

# Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Through this letter I want to convey my respect and my brotherly greetings to everyone.

As the Apostle John wrote under the inspiration of God, I write to you ". . . not as though I wrote a new commandment . . . but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it" (II John 5-6). Everyone remembers *that* beginning, the day of his call, that day when we repented of our past sins before we were buried in the water of baptism, because we were convinced of having received the Truth. We were filled with enthusiasm, for we knew that we could rely on the help which we would need and thus make the rest of this life's pilgrimage walking hand in hand—spiritually speaking—with a generous Being, full of kindness and faithfulness. As we read in Psalms 37:23-24, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." So, all of a sudden life had become spiritually richer and more beautiful for us, it was in a way a new season, a joyful spring in our existence; and we knew that as the plant, in order to bloom, turns towards the light, so we, in order to grow spiritually, had to turn and walk according to God's commandments which are a light to our path.

But, since that day of revelation, what a lot of questioning and strife! What a lot of discontent and dissatisfaction! Do you know, brethren, that everyone will soon know where he stands? Everyone will know if he was indeed deceived or if he has deceived himself; everyone will know whether or not he has succeeded in becoming a true disciple of Christ. For Christ said, ". . . If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). It is not Christ who has deceived anyone. What proceeds out of His mouth is all truth. Talking about the circumstances which would prevail in the years leading up to His return, Christ said, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34). Which generation? It is obviously a generation to which the Truth was revealed and a commandment given. That commandment is "that we walk after

his commandments . . . . as ye have heard from the beginning." This generation shall not pass! Therefore, all the called of God, whether they are faithful or unfaithful, whether they live in assurance or in doubt, whether they are filled with faith or with unbelief, all will soon know where they stand, for the generation of God's people in the last days is coming to an end. It is true that many believed in 1975 that Christ would come back that year. Twenty years have already gone by since then. It is therefore very hazardous to fix a year for the return of Christ. If God had wanted His people to know it, He would have revealed it to us in His Word. Christ merely gave us certain signs which confirm that it will happen within one generation—a generation which must take heed that no one deceives it—that is, turns them away from the commandment by which each called must regulate his life, as we have heard from the beginning. Christ says to the called of this generation, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44).

God commanded the prophet Jeremiah to write a letter to the captives in Babylon. Let us consider the warning and the instruction which He gave to His people.

For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord. For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end [*'to give you a future and a hope,' RSV*] (Jer. 29:8–11).

The content of this letter which Jeremiah had to write, was certainly addressed to the people of God of his time who were in captivity in Babylon. But of what value would it be in having been recorded in this book, which we call the Bible, if this were merely ancient history?

We see in God's writings that a Babylon exists in the last days. It is called ". . . Babylon . . . . that great city, [*'Babylon the great,' RSV*] because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. 14:8). Since she is making all nations drink of her philosophy, then it is obvious that the people of God of the last days live in Babylon too. In the prayer which He addressed to His Father for those whom He had chosen and those whom He would yet choose, Jesus Christ said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15).

We also see that the captives of Babylon in Jeremiah's time lived in houses, cultivated gardens and ate the fruit of them, married and had children; and an exhortation was given to them. Let us read it: "And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (Jer. 29:7).

Was not the same exhortation recorded in the New Testament for the called of God under the New Covenant? "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Tim. 2:1-2).

Is the situation of the people of God living in Babylon the Great not comparable to the one of our ancestors? Our captivity is in the sense that we live in Babylon the Great not as followers of her philosophy, not as partakers of the wine of her fornication of which all nations are made to drink, but as a people who walk according to the commandment of God, as we have heard from the beginning. For the called of God who refuse these living conditions in this Babylon another captivity is reserved. The prophet Jeremiah speaks about it in the same chapter.

In Psalm 90 the prayer of Moses is recorded for us. In verse one we read, "Lord, thou has been our dwelling place [or our refuge] in all generations." Verses nine and ten: "For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Let us remember that no scripture was recorded in this book pointlessly. The Apostle Paul confirms it, he wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

We see that God says that the days of our years are generally from seventy to eighty years. By the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, God tells us that when seventy years are completed for Babylon, He is going to fulfill His good word toward His people, in delivering us from Babylon. And Jesus Christ Himself said, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled," speaking of the things mentioned in Matthew 24. Brethren, are we the called of God of this generation of which Christ speaks here? Are we those people who must fulfill the purpose which God expects of them in Babylon the Great? Everyone will soon be convinced of that, for the generation to which God revealed His way of life is coming to an end. That is why Christ said, ". . . be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Then, brethren, in

that day, as we read in Psalm 33:12, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." Once again, everyone will know with conviction if he was deceived when he was called or if he has deceived himself in the course of those years which come to an end like a sigh.

Be reassured brethren, we take no risk in walking unto the end in the commandment, as we have heard from the beginning. For strifes of words, for compromises, for discord, for division, for dishonesty towards God's way, the end is near. When everyone sees on which side of Christ he finds himself, he can only be convinced.

To you all I wish good spiritual and physical health. Let us not grow weary of praying for one another. And I say to you, "Thank you," for enduring sufferings and trials with courage in this Babylon, that you may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God.

Your Brother and Friend in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jean Aviolat', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name 'Jean Aviolat'.

Jean Aviolat