

- Systemic Teaching about Christian Life -

Evangelium

Das Evangelium

The Gospel

of

the Kingdom

of God

Series:

THE GOSPEL

The Good News of God

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General Considerations about Using This Material:

The subject presented in this material aims to provide support to knowledge and an in-depth study of the Bible and the Christian life.

Based on the understanding that in the Christian Bible is contained the consolidation of fundamental and formal records of the writings inspired by God for humanity and each person of it, the contents exposed in this material are not intended to add, ever, anything to the Bible, nor ever remove anything from it. The aim through this subject is to contribute to the exploration of what already was registered and passed on to us over thousands of years of history by the One Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth.

The contents presented on the next pages, of course, intend to address just a portion of the essential themes of life displayed with such great amplitude in the Bible. On the other hand, however, this subject is presented in a grouped, colligated, organized and systematized manner with the objective to serve as an aid to knowledge and understanding of the Christian life without losing sight of the main aspects of it.

Ecclesiastes 12: 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.

Related words put together, as told in the biblical text above, serve as goads and nails for fixing supports and help for the life of people that hear and receive them. Therefore, one objective of this material is to study and seek a broader understanding of the truths handed down to us by the Unique Pastor and God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

We would still like to suggest that the reading and studying of this material also should always be accompanied by prudence and proper investigation, believing that this is a very healthy habit to be practiced toward any material presented to a person.

The act of acceptance, rejection, or “retaining what is good,” is a personal and individual attribute given to those who receive the wisdom from God and which should be exercised or used by them toward all that comes into their hands.

Proverbs 8: 12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion.

Acts 17: 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

Proverbs 16: 1 The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits.

3 Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established.

More details about these initial considerations are posted at www.zoominchristianlife.org.

Ronald Gortz and Irmelin Gortz, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ!

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*Revelation 21: 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."
6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.*

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*1Timothy 2: 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

More details about these initial considerations are posted at www.zoominchristianlife.org.

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C1. The Third Compound Name of the Gospel

The subject covered in this new material refers to one of the themes that make up the series The Gospel, The Good News of God, which already has the following previous subjects:

- ⇒ 1) Much More Than a Message: An Offer of Life!
- ⇒ 2) The Limit of the Unlimited Gospel;
- ⇒ 3) The Gospel of the Creator;
- ⇒ 4) The Gospel of Christ.

In the subjects mentioned above, it has been highlighted that the Gospel of God refers to an offer of newness of life presented directly by God to humankind and also that the breadth of the Gospel is so extensive and comprehensive that it is necessary to use various compound names to expose its greatness and the diversity of its characteristics.

We understand that it is important still to remember here that the different compound names do not constitute distinct gospels. There is only one Gospel of God. The various compound names of the Gospel, therefore, announce some of the most prominent facets of this one Gospel, as it is in the case of the first compound name already discussed above and which took into consideration the expression “Gospel of God” or “Gospel of the Creator.”

And to consider the Gospel as being of God or the Eternal Creator, in turn, exposes a multitude of factors associated with it. To say that the Gospel is of God associates, for instance, the origin, ownership, motivation, conception, and purposes of the Gospel with the Eternal God and Father of all creation Himself. Moreover, considering the Gospel as coming from the Father of Lights as well shows that it is the Gospel of God's Love, for it is also structured and entirely grounded in this inexhaustible and marvelous virtue of the Lord Himself.

The second compound name of the Gospel that has been considered is “The Gospel of Christ” or “The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The attribution of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Gospel of God reveals to the world that this Gospel also proceeds and is co-authored by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The Lord Jesus Christ is God's main offer to the world, but the Lord Jesus Christ is also the voluntary offer that has offered itself to be given to the world. Just as the Heavenly Father gave His Only Begotten Son in love so that human beings can have eternal life and relationship with the Creator, so the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself and continues to give Himself in love so that all purposes of the Heavenly Father could and can be manifested to the world and accomplished in the lives of those who receive the Gospel granted from heaven.

When the Gospel of God is also called by the name “Gospel of Christ,” or by the name of the “Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ,” it is revealed to us that the same central aspects of this Gospel that are associated with the Heavenly Father are also associated with Christ.

The list of compound names of the Gospel outlined in the Scriptures, however, is not limited to associating this Gospel only with the names of God Himself. To highlight

some essential attributes of God offered by His Gospel and to specifically show some characteristics of this offer, the Scriptures also extend the list of compound names of the Gospel to these attributes and characteristics.

After knowing that the compound names of the Gospel of God and the Gospel of Christ clearly show the Offeror of the Gospel and the motivations and purposes for it to be manifested to human beings, it becomes very interesting and relevant to move towards a more profound observation of the details of other aspects that are also encompassed in this Gospel.

Thus, and given the number of times that in the Scriptures the mention of the kingdom of God is associated with the Gospel, we would like to adopt the compound name "The Gospel of the Kingdom of God" as the third great title of the Gospel to be detailed more extensively.

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh into the world was also intended to intensify the announcement of the availability of the "kingdom of God" to human beings, as well as to make known the offer of the Gospel of this kingdom in all nations and in all generations until the end of the present world.

*Matthew 24: 14 **And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.***

The granting of the Gospel of God as being as well the Gospel of the Kingdom exposes the Lord's purpose in intensifying the testimony to all nations and peoples that together with eternal salvation and the newness of life in Christ, they also are offered a new relationship with the heavenly kingdom, as exemplified below:

*Mark 1: 15 **and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."***

The compound name "Kingdom of God," after the very name of God and of Christ, is probably the broadest way in which it is possible to refer to the set of all things that work in harmony and voluntary cooperation with God, as well as to everything that willingly is aligned with the will of the Lord.

After the names "Gospel of God" and "Gospel of Christ," the name "Gospel of the Kingdom of God" is shown as the name that most broadly expresses the multiplicity of characteristics of this same Gospel.

Therefore, everyone who longs to know the fundamental aspects that sustain the life of the present Universe and for eternity also needs to be willing at the current time to practice a more intense and specific relationship with the kingdom of God or with the Gospel of this kingdom.

C2. The Definition of What Is Considered Part of The Kingdom of God or The Kingdom of Heaven Belongs To the Unique God of This Kingdom

In the Scriptures, the kingdom of God is also often called by the compound name “kingdom of heaven” or “heavenly kingdom,” as exemplified below:

*Matthew 4: 17 **From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."***

*2 Timothy 4: 18 **And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!***

The mention of the Scriptures to the “kingdom of God” as being also the “kingdom of heaven” refers to complementary characteristics of one or the same kingdom, and does not imply that the two references are dealing with different matters.

In a very summarized way, the term “kingdom of God” indicates more to whom this kingdom belongs or from whom this kingdom comes from, whereas the term “kingdom of heaven” indicates more the idea of the central place of this same kingdom or the place from which this realm in reference is originated.

Moreover, when the origin of the kingdom in reference is observed more closely, it can be seen that one of the main challenges to speak about the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven lies precisely in the fact that this kingdom is not of the world of the natural human being.

Because the heavenly kingdom or the kingdom of God does not come from natural things, or the characteristics of the material world, the kingdom of God can only be known by what God allows us to know about it spiritually.

As much as people strive to know the kingdom of God, it is God who reveals the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to the heart of an individual.

*Luke 8: 10 **And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'"***

*Matthew 13: 11 **He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.***

The kingdom of God is very distinct from any other kingdom that may exist, and the definition of what the kingdom of heaven comes to be or that which is contained in it is fully established by the God of this kingdom.

Even though all things belong to God, and although the heavens, the Earth, and what is in them were created by God and only continue to subsist because of the power of God, it pleased the Lord to establish the terms of what He names His kingdom and that which He defines as other kingdoms.

Although God reigns over all kingdoms and all kingdoms are subject to the limits defined to them from the heavenly throne, it has pleased God to establish a separation of terminology between the so-called kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, and that which is not regarded as the kingdom of God or the heavenly kingdom.

Although God created it, and it remains because God sustains it, the material world, for example, is not considered as an item included in what is called by the Lord as the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. In the Scriptures, the natural world is considered by God as belonging to what is named as the kingdom of this world, the kingdom of men, or the kingdoms of the Earth, as follows:

John 18: 36 **Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."**

37 **Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."**

Daniel 4: 17 **This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.**

2 Kings 19: 15 **Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth."**

Therefore, **one of the first aspects to be considered in the search for more extensive knowledge about the kingdom of God is to accept the concept that the Lord Himself has established for what He calls His kingdom, and Whose throne is established above all and above everything.**

Psalms 103: 19 **The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.**

People on Earth, only in their natural condition, are not able to formulate, imagine, or modify the definition of what is the kingdom of God and what it contains, for the kingdom of God is higher than what human beings think or speak about it, just as God and His thoughts are above every creature.

Isaiah 55: 8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."

Human beings are not called by the Lord to establish concepts or terms about the kingdom of God and its characteristics, nor are they called to try to impose limits on the heavenly kingdom. Human beings are called by the Lord to seek what God presents to them about Himself and His kingdom.

*Matthew 6: 33 **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.***

Thus, we still present below some texts that report part of the greatness and sovereignty of God above any counsel of the creation and which also mention the instruction that is given to human beings to seek God and His virtues with intense attention instead of leaning on their own understandings.

*Isaiah 40: 10 **Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.***

11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.

12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?

*13 **Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has taught Him?***

*14 **With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, And taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, And showed Him the way of understanding?***

15 Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, And are counted as the small dust on the scales; Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing.

16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering.

17 All nations before Him are as nothing, And they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.

*18 **To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?***

19 The workman molds an image, The goldsmith overspreads it with gold, And the silversmith casts silver chains.

20 Whoever is too impoverished for such a contribution Chooses a tree that will not rot; He seeks for himself a skillful workman To prepare a carved image that will not totter.

- 21 **Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?**
- 22 **It is He who sits above the circle of the earth,** And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.
- 23 He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless.
- 24 Scarcely shall they be planted, Scarcely shall they be sown, Scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, When He will also blow on them, And they will wither, And the whirlwind will take them away like stubble.
- 25 **"To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One.**
- 26 **Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing.**
- 27 Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God"?
- 28 **Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.**
- 29 **He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength.**
- 30 **Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall,**
- 31 **But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.**

Isaiah 46: 5 **To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal And compare Me, that we should be alike?**

6 They lavish gold out of the bag, And weigh silver on the scales; They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.
7 They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it And set it in its place, and it stands; From its place it shall not move. Though one cries out to it, yet it cannot answer
Nor save him out of his trouble.

8 **Remember this, and show yourselves men; Recall to mind, O you transgressors.**

9 **Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,**

10 **Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.'**

Isaiah 55: 6 **Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.**

7 **Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.**

*Hosea 6: 3 **Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth.***

C3. Levels of Relationships with the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven

After seeing in the previous chapter that God calls all people to seek His kingdom so that each person may know the heavenly kingdom from what the Lord announces about it, we would like to highlight a second very relevant aspect to be considered regarding a person's relationship with the kingdom of God.

Although it is God's will for all people to come to the knowledge of the truth, knowledge of the truth about God and the kingdom of God is also closely associated with the degree of relationship that a person begins to practice with God and His kingdom.

Even though it is God's will for all individuals to know and relate intensely and continually to the kingdom of heaven, there are people who reach this kingdom at different levels because of the positions or attitudes they adopt toward the heavenly kingdom.

Through the Scriptures, it can be seen, then, that a person's relationship with the kingdom of God can vary, at least, according to the following levels:

- ⇒ 1) A constant relationship with the kingdom of God, but without any perception and understanding about this kingdom;
- ⇒ 2) A constant relationship with the kingdom of God plus a perception that there is a heavenly kingdom or plus some information about the existence of this kingdom;
- ⇒ 3) A constant relationship with the kingdom of God plus a condition that allows one to see the heavenly kingdom;
- ⇒ 4) A constant relationship with the kingdom of God plus the possibility of entering the kingdom of God;
- ⇒ 5) A constant relationship with the kingdom of God plus an understanding of what the kingdom of God comes to be and with what the kingdom of God resembles;
- ⇒ 6) A constant relationship with the kingdom of God plus a role of cooperation with this kingdom;
- ⇒ 7) A constant relationship with the kingdom of God having the kingdom of God by inheritance.

The kingdom of God has a constant relationship with every human being, as well as with all creation, whether people are aware of it or do not know about it, whether they ignore this fact, or even if they despise this relationship.

The fact that the kingdom of God is presented as not belonging to the kingdom of the present world in which we live does not imply that it is a kingdom absent from the realms of this world, as it does not mean that it is a kingdom that lacks a full capacity to act on the kingdoms of the Earth.

The word used in the Scriptures for “*kingdom*” encompasses both the territory demarcated by a kingdom and the position or condition of a given king in exercising a reign according to the characteristics of his kingdom even over other kingdoms.

Therefore, **although the kingdom of God also receives the name kingdom of heaven and is referred to as a kingdom which is far above any other kingdom, it is a kingdom fully capable of being and acting in any other kingdom of the present world.**

The kingdom of God is greater than the created universe, for it contemplates all conception and the power to create and sustain the created worlds.

Although earthly kingdoms cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of heaven is fully capable of intervening in all earthly kingdoms.

The kingdom of God has its own autonomy of action. The kingdom of God is not subject to the kingdoms of the world; on the contrary, the kingdom of God is fully capable of acting in the kingdoms of this world, and it is through the kingdom of heaven that the world is ruled.

To corroborate with the above, we present below a series of passages on the sovereign position of the Lord over the kingdoms, as well as we repeat a part of a previously mentioned text added with a few more verses:

John 18: 36 **Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."**

37 **Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."**

...

19: 9 **and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.**

10 **Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"**

11 **Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."**

James 1: 17 **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**

Psalms 93: 1 **The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved.**

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Psalms 96: 10 **Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns; The world also is firmly established, It shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples righteously."**

Job 41:11 **Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine.**

Isaiah 37: 16 **O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.**

Daniel 4: 17 **'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'**

Psalms 103: 19 **The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.**

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Psalms 22:28 **For the kingdom is the LORD'S, And He rules over the nations.**

The kingdom of God already exists before the world was created and it is through His kingdom that God rules over everything. The present world would not exist and could not be sustained if it were not for the Lord's intense and constant actuation through the heavenly kingdom in all that exists in the universe, even though the support that God gives to the world is not visible to the natural eye.

Hebrews 1: 2 **(God) has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;**
3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

In introducing the teaching of the kingdom of God to His disciples, the Lord Jesus Christ exemplified the action of the heavenly kingdom in the earthly world in various ways, and even in the most different details of earthly life, as it can be observed in the following text:

Matthew 10: 29 **Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.**
30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
31 Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

The world in which human beings live is not sustained only by a material world and by a world made up of grouped material particles. The visible world is consistent, also materially speaking, just because the kingdom that is not of this present world sustains it.

As much as the relationship between earthly kingdoms and the kingdom of heaven is not perceptible to natural eyes, the Lord Jesus Christ taught that the relationship between them occurs in a real and constant way.

Therefore, even if a person does not know the reality exposed in the texts or paragraphs above, or does not believe in it, the kingdom of God is in constant relationship with him or her.

God's will, however, is not that this relationship becomes notorious only in one direction, just in the sense of the actions of His kingdom toward the world, for the Lord's desire is that people also seek the relationship with the kingdom of heaven.

The natural world, as previously considered, depends on the actions of the heavenly kingdom, but there are also actions in the natural world that trigger actions in the heavenly kingdom, an aspect that can be seen in the continuity of the last text of Matthew mentioned above.

*Matthew 10: 32 **Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.***
*33 **But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.***

The attitudes of human beings on the Earth do not shake the kingdom of God and do not strengthen or weaken it, because the kingdom of heaven is under the reign of the Almighty God, but the attitudes a person takes toward the kingdom of God may profoundly affect his or her relationship with God and the heavenly kingdom.

*Matthew 5: 3 **Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

In contemporary times, many aspects of the kingdom of God already are described in the Bible Scriptures, which is why it is no longer necessary for people to remain in complete lack of information about this kingdom.

From the Scriptures, people can already come out of the first condition of relationship with the kingdom of God, in which they are sustained by it without, however, knowing the existence of this kingdom, and can move to the second level where they can have, at least, an informative and intellectual insight of the heavenly kingdom.

References to the kingdom of God are all over the Scriptures, and they repeatedly exalt the sovereignty and greatness of this kingdom.

Nevertheless, informative knowledge about the kingdom of God, though valuable and necessary, is still not the level of relationship with the kingdom of heaven that God wants for people.

It is God's will that people come to receive the kingdom of God willingly in the heart and as well come to the point of entering it.

Just as God offers His fellowship through the offer of the Eternal Gospel so that people may come to know Him and live and walk in the Lord, so

God also invites people to a conscious, voluntary, and intense relationship with His heavenly kingdom.

Although a person on Earth still encounters various limitations in one's natural condition, this does not necessarily characterize an impediment for God to reveal and grant many spiritual aspects of the kingdom of heaven to him or her.

On the other hand, we understand it to be crucial highlighting at this point that the relationship at deeper levels with the heavenly kingdom and the knowledge that goes beyond the mere informative aspect about this kingdom present some specific prerequisites for them to be reached.

The relationship with the information recorded in the Scriptures about the kingdom of God can be reached by all those who have access to the biblical records, but the condition that surpasses this level of relationship can only be achieved by the one who first has a specific experience with the God and the Christ of the heavenly kingdom.

Moreover, by the fact that a more profound relationship with the heavenly kingdom is associated with some specific or personal experiences of an individual with the God of this kingdom, the broader exposition of some parameters of accessing the kingdom of God also becomes such an unusual challenge.

Moving from the condition of having some written information about the kingdom of God to advancing to the level at which it is possible to see and know the kingdom of heaven encompasses a step that is impossible for any human being to accomplish by oneself or through other people.

Moving from the level of mere information about the existence of the kingdom of God and its function of sustaining the Universe to the level at which it is possible to see the heavenly kingdom and its actuation is an experience associated with one of the most indispensable gifts that can be granted by God to a person.

Before a person can indeed see the kingdom of God, one needs to be empowered by the Lord to see this realm in its spiritual condition. There is no way to show the kingdom of God adequately for those who cannot see this kingdom accordingly to the necessary condition for it to be seen properly.

Since the kingdom of heaven is not like the kingdoms of the natural world, it is necessary that a person also becomes first enabled by the heavenly kingdom itself to be able to perceive the characteristics of what cannot be seen or understood only with the natural eyes or the mere natural human understanding, as also reported in the following texts:

- John 3: 1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.*
- 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."*
- 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
- 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*
- 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

1 Corinthians 2: 6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

John 1: 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

A person can only pass from a mere informative or intellectual level about the kingdom of God to a more precise and spiritual perception of it when he or she receives the newness of life that the Lord of the heavenly kingdom offers him or her.

It is God Who places a person in the condition of novelty of life or in the necessary condition that allows him or her to see and also enter the kingdom of the Lord, and this He does from the moment an individual receives Christ in the heart as the Lord and receives the gift of salvation that He offers us through His Gospel.

Just as God established what is or is not associated with the so-called kingdom of heaven, so also God established the conditions for each level of His heavenly kingdom to be known and experienced.

What a person born again or born of the Spirit of God sees and experiences of the kingdom of God might even be communicated in part verbally to those who do not yet see the kingdom of God to encourage them to also want to receive this kingdom, but a real understanding of what is the heavenly kingdom and the visualization with proper understanding of what is the kingdom of God can only be attained when, first, a person opens one's heart to receive the Lord of the heavenly kingdom in his or her own life.

The new birth is one of the prerequisites by which a person can transpose the merely informative and superficial knowledge about the kingdom of God and can move on to an experience of seeing and knowing this kingdom more profoundly and in the way that God wants him or her to know it.

By receiving Christ in the heart as the eternal Lord and Savior, a person receives the gift of being constituted as a new creature in the Lord according to the heavenly kingdom or according to the spiritual man, and not according to the natural man. And it is in this new condition granted by the Lord that a person is also called to advance to the other levels of relationship with the kingdom of God.

Thus, after a person perceives the kingdom of God and comes to have an understanding enlightened by God about His eternal kingdom, one is invited by the Lord to come closer to this kingdom so that one may also understand how to proceed in everything according to this heavenly kingdom and how to proceed to become even a co-worker and eternal heir of it.

Several texts in the Scriptures teach us about the kingdom of God, but there are also several texts that show us the specific aspects about receiving, entering, understanding, increasing cooperation, and inheritance regarding the heavenly kingdom, as expressed in some more examples presented below:

Mark 10: 15 "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

Hebrews 12: 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Matthew 5: 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 11: 25 At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes."

2 Peter 1: 11 For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*Matthew 6: 9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

*James 2: 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of
this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He
promised to those who love Him?*

*Matthew 25: 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand,
'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
you from the foundation of the world.*

The acknowledgment of the Unique God Who possesses the kingdom of heaven, the recognition that all life depends on God, the acceptance of the newness of life that God offers in Christ Jesus through His Gospel, and the abiding in the fellowship with the Lord and with His kingdom are actions that corroborate so that the relationship with the kingdom of God may advance to the several levels to which God beforehand or already has called us.

*Psalms 25: 14 The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And
He will show them His covenant.*

*Daniel 2: 20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God
forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His.
21 And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and
raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those
who have understanding.
22 He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the
darkness, And light dwells with Him."*

*Jeremiah 10: 6 Inasmuch as there is none like You, O LORD (You are
great, and Your name is great in might),
7 Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your
rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations, And in all
their kingdoms, There is none like You.*

C4. The Kingdom of God and the Gospel of the Kingdom

Before we continue to make more specific approaches to the kingdom of God, we would like to point out the difference between the kingdom of God and the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel of the Kingdom, evidently, is an integral part of the kingdom of God and from which it also originates, but it is significant to always keep in mind that the Gospel is the means through which God offers certain gifts to be received by people.

While the kingdom of God encompasses all that the kingdom is and all that is part of it, the Gospel of the Kingdom encompasses the exposition or presentation of the kingdom of God as an offer to all human beings, as well as the granting of the kingdom of God to all who willingly receive it through the righteousness and grace of the Lord.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the most objective way by which God has chosen to make His kingdom known more widely, as well as to make known the offer of His kingdom to all individuals of all generations and peoples of the Earth.

In the material on The Gospel of the Creator, it was approached that God, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, offers Himself to humanity so that everyone who believes in Him may access Him more intensely and may maintain a continuous fellowship with Him. In the subject on The Gospel of Christ, it was approached that also the Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself and continues to offer Himself so that people may receive from His life through fellowship with the Lord.

And just as the Gospel of God and the Gospel of Christ present in their very names what they offer to human beings, so also the Gospel of the Kingdom offers that which is in its name, that is, it offers the kingdom of God or heaven to all the people of the Earth in such a way that this kingdom can be received by everyone who is also willing to receive it according to the way in which the Lord offers it.

The fact that the Gospel of God and Christ also is called the Gospel of the Kingdom shows an even greater breadth of the immeasurable offer made available by God to human beings.

If the Gospel of God and Christ were not also the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Gospel could represent the fact that God was offering Himself personally to humankind, but without this implying that God was also offering His kingdom to them.

If the Gospel were only a personal offer of God to human beings, it could be the offer of a relationship of the human being with God without the kingdom of God being made available to them, and where the very distances and frontiers between the kingdom of God and the world of men could never be transcended.

If the Gospel did not contemplate the kingdom of heaven, it would be a personal message from God where all the aspects and conditions that are available in the kingdom of God could be kept separate and inaccessible to those who received the Gospel.

Receiving, for example, a personal letter, message, invitation, or gift from a head of state from another country is much different from receiving something from a head of state when one makes use of his or her function as a ruler conferred upon him or her in the respective country.

Receiving something personal from a head of state does not automatically imply that the state to which he or she is connected is also involved in what has been forwarded to a person. When, however, something is sent in the name of the state, or of the kingdom, the state itself is involved in what was released to be handed over to others.

Therefore, **the Gospel of God and Christ, also in the form of the Gospel of the Kingdom, besides being a personal offer of God and Christ to all human beings, is as well an official presentation of an offer of the kingdom of God to these same human beings.**

Mark 1: 14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Daniel 7: 18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.

Hebrews 12: 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Since the Gospel of God and Christ is also the Gospel of the Kingdom, there is no longer the possibility to dissociate the kingdom of heaven of all that God offers through His Gospel.

Considering that the Gospel contains the compound name of the Gospel of the Kingdom, the kingdom of God becomes an integral part of all that is offered by the Gospel, just as the call to receive the Gospel also refers to a call to receive and live it according to the principles of this kingdom.

On the other hand, we understand that it should be highlighted here also that the Gospel should never be considered as only the Gospel of the Heavenly Kingdom, where a person who wants to receive it thinks that one can receive the kingdom without also receiving the King of this kingdom. According to the Scriptures, there is no way for a person to receive the Gospel of the Kingdom without first receiving the God and Christ of this kingdom.

As already mentioned in the introduction to this subject, the Gospel of God, Christ, and the kingdom of heaven is only one Gospel and the same forever, and which God also offers with all the aspects contained in the heavenly kingdom.

C5. The Preaching of the Kingdom of God and the Preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom

Considering that the kingdom of God and the Gospel of the Kingdom are distinct but complementary aspects, we also understand that it is very reasonable to point out a similar distinction between the preaching of the kingdom of God and the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

The Scriptures show us that both the kingdom of God and the Gospel of the Kingdom have been widely announced.

*Matthew 4: 23 **And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.***

*Luke 9: 2 **He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.***

*Acts 28: 30 **Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him,***
31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

Preaching the kingdom of God is to announce or proclaim the kingdom itself and the characteristics of this kingdom.

To preach the Gospel of God is to announce the availability of the granting of the kingdom of God to those who accept it in the terms in which it is offered.

The fact that a kingdom is proclaimed to other places and the individuals of other kingdoms, by itself, does not automatically or generally imply that this kingdom is also available to those to whom it is announced.

A nation or country, in particular, may take actions so that it becomes known to other countries and other peoples, but not necessarily with the goal that other people will become part of this country or nation. A nation may announce itself to other nations to offer, for example, the products it produces or to present itself as a buyer of products that other people produce.

The proclamation of the kingdom of God associated with the announcement of the Gospel of the Kingdom, however, is not intended to present the kingdom of God and its characteristics only to let people know of its existence, but it also seeks to reveal God's willingness to offer His kingdom for those who believe in the Lord, in His kingdom, and also in His Gospel.

When the Lord Jesus Christ proclaims the kingdom of heaven to human beings, He does not call people just to believe in the existence of the “kingdom of God,” but He tells them as well to believe in the “Gospel of this

Kingdom,” for in addition of knowing about the kingdom of God, it is through the offer presented in the Gospel that people can also receive it in their personal life.

Mark 1: 14 **Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."**

The preaching of the kingdom of God comes to fill the gap of information about the kingdom of heaven, but the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom comes to awaken people to know that the kingdom of God is near them and that, in addition to being near, it can be accessed by those who live on Earth and by those who accept it as a gift from heaven and God.

How will people voluntarily receive something about which they do not have a minimum of information?

How will people want to receive something if they do not know it or do not know that it is available to be received voluntarily by them?

Therefore, **the preaching of the kingdom of God and the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom complement each other so that the proclamation of the kingdom and its availability become announced and known together.**

When the Lord announces the greatness of the aspects of His kingdom, He does it because of His purpose of sharing them also with those who are pleased with Him and His gifts.

The Lord Jesus Christ presented many characteristics of the kingdom of God in His preaching and teaching, but He also remained very intense in announcing how a person can receive and enter the kingdom of heaven, according to some examples that we repeat below:

John 3: 5 ***Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."***

Matthew 7: 21 ***Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.***

Matthew 5: 3 ***Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

The focus of the preaching of the kingdom of God aims at proclaiming to people the real existence of the kingdom of heaven and how human beings are dependent on this kingdom.

The focus of the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, in turn, is to let people know that even though they are living under natural limits, they can choose to interact with the heavenly kingdom much more intensely than when they do not perceive it and do not receive it in personal life.

C6. Seek First the Kingdom of God!

In this new chapter, before we continue about some specific characteristics of the kingdom of God and how and where it can be found by people on Earth, we would like to talk about the importance of the search for this kingdom “*in the first place.*”

In His preaching and teaching, the Lord Jesus Christ continually referred to the kingdom of God and intensely taught about it, making the subject of the kingdom of heaven become one of the subjects most addressed by the Lord in the time He was in the flesh on Earth.

The Lord Jesus Christ taught widely about the kingdom of God even in the days that followed His death and resurrection, as can be seen in the following text:

*Acts 1: 1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,
2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,
3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*

In the first days after He had been raised from the dead by the power of God, and when He was about to be raised to heaven to His position of glory at the right hand of the Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus Christ continued to urge the disciples on the subject of the kingdom of God, showing how important this subject is from His and the Heavenly Father's point of view.

The theme of the kingdom of God has a special place in the books that chronicle the life of the Lord Jesus Christ on Earth and as well as in the book called the Acts of the Apostles, and this, to the point that the theme of the kingdom of God appears both in the first lines which make the opening of this last book and also in the verses that present the closing of the same book, as we see below:

*Acts 28: 30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him,
31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.*

The theme of the kingdom of God is of such great importance that the Lord Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, invested another forty days to “*speaking the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,*” confirming what the Lord Jesus Christ had already taught to His disciples previously in His ministry while in the flesh on Earth, namely:

*Matthew 6: 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’
32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

When, after His resurrection, the Lord Jesus Himself first presented the theme of the kingdom of God to the disciples, He was confirming one more time to them what He had previously told them to do.

The Lord Jesus intensely taught His disciples the importance of the kingdom of God, but also the prominent place that “seeking the kingdom of God” should occupy in the life of those who want to live and walk according to the instruction of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ not only taught that the kingdom of God should be sought diligently, but also instructed that the kingdom should be sought before anything else in life, even before those aspects that may seem to be the most essential for life and survival, such as food, drink, and clothing.

It should also be pointed out that the Lord Jesus Christ put “the call to seek for the righteousness of God” as well in the first place. The search for the righteousness of God is placed first in parallel with the search for the kingdom of God, but for a didactic and structural matter of the subjects of the Systemic Teaching about Christian Life, we will seek to approach the aspect of the subject on the righteousness more widely in the material entitled The Gospel of Righteousness of God.

Thus, what is the kingdom of God or what is so important in the kingdom of heaven that the Lord Jesus Christ exalts the search for this kingdom in a position of such great prominence?

What is so sublime and relevant in the kingdom of God to the point that the Lord Jesus Christ established the relevance of the search for it above the search for the basic material things that sustain the natural life?

What is so significant or precious in the kingdom of God that the search for it should be placed first in the life of a person that lives on Earth?

And yet, before answering the questions above, what means to seek for something in the first place?

The word “*seek*,” used to describe the attitude that the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ should have regarding the kingdom of God, is correlated with the firm purpose of “*seeking in order to find*,” “*seeking to discover*,” and is correlated with “*the effort to investigate something in order to actually achieve what is being investigated*.” (According to comments associated with Strong's Greek lexicon).

Moreover, or in turn, “*to seek something in the first place*” is to seek something **first in time, position, and place**. (According to comments associated with Strong's Greek lexicon).

Seeking for something first, then, is searching for something before looking for anything else.

Seeking for something in the first place **is putting the search for something specific before the search for all other things**.

Seeking the kingdom of God first encompasses even postponing the search for several other things for after the search for the kingdom of God has been done.

In the text of Matthew 6, verse 33, it is evident that seeking the kingdom of God is not something to be postponed to the near future or a distant future, nor it is an attitude to be delayed for the time after life on Earth, for the search for the kingdom of God, in the first place, is counterposed by the Lord Jesus Christ with the pursuit of the most elementary material things for the physical or natural survival of human beings.

When the Lord insists with His disciples that the kingdom of God should be sought first, He does so because the kingdom can indeed be attained by those who seek it first and by those who seek it according to the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Though the kingdom of God is the kingdom of heaven, it is not far away and can be found, through the Gospel, by the people who live on Earth so that this kingdom may contribute even more with the life of those who receive it.

Let's look again at two statements that affirm the proximity of the kingdom of God to human beings on Earth:

Mark 1: 14 **Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."**

Matthew 12: 28 **But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

It is important to know that what the Lord teaches us to be sought in the first place is also possible to be found first, for before the Lord asks us to do something, He has already made the provision so that which He teaches us to do may also be accomplished through Him.

C7. Why Seek the Kingdom of God in the First Place?

Several aspects related to the meaning of seeking something in the first place were approached in the previous chapter, however, it seems to us that the question that may intrigue many people is not only the understanding of what it is to put the search for the kingdom of God in the first place, but rather the reason why the kingdom of God should be sought first.

Why, then, seeking the kingdom of God before all other things?

The Lord Jesus Christ's answer to the question about the reason for seeking the kingdom of God first and the vital importance that the kingdom of heaven represents to be first in a person's life is very simple and objective:

*John 15: 5 **I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.***

Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, using other words, also expresses what the Lord said about the necessity of the kingdom of God to be first in a person's life, namely:

*Romans 7: 18 **For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.***

*Romans 8: 2 **For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.***

*3 **For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,***

*4 **that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.***

*5 **For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.***

*6 **For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.***

*7 **Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.***

*8 **So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.***

*9 **But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.***

Why, then, are we called to seek the kingdom of God in the first place?

Christ calls people to seek the kingdom of God in the first place because apart from the newness of life granted by the kingdom of God, there is no useful life for eternity and there is no life that pleases God. Devoid of the kingdom of God, life is the life of the flesh, which inclination is to death.

Seeking the kingdom of God is the search for which is indeed good for the present life and also for the eternal life, and therefore it should always be done first or before anything else.

If a person seeks the things of life first after the flesh, one sows according to the flesh, departs from the life that God has for him or her, and does not produce the fruits of life according to the will of God.

Therefore, to seek the kingdom of God first of all involves seeking the Lord, the newness of inner life according to the kingdom of God, and the instruction of the Lord and His kingdom before doing other things in life, and this, also so that which a person does may become useful and valuable in the eyes of God and before men.

*Hebrews 6: 7 **For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God.***

*Romans 14: 17 **For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.***
*18 **For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.***

In the kingdom of God, there is provision for the forgiveness and remission of sinners, and there is also provision for the granting of a new heart according to the kingdom of heaven, a heart in which the Spirit of God dwells to guide in all truth those who trust in the Lord. In the heavenly kingdom, there is wisdom and all sorts of good gifts. In the kingdom of the Father of lights, there is the possibility of an understanding enlightened by the heavenly light and a fellowship with the Creator of the universe which can never be found in the kingdoms of this world or through any kingdom on Earth.

Nevertheless, to that which a person is inclined to first or in what one sets his or her mind primarily is what ends up attracting this person also in other things.

We emphasize here, then, that seeking first the kingdom of God, or the contempt for it, is respectively a matter of life or death regarding the real and eternal life offered by God.

*Ezekiel 18: 31 **Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?***

*Hebrews 8: 10 **For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.***

*11 **None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.***

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

Seeking the kingdom of God first encompasses the search and willingness “to be in Christ” to be enabled and instructed for all that regards to the day-by-day living and walking.

Seeking the kingdom of God in the first place includes recognizing that there is no other God besides the Eternal Lord and that a person dissociated from life according to the kingdom of heaven has not the proper support to live and walk according to the newness of the heavenly life and the will of God.

Seeking the kingdom of God first involves surrendering one's life to God's hands to be, first of all, sustained, supplied, instructed, and guided by the Lord according to the heavenly kingdom.

*2 Corinthians 3: 4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God.
5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,
6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

Isaiah 37: 16 O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

Jeremiah 14: 22 Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O LORD our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these.

*Psalms 37: 4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.
6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday.*

*Proverbs 3: 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.
7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.
8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.*

Seeking the kingdom of God first involves seeking the God of the kingdom first to be His and to live and walk through Him according to His righteousness, peace, and the Spirit of God.

Establishing the search for the kingdom of God in the first place includes to be pleased first with God and before anything else that was created by Him, and it also means recognizing that the Creator is above all life and all creation.

Psalms 63: 3 ***Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.***

Seeking the kingdom of God first is to seek the real essence of life in the first place. And God and His heavenly kingdom are the substance that provides newness of life and gives support to this novelty of life in the Lord.

Seeking the kingdom of God is not a mandatory task or some goal to be achieved by a person so that he or she, as a kind of reward, only receives food, drink, or clothing for the natural life.

The kingdom of God sees life in its entire or global aspects, and not only in the material and temporal matters. The kingdom of God sees and provides for life from before its conception and continues to provide for life even in eternity with God for all those who also want the kingdom of the Lord.

The kingdom of God supports the universe and all the life that has been in it since the foundation of the world, but when a person seeks the kingdom before performing the other actions of his or her own life, one seeks the favor of God so that also his or her life becomes ordained and aligned by the Lord according to the purposes or principles of the heavenly kingdom.

Seeking the kingdom of God first, therefore, also demonstrates that a person believes in God as the Lord who reigns over all life and all aspects of life. That is why those who seek the kingdom of God and announce that the Lord reigns over life are also regarded as blessed and holders of beautiful feet that spread the offer of the newness of divine life available to all those who also want to receive it.

Romans 10: 15(b) ***As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"***

Isaiah 52: 7 ***How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"***

When a person seeks the kingdom of God in the first place because of the Gospel preached to him or her, one announces that one believes that the kingdom of God is the source of all life, even though it may not appear so to the natural eye.

On the other hand, one who refrains from placing the kingdom of God in the first place in his or her personal life is subject to the risk of running after the wind and that which, from the eternal perspective, is devoid of meaning and profit.

1 Samuel 12: 21 **And do not turn aside; for then you would go after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they are nothing.**

Proverbs 10: 2 **Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, But righteousness delivers from death.**

Proverbs 11: 4 **Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, But righteousness delivers from death.**

Proverbs 23: 4 **Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease!**

5 Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven.

Jeremiah 16: 19 **O LORD, my strength and my fortress, My refuge in the day of affliction, The Gentiles shall come to You From the ends of the earth and say, "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, Worthlessness and unprofitable things."**

Jeremiah 23: 32 **Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams, says the LORD, and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all, says the LORD.**

Hebrews 13: 9 **Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.**

Habakkuk 2: 18 **What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, The molded image, a teacher of lies, That the maker of its mold should trust in it, To make mute idols?**

Matthew 16: 24 **Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Some people who do not seek the kingdom of God in the first place, perhaps may not do so because they do not know about the essence of life and the support that spiritual life gives to material life, but there are also many who do not do it because they do not believe that it is from the kingdom of God that the essence of life comes from or because they despise the essence of life by giving more value to the natural life than to the spiritual life that comes from the kingdom of heaven.

Thus, to seek the kingdom of God first encompasses also honoring the Creator by recognizing that every life on Earth is manifested only by the permission of the Lord and that it only remains as long as the Lord allows it to be so.

Finally, in this chapter, we would like to mention that **seeking the kingdom of God in the first place includes making use of the opportunity that the Lord grants to human beings to be found by them while He and His kingdom, through His Gospel, still are manifesting themselves so close to people on Earth.**

Isaiah 55: 6 **Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.**

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

Matthew 4: 17 **From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."**

C8. The Vital Role of the Distinction Between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Other Kingdoms in Seeking for the Kingdom of God

In the chapter on the levels of relationship with the kingdom of God it has already been pointed out that the kingdom of the Lord is not a kingdom of this world and that it is also called the kingdom of heaven, implying in this way that obtaining an appropriate knowledge about this kingdom depends on the action of God in granting it to people.

On the other hand, a high amount of information about the kingdom of God has already been made available by the Lord to humans over the centuries, regarding which a large part has even been recorded in the Scriptures so that it could be passed on from generation to generation.

Through the most diverse information recorded in the Scriptures, the Lord repeatedly points out that the heavenly kingdom is distinct in its origin and central location, but also that the kingdom of God is distinct from other kingdoms in its purposes and manner of acting, aspects that we recall once more through the examples below:

*John 18: 36 **Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."***

*Colossians 1: 13 **He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,**
14 **in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.***

Although the Lord Jesus Christ spoke about some examples of similarity between the kingdom of God and some practices of the natural life, the kingdom of God is not exactly like the examples of natural life on Earth, nor does it have the faults and sins that natural life or according to the flesh presents, teaching the Lord also that flesh and blood do not inherit the heavenly kingdom.

*1 Corinthians 15: 50 **Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.***

Thus, in trying to define the kingdom of God from the concepts and structures of the kingdoms of men, many people end up following the path that leads them to misconceptions about what is the kingdom of heaven indeed.

The kingdom of God is singular, presents specific or unique characteristics that no other kingdom possesses, and presents aspects which are manifested differently from the ways that the other kingdoms use to express themselves.

For instance, while the rulers of the kingdoms of the world seek to dominate those who are under these realms, the Ruler of the kingdom of light offers remission and deliverance to people so that they may attain the freedom that is found only in Christ Jesus, as can be seen as well in the texts listed below:

Mark 10: 42 **But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.
43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant."**

Colossians 1: 9 **For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;
10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;
12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.
13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,
14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**

John 8: 34 **Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.
35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.
36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**

Another difference between the kingdoms of the world and the kingdom of God is that the kingdoms of the world work from the outside to the interior, while the kingdom of God comes to give a new heart and through it a new understanding to those who receive it. The granting of a new heart and the condition of a new creature in Christ are characteristics provided exclusively by the kingdom of God to those who receive it indeed. (This subject is presented more broadly in following chapters and in the themes of the series named New Creation in Christ).

There are many differences between the kingdom of God and other kingdoms. The kingdoms of the world, for example, do not have the power to forgive people's sins before God, while the kingdom of God offers eternal forgiveness to all who want it and receive it in the graceful way that God offers it.

The rulers of the kingdoms of the world do not invite their servants to be their children, but the kingdom of God does not only call people to be children of the kingdom but also offers them inheritance and an eternal condition of sons of the Lord.

Therefore, the Gospel of the Kingdom was sent to the present world also so that people may know that the kingdom of God can supply abundantly what no kingdom of the world can provide for them, according to a few more examples below:

Matthew 9: 6 **But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."**

John 14: 27 **Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**

Luke 11: 20 **But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

Isaiah 37: 20 **Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD, You alone.**

In many ways and several texts, the Scriptures teach us how important it is to keep in mind a proper distinction of the kingdom of God ever present in those who receive it and who are willing to live and walk according to the will of God.

The knowledge and resources that the kingdoms of the world and the power of darkness offer can never provide the conditions and understanding that are necessary for a life according to the will of God, for this the Lord chose to keep in His own kingdom, and opted to share it only to those who also want to receive that which is offered to them from heaven.

The plans and thoughts of God, kept for those who seek the Lord and His kingdom, are incomparably higher than what the creature can conceive in its own understanding, there being a distance between them that is impassable just by natural means.

Isaiah 55: 6 **Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.**

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."

We recall here, once again, that the offer of the kingdom of God and the announcement of the way to this kingdom are directed to all people, but the kingdom of heaven is indeed granted to people who incline themselves to receive it and who remain

seeking that what is offered them by the Lord. God's higher ways and thoughts, even though they are offered to all, need to be received and sought in God and His heavenly kingdom.

*Matthew 7: 7 **Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.***

In the introductory materials of the series of subjects on the Gospel of God, it has been repeatedly pointed out that the Gospel has the characteristic of an offer, and as such, what it offers is not imposed on the people, and neither the gifts offered by it are imposed on an individual if one does not want to receive what is offered to him or her through the grace of the Lord.

Considering that the kingdom of God is offered according to the Gospel of God, Christ, or the Kingdom, that which is offered also needs the agreement of acceptance of the one to whom the offer is addressed, which, in the case of the kingdom of God, also includes asking and receiving, seeking and finding, and knocking until the door opens.

The action of asking, seeking, and insisting on the Kingdom of God, however, does not need to be complicated, because it is done, primarily, by praying directly to God.

*Romans 10: 13 **For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."***

*Luke 11: 10 **For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.***

*James 1: 5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.***
*6 **But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.***

*Psalms 61: 1 **Hear my cry, O God; Attend to my prayer.***

*Psalms 69: 13 **But as for me, my prayer is to You, O LORD, in the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.***
*14 **Deliver me out of the mire, And let me not sink; Let me be delivered from those who hate me, And out of the deep waters.***
*15 **Let not the floodwater overflow me, Nor let the deep swallow me up; And let not the pit shut its mouth on me.***
*16 **Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.***

Asking, seeking, and insisting on requesting can be humiliating attitudes before the eyes of the kingdoms of the Earth, which often prefer to exalt their own strengths and achievements through their carnal efforts. However, many attitudes despised by the kingdoms of this world are precisely those attitudes that are noble before the kingdom of heaven and its God.

Asking for something expresses a need and announces the inability to carry out what is requested. Asking for something shows humility and dependence, likewise a little child who asks for help when he or she needs something.

Therefore, to know that the kingdom of God has its own characteristics, as well as that the manners of conduct recognized by it are also supported by specific criteria, can be decisive for an appropriate relationship with this kingdom and with the novelty of eternal life that is granted by it.

Because it is from a distinct place, having unique or particular characteristics, and having criteria of relationship with people which in many ways are different from the manners of conduct that are proposed by the kingdoms of the Earth, the kingdom of God also needs to be sought in the proper place and by the ways that are pertinent to it, aspect exemplified once again below:

*Matthew 18: 3 **And said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."***

*1 Peter 5: 5(b) ... **and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."***

*Colossians 3: 1 **If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.***
*2 **Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.***
*3 **For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.***
*4 **When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.***

The kingdom of heaven is also granted by God to renew the understanding of people and is powerful to transform them according to the understanding belonging to this kingdom, but if one does not want a transformation in his or her life, one expresses an objection to what the kingdom of heaven offers. And because of this kind of posture, an individual may deprive oneself of the kingdom of heaven, for God allows His kingdom to be experienced more intensely also as a person allows the Lord to transform one's life to be more and more in consonance with the heavenly kingdom.

Since the kingdom of God is not of this world, it cannot be achieved according to the principles of the present world and by those who conform or mold their lives in the first place with the rudiments of this world.

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

Moreover, what the kingdom of God offers is not a set of information with no definite purpose, and what it offers is not a set of words for a mere record and mere knowledge. The kingdom of God is offered with its power that is fully able to cause mighty changes even in the deepest areas of a person's life.

1 Corinthians 4: 20 **For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.**

Thus, for a person to know the kingdom of God, one needs also to be willing to know and receive what was still unknown to him or her. And for a person to be able to understand the aspects of the kingdom of God appropriately, one needs first have his or her understanding enlightened by the kingdom of heaven itself.

A person who renders oneself only to the concepts of life according to the very natural creature, or according to the kingdoms of the Earth and the darkness, needs to awaken to a willingness to stand before God to know and to be taught that there is much more about life than what is propagated among humans in their mere natural knowledge.

Ecclesiastes 1: 9(b) ... **And there is nothing new under the sun.**

Ephesians 5: 14 **Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."**

Psalms 68: 32 **Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; Oh, sing praises to the Lord.**

33 **To Him who rides on the heaven of heavens, which were of old! Indeed, He sends out His voice, a mighty voice.**

34 **Ascribe strength to God; His excellence is over Israel, And His strength is in the clouds.**

35 **O God, You are more awesome than Your holy places. The God of Israel is He who gives strength and power to His people. Blessed be God!**

The perspective of God and His reign over life encompasses all past, present, and future times, as well as covers what happens simultaneously in all places of the world. That is why God's perspective over life is the only one that can guide a person safely at present and to a safe and secure future.

Psalms 146: 10 **The LORD shall reign forever, Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!**

2 Kings 19: 15 **Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth."**

Jeremiah 29: 11 **For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**

The Lord instructs us not to be afraid of the world around us, for He, from His heavenly kingdom, can provide for us all the protection, instruction, direction, and provision that we need. And it is up to us to trust in Him, to receive the kingdom that He offers us through His grace and mercy, and to walk according to the specific instructions of the heavenly kingdom, aspects also announced through the songs of the Psalmists, and of which we exemplify some verses that follow:

Psalms 90: 1 **Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.**

Psalms 33: 13 **The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men.**

14 From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth;

15 He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.

16 No king is saved by the multitude of an army; A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.

17 A horse is a vain hope for safety; Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy,

19 To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.

21 For our heart shall rejoice in Him, Because we have trusted in His holy name.

22 Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, Just as we hope in You.

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

15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation.

Psalms 32: 8 **I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.**

Finally, in this chapter, we would like to emphasize that **the understanding of the distinction between the kingdom of heaven and the other kingdoms does not change the reality of the existence of the kingdom of God, but it can cooperate, and much, to a new reality of life for the individual who perceives this distinction and for the person who indeed seeks the kingdom of God to live and walk by the corresponding ways or characteristics of this kingdom.**

C9. The Kingdom of God in its Global Set and the Part of the Kingdom of Heaven that “Comes to Us” on Earth

At the beginning of this new chapter, we would like to point out again that the kingdom of God, although also expressed as the kingdom of heaven, can already be seen and entered by the people who live on the Earth and receive it voluntarily.

On the other hand, in order not to present a mistaken idea of this relationship with the heavenly kingdom, we understand it to be very significant to highlight that the Scriptures also teach that the fact that the kingdom of God can already be seen and accessed by the people on Earth who receive it does not mean that it can already be seen or entered in all its aspects.

If, on the one hand, and although inhabiting a natural body, people on Earth are called by God to know already the parts of the kingdom of heaven that are necessary for them to live and walk according to the heavenly will, on the other hand, this does not mean that they already can see and access all aspects of the kingdom of the Lord.

Although people on Earth may already receive what they need from the kingdom of God to live and walk in consonance with the way of truth and life in the Lord, not everything of the kingdom of God or that which is yet to be revealed can be seen and experienced by people while they are still in the condition of a natural body.

And to understand more fully what has been mentioned in the above paragraphs, it is important to note that a person's relationship with the kingdom of God encompasses aspects of the past, the present, and the future of this kingdom.

The past of the kingdom of God, for instance, may come to be known in parts through information about the actions that have already been performed by God through the kingdom of heaven, such as the creation of the present world and the sending of Christ in the flesh into the world to make provision for the redemption of human beings through His life and work on Earth. A work that culminated in the crucifixion of the Lord on the cross of Calvary, and after in His resurrection from the dead by the power of God that is in the heavenly kingdom.

Regarding the present relationship with the kingdom of God, a person can already receive and experience immeasurable attributes of the kingdom of heaven, for the work of Christ performed in the past is a fact with effects for the present and lasting for eternity. The work of Christ of the past and the living condition of the risen Christ allow a person to experience the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in his or her life already in one's present days in the world.

Nevertheless, regarding the future relationship with the kingdom of God, many aspects are reserved to be seen and experienced by a person only after he or she will be with Christ in the full glory of the heavenly kingdom.

Several mysteries about the creation of the world and human beings are still reserved in God and will be revealed only when a person is in the eternal presence of the Lord. Similarly, also various gifts and conditions already existing in the heavenly kingdom will be manifested to those who believe in the Lord only when they are no longer in the present world or when they are no longer in a corruptible body. And several questions of the future itself will be clarified and made available to people only when they are no longer associated with life on Earth.

The Lord Jesus Christ, Paul, Peter, John, and several other writers of the Scriptures have repeatedly pointed out the need of perceiving distinct times and the relevance that the discernment of these times represents in the relationship with the kingdom of God, as can be seen in some examples below:

*2 Timothy 4: 18 **And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!***

*Romans 8: 23 **Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.***

*24 **For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?***

*25 **But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.***

*Philippians 3: 20 **For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,***

*21 **who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.***

*1 John 3: 1 **Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.***

*2 **Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.***

*3 **And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.***

The discernment of the aspects of the kingdom of God which are pertinent to the period of life on Earth and of those that are not yet for the present time needs to be widely supported by the wisdom granted by God and by the understanding of the teachings that the Lord has left us in the Scriptures.

We have seen previously that the actions of the past of the kingdom of God are fundamental and offer us assurances that are essential to establish a steady faith in the heavenly kingdom already at present, and which, therefore, should never be despised.

Likewise, the knowledge of the promises of that which is yet to be revealed in the future time of the heavenly glory also has an enormous significance in the present time for the strengthening of the hope and faith of a person, for if there were nothing more to be expected, all hope would be vain or devoid of purpose.

*Romans 8: 24 **For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?***
*25 **But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.***

When, for example, the subject of God's promises to be experienced in the future of the heavenly glory is addressed, it is important not to confuse promises and hope with the fulfillment of these promises.

Hope and promises are different from the fulfillment of the promises and what is in the kingdom of God to be experienced in the future. Hope and promises are not aspects to be obtained in the kingdom of God only in the future, and they express characteristics of the heavenly kingdom to be received and used by every Christian already at present, although the fulfillment of several of them is promised for a specific time that is yet to come in their lives.

Promises are an essential element for the action and strengthening of an individual's hope. And hope, in turn, is an indispensable element for the constitution of faith in God. Moreover, we know that without the working of the faith in God in an individual's life, a person cannot see and enter the kingdom of God in the present time.

The examples of the promises, hope, and faith in the Lord described in the Scriptures show us that there are several attributes of the kingdom of God that should be present in all the plans and conduct of life that a Christian does during his or her pilgrimage on Earth. These examples show us that there are many aspects of the kingdom of God already available to be accessed while a person lives on Earth, and which utilization should not be postponed even though part of the fulfillment of the promises is for a future ahead.

Thus, we would like to suggest to the reader to take the due time to see the extensive list of texts below to observe with attention in them, yet as an example, the action that is already assigned to hope toward those who are still living and walking on Earth.

*Romans 5: 3 **And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;***
*4 **and perseverance, character; and character, hope.***
*5 **Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.***

*Romans 15: 4 **For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.***

*Romans 15: 13 **Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.***

*2 Corinthians 3: 12 **Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech.***

Ephesians 2: 12 **That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.**

Ephesians 4: 4 **There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.**

Colossians 1: 21 **And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled**
22 **in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight,**
23 **if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.**

1 Thessalonians 4: 13 **But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.**

1 Thessalonians 5: 8 **But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.**

2 Thessalonians 2: 16 **Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,**
17 **comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.**

Titus 1: 1 **Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,**
2 **in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.**

2 Peter 3: 10 **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.**
11 **Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,**

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

1 John 3: 1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Hebrews 10: 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Returning, then, to the matter of the relationship with the kingdom of God in the time in which a person lives on the Earth, we emphasize here again that although there are many aspects to be achieved in the kingdom of God in the future, that what God offers already in the present to be known and experienced of His kingdom, by those who believe in Him, is thoroughly sufficient so that a person may already live and walk according to the principles of the heavenly kingdom, as the following texts also show us:

Galatians 5: 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Romans 8: 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

Although countless facets of the kingdom of God are prepared to be seen and accessed only after life on Earth, that which is already accessible in the kingdom of God is powerful to save a person from this world, from the path of perdition, and is mighty to lead a person along the way of truth and eternal life.

Even though various aspects of the heavenly kingdom are for a time still to come in the life of the one who is still in his or her fragile natural condition, the help of the

kingdom of God has been already widely available at present, even when a person stumbles and needs again to be restored by the strength of the Lord.

*Psalms 37: 23 **The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way.***

*24 **Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.***

*1 John 2: 1 **My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.***

*2 **And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.***

Both the text of Psalm 37 and the text of the letter of 1 John present their verbs in the present tense. Christ is not only proclaimed as a future propitiation for the forgiveness of sins. Since the time of antiquity, and as well at present, Christ already has been this unique and complete provision. Moreover, we will not have an Advocate before the Heavenly Father only in the future; we already have Him right now.

Considering that the Gospel of the Kingdom is also the Gospel of Christ, we can know that the power that is in Christ to already save and guide people in the present time is also the power that is in the kingdom of God to save them and to grant them newness life equally in the present day.

*Romans 1: 16 **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.***

Therefore, **knowing that there are many aspects of God's kingdom to be revealed in the future is very relevant for a Christian not to faint in the hope of things that are yet to come. However, it is equally significant to know that what is already available in the heavenly kingdom at the present moment of life on Earth is as well entirely sufficient to lead a Christian into victory in his or her daily life until he or she reaches what the Lord promised him or her in the glory that is yet to be revealed.**

Even being still in the world that is opposed to God, that which is necessary for a life according to the will of God, or that which is needed for a life in godliness at the present day, is available to all those who already accept the manifestation of that which God and His kingdom offer to them.

*2 Peter 1: 3 **As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,***

*4 **by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.***

1 John 5: 11 **And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.**

John 4: 14 **But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.**

Romans 8: 32 **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

Mark 1: 15 and saying, "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.**"

Those who are still on the Earth and who receive the kingdom of the Lord by the way through which it is made available, and according to the parts of it that can already be received, can also reach the condition to act in consonance with this kingdom.

Those who receive the “kingdom” of God according to the grace of God, can also receive already the parts of the kingdom that instruct and enable them to “reign” in life in conformity with the kingdom of God and through the King established over this kingdom, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5: 17 **For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**

When the Lord Jesus Christ instructed His disciples to seek the kingdom of God, He did not teach them to ask first that they might leave life on Earth to only then become able to see and enter to the kingdom of heaven. On the contrary, the Lord instructed His disciples to ask the Heavenly Father for the coming of the kingdom to them in order that they could live and walk even on Earth according to the Lord's eternal kingdom and will, as follows:

Matthew 6: 6 **But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.**
7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.
8 Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.
9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

*Luke 11: 2 So He said to them, "When you pray, say: **Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**"*

Why, then, is it so important to discern that the kingdom of God in its full characteristics is distinct from that part of the heavenly kingdom that “comes to us” while we are still on the Earth?

To discern that the kingdom of God is broader than we can see, but also to discern what parts of it come to us, may be crucial to:

- ⇒ 1) **Not incur the inappropriate search of what is part of the kingdom of God, but which cannot yet be achieved while a person is still on the Earth;**
- ⇒ 2) **Not incur the attitude of failing to enjoy the part of the heavenly kingdom that can already be accessed at the present time.**

It is incoherent, for example, for a person to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God and for the will of God to be done and because of that to expect to receive something in the present that is to be received exclusively in the future time. However, it is also not according to the kingdom of God that a person should not seek what is already available as help to live and walk in the light of the Lord in the present days of his or her life on Earth.

The fact that the Lord Jesus instructs His disciples to ask for the coming of the kingdom of God does not mean that “the whole” kingdom of God will manifest itself to them, but that the part that is necessary to live and walk on Earth according to the will of the Lord is fully available to be manifested in what they need in each period of their lives.

Although it is partial access, what God allows a person to reach from the kingdom of heaven, when one receives it and seeks it according to the Lord's instruction, is very broad and goes far beyond what people could even think or imagine.

The fact that the kingdom of God reserves various aspects or gifts to the life with God after the time of an individual on the Earth does not imply that people still living on the Earth should be deprived of any aspect that they need from the kingdom of God in the present time.

What is already available in the kingdom of God for those who live on Earth is abundantly sufficient to supply all that is necessary to live and walk according to the will of the kingdom of God, and, therefore, the Lord has insisted so much in teaching that this kingdom should be sought first.

Although various parts of God's kingdom cannot be accessed by Christians while they are still in a natural body, the kingdom of God is a kingdom fully empowered or able to act in the present on behalf of those who have their hope in the Lord and who trust their lives to the One Who is eternally worthy of all honor and praise.

*Ephesians 3: 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,
21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

C10. The Distinction between the Part of the Kingdom of God that “Comes to Us” and the Expectations of People Regarding the Kingdom of the Lord

In the previous chapter, we saw that there are several reasons why many individuals do not use the part of the kingdom of God that is already available for their lives in the time they are still on Earth, or that is already available to them in the Lord for the most different situations of their daily life.

Many people, for example, do not benefit from what is offered to them from the kingdom of God for the time of life on Earth by ignorance, by neglecting the search of the heavenly kingdom in the first place, by despising what God reveals to them, and even by seeking what is not yet allowed to be experienced instead of using what is already available to them in the Lord.

In this new chapter, however, we would like to point out that **many people also do not benefit on a larger scale from the kingdom of God in the present time because they are seeking what they by themselves think or understand to be the kingdom of God, but whose concepts, in reality, are not part of what is the kingdom of the Lord offered to them.**

Although they may even make a great effort in the search for the kingdom of God, many individuals do not reach the aspects of the heavenly kingdom by seeking, as being the kingdom of God, what is not indeed contained in what the Lord defines as being His eternal kingdom.

When the Lord Jesus Christ instructed people to pray for the kingdom of God to come to them, He did not call them to create an expectation that asking for the coming of the kingdom of God could somehow become equivalent with them asking for what they think that this kingdom is or what they would like to receive from the kingdom of heaven, for to seek even with care and intensity something that is not of the kingdom of God, as if it were of this kingdom, does not make what is sought as being part of the heavenly kingdom.

The Lord Jesus Christ teaches that a person may ask God for material things, and He did it when He said that we should also pray for our “daily bread” to the Heavenly Father. However, a specific prayer “for the coming of the kingdom of God” should be a request with the expectation that the Lord will grant what is part of the heavenly kingdom indeed.

When the Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples to seek His kingdom first, He did not teach them to seek things that resemble the kingdom, things that people would like to associate with the kingdom of God, or the aspects or persons that human beings from themselves announce as being part of the Lord's kingdom.

Therefore, **once an individual becomes instructed about the aspect that there are parts of the kingdom of the Lord to be made available in the future and that there are parts that are already available for the present time, it is also very significant for him or her to discern what encompasses the kingdom of God that “comes to us” and what “is not indeed part of the kingdom of God.”**

And it is again in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ that we can find the broadest and most accurate definitions of what constitutes the part of the kingdom of God that is to be sought in the present time and which, therefore, is offered by God to people still on Earth, as can be seen in the following text:

Luke 17: 20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

Considering the words of the last text above, which declare that the kingdom of God does not come to us in a naturally visible way and also that the kingdom of God is expressed on Earth in the heart of people, it is incompatible with the words of the Lord Jesus a person, for instance, pray for the kingdom of God to come and then expect to receive something visible or outwardly as if it, in itself, were the very kingdom of God or part of it.

According to the Scriptures, the kingdom of God certainly acts in favor of people on Earth who trust in the Lord, adding to them also natural food, drink, and clothing. However, material food, drink, and clothing in themselves are just not considered by God as part of what is the kingdom of heaven.

Although the Lord reigns over rain, the Sun, spring, summer, fall, winter, and over other several aspects that influence the natural growth of things on Earth, the Lord does not include food, drink, and clothing that are produced in the natural world as being what He calls the heavenly kingdom, an aspect that is confirmed very objectively also in the following text recorded in Paul's letters:

Romans 14: 17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

God may even bless a person with several distinct natural gifts, but even if a person achieves abundant elementary or differentiated material goods by the favor of the Lord, material things do not encompass what the Lord has established as being part of what is termed by Him as the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven.

Thus, discerning what is and where the kingdom of God can be found while a person still lives on Earth is crucial to those who yearn for an appropriate relationship with this kingdom, for a substantial discernment about the kingdom of God is indispensable so that a person does not spend his or her life seeking for the kingdom of God in that which is not indeed the eternal kingdom of the Lord.

Understanding the general and central aspects of the kingdom of God and then going into broader detail, as well as knowing several aspects of things that do not make up the kingdom of heaven indeed, is very relevant for an individual not to fall into the error of seeking as being of the kingdom that which the kingdom is not or what will not be granted as part of the heavenly kingdom.

C11. The Part of the Kingdom of God Which “Comes to Us” Most Explicitly Mentioned in the Scriptures

In the previous chapter, it could be observed that the texts of Luke 17, verses 20 and 21, and Romans 14, verse 17, teach us that the kingdom of God is not characterized by things that can be seen with natural eyes or by the most basic material things for the natural life, such as food and drink, or eating and drinking.

If we also recall the text of Matthew 6, it may be noted that in it the Lord Jesus Christ makes a clear distinction between the kingdom of God and the most diverse aspects of the natural world by declaring that the search for the kingdom of God should precede the search for the referred material things.

*Matthew 6: 31 **Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’***
*32 **For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.***
*33 **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.***

On the other hand, if we look at the texts mentioned above not from the angle of what does not represent the kingdom of God, but in the sense of the characteristics of the heavenly kingdom, we can see that the Scriptures do not merely describe what is not considered to be the kingdom of the Lord.

Through various texts of the Scriptures, we can observe that God does not only announce the offer of His kingdom to all human beings by distinguishing it from things which are not considered to be part of this kingdom, but He simultaneously also announces several specific characteristics about what constitutes or expresses the kingdom of God, and which can already be sought by those who receive this kingdom in accordance with the Gospel of the Lord.

Moreover, if we return to observe the text of Romans 14, verse 17, carefully, we can note that God is even very explicit or objective in declaring some aspects that encompass the heavenly kingdom, as follows:

*Romans 14: 17 **For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.***

Just as natural food, drink, and clothing are explicit examples of what is not considered by the Lord as the kingdom of God, so the righteousness of God, the peace of the Lord, and the joy in the Holy Spirit are explicit examples of characteristics of what is the kingdom of heaven.

And if we keep in mind that the righteousness of God, the peace that is in the Lord, and the joy of the Holy Spirit are what is named by the Lord as the kingdom of heaven or realm of God, the call to seek the kingdom of God in the first place evidently encompasses or signifies a call to seek these and other characteristics of the heavenly kingdom first.

Although the heavenly kingdom is not limited to the righteousness of God, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, it should be emphasized that these three aspects are probably the aspects most directly associated with the Lord's kingdom in the Scriptures, and which should, therefore, awaken a high degree of interest on the part of those who are looking for attending to the instruction of the Lord to seek first the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God in all its breadth is immeasurable, and the fact that a text announces that the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit does not mean that the kingdom of God is restricted to these three aspects, but surely this text already points to very precious and precise characteristic about what is the kingdom of God and what a person is called to seek first.

Moreover, regarding specifically the righteousness of God, we can say that there is even a redundant emphasis of the Lord Jesus Christ about it in relation to seek it in the first place, for in addition to the explanation that the righteousness of God is a direct expression of what is the kingdom of God, the Lord explicitly also stated that the heavenly righteousness should be sought first simultaneously with the search for the kingdom of God itself.

Although the kingdom of God, for example, essentially also has God's love as one of its characteristics, the Lord wanted to make explicit the association of His righteousness with His kingdom, as well as the call for people practicing the search for this characteristic in the first place.

If we still consider that the righteousness of God undoubtedly grounds the love of the heavenly kingdom, we can also know that any action of the love of the kingdom of heaven will be a work performed in righteousness, just as we can understand that the actions that are permeated by unrighteousness are not in fact works performed by the kingdom of God and nor through the love of the Lord, as also exposed in the text below:

- 1 Corinthians 13: 4 **Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;***
*5 **does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;***
*6 **does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;***
*7 **bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.***

Similarly to the condition of the Lord's righteousness regarding love, a person cannot truly enjoy the peace of the kingdom of God and the joy of the Holy Spirit if one remains dissociated from the righteousness of the heavenly kingdom.

Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit do not express everything that there is in the kingdom of God, but nothing in the kingdom of God can be dissociated from the righteousness of God, the peace of the Lord, and the presence of the Holy Spirit of God.

Righteousness, peace, and the action of the Holy Spirit are aspects that cannot be put apart from the work of the kingdom of God, and as such, they are also liberated to be abundantly manifested even for the time a person lives on Earth, as can be seen respectively also in the following texts:

Romans 5: 17 **For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**

Romans 3: 21 **But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,**
 22 **even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;**
 23 **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**
 24 **being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,**
 25 **whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,**
 26 **to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

John 14: 27 **Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**

John 14: 16 **And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.**

...
 26 **But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.**

And since God's kingdom is righteousness, any request for God's kingdom to come to Earth implicitly should also be a request for the righteousness of God to come to Earth, but if a person asks for the kingdom of God without wanting that the righteousness of the Lord accompanies this kingdom, this person is not truly asking for the kingdom of heaven.

Similarly, the action mentioned in the preceding paragraph also applies to the operation of the peace of God, the Holy Spirit, and the other aspects of the kingdom.

Something very significant to be understood about the characteristics of the kingdom of God, then, is that none of its attributes can be dissociated from this same kingdom.

Therefore, much is to be sought and explored on the three aspects mentioned so explicitly above and which the Scriptures directly teach as being part of the kingdom of God. On the other hand, considering that following this theme there are subjects that deal specifically with The Gospel of God's Righteousness and The Gospel of Peace, and yet that several aspects of the Holy Spirit's work for Christians are permeated in all

those materials, we would like to leave the broader approaches of these topics to the subjects more directly addressed on them.

Finally, in this chapter, we would like to include yet another text that clearly shows even the sequential action of the righteousness and peace of God, followed by the granting of the Holy Spirit and the love of God to those who open the heart to receive the heavenly kingdom which is offered to them by the grace of the Lord.

- Romans 5: 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*
- 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*
- 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;*
- 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.*
- 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*
- 6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*
- 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.*
- 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
- 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*
- 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*
- 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*

C12. The Non-Visible or Spiritual Aspect of the Kingdom of God

Still giving continuity to the aspects that allow us to distinguish the kingdom of God from that which is not the heavenly kingdom, we would like to return once again to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ presented below:

Luke 17: 20 ***Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."***

Through various texts already mentioned in previous chapters, we can note that the Scriptures evidence that the kingdom of God that “comes to us” is not basically composed of material characteristics.

And when we also observe the last text above, we may note that the reality that the kingdom of God that “comes to us” is not found in material or natural things is evidenced even in a very explicit, direct, or objective way.

In his words, **the Lord Jesus Christ stated very objectively that the part of the kingdom of God that the Lord offers to humans on Earth does not come with “*visible appearance*” or does not come with “*observation*,” as it is translated into some languages or versions of the Bible.**

Based on the Online Bible's comments associated with Strong's lexicon, it can be observed that the word “*observation*” has its origin in a word that some Bible versions present as “*having no visible appearance*,” that which “*cannot be observed with natural eyes*,” or that which “*cannot be naturally seen even if one looks closely or with attention*.”

Therefore, **when a person seeks to know the kingdom of God or thinks of seeking the kingdom of heaven in the first place, one should also have in mind the “unobservable by the natural eyes” or the “non-visible” characteristic that the kingdom offered by the Lord to the human beings has.**

In other words, **the announcement that the kingdom of God offered to human beings “does not come with a visible appearance” or “in a form that can be observed with natural eyes” aims to arouse people's attention to the fact that the kingdom of God is offered according to a reality that goes beyond the natural perception, which, in turn, is the sphere of the spiritual reality.**

Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, also announces in a very objective manner that the revelations and gifts that God offers us through His Gospel refer in the first place to spiritual aspects and gifts, and, therefore, not visible or understandable to those who want to understand the attributes of the kingdom of God merely through their natural mind, as follows:

- 1 Corinthians 2: 6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.*
- 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,*
- 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*
- 9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*
- 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*
- 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*
- 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*
- 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*
- 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
- 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.*
- 16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

In view of the above, that is, in the face of the fact that the kingdom of God does not come with visible appearance or that the kingdom of God offered by the Lord to human beings is constituted of spiritual aspects, and not according to the perception or observation of the natural man, it may seem to some people that the kingdom of God, then, does not really have many useful or practical aspects to be received while they still live and walk in the present world.

At first, when realizing that the kingdom of God does not come with visible appearance or that its attributes are spiritual aspects, a person might come to think that there would be almost nothing left to be considered as the kingdom of God to be received into his or her life while still on Earth.

This last consideration, however, is devoid of a knowledge of what sustains the whole universe and of what actually can grant newness of life and strengthen a person to live and walk according to the will of the Lord.

The kingdom of God, invisible to the natural eye, is much broader and more enduring than the visible world or the world that can be seen by the natural way.

Considering, for instance, that faith, the hope sustained by the Lord, and the love that comes from God are eminently spiritual aspects, we can notice that in these three aspects there is an inexhaustible breadth to be explored and experienced, for these aspects go beyond the limited condition of material life, as also taught in the following text:

1 Corinthians 13: 12 **For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.**

13 **And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**

As we have discussed in previous chapters, God created the material or the natural world, but He did not create it from material things. The created world results from the spiritual power of God and is supported by what humans in their merely natural condition cannot see.

John 1: 1 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

2 **He was in the beginning with God.**

3 **All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.**

As already mentioned as well, the very work of the Holy Spirit in the life of those who receive the salvation of God is manifested initially by spiritual aspects.

And if we also adopt worship as another example, we can see from the Scriptures that the worship that the Heavenly Father seeks on Earth is primarily spiritual worship and what is not associated with natural places, nor limited to physical sites, races, nations, languages, or predetermined times as, for instance, a few distinct days in the week, as narrated by John in the following text:

John 4: 21 **Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.**

22 **You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.**

23 **But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.**

24 **God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."**

The worship that the Heavenly Father seeks does not follow the patterns of specific physical places, rituals, and times which the human beings value so much and implement according to their natural or carnal minds.

We still recall here that the word "worship" has its origin in the word "serving." So, when the Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed that the Heavenly Father seeks those who **worship Him in Spirit and Truth**, He announced that the Heavenly Father seeks those that **serve Him in Spirit and Truth**. And this, at all times and in all places, for at all times and places the Spirit of the Lord is with those who receive in the heart the offer of the Gospel of the Heavenly Kingdom.

John 16: 13 **However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.**

1 Thessalonians 5:23 **Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

God seeks people who serve Him from a made alive spirit, just as God is a Spirit, and this is only possible for those who have received the new birth through the Spirit of the Lord and not only natural birth or from flesh and blood.

The result of welcoming Christ as Lord is to receive the spiritual kingdom of God that is accompanied by the bestowal of a made alive spirit that becomes inhabited by the Holy Spirit, an event that, in turn, allows a person to reach a spiritual condition of being guided by the Lord in the most diverse circumstances of life.

Having the Holy Spirit in the heart represents the possibility of being guided according to the aspects of the kingdom of God in the most diverse areas of life instead of being guided only by natural knowledge and abilities.

Having a spirit made alive by the Lord and being led by the Holy Spirit is evidence of a living and spiritual relationship with the kingdom of God.

Romans 8: 14 **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**

15 **For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."**

John 3: 8 **The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.**

2 Corinthians 3: 17 **Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**

And still giving continuity to the matter of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the one who receives the kingdom of God in his or her heart, we can see in the Scriptures that also that which results from the action of the Holy Spirit is firstly constituted of spiritual characteristics, as follows:

Galatians 5: 22 **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Despite the fact that being led by the Holy Spirit can result in many material actions according to the will of God, and although the fruit of the Spirit can lead a person to express oneself appropriately by natural means, both the direction of God and the fruit of the Holy Spirit, properly speaking, are not material and physical, but spiritual.

A person who, for instance, acts through the love of God can undoubtedly express natural actions that result from this spiritual virtue, but the love of God itself is not something physical or material in the sense that it can be encapsulated and shown as it is possible to do with something physically tangible. Even if a person uses the most potent microscope available on Earth, one can never see a particle of love.

An individual may even love other people whom he or she has never seen and will never see on Earth, and can render them a valuable service by, for example, praying for them moved by the love of God for every human being.

True love comes from the kingdom of God, and for one to love others truly, one also needs first or indeed to receive the love of the heavenly kingdom in his or her heart. However, God's love does not physically enter a person's heart, for it is a spiritual condition.

Thus, also regarding the heavenly love that the need of seeking the kingdom of God in the first place becomes more evident, for:

*1 John 4: 19 **We love Him because He first loved us.***

*Galatians 5: 6 **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.***

*Ephesians 4: 15 **But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ.***

True love, enduring peace, God's joy, longsuffering, meekness, and so on, are not the result of human endeavor or their natural virtues, but they are gifts of the heavenly kingdom to those who receive these gifts of this kingdom.

If an individual seeks the kingdom of God before other things or before seeking only temporary things, and maintains his or her active relationship with this kingdom, one is on the proper path to receive the provisions or gifts of the kingdom of heaven to permeate his or her thoughts in order that one's natural actions may also be instructed and supported by the spiritual virtues that there are in the heavenly kingdom.

If a person allows the spiritual aspects of God's kingdom to guide him or her in the most diverse aspects of life, one can perform actions or works even in the material realm that are pleasing to God, and one can see that also in the natural aspects his or her actions can result in glory to the Lord.

Although the kingdom of God is not natural food, drink, and clothing, when a person accepts the kingdom of God in his or her life and proceeds to live according to it, even the use of that which is of the natural world can serve to the exaltation of the Lord of the eternal kingdom.

Galatians 5: 16 ***I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.***

1 Corinthians 10: 31 ***Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.***

The kingdom of God, which does not come to us with visible appearance, but which can be seen and entered by those who receive Christ as Lord and thus also receive the new birth through the Spirit of the Lord, is an immeasurably broad realm and full of attributes which God has reserved to be granted to all those who are willing to live and walk in the Lord or according to His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

C13. Supported Above All by the Spiritual and Eternal Kingdom

In the previous chapter, we sought to highlight the aspect that the kingdom that the Lord offers through His Gospel is a kingdom that aims to bestow gifts on people's lives so that they can also live and walk according to the heavenly kingdom.

And although there are still several aspects to be addressed about the working of the kingdom of heaven in a person's life and through a person, we would like to use the present chapter to reiterate that the kingdom of God, in its global set, is broader than that which a person on Earth can receive from it, and also that the heavenly kingdom is fully capable of giving support to the people who receive it and to everything that is offered to human beings through it.

Nevertheless, **since the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, we understand that at this point it is also very significant to highlight that which grounds or supports this kingdom equally has its origin in spiritual aspects.**

Although God's help through material things can cooperate in strengthening the faith or trust of people in the Lord, the foundation of the heavenly kingdom and the life of an individual who receives this kingdom does not lie in material things.

Even though many people find a sense of security in material things, institutions visible to the natural eye, or in temples or constructions made by human hands and which have the appearance of solidity, what supports the kingdom of God is not material but spiritual, so as are the most diverse attributes of the heavenly kingdom.

Despite that Christ came in the flesh into the world, so that the work of propitiation or forgiveness of sin could be manifested to human beings, it is not in the physical or natural Christ that the foundation of a Christian's life dwells. A Christian's steady foundation is in the resurrected, spiritual, and eternal Christ, Who can be accessed through the spiritual action of faith in God.

Although the fact that Christ has been manifested in the flesh to the world at a specific period and for a particular purpose, the foundation of both material and spiritual things lies, above all, in the Eternal Son of God in His spiritual condition.

*Hebrews 1: 1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,
 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;
 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

1 Corinthians 3: 11 **For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

The kingdom that is offered to us through the Gospel is first and foremost founded on the eternal and sovereign spiritual condition of the Lord above everything and above all.

Thus, in addition to the fact that the kingdom of God is offered to people with the purpose that the gifts and virtues of this kingdom may be in the heart of each person, the Lord also announces, in the Scriptures, a series of other global characteristics of His kingdom to which a person becomes associate when one receives Christ as the Eternal Lord.

So that people may be informed about various global aspects of the kingdom of God that underlie the part of the kingdom that “comes to us,” or so that they can know what are the central aspects that support the kingdom and the novelty of life offered to them through the Gospel of the Lord, the Lord also informs, through the Scriptures, a series of characteristics of what encompasses the kingdom that offers itself to be favorable to those who receive it in the heart.

The kingdom of God, viewed from its global perspective, presents many facets to which a person becomes associated with by receiving this kingdom in the heart, remembering, however, that each of these various aspects refers to spiritual and non-material conditions, as exemplified in the text below that exposes another precious list related to the aspects of the breadth of what is contained in the kingdom of heaven:

Hebrews 12: 22 **But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,**
23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,
24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.
25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,
26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."
27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.
28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.
29 For our God is a consuming fire.

In the text of Hebrews, quoted above, it can be observed, then, among others, that:

⇒ 1) The kingdom of God includes a mountain, the Mount Zion;

- ⇒ 2) The kingdom of God includes a city belonging to God, which is also a heavenly city;
- ⇒ 3) The kingdom of God includes an innumerable company of angels;
- ⇒ 4) The kingdom of God includes a general assembly and the church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven;
- ⇒ 5) The kingdom of God includes the spirits of just men made perfect;
- ⇒ 6) The kingdom of God includes the Mediator of a New Covenant offered because of the blood of the perfect Lamb who was crucified for the salvation of all people by faith in the Lord;
- ⇒ 7) The kingdom of God includes the instruction of God from heaven for those who belong to this kingdom;
- ⇒ 8) The kingdom of God presents a condition of being unshakable;
- ⇒ 9) The kingdom of God is given together with the grace of God to strengthen and sustain those who receive this kingdom;
- ⇒ 10) The kingdom of God belongs to God Who is the judge of all and Who is a consuming fire.

Repeating once more, it may be noted from the above list, that all these characteristics of the kingdom of God are attributes of a spiritual and not material realm, and are characteristics of a kingdom that is not visible through natural eyes, but only through the eyes of the spiritual understanding enlightened by the grace of the Lord.

The above text which exposes the list of what has been described as part of the kingdom of God presents this kingdom as an unshakable kingdom, and only that which does not belong to the material realms is what can be exempt from being shaken.

“The strong 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck Nepal on April 25, 2015, moved Mount Everest 3 centimeters to the southwest, says China’s National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation,” demonstrating that neither the highest mountain of the planet is exempt from being moved from its place.

Therefore, when, for instance, the Scriptures quote the Mount Zion as belonging to the kingdom of God, one can know with certainty that it is not a physical place, that it is not a natural mountain or some earthly territory.

Any mountain, place, or building on Earth, however steadfast it may seem, is shakable, which reaffirms, therefore, that Mount Zion is a spiritual meeting place for a person with God and is not subject to the external circumstances that things on Earth are.

The refuge which the psalmist declares to have in God is an eternal shelter even though all the Earth, its mountains, and its waters come to be shaken, as follows:

*Psalms 46: 1 **God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.***

*2 **Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;***

*3 **Though its waters roar and be troubled, Though the mountains shake with its swelling.***

Mount Zion, continuing to use it as an example of the unshakable condition of the kingdom of God, is a spiritual place inhabited by God, but which simultaneously can also be dwelt spiritually or through faith in God by the person who has Christ in his or her heart, and who, for this, received the spiritual life of Christ or in Christ.

*Ephesians 2: 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

Mount Zion is the spiritual place where God reigns or is be seated as the Lord above all and everything, but it is also the place from which the Lord instructs people to know His will.

The coming of Christ into the world brought the kingdom of God closer to human beings to the point where they, even still on Earth, can receive the heavenly kingdom and come to spiritual aspects that before seemed impossible for a human being to reach.

From the moment a person receives the invitation to the New Covenant with the Lord, which has the testimony of the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary and is firmly established on an unshakable spiritual foundation, one “has already reached Mount Zion,” the place of fellowship with the Lord, or the throne that acts in grace and mercy towards those who draw near to it.

1 Corinthians 1: 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hebrews 4: 14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

And since the Heavenly Father has already revealed in Christ Jesus that the worship He seeks is a worship “in Spirit and Truth,” the external means of attempts at worship and fellowship with God which human beings have wanted to adopt through the law of Moses, or similar to it, also have already been notoriously declared by the Lord as useless or inappropriate.

*Hebrews 12: 18 **For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched** and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest,
19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.*

20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow."

21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")

*22(a) **But you have come to Mount Zion ...***

*Acts 7: 48 **However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:***

*49 **'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest?***

*50 **Has My hand not made all these things?'***

*51 **You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.***

*Hebrews 7: 18 **For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness,
19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.***

In referring to the future days on Earth of His disciples, the Lord Jesus Christ was emphatic in asserting for them not to give credit to the messengers and messages that claim that Christ may or will be found in material places, houses, or in their inner rooms, also stating in this way that the meeting place of an individual with God is not subject to some material or natural places, even if some claim that they are special or distinct.

*Matthew 24: 26 **Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.***

The place where God also dwells, also considered as Mount Zion, and which a Christian on Earth already has within his or her reach, is the new heart that a person receives through the Spirit of the Lord when one renders the heart to receive Christ as Lord.

Mount Zion is, therefore, a spiritual meeting place between God and the person who experienced the new birth through the Holy Spirit and who received from the Lord a new heart that He grants to those who become part of the New Covenant.

*Isaiah 66: 1 **Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"***

2 For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word."

Isaiah 57: 15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Because Mount Zion is spiritual and not a natural mountain, it can be established by God in the high and holy place, but it can also be established in the heart of the one who receives from God the spiritual condition to live and walk in fellowship with the Lord.

Before the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world to announce more precisely the characteristics of the heavenly kingdom, people sought physically palpable mountains or hills to place an altar or a tabernacle in the attempt to worship God. However, since the natural mountains, hills, tabernacles, and altars can come to be shaken, as has been demonstrated countless times in history, they have never been and can never be the expression of what is the kingdom of heaven.

Mount Zion, the mount of the Lord, is a high and holy place, but it is also in the hearts of those who receive the kingdom of God. And it is with these that the Lord dwells and it is in these hearts that the Lord grants His instruction, as we can observe in the texts that follow next.

In addition to the high and holy place of God, the heart of a person who receives the heavenly kingdom also expresses a place from which the Lord does what He proclaimed to do from Zion.

1 Corinthians 3: 16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Psalms 46: 4 There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.

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John 7: 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

39(a) But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive.

Hebrews 8: 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

1 John 2: 27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

Similar to what has been commented in the last paragraphs, if we look at the text of the prophet Isaiah which announces about the instruction the Lord gives in Zion, and observe it in parallel with the invitation of the Lord Jesus to find rest in Him and His teachings, we can see that Mount Zion or the kingdom of God is present where the Lord's fellowship takes place with those who accept the invitation to this relationship.

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

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Matthew 11: 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Revelation 3: 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

The kingdom of God, which in its foundation is a spiritual kingdom, has used natural aspects such as the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world to announce to us that it is from the kingdom of heaven or the spiritual realm that eternal salvation comes to human beings, but the salvation of human beings did not come from themselves, from material or created things, or from human kingdoms.

Although accomplishing before the kingdoms on Earth what was necessary to perform in the natural world, the salvation offered by God came from heaven to be eternally a salvation granted by the heavenly kingdom through the eternal grace of the Lord.

John 1: 18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

***1 Peter 1: 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,
7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,***

**8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him,
yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,
9 receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

**1 Peter 1: 17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges
according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the
time of your stay here in fear;**

**18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like
silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from
your fathers,**

**19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish
and without spot.**

**20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world,
but was manifest in these last times for you**

**21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead
and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**

If already the material world is of indescribable grandeur and beauty, how much higher and more beautiful are than the attributes, the words, the mysteries, and the resources of the eternal and unshakable kingdom through which also all things of the heavens and the Earth were created?

The resurrection of Christ is one of the most evident conditions of the spiritual kingdom's power over the material realm, and the position in which the living Christ is now established and will remain established eternally is the only valid foundation of life in which a person can build a life for eternity.

The essential part for the Christian life does not come first from the kingdoms on Earth, but from the kingdom of heaven and the Lord of this kingdom. And is it not to first obtain the essential part of life in the Lord that Christians on Earth should pray first to God Who is in heaven and as well in their hearts?

**Ephesians 1: 16 Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of
you in my prayers:**

**17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may
give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of
Him,**

**18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may
know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory
of His inheritance in the saints,**

**19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who
believe, according to the working of His mighty power**

**20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and
seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,**

**21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and
every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which
is to come.**

The Lord Jesus Christ was emphatic in teaching that human life does not consist of natural assets that a person may acquire, even going so far as to compare as greedy, mad, or foolish those who place their trust in material or temporal things.

*Luke 12: 15 **And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."***

*Luke 12: 16 **Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.***

*17 **And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?'***

*18 **So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.***

*19 **And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry."***

*20 **But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'***

*21 **So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."***

Many men and women, who think they are strong and stand on solid or lasting grounds for having some earthly possessions or assets, do not indeed realize that they are subject to a condition of spiritual weakness or infirmity because they are not grounded in what can truly give unwavering and enduring support for them.

And yet others, are deluding themselves with the idea that they can perpetuate themselves if only their names are associated with material things or historical records of events, but they do not realize that all these things do not represent a substantial ground, as it is also mentioned below in the text of one of the psalmists:

*Psalms 49: 5 **Why should I fear in the days of evil, When the iniquity at my heels surrounds me?***

*6 **Those who trust in their wealth And boast in the multitude of their riches,***

*7 **None of them can by any means redeem his brother, Nor give to God a ransom for him,***

*8 **(For the redemption of their souls is costly, And it shall cease forever)***

*9 **That he should continue to live eternally, And not see the Pit.***

*10 **For he sees wise men die; Likewise the fool and the senseless person perish, And leave their wealth to others.***

*11 **Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever, Their dwelling places to all generations; They call their lands after their own names.***

*12 **Nevertheless man, though in honor, does not remain; He is like the beasts that perish.***

*13 **This is the way of those who are foolish, And of their posterity who approve their sayings.***

- 14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave; Death shall feed on them;
The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; And
their beauty shall be consumed in the grave, far from their dwelling.*
- 15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, For He
shall receive me.*
- 16 Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, When the glory of his
house is increased;*
- 17 For when he dies he shall carry nothing away; His glory shall not
descend after him.*
- 18 Though while he lives he blesses himself (For men will praise you
when you do well for yourself),*
- 19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They shall never see
light.*
- 20 A man who is in honor, yet does not understand, Is like the beasts
that perish.*

The highest, most qualified, and most exalted places on Earth cannot offer that which is only provided by the kingdom of God and Christ, for it is not the high places of science, technology, philosophy, religion, finance, armies, politics, medicine, human power, and creation that can save and provide eternal life to a person.

As much as people seek to look at things considered elevated before human eyes or from the natural perspective, salvation and everlasting help for their lives have always come and can only come from the Lord who reigns from the kingdom that is higher than all and above everything.

Eternal salvation and the foundation of eternal newness of life are unique attributes of God and the kingdom of heaven, and for this, the kingdom of God will always have primacy in all things.

- Psalms 121: 1 I will lift up my eyes to the hills, From whence comes my
help?*
- 2 My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.*
- 3 He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not
slumber.*

*Psalms 18: 2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of
my salvation, my stronghold.*

- Colossians 2: 8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and
empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the
basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*
- 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

Colossians 1: 18 ***And He (Christ) is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.***

19 ***For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,***
20 ***and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.***

C14. The Address of God's Kingdom on Earth: “It Is Within You!”

After we have approached the words of the Lord Jesus Christ about the point that the kingdom of God does not come to us in a naturally visible way or that can be observed with natural eyes, even if someone does it carefully, we would like to return to the text of Luke referenced earlier to look at a second aspect that characterizes the spiritual or the unnatural condition of the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 17: 20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

Although it has already been considered that it is from the heart that a person can access the heavenly places in Christ or experience fellowship with the Lord through faith, we would like to reiterate the second part of what the Lord Jesus Christ mentioned in the above verses, namely: ***For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.***

Faced with the use of the word “*kingdom*,” there is a very high tendency among human beings to come to think of visible realms and kingdoms physically instituted with their command structures and hierarchies. Therefore, to have the information that the kingdom of God is near, but do not know where it is indeed or where it can be found, is one of the aspects that has led many people to misconceptions and frustrations in their attempts to seek the kingdom of the Lord.

In the previous chapters, it also has already been seen that the kingdom of God does not come with visible appearance and that the kingdom of God that is offered to be received while we are still on Earth is a kingdom that has its foundation in spiritual aspects.

Through His heavenly kingdom, God certainly sets out to provide resources for people's natural or material needs, just as the Lord is able to manifest healing to people and to release them even from physical prisons and oppression, and continually or often He also does it. However, material supply or natural intervention is still not precisely what God calls as the kingdom of heaven. Although God instructs us to pray for our daily bread, this does not mean that the natural provision that a person reaches because of the favor of the Lord is the very kingdom of God.

An individual may even have a natural supply day after day and yet not being attentive to the relationship with the kingdom of God, for in countless occasions the Lord manifests Himself in kindness and mercy to all, as shown below:

Matthew 5: 45(b) ...for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

*Psalms 145: 9 **The LORD is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.***

The fact that a person does not seek the kingdom of God in the first place does not necessarily mean that this person will not have food, drink, and clothing for his or her natural life. Many who do not seek the kingdom of God even have these items in greater abundance than those who long for the kingdom of the Lord. Moreover, many among those who have plenty of riches do not seek the real kingdom of God for thinking that the possession of natural resources might even be like a synonym or sign for being “favored” by life and that they, therefore, do not need spiritual things. These, however, are contenting themselves just with the passing or non-permanent aspects.

*Mark 10: 24 **And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!***

*Philippians 3: 18 **For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:***

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their mind on earthly things.

In this way, when the Lord Jesus Christ taught that a reference to the kingdom of God could not be made by saying **See here! or See there!**, He was announcing through another way that although the kingdom of God is close to the people on Earth, it cannot be seen in physical places or natural things.

Although the whole natural provision on Earth results from the creation of God, which was made from the kingdom of God, the Lord does not call as the kingdom of God any of the aspects that are material and tangible to the natural eyes.

Considering also that the buildings, structures, or institutions that men and women create can be referenced by saying about them that *here they are* or that *there they are*, also what human beings create, and which is tangible materially speaking, does not really characterize the heavenly kingdom or is not part of the kingdom of God itself. Although many people claim to create physically tangible things as belonging to the heavenly kingdom, that regarding which one can say **see here, or see there** is not part of the kingdom of heaven indeed.

Similarly, also the tabernacle of Moses, its utensils, and the regulations of the law of Moses are not what the Lord calls as the kingdom of God, for they just expressed the shadow of the heavenly things. And also because of this, they could never, cannot at present, and never will be able to show or accomplish that which only the true kingdom of God is or can produce.

*Hebrews 10: 1 **For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.***

Colossians 2: 16 ***So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.***

Material offerings or sacrifices, tithes, penances, disciplines to keep days, events, or routines, even if repeated month after month, year after year, can never perfect inwardly those who practice them.

What makes someone perfected before God is what God produces in the person through His kingdom, not what people try to produce from themselves or through material things as if these could become the expression of the heavenly kingdom.

The subject of the non-material characteristic of the kingdom of God is worthy of insistence and repetition also because human beings are so persistent in trying to link the definition of the kingdom of God to the things that are material, visible to natural eyes, or which they seek to define or establish as being part of the heavenly kingdom.

Moreover, the expectation of wanting to see the kingdom of God in natural aspects can still be especially accentuated after the individuals of a particular group or nation go through times of greater material limitations.

On the days when the Lord Jesus Christ said that the kingdom of God does not come with visible appearance, He, for instance, frustrated the expectation of many people, for the people He spoke to, had coexisted for generations with a sequence of great oppressive empires, beginning with Babylon, the kingdom of the Medes, then the Persians, the vigorous Greek empire, and all these, followed by the impetuous Roman empire.

Thus, while the Lord Jesus Christ preached the kingdom of heaven, the majority of people, most probably, had the expectation that the Lord would manifest an earthly kingdom that was specially empowered by the power of God to deliver them from the other oppressive kingdoms and to turn them into rulers of their enemies instead of being those who were dominated or oppressed.

Repeating what has been exposed in the preceding paragraphs, but in other words, **in declaring that the kingdom of heaven is not a kingdom with natural characteristics, the Lord Jesus Christ also announced directly that the kingdom of God is not some new type of earthly kingdom clothed with the power of God or the heavenly kingdom.**

The kingdom of God is not granted from heaven so that a few individuals receive a special power from heaven for the purpose of subjecting their fellow men to the few who receive this power, as many of the rulers of the peoples on Earth do.

Luke 22: 25 ***And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.'***

26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves."

One central aspect of the preaching of John the Baptist and the prophets described in the Old Testament was that when the kingdom of heaven would come to be offered to people, it would come to offer justification and salvation to all, regardless of the social condition, nation, or location in which each person could be.

Therefore, when the Lord Jesus Christ instructed people not to say about the kingdom of God "***see here, or see there,***" He was teaching that the kingdom of God is distinguished from so many things and forms of action which people had seen in the natural world, even regarding the expectations and purposes that people create in relation to a supposed performance of the kingdom of heaven in their behalf.

James 4: 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

As has already been mentioned, many people or groups of people throughout history even made and still undertake the more diverse efforts to try to qualify the material or natural things that they have created as if these could become the kingdom of God. Many mobilized armies, marches, agglomerations, and even big wars referring to these things as being the kingdom of God. Others, as also mentioned, build buildings, raise missions, or create a series of institutions under the idea that so they are also building parts of the kingdom of God.

Nevertheless, taking the words of the Lord Jesus Christ once again as parameter, material things are not the kingdom of God properly speaking even if people insist on naming them as such, for by having visible appearance and being able to be indicated with natural or tangible locations, they also show their condition that does not correspond with what the Lord announced as being the heavenly kingdom.

To insist on attributing the "name of God's kingdom" to some aspect that is not indeed the kingdom of God, did not, does not, and will never make it become the kingdom of God.

Returning to the matter of the things created by human beings, if someone builds buildings, temples, or the more diversified or exalted constructions, or constitutes institutions materially tangible and officially recognized in the various governmental organs on Earth, what he or she established is not "the kingdom of God" indeed.

Moreover, the kingdom of God is as well not the command posts in the world, the natural military troops, the mobilizations of warships or commercial ships, the political mobilizations between rulers, and things like these.

And the fact that one says that the kingdom of God is in a particular house or religious institution does not mean that this person is speaking the truth and that his or her words are trustworthy, an aspect warned by the Lord Jesus and that we repeat once more below:

Matthew 24: 26 ***Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it.***

If it is possible to ascribe an external address to something, this denotes that this aspect is not the kingdom of God, for, as has already been mentioned several times, the kingdom of God does not come with visible appearance, and it cannot be referred to by saying of it “***see here or see there.***”

The kingdom of God cannot be found if one seeks it outwardly and cannot be observed and mapped by natural ways so that one can see it through the physical eyes, whatever natural means by which someone seeks to do so.

Is there anything natural on Earth that is not corruptible, which is eternal, and which cannot be destroyed? So, if all the naturally visible things are corruptible, none of these is the kingdom of God on Earth properly speaking.

1 Corinthians 15: 50 ***Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.***

Continuing yet on one of the points mentioned above, several people insist on the expression “*I want to do such and such thing to implement or to establish the kingdom of God or to help to establish the kingdom of God.*” But what do these people mean in fact as implementing or establishing the kingdom of God? What for them is the kingdom of God that they claim so much that it needs to be established?

To use the expression “wanting to implement or establish the kingdom of God” in some situations may even convey the idea that everything a person wants to do from this statement becomes noble and well-meaning, but if the Lord Jesus Christ said that it could not be said of the kingdom “***see here, or see there,***” how can a person who claims to be committed to the establishment of the kingdom of the Lord measure the success of his or her endeavor?

There are also others who begin an enterprise or a business and say that that particular aspect is the kingdom of God or that it belongs to the kingdom of God. However, if it is not appropriate to refer to the kingdom saying, “***see her, or see there,***” it is also not appropriate to say that an enterprise or a business is the kingdom of God.

To the frustration of many people who would like to take over parts of the heavenly kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ taught that the kingdom of God would not come in the form in which people could come to create units or addresses materially tangible for it, and where they could exercise the dominion over this same kingdom.

Let us still add the following question: Can an enterprise or a business be shaken over the years and the centuries? If so, this is yet another aspect that announces that it is not indeed what God calls as the kingdom of heaven.

Once again, we remember, then, that **the kingdom of God is distinct from the kingdoms of the Earth and acts differently from the kingdoms of the Earth, for it is a heavenly kingdom and its characteristics cannot be perceived, seen, and accessed as one perceives with natural eyes the other kingdoms.**

A person who receives the kingdom of God and enters into it may even receive the guidance of God to constitute an enterprise or to work in a particular job or market segment for a purpose that the Lord instructs him or her to follow, but the company or the job, in themselves, do not constitute what God calls the kingdom of heaven, nor do they constitute the places where the kingdom of God “comes to us.”

And if we continue to explore the words of the Lord Jesus by saying that we cannot refer to the kingdom of God by saying “*see here or see there*,” we might still say, from another angle, that the address of God's kingdom on Earth can be only where the eyes and the natural perceptions cannot reach.

Therefore, and **in order not to incur the search for the kingdom of God in places, things, houses, institutions, or addresses in which it cannot be found, it is prudent to always keep in mind the address to which the Lord Jesus Christ referred to as a place appropriate for the kingdom of God to be sought, that is: *For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.***

The sober understanding of the place to which the kingdom of God is addressed on Earth, and where a person can interact more intensely and continuously with the heavenly kingdom, can cooperate much in the enlightenment and the perception both of that which belongs to the kingdom and of that which is not the kingdom of God. This clarity of understanding can be crucial, at the same time, so that a person does not lose the focus of what is actually offered to him or her by the Lord through His kingdom, and so that one does not become entangled by that which is not according to the will of the Lord for his or her life.

Thus, as has been mentioned several times, **the principal address of the kingdom of God on Earth is the heart of every individual who voluntarily receives this kingdom.**

On the last point, we also reiterate something that should never be forgotten, and which is the fact that the Lord offers His kingdom through the Gospel of the Kingdom. And since the kingdom is offered through the Gospel, no one should ever present the heavenly kingdom in the way of trying to impose it to another person.

Finally, in this chapter, we just want to mention that once the kingdom of God has an address to manifest on Earth, it may be understood that just as the kingdoms of the Earth may have natural soils for the cultivation of natural food, so also the kingdom of God has its fields of cultivation for the seeds that come from it.

God's will, therefore, is for people to be attentive to the main soil in which something can be sown in their favor, which is the heart because it is the soil that the Lord has designated to receive the seeds of His eternal kingdom, once again exemplified by the following texts:

Matthew 13: 19 ***When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.***

- 20 ***But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;***
 21 ***yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.***
 22 ***Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.***
 23 ***But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.***

Luke 8: 15 But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

- Proverbs 4: 20 My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings.***
 21 ***Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart;***
 22 ***For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh.***
 23 ***Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.***

After Christ was revealed to the world, after He was exposed to death on the cross of Calvary, raised from the dead, and seated at the right of the throne of the Heavenly Father, the great place of revelations and events of the kingdom of God on Earth came to be also in the heart of every individual who believes in it and receives it, which is why the Lord Jesus Christ also said: ***For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.***

And to conclude, we reiterate that several texts in the Scriptures point to the working of the kingdom of God in the hearts of the people that welcome it, as we can see in a few more examples presented below:

John 14: 1 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

2 Corinthians 4: 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3: 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

2 Thessalonians 3: 5 ***Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.***

C15. The Distinction Between What Is the Kingdom of God and the Results of the Actions of the Kingdom of God

Keeping in mind that the working of the kingdom of God in one's life or on behalf of an individual is, in part, also related to what one understands about the kingdom of the Lord and to what one believes regarding this kingdom, we would like to insist a little further on a point which seems to us to be very propitious or useful so that a distinction of what is indeed the kingdom of God may be made more accurately.

Similarly, we understand that it is very relevant for a Christian to know increasingly what is the kingdom of God to seek it more precisely and for the fact that a broader manifestation of the kingdom of God on Earth may also be associated with the attitudes of Christians regarding the kingdom of the Lord and the faith they practice in what the kingdom of heaven offers them while on Earth.

Thus, as much as the Lord teaches us that the kingdom of heaven is spiritual and that it cannot be seen in things visible to the natural eye, there may still be aspects that may lead some individuals to confuse apparent things with that which the kingdom of God is indeed.

But why, then, even though knowing that the kingdom of God does not come in material form, do many people continue to seek the kingdom of heaven in the visible aspects, the outward things, or the works that can be seen or observed by natural eyes?

And among several aspects, **undoubtedly one of the reasons why many people seek the kingdom of God in the visible works or things results from the lack of discernment or conscious dissociation between that which is the very kingdom of God, as defined by the Lord Himself, and what are the results that are produced by the kingdom of God in the life of an individual or through the life of a person.**

The kingdom of God and the results that the actions of the kingdom cause on aspects of the external or natural life are respectively very different aspects, and which should be seen in a dissociated way so that the understanding of the working of the kingdom of heaven in the heart of a Christian may become understood properly or more broadly.

In many situations, and as well regarding the kingdom of God, not discerning or perceiving the distinction between what causes something and what is the result of what the cause produced may undermine, and much, the discernment of aspects that should be seen and understood in a dissociated way.

Therefore, to understand the kingdom of God, it is crucial to accept the division that the Lord teaches about the inner and the outer aspects of a person's life.

The life of the flesh or the natural life also only survives because of the breath of life that the Lord grants to the creature, but not even for this does the Lord call the natural life as being part of the heavenly kingdom.

There are many results of the working of the kingdom of God that can be seen through natural eyes, but this does not mean that a person who sees the results is already seeing the kingdom of God itself or seeing what actually moves the kingdom of God to perform a specific action.

And to explain more broadly and objectively the point we are seeking to highlight in this chapter, we will yet try, below, to make use of a reference to a specific situation.

Thus, for instance, let us say that a specific person is confronted with a situation where others need help and where the person of our example is moved to a condition of compassion for the needy to the point of actually helping them.

The compassion that works within a person's heart is not something visible and is not something that can be touched physically. A person of compassion may even become inwardly responsive to help others, but still not become willing to do it, or, on the other hand, one may perceive the operation of the compassion and as well take practical actions to help others in a way that is perceptible or tangible.

Compassion from the kingdom of God is an attribute inwardly granted to the heart, and regarding which a person may attend or not attend to express oneself in external or naturally tangible actions.

The compassion granted by God is an aspect of the kingdom of the heavens, and because of its presence in the heart of a person, an individual may move to the point where he or she may also tangibly help others. However, the help carried out, properly speaking, is an outward action and, therefore, it is not precisely it that is characterized as an aspect belonging to the kingdom of God.

Although the perceptible action of help from our example has been carried out from an attribute or virtue of the heavenly kingdom in the heart of a person, the performed help is not the cause, but it is the result of what is indeed the kingdom of God granted to an individual.

Continuing yet from the same example, we would like to emphasize, then, that what the Lord instructs us to seek first is what happens in the heart, that is, the inner compassion coming from God or that which causes the outward actions to have their origin in the attributes of the heavenly kingdom.

Many people practice actions that are called acts of help to others or have the appearance of aid to their fellow men, but which are not always so when analyzed by what goes on in the hearts of those who practice them.

There are people who offer themselves as helpers to other people, but who, inside the heart, are stealing wolves, and who, in turn, do not act moved by the kingdom of God despite externally doing acts similar to those that are genuinely moved by the mercy granted from the kingdom of heaven.

*Matthew 7: 15 **Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.***

*Matthew 6: 1 **Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.***

*2 **Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.***

In the Lord's Scriptures, it is more than evident that God calls people saved by His kingdom to do outwardly, natural, or tangible good works, but still, these works are not those which the Christians have been called by the Lord to seek first.

In the first place, Christians are called to seek the Lord and the kingdom of heaven to have the heart filled and aligned with the kingdom of God so that their works are indeed good and resulting from the fellowship with the heavenly kingdom.

Before anything else, the Lord calls people to believe in Him to receive the salvation offered by the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Grace of God, so that they at first come to see and enter the kingdom offered to them in Christ Jesus.

The Lord calls people first to be in Him and to have fellowship with Him so that their works are not the result of carnal passions, but that they may be works performed under the direction and strengthening granted by the Lord through the Holy Spirit, as is described several times in the Scriptures, and of which we mention a few more examples below:

John 6: 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Titus 2: 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,
13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

John 15: 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Galatians 6: 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

In the first place, the Lord calls people to know His kingdom and to receive the gifts of this kingdom in order to move toward other things from or through the virtues that are granted them by the kingdom of heaven.

Therefore, there is an order or sequence so that an individual may perform his or her actions in consonance with the kingdom of God or through it.

In the first place, the kingdom of God grants to the heart of a person what needs to be given and teaches this heart to be in line with the characteristics of this realm. And once one receives what he or she is called to receive at first from the heavenly kingdom, one is also called to practice outward actions as a result of the kingdom that already operates actively within him or her.

Philippians 2: 13 ***For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.***

2 Corinthians 3: 5 ***Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.***

2 Corinthians 9: 8 ***And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.***

One of the most relevant problems for many people who seek the kingdom of God in a wrong way is that they think that acting in consonance with the heavenly kingdom means, basically, adopting the same outward postures and actions that are practiced by people who genuinely do their works guided by the kingdom of God.

When an individual, in his or her natural efforts, wants to copy the outward acts of what others genuinely do by the virtues they received from the kingdom of God, this person is not moving from the kingdom of God, but from what one sees others doing outwardly. And in this case, the person does not walk through the faith granted by the kingdom, and although one may think that he or she is moving according to the kingdom of God, one walks by sight or by what he or she has observed with the natural eyes in others.

In this way, we point out once more that **what is done according to the kingdom of God is not necessarily what is done only under the intention, desire, or thought of doing it for the kingdom of God or as if it were an action that arose from the heavenly kingdom.**

What a person accomplishes in consonance with the kingdom of God is that which was also born of the kingdom of God or is made from the attributes and virtues of the heavenly kingdom.

What is done as a result of the kingdom of God in the heart is that which is done in conjunction with the kingdom of God and not resulting from an action dissociated from the kingdom of the Lord and which people want to be recognized as part of the kingdom of heaven.

On several occasions, some people observe the good that those who are of the kingdom of God do and want to copy their outward actions because they see some attractive results that the practice of good grants or because they see the consideration that is granted by others to the people who do good. However, to copy the external actions of the practice of the good works that others perform still is not to seek the

kingdom of heaven, and this may even become an excuse for some not to seek the kingdom of God indeed.

When a person sees the good that others who are moved by the kingdom of God practice, one sees only the outward results of an inward relationship that the other individual has with the kingdom heaven, but one has not yet seen the kingdom or attributes of the kingdom itself. And this is why the Lord exhorts His disciples not only to practice outward good works, but He also calls them to testify to others about the source that moves them to good works, that is, to announce Christ to them as the light that illuminates their hearts to be able to practice works from or by the virtues of the heavenly kingdom.

*Matthew 5: 16 **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.***

The light that the disciples of Christ are called to testify before the people of the world is the light that they find in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and His kingdom.

All Christians are called by the Lord Jesus Christ to bear witness of the source of the light that illuminates their lives and guides them to the works that result from the fellowship with this light. And this, so that the other people also become even more exposed to the message that they likewise can open the heart to the heavenly light so that their inward may as well be transformed into a heart according to the kingdom of light.

*John 8: 12 **Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."***

The works of a Christian can collaborate to arouse the attention of other people to the fact that he or she is able to act by virtues that are not known to the natural man, but the Lord's call is not so that people who have not yet received the Gospel seek the virtues of the kingdom of God in the Christians themselves. The Lord's invitation is for each person to come directly to Him to receive from Him the salvation, the newness of life, and the virtues of the heavenly kingdom.

Although the works that people do guided by the kingdom of God and that are visible to the natural eye may cooperate to awaken other people's attention to what is possible to be accomplished outwardly through the kingdom of God, it is not the works that are naturally visible, in themselves, that save people for the newness of life in the Lord, but it is the grace of the Lord that can be received personally through faith in Him.

*Ephesians 2: 8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,**
9 **not of works, lest anyone should boast.***

The light of the kingdom of God is first granted to enlighten, purify, and restore the one who welcomed the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is merciful and present to help the one who has received this kingdom, for the kingdom of God does not first seek a new worker for its works without first manifesting its gifts or virtues to those who received it.

In the first chapters of the current material, we have already presented the example of Nicodemus, the Pharisee who realized that what Christ did could not be done if He had not something different that would enable Him to do those things. Nicodemus, therefore, was not seeking signs and miracles that could be seen outwardly, but he was looking for what he could not see with natural eyes and what actually was the source of the ability of the acts of kindness that Christ performed.

From this last perspective, let us see below, then, once again the mentioned text:

*John 3: 1 **There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.***
*2 **This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."***

And besides the question of Nicodemus, also in the answer of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is possible to note what was the issue for which Nicodemus was seeking an explanation, as follows:

*John 3: 3 **Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."***
*4 **Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"***
*5 **Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."***

Through the signs that Nicodemus saw Christ accomplish, he could see what the outward result of the working of the kingdom of God was, but not the very kingdom of God. And the Lord Jesus Christ informed Nicodemus that it takes something more than the natural view to actually see the kingdom of God that provided the accomplishment of the outward signs that Christ manifested.

The Lord Jesus was announcing to Nicodemus that there are things to which we should be aware that they are not visible to those who look at them only on the natural level.

As much as a physical sign or material aid may benefit a person, they are temporal acts, but if a person receives the kingdom of God in the heart, one obtains what is eternal and what is given by God as eternally incorruptible.

*2 Corinthians 4: 16 **Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.***

***17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,
18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.***

God certainly wants Christians to help people, and the one who has fellowship with the kingdom of God, which is in one's heart, is guided by God, in due time, to bless other people. However, the practice of helping others should be based on the virtues of the heavenly kingdom and should also aim at the announcement of the kingdom of God to others so that they may also be informed about the Lord's kingdom, may choose it, and may, by the heavenly light, come to know personally God and His kingdom.

Many people widely announce their intentions and actions under the banner of seeking to help their peers, but many of them do so to be seen prominently in society, to gain personal advantage, or even to gain power over others. Thus, although many intentions and actions outwardly may have a similar appearance to the works done genuinely based on the virtues of the kingdom of God, many of them indeed have their origin in carnal or perverse ambitions.

If outward help alone or by itself were a parameter to define something as being made for the kingdom of God or through the heavenly kingdom, a person could be extremely perverse in one's heart and still compensate one's evil or justify oneself merely with external acts of help to his or her fellow men. However, humans' outwards efforts of justification cannot justify any person before God.

It also is not to go throughout the world, under the allegation of doing “good works for the kingdom of God or in its name,” that counts for the justification of a person before the Lord or for him or her to reach the eternal salvation of one's soul.

Romans 3: 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Romans 4: 6 Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works.

It is not the external use of the name of the kingdom of God or of doing something outwardly as if it were made for the Lord that makes a person into an agent or representative of the kingdom of heaven.

Many people in the most diverse parts of the world claim to be working for God or in God's name, but who are not indeed and whose purposes aim at their distorted and greedy longings, an aspect also exposed several times in the Scriptures, such as the two texts below:

Matthew 7: 21 Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’

23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

1 Timothy 6: 3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,

4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,

5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

The aspects described in verses 11 and 12 just quoted, and which are mentioned after the expression “**and pursue**,” are not aspects that are natural, material or that can be found in outward things, for the righteousness of God, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness, and lay hold on eternal life can only be reached through the working of the kingdom of God first in the heart of a person.

In a sense, it seems that on Earth there are many more people who are trying to spread out or perform outward manifestations that seek to resemble those of the kingdom of God than people who actually aspire the kingdom of God to come to their hearts and the hearts of other people.

By observing that those who practice good works based on the kingdom of God have peace and joy in their hearts, some people may think that if they act outwardly in a similar way, they too can reach these same things, not realizing, however, that peace and joy in the Holy Spirit do not result from external works but from the presence of the Lord in the heart of an individual.

What makes it possible for a person enjoying the heavenly joy is primarily the fellowship with the kingdom of God, for the joy of the Holy Spirit is a gift given from on high together with true righteousness and peace, and not obtained first from outward works.

No matter how much an individual may receive information about the kingdom of God through preaching, books, or testimony from other people, it is the practical action of opening the own heart first to fellowship with the kingdom of God that leads an individual to meet righteousness, peace, and lasting joy of heaven.

And yet regarding the kingdom of God, even the sorrow that is according to the kingdom of heaven is different from the sorrow coming from the world.

2 Corinthians 7: 10 **For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.**

Copying an outward act generated from an action of the kingdom of God within another person may not be something impossible to accomplish, but the actual work of the kingdom of God in the heart of an individual can never be copied, for it is specifically and directly generated by the Lord within those who believe in Him.

The kingdom of God can produce profound changes in the inward or the heart of a person, but considering that its action in the inner part is not visible to the natural eyes, those who do not have fellowship with the kingdom of God can never accurately perceive how the kingdom of God operates indeed.

As brilliant as they may appear in the eyes of their fellow men, not even those who seek to become specialized in human behavior or techniques and clinics to follow people's behavior can attain the ability to see with natural eyes that which only the kingdom of God can grant and operate in the hearts of those who practice a closer and continuous fellowship with this kingdom.

As a result of things like mentioned in the paragraphs above, a significant part of the confusion we see in the world regarding the works denominated as works of the kingdom of God comes from the fact that many in the world content themselves with the exaltation of works that only have the appearance of being from the kingdom of heaven, but which are not genuinely born from the heavenly kingdom or which are attempts at imitation just of the outward acts performed by others.

Matthew 24: 23 **Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.**

24 **For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.**

25 **See, I have told you beforehand.**

26 **Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.**

The exacerbated emphasis on outward works, signs, and wonders that do not have the kingdom of God as their source, is an artifice used by many to deceive many others who are not attentive to the reality that the Lord Jesus Christ taught about the characteristics of the working of the kingdom of heaven in and through the heart of the one who believes in the Lord.

Since the word “*christ*” also means “*anointed*,” we can see in the words of the Lord Jesus that many will seek to present themselves as if they were “*specially anointed by the Lord*,” but who do so as false prophets seeking to exploit the equally false aspect that the kingdom should be recognized primarily by signs and wonders, and not by the inward witness and working of the Holy Spirit in those who receive Christ Jesus as Lord.

Romans 8: 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

1 John 5: 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

When people begin to focus their attention inappropriately or exaggeratedly on those who exploit the use of apparent or visible things improperly, rather than what God has established as a trustworthy witness in the heart, they enter into areas of huge vulnerability and are at risk of becoming deceived by the most absurd allegations or propositions.

*2 Thessalonians 2: 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,
10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

The religious systems in the world, including those who call themselves Christians and where people rely on their temples and material institutions that they claim to be part of the kingdom of God, but which are not really part of it because they are visible to the natural eyes, invariably end up being stages of display of the outward attributes or titles of their leaders and their participants.

And since such systems rely on their goals of exalting themselves in naturally visible things, it is evident that what they reap as a result is a broader manifestation of human vanity, which, in turn, is a source of envy, jealousy, and the most diverse disputes and contentions that enter the hearts of those who associate with the aforementioned systems.

When people rely on people and their systems to the detriment of trusting in the Lord and His kingdom, they begin to walk according to the parameters of carnal disputes between human beings, which, in turn, tend to affect the conduct of the individuals in their other activities, to the point that even in their homes they consume precious time of their lives with conflicting thoughts or issues that in the end do not provide any benefit to those who have been entangled by them.

- 1 Corinthians 3: 3 For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*
- 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?*

The propositions that seek to present themselves and establish themselves based on the search for visible signs or things that can be measured naturally are subject to corruption likewise the other temporal aspects, leading those who associate with these propositions to subjection to a cycle of unfruitful activities and dissimulation so that their weaknesses, distortions, deterioration, and hypocrisy do not become evident so quickly.

The kingdom of God, therefore, is very different even from that what religious systems and many people in the world nominate as Christian or as being the kingdom of God, which is why the Lord calls each of those who believe in Him to abstain as well of these kinds of carnal inclinations of human beings.

Both Christ and the kingdom of God are continually presented by the Scriptures as associated with virtues or attributes very different from what so many people dare to try to ascribe to the kingdom of heaven.

- Ephesians 4: 17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,*
- 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;*
- 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*
- 20 But you have not so learned Christ,*
- 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:*
- 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,*
- 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*
- 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

- 1 Corinthians 1: 26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.*
- 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;*
- 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,*
- 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.*

*30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."*

The kingdom of God is offered to people to grant newness of life by its presence in their hearts, and there is nothing outward that can imitate the novelty of life that the Lord gives directly to those who remain in fellowship with Him.

Matthew 11: 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

John 7: 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

We repeat, then, once again, that **to seek the kingdom of God in the first place is not to set the goal of conquering others or the world for the kingdom of heaven, nor is it to create religious systems, to constitute institutions, or to build temples made by human hands, but it is, first of all, to meet the kingdom of the Lord personally so that the kingdom may act first in the very heart of the one who seeks it.**

A full vessel may also offer what it has, but what can a recipient with no content offer to others?

In the Old Covenant, that is, in the condition of life under the law of Moses, the attempts for a person to seek to be filled with life was the opposite of the process in the New Covenant in Christ. In the Old Covenant, people wanted to perform external works waiting for their hearts to change. However, this way to try to reach life did not work, and the Scriptures inform us that this path will never work.

Since the central aspect of the working of the kingdom of God in the change of life of a particular person is manifested through the granting of a new heart or a new birth by the Holy Spirit, only God can actually "implant" His kingdom in an individual's life.

The kingdom of God first grants a new heart or a new interior condition of life to the person who receives it so that, after receiving the novelty of life personally, this individual may also present new attitudes or actions aligned with the new condition received from the Lord.

The people on Earth who love the kingdom of God are called by the Lord, yes, to announce or tell other people that the kingdom of God exists and that it is available to all who will receive it willingly, but He Who grants the very novelty of life of this realm always is God Himself.

All the newness of heavenly life comes directly from a single source, which is God.

No aspect of the world can produce what God alone produces, and by resisting the sovereignty of God that is announced to them, people who rely on the things of the

world cannot even appropriately see what God offers them through the Gospel of His Kingdom.

*John 14: 17 **The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.***

It is the dwelling of the Spirit of God in the heart of a person, not the aspects of the tangible world, nor other people, which is the guarantee of the granting of the kingdom of God to those who receive the Gospel of the Lord, Who is also powerful to produce life for all which is needed for a person to accomplish the will of heaven.

*Romans 8: 11 **But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.***

*Romans 8: 26 **Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.***

And yet before concluding the present chapter, we would like to mention that due to the fact that the heart of each person is such an expressive place as to the newness of life granted by God, or for the working of the kingdom of God, it also has become a place which is hugely desired by those who actively resist the kingdom of God or who act according to what is denominated as the “man of sin” or the “man of iniquity.”

The man of sin, which is expressed by human beings who have withdrawn from the Lord and who keep distant from God, is the expression of the set of those who oppose God to the point of thinking that they, themselves, can give spiritual direction to their own life or even to the lives of others, that is, those who do not recognize the need for the direct instruction and working of the kingdom of God in the heart or the life of people.

The conduct of the man of sin may come to be so bold in one's contempt and opposition to the kingdom of God that a person seeks to take the place of the government of the heart or the place which God has appointed for Himself to serve as His dwelling place or sanctuary. That is, the adoption of the position according to the man of sin may lead a person to the point where an individual, in one's pride, comes to think that a mere human being could become one's own God, as described in the text below:

*2 Thessalonians 2: 3 **Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,***

4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

When a person sees oneself as a god, as an individual who thinks that in oneself or in the creation one has enough wisdom, strength, or energy to guide one's life, or thinks that one can be the spiritual guide of oneself and others, he or she is trying to seize a place and a position of government that should be exclusively of the Unique Eternal God and the kingdom of the Lord.

Therefore, we understand that it should be highlighted here also that the kingdom that God grants to the heart of a person is not a set of positive thoughts or a skill for people to discover the way they should walk as if the thoughts of human beings had the power to discern the truth or move the world and the things of it in favor of their lives. The kingdom of God is not composed of some sublimity of words and is not a power of imagination or creation granted to people and that humans so much like to mention in their speeches and allegations.

Still under the idea of a supposed power of positive or creative thinking, human beings go so far as to trust that “having positive thoughts about something or someone” has the power to mobilize the most favorable aspects toward what they claim to have “positive thoughts.”

But what do people think they can cause when they claim that they are “thinking positively” so that another person even far away from them will succeed, be healed, or something like that? In what do they ground themselves when they proclaim to have “positive thoughts about something?” Or what strength can they really mobilize when they say that they practice strong thoughts so that something out of their reach happens?

When people turn away from the fear of God, they also turn away from the kingdom of God and begin to think the most bizarre things imaginable, because they lack the light and the love of truth.

Thus, to seek the kingdom of God is to seek the kingdom of light in the heart to also know the ways of light, to walk in the light, to enjoy the fruit of the Spirit, and, still, to reach the proper discernment to reject the fruitless works of darkness.

Ephesians 5: 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

Although the kingdom of God does not come with apparent or visible light, it is powerful to grant discernment even on the most profound darkness and to show what is in them in a way that no natural light or human thought can do.

While the kingdoms of the Earth present many limitations to enlighten or discern even the natural world, the kingdom of God can illuminate the understanding both on the natural world and on the spiritual world.

Without Christ in the heart, the light of a person on the spiritual world that surrounds him or her is darkness, for deceitful is the heart of human beings when they trust in themselves. Only God, Who is truth or has truth as one of His virtues, can help a person to search the heart according to the light of truth.

Matthew 6: 22 **The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.**
23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Jeremiah 17: 5 **Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD.**
6 For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited.
7 Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD.
8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.
9 The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?
10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings."

The only good eyes that a person can have are the eyes of the Lord or the eyes enlightened by the light of the Lord.

Ephesians 5: 14 **Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."**

Psalms 32: 8 **I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.**

John 8: 12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

He who thinks that the kingdom of God in its spiritual condition is not powerful, is very mistaken, for it can work in the spheres and aspects that no kingdom of this world can work successfully, and it is powerful to deliver people from places of which the kingdoms of the world can never set them free.

2 Corinthians 10: 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.
4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,
5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,
6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Ephesians 2: 1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,
2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,
3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

External or natural manifestations caused by the working of the kingdom of God are undoubtedly magnificent, useful, or beneficial to people, but the inward actions of the kingdom of God in those who receive it are still infinitely superior.

Unlike the propositions of the "man of sin" or the "man of iniquity," who seeks to pervert human beings by a wrong exaltation of their natural and transient capacities, the kingdom of God, when it works in the heart of a person, produces substantial and eternal benefits for those who receive it by the fact that it is the expression of the presence and lordship of the Eternal God within an individual.

The kingdom of God in a person's life is the newness of God's heavenly life in this person. It is the life of the Creator to Whom one can pray and in Whom help can be sought for the most diverse circumstances of life. It is

the ever-renewed newness of life of the Eternal Creator Who can answer prayers and grant all that is necessary for a person to be supported not only for the natural life but also for eternal life.

To have a kingdom of light, love, power, salvation, righteousness, and peace in the heart is only possible because this kingdom is in God and is grounded in the Lord, and as such, it is primarily in the Lord that one is called to seek it by faith in Christ Jesus.

Finally, we highlight again the good news of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God that announces that this kingdom indeed is very close and ready to act in those and through those who receive it.

The kingdom deposited in a heart is the most significant deposit that a person could receive in all its existence. And so that it may be kept forever, the Lord of this kingdom Himself still grants us a perfect Helper so that it can be kept until the end and forever.

*2 Timothy 1: 14 **That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.***

*Ephesians 3: 14 **For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,***

*15 **from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,***

*16 **that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,***

*17 **that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,***

*18 **may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height,***

*19 **to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***

*Ephesians 1: 13 **In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,***

*14 **who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.***

C16. The Central Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven

In the preaching and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ on the kingdom of God, it may be noted that the Lord announces that the kingdom of heaven contains a mystery, but also that it contains mysteries.

And regarding the mystery or mysteries of the kingdom heaven, there is a difference between hearing about the existence of these mysteries, knowing a written content about these mysteries or understanding these mysteries.

The fact that the kingdom of God contains a mystery or several mysteries does not mean that the existence of these mysteries cannot be known, for, since the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, many mysteries of the kingdom of God were publicly announced, as well as recorded in the Scriptures.

On the other hand, the simple information about the existence of the mystery or mysteries of the kingdom of God is not enough to understand them. Thus, in addition to the knowledge about the existence of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, it is also important to note that the understanding of the mysteries of the kingdom only occurs in fact when it is granted by God to a person, as exemplified below:

*Mark 4: 11 And He said to them, "**To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables,**
12 so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And their sins be forgiven them.'"*

*Luke 8: 10 And He said, "**To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'**"*

In the texts above, it is interesting to note that knowledge of the comparisons of the kingdom of God with comparative figures of similitude, such as the parables announced by Christ, is not enough for the mystery and mysteries of the kingdom of God to be truly understood by an individual.

Although there is in the will of the Lord the intent that all may know and understand the mystery and mysteries of His kingdom, this knowledge is not granted to all because some remain ignoring the kingdom of God or resist the offer of the Gospel of this kingdom.

The more in-depth knowledge of the mystery or the mysteries of the kingdom of God is given to those who voluntarily receive the Gospel of the Kingdom and to those who enter this kingdom, for those who, first, leave the condition of being "***those who are outside***" to become part of the kingdom of God.

The Lord's will for His disciples is not to speak to them only by parables, figures, likenesses, or illustrative examples. The Lord's intention is to expose the kingdom of God more directly or objectively to those who believe and follow Him so that they may know the truth and walk in the truth.

John 16: 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me;

10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;

11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

12 I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

Having some generic information about a subject or having a figurative knowledge of similarity about one aspect of life is very different from having the faculties of the understanding exercised by a practice and living experience with some subject in particular.

Hebrews 5: 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

So, the description that follows in this chapter does not merely aim at providing an informative knowledge about the mysteries of the kingdom, but it is intended to encourage people to seek to receive and enter the kingdom of God to experience and to know, through practice, the mystery and mysteries of this kingdom.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information on how a person can receive the kingdom of God and how one can be instructed to continue advancing to the point of entering it, but with the warning that information by itself does not have the power to make an individual experiencing what is informed. If one is unwilling to take steps to receive and enter the kingdom of the Lord, one will remain among “*those who are outside,*” who may even be aware of the existence of mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but who are not able to really discern and experience these mysteries.

Returning, then, to the considerations of the introductory paragraphs of this chapter, we remember that references were made purposely to a single mystery of the kingdom of God, but as well to the mysteries of this kingdom in the plural. And this differentiated mention was made due to the significant distinction that exists between the central mystery and the other mysteries of the kingdom, and also because of the significant relevance that can be in knowing first or primarily the central mystery of the kingdom of heaven.

Thus, due to the prominent importance of the “central mystery of the kingdom,” we will also seek to direct attention first to it, leaving the approach of the theme of the “mysteries of the kingdom” to the following chapters.

In this chapter we emphasize, then, that **just as the Gospel was given to offer a central or a special gift that precedes other gifts, and just as the Gospel presents a central aspect of God's will for other aspects of His will to be more widely known to those who receive the Gospel, so also the Gospel of the Kingdom was given to reveal a central mystery that precedes the other mysteries of the kingdom.**

As it has been exposed in the first theme of the series on the Gospel of God that in the Gospel there is a “Good News from Which All Other Good News of the Gospel of God Derive,” so we intend to explain in this chapter that there is a “central mystery of the kingdom of God from which comes the understanding of the other mysteries of this kingdom.”

The possibility of receiving and understanding the central mystery of the kingdom of God is something that was hidden in God for centuries, but which at the due time was very explicitly announced through many of the Lord's words, teachings, and manifestations.

And once the central mystery of the kingdom of God has been widely proclaimed, it can be understood that this central mystery is not the understanding of an intellectual solution to a riddle, an informative knowledge, a life formula, a good or positive thought, some kind of special feeling, a philosophy of life, good advice, a good education, a strong and healthy physical body, and neither a quick, sharp or privileged intelligence.

The central mystery of the kingdom of heaven is also not a set of concepts for reigning, governing, or exercising dominion over others. It is not a set of steps or techniques to achieve material abundance, an ability to perform many works, nor the condition of possessing a great profession or a mighty enterprise. The mystery is not a good family, a good marriage, a state of being at peace with oneself, a set of inner or outer religious practices, and neither some meditation practices for a person to meet what some call as “my inner self.”

The central mystery of the kingdom of God still is not a kind of faith in faith, a reliance on the power of the oratory and words spoken by the human mouth, or the belief that the practice of many works, sacrifices, and tangible offerings may justify a person before God or can give an individual eternal salvation.

The central mystery of the kingdom of God, to be known in a living or practical way, is the living dwelling or the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the heart of all who receive Him in the heart as the Eternal Lord, as Paul very explicitly described in the following text:

*Colossians 1: 26 **The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.***

*27 **To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

*28 **Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.***

Therefore, **to seek the kingdom of God in the first place is not to seek to perform works under the claim that they are made for the kingdom of God, but it is to seek the central offer or gift of the Gospel.**

To seek the kingdom of God first begins with seeking in the first place the central mystery of the Gospel of the Heavenly Kingdom, which always or invariably refers to one and the same aspect, which is: Christ offered by Heavenly Father to human beings to dwell in the heart of each one of those who in his or her life or in his or her heart receives Him as the Eternal Lord.

The central mystery of the kingdom of God is in Christ Jesus being offered by God to dwell in the hearts of those who receive Him so that a complete change in their relationship with the Lord of the heavenly kingdom and other aspects of this kingdom may be made possible.

Considering, then, the centrality of the teaching that is exposed in the last text of Colossians mentioned above, we would like to try to put in order some points already mentioned in this material aiming at showing them in a way where their joint action may be viewed from a more sequential perspective.

In this way, we first recall that the Lord Jesus Christ declared that the kingdom of God does not come to us with visible appearance, so “***Christ in you***” is not established by visible appearance and is not something that has some material or natural aspect as a firm foundation.

Secondly, we reiterate that the Lord Jesus Christ taught that the kingdom of God is in the heart of the one who receives it, so “***Christ in you***” is expressed by the presence of the Lord Jesus Himself in the heart of the one who receives Him.

Thus, praying to God asking that “***Your kingdom come***” is first of all a prayer or request for the presence of Christ in the heart of the one who prays and so that more people may know that they too can receive Christ similarly, for “***Christ in you***” is the most significant and expressive manifestation of the “coming of the kingdom of God” to the people who are still on Earth.

The mystery that precedes, for instance, a more intense and profound relationship with God's love and the fullness of God is the presence of Christ, through faith, in the one who chooses to entrust his or her life to the Lord, as explained in another text that follows:

*Ephesians 3: 17 ... **that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,**
18 **may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height,**
19 **to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***

To understand and experience the central mystery of the kingdom of heaven practically or in a living way is, therefore, crucial for anyone who longs to achieve salvation, the newness of life in the Lord, or the wide diversity of gifts of the kingdom of God.

Without the central mystery of the kingdom of God becoming manifested in the life of a person, which is “*Christ in you*,” there is no way to understand the other aspects of the kingdom of God, and there is no way of entering the kingdom of God.

Next, let us then seek to approach the presence of Christ in a person's life in a little more detail or in a more profound way also from the following text:

Romans 8: 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If we look at the above text with the previously mentioned text of Colossians still in mind, it is possible to note that while the text of Colossians presents a more explicit emphasis on what is the central mystery of the kingdom of God, the text of Romans above also expresses the central mystery through an exhortation of what happens to those who do not receive what is offered to them as a central aspect of the kingdom of heaven, declaring that *if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, one is not His!*

That is, if one does not have the Spirit of Christ, the condition of “*Christ in you*” has not yet been fulfilled in this person, and consequently one is still separated from the central aspect of the kingdom of God that can grant him or her access to the other aspects pertinent to the heavenly kingdom, as it is also attested in other words in the following text:

John 14: 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

The presence of Christ in the life of an individual through the Spirit of the Lord is a characteristic that cannot be dissociated in any way from the genuine Christian life or the relationship that is according to the way God wants each person to relate with His kingdom, an aspect exemplified yet in several other texts:

1 John 3: 24(b) ... And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

- Galatians 4: 3* **Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.**
- 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,**
- 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**
- 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"**

The offer of the newness of life of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, first of all, offers the Lord Jesus Christ as its principal gift.

- 1 John 5: 12* **He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**
- 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.**

To receive Christ, then, is the way to receive justification provided by the Lord, heavenly salvation, the condition of a new creature granted through the new birth, and the Spirit granted by Christ, Who is also called the Spirit of Christ.

However, if one does not receive Christ, one as well is not in a proper condition to receive the newness of life from the Gospel of the Kingdom and the gifts that accompany it.

“***Christ in you,***” expressed by the presence of the Spirit of Christ in the heart of the one who believes in the Lord and receives Him in his or her life, is the way for a person to grow even in the understanding of Who is the very Christ offered by the Heavenly Father, the truth that is in the Lord, the other aspects that are pertinent to the kingdom of the Lord, and also that which is yet to come.

John 15: 26 **But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.**

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John 14: 26 **But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.**

+

John 16: 13 **However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.**

14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

“Christ in you,” or receiving the presence of the Spirit of the Lord, which had been promised by God since antiquity, expresses the higher purpose for which Christ came into the world and became a curse in our place so that we can receive remission of sins and salvation in the Lord.

Galatians 3: 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),
14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Therefore, the words **“Christ in you,”** **“he who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life,”** **“God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts,”** **“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith,”** **“indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you,”** **“for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,”** and several others mentioned in the Scriptures, are all expressions that in a convergent way repeatedly point to the fact that there is one of the mysteries of the kingdom of God that really has a position of particular relevance or prominence regarding the other mysteries of this same kingdom.

And considering that God announces that there is a mystery of His kingdom with distinguished prominence offered to all through His Gospel, and since the Gospel refers to an offer to be accepted voluntarily, it is also up to people to look with special attention at this central mystery, just as it is up to each one to adopt a distinct or priority position regarding it.

John 6: 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Romans 10: 9 That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

Revelation 3: 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Hebrews 12: 1 **Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,**
2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

John 15: 5 **I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**
6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

1 Peter 3: 15 **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.**

Continuing still at the same point, **another way in which the central mystery of the kingdom of God can be seen in its condition of prominence regarding the other mysteries of the kingdom is related to each of the attributes which the Scriptures describe about Christ, or about each of the gifts or treasures that are in Him**, of which we exemplify some more verses below:

1 Corinthians 1: 30 **But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,**
31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

John 10: 9 **I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**

Revelation 1: 8 **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."**

Revelation 22: 16 **I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.**

Revelation 21: 6 **And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts."**

Revelation 22: 13 **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.**

14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

John 6: 35 **And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."**

John 11: 25 **Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."**

Colossians 2: 1 **For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,**
2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,
3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The one who believes in Christ as the Scriptures present Him, including all the glory which Christ had in heaven before he came into the world, the glory which He manifested as the perfect Lamb that takes away the sin of the world, and the glory which was restored and bestowed to Him as the Eternal King after His resurrection from the dead, and receives Christ in one's heart, comes to have an encounter or receives in one's life the One through Whom God yearns to bless people with all the riches of the heavenly places.

Ephesians 1: 3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**

Ephesians 2: 4 **But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,**
5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

As the Scriptures described by Paul teach us, “**Christ in you**” is the central mystery of the kingdom of God revealed to those who receive it so that each one of them may “be in Christ,” and in Whom, in turn, is found the provision of the kingdom of God for the newness of life in the Lord or for a life in conformity with what the Heavenly Father desires for every human being.

“**Christ in you**” is the presence of the “Unique Mediator” accepted by God so that human beings may appropriately relate to the Eternal Creator of their lives and the virtues of His eternal kingdom.

*1 Timothy 2: 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,
6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

Dissociated from the central mystery of the kingdom of God called “**Christ in you, the hope of glory**,” a person is not only dissociated from the knowledge of the glory of God in the heart, but one is also separated from the hope that can collaborate for the establishment and strengthening of his or her faith.

If a person is not willing to receive the central mystery of the kingdom of God, which is Christ in the heart, one does not place oneself in a position where his or her hope and faith have a firm foundation, since the central mystery of the heavenly kingdom is the reason or substance of the faith in the Lord!

To receive Christ in the heart is to receive the central mystery of the kingdom of God hidden by God for centuries and revealed in due time. It is to receive the greatest gift of the kingdom of God. On the other hand, considering that all the other mysteries of the kingdom are found in Christ, if one despises the greatest gift of the kingdom of heaven, one also despises the other aspects of the kingdom of the Lord.

If anyone receives Christ as the central gift of the kingdom of God, Christ also recognizes him or her before the Heavenly Father, but if one denies Christ as his or her Lord, then Christ will also deny this individual before the Heavenly Father.

*Matthew 10: 32 Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.
33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*

Once a person accepts and receives Christ in the heart, Christ also allows this person to live in Him and allows him or her to enjoy the best place a person can be, which is *“to be in Christ”* and *“to be of Christ.”*

When one receives Christ as the *“hope of glory”* offered by God through His Gospel, God also calls this person to be in Christ, to live and walk in Him, from Him, with Him, for Him, and through Him.

“Christ in us” is the hope of glory, while *“we in Christ”* is the expression of the expected glory, for Christ is the exact expression of the glory of God!

Colossians 3: 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Colossians 1: 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,
14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.
15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.
17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.
18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.
19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,
20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.
21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled
22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight,
23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

“Christ in us,” manifested by the presence, power, and instruction of the Holy Spirit in the heart, is the conditional mystery of the kingdom of God so that the other mysteries of the kingdom of God can be explored and known more widely!

“Christ in us” is the expression of the grace of God which grants the possibility of also *“to live in Him”* and *“to walk in Him.”* And *“Christ in us and us in Him”* is the purpose of any person or ministry that truly serves Christ.

Colossians 2: 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,
7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.
8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.
9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Colossians 1: 26 The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.
27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.
29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Since Christ is the preeminent gift that the kingdom of God offers, and that being able to receive it in the heart to walk and live in Christ from now on and in all eternity is the insurmountable mystery of the kingdom of God that opens the way for the other mysteries of the kingdom, why, then, do so many people seek in outward things or in other people what can be within each one of them?

“Christ in you” is the revelation to humans of the mystery that God wants to relate to them in the nearest place that the Lord can be of them. And it is such an intimate place between God and an individual that this fellowship can be done inwardly and without the need for the interposition of external things or other people, to the point of Paul declaring:

Romans 8: 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,
39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And finally, in this chapter, we would like to mention that the theme of “Christ in us” to also “live and walk in Him” is a subject of the utmost relevance. However, because of its breadth and not to distance ourselves from a general panorama of the Gospel of the Kingdom, we inform that the theme of “being, abiding, living, and walking in Christ” is more broadly covered in the material on The Gospel of Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, The Central Principle of the Life of a Christian, and throughout the series Walking in Newness of Life.

C17. The Mysteries of the Kingdom of God

In the previous chapter was approached the aspect that from the moment a person receives Christ in the heart, one receives the central treasure of the kingdom of God in which are all the other treasures of this kingdom. From the moment a person receives Christ in the heart, one receives the central mystery of the kingdom of God and which is the mystery that can reveal and grant the other mysteries of God.

From the moment a person receives Christ, all the search for the other aspects of the kingdom is drastically modified, since the person no longer needs to look for where the kingdom of God is. After receiving Christ, an individual no longer needs to know where to look first, since everything that belongs to the kingdom of God also belongs to Christ, can be revealed by Christ, and can be granted by Christ, Who comes to be, through the Holy Spirit, in the heart of the one who received Him as Lord.

When a person receives Christ in the heart, one receives the One Whom the Heavenly Father has established over all His kingdom and through Whom the whole kingdom exists and acts.

When someone receives Christ, one can understand that he or she does not longer need to seek the kingdom of God first in outer places, material things, or one's fellow beings, for the mystery of the kingdom is "***Christ in you***," it is Christ in every heart that received Him through faith in God.

After receiving Christ, an individual can begin to understand indeed what the Lord said in the following verses:

*Luke 17: 20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation;
²¹ "nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!'
For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."*

After one receives Christ in the heart, seeking the things that are from above is to seek Christ in one's own heart, for Christ is the bread that came down from heaven, He is the life that came from above to give life to all those who believe in Him and receive Him as Lord.

Nevertheless, **when an individual receives Christ in one's heart and abides in the Lord, one also begins to see the other mysteries of the kingdom of God in a way that one could not see previously, for he or she begins to see that the other mysteries of the kingdom of God always derive from the novelty of life that is in Christ and which is granted by Him.**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, **receiving the kingdom of God is, first of all, to receive Christ into the heart, and to enter into the kingdom is first "to be in Christ," but this, also with the purpose of knowing the other mysteries through the presence and the instruction of Christ.**

When someone receives Christ in the heart, Christ begins to give life in the interior of the one who received it, causing that even the form of the relationship of an individual with the external things also becomes affected by the novelty of inner life granted by the Lord.

Romans 8: 10 **And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.**

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Proverbs 3: 5 **Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;**

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.

8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.

Many are the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and many are the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven that may be known by those who receive the treasure, the pearl, or the central mystery of the heavenly kingdom, and who through fellowship with the Lord remain in Christ.

The teaching of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, is vital to the understanding of the other mysteries of the kingdom of God, for one of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven is that its mysteries cannot be taught and known by mere human knowledge. Since the mysteries of the kingdom of God are spiritual, they must be understood spiritually and can only be known by those who are not only attentive to the things that are seen but also to the things that are not seen.

1 Corinthians 2: 14 **But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

2 Corinthians 4: 18 ... **while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

Without believing in the existence of the spiritual world, there is no way to understand, for instance, that God created the worlds from His word, that the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world, that the Only Begotten Son of God became flesh to dwell with the creation in the likeness of the creature, and that God was in Christ in all His ministry during the period that He was in the flesh in the world and also on the cross of Calvary to make reconciliation between the Creator and the creature. Without believing in the spiritual world, there is no way of reaching the understanding that God did indeed raise Christ from death by giving Him a glorified body and by having Him sit at His right hand so that Christ reigns as the Righteous King over all the kingdoms of the world.

1 Timothy 3: 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

The material world is the more fragile world, it is the world that goes by, but the spiritual world is that which will remain, as much as it is not seen by natural eyes.

The kingdom of heaven is not a kingdom equated with the kingdoms of the present world, for these can last for decades and centuries, but over time all of them become deeply shaken.

After the mystery of “*Christ in us*” was proclaimed to the world, which also allows us to be in Christ, and after the mystery of the existence and the living actuation of the spiritual realm among humans has been proclaimed, the passing or temporal condition of the natural realms and the eternal condition of the kingdom of God become some of the principal mysteries to be considered and understood.

The non-belief in the spiritual condition of the kingdom of God or the non-acceptance of it, and the non-belief in the temporal condition of the natural world or the non-acceptance of this fact, may lead people who believe so to expressive misconceptions, to the point that they can become enemies of the cross of Christ and mockers of the existence of God Himself, who is Spirit, as exemplified in some texts below:

Philippians 3: 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their mind on earthly things.

***2 Peter 3: 1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),
2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,
3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,
4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."
5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,
6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.
7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.***

*2 Timothy 3: 4 ... **traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,**
5 **having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!***

In addition to the above, and as already mentioned in other chapters, the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God is not granted by the Lord for mere informative knowledge, it is given, as well, so that a person may walk in new or adequate attitudes or adopt a position according to the heavenly kingdom also in what concerns his or her earthly or natural life.

*Philippians 3: 20 **For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,**
21 **who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.**
4: 1 **Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.***

*2 Peter 3: 10 **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.**
11 **Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,**
12 **looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?**
13 **Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**
14 **Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;**
15 **and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you.***

The spiritual kingdom is granted by the Lord so that those who receive Christ may have a life according to the spiritual direction and no longer according to the natural man who does not discern the will of God.

*Ephesians 5: 8 **For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light**
9 **(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),**
10 **finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.**
11 **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.***

- 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.**
- 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.**
- 14 Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."**
- 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,**
16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Galatians 5: 25 ***If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.***

In this way, we understand that it should be emphasized here that the word “kingdom” is not necessarily associated with the establishment of new realms instituted materially, as many tend to think and as many have thought throughout history after the coming of Christ in the flesh to the world.

Although the fellowship with the kingdom of God aims to cause changes in people's conduct also regarding the material things, and despite that the instructions of the kingdom of God teach those who receive it to adopt positions or attitudes according to the light and righteousness of the kingdom also in natural aspects, the kingdom of God does not have the central focus on earthly territories. The kingdom of heaven aims first at the salvation of hearts and the granting of heavenly life to these hearts so that, through the mysteries of the kingdom, they overcome the world.

What overcomes the world that opposes God are not carnal works and a wide range of material resources. What overcomes the world is faith in Christ, Who is powerful to intervene in what is necessary or even come to the point of revoking or destroying old things so that the newness of God's life becomes revealed.

- 1 John 5: 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith.**
- 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**

And why are we again turning to the variety of aspects related to the kingdom of God?

At this point, we are again turning to the variety of aspects of the kingdom of God to make it notorious that after understanding the central mystery of this realm, it is also very significant or necessary to know several other mysteries of the kingdom of the Lord.

The faith quoted in the last text above, for instance, is another great mystery of the kingdom of God.

The trust that a person places in God is a spiritual action that can cause the God of the kingdom of heaven to move in favor of this person and can cause that God also puts the heavenly kingdom in movement in favor of an individual, aspect broadly exemplified in the Scriptures.

*Psalms 25: 12 **Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.***

*James 1: 5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.***
*6 **But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.***
*7 **For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;***
*8 **he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.***

At this point, we understand that it is very important to highlight that the Lord wants us to understand the mysteries of His Kingdom also according to what He has announced about them through His Scriptures, for, as has already been said, the fact that the Kingdom of God is a spiritual realm does not mean that it does not have an outstanding performance and intervention in the material world.

When a person spiritually makes God his or her refuge and chooses the Lord as his or her dwelling place, that is, when someone chooses to be “in Christ,” the Lord moves His angels from the spiritual realm with full conditions to cooperate as a whole for the life of this individual.

*Hebrews 1: 14 **Are they not all (the angels) ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?***

*Psalms 91: 9 **Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place,***
*10 **No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;***
*11 **For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.***

The fact that the kingdom of God is essentially spiritual does not imply that those who are longing for the kingdom of God should alienate themselves from the natural world in which they are still dwelling. God's project through the kingdom of God is primarily to save people for eternal life, but it also includes the aspect that many of the saved testify through words and many actions about the heavenly kingdom and the salvation that from this kingdom is offered to all human beings.

“**Christ in you, the hope of glory**” is also given so that this glory may be announced in the world for that many others may as well hear about the glory of having Christ in the personal life. And this, with the goal that they may also choose to receive Him in their hearts, to the point of Christ presenting the following prayer to the Heavenly Father regarding His disciples still present in the world:

*John 17: 15 **I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ...***

- 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ...*
- 20 I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;*
- 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*
- 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:*
- 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.*

Therefore, in order for a Christian to understand how the Lord will instruct and strengthen him or her to live and walk in the will of God or according to the heavenly kingdom, there are still, besides the central mystery, many other mysteries that were not mentioned in this material and that are worthy of being more widely sought and understood through the help of the Lord of the kingdom.

To grow in the understanding and practice of prayer to God, the keys of the kingdom, the words of the kingdom, the gifts granted from the kingdom of heaven to act appropriately toward other people on Earth, the calling of heaven to those who live in the world, prayers to God on behalf of Christians in general and for those who have not yet received the kingdom, the sovereign position of Christ over all kingdoms and peoples, and many others, are mysteries that the Lord wants the children of light to seek increasingly, as well as make more and more use of them.

To learn to discern wisely the promises that the Lord has for each Christian, so that each one can understand adequately one's hope and faith in the Lord, is an aspect that God grants increasingly to those who remain in fellowship with the central mystery of the kingdom of God.

Although “*Christ in you*” is the central mystery of the kingdom of God and which the Lord gives to those who receive it, we understand that it should be highlighted at this point that this mystery is also given so that a person may reach an entirely new horizon of mysteries of the heavenly kingdom to be sought and known.

Before being able to have fellowship with the kingdom of God, a person could only put on the so-called old man or the old nature, but once someone is in the condition of “*Christ in you*,” one is called to put on the so-called ***new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness and who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.***

Thus, to know what the new garments in Christ Jesus that a Christian is called to put on are, and what each one of them represents, are mysteries of the kingdom of God to be sought, known, and experienced.

Before being able to practice fellowship with the kingdom of God, a person was basically subject to sowing in the flesh to reap after the flesh, but once someone receives the condition of “*Christ in you*,” one is called to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God to know how he or she can sow in the Spirit to also reap according to the fruit of the Spirit of the Lord.

Before one could relate more intensely to the kingdom of God, a person was subject, in his or her majority of the thoughts, to the rudiments or elementary principles of the world. However, after receiving the condition of “**Christ in you**,” one is called to know and understand in the Lord the thoughts that are from above, the thoughts that are according to the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom.

Colossians 3: 1 **If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.**
2 **Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**
3 **For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

1 Corinthians 2: 16 **For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.**

When we also look at Psalm 23, we can see that the psalmist begins his song by announcing the central mystery of the kingdom of God that would come to be more widely revealed in Christ. That is, when he announces that **the Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want**, he declares that all his provision comes from the presence and care of the Lord toward him.

Next, however, we may note that the psalmist also states that the Lord leads him to understand many other mysteries of the kingdom and that even affect much his relationship with the natural things of the present world, such as when he announced that: **He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake; Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

Considerations like those in Psalm 23, which reflect the sublime condition of “**Christ in you**” working for the other aspects of a person's life, are also found in the following verses:

John 16: 33 **These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**

Matthew 11: 29 **Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

Therefore, **many are, in fact, the mysteries, treasures, gifts, or riches that the Lord wants to teach and to give to those who are already in the condition of “Christ in you” so that, also being in Him, they may live and walk according to the kingdom of God in the most diverse circumstances of their lives.**

Finally, also in this chapter, similar to what was mentioned at the end of the last chapter, we understand that there is undoubtedly much to be addressed about the inexhaustible set of mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but as the focus of the present

subject aims to highlight the Gospel of the Kingdom, that is, the fact that God makes His kingdom available in Christ Jesus, we chose not to extend ourselves at this point, but to do so in the approach to other subjects.

Let us remember, however, once again that **the one who receives the condition of “*Christ in you*” already has in his or her heart the Unique One Who is fully able to teach him or her to see, to understand, and to put into practices those mysteries of the kingdom that are necessary to live and to walk at every new day in conformity with the heavenly kingdom.**

The Gospel of the Kingdom is presented to all people of the world to offer them the “Good and Eternal Shepherd,” but also to announce to every person that, regardless of the circumstances surrounding him or her, one may have an Eternal Shepherd Who guides him or her perfectly to the other mysteries of the kingdom of God by the fact of this Shepherd being granted to dwell in his or her heart.

Hebrews 13: 20 **Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,**
21 **make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.**
Amen.

Romans 8: 32 **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

C18. The Personal Decision and Attitude Regarding the Search for the Kingdom of God in the First Place

After knowing several aspects described in the Scriptures about the central mystery of the kingdom of God and the breadth of other mysteries that are offered by the Lord for the purpose of granting to each human being the novelty of eternal life and the benefits that accompany it, the reason why the Lord Jesus Christ calls each person to seek first a more intense relationship with the kingdom of God becomes more and more evident.

For people to be informed about how much the kingdom of God aims to bless them and how much they need the gifts, attributes, or mysteries that only the kingdom of heaven can give them, the Lord has also made abundant the Scriptures that point to the kingdom of the Son of His Love and to the variety of aspects that the Lord promises to all those who receive and voluntarily seek His offer presented through the Gospel of the Kingdom.

On the other hand, considering that the position that each person adopts regarding the kingdom of God is also directly linked to the level of relationship that an individual has or will have with this kingdom, we consider it helpful to extend or insist on this point even a little more.

The emphasis on the attributes of the kingdom of God and what is already offered to human beings from this kingdom is surely necessary or even a priority so that people have a satisfactory set of information about what is presented to them. However, the most accurate understanding of what each person is called to do to receive from the abundance of this kingdom is equally indispensable, and in no way should this aspect be in the background.

In the Scriptures, it can be observed that the Lord has always made it clear that He does not want people only to be informed about the kingdom but to indeed relate intensively and continuously with it.

And although the manner in which a person may receive Christ and practice a more intense relationship with the Lord and His kingdom is described in several other materials of the Systemic Teaching about Christian Life, we understand that it is very significant to address some aspects still in this specific point to emphasize that the instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ to seek the kingdom of God first does not oppose the instruction to receive His Gospel by heavenly grace.

The instruction of the Lord Jesus to seek the kingdom of God in the first place is also in line with how God offers salvation and the other aspects of the newness of life in Christ Jesus or as a new creation in the Lord.

As has been said several times before, a more intense and profound relationship with the kingdom of God is offered by the Lord to human beings through the Gospel of the Kingdom, and being through the Gospel, the mentioned relationship will also need to respect the aspects by which the Gospel of the Lord is offered and granted to people.

In a sense, to say that God offers His righteousness, a newness of life, and peace through the Gospel is synonymous or redundant with the proclamation that God offers

His kingdom through His Gospel, for God's righteousness, the novelty of life, and His peace are attributes of what constitutes the kingdom of God.

We understand it to be very significant to highlight the above points once more, for in encountering words that call them to perform actions to achieve specific goals, some people soon forget the Lord's teachings on heavenly grace and the giving of the gifts of the heavenly kingdom through this grace, passing quickly, or again, to the old thoughts that the gifts of God are attainable through human works, efforts, or merits.

When the Lord Jesus Christ instructs people to seek the kingdom of God first, He is definitely not calling them to seek the kingdom of God in the sense that the pursuit of it is the reason why the kingdom will be given to them or that the efforts that they have undertaken to seek it will add an attribute to them becoming meritorious of the heavenly kingdom.

When the Lord Jesus Christ teaches people to seek first the kingdom of God, He calls them to seek that which is very close to them and which is already available to them in the Lord to be received by heavenly grace.

*Matthew 4: 17 **From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."***

*Mark 1: 15 **And saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."***

The effort of seeking the kingdom of God, in itself, does not make that anyone deserves the kingdom of heaven and does not represent the guarantee that the privilege of being able to see and enter the kingdom of the Lord will be granted to a person, for if this were so, this privilege would not be a concession according to the criteria of the Gospel of the Lord.

During the centuries and also in the present generation, millions of people follow the principle of the search for the kingdom of God under the thought that their effort or the works they seek to do to reach the kingdom of God is the way by which they may have the access granted to the kingdom of heaven, but whose expectation repeatedly ends up becoming frustrated for being discordant from the way in which the Lord invites each person to seek the heavenly kingdom.

When the Lord Jesus Christ called His disciples to seek the kingdom of God as a principal or a priority aspect of their lives, He had already announced to them that no one can see the kingdom of God and enter it if one is not born again or if one does not experience the new birth through the Spirit of the Lord, just as He also announced to them that if one does not become like a child, he or she cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

When the Lord Jesus Christ called people to seek the kingdom of God first, He did not disqualify any of the other aspects that enable a more intense relationship with the heavenly kingdom.

Together with the instruction about the search for the kingdom of God first, the Lord Jesus made evident to His disciples that this search should also pass first or foremost by the ways that He taught them to seek the

heavenly kingdom, for without carrying out the search for the kingdom through the means taught by the Lord, in “no way” can an individual find the kingdom of heaven, and, consequently, one cannot relate to it in the manner and intensity to which one is called by the Lord.

*Luke 18: 17 **Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.***

*Matthew 18: 3 **And said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."***

Therefore, if we look, for instance, at the instruction to seek the kingdom of God first together with the condition that a person can only enter into the kingdom to which one is called to seek if one becomes converted and becomes like a little child, we can understand that the conversion and becoming as a little child are some of the central aspects to be sought in the very first place.

And when, in turn, we come to see that the conditions for a person to enter the kingdom of heaven are associated with the aspect of becoming as a child, we can again see that the kingdom of God is granted by heavenly grace and not by human works.

When we come to see that a person needs to convert from the position in which one finds oneself and move into a position where one becomes like a child to enter the kingdom of God, we can see that the actions for him or her to enter the kingdom of God are much more focused on not resisting what is offered than on achieving or deserving what he or she wants.

And still focusing on the aspect of becoming as a little child, we ask:

- ⇒ What are the merits that newborn children present to receive care and food from their parents?
- ⇒ What works that a child who is still at an early age does to have the right to be supplied by those who care for it?

Children do not receive from their parents the most basic or necessary aspects of life because they first practice good works, they receive it because, in their infancy, they are dependent on the care of adults and on the granting of gifts provided by those who care for them.

Thus, to convert from a condition of arrogance in the heart, where the person thinks one can do good works so that one has the right of access to the kingdom of God, and move to a position of humility in the heart in which one recognizes his or her need to receive help and care from God, are indispensable actions toward receiving the kingdom of God.

Regarding the last paragraph, we remember, however, that also the work of positioning ourselves in humility is not a matter of seeking to become a person deserving of the kingdom of God.

As mentioned in the specific subject on The Gospel of God's Grace, a person does not become worthy of God's grace or favor when one adopts a position of humility, but by the fact that when one takes this position, one ceases to resist that which God freely wants to give him or her.

*James 4: 6 **But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."***

Turning from a position of pride to becoming as a little child, for example, is another way of expressing the attitude of leaving the insistence on the concept of wanting to do works to be worthy of the gifts of God. Turning from a position of pride to becoming as a little child is another way by which an individual placed oneself in a position of willingness to receive that which is freely and lovingly offered by the Lord to be received through eternal grace.

Similarly, we also recall the fact in which people asked Christ what works of God they should accomplish and in which the Lord Jesus did not instruct them to do works to be worthy of the gifts from the kingdom of heaven, but, instead, said for them to do the work of receiving that which already was sent freely to them from heaven, as follows:

*John 6: 26 **Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.***

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

*28 **Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"***

*29 **Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."***

Thus, **if someone wants to know the central secret to see and enter the kingdom of God, or the secret of seeking the kingdom of God first, the secret is to believe in the gift of love already offered by the Heavenly Father to the world in Christ Jesus and receive it as a gift from heaven like a little child who gladly receives what is freely given to him or her.**

*John 3: 16 **For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.***

Believing in Christ Jesus as the Heavenly Father's envoy to provide for salvation and eternal life is God's main or central will for every human being, and this is what the Scriptures instruct us to do first of all, as it is equally instructed in the texts below and which had also been previously mentioned:

Romans 10: 11 **For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."**

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

1 Peter 3:15 **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.**

Yet another point which denotes the fact that seeking the kingdom of God at first does not refer to a call to do works with the purpose of being worthy of the kingdom is the fact that the kingdom of heaven is beforehand offered to all people, regardless of whether they want or do not want it, seek or do not seek the kingdom of the Lord. From the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom, the kingdom has been offered by God to all individuals of all generations, nations, peoples, races, languages, or regions of the Earth, regardless of whether they are in favor of receiving it or resisting it.

In the material on the subject that has the title "The Gospel of the Creator," it has been approached the aspect that every offer, even if it is offered by grace, has criteria of offering and accepting the offer. And to seek first of all to be willing to believe in God's offer, or to stand before God to receive that which the Lord wants to give freely from heaven, is to practice in the first place the first aspects by which God grants His kingdom, but this practice does not consist in a work to become deserving of what the Lord freely offers as a gift of His love.

Doing works to have the merit or the right to something is very different from doing actions or adopting the attitudes to place oneself in the appropriate condition of receiving something that is offered for free.

The mentality that people should first become worthy in the eyes of the Lord before they can receive the gifts of God or His kingdom is one of the aspects that most opposes the way in which God offers the attributes and gifts of the heavenly kingdom.

The idea that human works are a prerequisite for a person to attain the central mystery and the other mysteries of the kingdom of God may appear to many as a path of piety or devotion to the Lord, but in reality it is a path of contempt and resistance to the justification and the grace that God provided in Christ Jesus through His work on the cross of Calvary.

Romans 10: 1 **Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.**

2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Returning once again to the aspect that Christ in a person's life is the central mystery of the heavenly kingdom and through which the other mysteries can be sought, understood, entered, or received, and that Christ on His own initiative presents Himself at the door of people offering them fellowship with Him, we can note that by this aspect too, the instruction to seek the kingdom of God is more directed to a person being attentive to hearing the offer or the voice of Christ than to a need of doing works to find Christ or attract Christ into his or her life.

Revelation 3: 20 **Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.**

Romans 10: 6 **But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down from above)**
7 or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).
8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):
9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

Still another way of exposing what was mentioned in the last paragraph and the last text above of Revelation is also described by the psalmist when he calls people to open the doors to enter the King of Glory, as follows:

Psalms 24: 7 **Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.**
8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.
10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.

And, in the first place, the gates that are eternal and that are called to lift up their heads or open the door, so that the King of Glory shall come in, are not the hearts of people who are called to receive Christ?

Let us see what is also instructed in the following text:

Ephesians 5: 14 **Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."**

As for seeking the kingdom of God first, it is vital for a person to remain in the simplicity that is associated with this pursuit so that it may be done in Christ and through Christ, as well as to avoid becoming embroiled in issues that seek to separate people from an appropriate relationship with the heavenly kingdom, an aspect that Paul explicitly warned through his letters, as follows:

*2 Corinthians 11: 3 **But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.***

*Hebrews 13: 8 **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**
9 **Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.***

*Colossians 2: 8 **Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.**
9 **For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;**
10 **and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.***

Seeking the kingdom of God first, therefore, encompasses seeking to dispose oneself or to stand personally before the Lord to receive from His kingdom what beforehand or already is prepared in Christ Jesus to be manifested to those who are willing to receive it by His grace.

C19. Personal and Direct Fellowship with the Kingdom of God

Due to its relevance, we would like to conclude the present material by emphasizing once again the matter of the personal and direct fellowship with the kingdom of God.

Although we have sought to emphasize, for several times, that the Lord Jesus Christ teaches that the part of the kingdom of God that is granted to human beings to see and to enter while still on Earth becomes revealed by God first from the heart of those who welcome it, we would like to emphasize that the fact that this kingdom is granted to the heart also implies that each person is called to have a personal relationship with the kingdom of heaven. And this, especially regarding the relationship with the central mystery of the kingdom of God, which is Christ in the heart, and which allows a person to have free access to the Heavenly Father.

If we look at several texts from the book of Psalms, we can note that there are several approaches to God's work in favor of groups of people who trust in Him, but we can also note, as in Psalm 23, that there are many texts in which the psalmists tell of their personal experience with the Lord, such as: ***the Lord is my Shepherd; the Lord is my rock and my salvation; I will be glad and rejoice in You, O my God, I trust in You, create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me,*** and so on.

Similarly, also in the so-called New Testament writings, we find many texts focusing on the personal decision of an individual to receive the Gospel and to abide in the Lord, as also exemplified below:

Romans 10: 13 ***For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."***

John 15: 5 ***I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.***
6 ***If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.***

Romans 14: 12 ***So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.***

Although the Christian life also becomes manifested in meetings and collective actions of those who live and walk according to the kingdom of God, and although God also manifests specific actions that collectively embrace those who are of Christ, it is very significant to keep in mind that the fact that the kingdom is granted to the heart of people also expresses that it is from within each person that the kingdom of God aims to manifest itself first to each one of them.

John 6: 35 **And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."**

John 7: 38 **He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**

John 11: 25 **Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.
26 "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"**

John 6: 47 **Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.**

Psalms 34: 18 **The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.**

Psalms 51: 17 **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart; These, O God, You will not despise.**

Although God calls all people to seek first the kingdom of heaven and wants that all receive salvation, no one should wait for others to practice this aspect first in one's own life.

Considering that a person can only receive the kingdom of God if one receives the new birth by the Spirit of the Lord and if one becomes like a little child, it is evident that others can never do it for him or her.

Because the kingdom of God that "*comes to us*" is addressed first to the heart of each person, it is also up to each person to decide to accept this kingdom and to deepen in the relationship with it from his or her heart.

When the Lord calls us to pray for the kingdom of God to come to us, this means that every person can pray that God may be favorable to all in the sense of continuing to offer the kingdom to all, but this does not mean that a person or a group of people may decide to accept the kingdom for others, or impute, impose, or implant the heavenly kingdom in others.

Choosing to receive Christ and to practice the fellowship with Him and His kingdom does, in fact, always fall into the personal decision of each one to be willing to do so.

We are repeatedly insisting also on this last point because although the option for the kingdom of God is a personal decision and that this aspect is quite evident in the

Scriptures, the pressure or influence that the group or collective mentality tries to exert on people is not something with which a person should deal lightly.

The central mystery of the kingdom of God, which is called "**Christ in you**," is not synonymous with a generic or non-specific presence of Christ in the heart of the people who receive Him, for every Christian is personally called to fellowship with the Lord and to discern "all things," being called even to be individually aware to not becoming persuaded or entangled by those who call themselves Christians but who are not walking under the instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ indeed.

Therefore, the fact that a person is part of a group that declares to work for the kingdom of God, or still is registered as a member of this group, does not mean that a person is in fellowship with the kingdom of God, and not even that one has already been born again in the Lord.

Considering that the kingdom of God does not come with visible appearance, also the list of those who "came" to this kingdom and are a part of it is not a visible list in the natural world.

As taught by the Scriptures, **the names of those who truly are of the kingdom of God are registered in heaven and do not need any earthly list to ratify what is already established before God.**

Hebrews 12: 22 **But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,
23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect.**

"Having come to the kingdom of God" or "to be part of the kingdom of God" is a connection that also results from the presence of the kingdom in the heart of a person because one individually, by faith, received Christ Jesus as Lord, not because of a collective decision or by the fact of participating in some group of people, even though if this group denominates itself as Christian.

What connects a person with the right of becoming a child of the kingdom of light or a son of God according to the new birth is a personal decision to believe in Christ and receive Him personally in the heart as the Eternal Lord, and never occurs by any association with a group or things that people on Earth have created and that many so much venerate.

John 1: 12 **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

Romans 8: 15 **For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."**

- 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,***
17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

The individual who receives Christ in the heart, already by this act becomes part of the family of God, which is found simultaneously in the most diverse places and nations, which cannot be administered by human concepts and controls, and does not even have its citizenship among the earthly kingdoms.

Since the kingdom of God is a realm with a spiritual foundation, establishing a bond of eternal life with it also encompasses spiritual actions.

And yet, the person who receives the kingdom of heaven receives the conditions and guarantees according to the heavenly kingdom to which one becomes associated, and not according to the realms of men in which one lives just temporarily.

Philippians 3: 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The condition of belonging to the body of Christ is much superior or distinct than the institutional concepts that many religious groups propagate and seek to establish in order to try to say who belongs to the kingdom of heaven or who is not of the kingdom of God. These groups follow their own concepts to try to exert a corrupt dominion over their fellows, and which has nothing to do with the freedom that is in Christ Jesus and His kingdom.

The attempts to control the access to or association with the kingdom of God by means of naturally tangible or visible aspects is a disguised form of the so-called circumcision which was under the law of Moses, but which a long time has already been considered obsolete or revoked by the Lord, and which, therefore, is not accepted in any way for the matter of closer relationship with the heavenly kingdom.

The insistence on the improper point that the bond with the kingdom of God needs earthly marks or proofs of association with groups that claim to serve God may even reach the point where a person who has already bonded to Christ, and returns to believe in apparent or temporal things, may become estranged from Christ and fall from heavenly grace, as described below:

- Galatians 5: 1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.***
2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.
3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.
4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

- 5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.**
6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

John 12: 42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;
43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Colossians 3: 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,
10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Many people seek the kingdom of God in other people or earthly things because they do not know where to seek it, do not believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and can dwell in their hearts, or do not pay attention to the fact that only through Christ their lives can be enlightened with the light of the kingdom of God.

In this way, and countless times, the search for the kingdom of God in things, services, ceremonies, or sacrifices becomes one of the most fruitless works of darkness that may exist, because in so many situations and with so many apparent or external things, it masks or hides the need for the appropriated search of the kingdom of God. The proposition of this kind of search to try to find the kingdom of God seeks to hide its false condition and may come to consume precious years of a person in which one could have enjoyed the direct or personal direction of Christ in his or her heart.

Many people also do not find a closer relationship with the kingdom of God because they seek it in parables, preaching, books, philosophical thoughts, or even in leaders, teachers, or mentors who are not sincere to teach that the kingdom of God is not in the parables nor in the human institutions or in the positions of their leaders. Those who seek to dominate others distort, in one way or another, the fact that the kingdom of God is first and directly found in Christ Jesus through faith and personal fellowship with the Lord that begins in the heart.

Because of a sense of security that a participation in some group seems to impart to them, many individuals still seek the kingdom first in collective places or in the condition of belonging to particular groups, but not even a large assembly, a group of priest, or some pastoral council can replace the unshakable condition that only God and His kingdom in the heart of a person can grant. Thus, instead of protection, many assemblies are strongholds of opposition to the direct work of Christ in each person. They are strongholds that propagate evil or ruin rather than real benefits to people.

Proverbs 5: 14 I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly. (AV)

or

Proverbs 5: 14 I was on the verge of total ruin, In the midst of the assembly and congregation.

15 Drink water from your own cistern, And running water from your own well.

16 Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets?

Isaiah 3: 12 As for My people, children are their oppressors, And women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, And destroy the way of your paths.

If someone wants to be aligned with the central mystery or the mysteries of the kingdom of God, one should also respect the unique position of Christ toward other people regarding the relationship of each one of them with God, as follows:

*1 Timothy 2: 5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,
6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

When someone proposes a relationship with God and the kingdom of God that does not respect the exclusive position that Christ has in us and as Mediator between people and God, and proposes other people, things, or means of access to God, or for God to manifest Himself to the hearts of people, it is an opportune time to testify that the mystery of the kingdom of God is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*”

Not even a spouse can make the decision for another spouse in the sense of the other to accept the kingdom of God in the heart, for the coming of the kingdom is specific to the heart that receives it, and no one can make this decision in the place of his or her neighbor or for one of his or her fellow men.

*Hebrews 6: 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,
12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

Luke 17: 33 Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

34 I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left.

35 Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left.

36 Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.

Romans 14: 12 ***So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.***

And here again, we ask what has similarly been done in previous chapters, namely:

- ⇒ **Why try to seek something first in outward, apparent, or visible aspects if the kingdom of God is so close in the heart of the one who has received Christ in his or her heart?**
- ⇒ **Why seek first in the outside world what is inside the own heart?**
- ⇒ **Why do so many people seek the kingdom of God first so far if the Lord Jesus said that the kingdom comes to them?**
- ⇒ **Why do so many people even receive the kingdom in the heart, but when they receive it, they still think that it is far away and that they must first go to the external things or collective group of people to see the kingdom of God working in them?**

Bearing these last questions in mind, let us look once more at the prayer that Paul, an apostle of the Lord, made concerning the operation of the kingdom of heaven within a person so that he or she may grow in the knowledge of this kingdom.

Ephesians 3: 14 ***For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,***

- 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,***
- 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,***
- 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,***
- 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height,***
- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***
- 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,***
- 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.***

There are many reasons why the Lord calls Christians to have fellowship with one another, and God can awaken a Christian upon the aspects of His kingdom from what one's brother in faith shares with him or her, but this is by no means conceded to replace the fellowship of each one of God's children with the Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the kingdom of God that the Lord has already or in advance deposit in the heart of those who believe in Him and receive Him.

If a person has already received the Son of God and remains in the Christ granted to him or her through the grace of God, the power of the kingdom of God dwells in him or her and is with him or her to strengthen and instruct him or her so that, from the virtues of the kingdom of heaven,

one may walk according to the will of the Heavenly Father also in the natural world in which one still dwells.

The kingdom of God is granted by God to the heart of each person who receives it, for this is the unique or perfectly appropriate place in which the kingdom of God can accompany all the time, and in all places, the one who receives it.

When a person with humility accepts the offer of God so that the kingdom and the central mystery of the kingdom of heaven may be and act freely in one's own life, one accepts the offer of no longer being alone inwardly and no longer being without God in the world, even if others around him or her have not yet done so or even if they resist receiving the heavenly kingdom respectively in their hearts.

1 John 4: 4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them (the false prophets or the spirits that do not come from God), because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

John 14: 17 The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Isaiah 57: 15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him also who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Can there be a more illustrious guest to be received in the heart than the Most High and Sublime Lord?

Can there be anything nobler than having Christ, the King of Glory, the King of the Kingdom of Heaven and Who is over all other kingdoms living in one person in all the time and in all places that this person goes or lives?

Therefore, so that people experience an appropriate and growing fellowship with the kingdom of God, Christ calls them to seek His kingdom first, but the Lord did not do it without supporting them also through the instruction of where and how they should seek it in the first place.

Furthermore, and even though the Scriptures teach us about the way for a person to see and enter the kingdom of God, not even the Scriptures, in themselves, are sufficient for a person to know the kingdom of God and the newness of life that is in it, for the mystery is "*Christ in you,*" the Unique One Who can give discernment of the Scriptures and Who utters words that are spirit and life.

As the Scriptures declare, "the letter kills," an aspect that was more broadly addressed in the material on the theme The Letter or Life, which is why the Lord firmly

admonished those who seek the Scriptures but who do not come to Him to have the newness of life granted by the heavenly kingdom.

John 5: 39 **You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.**
40 **But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.**

Finally, we would like to emphasize that **although the kingdom of God offers the newness of life in the Lord, this does not mean that seeking the kingdom of God or practicing fellowship with this kingdom do not make use of aspects and practices that have been used since the ancient times and that continue to cooperate in the revelation of the central mystery and the other mysteries of the Lord's kingdom.**

While there may be a number of tools today to deal more quickly with the information a person has access to, and although God gives each new generation some understandings that may not have been so widely understood in other generations, personal prayer to God, the exercise of personally meditating on the instruction of the Lord, the presence of the Holy Spirit specifically with those who have Christ in their hearts, faith in the Lord, and so many other aspects of the relationship with the kingdom of God, remain under the same parameters or on the same foundation that they have always been.

Because the central mystery and the other mysteries of the kingdom of God are unshakable and, therefore, not equal to the natural aspects, they also never grow old or lose their vigor and effectiveness, reason why no one should discard something that is offered by the kingdom of God only by the fact that what is offered to him or her is ancient or from ancient times.

The kingdom of God itself and its central mystery are ancient, and yet they do not become old, outdated, or shaken, an aspect which is also widely presented to us in the Scriptures, and of which we exemplify some more texts below:

James 1: 17 **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**

Hebrews 13: 8 **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**

Revelation 1: 8 **"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."**

Daniel 4: 3 **How great are His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion is from generation to generation.**

- 1 John 1: 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life,*
2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us,
3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

To think that such a vast and unwavering kingdom is willing to be and to operate in the hearts of still fragile people while they yet dwell in the present world may even seem an unattainable goal, but it is not and can be achieved because God intended to so through His Eternal Gospel.

- 2 Corinthians 4: 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*
7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

- 2 Corinthians 4: 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*
18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

- Job 42: 2 I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.*

Concluding, therefore, and highlighting here again that the kingdom of God is offered to us through the Gospel as an eternal gift, we suggest once more the reading of the texts presented below:

- Isaiah 9: 6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*
7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Mark 1: 14 **Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,**
 15 **and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."**

Romans 1: 16 **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**
 17 **For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."**

Psalms 24: 7 **Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.**

1 Peter 3: 15 **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.**

Colossians 1: 26 **The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.**
 27 **To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**
 28 **Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.**

Romans 5: 17 **For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**

Matthew 6: 6 **But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.**
 7 **And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.**
 8 **Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.**
 9 **In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.**
 10 **Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.**

Revelation 5: 13 **And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"**

Bibliography

Note on Biblical Texts referenced:

- 1) The biblical texts without explicit indications of reference were drawn from NKJV Bible, as indicated below.
- 2) Highlights in the biblical texts, such as underline, bold, or similar were added by the author of this study.

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