Palma:

“To enter the Sabbath congregations (around 1903), whatever it may be, it is done through the baptism , baptism by immersion, immersing the baptized person in water and saying these words before of immersing him in the water: 'I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen'

(81) .

Under Christian-Israelite doctrinal principles, baptism converted believers into true children of Abraham through faith in Jesus Christ; Likewise, through this faith they were summoned to keep the commandments of God. The following epistolary words from Pastor José Pulgar to a member of the Pucón community, in 1917, reflect very well that these Israelites were above all Christians, disciples of the Messiah Jesus:

“José G. Pulgar writes to my beloved brother Bruno Sachs from Pucón.

“My very beloved brother in the faith of Christ, whose name be praised by all his faithful who They love obeying His divine precepts in everything , now and eternally, amen...

“Your brother in Christ...” (82) .

Adventist proselytism against the “ cabañistas ”

As has been recognized in previous lines, a large part of the first converts to the Christian and Israelite faith came from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At the time when Adventists called the *spiritual*

Israelites “ Cabañistas ” , both religious currents “ "the members disputed" and had a strong controversy as a result of their differences, particularly regarding the prophetic *revelations* of Ellen G. White, the celebration of biblical festivals, certain prophecies and the current position of the Jewish people in God's plan.

The Seventh-day Adventists came to consider their former members as dissidents or separatists who were going to swell the ranks of the “ cabañistas ” Sabbatists. In Emma Howell's work, *The Great Adventist Movement* , you can read:

" The Shepherd Ketring , temporarily at the head of the mission (Adventist, between 1903 and 1904), had to confront the separatist movement of the Cabañistas , and unmask the true spirit that I encouraged them . Only a few people left the truth, leaving the six hundred believers at that time. “So more united than ever after that crisis” (83) .

There is no concrete precedent within the available historical sources of the Church of God that corroborates that fact described, but the truth is that Adventist sources leave no doubt that the theological confrontation with the Christian-Israelites was considerable. Below are some news items recorded in the *Adventist Magazine* from the beginning of the last century, in which the controversial relationship between both institutions is mentioned with strong adjectives towards the “ cabañistas ”:

“In Quepe I organized another Sabbath school. These began to keep the Sabbath through the work of the *cabanistas* . But they cannot accept the ceremonial law, but they began to keep the moral law and es-spiritual (the Ten Commandments of God)” (84) .

“On June 5 (1905) I went by train to Quepe, where there are several people interested in the truth. also found some of their relatives who live in the countryside, who were very interested in learn in more detail the biblical teachings regarding tithing, as it is practiced among the Seventh-day Adventists. The enemies of the truth work hard in those places, to defy - gure ... the truth. This is how a *cabanista* teaches that every Adventist who does not pay the tithe willingly - stupidity , their property is seized and the shepherds take their tithe by force... And I explained to them - what our practices. They saw clearly what spirit reigns in *those* who employ deception and lies to make proselytes” (85) .

“On September 6 (1909) I left Santiago, going south... On the 30th I returned to Pitrufquén to celebrate on Saturday ... here I just convinced a family who believed they were in the truth by following the angel of light, *the Cabins celebrated* , because they call the Adventist Church a blind angel, but I believe that This angel of light is the one the apostle Paul tells us about in 2nd Corinthians 11:12-15.

“At this time *they celebrated the Cabañas* , and I with some of the brothers visited them to see the light what they say they have (the *cabin owners*), but I found the fulfillment of the word of Christ (John 12:35, last part), because they did not even want to open the Bible, because during eight days they were In their tents eating the delicious turkeys and fat chickens, they do not teach. Can it be called light? I believe that no light, but darkness. 'By their fruits you will know them' (Matthew 7:16)” (86) .

The Adventist-Israelite dispute even crossed the borders of Chile. There are two sources that mention this fact: For example, Howell reports that:

“Around the year 1900, two young *cabin owners* from Chile, Luis A. Rojas and Federico Bizama , attended - They went to some Adventist meetings held by... Roberto H. Habenicht ... And although those two young people - nes had come from Chile to spread their *cabanista ideas* , were convinced to the truth. Good you can call Mr. Federico Bizama (today a retired canvasser) and later an ordained pastor Luis A. Rojas, the principle and promoters of the Adventist work in Paraguay” (87) .

Víctor Thomann , an Adventist leader based in Chile, made a trip to Buenos Aires in 1910. When reporting his trip to the *Adventist Magazine* , he confirmed that Federico Bizama was carrying out his canvassing in the Argentine capital, writing:

“An ex- *cabañista* , the brother Bizama , who joyfully embraced the truth and left ritualism, today with good zeal helps us and brings many people into contact with the workers...” (88) .

Two situations draw attention to these last antecedents: first, both names -Francisco Bizama and Luis A. Rojas- do not appear in the sources of the early history of the Church of God in Chile; and second, it is curious and strange that in such a short time of existence (four years) the *Israelite Church* had sent missionaries to a distant country at that time, especially when in Chile the work had not yet been consolidated.

In reality, the observance of the feasts of Leviticus 23, particularly that of the Booths, was one of the most controversial and discrepant issues between Adventists and Christian-Israelites. Precisely at that time, the *Adventist Magazine* of October 1904 published the article “The Festival of the Jews called Booths,” in which it maintained the following:

“For whom was the Feast of the Cabins ordained?

'You will live in booths for seven days; *all natives in Israel* will live in booths' (Leviticus 23: 42)...

Was the Festival of Cabins celebrated before or after the harvest?

'When you have harvested your threshing floor and your winepress' (Deuteronomy 16:13)

When will the harvest of the threshing floor and the winepress be done in the antitype?

'When the wicked are destroyed. See Revelation 14:14-20 and 19:15, etc.

When will therefore be the time to celebrate the Feast of Booths in the antitype?

'When those who fight against the Jerusalem from which living waters come (Zechariah 14:8, Revelation 22:1) are destroyed

Where will the saints be then?

'He will exalt you to *inherit the earth* : when sinners will be cut off, you will see'. 'The righteous will inherit earth, and they will live on it forever' (Psalm 37: 34 and 29)

So it is not now that the Feast of Tabernacles is to be celebrated, but 'when you have entered into the land that I give you and you will reap its harvest' it will be time to come 'from year to year' to celebrate the festival of

Booths (Read Leviticus 23 and Zechariah 14)” (89) .

The ministry of José Pulgar

José Gertrudis Pulgar was one of the prime ministers notable for the work he carried out for three decades. According to the testimonies of his daughters Elsa and Ester, he had been in the group that Segesser converted into Gorbea . If he had been born in 1887, when said missionary was there in 1896 or 1897, Pulgar was about 9 or 10 years old, from which it is clearly inferred that he was only a child at that time and probably would not have been baptized or assumed as member in full communion of the congregation in formation, as were his parents Juan de Dios Pulgar and Delfina Barriga and, possibly, his older brother, David (90) . Subsequently, the story of his descendants - in accordance with the rest of the historical evidence - expresses that after David Pulgar's departure from the ministry, José Cecilio Palma assumed the exclusive pastorate of the Gorbea congregation, and José Pulgar remained an active member. of the community, since it is mentioned on several occasions in the Palma *Memory* (91) . One of them is related to his baptism, carried out at the Cabañas festival of 1913 (92) . And when José C. Palma distanced himself from the Gorbea community in 1916, José Pulgar - who was already 29 years

old - was appointed pastor by the members led by the elderly Amelia Matus. The particular event is related in the following way by Ester Pulgar (b. 1916):

“It was already close the festival of Passover and there was no one to minister the Holy Supper. Then, the sister An elder of the church (Amelia Matus) gathered the entire congregation that was formed in her ma - I was only for women, and the only man was brother José Pulgar, who at that time was very jo - come. The old woman proposed fasting and asking God to anoint Brother José Pulgar as a pastor. AND She was the one who laid hands, since there was no other anointed brother at that time in the church, except her. The brothers unanimously accepted, and that is how the pastor was anointed. brother José Pulgar” (93) .

In reality, in that group of believers there was another man, Prudencio Garcés, husband of the elderly Matus, but he was elderly and was not in a position to assume the pastorate of Gorbea. This anointing of a minister through a woman has been questioned because the Scriptures say: “Let your wives be silent in the congregations; for it is not permitted for them to speak, but to be subject” (1 Corinthians 14:34); and also: “Because I do not allow a woman to teach, *nor to take authority on man*” (1 Timothy 2:12) (94) . However, circumstances could give rise to exceptional events such as the one described. The evangelist Heber Palma refers to this, pointing out:

“I didn't know that fact, it doesn't appear in the Bible. Whether it was right or wrong, God knows. According to circumstances and situations cannot be judged, like other facts that do appear in the Bible to fulfill God's purpose. If this was the case, it should be commented on as a historical fact, although the brother - No Pulgar fought for the healthy ordering of the nascent Church” (95) .



José Pulgar Barriga (1887-1948) was one of the most prominent leaders of the Israelite Church of God in the first half of the last century. His Adventist family was converted by Federico Segesser himself , according to the testimony of his daughters. He was baptized in 1913 by the Christian-Israelite doctrine and in 1916 he

was consecrated minister of Gorbea under very particular circumstances. He soon moved with his family to the town of Lastarria, where he formed an important congregation. In his ministry he fulfilled both the functions of pastor and evangelist. He died in 1948 after a long illness.

In fact, José Pulgar became a fundamental leader in the subsequent development of the Church of God in Chile, both as pastor of his congregation and as evangelist, since he visited various congregations, performed baptisms in other groups of faithful. and consecrated new ministers.

Married to Clorinda Aldea in 1904, José Pulgar first directed the Gorbea church; Later he moved to the town of Lastarria, south of Temuco, where he lived until his last days, in 1948. He had ten children: Lidia, the eldest, born in 1906; Elsa, Damaris, Esther, Naomi, Rachel, Elijah, Sidrac , David and Nehemiah. Of them, the eldest daughters were his most fervent disciples and propagators of their father's teachings. During the thirty years of his ministry, Pulgar formed congregations in Cunco and Toltén, apart from Lastarria, and frequently visited various churches. Ester Pulgar's testimony corroborates that:

“He took up his ministry with great enthusiasm, bringing many souls to the Congregation, among them Brother Miguel Jara and sister María Cares, his wife, arrived; and both (from the church of Curacautín) formed a congregation in Cunco, where they resided.

“As the congregation grew in number, Brother José Pulgar anointed Brother Miguel as pastor.

Jara... Later he baptized his in-laws, Abelino Aldea and Clarisa Garrido, his brother José Zambrano, and in Quitratúe to Sister Nieves Pessuarch , mother of Brother Emisael Palma ...

“After a few years, brother José Pulgar went to live in Lastarria, where he formed a large congregation. Sister Amelia Matus, brother

José Zambrano, sister Filomena Matus and sister Anita Garcés...

“The Church grew and brothers were baptized in Toltén, Temuco and Talcahuano” (96) .

According to the testimonies collected, José Pulgar was an outstanding Christian-Israelite, a “good religious,” “a very dedicated and very wise man, very knowledgeable, according to the ministers and brothers who knew him” (97) . Despite some distorted testimonies regarding the fact that his Lastarria group and the churches formed by it disagreed with the rest of the Israelite congregations, and maintained a state of strong autonomy, the historical and testimonial evidence rather demonstrates that Pulgar shared harmonious relations with the other groups of the Church of God. Except for specific cases, due to certain doctrinal differences and spiritual criteria, Pastor Pulgar carried out a fraternal ministry. In this regard, Heber Palma adds:

“I don't remember that brother José Pulgar has had any conflict in the churches, but always -

I heard that he was a good minister. My father (Emisael) always had a very good relationship , no not only with him, but with his entire family, since he always visited them (in Lastarria) and wrote to his sister - Dámaris Thumb...

“Surely because of his job (in a pharmacy, or pharmacy as it was called at that time) he does not travel.

He did not write much like other ministers, but like him there are many ministers who worked duly in the formation of churches in Chile, at the beginning of the last century” (98) .

Emisael Palma dedicated similar words to José Pulgar when he wrote to JA Loje , a Peruvian pastor:

“We can also say that in Chile there were pioneers of the Gospel who left their spiritual footprints - them... (in) this country, among whom we remember the brothers José Pulgar, Miguel Jara... and others who They already sleep in the Lord” (99) .

Finally, it must be emphasized that when within the Chilean Church of God a strong appreciation and admiration for the people of Israel arose, promoting Zionism among its members, José Pulgar - although to a lesser extent - was also an active and fervent Zionist. . Proof of this, for example, is presented in the weekly *Mundo Judío* , which in November 1941 published the death of Valentín Martínez, a member of the Church and promoter of Christian Zionism, indicating: “Together with the other leaders and prominent collaborators of the cause (Zionist), like Mr. José G. Pulgar and Mr. Federico Martínez” (100).

The beginnings of the evangelistic ministry of Federico Martínez

Federico Martínez Navarrete, although it is true that he was not one of the first ministers consecrated in the Chilean Church of God, was baptized early in it and must be considered the greatest reference of Israelite Christianity in this country from the end of the 1990s. 1910.

Several sources agree that he was born in the mid-19th century. According to an internal publication of the Israelite Church, he was born around the year 1860, approximately (101) . Initially he was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and he learned about the *Israelite Gospel* in Victoria through a cousin of his, who was married to Martín Ávalos. He had precisely organized a congregation in said city (102) and he himself baptized it in 1901, as recorded in the testimony of the old document entitled *Ministers . Appointment File. Curacautín and Chile* , which records the following: “Federico Martínez Navarrete. Baptized in 1901 by Martín Ávalos B. ” (103) . Married to Juana Yáñez, he had four children: Hermógenes, Federico Segundo, Saúl and Elba. The second son and the third later became ministers of the Church.

In his beginnings as a Christian-Israelite, Martínez was only a member of the Cura-cautín community, without any ministerial position, as can be seen from the only mention that José C. Palma makes of him in his *Memoir* :

“On May 30 (1919) Miguel Jara, *Federico Martínez* and Ben-Jamin Arevalo. Mr. Arévalo came in the company of Messrs. Jara and Martínez, who came to con-differentiate with me...” (104) .



Federico Martínez Navarrete (1860-1970) is the most prominent minister and leader that the Israelite Church of God has had in Chile. Baptized by Pastor Martín Ávalos in 1901, he early dedicated himself to evangelizing. In 1942 he was officially recognized as General Pastor and evangelist. Most of the Christian-Israelite congregations in Chile and Argentina were formed directly or indirectly by their proselytizing missionary work.

However, Martínez gradually assumed responsibilities in the Zionist movement that was developing within the Church of God in those years. He became the second president of the Zionist center organized among some members of Curacautín (105) . Said *Jewish World* organ of November 1941, also mentions him as an important Zionist leader when publicizing the death of Valentín Martínez (106) .

Despite having embraced with great enthusiasm and responsibility the principles of the Israelite Church of God, Federico Martínez has a chapter in his personal religious history that has sown some doubts among the members of the Church. This is the period in which he - without abandoning the Christian-Israelite principles of faith - temporarily distanced himself from the Congregation and went to preach Christian Zionism among the Adventists, that is, the hope of the prompt restoration of the State of Israel in the land of their biblical ancestors. Although it is impossible to determine exactly when that missionary work among Seventh-day Adventists occurred and how long it lasted, since the testimonies

do not indicate the chronological data and contradict each other regarding the duration of this separation (107) , there is a precedent published in a Adventist source that allows at least to indicate the approximate period in which Martínez's temporary distancing occurred. In an edition of the *Adventist Magazine* , from 1911, it reads:

“The work in Chile is progressing more and more... (And after naming several facts of conversions to the advent - tism in different places in Chile, he says)... Brother *Federico Martínez* baptized three souls in Hui - chahue , lately” (108) .

What is clear is that that period was not long-lasting, as confirmed by the testimony of Elsa Pulgar (b. 1912), when she declared:

“Brother Martínez was also one of the first (of the Church)... he understood the recollection of the people of Israel. He returned (later) to the Adventists; He wanted to preach this to them, but the Adventists did not they accepted; They did not accept that there was a gathering of Israel. So, there he returned to the Church and continued forward” (109) .

In fact, Federico Martínez abandoned his mission among the Adventists because the Christian Zionist message did not bear fruit, since they do not accept that the people of Israel continue to have the blessing that God gave to the patriarch Abraham, according to Genesis 12:1-3. Martínez himself expressed this to Emisael Palma in a letter, telling him that “Adventists believe that Israel is rejected as a nation” (110) .

Whatever it was, the truth is that Federico Martínez returned to the heart of the Church of God with new vigor, striving to spread the Gospel of Christ and promote the restoration of the Jewish people in the ancient Land of Israel, or Palestine, as it is called. the secular world. In this regard, there are two testimonies that demonstrate that between the end of the '10s and the beginning of the '30s of the last century, Martínez freely practiced as an evangelist, since there is no evidence until 1942 that he was officially consecrated as such. . The first statement refers to the evangelistic visits he made in the vicinity of Temuco and the second to Santa María de Llaima, in the interior of Cunco:

“I was two years old (in 1918) when he (Federico Martínez) met me, *when he was visiting the my father's house* . And when I was older and he saw me, he said: ' La Evita is still in Chile. ' I had two years when she said that she was going to go to holy Palestine; and still here in Chile! ” (111) .

“There *I went to my father* , brother Federico Martínez, but in the countryside, where we lived” (112) .

“Federico Martínez... arrived at the field on horseback. He sent word that on that date he was going to go to the house of the Zúñiga brothers; So, they were waiting for him there and they were going to find him at the bus stop - llo , the only locomotion that existed at that time. I am talking to you about the years 1925 to 1930” (113) .

According to an official document from the Curacautín church, dated October 28, 1939, Federico Martínez already had the status of elder in said community. Over time he would become a tireless evangelist and “former of groups (congregations) both in Chile and Argentina” (114) .

Some other early ministers and members of the Church

As complementary information, biographical data of some ministers is included below. and simple members who made up the Israelite Church of God in the first decades of existence in Chile, and are one

of the few names of whom there has been a certain record of their permanence in the institution, either through a document or through testimony. direct oral from those who knew them. Some of them stood out as leaders, preachers or prominent members.

Miguel Jara, like most of the early Christian-Israelites, came from Seventh-day Adventism, and his conversion was the work of Pastor José Pulgar. He was originally from the Curacautín church, where he was apparently one of the first pastors to lead it, but he later moved to the town of Cunco, where he organized a congregation in the second decade of the last century at the request of Pastor Pulgar. Two sources reaffirm these facts, the first of which is the book *One Hundred Years Between Volcanoes and Araucarias* which says:

“The congregation of Curacautín, since the beginning of the century (20th century) was led by the pastor Miguel Jara who, due to a change of residence, gave his address to brother Federico Martínez Na - “varrete” (115) .

José C. Palma also confirms around the year 1918 that: “Mr. Jara is the one who directs the Curacautín congregation” (116) . To this, Ester Pulgar adds that it was her father, José, who had converted her to the Christian-Israelite doctrine along with his wife María Cares, as has been seen, “and both formed a congregation in Cunco, the place where they resided” after abandon Curacautín; and it was José Pulgar who also consecrated him pastor of that community of faithful (117) . Consequently, Miguel Jara was the first minister of Cunco, and since then he established a close fraternal relationship with José Pulgar (118) . He stood out for converting new souls to the apostolic Gospel - “ I sometimes went to my father's house to preach,” says Elizabeth Soto (b. 1920) - and for having actively participated in the Zionist movement that was emerging in the Church of God. becoming its leader. Even together with Manuel Maturana, from Curacautín, they were the first representatives of the community before Jewish entities in 1919, and they were always in close contact with the Chilean Hebrew community. But, above all, Miguel Jara has been recognized by those who knew him and have heard him mentioned as “a very good religious” (119) , “a good brother, keeper of the things of God; and met all the requirements of the Church” (120) ; “very knowledgeable in the Bible” (121) , and “a very active brother” (122) . In his last days, Miguel Jara emigrated to the town of Cumpeo with his wife María, where he served as pastor until his death in 1956.

Agustín Bastías (1879-1959), meanwhile, was one of the fundamental pillars in the origin of the Pucón congregation. According to a current source, he would have been a descendant of Jews, which explains the close contact he had with the Jewish community, particularly those residing in Buenos Aires (123) . María Muñoz says of him that “he kept everything well, and even he understood that the first fruits had to be kept” (124) , which is understandable due to his attachment to certain Mosaic practices even though he was a Christian.

Lorenzo Fuentes, “baptized in approximately 1910, was a minister of the Church in Curacautín” (125) ; Like him, Jorge Villalobos was consecrated pastor “around 1914; celebrated Cabañas in Pehuenco ” (126) .

Benjamín Arévalo (1860-1946) formed the church of Pucón at the beginning of the 20th century together with Agustín Bastías (127) . According to another source, he was anointed pastor around 1914 (128) .

Nieves Pessuarch Cares, born in 1849. It is believed that her origin is Spanish Jewish (Sephardic) (129) . There are no records regarding the year of her entry into the Church, but it is known that she lived in Quitratúe when she received the knowledge of the Christian-Israelite faith and was baptized by José Pulgar. There she lived with her husband, José María Palma, who never converted or was baptized for

the same faith; and he had four children: two girls, Elisa and Carmen, and two boys, Gertrudis and Emisael . The latter became a prominent evangelist of the community. In 1918, together with her family, Nieves Pessuarch emigrated to the city of Curacautín, where she became consecrated elder of the congregation; “she was a midwife and cared for the sick and prayed for them” (130) . He died in 1954 at the age of 105.

Amelia Matus, who is said to have become a Christian-Israelite directly from Catholicism in Victoria at the dawn of the 20th century, so was not part of the Adventist core that formed the basis of the Church of God. Elsa Pulgar recounts the conversion of the elderly Matus:

“That sister was very Catholic, she was one of the *blessed* , as they say. But the priest had given him a na Bible; and she, reading it, said: 'Why does it say here that the Sabbath must be kept, that there are holidays what to keep?' Then he asked the priest, saying: 'Father, what was the day that God commanded - give?'. 'On Sunday, then, daughter,' he replied. 'And how does it say here the Sabbath , which God commanded to be kept Saturday ' . 'Well, yes,' he said, 'God commanded the Sabbath to be kept , but the (Catholic) Church changed it to on Sunday ' . 'How are you going to command more than God! I never go to church again, and I 'm going to - I will continue reading this Bible and I will do what it says here. But she was worried: ' These holidays, where - 'Will there be people who obey this?'... And suddenly it is found that there were brothers who kept-ban , and so she continued... Alone (at first), her husband was very contrary; but in the end he worked so hard her, until she won her husband. They were already a marriage in religion. Prudencio Garcés was her husband - so” (131) .

Amelia Matus was a contemporary of Nieves Pessuarch , and for her selfless work within the Church she was also consecrated as an elder. She was one of the first to observe the Easter festival with the Unleavened Sisters in 1905 along with José C. Palma (132) . Later, Amelia Matus moved with her husband to the town of Gorbea, where she became the protagonist of the episode that established José Pulgar as a minister. He died in 1940.

Manuel Maturana, coming from Adventism, was initially a member of the Victoria congregation, in which, together with José C. Palma and Amelia Matus, he was among the first to understand and celebrate the days of Unleavened Bread immediately after the Passover of Abib . Then he went to live in Curacautín and came to join the local Israelite community. He became a consecrated minister, but was suspended from office (133) ; At the same time, he was an active collaborator of the church and a prominent disseminator of Zionism in the Christian-Israeli community along with Miguel Jara and Federico Martínez. However, his religious life was soon altered, and he died tragically in 1935 (134) .

Juan Francisco Palma (1885-1978) was an Adventist convert to Israelite Christianity and member of the Gorbea church with his wife Blanca Aurora Garcés. He was baptized by José Pulgar and became secretary of the first board of directors of the congregation in 1913 (135) .

Juan Barrientos had been converted by Conrado Saller in Entre Ríos (Argentina) (136) , but he was in permanent communication with the Chilean Church of God. Thus, for example, in January 1918 he wrote a letter to José C. Palma (Gorbea) from San Martín de los Andes (137) . Apparently, he soon returned to Chile, since Palma mentions him as residing in Chile the following year: “On the 20th of the same month of April (1919) I received two messengers from Mr. Pulgar. The messengers were Juan M. Barrientos...” (138) . Perhaps Emisael Palma was referring to him when he wrote: "In 1917 I saw the last trip that a brother made from Argentina to Chile to the solemnity of Ázimos... Later, those brothers - because of the Gospel - came to Chile" (139) . Indeed, Juan Barrientos and his family, including his wife Delfina Matus, returned to Chile. Ester Pulgar reviews: “Brother Juan Barrientos arrived from

Argentina (Entre Ríos) at that time; “He felt very comfortable in Chile and moved to Lastarria with his entire family” (*140*) .

José Mercedes Zambrano, born in 1872 (*141*) , lived between the towns of Quitratúe and Lastarria. Although he was initially seen participating in the Pucón congregation, in 1907 (*142*) , he later joined the Lastarria church, where he was baptized by José Pulgar. He became a minister of the Church of God, and died of advanced age in the early 1970s.

José del Carmen Muñoz, a man who was familiarly called “Carmelito” Muñoz, appears mentioned in 1907 in the *Memoria* de Palma as a member of the Pucón community (*143*) . Although he was one of the first members of that Church, his name is associated with a dissident movement generated in the early 1930s.

Juan de Dios Torres, minister of the Cunco congregation, together with Miguel Jara, stands out in the history of the Church of God for being the first Christian-Israelite to manage actions aimed at establishing concrete and permanent links between the Congregation and the Jewish community , in 1916 (*144*) .

The Arriagada Gratofil family is particularly mentioned by the testimony of Ester Pulgar. It was made up of Carmen Gratofil and her daughters Adelaida and Adelina Arriagada; her husband never converted. Although they had a comfortable socio-economic position, they were fervent religious and permanent collaborators towards the Zionist cause. They resided in the port city of Talcahuano, but were linked to the congregation of José Pulgar, who baptized them, and they celebrated the solemn festivals in Lastarria (*145*) .

The controversy over baptisms and *rebaptisms* in 1913

During the first fifty years of the Israelite Church of God there was an issue that generated great controversy and whose consequences continue to the present as a result of misinterpretations and/or ignorance of certain facts and the confusion of the protagonists of the first time. That issue is that of baptisms, which involves the baptism of Martín Ávalos, the “ rebaptism ” of Israelites from Seventh-day Adventism, and the baptism of Federico Martínez Navarrete. Reference is made to each of them separately below :

There has been a question regarding the baptism of Martín Ávalos based on the erroneous belief that he remained an Adventist when he performed the baptisms during his ministry. Here are some approaches that represent that position:

“As my brother informed me Zúñiga, Pastor Martín Ávalos was never baptized by the Church (of Israelite God), always *remained with that* (Adventist) belief” (*146*)

“What is known about that man (Martín Ávalos) is that he was one of the beneficiaries of the campaign of these missionaries who came with the doctrine to Chile; but this man received the Israelite doctrine and *he was not baptized by the (true) line* ; He *stayed with the (Adventist) line* that he brought” (*147*)

In accordance with the available historical background, the above thesis expresses a truth and a farce. The truth is that there is actually no indication that Pastor Ávalos - an Adventist convert - has been baptized again by the evangelist Federico Segesser . The explanation is given by the following analysis of the facts:

“Federico Segesser , apparently, did not rebaptize those who came from Seventh-day Adventism , because- who - although he censured this Church - maintained very good relations with said sect, as stated in the book *With His Spirit* , by Leopoldo Zambra. This was undoubtedly due to the doctrinal proximity with

Adventists for the observance of the Ten Commandments. Therefore, we conclude *that he considered the baptisms* of those who came from Adventism were valid. The best proof of this is that many members of the nascent Christian-Israelite community in Chile remained with their previous baptism - Adventist mo ; In another way, how do you explain the testimony of Brother José Cecilio Palma in his *Me- " Did I die ?" (148)*

Reference will be made to that testimony later. But the clarity of the issue is that there is certainty that Ávalos was not renamed by Segesser . Regarding this, Federico Segundo Martínez declared that “there is no evidence in Chile that a minister with such credentials has arrived from abroad and has baptized the first one.” that is, in this case to Martín Ávalos (*149*) . Without a doubt, Segesser applied the biblical principle with believers who came from Adventism, as did several Chilean pastors at the beginning:

“About baptism (in early times) there was no agreement, since some ministers accepted brothers with the baptism of other Churches, according to what Paul said: 'One faith, one Lord, one bau - tism ’” (*150*) .

Therefore, Martín Ávalos effectively remained with Adventist baptism, but in 1897 he ceased to be a member of the Adventist Church and converted to the Christian-Israelite faith taught to him by Segesser . The promoter of Adventism in Chile, Federico Bishop , confirms this:

“Mr. Martín Ávalos was a Presbyterian when I arrived in Chile, and the day after I entered his house began to believe in the Sabbath (1896), and *after a year* began to keep the Cabins” (*151*) .

Ávalos himself recognized in 1913 the date on which he stopped being an Adventist when he began to keep the biblical festivals according to the teaching he received:

“You ask me to tell you from what year the three festivals of Leviticus 23:23-44 have been kept. They make 16 years (since 1897)... that *we keep them* , being the first in Chile to receive this message... to *obe - say it and make it known* ” (*152*) .

In previous pages, the Christian-Israelite doctrinal principles that Martín Ávalos preached were explained. He was the only minister who baptized at the beginning (*153*) and his disciples called themselves “Israelites.” Correctly, Heber Palma concludes that “what is known is that when (the first members of the Church) were known in southern Chile... they already understood the festivals and other points of Israelite doctrine, and they did not remain Adventists” (*154*) . This is also the case of Martín Ávalos. He was in the Adventist Church for less than a year and practiced Israelite principles.

On the other hand, in the Cabañas festival of 1913, members of the congregations of Gorbea, Curacautín and Temuco celebrated together in the surroundings of the city of Curacautín, on the banks of the Blanco River. Within this context, the rebaptism of some Church leaders took place, including José Cecilio Palma, who recounted the event in his *Memoir* :

“In 1913, at the Cabañas festival, I consulted with the directory that had already been formed to po - ner in order all the things that belong, that the Reformed Christian must practice , and that everything is - would put this order of articles in writing so that the article that does not conform could be modified .

I. Everyone found it good, those who took part, José Pulgar, Julián Segundo del Castillo, Eusebio Jara, Miguel Jara, Manuel Maturana, Juan Francisco Palma, José Cecilio Palma.

“We began the work that we had agreed upon. Before twelve we left the cabins, further to the west. bank of the river, about a block from the cabins. We approved several articles... In short, we came to discuss the baptism . I said that I knew that as a Reformed Christian I had to be baptized in the Church that

He believed it to be the true Christian reform, and that the Christian is born into the Church through baptism. Pa -

blo says 'one faith and one baptism', and *we* will have been baptized by *other ministers of other Churches - sias* , who curse the holidays...Mr. Maturana said: 'I was baptized in the Adventist Church and saw - Truly I find that it is just that we are all born through baptism by the Church that believes - we know that it is the true one. The others found it good, but that they would study more and that we that we had every conviction we would do it; and some said they had to consult with the woman .

I and Mr. Maturana decided to be baptized the next day. We also agreed not to tell them nothing to the congregation until we, myself and Manuel Maturana, were baptized, because what On other days we approved, in the afternoons we read them before the congregation.

“When the penultimate day of the Cabañas festival arrived, we left along the river bank; we walked through it South side. At about 500 or 600 meters we reached a suitable part, the water was romantic and we sat down. at the foot of a large stone... We began to deliberate who was to baptize; in short, acor - we give luck. Agreed that if luck came out for one of the two who had not been baptized - tsar at that time, would baptize one of the two of us who were going to be baptized (me and Manuel Maturana). TO-

yes agreed, we also took a small stone where we were sitting on the bank of the river and wrote -

We each named the name on the little stone we chose. We did this so that the Lord would show which He would be the one who had to baptize first. So, we fell down and prayed to the Lord that he would choose which It would be the one who chose and the luck came out for M. Maturana, who baptized me and immediately I baptized him

...We got out of the water to change clothes; In those moments we saw that our colleague José Pulgar and Julián Segundo del Castillo began to take off their outer clothing and told us that they too They wanted to be baptized to be for the Christian Reform Church, and *in reality they did* , and M. baptized them. Maturana, leaving JF Palma, M. Jara, E. Jara unbaptized, but before the Feast of Bread (without Yeast) were baptized, except for the elderly Eusebio Jara. We left the baptistery for the cabins with joy. But when it became known that day, no small revolution was formed . Some said it was to bring to Christ below, others that it was to crucify Christ again..." (155) .

That is, those who at that time were not satisfied with the previous baptism that they still maintained, fundamentally Adventist, proceeded to be baptized new and mutually. And from Palma's text the following considerations can be extracted: First, all the protagonists continued with sectarian baptism, therefore none of them had been baptized by the Christian-Israelite faith more than ten years after Segesser preached , and none of them They had met him, except for José Pulgar, who was 10 years old when the Swiss missionary passed by. Second, of those who were baptized among themselves, only José C. Palma had the status of minister and with the power to baptize (consecrated by Ávalos in 1903). And third, those who were rebaptized on that occasion (1913) were: José Cecilio Palma, Manuel Maturana, José Pulgar and Julián Segundo del Castillo; and in 1914, Juan Francisco Palma and Miguel Jara. The elderly Eusebio Jara was left without being rebaptized. Finally, they decreed some articles for the congregational organization; The 4th point said: “Every person who wants to enter the Church will be baptized” (156) .

Likewise, in the *Memoir* of José C. Palma there is another story that describes the controversy over baptisms and rebaptisms , demonstrating that five years after the first story, it still continued to be a relevant issue:

“The Cabañas festival in 1918... Mr. Miguel Jara, who directs the congregation of Curacautín..., and on the last big day of the festival they said goodbye with a no small dispute between Miguel Jara with José Gertrudis Pulgar brought several arrangements, since Mr. Jara maintains that *they can be incorporated to society (Church) without baptism in the Congregation, having been baptized*

in other sects (by immersion), and Mr. Pulgar maintained that to be incorporated *one had to be born at the Congregation through baptism*. The congregation was divided into two opinions..." (157) .

Such a debate would not have arisen if those who participated in the 1913 rebaptisms had been baptized at the time of entering the Congregation. At first they believed in the biblical principle of "one faith, one Lord, one baptism" and they did not see it necessary to replace their sectarian baptisms with that of the Church they adopted. But later they understood that entering the true Church also implied practicing authentic baptism. That is why one of the factors of divergence that José Pulgar subsequently had with Federico Martínez was the questioning of the latter's baptism, believing and wanting to make people believe that the baptism performed by Ávalos was not valid due to the assumptions stated above. A daughter of Pulgar remembers that controversy:

"What he never agreed with (with Federico Martínez), because my father told him that he had to baptize - zated by the Church, because his baptism (supposedly Adventist) was not valid. He (Martínez) He felt satisfied and was never baptized (by the Israelite Church of God)" (158) .

Remember that Martín Ávalos baptized Federico Martínez in 1901, and the questioning of his baptism directly affected Martínez's baptism, according to the criteria of his detractors. However, objective facts demonstrate that in that year 1901 Ávalos already had organized at least two congregations that called themselves "Israelites," and he himself had beliefs and preached biblical teachings when he baptized Martínez. His son, Pastor Federico Segundo Martínez, wrote a testimony about it:

"Some say that the baptism of Brother Federico Martínez Navarrete is bad because he was baptized by Martín Ávalos, who had been an Adventist. This is false because Avalos was already an Israelite, because There is no record in Chile that a minister with such credentials has arrived from abroad. He would have baptized the first and anointed the first minister and organized the first church - sia ; There is no record, therefore all baptisms are good.

"The baptism of Brother Federico Martínez is good for the following reasons:

- a) For being baptized by Martín Ávalos about (four) years after he had converted to the Israelite doctrine and had organized two churches, which ministered
- b) Because no one can understand prophecies if the Holy Spirit is not present (1 Corinthians 12:10). Federico Mar-
tínez Navarrete understood many prophecies by studying alone, baptized by the Holy Spirit (1st Corinth -
uncles 12:13)
- c) John the Baptist initiated baptisms in Israel without being baptized himself (Matthew 3:13-16), but he was sealed by the Holy Spirit, case of Martín Ávalos , who was sealed with the Holy Spirit, according to Ephesians 1:13
- d) God gives growth (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). The work of Federico Martínez grew greatly in Chile and Argentina. The work of men is destroyed, but not that of God (Acts 5:38-39). The work of Federico Martínez has not been destroyed, because it belongs to God" (159) .

Notwithstanding the above , the shadows of doubt regarding Martínez's baptism increased in the 1930s, and at the beginning of the 1940s the old man had to face strong pressure to be rebaptized. The antecedents show that despite the inconsistency of the thesis, he himself ended up being a victim of it and he also believed it. The solution to their situation will be resolved in 1942, when point 4 of the 1913 agreement was confirmed.

Development of the Zionist movement in the Church of God

At the same time that Martín Ávalos began the formation of the Israelite Church of God, in the Swiss city of Basel (where Federico Segesser originally resided) the First Zionist Congress in history was held, convened and organized by Teodoro Herzl , considered the spiritual father of the modern State of Israel. On that occasion the World Zionist Organization was founded. The very name of the movement comes from the archaic name of Jerusalem and the Holy Land (Zion), “which expresses the immemorial nostalgia of the Jewish people for their return to the country” of their ancestors.

“ *Zionism* , the Jewish national liberation movement, was the modern response to centuries of discrimination and ostracism, of oppression and murderous persecution and became increasingly clear the convention -

foundation that the Jewish people could only be redeemed through self-determination. The purposes of Zionism were: The return of the Jews to the Land of Israel and the rebirth on their soil of na -

Jewish tradition , and obtaining a recognized and legal place of residence for Jews in their homeland historical. Modern Zionism developed as an organized political effort of pioneers, who gave birth to the Third Jewish State” (*160*) .

Herzl was the promoter of Zionism by supporting the urgency of founding - in Palestine (gentile name for the Holy Land) - a legally secured homeland for the Jewish people dispersed throughout the world (In 1918 it was estimated at 15,000,000 Jews throughout the world. planet). From that moment on, and thanks to Turkey's tolerance, settlements of pioneers and Jewish settlers began to be established. The Zionist movement gained strong momentum with the so-called Balfour Declaration in 1917, in which - by virtue of its mandate over Palestine - England committed to favoring the creation of a Jewish National Home in that territory. Since then, the gradual emigration of Hebrews to Palestine increased, as did the rejection of the Arabs of the region, who saw how the territories that they also considered sacred were becoming populated with Jews.

The belief in the fulfillment of biblical prophecies regarding the return of the Jews to their land and their future conversion to the Messiah Jesus was part of the doctrine of the Sabbatarian Church of God in the United States, as observed in the respective chapter. And that belief was also transmitted to the first converts of the Church of God in Chile. Remember that Martín Ávalos wrote the following regarding Israel:

“Who is all Israel whom the Lord commands to keep not only the moral law or the Decalogue, but tam - well the festivals ordered in the law of Moses? “Because I do not want you, brothers, to ignore this mystery.” arrogant towards yourselves ; and the hardening has partly it happened - to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles came in. And so all Israel will be saved...” (*161*) .

Federico Martínez, a disciple of Ávalos, became one of the main promoters of Christian Zionism in the following decades. But it was in the Cunco congregation where the emergence of this current occurred, there the historical link between the Israelite Church of God and the Jewish community originated in favor of the ideals of the world Zionist movement.

In fact, until 1916 the Christian-Israelite churches of Araucanía had developed silently for twenty years without any connection with the community of natural Jews. That year a chance event changed the life of those communities: the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, had appointed Justice Louis D. Brandeis to the Supreme Court of that country, being the first Jew in American history appointed to such a high position (*162*) . One of the well-known members of the Cunco congregation, Juan de Dios Torres, who, apparently, had never had contact with natural Jews, had access to the news about Brandeis

' appointment through a newspaper. From that moment, he and Pastor Miguel Jara began to make arrangements to contact a Jewish community. In this regard, there are two sources that describe that milestone of Israeli Zionism. The first of them comes from a report about the Church of God that appeared in the Jewish magazine *Masa Ajer* in Israel, in 2002, which relates:

“ Did you know?’ said the pharmacist Juan de Dios Torres excitedly to the shoemaker Miguel Jara, who (was)...leading the small community...in the town of Cunco, in Chile. 'You're not going to believe me, but - There are more Jews in the world...

"But look," the pharmacist extended the newspaper that came into his hands from the capital, Santiago, end of January 1916 -, here it is written that in the United States he assumed office as a judge of the Supreme Court -

ma a gentleman named Brandeis , who is, look, it is written here, who is a Jew!

“That same night a letter was drafted to the honorable Justice of the Supreme Court, Mr. Brandeis , Washington DC of the (*Israelite*) community...of Cunco. 'If your Excellency could inform us - they asked the members of the community – if there are Jews in the world” (**163**) .

The other story appears included in two Chilean publications related to the Jewish presence in Chile, and corresponds to a report made to the Israelite Church in the '40s, which states:

“(A member) of the community of Cunco, a town apothecary, Juan de Dios Torres, in his court

young man was completely unaware of the existence of Jews, since he had never seen one. By chance He read in a newspaper that the Supreme Justice of the United States, Louis Brandeis , was of Jewish origin, since He sent him a letter asking for information about the Jews in the world. This letter was answered by secretary of Brandeis , giving him the direction of the Jewish Collective of Entre Ríos (Argentina), for between which the community of Cunco entered into contact with *true Jews for the first time* -

“ros ” (**164**) .

It is not surprising that Torres and Jara were unaware of the existence of Jews in Chile and in the world . They lived in a time where the means of transportation and communication in Chile were limited; Furthermore, they lived almost in the foothills of Araucanía, which gave a character of isolation to the Cunco area. On the other hand, the Jewish community in the country was very small at that time, as confirmed by *La Patria Israelita* in 1920, the official organ of the nascent Judeo-Chilean organization:

“Until the year 1910, in all of Chile there were no more than 20 to 30 Jews, and in Santiago about 10 to 15.

They knew as Russians, French and Germans, according to the country where they were born...

“They did not make themselves known as Israelites for the simple reason that they were such a small minority, and co -

knowing the prejudices that the populace has towards the Jew in almost the entire world, and especially in a country so far from Europe, where the people *never had the opportunity to meet the Jew* ” (**165**) .

One author refers to the fact that “in 1917 a commission from them (from the Church of God) came to speak with the Jewish community of Temuco to establish 'fraternal' relations, which continue to this day (year 1971), essentially in Jewish orientation for sacred festive dates” (**166**) .

In 1918 another milestone occurred in the history of Chilean and Christian-Israeli Zionism. Between May and June of that year, the famous Jewish lecturer Baer Epstein was in the country, commissioned by the Zionist Federation of the United States with the purpose of giving some conferences designed to publicize the latest agreements of the leaders of the Zionist movement regarding to the conquest of Palestine by the English and its offer to the Jewish community.

Until Epstein's arrival in Chile, Herzl 's modern or political Zionism was almost not known, or at least it had no organization in the country. The only Jews who propagated Zionism in Chile at that time were:

Lázaro Mirsky , Isaac Drapkin and Singer, and the propaganda was manifested only in the celebrations of the anniversary of the death of Teodoro Herzl that took place in the few Israelite synagogues without great advertising (167). But since the arrival of Baer Epstein, in May 1918, the Zionist movement took another direction, both within the Jewish community and within the Israelite Church of God. In the latter, an institution called “Children of Zion ” was founded , based in the town of Curacautín, with Federico Martínez being its first president. The aforementioned publication *La Patria Israelita* reported on this in October 1920:

“ Dr. Baer Epstein arrived in Chile from Argentina recommended by the Zionist Federation of Buenos Aires to the Israelite Center of Santiago... The doctor has given five conferences in Santiago, two in Concepción and one in Valparaíso, in which he has exposed Zionism in a pleasant and of course, and the echo of his lectures resonated in the Israelite colony with a magical force. “The result of Dr. Epstein's propaganda brought about by the Balfour Declaration was that Zionist centers and circles were immediately formed throughout the republic. In Santiago, ...in Valparaíso, in the other provinces the following Zionist institutions were organized :... in *Curacautín , the Sons of Zion Zionist Center , chaired by Don Federico Martínez...* ” (168) .

If Miguel Jara and Juan de Dios Torres made it possible for the Church of God to come into contact with their spiritual brothers, the children of Israel, the creation of the Children of Zion Center definitively put the Congregation on the path to the national Zionist movement underway.

Children of Zion was made up of all those members of the Church who wished to deepen their spiritual relationship with the people of Israel and contribute materially to the Zionist cause. In addition to Curacautín, there were members belonging to that Zionist center in Cunco, Quitratúe , Lastarria, Temuco and Cumpeo (in the latter, since the '30s). From then on, it was customary on the Festival of Booths to raise the flag of Israel. “They did this with great pride, although in those years the manifestations of Jewish style (or character) were still not looked upon favorably” (169) .

The events described above allow us to determine how the gradual connection of the Christian-Israelite Church with the Jewish community occurred. The *Encyclopedia Judaica Castellana* , 1948 edition, indicates that this Congregation was discovered as a result of the letters that its leaders sent to Judge Brandeis and “ to an Argentine Zionist Congress” (170) . This last reference must be the 1919 letter that Arturo Bab mentions in 1940, which says:

“ On the occasion of the First South American Zionist Congress that took place in Buenos Aires, during
During 1919, the directory received, to its great surprise, a letter signed by seventy families from the little town
of Curacautín and neighboring villages, located in the southern department of Cautín...Considering, therefore, children of Israel, would like to contribute their good wishes and obols to the cause of the restoration of
Eretz Israel” (171) .

That is to say, those Christian-Israelite congregations unknown to Chilean Judaism requested their affiliation to said Trans-Andean Congress and to the Argentine Zionist Federation. But the response to that intention was closer than expected. In the middle of that same year, 1919, at the initiative of Boris Cojano , general secretary of the Centro Israelita (today Círculo Israelita), and in accordance with a project prepared by himself, a manifesto was launched addressed to the Jews of Chile by which the Center Israelita called in Santiago for a First Israelite Congress in the country with the aim of studying and resolving all the problems that could be of interest to Chilean Judaism. Thus, finally, on September 19, 20 and 21 of that year 1919, the First Zionist Congress was held and the Zionist Federation of Chile was organized (172) . The Zionist organization Children of Zion , which represented the Israelite

Church of God before Chilean Judaism, was also invited to be represented at that historic event, as well as at subsequent congresses. The Christian-Israeli delegates who appeared before the First Zionist Congress were Miguel Jara and Manuel Maturana. The fact has been recorded in various Jewish publications, such as those set out below:

“...On Friday, September 19, 1919... it was inaugurated in the social premises of the Centro Israelita de Santiago , Delicias 2326, the Congress chaired by the Executive Committee, attended by delegates from the following -

three institutions: Zionist Center of Valdivia, 'Children of Zion ' Center of Curacautín..." (173) .

“The First Zionist Congress of Chile was solemnly inaugurated on September 19, 1919...Trans-

We will write the names of the institutions that attended and the delegates who attended:

Zionist Center of Valdivia, Mr. León Trajtman

Zionist Center of Curacautín, Messrs. Manuel Maturana and Miguel Jara..." (174) .

The following year, the Israelite Church of God was once again present at the Zionist Congress of Chile, as an edition of *La Patria Israelita* from 1920 alludes to:

“This year's Congress came out brilliant from every point of view. More than sixty delegates attended...

sent delegates :... the Zionist Center of Curacautín Hijos de Sión ...

(175) .

In that same year, 1920, the Zionist community of the Church began its active participation in material collaboration for the world Zionist cause, making monetary contributions to the Reconstruction Fund in Palestine, known as “ Gehula.” Fond ”. The official organ of Chilean Zionism noted this contribution by publishing the letter that Manuel Maturana sent to the Zionist Federation, which expressed the following:

“Mr. Boris Cojano , Secretary General

Distinguished sir and coreligionist:

In my possession is the handwritten work of the Zionist Federation of Chile. With great pleasure I have seen the name -

lie entrusted to me by the Zionist Federation of Santiago, which I will gladly carry out at the level of

my duty for the good of our people. I have spoken with the President of the Zionist Center

Children of Zion and we have agreed for the Geehula collection Fund . I have also received 10

copies of No. 1 of *La Patria Israelita* , the product of which we will send you along with the money from the collection -

ta .

For no other reason, I greet you with Zionist affection. Signed, Manuel Maturana” (176) .

Two weeks after the publicized letter, *La Patria Israelita* discloses the monetary cooperation of the Temuco congregation to the Zionist fund through its “Zionist Federation Movement” section, stating:

Guehula was received from Temuco Fond , which we copy to

continuation:

“Collection list... From Temuco:... Mayo Toledo, \$30;... José Pulgar, \$10;...Juan M. Barrientos,

\$10...” (177) .

And the following month, a Christian-Israelite contribution is published again; this time from the Curacautín church. It mentions a list of Zionist members, headed by Federico Martínez and followed by: Esperidión Mendoza, Guadalupe S. de Alvial, Gertrudis Palma, Emisael Palma, Florinda González, Margarita F. de Mendoza, Ismael Maturana, María Cares de Jara, Lucio Riveras, Elisa Veras, Juan

Labial, Luis Manríquez, Miguel Jara, Lidia Maturana, Lucía A. de Salazar, Aníbal Salazar and Lorenzo Fuentes, among others, contributing the total sum of \$85 at the time (178) .

The strong idea that existed early in the Chilean Church of God regarding the spiritual bond with the Jewish people soon generated within it the mistaken thesis that its members descended from natural Jews, specifically from ancient Jews who fled from inquisitorial persecutions. Many Jewish and Catholic-Protestant authors have based themselves on this false assumption to determine the origin of such a unique Christian Church. As an example, in the aforementioned text by Arturo Bab , which mentions the letter from the Curacautín community to the South American Zionist Congress of 1919, it is indicated: “This letter said that the signatories of the old Creole-Chilean strain would be descendants of Spanish *crypto-Jews* . and they form a formerly secret sect called 'sabatarians'..." (179) . Another proof is the synthesis of the *Encyclopedia Judaica Castellana* , which says:

“In the south of Chile, mainly in the province of Cautín, scattered in small towns and adjacent fields, live isolated groups of Chileans who claim to be descendants of ancient *ma - rrans* (*crypto-Jews*) who arrived in the country in the 17th century, who fled into the interior of the territory. sheltering from inquisitorial persecutions; but more than anything with the intention of being able to continue practicing - ticing the ancient Jewish faith” (180) .

The entire weight of the history of the Church of God so far described in this historical work leaves that thesis without arguments . But where did this false historical concept come from and who spread it? Ester Pulgar responds categorically: “From Curacautín” (181) . The work of José C. Palma corroborates this statement, and the main manager of the crypto-Jewish origin of the Church would have been Manuel Maturana. Palma wrote in 1919:

“I will write more about those from Curacautín, since you asked me what fault they have incurred. You I will say that there are several. First of all, they twist the meaning of the Scriptures. What the apostle Paul says in his letter to the *Ephesians* 2: 11-18. From what it says... in that chapter, they say that they can say that they are from Jewish race, so that the Jews can take them to Palestine. If I didn't know them I could have some small doubt, but I know them, and I know that *they are of the Chilean race* ... They also have a prophet. Is - It's Manuel Maturana. This one says that the Lord commanded him to preach Zionism...; and how to speak - ba among us that a time would come when all the nations would rush to Jerusalem and ten men - men of all races would grab the skirt of a Jewish man, he (Maturana) saw that it was the right side. where they could form a congregation and call themselves 'Zionists'; but he always had his lectures with Hebrews They have told him how it is that of any race he must say that they are Jews to be able to go. go to Jerusalem and there they will give them daughters... But I speak the truth, and not like them (the Zionists of Curacautín), who say that *they are Jews and that they are from those scattered from Spain* ... and they deny that they are Christians so that they can take them” (182) .

However, the Jewish leaders, in general, were quite clear that the Sabbatarians of Araucanía were not natural Jews, as can be deduced from the letter of September 2, 1932 that Robert Levy sent to María Cares, a member of the Christian community. Zionist and wife of Pastor Miguel Jara. Levy said: “Your request to join this Corporation (Israeli Community of Te-Israel) is being studied. muco), which is an independent issue of Zionism. For now, we stumble upon our States. tutos, approved by the Government when granting us legal personality , and which say that it belongs -

To join the Israelite Community of Temuco you must be an *Israelite* (natural Jew), over 18 years of age, without distinction of sexes. Now, are the Sabbatarian brothers Israelites ? This would have to be checked barlo , but you well know that it is not easy at all... Perhaps they could be passive partners, but the Statutes they have not foreseen the case” (**183**) .

Despite this, as noted in the Annex to this historical work, Jewish intellectuals have believed in the crypto-Jewish thesis that the Christian Zionists of Curacautín spread. However, the majority of the membership of the Israelite Church of God was convinced that they were Gentiles converted into true “spiritual Jews” by faith in Jesus the Messiah.

Federico Martínez was, as has been said, the main promoter of Christian Zionism from the '20s, based on the upcoming fulfillment of biblical prophecies, such as Ezekiel 38: 24-37 and others, which announce the return of the people of Israel to the ancestral land of their fathers, the future conversion of Israel to Christ Jesus and their union with the Gentiles converted to the true faith to be delivered from the plagues and wait as one people for Jesus King and Savior. Many understood that those events would occur soon and quickly, which is why - after the eventual restoration of the State of Israel - many Christian-Israelite members or families began to emigrate to Palestine, particularly from the 1950s onwards.

The small community of spiritual Israelites decisively supported the world Zionist movement, either by attending the Chilean Zionist congresses or by contributing financially to the material restoration of the Land of Israel. Within this context, the letter cited above mentions this matter, in which Levy expresses to María Cares de Jara:

"Distinguished lady:

Just this morning I received your appreciated certificate of August 31... and since we have already informed Santiago of the sale of shekalim , I just sent the \$10 to the Zionist Federation of Chile so that directly, from the capital, they can send you and your husband (Miguel Jara) the two shekalim orders.

Regarding the possibility of continuing to sell shekalim in that one , among his coreligionists, also The Zionist Federation of Chile will answer you, since they can only vary the regulatory deadlines set for the election of delegates to the next Zionist Convention of Chile, to be held on 10 of the current one.

It is a pity that this matter was considered too late, otherwise you would have had all the time necessary to make its provisions on a timely date; but, I consider that Faith-

The Zionist Federation of Chile will take charge of these circumstances and, possibly, give them the opportunity to have a representative in the next Congress.

"In this regard, it is convenient to know if you can send it directly from here or if it will be some brother of yours, one of those who must also reside in Santiago. Of course, the first thing would be much better” (**184**) .

The 17th Zionist Congress of Chile, held in 1935, had 73 delegates, one of whom re-presented the church of Cunco through the Children of Zion Center , as published by *Mundo Judío* :

“ Delegates appointed by the institutions affiliated with the Zionist Federation of Chile:

...Children of Sion Center , Cunco, 1” (**185**) .

“List of delegates... Except for unforeseen events and subsequent changes, the list of delegates to the 17th Zionist Congress of Chile can be established as follows:

...Cunco:

1) List: Messrs. Alejandro Pilovsky and Jaime Turteltaus

2) Children of Si3n Center : Mr. Enrique Mar3n” (186) .

“ Offering the floor to the different presidents of delegations, they used it to respond to the welcome greeting from the President (Jaime Trumper), the people indicated below :...

“Mr. Enrique Mar3n on behalf of the Zionists of Cunco, grouped in the Children of Si3n Center ,

brought the cordial greetings of its representatives, committed for nearly twenty years to developing the Zionist sentiment in the southern zone. He said that the Cunquino Zionists were few in number, but great nationalist heart and adversaries of all personalism in issues that closely touch the future - tour of the Jewish nation. He paid a heartfelt tribute to the workers' contribution of the Work of Palestine (Land of Israel), without ignoring, of course, the efficiency of other factors necessary for the most rapid development of

Eretz Israel. He asked for greater attention from the leadership towards the Zionists in his region and ended his exhortation

with the expression of the sincere wish that the labors would be fruitful, invoking the words of the

biblical prophet who said: 'Well, I will plant them on their land and they will never again be uprooted from the land

which I gave them, says the Lord your God ” (187) .

At the 22nd Chilean Zionist Congress, held in November 1940, there were 22 participating institutions and 117 accredited delegates. One of them He represented Israelite-Christianity, whose name does not appear on the list, but it is presumed that he was Gregorio Mondaca, from the Zionist Center of Cumpeo (Camarico) (188) . Also in the next version of the Zionist Congress, held in October 1941, with 60 delegates, the Cumpeo congregation was present in the person of Gregorio Mondaca (189) .

Parallel to the Christian-Israelite intervention in the Zionist congresses, the official organ of the Jewish community in Chile, *Mundo Jud3o* (published since January 1935), reports on the pecuniary collaboration carried out by the Zionist members of the Israelite Church of God, both for the campaign of the so-called Keren Kayemeth Leisrael (Jewish National Fund) and for the Keren Hayessod (Eretz Israel Reconstruction Fund). The first, created in 1901, was an institution dedicated to the acquisition of land in Palestine for the Jewish people. *Jewish World* periodically provided a list of Jewish institutions and individuals contributing to the Keren Kayemeth Leisrael , and such lists almost usually featured members of the Israelite Church of God “emptying piggy banks” or purchasing trees in Israel (190) .

Here are some examples:

“ Birthday ... Tishri Action (November 29, 1940)

Delivered by Mr. Gregorio Segundo Mondaca (Monetary contributions are expressed in \$)

Gregorio Segundo Mondaca, 105; Juan Mondaca, 102; Jos3 Mondaca, 203; Jes3s Mondaca, 40; Jesus Mart3nez, 50; Tom3s D3az, 40; Humberto Oyarz3n , 20; Juan P3rez, 20; Galvarino Gaete, 20; Isidora from Oyarz3n , 10; Luis D3az, 10; Raquel D3az, 5; Mar3a Mart3nez, 10; Leticia D3az de Gaete, 10; Maria Arenas, 12; Pilar Marabol3 de Mondaca, 11” (191) .

“ Birthday : (November 7, 1941)

Sent by Mr. Gregorio Mondaca

Mirsky Forest : Gregorio Mondaca, 4 trees, 100; Jos3 Mondaca, 203; 3 trees, 75; Juan Mondaca, 4 trees, 100; Tom3s D3az, 1 tree; Humberto Oyarz3n , 1 tree, 25; Jes3s Mart3nez, 1 tree, 25;...

Talcahuano:

Mateo Arriagada, 1 tree, 25; Carmen Gratofil , 1 tree, 25; Adelina Arriagada, 1 tree, 25...

Chillan:

Federico Mart3nez, 5; Elba Mart3nez, 10...

Curacautin:

Miguel Acuña, 5... (192) .

Likewise, the Keren Hayessod , founded in 1920 in order to create the infrastructure conditions to absorb the olim or Jewish immigrants of the world who began to arrive in Eretz Israel after the First World War and the Balfour Doctrine. In its edition of February 21, 1935, *Mundo Judío* published the list of contributions to the Keren Hayessod in southern Chile, and it says: “Cunco. Collective subscription of the Children of Zion Center ... \$52.30” (193) .

Another way to contribute to the realization of the Zionist ideology was the purchase of “ shekalim ”. The shekel (in the singular) was a document that accredited its holder's status as a member of the World Zionist Organization. Within the Jewish reality, the shekel was the card that any Jew or Gentile Zionist over 18 years of age could acquire and which accredited him as a citizen of the Jewish State in formation. The purchase of shekalim was also common among Christian-Israelites from the 1930s onwards. In order to highlight the high degree of commitment and organization of the Zionists of the Church of God around 1938, information dedicated to the Zionist Center of Cunco is presented below:

“On the 10th of this month (July 1938) the partners of the Children of Zion entity met with the objective to elect a new Board of Directors for the period of work 1938-1939, having elected the following - these people:

President: Mr. Miguel Jara; Vice President : Mr. Luis Segura; Secretary: Mr. Heriberto Torres; Deputy Secretary: Eduardo Rodríguez; Treasurer: Mrs. María de Jara; and the Treasurer: Mr. Samuel Se-gure.

“ The new Directorate addressed a note to the Zionist Federation, in which it promised the most extensive collaboration in all Departments” (194) .

Finally, to the Christian Zionist leaders who have been mentioned so far - Federico Martínez, Miguel Jara, Manuel Maturana, Enrique Marín, Gregorio Mondaca and José Pulgar - we must add Valentín Martínez, about whom a sensitive note was published in *Mundo Jewish* on the occasion of his death, which occurred in 1941:

“A friend of our cause has died.

Mr. Valentín Martínez dedicated all his efforts to Zionist work

Recently, Mr. Valentín Martínez, who was a Zionist collaborator since 1924 and spread Zionist ideas among the congregations of Temuco, Curacautín, Lastarria and Pucón.

Four years ago, thanks to his tireless work, he organized the Cumpeo congregation . His teaching spread among the aforementioned communities, converted the various groups in these localities into faithful collaborators of Zionism.

Together with the other leaders and prominent collaborators of the cause, such as Mr. José G. Pulgar and Mr. Federico Martínez, dedicated all his time and all his efforts to the organization of these nuclei, especially from Cumpeo .

Chilean Zionism regrets the sensitive death of Mr. Valentín Martínez” (195) .

The '40s and '50s will see the greatest development of the Zionist movement within the Church of God.

The first schismatic groups in the Church of God

In the same year that Juan de Dios Torres learned of the existence of Jews beyond Cunco and began the efforts together with Miguel Jara to establish links with the Jewish community, within the Israelite Church of God the first division occurred due to doctrinal matters.

It must be remembered that in the first 15 to 20 years of the Christian-Israelite community, Martín Ávalos and José Cecilio Palma were the ministers with the greatest authority and influence. The latter

led between 1905 and 1916 the group of congregations that received the name of the Church of the Christian Reform. In 1913 he formed a Directory that included other well-known names, such as José Pulgar, Miguel Jara, Manuel Maturana, Juan Francisco Palma, Julián Segundo del Castillo, Eusebio Jara and Jorge Villalobos, and as deaconesses and elders Amelia Matus and Nieves Pessuarch . In order to "put in order all the things that... the Reformed Christian must practice, and that everything would be in writing that order of articles." José C. Palma himself recorded the articles that were decreed on that occasion.

- "1. The assembled elders... have agreed on the following: to appoint one or two brothers to watch over - keep order when studying.
2. Young people of both sexes who do not obey their parents or the elders of the church, After three warnings the church is empowered to expel them (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)
3. People who gossip in the congregation will be reprimanded before it (Hebrews 22: 10, 26:20, 11:13 and 20:19).
4. Every person who wants to enter the Church will be baptized
5. The Church has agreed to put into practice the institution that God gave Moses to keep the holy Sabbath (Exodus 3:29, 23:12, 35:1-3; Jeremiah 17:20, Nehemiah 13:19), understood to- " Therefore , when the Sun enters, no candle, lamp, or fire will be lit, nor will any servile work be done" (**196**)

Until 1916, José C. Palma was the one who led the Gorbea congregation; However, in that year he resigned from the pastorate mainly due to doctrinal differences, although a letter from José Pulgar to Bruno Sachs dated September 17, 1917 suggests some fault on the part of Palma that would have meant his departure from the institution. The letter reveals the following:

"My dear brother, I really wanted to go see you (in Pucón) before Las Cabañas, but I haven't.

I couldn't, nor will I be able to , since the holidays are so close,... in addition to that I have learned that the Pal brothers-

ma (José Cecilio and Juan Francisco) from Gorbea are going to celebrate the Cabañas festival there with us -

Tedes . With all the more reason I avoid the trip... Receive these brothers with love,... because they are our brothers -

hands . The Church does not recognize them as outsiders, even though they act outside.

" We do not keep more commandments than they, nor do they more than us. that there are certain *traditions* on their part, it is true, and that the Church did not accept them, but this is not a case for separate from each other. Although they have turned away for one reason or another, I will show you something about the

particular. You know that *they became outside the Church* by their own will... As I

I said there that Brother Cecilio Palma, after recognizing the *fault* , said that they should not count it as

brother, because *he had stained the Church* ; and since I was president of the court that was formed

to interrogate him along with *another person guilty* of certain offenses...I do not mean by this

That *the fault is very great* , no, but it is already the case for not sanctifying oneself and judging those who are rebels.

others, and to judge them, and to become holy has a multitude (innumerable) of passages or decrees in form -

of laws, to show that he is better than the rest of the Church, despising them all with

the title of saint, not remembering works of the past... I can tell you, as I let you know before,

that this brother was spoken to with many tears in his eyes, not only me but also all those who

We formed the court, but his contumacy was impossible to abandon. I can tell you that the Church -

He does not consider them cast out or outside, but rather he hopes that his brother will return from his tenacity. and will take your

same ministry whenever he wants to take it up again, but at the moment he does not have it, for

how much he renounced before the church, which left his ministry. And the church accepted him, for whose sake now

It does not have the power to baptize...” (197) .

In short, José C. Palma committed an offense that cannot be determined as to what it consisted of, but only that it was not serious; Furthermore, at the beginning of the letter, Pulgar mentions some “traditions” that suggest that the sanction applied to Palma was due to a doctrinal issue. He and other members of the Gorbea church left voluntarily, as they were not expelled.

Until that time, José Pulgar did not have any ministerial position, so the Gorbea community was left without a pastor as a result of Palma's resignation. The membership in full communion was made up fundamentally of women, and the only man who was in a position to assume leadership was José Pulgar. It was under these circumstances that his ministerial consecration took place in 1916. Soon José Pulgar and his family emigrated to the town of Lastarria, where he established his residence and organized a new congregation.

Three years after the schism of José C. Palma (1919), Pastor Pulgar took some steps to reincorporate him and others into the Church, an event that has been recorded by Palma himself in his *Memoir* in the following terms:

“On the 20th of the same month (April 1919) I received two messengers from Mr. José Pulgar; the men -

The saviors were Juan M. Barrientos and... Mr. (José) Zambrano, (who) expressed himself like this: 'The brother says

no Thumb if you want us brothers to meet, if possible today to study and get agree to join. You will say what time...” (198) .

“On May 30 (1919) Miguel Jara , Federico Martínez and Ben-

jamín Arévalo... They had said in Curacautín that they agreed with me to confer and come to an agreement...” (199) .

But attempts at reunification were in vain. José Cecilio Palma became a dissident of the Church, and among the members who followed him were: José Francisco Palma, Bartolo Chávez, Feliciano Mondaca and Blanca Aurora Garcés, the believers Pedro Montecinos “and another young man” (200) . With them he organized the “Judaizing Christian Reform Church” and continued to observe the principles of faith of the Israelite Church of God, but had some specific discrepancies with respect to the other Israelite congregations. For example, he understood and taught the accounting to obtain the dates of the feast of Pentecost in the following way:

“Leviticus 23:11-16

1. The omer was offered on the following day of the Sabbath , that is, the first day of the week or Sunday
2. Verse 15: 'Seven weeks completed': The seven weeks completed, biblically, do not begin with a day Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, starts with the first day (of the week) and ends with the seventh
3. Verse 16: 'Until the next day of the seventh Sabbath '
4. The Bible does not say that the first and last days of Unleavened Bread are Saturdays
5. When counting from any other day, and the 50th day falls, for example, on a Thursday, the previous day even if it were seventh counting of a Wednesday, it is not an (annual) Saturday ” (201) .

José C. Palma was also not a supporter of the Zionist current that was developing within the Congregation. He did not agree with the claims of some members that they were descendants of crypto-

Jews or Spanish Jews who had fled the Inquisition. Hence his disagreements with the champion of that thesis, which were reflected in a letter recorded in his *Memoir* :

“ They also have a prophet. This is Manuel Maturana... they say they are Jews and that they are from the Espar - acids from Spain. But I am Chilean, nothing more than a Christian *Judaizer* , and they deny that they are Christians.

tians so they can take them (to Palestine)... The only thing I will do is pass a note to my government - not about what happens, because I don't want to be classified as such (I didn't do it)” (202) .

In that same letter, Palma distinguishes three Sabbatarian groups in Chile around 1919: the Seventh-day Adventists; the Israelites or Zionists (which the Gentile world mistakenly called “ Cabañistas ”), of whom he affirms that a part of them is “led by Mr. Martín Ávalos”; and “our Judaizing Christian Reform institution” (203) . The latter was the institution that he directed until his death, after which it disappeared. Emisael Palma referred to the division of José C. Palma, Juan Francisco Palma and Bartolo Chávez when he wrote:

“Back in the year (1916) three men separated in Gorbea. One of them returned to the Church (it is by Juan Francisco Palma). The group became extinct around the year 1930, more or less” (204) .

José C. Palma was a very cultured leader and lover of biblical and historical scholarship, as has been demonstrated in his work *Memoria. History of the Chilean Christian Reformation* . He also used to communicate by letter with many people from other religious professions. Among this correspondence there is a letter from 1918 sent to him by Federico Bishop , founder of the Chilean Adventist movement, in one of whose lines he tells Palma: “You, *when you were a cabañista* , perhaps believed that this was the truth” (205) . The aforementioned text could lead to the conclusion that that minister really abandoned the Christian-Israelite doctrine, however the available testimonies do not allow us to confirm this. Heber Palma rather confirms that “he was always an Israelite, and his children continued in the Church; They did not go to Adventism, nor was he an Adventist, according to his *Memory* ” (206) . Finally, Nehemías Palma, grandson of José C. Palma, categorically states:

“The first thing I can answer... is that he (his grandfather) did not depart from the (Israelite) Church. So much so, that with the group that he met in Gorbea he kept the Cabins and all the festivals; and That's why his children - Luzví , Amador, Sara and Juana - ...were baptized...; his wife Elena Muñoz Chávez ... continued raising her children... (and) celebrating the holidays. So, if he had departed (from the doc - trina) would not have celebrated and would not have passed on to their children and to us (their grandchildren)” (207) .

In truth, José Cecilio Palma continued to be faithful to the essential doctrine of the Israelite Church of God, but he did not congregate with members of it. He gathered in his home with his family and a few other believers, and thus observed the biblical festivals (208) .

Another case of dissidence from that time is the one led by José del Carmen Muñoz, known as “Carmelito” Muñoz and a member of the Pucón church. The only concrete testimony about his schismatic movement comes from Rosamel Zúñiga, a former evangelist who emerged in the '40s. Born in 1919, Zúñiga relates that in his childhood “Carmelito” Muñoz appeared with the extravagant and unbiblical belief that only twelve men should participate in taking the Holy Supper, and it should not be given to women. The following story describes this apostasy that emerged in the '30s:

“I remember, brothers, when I was a child... (of) 'Carmelito' Muñoz, who worked a lot in the work... After he worked so hard on the work, Satan got into his mind and that of another collaborator with him, a brother named Ulloa. And they discovered (that) the Holy Supper or the Passover did not have to be given -

use it or minister it to women. And this continued, the movement based on the fact that when Jesus gave him the

At dinner with his disciples there was no woman. And they verified that there was no woman there of the many women who followed Jesus... But then they continued discovering, don't you see that they continue scrutinizing, they say! We must search the Scriptures. And they brought to light another truth for them, that At the Supper, if there were not twelve men, it could not be celebrated. And they stopped making dinner, because they didn't

There were twelve men. And the following thing happened, brothers: They were never able to take it again because they never had

They saw twelve men, because of their idea. This is how it happened, brothers. The date of this can only do say that I was a young man.

Cunco met. We had in Hui-

chahue an old man named José Luis Segura, and that brother and brother (Miguel) Jara led the meeting. I was more of a boy, I was involved here and there and I paid a lot of attention throughout. And the brothers studied and found out that Jesus had given the Supper only to twelve men because He anticipated the way in which the people were going to continue eating the Passover. And He advanced

one night because he had to die according to the law on the 14th day of Abib , and then the Lord Jesus a The day before he organized the new way of eating the Passover, and he organized it with the twelve apostles, with the

twelve witnesses . Hence it was an ample reason why there were no women there... So, it was-

They made a mistake , didn't they? They propagandized themselves , they preached; but, as I later learned, ' Carmeli -

'Muñoz, one of the ringleaders, was lucky . In Argentina he returned to the primitive organization, and finally nal died well" (209) .

Both the schism generated by José Cecilio Palma and that of José del Carmen Muñoz did not produce major alterations in the Church of God, but they became the precedents for future dissident movements that would emerge in subsequent decades.

New congregations and new leaders in the '20s and '30s

At the beginning of the 1920s there were a small number of Christian-Israelite congregations scattered throughout the Araucanía region, although there were other small groups scattered in rural areas and in small villages. The limited but fervent proselytism of the Israelites gave rise to new churches and focused nuclei during the 1920s and 1930s. Likewise, in that period new spiritual leaders and preachers emerged.

The congregation of Santa María de Llaima, a pre-mountain town located in the interior of Cunco, emerged linked to the Judaizing Christian Reformed Church led by José C. Palma. It was organized in 1927 by José del Carmen Muñoz, before he promoted the dissidence described above. The constitution of the group was recorded as follows:

"The Christians and believers of Santa María de Llaima... We agree to appoint Brother José del Car-
Men Muñoz to organize us into a religious society, being a member of the Reform Church -
ma Judaizing Christian of Gorbea, who stated that it was necessary to appoint a board of five
members, which we unanimously accepted and were provisionally organized. To const-
company we sign (Llaima, April 24, 1927): President , Froilán Segundo Soto; Secretary, Domingo A.
Soto; treasurer, Berena Soto T.; first Director , Pedro N. Montecinos; and second Director, José del Ro-
sario Ceballos" (210) .

The congregation of Santa María de Llaima remained under the ministry of Froilán Segundo Soto (1897-1973) for many years. He had been Catholic, and his conversion occurred through Federico Martínez and Pedro Montecinos. He was married to Hortensia Torres and had nine children, of whom seven were members of the Church (José Santos, Enrique, Fortunato, Elías, Magdalena, Elizabeth, Berta). Some of these and other descendants became members and ministers of the Church, both in Chile and Argentina, such as Fortunato Soto and Domingo Alcides Soto (211).

In Curacautín, Federico Martínez Navarrete handed over the direction of the church to evangelist Emisael Palma in 1931. Other prominent members of that community were Lorenzo Fuentes, José María Montero, Pedro Gómez Benavides and Miguel Acuña Robles. The first three became deacons, and Miguel Acuña (1893-1968) he was appointed counselor of the congregation in 1939; Later he had “an outstanding performance at the local level, regional and national” (212), since he transcended through his evangelistic work. He has been considered a good spiritual teacher and “very serious in doctrine” (213).

Emisael Palma was born in 1906 into a Christian-Israelite family on the side of her mother Nieves Pessuarch , since her father, José María Palma, was never a convert or member of the Church. From a very early age he began his spiritual life, since when he was 18 years old he was baptized for the Israelite faith (1924), as recorded in an old document from the church of Curacautín. (214). Despite the veracity of this fact, in recent decades the thesis has been raised that Emisael Palma would have originally belonged to the Baptist Church and then joined the Israelite Church with the baptism of that Protestant branch. However, the testimony of his son, the evangelist Heber Palma, absolutely discards that version, saying:

“About the baptism of Emisael Palma... According to his biography and the stories of his experiences and history, as a child or young person, they do not agree with that statement; and not only his, but also what con-

There were his sisters Carmen (who was baptized by José C. Palma) and Elisa... As a child he too He lived in that area of Quitratúe and Gorbea, and remembered his experiences with the families of the church. In

The records and minutes of the Curacautín church appear registered as a member in 1924, with 18 year old. Later he appeared as the first deacon, and at the age of 25 he was named evangelist (6 of June 1931, in Cunco). It can also be a confusion, since (because of) his evangelical spirit

He always shared with other Churches, or visited them. Being very young he was *a friend* of the Meto Church - distant There he met his wife Fredesvinda Zúñiga ; helped form the National Baptist Church. In-

He even rented him some rooms (house) for worship. I remember , when I was a child, I accompanied him to He visited other churches that were not Israelites and preached in them, but I believe he was never from another I-church , as his biography says” (215).

Indeed, from a very young age Emisael Palma began preaching the *Israelite Gospel* . For such spiritual qualities in Cunco he was consecrated an evangelist in 1931 “by agreement of the churches of Cunco, Lastarria, Huichahue and Curacautín” (216). In 1934 he founded his own family with Fredesvinda Zúñiga, with whom he had six children, two of whom became ministers of the Church.

Emisael Palma was self-taught. His desire for constant reading, Bible study, interest in staying informed, meditation and spirituality made him a cultured man. Without a doubt, he became the most prolific minister in terms of doctrinal writings and epistolary correspondence:

“ Emisael Palma, who was an evangelist, was a great man, who contributed many things (to the Church) ; for -

who wrote a lot. He was one of the pastors who wrote, because others only preached. Inclu- _ He had correspondence with many churches” (217)

His concern for the better progress of the Church and the unity of its members led him to promote the organization of the first congress of ministers of the Church, held in 1942.

Very close to Cunco, meanwhile, another congregation emerged in the '30s. This is the rural town of Huichahue. The large family with the last name Segura lived there, whose first outstanding members were José Luis, José del Carmen and Belarmino, all brothers. His father was not a convert to the Christian-Israelite faith. They came from the Baptist Church and learned about the Gospel through Miguel Jara and Federico Martínez (218). José del Carmen Segura Quezada (1892-1988) was a Baptist pastor when he converted to the Israelite faith, like his brother José del Carmen; They initially maintained Protestant baptism until they were later baptized by a minister of the Church of God (219). José Luis Segura came to minister and represent the churches of Melipeuco , Cunco and Santa María de Llaima, until he left for Argentina in the middle of the last century. Other members of the Segura family were: Belarmino Segura, minister in Chile and later emigrated to Argentina; Pedro Segura, father of José Luis Segura Pinilla, who became a pastor of Temuco; Samuel Segura, who was deacon of Cunco, and Sabino Segura.

“There must be more than a hundred Seguras. At the Congresses they represented the congregations of the area where did they live. Sometimes they changed places (of residence) or represented them; others came to Te-
very much , then to Argentina, like Brother Eleazar Segura, in Buenos Aires” (220).

Deacons Atanasio Navarrete and Gabriel Sánchez were also members of the Huichahue congregation. The first was already a Christian-Israelite in the area in the '20s, and later he continually changed residence and congregation. The testimonies that exist about him speak of “a noble brother, a humble man, who offended no one and was angry with no one” (221). He died around 1977. As for Gabriel Sánchez Burgos (1902-1988), he is also considered the *patriarch* of the large family that bears that surname. Initially indoctrinated by Federico Martínez, he later became a deacon in Huichahue, where he married Herna Zúñiga; He later went to Melipeuco , where he ministered as a pastor. Driven by the Zionist current of the 1950s, he went to Argentina, where he died while exercising his ministry in Bahía Blanca.

In Pucón, another important area in the history of the *Israelite Church* in the first decades, both Agustín Bastías Toledo and Benjamín Arévalo were consecrated leaders. The first, married to Encarnación Chávez, was officially anointed pastor in 1936.

In Quitratúe and Lastarria the evangelistic figure of Jerónimo Agüero began to emerge, who also had a large family. Born in 1901, he had converted to Israelite doctrine in 1920 through José Zambrano, his spiritual teacher (222). Later he became an evangelist of the Church.

Very far from the Araucanía area, to the north, the Cumpeo congregation emerged in the mid-1930s. Through a Jewish source it is possible to associate the organization of that church with the evangelistic activity of Valentín Martínez. This, an active Christian Zionist collaborator, would have organized the Cumpeo congregation around 1937 (223). The community was formed on the basis of the Mondaca family (Gregorio, Juan, José, Agustín and María) and the Martínez Cañete family (Jesús, Nicano Segundo and Javier). The first pastor of the church was Gregorio Mondaca, an ardent supporter of Christian Zionism. Later, as a result of his personal situation, the congregation was divided in 1945, and a sector was in charge of Humberto Oyarzún (1898-1971), a Catholic who in 1938, seeking the truth, came to the Israelite Church of God. (224).

Finally, we must mention the consolidation of the church of Temuco. There was a core of long-standing believers there, but the entry of Julio Labrín into the leadership of the congregation allowed the formation of a stable and vigorous Christian-Israelite community in the Pueblo Nuevo sector at the end

of the 1930s (225) . . Julio Labrín was a retired police officer, and his conversion occurred very soon after having learned about the Israelite faith. He was later anointed pastor.

At the end of the 1930s, in addition, some emerging preachers began to distinguish themselves in the spiritual direction of the Church, such as Rosamel Zúñiga, in Huichahue; Rufino Cifuentes, in Los Angeles; Luis Armando Tapia, in Pucón; José Santos Carrasco, in Toltén; and Fidel Medrano, in Melipeuco , among others.

The Israelite Church of God as seen by Jewish publications

After the letter from the Cunco church to the American judge Louis Brandeis , in 1916, which put him in contact with the Argentine Zionist Federation; the creation of the Children of Zion Zionist Center , which made the Church strengthen certain ties with Chilean Judaism; and the participation of its delegates in the First Zionist Congress of 1919, contributed to the Church of God being discovered and known in the leadership and intellectual circles of the Jewish community. Therefore, it is not surprising that it was mentioned in several Hebrew publications, both in books and newspapers of the time between 1920 and the beginning of the 1940s. Below are excerpts from that information:

Remember the tangential mention of Christian Zionists in *The Israelite Word* , official organ of the nascent institutionalized Judaism published since 1920:

“The result of Dr. Epstein's propaganda brought about by the Balfour Declaration was that Multiple Zionist centers and circles were immediately formed throughout the republic. In Santiago ,... in Valparaíso,... in Curacautín, the Sons of Sión Zionist Center , chaired by Federico Martínez” (226) .

In 1928, news was published that reported the existence of Christian-Israelites, a fact that was included by the historian Cecil Roth in his work *The Secret Jews. History of the pigs* :

“In southern Chile, near Temuco (according to an article published in *The New Judea* in 1928), to - There is still a community... of sabbatarians who observe the Sabbath and the festival of the Tabernacles” (227) .

In *Mundo Judío* a singular news item was published that referred to the members of the Cunco congregation as *Jews* :

“Mr. Jacobo Pilowsky, from Santiago, has visited the *Jewish* community of Cunco, in order to co - know the origins, customs and life of this nucleus. Mr. Pilowsky intends to be - write a study on the *Jews* of Cunco. The community has offered Mr. Pilowsky a reception - intimate and cordial conversation , chatting with the guest for long hours on different topics God . For this reason, a collection was made for the Keren Kayemeth , gathering among those present - “You have the sum of 52 pesos and 60 cents” (228) .

For his part, the Jewish researcher Moisés Riesenberg , author of the book *The Primitive Jews in Chile* (1937), dedicated a space to the Christian-Israelite churches of Araucanía, declaring:

“In the extreme south of Chile, in the middle of the dense forests and mountainous fields of the province of Curacautín, spread among the indigenous Araucanian population , there is a rare tribe, which differs of the other Chilean inhabitants... They are the ' Benei Sion' (Sons of Zion), or 'sabatistas', as they are called - nominate here. They live scattered throughout the villages of Cunco, Curacautín, Lonquimay and others, as well as in the valleys lost between the mountain range. Their number is not very high. They reach only 600 families. The MA - Most of them are made up of farmers. Part of them is dedicated to cutting down surrounding forests. They count

also with artisans, small merchants, teachers, state employees , pharmacists, etc.,

but all of them are united by belonging to the same faith, to the so-called 'Hebrew Church (Israeli - ta) ' ” (229) .

In 1938, again the Israelite Church of God was alluded to in *Jewish World* . On that occasion he was included in the report that two journalists from the aforementioned weekly had made, with the title "Mission of great and transcendental importance developed by the *Jewish World* in the Jewish circles of the country." The references to the Church were the following:

“Impressions received by our special envoys, Messrs. Elías Aron and Ismael Paradiz , after his tour of the main towns in the south (in the first half of February 1938)...

“But the action of Messrs. Arón and Paradiz was not limited only to the big cities,

In his desire to spread and reach our publication to the most distant of Jewish homes, he lived

They located small towns in which they barely found three or four Jewish families. In Cunco, a small town , while they were walking along one of its dusty paths, they found themselves

suddenly with a modest little house on the front of which there was a sign with the following inscription:

'Israeli Church'. One can imagine the surprise of our editorial colleagues at this fact.

They tell us that they made themselves announced, and immediately upon finding out who they were and the mission they had,

all the doors were opened for them and a torrent of words of welcome greeted their presence;

They passed by, and what would not be their astonishment when they saw hanging on one of the walls of the 'church' nothing less

than a portrait of Dr. Teodoro Herlz ... Then they told them that they were 'Sabbathists', and their faith is so great and their hopes in the ' Jewish State ' are so sublime, that in their fanaticism they do not tremble -

var ' goym ' (Gentiles) friends to the 'Israeli Church' to help them pray that the God

May the Almighty of Israel remember his children and grant them the long-awaited ' National Home ' . It is al- go that is truly moving, our envoys tell us , one even feels a little depressed -

rified by such a spectacle, and then when he recovered his serenity and thought of those brothers who *gave so much*

in a rare way they manifest their Judaism , oneself, thinking about the brothers of Cunco, acquires new energies for the (Zionist) struggle...

“In Lastarria, another small town, made up in total of about forty wooden houses, we found three

Jewish families _ In each house, upon entering, they found Ke-Ke's piggy bank placed in the main room.

ren Kayemeth , and one of his coreligionists is the owner of the only pharmacy in town to which he

proudly placed a sign with the title 'Botica Hebrea ' (They refer to José Pulgar's pharmacy)” (230) .

For his part, Arturo Bab issued some erroneous, Judaized concepts in 1940 regarding the Church of God in Chile, but he showed interest in this Christian-Israelite community by writing:

“ They form a *sect* .. called 'sabatarians'... Considering themselves, therefore, children of Israel , they would like to contribute

contribute your good contributions to the cause of the reconstruction of Eretz Israel.

“The villages inhabited by these people, simple farmers, firewood hewers , artisans, who their neighbors

They are also called ' cabañistas ' , because they usually gather during the Succoth festival in the tents.

corresponding to the festival, is located between Valdivia and Concepción” (231a) .

An annexed text entitled _ _ _ “The 'Israeli Church' in Chile.” This is a description of the Church based on a trip made to Araucanía by one of these authors around 1940:

“It has been barely eighty years since the province of Cautín was repopulated and, in fact, only around -

In the year 1880 it was possible to impose itself on the Araucanian population and definitively found cities and

towns that for the most part have experienced a considerable boom.

“We went to one of these towns to learn about the rites and customs of the members of the Ila - called 'Israeli Church'. We arrived in Cunco on a beautiful summer morning. This town... reminds us - immediately resembles the people of cowboy movies , in which, in this case , the cowboy is replaced by the Chilean huaso.

“A German Jewish refugee who had lived in Cunco for some years took us to the president's house.

from the aforementioned community, Mr. Miguel Jara, who received us very kindly and promptly, entered a soft conversation , he gave us very interesting data about the religious life of the members of the ' Church - sia Israelite '. He explained to us that he, as president, simultaneously held the position of chief executive . religious or 'pastor', this position for life, for which he was elected by the community. Due to the decrease - nution of the community, which now barely reaches twenty-eight members in the town, was not possible - ble maintain its temple, at the entrance of which a sign with a golden Magen David could be seen , which read 'Israeli Church'. Outside the wooden benches for believers and a special seat-

Particularly for the shepherd, this temple contained nothing, neither an image nor an eternal light. during service

religious, the men remained bareheaded and the women wore hats. Did not exist

no separation between both sexes in the placement of seats. It was only spoken in Spanish,

that none of the believers mastered Hebrew. The pastor had a Bible as his only religious book

in Spanish , that is, the Old and New Testaments, which is the only religious source for everyone.

From the beginning we were impressed by the deep mastery of the biblical text that these people have.

simple, since none of its members is in an outstanding economic position. They are in

mostly artisans, carpenters or small farmers. They like to underline their conversations

with biblical recitations. They do not have special texts for religious service. The shepherd reads a piece of

the Bible and comments on it, and at the end hymns are sung in Spanish, taken from a book of the Protestant cult.

te, and accompanied in this case by a harmonium or a violin.

“Their religious holidays are: Saturday , which is for them a day of strict rest; the New Year, Suc -

coth , for which they have a special hut; the Day of Fasting, and the 'Passover Lamb' or Holy Supper,

The latter is a festival to which they do not admit the presence of anyone foreign to their religion, not even a Jew.

For Pesach they also prepare Mazot (unleavened bread).

“They believe in God the Father, in God the Son and in the Holy Spirit (not in the Trinitarian sense), but they reject the

Virgin Mary. Since for them Jesus is nothing more than the fulfillment of a prophecy, it is in no way -

do incompatible with his *Judaism* . The 'Israeli Church' is unaware of the use of the cross in any form. He

Birth of a child does not give rise to any special ceremony. To be a member of your community there is

must be baptized by the shepherd in the nearest river, a ceremony that cannot take place before 16

or 18 years or even later, as the case may be. They also do not know any particular ceremonies for the marriage.

ment or for deaths. The Magen David is sometimes placed in the graves .

“As Mr. Jara explained to us, they use the Jewish calendar and abstain from eating pork. Between

Its other characteristics are worth mentioning that all believers are determined Zionists and their sue -

golden dream is to know Israel and live there... Another characteristic of this community is the eagerness of its members

to make proselytes . It is a great pride for each of them to have converted a non-Jew to

their religion... Another curious fact is that they know both the ' Our Father ' and the ' Schema' as prayers.

Israel', in its corresponding Spanish text...

“Officially they have been grouped since the beginning of our century. Its centers are scattered in the

province of Cautín and in some towns outside it. Thus, we have communities in Cunco, Curacautín,

Cumpeo and its surroundings, in the fields. There are also members of the 'Israeli Church' in Las-

Tarria, Temuco, Los Angeles, etc. Its components are all Chilean, which we were able to verify in the

in the registry of the community of Curacautín. Throughout Chile it seems that its members are not enough to be thousand people... What they all have in common is their pride in being Jews (spiritual) and a simplicity in the way of living and giving opinions... ” (231b) .

Some unique characteristics of the Church of God in Chile in the first half century

At the end of this chapter we wanted to create a picture that shows some peculiar features of the development of the Chilean Church of God during the first four decades, some of which persisted in the following two decades. The aim is to provide some elements that allow a comparative analysis to be carried out between the institution of those times and its current state.

First, it should be noted that the membership was actually considered “Jewish” in the spiritual sense revealed by the apostle Paul. Except for the admitted exceptions of Agustín Bastías (Pucón), Juan Rojas (Cunco) and Nieves Pessuarch (Curacautín), in whom their Hebrew ancestry is recognized, the members of the Congregation were Chileans of mestizo origin and scarcely any of another ethnic origin (Mapuche) , European). Elsa Pulgar (b. 1912) says that they considered themselves “Jews at heart”; and Samuel Segura (b. 1916) reaffirms it by expressing the fundamental belief of those years:

“I was a schoolboy (in the '20s),... and he (Miguel Jara) discovered that the true name of the Church was an *Israelite* , because the Bible says: 'We were separated from the citizenship of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promises, but through Christ Jesus...'; so we are *Israelite Christians* , not the old one law... That is why we have converted to the Gospel of Jesus, because he worked and died to give us life eternal” (232) .

The Israelite Christians came from various aspects of Christianity, but above all from the Seventh-day Adventist and Baptist Churches. Likewise, the converts, in general, were people of a rather humble economic-social situation. Note that Larraín de Castro described them as “simple people, since none of their members is in an outstanding economic position” (233) . Most of them were small farmers, artisans, carpenters, etc., that is, they carried out trades or activities that allowed them to be economically independent so they could practice their principles of faith freely and without difficulties. There were also some members with a very good economic position, but they constituted a minority made up of medium-sized farmers (hijueleros), merchants, etc. In this group were Juan de Dios Torres, from Cunco; the Arriagada Gratofil family , from Talcahuano; José Pulgar, from Lastarria; and Miguel Acuña, from Curacautín. However, that condition was not a barrier that prevented the fraternal coexistence of the members of the Church in accordance with evangelical teachings.

Another characteristic feature of the Church in those first decades was the integration of new members who were baptized at a very early age. We know of the extreme case of Ángela Carrasco, from Cunco, baptized at 8 years of age (234) . Also the cases of Elsa Pulgar, baptized in Lastarria in 1930, at 18 years of age; Guillermina Muñoz, baptized in Cunco in 1938, at age 16; María Muñoz lived in Cunco when she was baptized in 1954, also at the age of 16. And a very particular story is that of Eva Fuentes, baptized at the age of 14 when she lived in the interior of Temuco, in 1930. Her sisters Priscila, Elda and Marta also went to the baptismal waters very early. His testimony says that when he was preparing to go to Temuco to study, his father, José Fuentes Muñoz, advised him that he should “make a commitment to God”; Then, she told him: “Dad, I don't know What is sin! What am I going to repent of? The Bible says that baptism is for repentance, and I know no sin.” Her father argued that she had to do it to be prepared for life and the temptations of the big city. That was probably the thought of many parents that led young people to take on such an important spiritual step as baptism (235) .

From its origin in Chile, until the mid-20th century, the Israelite Church of God generally did not have temples or physical places for the faithful and believers to gather in “holy convocation” for the worship service. The local congregation commonly met in the home of a member or, usually, in the residence of the respective minister. It was common for the place of worship to constitute a space enabled on the second floor of the homes, which were large and recalled the upper room that Luke mentions in the book of *Acts* (Acts 20:8), and also brings to the remember the custom of apostolic times of meeting in private homes (Romans 16: 5, 1 Corinthians 16: 19, Colossians 4: 15, Philemon 2). Regarding this peculiar practice, Graciela Lagos (b. 1936) refers that in Cunco at the beginning “there was a small church where (pastor Miguel Jara) lived... And as the members increased, it then became small. Later, the late Manuel Segura rented it, who had a large house, and services were held upstairs. Then the brother went to Argentina; and since we had a big house, we went to have services there” (236). For his part, Samuel Segura (b. 1916) recalled that in Huichahue “we had a large house where we worshipped. We didn't have a church, the building. We provided the property to preach the Word of God” (237). Meanwhile, Elizabeth Soto (b. 1920) adds that “before - in the '30s - there were no churches; We met in a big house. Brother Gonzalo Toledo lived in Cunco and we also met there (at his house)” (238). Ester Pulgar (b. 1916) recalls that “brother Juan Barrientos had a large two-story house, and upstairs (the space) was as large as the house... So, he designated it only for the church, but the second floor” (239). And Josadac Agüero (b. 1938) adds that when he was a child the Church had houses to meet: “The only churches (temples) that I remember from that time - around 1945 - were in Lastarria, Cunco, Temuco and Curacautín” (240). In Temuco, until 1943, the house of the leader Julio Labrín became a place for Sabbath worship. (241). The reasons why the Church of God, in general, did not build temples are not clear, but it is alleged, on the one hand, that “it was preached that, since the departure to Israel was near, it was not necessary to build churches or make temples.” (242). On the other hand, the semi-clandestine state of the Congregation, without the legalization of its existence, inhibited the erection of houses of worship (243).

Because many members were scattered in the rural areas surrounding the towns where there were established congregations, the distances made it difficult for them to meet there. They could not attend regular Sabbath services , and in that case they held worship services in their respective homes. A testimony of this relates that during his childhood “my father held (sabbatical) meetings in the house, when we lived in the country... The Sabbath service was held in the house... So all the workers were prepared early On Friday, the meal...” (244). In fact, the Sabbath was *received* at sunset on Friday, and a clarification must be made about this: The thesis has been maintained that the Jewish character of the Christian-Israelite faithful of the south led or has led many of them to practice the Jewish custom of lighting candles for the beginning of the weekly Sabbath rest; However, the testimonies collected rule out that possibility. Graciela Lagos, who lived her childhood and adolescence in Cunco in the late '30s and early '40s, declares that “she never saw anyone (from the Church) light candles (to receive the Sabbath)... They met together. the brothers who lived near the church... and the Sabbath was received with prayer and God was praised; and he said goodbye (at sunset on Saturday) with prayers and praises and choirs were sung ” (245). The evangelist Heber Palma, from Curacautín, also confirms this testimony, arguing that “this custom of lighting candles (for the beginning of the Sabbath rest) is not recorded as a religious norm” (246). On Saturday, however, the custom of not making a fire to heat the meals prepared on Friday was widespread : “No fire was lit -as Eva Fuentes remembers-; as the verse says: 'You shall not light fire in your dwellings on the Sabbath day'. Then, in the workers' kitchen there was fire; My father told them to put some large logs there and cover them, and the next day, to heat the food that was left prepared, they heated it there. And all the workers also respected all that...” (247).

Emilia Jara (b. 1934) confirms the above by saying that “in those years (at the end of the 1930s) fires were not lit on Saturday . They left the fire buried and heated the food there... (Likewise) they did not eat the entrails; the livers of the animals (they were not eaten either)” (248) . Saúl Lagos (b. 1937) indicates that the male of the family had to do the cult service in the house. At least in Cunco in the '30s and '40s “there was only one worship service, at 3 in the afternoon. But later they began to study and it was understood that they were two services” or sabbatical cults (249) .



At the beginning of the 20th century there was an important advance of the apostolic Gospel in Pucón and its surroundings. The first mention of the community of Christian-Israelites in that sector comes from the year 1907, although its formation perhaps occurred around the year 1900, under the direction of Benjamín Arévalo and Agustín Bastías.

The photograph was taken between 1927 and 1930, and corresponds to some members of the Pucón congregation. It shows (standing, from left to right) Inés Arévalo, Celso Chávez, Carlos Arévalo, a girl and unidentified members ; (seated, from left to right) Sara Bastías, Agustín Bastías, Encarnación Chávez de Bastías and an unidentified girl.

A characteristic characteristic of the Christian-Israelites of the period analyzed was the great interest in biblical scholarship. This is how Saúl Lagos remembers it:

“There were people who studied a lot... There were brothers who didn't know how to read either; in those years there was

little education, but they participated (actively in the work) and were good in the doctrine... And they all e-

They were biblical, scholars. “They would get together at night, they would wake up arguing (about the Scriptures).”

(250) .

This is endorsed by the testimony collected by Uzziel Zúñiga from his father, the evangelist Rosamel Zúñiga , revealing that:

“(The pastor) José Luis Segura was my father's neighbor in the countryside, in Huichahue. So my father He would go at night to talk about the Bible with Brother Segura, and they would talk until late in the morning. evening...

“And my dad remembered that at that time many times they held meetings at night with lights

with lit coligües. They lit coligües and some people held them up like torches so that the brother read the Bible, because the light that was there at that time was a lamp, that's what it's called.

At that time, there was a jar with a little wick into which they poured paraffin. That was the light that was in-then ; but sometimes there was no paraffin , it ran out, so they held the meetings with the light of a co-flirt ... Sometimes my dad went to other places, and the same thing happened too. He came at night sometimes and they had people gathered to talk about the Bible; Thus, a bonfire was lit, coligües were taken in turned on to read the Bible. That's how my father told it" (251) .

Until 1942 there was no national organization of the Israelite Church of God. First, because the existing congregations were concentrated or focused in a fairly restricted area, such as the Araucanía region; and from there it did not spread further (except the community of Cumpeo) due to the lack of a proselytizing strategy. And second, each of those that emerged at the beginning of the century had a markedly local and autonomous character with respect to others. It can be stated, however , that some churches were closer to some than to others, according to the ministers who led them; and only on some occasions - such as on solemn festivals - did they meet by their own decision, without responding to a predetermined institutional agreement. Ixia Arévalo Pulgar, granddaughter of Pastor José Pulgar, has collected the following testimony:

"No, (the Church) was not a national organization . Later, when the first Congress, that not all (the ministers) agreed, because they were used to functioning - nar in a group way, each one in his locality, more at the family level than otherwise. Like ca- "The family maintained a group in different (localities), but there was no national organization." (252) .

Indeed, in the first decades, families emerged that had a certain ascendancy or leadership over the respective memberships of the congregations. Thus, it is possible to mention the Palma family in Gorbea; the Pulgar family in Lastarria; the Martínez and Palma families in Curacautín; the Jara Cares couple and the Torres family in Cunco; the Bastías-Arévalo family in Pucón; the Segura family in Huichahue; the Soto family in the Santa María de Llaima- Melipeuco area , and the Agüero family in Quitratúe .

The absence of a broad organizational structure generated a certain distortion of the identity as an ecclesiastical institution that recognized itself as a link in the apostolic Church of God. For example, there was no single denomination that encompassed all Christian-Israelite congregations. This would be explained because Federico Segesser , apparently, did not place emphasis on the name of the Church that he was establishing with his preaching or did not truly transmit the denomination of the American Church that had been sent to him. In another way, how to explain that before the institution officially adopted the current name of the *Israelite Church of the New Covenant* , there were several names that identified the various local churches, or, these were known by the Churches of Christendom with arbitrary and inadequate names. , both because it did not correspond to the New Testament name and because the names attributed were not related to the essential nature of the Congregation. This is the case of the denominations given by the Adventists and that spread later, such as " cabañistas " and " cenceñistas ". The first adjective is the oldest and most widespread and is due to the observance and practice of the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. In reality, biblically and historically it is wrong to affirm that in its beginnings the Israelite Church in Chile was called " Cabañista Church ". That name never existed among the Christian-Israelites, but was the adjective applied by the other Christian confessions. José Cecilio Palma clarifies this matter with his testimony:

"When I entered the Cabañista Church (1903), because with this name they (those from outside) designated

the Congregation for keeping the Feast of the Cabins; further *They called themselves Israelites* ” (253)
“In the same year that I appeared in the Cabañista Congregation , as the *other denominations call it -*
“minations ...” (254) .

Regarding the name of the “ Cenceñista ” Church, it was also conferred by the Churches of Christianity as a result of their members observing the biblical commandment to eat unleavened bread or unleavened bread for a week after Easter. Cenceña means precisely *thin cakes to rise , dry breads* . JC Palma also mentions that designation:

We were formed from this institution (organized by Martín Ávalos) , who began to guard the festival of Unleavened Bread, and the festival of Cenceñas (for) seven days. The rest of us name -
“cenceñistas bran for keeping said party” (255) .

Of the denominations that existed among the Christian-Israelite congregations before 1942, the following have been documented: Zionist Church, after 1916 (256) ; Church of the Christian Reform, Gorbea and Curacautín (257) _ Church of the Judaizing Christian Reform, of Gorbea (258) ; Israelite Church, in Cunco and, probably, in Lastarria (259) _ and Christian Apostolic Zionist Church, in Curacautín (260) .

These churches also demonstrated their autonomy by internally electing their boards of directors, not as an overall policy nor under a pre-established legal order. This can be seen, for example, when José C. Palma relates that “I began to form a directory (of the Church of the Christian Reform) until in 1913 they were already included in it...” (261) ; and as read in Minute No. 1, of October 28, 1939, of the Curacautín church: “A board of directors was appointed, which was formed as follows...” (262) .

The above also entailed almost total independence in appointing ministers; and in this case, it is understood, there was no pre-established rule. Ministers were consecrated hastily and without a process or spiritual preparation. Emblematic cases regarding this practice were the consecration of José Pulgar and the one mentioned by José C. Palma in his *Memoir* , which occurred in 1903:

“In said meeting it was agreed to appoint a brother to baptize on the southern border of our someone converted, Mr. Martín Ávalos from San Felipe had to come.

The brothers determined that I (Palma) could do this work. I knew very little... *I had no ins -*
struction of competent men , and I made it present, but they said that I could baptize and that another certain use of the word in the act of baptism; and they chose Mr. David Pulgar for this service.

In this sense *we accept the ministry* . Mr. Ávalos, laying his hands on us, prayed to the God of lights so that we might minister according to the Word of God” (263) .

As can be seen, the ministerial consecration ceremony of Palm and Thumb was simple and without a prior spiritual protocol; In addition, it must be added that Palma had only entered the Church that year. Heber Palma complements this assertion by recognizing that:

“ Before (the Church) was organized on a national level, each congregation appointed as ministers

The brother who stood out most spiritually and in his development to work for the Church...

So, they appointed him to be a minister. Suddenly it was the naming *of the church* , co-

It is said: ' This brother is going to be a minister'... Later (after 1942) it was said that for appointing a minister had to follow a more detailed, more protocol-based procedure, and there was to do a fast, the presentation (of the designated one) and the laying on of hands had to be done to consecrate him minister. There were even brothers, among them an old man from 1920, who said they had than anoint him with oil; Then, they anointed him with oil. Suddenly there was a minister who was just aged with the laying on of hands, and he confirmed it with oil. So, they were things that were gone perfecting and reaching mutual agreements afterwards” (264) .

One element on which the leaders of yesteryear did agree regarding the previous issue was that applicants to the ministry must comply with the requirement of being married, in accordance with apostolic teaching (1 Timothy 3:1-7). In any case, there were exceptional cases, such as those of David Pulgar and José C. Palma, who were single at the time of being consecrated ministers by Martín Ávalos; and that of Gregorio Mondaca, anointed minister by José Pulgar at the end of the '30s. The latter case generated a controversy within the Cumpeo congregation, as can be seen from Batsheba's testimony. Oyarzún, whose father, Pastor Humberto Oyarzún, objected to such a designation: "My father said that (Mondaca) could not be a single minister. He has to be a husband to a woman, a father to children, to have them under discipline" (265).

In general, there was a common doctrinal basis among the adherents of the Israelite Church of God, the central tenet of their beliefs being that "we are on the path that leads to eternal life, we have converted to the Gospel of Jesus, because he worked and He died to give us an opportunity to enjoy eternal life, to be resurrected after death," as declared Samuel Segura, a convert around the '20s or '30s. The doctrine they had accepted involved fulfilling God's law to live in holiness; That law included the observance of the moral commandments and worship of God; the latter referred to the biblical festivals.

However, there were some doctrinal points or religious practices on which ministers or students of the Scriptures disagreed. This has its origin in a fact already analyzed in previous lines: Federico Segesser preached a basic doctrine during the ephemeral time he was with the first converts. There is no other explanation. The remaining principles of faith - which today support the Israelite Church - are the result of the permanent biblical study and the search for truth in which the first Christian-Israelite leaders and preachers were committed. It was always like this throughout the centuries. Another factor that played against full doctrinal harmony is attributed to the relative distance that existed between the congregations and the disciples of the Bible, since, although they communicated with each other, it was not enough; Sometimes months passed in which they did not visit each other, and the churches were isolated from each other.

Among the early beliefs without consensus were, for example, the variable number of parties that should be observed. It must be remembered that the groups formed by Martín Ávalos did not keep the Unleavened Bread or Pentecost, since they understood that they had been fulfilled with the death and resurrection of Jesus. But José C. Palma began keeping such festivals starting in 1905, and that was the biblical criterion that was finally imposed in the Church (266). As explained in previous pages, Palma himself understood the accounting to obtain the date of the day of Pentecost differently in relation to the general practice of the Church. Likewise, there were Christian-Israelites who observed the new Moons (267). Only some understood that the tithe was not valid and others handed it over to their ministers. Saúl Lagos affirms that in Cunco and Huichahue "tithing was not understood," and Josadac Agüero remembers that in Quitratúe tithing was done (268). On the other hand, there were discrepancies regarding the Levitical precepts on the way to observe the Sabbath: some maintained that there was no need to light a fire, or buy tickets to travel, there was no need to ride a horse or use beasts of burden to arrive by cart. to worship that day; but others considered that such commandments had been abolished by Christ. Some even applied the law of uncleanness or purification to women, etc. (269). The issue of male beards was also the subject of discussion, especially from the middle of the century onwards. It should also be noted that due to the understanding of the prophecies of Israel's return - perhaps in the 1910s - there were nuances in the interpretation of the timing of the fulfillment of said prophecies. Likewise, the Zionist movement that generated the issue of the restoration of Israel created confusion among members: some saw it as a political rather than a religious-eschatological issue; others - like José

C. Palma - saw it as an opportunity to take advantage and go to Palestine (Land of Israel) with the help of the Jews; On the other hand, the Zionist members appreciated it as a certain possibility to contribute to the material fulfillment of the material rebirth of Israel, after which the expected conversion of this people to Christ Jesus would soon come, in accordance with the divine promises. Finally, the issue of the legitimacy of the baptisms that the new converts had aroused doubts and disagreements, since some ministers accepted members with the baptism of the denominations of Christianity, according to the premise of the apostle Paul - "one faith, one Lord, a baptism"; but others, not satisfied with their previous, "sectarian" baptism, were rebaptized through an Israelite minister. Perhaps there were other issues in which divergence prevailed within the Church of God in those years, since it was in a state of transition towards consolidation.

Despite the picture described above, the Chilean Christian-Israelite congregations felt part of a single ecclesiastical group whose ties were strengthened by the fundamental principles of faith that linked them. That is why ministers in particular and members in general communicated distantly but periodically, either through visits by some ministers to other churches, by performing baptisms or, mainly, on the occasion of the celebration of the "holy convocations." annually, particularly during the Easter and Cabañas festivals. There are many testimonies that the ministers with the greatest number of intercongregational visits were José Pulgar, Federico Martínez and Emisael Palma, demonstrating the community that existed at that time. In a 1940 minute from the Curacautín congregation the following was recorded:

"It was agreed to request a visit from brother (José) Gertrudis Pulgar to come to effect - perform the baptisms of the brothers who are preparing; and at their request it was agreed to call him for Saturday , May 18" (270) .

And just as Federico Martínez and Emisael Palma sometimes used to keep the Cabañas festival in Lastarria or in other places, members of the Church living in Argentina also came to Chile to celebrate one of the festivals. Emisael Palma (b. 1906) remembered the passage of one of these faithful who came from southern Argentina:

"In the year 1917, the undersigned, as a child, remember having seen the last trip that a brother made - hand from Argentina to Chile to participate in the Lord 's Supper in Gorbea. The day after termi - nothing the solemnity - I remember it very well - the brother under a quite threatening rain, mounted on horseback and another on the side of reinforcement, covered in ponchos and goat boots with hair, left to cross the mountain range of the southern Andes before the snow closed its path. I was passing by my sister's house. to Amelia Matus in Gorbea, to (later) cover a distance, I think, of about 350 or 400 km . or more, other side of the Andes" (271) .

The membership of the Christian-Israelite churches was not significant, except for those of Cunco, Huichahue, Curacautín and Lastarria at times, since there was a lot of mobility of the faithful. But at the events of the solemn festivals, a significant number of converts and believers from rural areas and small surrounding villages gathered, according to the testimonies collected:

"(Cabins were) made in Lastarria, because brothers from Talcahuano came, from different places; of Toltén, Gorbea, Quintratúe . Many brothers got together to build cabins; also for the holidays Passover and Unleavened..." (272) .

"On the Passover festival, for example , all the brothers (dispersed) came to eat Supper in Cunco. Those from the countryside came, from there on the side of Caburgua , Huechelepun , on the side of Lake Colico ,

in that area” (273)

The congregational interrelation produced in the festivals had an exception when certain families - due to the long distances and/or costs involved in traveling - decided to celebrate a certain festival in their own residence. “With my grandmother Carmen we had the Cabañas party, and at her house,” says a testimony (274) . Froilán Segundo Soto did the same thing on some occasions: “My father had a field, and he kept (the cabins) in his house,” recalls Elizabeth Soto (275) . Or, a few families close to each other met to choose the place for the solemn festivities (276) .

But the common rule was that members of different congregations took turns visiting each other during the Feast of Tabernacles, a festival of joy that represented for them the pilgrimage of the faithful on this physical earth to reach the heavenly Zion , where they hoped to live eternally. next to Divinity. The first descriptions of the observance of the aforementioned festival come from the work of José C. Palma, where these phrases are found that describe it: “In 1903 was when I was able to know what the Cabañas were. The custom of keeping the festival... in the fields, on the banks of rivers”; “this festival was celebrated on the banks of the Cautín River in Pillanlelbún ...”; “In 1913 we celebrated the Festival of the Cabins in Curacautín, on the banks of the Blanco River on the south side, indigenous land.” In 1917, José Pulgar wrote: “I have learned that the Palma de Gorbea brothers are going to celebrate the Cabañas festival there (Pucón) with you... I hope you have blessings in learning your studies, in said solemnity. .. We are going to celebrate the Cabins in Quitratúe ; We have a very nice separation on the south side on the banks of the Quitratúe River ” (277) .

In order to preserve the richness of the testimonies collected regarding the way and circumstances in which the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in the first decades of the Church of God in Chile, four testimonial narratives are presented below:

Ixia Arévalo has collected the story of her mother Elsa Pulgar regarding the period 1920-1940: “What my mother says is that (the brothers) even moved with their sheep, their flocks of sheep, because they would not leave them alone. Since they needed many days to move, then they took

They packed all their things, belongings to (meet their needs) in their carts. That was the middle of crazy-motion” (278) .

Uzziel Zúñiga, in his youth, collected the following descriptive testimony from his father Rosamel Zúñiga from the 1930s:

“My father remembered that at some point the largest congregations in Chile were those of Cunco and Huichahue, where there were more brothers. There were 60 to 70 cabins built in Cunco at that time .

Well , because people who lived towards the Cunco mountain range were going, a place called Melipeuco , and other places; They all arrived in Cunco . Then a large number of brothers joined in... I am talking more or less about the years 1930 to 1935” (279) .

Graciela Lagos (b. 1936) recalls the Feast of Tabernacles in the early 1940s:

“In my childhood ... Cabins were made with so much taste and sacrifice. In those years we lived in Cunco, and They were going to look for us in carts, and we were several brothers. We arrived (to the party) with sacrifice and we

We were crying... Other brothers, up the hills, arrived with great sacrifice, with their little things.

Others on horseback were going to leave things; Then they went to look for another load...

"In my childhood, 40 or 50 cabins were made, and those who could not (keep the festival together), for e-

For example , the oldest people stayed and made their little cabins in the patio of their houses; but from here (from main group of cabins) they were going to visit them... They were very united, and there were a lot of people there -

You are years...” (280) .

Finally, Heber Palma (b. 1938) also remembers that past with respect to the '40s:

“I remember beautiful things and things etched in my memory. When I was a child, the holidays were very simple. The (feasts of the) Cabañas were mainly simple, but there was enormous consecration

tion of people, harmony. That's what we children saw , an enormous harmony, where we played,

We shared all the families who got together to celebrate the Cabañas festival...

“Generally, in the Cabañas everyone came from here, from the commune of Curacautín, because their - hands from the countryside or from other sectors, but sometimes brothers from other churches, from other places, like families , like visits to this place. Later, I also remember that, even I,

As a child, we went out with my father to celebrate Cabañas in other churches. We were going to Lastarria. Remember -

I know that my first tour, as a child, was to Lastarria.

“In our case, for example, we traveled from the countryside by cart to the town, or on horseback. Then here

We took a train to Púa, a transfer to Temuco, and from there to Lastarria. And formerly,

My grandmother (Nieves) told me that when my father (Emisael) was a child, they would go out to celebrate the Ca-

you bathe Gorbea, other times Lastarria, Quitratúe ; and they left Curacautín days before with the most elemental, many times in the rain and cold, on foot, to take the train...

“ I saw brothers in carts in the camp. They brought their oxen, their field carts , some

tented carts , where they put their belongings and sometimes traveled all day; and they arrived in carts with oxen to guard the cabins...

“Generally the cabins were made of sheets, with a wooden structure. they made them with quite a slope and well stretched (so that the rainwater would drain). Then they put some roofs the thickest ones...” (281) .

The unity of the Israelite congregations that occurred in the celebration of the solemn feasts would also soon be projected on a general level, since at the beginning of the 1940s the most influential ministers made the first efforts to achieve full unity of the Israelite Church of God, both institutionally and doctrinally.

GRADES

(1) p. 40

(2) Leopoldo Zambra, *With his Spirit* , p. 41; José Cecilio Palma, *Memoir. History of the Chilean Christian Reformation* , p. 7

(3) Zambra, *With his Spirit* , p. 54

(4) idem, p. 41

(5) Letter from Emisael Palma to José Alfredo Loje , August 1973, page. 1; testimony of Leopoldo Zambra, May 14, 2003

(6) p. 28

(7) *History of the birth of the Israelite Church in Chile*

(8) Cited in José C. Palma, *Memoria. History of the Reformation...* , page 14

(9) Testimony, July 24, 2003

(10) Oscar Pereira, *Israelite Church of the New Covenant: A case of symbiosis between Judaism and Christianity* , p. 8

(11) Simón Cifuentes, *Reports compiled from the Israelite Congregation of the New Covenant in Chile* , page. 1

(12) Letter from Sergio Águila to the author, August 2003, page. 1

(13) Testimony of Silvia Iturra, August 29, 2003

(14) Letter from Frederick Bishop to José Cecilio Palma, cited by the latter in *Memoria. History of the Reformation...* , page 12-13

- (15) Federico Segundo Martínez, *History of the birth of...*
- (16) *The Voice of Truth* , Israelite Church of the New Covenant, March-April 1994, p. 6
- (17) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 2
- (18) Testimony, July 24, 2003
- (19) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 2
- (20) idem, p. 12
- (21) Letter to JA Loje , August 1973, p. 2
- (22) Testimony, July 24, 2003
- (23) *Treatise of the seven words of Wisdom* , José Alfredo Loje , page. 28
- (24) Letter to the author, p. 3
- (25) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 12
- (26) Testimony of Carlos Arévalo, July 24, 2003
- (27) *The Voice of Truth* , Israelite Church of the New Covenant, March-April 1994, p. 6
- (28) Teresa Martínez and others, p. 70
- (29) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 1, 13
- (30) Written on April 8, 1917, in Gorbea, during the festival of Asimos, page. 2
- (31) According to the testimony of Elsa Pulgar (b. 1912), “(David Pulgar, her uncle) was traveling and went to Temuco to buy everything necessary to be gathered on those holiday days (of Las Cabañas) and it did not arrive. He arrived on the third day, crying, repentant, that he had fallen into failure, that he could not move forward. It turns out that when he was single, (David) had met a girl, and he had his love affairs with her. And that time, when he was going to Las Cabañas, he passed through Temuco; He met that woman and It stayed the three days it took to arrive. Thus, when he returned on the third day, he arrived at the Cabins and confessed his fault. fell and He never got up again. He completely stopped being a religious person (Testimony, July 24, 2004). Ester Pulgar, sister of the previous one, corroborates this fact by declaring that “David Pulgar was an uncle of mine, the older brother of my dad... He fell into adultery, into drunkenness, and lived in brothels, with very corrupt people” (testimony, December 19 2003)
- (32) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 3
- (33) pp. 7, 9-10
- (34) Letter to JA Loje , August 1973, p. 2
- (35) Letter from Heber Palma to the author, May 2003, question . 8, p. 2
- (36) Cited in Palma, *Memoria. History of the Reformation...* , page. 13
- (37) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 13
- (38) idem, pp. 1-2
- (39) *The Israelite Homeland* , June 15, 1919, no. 3, page. 3
- (40) Juan Guillermo Prado, *A crypto-Jewish community in Araucanía? ; Jews on the Border, a historical enigma* , p. 2
- (41) Cifuentes, *Compiled Reports of the Congregation...* , page. 1
- (42) *The Voice of Truth* , p. 6
- (43) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 5
- (44) idem, p. 13
- (45) see note 1
- (46) Letter to the author, February 10, 2004
- (47) *Marranos in Chile* , article published in *Las Últimas Noticias* , April 20, 1999, page. 8
- (48) Testimony of Silvia Iturra, August 29, 2003
- (49) Testimony of Ixia Arévalo, July 20, 2003
- (50) Testimony of María Eugenia Pardo, May 2, 2003
- (51) Hymn *Praises to God and the Lamb* , p. 4
- (52) Hymn *Jesus said: I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me* , page. 49
- (53) Hymn *The Blessed Son of God* , p. 173
- (54) Hymn *Jesus said: Remember the Sabbath day...* , page. 224
- (55) Hymn *Jesus said: Unless one is born again of the water of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God* , page. 253
- (56) Letter to Damaris Pulgar, July 1981, p. 3
- (57) Hymn *Those who trust in Jehovah are like Mount Zion* , p. 51

- (58) *Holy Bible Hymn* , p. 133
- (59) Hymn *And I Saw Another Angel* , p. 59
- (60) Hymn *The will of God is manifested in his laws* , from the *American Tract Society Hymnal* , New York, p. 9
- (61) Hymn *The Sabbath Day* , page. 146
- (62) Hymn *The Sabbath day or Lord's day* , page. 144
- (63) Hymn *The Lord's Supper* , p. 39
- (64) Hymn *The Feast of Trumpets* , p. 196, from the *Hymnal of the Evangelical Union*
- (65) Hymn *The Day of Final Atonement* , p. 246
- (66) Hymn *Jesus said : Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month will be the solemnity of the Booths to the Lord for seven days* , p. 25
- (67) Hymn *He who believes and is baptized will be saved* , p. 179
- (68) Hymn *The love of Christ for his people of Israel* , page. 83
- (69) Hymn *God said: I will come again, and will take you to myself, so that where I am, you may be also* , p. 94
- (70) *God and his laws of love* , p. 4
- (71) *God destroys this world* , p. 10
- (72) *Song of the Israel of God* , p. 286
- (73) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 1
- (74) p. 3; cited in Palma, *Memoria. History of the Reformation...* , page. 2
- (75) Ditto
- (76) idem, pp. 1, 3
- (77) idem, p. 14
- (78) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 12
- (79) idem, p. 3
- (80) *Adventist Magazine* , September 1905, no. 9, p. 6
- (81) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 12
- (82) idem, pp. 3-4
- (83) p. 206
- (84) Francisco Westphal reported to the *Adventist Magazine* , June 1905, no. 6, p. 5
- (85) Carlos Krieghoff reported in the *Adventist Magazine* , September 1905, no. 9, p. 6
- (86) Dámaso Soto reported to the *Adventist Magazine* , December 1909, p. 14
- (87) *The Great Adventist Movement* , p. 208
- (88) *Adventist Magazine* , March 1910, p. 12
- (89) no. 10, p. 3
- (90) This information was obtained from the testimonies of Elsa and Ester Pulgar, on July 24 and December 19 and 31. of the year 2003, respectively
- (91) pp. 3-6, 11-12
- (92) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 5
- (93) *The Church in its beginnings: Beginning of the Israelite Church of the New Covenant in Chile* , page. 1
- (94) Manuel Méndez questions that consecration, saying: “That Brother José Pulgar was anointed by a woman, and what? where is that in the bible? That doesn't make me happy. Where is it in the Bible that a woman can anoint a minister to a brother? The Bible does not say so” (Testimony, February 16, 2004). Meanwhile , Francisco Ulloa, former leader of the Israelite Church , adds: “There is a very clear basic principle in this regard, which says: 'I do not allow a woman to drink power over the man. That (what happened in Gorbea) is absolutely contrary to the Scriptures... So, (Amelia Matus) was a respectable person and a good help to the Church, but for him to have the capacity to anoint a minister, it is absolutely unbiblical” (Testimony, June 6, 2004)
- (95) Letter to the author, July 18, 2004, question . 3, p. 1)
- (96) Ester Pulgar, *The Church in its beginnings...* , page. 2
- (97) Testimonies of Eva Fuentes, April 14, 2003, and Silvia Iturra, August 29, 2003
- (98) Letter to the author, May 2003, p. 5
- (99) August 1973, p. 2
- (100) June 7, 1941, p. 5
- (101) *The Voice of Truth* , May-August 1994, p. 8. A granddaughter of Martínez, Eliana Martínez Ovando, confirms this

fact, saying: “Yes, they say that he died when he was 110 years old, because at that time they did not pass children through the Civil registration. So I had no idea when he was born. According to their calculations, he died at the age of 110” (Testimony of the

July 25, 2004)

(102) Testimony of Juan Espinoza, July 20, 2003

(103) p. 67; archive preserved by the evangelist Emisael Palma, who was in charge of the Communication Center of the Israeli ministry

(104) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 12

(105) Cifuentes, *Reports compiled from the...* , page.

(106) *Jewish World* , November 7, 1941, p. 5

(107) The temporary estrangement of Federico Martínez has been corroborated by Pastor Manuel Salazar, who knew him personally and received testimony of that fact from him (Testimony of July 21, 2003). According to Elsa Pulgar, Martínez was about eighteen years outside the Church (Testimony of July 24, 2003) and Ricardo Gómez, a dissident of the Church, affirms that it was eight years (Testimony of January 3, 2004)

(108) Francis Westphal reported to the *Adventist Review* , December 1911, p. eleven

(109) Testimony of July 24, 2003. Josadac Agüero also confirms this fact, and says that “ the brother was outside Martínez, but he came back. He traveled very little (among the Adventists), but he returned. And he joined the Church (again). Everyone knows that (Testimony of November 7, 2003)

(110) Letter of September 1948, p. 1

(111) Testimony of Eva Fuentes, April 14, 2003

(112) Testimony of Elizabeth Soto, July 23, 2003

(113) Testimony of Uzziel Zúñiga, son of evangelist Rosamel Zúñiga, July 4, 2003

(114) Cifuentes, *Reports compiled from the...* , page. 1

(115) Teresa Martínez Pérez and others, p. 70

(116) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 6

(117) *The Church in its beginnings...* , page. 1

(118) Ester Pulgar highlights this fact saying that Pastor Jara maintained permanent contact with his father, “because all the letters that (Jara) wrote to him every time there was a baptism, or that there were people who were interested, then, to give him a stronger doctrine, I called my dad. At that time my dad traveled a lot... there was a congregation very big in Cunco... Brother Jara was like that with my father, they fought together (for the doctrine)” (Testimony of December 19

December 2003)

(119) Testimonies of Elsa Pulgar and Rubén Cárdenas, July 24, 2003

(120) Testimony of Graciela Lagos, January 20, 2004

(121) Testimony of Eva Fuentes, April 24, 2003

(122) Testimony of Guillermo Landeros, July 19, 2003

(123) According to a grandson of Bastías, Joel Chávez, “ some young Jews were here (in Pucón) and they had that child, and he

They left the Bastías family in charge, and they raised him. The grandfather in the Buenos Aires synagogue is as a *rabbi third* . He is in a photo of the room where the entire rabbinate is , and he appears as the third rabbi” (Testimony of December 23).

July 2003)

(124) Muñoz adds to his story: “I remember that we once kept the feast of *Ázimos* with them (the church of Pucón).

They killed a heifer and he (Bastías) said that it was the first fruit, because of the first animal that was born in the year he kept the

firsts for the holidays. Just like flour. He was carrying a sack of flour, which was from the first wheat he harvested.

Just like potatoes. “The first bag of potatoes he harvested he took to the church, and there he distributed them among everyone.”

(Testimony, March 22, 2004)

(125) Heber Palma, letter to the author, July 18, 2004, question . 9, p. 2

(126) Carlos Arévalo, *Pioneers of the Israelite Congregation of the New Covenant - Chile*

(127) According to Joel Chávez, “around 1900 (the Pucón group would have organized). If Benjamín Arévalo was born in 1860, already

“He was 40 years old, which was the age he was when he arrived here (to Pucón)”

(128) Arévalo, *Pioneers of the Congregation...*

- (129) It is not known with certainty whether his father practiced the Jewish faith or was a convert to some form of Christianity, which had been established in Cañete, as recalled by Débora Maturana (b. 1921); *Reply to Sister Débora's letter Maturana* (to the author); Heber Palma, letter to the author, July 18, 2004, question . 5, p. 2
- (130) Emisael Palma, letter to the Director of *El Diario Austral* , Temuco, November 25, 1984; Heber Palma, letter to author, July 18, 2004
- (131) Testimony of July 24, 2003
- (132) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , pp. 3-4
- (133) José C. Palma reveals in 1919 that Manuel Maturana “was suspended from the ministry of the Reforma congregation Christian,... for lack of fraud and compromising others” (*Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page 14)
- (134) Elsa Pulgar's story says: “Brother Manuel Maturana, when (he continued religious life), his wife did not want to, he left and left with two children. So he always stayed living around the Palma family , in Curacautín. (He was religious) even more so, because later he - since he was alone and was a young man - began to live with the consent of the sister Nieves Pessuarch with one of her daughters, Elisa... And he worked in business for the countryside and suddenly he didn't arrive to the house. They looked for him and looked for him , and they couldn't find him. In the end , about a month later, they came to find him. dead on the mountain. That was the end he had” (Testimony of July 24, 2004). The date of his death provided by his granddaughter, María Eugenia Pardo (Testimony of May 2, 2003)
- (135) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 5
Segesser himself (*The Church in its beginnings...* , p. 2), but it is impossible, since this missionary was not in Entre Ríos
- (137) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 5
- (138) idem, pp. 11-12
- (139) Letter to JA Loje , August 1973, p. 2
- (140) *The Church in its beginnings ...* , page. 2
- (141) *History of the Church of God in Chile* , by unknown author, published in 1969 by the Universal Church of God, pp. 4, 9
- (142) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 3
- (143) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 3
- (144) Carlos Larraín de Castro, *The Jews in colonial Chile*, p. 125; *Jewish World* , December 28, 2001, p. 8
- (145) *The Church in its beginnings ...* , page. 2; testimony of Ester Pulgar, December 19, 2003; testimony of Elsa Pulgar, 24 July 2003. The names of the Arriagada Gratofil family are registered as economic collaborators for the world Zionist movement in the '40s
- (146) Testimony of Oscar Bravo, July 21, 2003
- (147) Testimony of Ricardo Gómez, January 3, 2004
- (148) Ricardo López, *Refutations and clarifications to the historical version of Sister Ester Pulgar* , page. 2
- (149) *History of the birth of the Israelite Church in Chile*
- (150) Letter to the author, May 2003, question . 11, p. 5
- (151) Letter to José C. Palma, cited by him in *Memoir. History of the Reformation...* , pp. 12-13
- (152) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 13
- (153) idem, p. 2
- (154) Letter to the author, July 18, 2004, p. 1
- (155) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 5
- (156) idem, p. 6
- (157) ditto
- (158) Testimony of Ester Pulgar, December 19, 2003
- (159) *History of the birth of the Israelite Church in Chile*
- (160) *Israel Facts* , Israel Information Center, p. 43
- (161) *God destroys this world* , p. 10
- (162) *Jewish World* , December 24, 1956, p. 6
- (163) idem, December 28, 2001, p. 8, art. “The Jews beyond the Sambation ”
- (164) Larraín de Castro, *The Jews in Chile...* , pp. 125-126, and Günther Böhm , *New background for a history of the Jews in colonial Chile*
- (165) June 15, 1929, no. 3, p. 3

- (166) Oscar Pereira, *Israelite Church of the New Covenant: A case of symbiosis between Judaism and Christianity* , pp. 3-4
- (167) *The Israelite Homeland* , October 15, 1920, no. 8, p. 2
- (168) ditto
- (169) Cifuentes, *Compiled Reports of the Congregation...* , page. 1-2
- (170) t. 3, p. 306
- (171) *From the writings of Arturo Bab*
- (172) *The Israelite Homeland* , October 15, 1920, no. 8, p. 2; *Jewish World* , October 11, 1939, p. 7
- (173) *Jewish World* , October 11, 1939, p. 7
- (174) *Jewish World* , June 4, 1999, p. 13, art. “How Zionism was born in Chile”, Samuel Gleisser
- (175) *The Israelite Homeland* , October 15, 1920, no. 8, p. 3
- (176) *The Israelite Homeland* , July 1, 1920, no. 4, p. 2
- (177) idem, July 15, 1920, no. 5, p. 2
- (178) idem, August 15, 1920, no. 6, p. 2
- (179) *From the writings of Arturo Bab*
- (180) edition 1948, t. III, p. 306
- (181) Testimony of Ester Pulgar, December 19, 2003
- (182) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 14
- (183) Quoted in Moshe Nes -el, *History of the Sephardic Israelite community in Chile* , p. 313
- (184) idem, p. 312
- (185) *Jewish World* , September 5, 1935, p. 9
- (186) idem, September 17, 1935, p. 1
- (187) idem, September 26, 1935, p. 1
- (188) idem, November 8, 1940
- (189) idem, November 1941
- (190) The Zionist Federation of Chile gave the Christian-Israelite congregations some metal piggy banks that had stamped with the map of Israel, in which Zionist members of the Church deposited coins. The collection was Zionist Federation and its final destination was the Jewish National Fund or Keren Kayemeth Leisrael , aimed at acquiring land in then Palestine, planting forests, draining swamps and wasteland reforestation
- (191) page 6
- (192) p. 6
- (193) p. 6
- (194) *Jewish World* , July 21, 1938, p. 4
- (195) November 7, 1941, p. 5
- (196) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 6
- (197) Letter to Bruno Sachs, from Pucón; September 17, 1917; cited in Palma, *Memoria. History of the Reformation...* , pp. 3-4
- (198) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. eleven
- (199) idem, p. 12
- (200) idem, p. 6
- (201) Nehemías Palma (grandson of José C. Palma), letter to the author, January 19, 2004, p. 3
- (202) Letter from José C. Palma to Samuel Levy (Buenos Aires), September 12, 1919; cited *Memory . History of the Reform...* , page. 14
- (203) idem, p. 12
- (204) *For the information of the Congregation* , page. 8
- (205) Cited in Palma, *Memoria. History of the Reformation...* , page. 7
- (206) Letter to the author, May 2003, p. 2
- (207) Testimony of July 22, 2004
- (208) Testimony of Elsa Pulgar, July 24, 2003
- (209) Sermon by Rosamel Zúñiga in the church of Temuco in 1989 or 1990, entitled *The division in the Church*
- (210) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , pp. 33
- (211) Testimony of Ruth Soto, May 13, 2004; and Eliseo Soto, September 25, 2006
- (212) Teresa Martínez Pérez and others, *One Hundred Years Between Volcanoes and Araucarias* , page. 70
- (213) Testimony of Luis Torres, July 20, 2003
- (214) *List of members of the Christian Apostolic Zionist Church*

- (215) Letter to the author, July 18, 2004, question . 4, p. 1
- (216) Emisael Palma, *Manifesto* , March 1989, p. 1
- (217) Testimony of Juan Espinoza, July 20, 2003
- (218) Testimony of Samuel Segura, July 23, 2003; and Eliseo Soto, September 25, 2006
- (219) Testimony of Samuel Segura, July 23, 2003
- (220) Heber Palma, letter to the author, February 9, 2005, question . 6, pp. 1-2
- (221) Testimony of Carlos Arévalo, July 24, 2003
- (222) Testimony of Saúl Lagos, December 6, 2003
- (223) *Jewish World* , November 7, 1941, p. 5
- (224) Testimony of his daughters Batsheba and Gladys Oyarzún , November 5, 2003
- (225) Testimony of Julia Retamal, September 17, 2003
- (226) October 15, 1920, no. 8, p. 2
- (227) p. 254. The information is also cited by Miguel Serrano, *National Socialism, the only solution for the peoples of South America* , pp. 58-59
- (228) February 28, 1935, p. 5
- (229) p. 224
- (230) February 24, 1938, p. 6
- (231a) *From the writings of Arthur Bab* , s/d. Both the testimonies of José C. Palma and Ester Pulgar confirm this fact.
- (231b) *The Jews in colonial Chile* , Günter Böhm , pp. 124-125
- (232b) Testimonies of Elsa Pulgar, July 24, 2003; and Samuel Segura, July 23, 2003
- (233) *The Jews in colonial Chile* , pp. 124-125
- (234) The testimony belongs to a deceased member of the community, Adela Tapia de Mondaca, collected by the sisters Batsheba and Gladys Oyarzún , from Cumpeo , according to their testimony of November 5, 2003
- (235) Respective testimonies of Elsa Pulgar, Guillermina Muñoz, María Muñoz and Eva Fuentes
- (236) Testimony of January 20, 2004
- (237) Testimony of July 23, 2003
- (238) ditto
- (239) Testimony of December 19, 2003
- (240) Testimony of November 7, 2003
- (241) Testimonies of Rogelio Maturana (b. 1925), July 22, 2003; and Guillermina Muñoz (b. 1922), July 25, 2003
- (242) Testimony of Guillermina Muñoz, idem
- (243) Testimony of José Escalona, July 20, 2003
- (244) Testimony of April 14, 2003
- (245) Testimony of January 19, 2004
- (246) Letter to the author, April 30, 2004
- (247) Testimony of April 14, 2003
- (248) Testimony of July 22, 2003
- (249) Testimony of Saúl Lagos, December 6, 2003
- (250) ditto
- (251) Testimony of Uzziel Zúñiga, May 4, 2003
- (252) Testimony of Ixia Arévalo, July 20, 2003
- (253) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 1
- (254) idem, p. 2
- (255) idem, pp. 3, 13
- (256) Emisael Palma, letter to the author, 1990, page. 3
- (257) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , page. 4
- (258) idem, pp. 11, 33
- (259) Mentioned in the report in *Mundo Judío* , February 28, 1938, p. 6; and in Larraín de Castro, *The Jews...* , page. 124
- (260) According to *the list of members of the Christian Apostolic Zionist Church* , from the late 1930s
- (261) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , pp. 4-5
- (262) *Book of Minutes of the Curacautín church* , page. 9
- (263) p. 2
- (264) Testimony of July 21, 2003
- (265) Testimony of November 5, 2003
- (266) Palma, *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , pp. 1, 3

- (267) Heber Palma, letter to the author, February 9, 2005, question . 5, p. 1
- (268) Respective testimonies of December 6, 203 and November 7, 2003
- (269) Heber Palma, letter to the author, May 2003, question . 11, p. 4
- (270) Minutes No. 3, April 27, 1940
- (271) Recasting of two letters, one sent to JA Loje , August 1973, p. 2; and another to the author, 1990, p. 3
- (272) Testimony of Ixia Arévalo, July 20, 2003
- (273) Testimony of Saúl Lagos, December 6, 2003
- (274) Testimony of April 14, 2003
- (275) Testimony of July 23, 2003
- (276) *The Voice of Truth* , Israelite Church of the New Covenant, March-April 1994, p. 6
- (277) *Memory. History of the Reformation...* , pp. 4, 13
- (278) Testimony of July 20, 203
- (279) Testimony of May 4, 2003
- (280) Testimony of January 19, 2004
- (281) Testimony of July 21, 2003

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE 40S TO THE 60S



Ministers attending the second Congress of Ministers of the Israelite Church, held in the city of Curacautín at the end of 1946. In it are distinguished - standing, left to right - Emisael Palma, Rosamel Zúñiga, Agustín Bastías and Rufino Cifuentes; and -seated, from left to right- Fredesvinda Zúñiga, Federico Martínez, Julio Labrín and Humberto Oyarzún .



Celebration of the Cabañas festival in Cumpeo , in the early '40s. In the photograph they appear, standing, behind (from left to right): Fidelina Díaz, Pilar Marabolí , Eleuteria Morales, María Muñoz, Luisa Bravo, María Mondaca, Javier Martínez, Juan Mondaca, Leticia Díaz, Galvarino Gaete, Isidora Cabrera; seated (from left to right): José Mondaca, Jesús Martínez, Tomás Díaz, Pastor Gregorio Mondaca and Humberto Oyarzún



After his consecration as a pastor in 1916, José Pulgar emigrated with his large family from Gorbea to the town of Lastarria, south of Temuco. There he formed a congregation that became one of the largest and most influential Christian-Israelite communities between the '20s and '40s. When the pastor and evangelist José Pulgar died (1948), that church was in charge of successive ministers, such as Julio Labrín, Domingo Contreras and José Zambrano, however it lost its characteristic dynamism and participatory spirit within the Israelite Church of the New Covenant. The photograph dates from the 1940s, and shows part of the membership of the Lastarria congregation.



Congregation of Pucón, in 1948



The third Congress of Ministers was held in December 1948, in the city of Curacautín. The delegates of the Church of God agreed to adopt the definitive name for the institution: “Israeli Church of the New Covenant”, which came to represent the Christian people, the spiritual Israel under the covenant of grace that he established with his death. Thus, the Church united its name with that of the people of Israel.

In the photograph, the delegates attending the Conference (from left to right): Jerónimo Agüero, Miguel Acuña, Daniel Méndez, Julio Labrín, José Zambrano, Froilán Segundo Soto, Samuel Segura, Humberto Ortega, Federico Martínez, Rufino Cifuentes, Silvano Acuña , Barrientos (name not distinguished), Isafas Fuentes, Pedro Gómez, Rosamel Zúñiga, Soto (name not distinguished), Antolín Cuevas, Humberto Oyarzún , Manuel Jesús Garay, José Luis Segura, Manuel San Martín, Fredesvinda Zúñiga, Agustín Bastías, Emisael Palma and children Othniel and Edna Palma.



The Evangelical Israelite Church of the New Covenant, or the “lower” Israelites in Curacautín, in the celebration of the Feast of the Cabins in 1957



The photograph probably shows an instance of the 1952 Conference held in Curacautín. In it the following members of the Church are distinguished (standing, from left to right): Edna Palma, Rosamel Zúñiga, María Medrano, Rufino Cifuentes, Emisael Palma, Fredesvinda Zúñiga, Osvalda Palma, Nevaí Palma; (seated, from left to right) Nimrod Palma, Manuel Jesús Garay, Federico Martínez and Fidel Medrano.



Congress of Ministers of 1954. In the photograph the following members of the Cunco church and delegates appear (from left to right); front row: Rosario de Zúñiga, Licha Sánchez, Laura de Segura, Noemí Sánchez, Amelia de Segura, Ida Segura, Rosa Segura, Fredesvinda de Palma, Emisael Palma, Luis Segura Quezada, Manuel Garay, Ernestina Álvarez (widow of Torres); second row: Patricia Díaz, (unidentified), Manuel Segura, Sabino Segura, Belarmino Segura, Jerónimo Agüero, Federico Martínez, Fidel Medrano, (unidentified), Gonzalo Toledo, Rufino Cifuentes and Samuel Segura; third row: Gabriel Sánchez, Miguel Acuna



Celebration of the Cabañas festival in Curacautín, in 1945. In the center stands the elderly Nieves Pessuarch (1849-1954), mother of the evangelist Emisael Palma



In January 1969, the thirteenth Congress of Ministers took place in the city of Temuco, which took place within the context linked to the unification process between the Israelite Church of the New Covenant and the American Universal Church of God. The staunchest promoters of this merger were Manuel Zamora, Manuel Garrido and Sergio Guerrero; However, when this was already considered a fact, the intervention of Pastor Federico Segundo Martínez was vital to put an end to the process.

In the photograph, the oldest of the delegates of the congregations represented. Standing: Heber Palma, (undistinguished), Miguel Rodríguez, Rosamel Zúñiga, Humbeto Ortega, Rubén Jara, (undistinguished), Federico Segundo Martínez, Carlos Arévalo, José

Baeza, Daniel Fica, Santos Inostroza, Romualdo Vega, (undistinguished), Hermógenes Martínez, José Alfaro, (two undistinguished),

Manuel Zamora, Benicio Peña, (undistinguished) and Emisael Palma. Seated delegates: Guillermo Landeros, Nicolás Landeros, Rubén Cárdenas, Soto (name not identified), Ramón Mella, (two not distinguished), Atanasio Navarrete, Raúl Ortiz, Gonzalo Toledo and (not distinguished).

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