

- Systemic Teaching about Christian Life -

Evangelium

Das 1. Capitel.

Von Christi Person und Amt; wie auch von Andrea, Petro, Philippo
und Nathanael, seinen Jüngern.

Im * Anfang war das † Wort, und das Wort
war bei Gott, und das Wort war Gott.

* 1 Mos. 1, 1. † 1 Joh. 1, 1.

2. Derselbe * war im Anfang bei Gott.
3. Alle Dinge sind durch ihn gemacht,
und ohne dasselbe ist nichts gemacht.

4. In ihm * war das Leben, und das Leben
war das † Licht der Menschen.

5. Und das * Licht scheinete in der Finsternis,
und die Finsternis haben es nicht begriffen.

6. * Es ward ein Mensch von Gott geboren,
der hieß Johannes.

7. Derselbe kam zum Zeugnis, daß er von
dem Licht zeugete, auf daß sie Alle durch ihn
glaubten.

8. Er war nicht das Licht, sondern daß er
von dem Licht zeugete.

The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ

Series:

THE GOSPEL

The Good News of God

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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 and Irmelin, 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 Indispensable and Exceedingly Great Facet of the Gospel that Everyone Should Know, but that Many Don't Even Know it Exists

To introduce this new material, we would like to mention first that it refers to a continuation of the approach of the main points that make up the series under the general theme [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;
- ⇒ 5) The Gospel of the Kingdom of God;
- ⇒ 6) The Gospel of the Righteousness of God;
- ⇒ 7) The Gospel of Peace;
- ⇒ 8) The Gospel of Salvation;
- ⇒ 9) The Gospel of the Power of God;
- ⇒ 10) The Gospel of the Grace of God;
- ⇒ 11) The Gospel of the Promise.

Similarly, also from the beginning of this new material, we would like to express how challenging it was to find the words to start this new subject on the Gospel of the Glory of God or the Gospel of the Glory of Christ in the sequence of a series of so many other topics on the same Gospel. And this, due to the vital relevance and breadth that this content still adds to what has already been seen, but also due to a feeling that knowledge of this theme is still too scarce for a vast portion of people, including those who claim to be admirers of the Gospel of the Lord.

After becoming aware of a significant part of what is contained in the Gospel from the perspective of the glory of God and the glory of Christ, and what has been exposed about it in the different chapters of this material, at various times, in a sense, we felt even deeply distressed to write an introduction that could express in a few words the immeasurable preciousness of this perspective and that, at the same time, could also offer the reader of this introduction a proposition that cooperates with the perception that the extent of the riches of this theme is very challenging to be condensed just in a few words.

Nevertheless, what we can say for those who really want to understand in a broader and more precise way the Gospel of God and the newness of life offered through it by the Lord, is that a more extensive appreciation of its multiple points also from the perspective of the glory of the Lord is inevitable.

Therefore, what was exposed in the previous paragraphs, leads us to make a proposition of only mentioning at this beginning the enormous relevance of the content that there is in the Gospel from the perspective of the glory of God and the glory of Christ, thus ceasing the attempt of making a brief explanation of it at this point because

it, in practice, is hard and also because the effort to synthesize this very impressive and broad facet of the Gospel probably would compromise the appreciation of the grandeur of the aspects that are contained in it.

After thinking and rethinking the introduction regarding this precious aspect of the Gospel that is being referenced above, we conclude that the best introduction that could be done concerning it, probably, would simply be to mention that it is an extremely excellent facet and worthy of being known by absolutely all human beings, but which will hardly be known if a person does not incline or actually devote time to get to know it more widely.

The facet of the Gospel that can be seen from the perspective of the glory of God and the glory of Christ may at first appear uninteresting to many due to the less familiar or popular appeal that is given to it. However, it represents a point that reserves treasures that surely will surprise beyond expectations those who are willing to know it more profoundly.

The Gospel from the perspective of the glory of God and the glory of Christ is revealed and offered to us as a set of aspects that “crowns” or “certifies” all other facets of the Gospel.

Nevertheless, due to the excellency of its preciousness, the facet of the glory of God and the glory of Christ is also that side that is only perceived or known indeed by those who pass the layer of superficiality in the relationship with the Gospel of the Lord and by those who are willing to move towards the deeper aspects of this same Gospel.

C2. The Meaning of the Expression "Glory"

When we find in the Scriptures that the Gospel of God is also called by the compound name the Gospel of Glory, we automatically also find ourselves challenged to know, in the light of the Scriptures, what comes to be the term *glory* so that we may understand broader what the Gospel is as a whole.

The fact that the term *glory* refers to a word that is not popularly known more profoundly does not justify a disinterest in the theme of the Gospel of Glory. And, in no way, should this fact inhibit people from seeking more excellent knowledge about such a relevant part of the Gospel and, above all, so essential to all those to whom God offers His Gospel.

Just as, for instance, a more profound and specific understanding of each of the facets of the Gospel is associated with a more precise knowledge of what the Heavenly Kingdom, Righteousness, Peace, and Grace of God are, so also the knowledge of the Gospel from the perspective of the glory of the Lord becomes more accessible when a person first knows what is included in the expression *glory* when it is associated with the Gospel.

Initially, we also highlight that a relevant aspect to be observed when a broader investigation of the term *glory* is started, and that may also confuse some people when trying to relate it with the Gospel, is that the expression *glory*, in addition to being a noun associated with the Gospel, sometimes is also used as a verb that expresses the *act of glorifying* someone, as exposed in some texts below:

1 Corinthians 6: 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

2 Thessalonians 1: 12 ... that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 6: 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.

The word *glory*, in the sense of the verb *to give glory* or *to glorify*, sometimes receives, by several people, a connotation more related to the practice of exalting and presenting praise to someone or something, thus giving a focus more directed to the actions of people and not so much to what comes to be the *glory* itself that is associated by the Lord to His Gospel.

Nevertheless, *giving glory* or *glorifying*, when one comes to understand more broadly what is associated with the term *glory* used in the Scriptures, is not limited to the act of expressing praise or praising an individual or something in gratitude.

To *give glory* or to *glorify* refers much more to the “act of attributing glory” to an individual or something than simply expressing gratitude, as exemplified in the following list of texts:

John 15: 8 **By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**

John 13: 31 **So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.**

32 **If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately."**

John 12: 16 **His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.**

John 8: 54 **Jesus answered, "If I honor (or glorify) Myself, My honor (or glory) is nothing. It is My Father who honors (or glorifies) Me, of whom you say that He is your God."**

1 Peter 4: 11 **If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever.**
Amen.

John 17: 1 **Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,**
2 **as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.**
3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**
4 **I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.**
5 **And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."**

Giving glory or glorifying is not an act that ends when this action is performed, as in the case of the expression of praise or gratitude. It is an act that seeks to highlight characteristics or attributes of the one or that which is glorified so that, from the knowledge of these attributes, people may position themselves concerning to the one or to what has been attributed glory.

To give glory or to glorify, therefore, encompasses the aspect of revealing characteristics of an individual or that to which some glory is attributed, which leads us to the knowledge of the fact that there are “different glories” in the world, as can be seen below:

Romans 1: 20 ***For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.***

2 Corinthians 3: 10 ***For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels.***

1 Corinthians 15: 40 ***There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.***

Yet another aspect that we consider to be important to highlight before trying to reach a more specific conceptualization about the term *glory* refers to the point that **in addition to the fact that there may be more than one type of glory, depending on who or what is in focus, there still may occur the existence of “different conceptions of glory” about one same aspect depending on who composed the proposition of a specific glory**, as it is also exemplified below:

John 5: 41 ***I do not receive honor (or glory) from men.***

or

John 5: 34 ***Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.***

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 (or glory) of men more than the praise (or glory) of God.***

*Psalms 4: 2 **How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness And seek falsehood?***

Mentioning the considerations of the last paragraphs in yet other words, we can say that regarding God and human beings, there is the glory of God and the glory of human beings, but there is also the glory that God defines for Himself and for human beings, as there is the glory that human beings define about God and about themselves.

In principle, the term *glory* is generic for all types of glory that seek to be introduced and known, which means that the word *glory*, to express the glory of a specific aspect, must also be accompanied by an explanation of whom or what the glory aims to present, as well as the explanation from whom or what a particular glory was defined and proposed.

After mentioning the considerations above about the term and the diversity of uses that might be applied to the word *glory*, we will then seek to address more specifically the word *glory* in its general concept.

The word *glory*, generically speaking, is a special word, because unlike many other words that seek to define some detail of an item in focus, the expression *glory* aims to present a global view of the set of aspects that exist in something specific.

While many words have their use directed to detail a particular item, the expression *glory* seeks to present in a condensed way the maximum of relevant or worthy of exaltation features that may be found in some subject in focus and about which one wants to offer a broader set of information.

In a sense, the expression *glory* is a useful tool to refer to something very extensive or broad, but that in many moments needs to be expressed succinctly or in a few words, and in which, for practical reasons, it is not always possible to make use of long descriptions or explanations.

When, for example, a person says that a certain king is seated on his throne and is ruling from this position, even though many are not physically witnessing what this king is doing to rule, people know what this king's position means if they already have a reasonable concept of what a king does from his throne of government.

Thus, this condensed reference to what a king does when he rules or what is associated with a position of a particular type of king is an expression of his *glory* according to the sort of his position and function.

In other words, when people have a reasonable sense of the broad set of actions that a king does as a regent of a particular domain and the conditions that this king has to exercise his function as ruler, we can say that they have a good sense of what is the *glory* that resides over the king when he is on his throne of government.

The *glory* of an individual or something, among others, is the informative, the visual, or the accessible revelation that one may have about the attributes of the one or that to which the *glory* refers, even if these attributes are not fully visible in the eyes of those to whom the *glory* is revealed.

When the Scriptures, for instance, inform us that God is the unique righteous and eternal judge and that He reigns over the entire universe, all nations, and over all the peoples who inhabit them, we cannot see this with our natural eyes, or we, in our limited condition in the world, cannot know in detail the full range of actions that this regency of God over all the individuals of the world demands.

Nevertheless, through the announced or revealed *glory* that God is fully powerful to be this right judge over everything and above all, this revelation and knowledge can be achieved in an entirely satisfactory way, allowing a broader interaction or relationship with the Lord from the revelation of His *glory*, as also exemplified in the following text:

*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.*

The use of the tool or word called *glory* to announce something about God, people, products, services, and so many other aspects, is something that is carried out continuously or daily in the most diverse segments of life.

In a way, what we know as advertising or disclosure of companies, people, products, and services in commerce, for example, is, in essence, the attempt to spread a *glory* regarding what is offered or who offers something to people to whom advertising is addressed.

When an industry, for instance, discloses views and information about what the vehicle it manufactures can offer its users, it is promoting informative dissemination, whether by video, audio, photos, test-drive, etc., of the *glory* that this industry wants people to register in their minds about the product it offers.

The *glory* about an individual or about something is very interesting because it is not always associated with the complete detailing of what is in focus, but it seeks to encompass the necessary points for people to come to know what is informed to them with the objective to make sure they are supported to decide if they trust or do not trust what is presented to them.

Going back to the example of advertising a vehicle, we can see that the vast majority of people do not purchase a car because they know in detail how all aspects of that vehicle were built and because they know how they all work together. On the other hand, the most prudent people adopt some evaluation criteria on the information

offered to them about the quality and safety of the vehicle that they are considering purchasing, where this set of aspects that leads a person to decide to buy or not to buy a car is what expresses, in a sense, the *glory* of the vehicle and its manufacturer.

The *glory* of an individual or something does not necessarily express the total or complete definition of a person, attribute, or something that is in focus, but it is an aspect that presents a set of information or parameters presented by someone with the intention of revealing, unveiling, describing, or exposing what is in focus in order to make it known and to be evaluated by people through what was informed or revealed.

Let us look at another example based on the text presented below:

*Psalms 19: 1 **The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.***

No person on Earth will be able to know the enormity of details that are in the heavens or the firmament. However, if an individual carefully observes the skies, one can see the glory of God's immeasurable greatness and sovereignty in having created what He created and in sustaining the firmament of His handiwork.

Therefore, *giving glory* to God, for example, is not merely thanking God for what He has done or does for people, but it is to acknowledge or to declare the recognition of the attributes of who God is, even though one cannot see and know all the details that make up these attributes.

If a person says he or she is grateful to God for the actions that the Lord has done for him or her, but one does not recognize who God is in regard to his or her life and the universe, one does not *glorify* God indeed.

*Revelation 16: 9 **And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.***

The *glory* of God, in many ways, reveals to us who and how the Lord is so that we may firmly establish our convictions of who God is for us, and this, so that we may position ourselves appropriately concerning what is revealed to us about God.

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

*10 **All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, And Your saints shall bless You.***

*11 **They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, And talk of Your power,***

*12 **To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, And the glorious majesty of His kingdom.***

*13 **Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations.***

- 14 *The LORD upholds all who fall, And raises up all who are bowed down.*
- 15 *The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season.*
- 16 *You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.*
- 17 *The LORD is righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works.*
- 18 *The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.*
- 19 *He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.*
- 20 *The LORD preserves all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy.*
- 21 *My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, And all flesh shall bless His holy name Forever and ever.*

C3. Distinction between Glory and the Gospel of the Glory

*2 Corinthians 4: 3 **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,***

*4 **whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.***

*5 **For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.***

*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.***

After we started to see in the previous chapter what the meaning of the glory of God is, and even before we enter more intensely into the theme about the purpose of the glory of the Lord, we understand that it is very significant to make a more evident distinction between the glory itself and the Gospel of the Glory.

As has been exposed in the first theme of this series of subjects, the Gospel is not just an informative message, but a real offer of gifts from God to all human beings who accept the gift that is addressed to them, and whose gifts are essential so that each person may come to meet the newness of life that is offered to him or her from the heavenly kingdom.

Therefore, the Gospel of God is not limited to the glory itself, but also encompasses the offer of the knowledge of God's glory to people who receive the Gospel as a gift given by God for their lives.

The fact that the Gospel of God is also called as the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord is very relevant, for the association of a divine attribute with the Gospel simultaneously expresses the Lord's will to offer us this attribute and the need that human beings also have to receive this attribute offered for their salvation and newness of life in God.

The fact that the glory of God is one of the integral elements of the Gospel, or one of the aspects revealed and offered by this same Gospel, communicates to us, precisely because it is associated with this Gospel, that we need this glory and that also the supply of everything that we need from it is already available to us in this same Gospel.

C4. The Purpose of the Offer of God's Glory through the Gospel

Since we have already gone through the topics that deal with what is the glory of an individual or something, and we have also seen that glory is one of the essential gifts that are offered by God through His Gospel to be received by all people who accept them by faith, we understand that we may advance now, with more propriety, towards a more profound understanding of the Lord's purpose in offering us His glory, as well as to know more specifically what is contained in the glory of God that is offered to us in the Gospel.

Thus, in this present chapter, we would like to focus more on some aspects of God's purpose related to the offer of His glory. And for this, we would like to mention again the following text already presented in the previous chapter about the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord:

*2 Corinthians 4: 3 **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,**
4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.
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.*

In a very objective way, as can be seen in the text above, the fact that God offers us His Gospel also as the Gospel of His Glory expresses the Lord's purpose that we may receive *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.*

For those who believe in the Gospel of the Lord and receive it in their hearts, God grants His Gospel, also associated with His glory, so that these people may come to know the glory of the Lord in Christ Jesus and so that they may be built up or strengthened through this glory.

The fact that the Eternal Gospel is also called the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord expresses God's will to offer us the knowledge of His glory so that we may reap the benefits of this knowledge.

Yet in other words, the offer of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, through the Gospel, aims to enable us to become aware of the need that each human being has to know the glory of the Lord who created and sustains all life, as well as it is granted under the purpose that the knowledge of this glory is indeed accessible to those who accept the Gospel in their hearts also to reap the rewards that the knowledge of the glory of God may produce in them and for them.

The possibility of knowing the glory of the Lord through the Gospel was made available in this way to all people of the world to supply one of the biggest, most crucial, or even the most significant of the needs that all

human beings have and which was attributed to everyone because of the subjection to sin that human beings incurred.

*Romans 3: 23 **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.***

In addition to attributing a yoke of slavery and punishment on people, subjection to sin also implied the interruption of what the human being most needs. And according to the Scriptures of the Lord, it is interesting to note that they do not inform us that human beings, because of sin, came short of more territories, natural resources, or more wealth, but of the glory of God.

Through the association of the glory of the Lord with the Gospel, as an offer directed to us, God offers us, in a real and accessible way, the true supply for the knowledge of His glory, which, in turn, is so necessary for us to be no longer in need of the essence of the newness of life in the Lord or so that we are no longer separated from what is so vital for our living and walking both in the present and in the future, namely: To know God and His Beloved Son Jesus Christ.

*John 17: 3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.***

*2 Peter 1: 2 **Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.***

C5. The Purpose of Knowing the Glory of God that the Lord Himself Wants to Manifest to Us

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.**

As seen in the previous chapters, the Gospel of God, also as the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord, aims to offer us and bring us to the knowledge of the glory of God. This aspect, however, leads us to the need to evaluate a second stage of the Lord's purpose in offering us the knowledge of His glory, which, in turn, is explicitly associated with the purpose for which God wants us to know His glory.

And why, then, is knowledge of God's glory so relevant to an individual's life?

To say that a person needs the knowledge of the glory of God is so significant for all human beings because this expression, to put it briefly, is another way of saying how much an individual needs to know individually or personally the Creator God of Heaven and Earth and what is in them.

When a person knows the true glory of God, one also comes to know God Himself.

Knowing God or knowing the true glory of God, in a way, are similar expressions, according to the texts presented below:

Habakkuk 2: 14 **For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.**

Isaiah 11: 9 **They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.**

John 17: 1 **Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,**
2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.
3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

John 1: 14 **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**

...
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.

Therefore, the Gospel of the Glory of God is offered to us so that we may know God and so that the purposes of what comes from knowing the Lord are manifested in our lives.

In other words, the Lord offers us the Gospel of His Glory for us to have access to know Him and His attributes so that we may believe in Him and that, through faith in the Lord, we may receive eternal life in God according to His manifold grace.

Through the Gospel of the Glory, whose primary gift is the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the knowledge of the glory of the Lord that the Gospel offers us, the lack of knowledge of God becomes supplied so that we may live and walk by faith and in the love of the Lord, and through which, we can grow in the salvation and the eternal newness of life that is available to us in God.

Bearing in mind the fact that God is unsearchable, it is only possible that He reveals a certain measure of His “Being” to us. That is why we need the knowledge of His glory, for, through it, the Lord can reveal Himself in the ideal measure that we need, but also in the perfect measure that we can bear in every moment of our lives.

Through the revelation of His glory, God, for instance, can teach us and reveal that He is the Almighty God without having to expose us to all His power, for if He did, we would surely be instantly disintegrated with such a powerful presence of the Lord.

Through His glory, God can announce, show, and grant partially and fully satisfactorily what people need to know of His most diverse attributes, but without having to show them in full to those to whom He wants to reveal them so that they may be built up and not be destroyed by the knowledge and revelation of the Lord's greatness.

No one can see what God sees by having His eyes on each of the sons of men. Nobody, not even close, has such a capacity. However, this does not prevent that through the glory of God this position and capability of the Lord can be revealed to us so that we may believe in Him in this sense, that our hearts may find rest in God, and so that we may rejoice in the Lord's holy virtues.

Only figuratively, because knowing the Lord is more than just knowing His fame, it seems to us that, in a sense, we could say that glory recalls the fame or the reputation that is attributed to someone about some of one's characteristics.

We remember here, however, that in the case of the glory of God, the fame of the Lord is according to His own glory, and it is not like the fame of people in the world.

When revealed by the Lord Himself, the revelation about God is according to the truth and in consonance with what the Lord truly is, while the fame of what people disclose about each other, or even about God, is not always based on the truth about each person or about God.

As we mentioned in previous chapters, the glory that people attribute to God is often much different from the glory that the Lord manifests about Himself and each person.

Having adequate knowledge of the glory of God and having an adjusted relationship with it are decisive points for the establishment of a person's set of hopes and one's growth in faith in God, for how may an individual be

able to believe, trust, and wait properly in God if he or she has no knowledge about the Lord or if his or her understanding on God is substantially distorted?

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

14(a) How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?

Thus, if we align the various purposes that we have cited so far in the last chapters and paragraphs, we could say that:

- ⇒ 1) The general purpose of the Gospel is to provide that we become aware of what we need for salvation, life according to the will of God, or for eternal life, and, primarily, to extend and offer, through divine grace, what we need so much for the newness of life in the Lord;
- ⇒ 2) The purpose of the Gospel, also offered as the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord, aims to show us that one of the essential needs of life according to the kingdom of heaven is the knowledge of the glory of the Lord and that through the Gospel this knowledge is widely offered to us;
- ⇒ 3) The knowledge of the glory of God, in turn, aims to provide us to know God Himself in what we need to know Him, but also to the appropriate extent that we can come to know Him still being in the present world;
- ⇒ 4) The purpose of knowing more about God is to cooperate so that our hope, faith, and love in the Lord may become increasingly strengthened so that we may indeed live and walk in the newness of life that the Lord offers us in His Gospel.

When the Lord informs us that His Gospel also offers us the possibility of knowing His glory, God is showing us that we can know the Lord Himself to be increasingly strengthened concerning each of His immeasurable attributes.

Through the Gospel of His Glory, God is offering Himself to human beings who want to receive Him, and this, so that they may know the Lord more deeply and have faith in the Creator and Supporter of their lives in order that, together with salvation, they also advance in the diversity of aspects of the newness of eternal life that is available to them in the Lord.

If the facets of the Gospel named as the Gospel of the Creator and the Gospel of Christ show us the origin and the gift offered for us to attain salvation and the newness of eternal life, the facet of the Gospel of God's Glory shows us that the purpose of all salvation and eternal life is that we may come to know God Himself so that we may continue to trust Him eternally and that we may have everlasting fellowship with each of the multiple virtues of the Lord's divine nature, to which we too were created and called.

*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 the Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."***

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

In the firm trust in God and in the love given by the Lord to those who trust Him that lies the way for a person to live in the novelty of life in God, but it is through knowing God, revealed through the knowledge of His glory, that an individual's trust and love towards God are perfected and firmly established.

Through an offense, the devil sought to defame the glory of God before humanity to try to separate human beings eternally from the fellowship with God. However, through the Gospel of His Glory, the Lord shows us how we can restore our knowledge about our God so that we may never again be withdrawn from trust, love, and fellowship towards our Unique Eternal Lord.

By the Gospel of the Glory of God, the Lord grants us access to all that, and even more, that Adam, Eve, and their descendants could no longer see when a doubt about who God was, proposed by the devil through the serpent, was accepted by them.

Through the Gospel of the Glory of God, we can have access to everything we need to know about our Lord so that we may also eternally trust Him and so that we may forever enjoy the fellowship with the Lord in the most diverse areas of His precious and eternal attributes and that slavery to sin tried to hide.

Through the Gospel of His Glory, the Lord offers us the knowledge of His glory so that, through it, we may know what our God is like, and this, so that we may know who He is for us and how He loves us so that we also may love and trust Him now and for eternity.

C6. Effects Resulting from Coming Short of the Glory of God Revealed According to the Gospel of the Glory

Romans 3: 23 ***For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.***

Taking into account that knowing the glory of God also expresses, in another way, knowing God Himself, we may also consider that part of the theme of the effects of the lack of knowledge of God on the part of the human being is already described in the subjects on The Gospel of the Creator, The Gospel of God's Righteousness, and The Gospel of Peace.

Nevertheless, when we see the subject of knowing the Lord through the lens of knowing the glory of God, we may notice that some aspects related to the lack of the knowledge of God may still be complemented and even seen in a more precise or objective way.

Although God sustains all life with His power, the lack of knowledge of the glory of God is of such high relevance because it can also be the cause of the very lack of a more active presence of God in a person's life.

Although God sustains the lives of all people, falling short of the glory of God, on the part of an individual, may lead him or her to a life experience where the relationship with the Lord occurs practically unilaterally between the Creator and the creature. That is, although God takes care of people and supplies them every day, many relate to life in general as if God did not exist, living without consulting and without receiving instructions from the One who created them and wants to instruct them on the way of truth and eternal life.

Lacking the glory of God does not necessarily mean saying that a person is absent from God in the sense of having the support for natural life, breath, or material existence itself, or yet in the sense of the maintenance of the universe and what is in it, because God is Omnipresent, God is everywhere and sustains everything. The lack of knowledge of the glory of God or coming short of it implies that a person becomes separated from the appropriate knowledge of the Creator who loves him or her, as well as that an individual is in a position of lacking the Lord's concepts or instruction about the purpose of life and how it can be lived in the light of the divine will.

Although any life only exists if God allows it to manifest itself, the ignorance about the glory of God and the non-relationship with this glory lead people to a way of life where they do not know God as they could and should know, staying so subject to a condition as if they were without God and hope in the world, as exemplified in the text below:

Ephesians 2: 11 ***Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands;***
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.

Thus, falling short of the glory of God is to lack the knowledge that a person should already have of God, but it also is to lack the fellowship that a person could already have with his or her Creator.

The more separated a person becomes from the glory of God, or the more a person comes short of this glory, the more distant is his or her understanding of who the eternal Lord and Creator is, and the more distant one comes to be from the life that is according to the will of the Lord. A condition in which he or she becomes subject to be led to the most varied effects arising from a life dissociated from an appropriate divine direction or instruction.

When an individual's perception of who God is and how He acts is corrupted, that is, when a person does not perceive the glory of God or perceives it in a substantially distorted way, his to her faith, thoughts, hopes, attitudes, and behaviors will also be subject of becoming corrupted, as already discussed more widely in the theme of The Gospel of the Promise, in the materials on the Gospel mentioned above, and as we are constantly reminded in the text below:

Romans 1: 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,
21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,
23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,
25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.

Amen.

...
28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,

30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful.

The more human beings turn away from the knowledge of the glory of God or deny it, the more they end up giving themselves over to the overly limited thoughts of creation, which can go so far as to confuse the creation and divinity in the most diverse areas of their lives.

In the theme on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, we also have sought to expose the point that it is through the proposition of corrupting the understanding of

who God is or through offenses against the glory of God that the devil often tries to introduce the temptations of sin before people.

When Adam and Eve allowed the devil to obscure the glory of who their God was, they also became weakened by the voice of this creature who came to try to lead them away from God and who came to try to lead them into a life subject to the yoke of sin.

The fall of Adam and Eve was not due to the power of the devil or the strength of the temptation of sin, but firstly it was because they embraced an offense proposed by the devil against the glory of who God was for them.

The lack of the glory of God, caused by the sin of breaking free fellowship with the Creator and His glory, has worked to lead people into ever deeper or distorted conceptual pits, from which they will never be able to come out by their own plans and efforts, but only by God's mercy if they, by faith in the Lord, welcome it into their hearts.

When people start trying to define God based on what they think about the Lord, and not from the revelation of the true glory of God, they begin to create bizarre concepts in every way and even go so far as to think that exploring their fellow men with “cunning, subtleties, or manipulations,” according to their own greed, is also what God does for the benefit of His mighty name.

When people lose focus on the glory of God, which, for instance, reveals God as the Unique Holy and Righteous Lord, they begin to interpret God from the perspective of themselves and even begin to think and believe that God also acts in greed and avarice as human beings act in the world.

Falling short of the glory of God is a factor that leads people not only to have substantially erroneous concepts about themselves, but also to the point of becoming ungodly before God and even thinking that God is like them in their most diverse corruptions, as mentioned in the following Psalm:

*Psalms 50: 16 **But to the wicked God says: "What right have you to declare My statutes, Or take My covenant in your mouth,
17 Seeing you hate instruction And cast My words behind you?
18 When you saw a thief, you consented with him, And have been a partaker with adulterers.
19 You give your mouth to evil, And your tongue frames deceit.
20 You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother's son.
21 These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, And set them in order before your eyes.
22 Now consider this, you who forget God, Lest I tear you in pieces, And there be none to deliver."***

As we have already tried to explain in the subjects on the Gospel referenced in the paragraphs above, the consequence of the distance that a person adopts concerning the glory of God is a reason or cause for many people to start to affront God, their fellow men, and to practice the most terrible actions also directed against God, themselves, and the other people around them.

When people turn away from the eternal glory of God, they may even think that God, the One Eternal and Immutable Creator, can be shaped according to the human mind, that even human beings can come to create idols with the status of gods, and, still, advancing to the mistaken idea that the very human being could become “god” of his or her life or even of his or her fellow men.

When people lose close contact with the true glory of God, which is also expressed by the contact with the true knowledge about God that a person may have while on Earth, they even start to think that God is volatile to praise or criticism like they are. Forgetting or denying, however, that God cannot be affected even by the praises or the absence of praises of human beings concerning Him because the glorious name of the Lord is even above all praise, as it was so preciously exposed in the book of Nehemiah:

*Nehemiah 9: 5 And the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said: "Stand up and bless the LORD your God Forever and ever! **"Blessed be Your glorious name, Which is exalted above all blessing and praise!"***

6 You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, The heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, The seas and all that is in them, And You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You.

The glory of God shows us that God does not change and that in Him there is no shadow of turning, no matter what people say or fail to say about the Lord.

*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.***

*Deuteronomy 10: 17 **For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.***

Distancing people from the glory of God distorts what they think of God, but it also corrupts what they think about themselves, their fellow men, the creation they see on Earth, and about the entire universe created by the Creator God of Heaven and Earth.

The lack of the glory of God works so that people are left to the most diverse vain and useless thoughts, consuming their life also in empty and purposeless attitudes regarding a true harvest for eternal life.

*Romans 1: 22 **Professing to be wise, they became fools.***

If an individual, for instance, has the idea that God is not indeed a merciful God and that in the face of the first mistake he or she makes the Lord will “throw a bolt of lightning over his or her head,” that individual will also tend to let an inappropriate fear regarding God become present in his or her life.

If, on the other hand, a person has the idea that God is a father that closes His eyes to everything, who allows His children to do whatever they want, and who never corrects them, regardless of how they behave, this person will tend to lean on an unruly life and focused only or primarily on carnal, earthly, and temporal pleasures or on activities devoid of a real or eternal purpose.

If, still, an individual thinks that God created the world and then “wound it up and lets it take its own course,” one will tend to believe that “the strong are the ones that survive.” And thinking like that, one may become insensitive when others are harmed or oppressed, because that is how one thinks God left the Earth for it to work on its own.

Men and women with an obscured heart present false testimonies of the glory of God, although many of them even say they are religious and devoted to God. Many in the world claim to announce the glory of God correctly, but they do not do it indeed when they do it based on exchange for a price, fee, or tax, because the true glory of the Lord shows us that God grants from His manifold grace and favor not for a price, but through kindness, mercy, and love.

When men and women with hearts hardened by their religions try to distort the glory of God before their fellow men or try to corrupt people's knowledge of who God really is, they don't actually serve God or cooperate with God. On the contrary, they try to distort the knowledge of the glory of God, among others, in at least three principal ways, namely:

- ⇒ 1st) Proclaiming that God does not give things without human sacrifice or that God does not give things without a human price, which is a lie since they are propositions that aim to pervert the grace of God.
- ⇒ 2nd) When they sin, when they give in to their lusts, and when they say that God is love and that, for this reason, the Lord will not punish sin, where these are also lies, for they try to present a perverted version of God's grace as if it could operate dissociated from God's righteousness.
- ⇒ 3rd) When they say that God does not directly guide or instruct those who love the Lord, claiming that they need other more experienced people to do so. Which is also a lie, because they want to pervert the glory of God Himself being the direct coverage of everyone who believes in Him, as well as they want to pervert the power of God to communicate directly with each person who cries out to Him for salvation, wisdom, and instruction as it is offered to us in the New Covenant with God in Christ Jesus.

*2 Timothy 3: 5 **Having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!***

*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.*

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.

When a person comes short of the glory of God, a central deficiency to which one becomes subject is that one also runs into the lack of proper discernment to judge what people say about who or how God is, about how God sees them, and how God works.

When people fall short of the glory of God, they also:

- ⇒ 1) Fall short of knowing every day the One who grants them the breath of life and who wants to support them, but who also wants to lead them to the paths of truth and righteousness;
- ⇒ 2) Lack of knowing what it really means for God to love them to the point of having given His Beloved Son to die for all and so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life;
- ⇒ 3) Fall short of knowing who is the merciful and forgiving Lord, but who, at the same time, is also just or upright in all judgments and paths;
- ⇒ 4) Run into the lack of knowledge of what God wants for each person to live in Him and to receive the condition and the inheritance of a child of the Heavenly Father;
- ⇒ 5) Come short of knowing that the One who called them is also entirely faithful and mighty to complete the work in them until the end.

The information and what a person believes to be the glory of God will tend to strongly affect his or her faith and the other choices or behaviors in his or her life. And, therefore, it is so crucial that a person understands how significant it is for him or her to know, appropriately, what God has to teach him or her about His eternal glory.

God is not what people in their distorted understanding say He is. God is what He says about Himself through His revelation about His glory.

When a person experiences an appropriate renewal of his or her understanding of God, through the glory of the Lord and not based on what the world says about God, one also has the possibility of achieving an inner renewal of trust in God that transforms, prepares, and enables him or her to walk under God's direction and according to the Lord's immeasurably precious will.

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

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.

C7. The Facet of Glory Highlights the Firm Past, Present, and Future Foundation of the Whole Gospel

In the previous chapters, we addressed the aspect that there are types of glories that are temporary or passing, as is the case with the natural body of the human being, as well as there are others that are eternal, as is the case with the glorified body that Christ received after His resurrection and which the Lord promises to grant in eternity to all who receive His gospel.

Although some passing glories are indispensable for a non-temporal glory to be made available next, as in the case of the human being in which the temporal body is compared to the seed for the eternal body, what really matters in the life of a human being, in the end, is to achieve that which is eternally beneficial or which can sustain him or her for eternity.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself declared that even if a person came to conquer the whole world, it would still be of no value if he or she also did not achieve the salvation of his or her soul.

Mark 8: 36 **For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?**

The most valuable natural and earthly aspects of the world are insignificant when compared to what is eternal. And not even the sum of many riches has the resources to achieve the eternal redemption of an individual's life, as it is also exposed in the following psalms:

Psalms 37: 16 **A little that a righteous man has Is better than the riches of many wicked.**

Psalms 49: 1 **To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.
Hear this, all peoples; Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,
2 Both low and high, Rich and poor together.**

3 My mouth shall speak wisdom, And the meditation of my heart shall give understanding.

4 I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will disclose my dark saying on the harp.

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. Selah*
- 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.*
-

Moreover, for something to be everlasting, that which constitutes it or that which constitutes its glory must also be eternal.

Therefore, in the context of the Gospel of God, if what constituted the Gospel or what sustained the Gospel did not have eternal glory or, in other words, were not indeed eternal, the Gospel would be merely a passing aspect towards human life.

Realizing what has already been accomplished through the Gospel is crucial, for it is also through the achievements already accomplished that this Gospel has the incomparable authority that is associated with it. However, what the facet of glory also makes evident is that the Gospel of God only has real authority because it continues to have steady support in the present and because it is grounded on a firm foundation that has the glory of being eternally unshakable.

Although the Gospel of the Lord can only offer what it offers because of the deeds already accomplished through it, the perspective from the facet of glory shows us more broadly what sustains this Gospel so that it can continue to be granted in the present and the future to all who believe in it.

The approach of the Gospel of God, from the perspective of the glory of God and the glory of Christ, is of particular or paramount importance to show that the full and perfect “substantiality or consistency” of the One who sustains the Gospel goes far beyond the historical and past achievements that are associated with this Gospel.

Knowing the Gospel from the perspective of the glory of God and the glory of Christ is especially significant for the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened to see the Gospel also from the perspective of it being a Gospel “eternally alive” because of the glory of the One who sustains this Gospel.

The history and the events that have occurred in the past and that are associated with the Gospel would not alone serve to sustain the newness of life in the present and in the future offered by the Gospel if they were facts dissociated from a firm and eternal foundation.

Past historical facts may be essential for the condition of sustaining something to be valid or to be able to be accomplished in the present and the future. However, without there being a continuous living condition that supports and continues to give validity to the facts that have already occurred, these past facts are just historical records.

Understanding the type of approach presented in the previous paragraph is highly relevant, since there are people who prefer to relate to the facts of history rather than to the Author and Living Supporter of their history and life in the present and future.

What has been done in the past throughout history through the Gospel has been done so that in the present, we may have living and free fellowship with the One who sustains the Gospel forever.

The facet of the Gospel of Glory is presented to us to highlight and continually remind us of the living condition of the foundation of the whole Gospel, who is the Lord, our God, the Unique Creator and Supporter of Heaven and Earth and of everything that is in them, and of everything that is contemplated in His Gospel.

The facet of God's glory presented in the Gospel is granted to us to show that the gifts of the Gospel would be nothing if they were not associated, in the present and future time, with the Author and Supporter of all the gifts contained in this Gospel.

Righteousness, salvation, peace, grace, power, and love of God simply do not exist apart from God.

Righteousness, salvation, peace, grace, power, and love of God are part of the glory of God and do not exist in any other glory that is dissociated from the glory of the Lord.

Thus, mentioned it again, the Gospel of Glory includes the offer that is extended to us to know God and to deepen ourselves in the living fellowship with the God of the Gospel and who sustains the whole Gospel.

The Gospel of Glory clearly or explicitly emphasizes that the ultimate goal of why the Gospel is offered to all people or that the supreme gift of the Gospel is for them to have free access to the Lord of the Gospel Himself.

The Gospel of the Glory of God highlights, even more objectively or expressly, that God has offered us and offers countless gifts, but also that He always offers them with the primary and the eminent objective of offering Himself and eternal fellowship with Him, because it is only in Him that life accompanied by eternal glory can be sustained.

*2 Corinthians 5: 17 **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.***

*18 **Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.***

Romans 11: 36 **For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.**

1 Peter 4: 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

In revealing the glory of God, the Gospel, firstly, reiterates before the world the position of the glory of God in all that has been done by the Lord on behalf of human beings. However, in calling us also to fellowship with the Eternal Lord, the Gospel highlights the position of God in the present and for eternity as the One who has always sustained life, grants the newness of life in the present, and who will continue to be the foundation of eternal life forever.

Through the facet of God's glory, the Gospel allows us to know everything we need to know about God in the past, but also in the present and about the eternal future so that in the present we may firmly establish our trust and hope in the Unique God who has an everlasting or a non-passing glory to offer us.

2 Corinthians 3: 5(b) ... our sufficiency is from God,

Psalms 54: 4 Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is with those who uphold my life.

1 Peter 5: 10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

Psalms 16: 1 Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.

2 O my soul, you have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You."

...

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, Nor take up their names on my lips.

5 O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot.

6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance.

- 7 I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.*
- 8 I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.*
- 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.*
- 10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*
- 11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Psalms 73: 26 My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Psalms 111: 3 His work is honorable and glorious, And His righteousness endures forever.

The Gospel from the perspective of the glory of God underscores to us that the Gospel is the way of restoring fellowship with the Creator, but also that what is given to us through the Gospel has a firm foundation in God Himself for a steady and unshakable continuity both in the present and forever.

The Gospel from the perspective of God's glory highlights to us the “essence of the immeasurable essences” that are offered to us by the Gospel, which is our Eternal God Himself.

The Gospel under the glory of God accentuates to us the main aspect of the Gospel that supports all its other aspects, and this, so that we may never forget the central and only aspect that can continue to support the Gospel in our lives.

The Gospel from the perspective of the glory of God makes evident to us the One who sustains what He offers us forever and ever.

Every true and lasting good aspect that is granted to us and all the support of some eternal good that is given to us comes from our Eternal God, and from whose glory our hearts should never depart.

C8. The Revelation of the Glory of the Lord is the Facet that Reiterates that the Gospel is an Inseparable Whole in God

Presenting a theme in a series of subjects, such as the series The Gospel, The Good News of God, has seemed to us to be necessary and beneficial so that such a broad theme can be covered in a more detailed and comprehensive way. However, it has also seemed to us that the use of this form of exposure presents a series of other challenges so that the global vision of the Gospel is not lost and that a specific aspect of the Gospel is not underestimated or overestimated to the detriment of the other facets that compose it.

Thus, when we start to see again evidenced in the previous chapter that the essence of the Gospel, in all its facets, is the Lord of the Gospel, we may also start to see what was already being reiterated in the other subjects of the series about this same Gospel, which is the condition of the Gospel being unique and a whole set consisting of its parts that are inseparable from each other.

Similar to how the foundations and columns of a house are integral or inseparable parts of a house, and without which the building cannot be considered stable, so also the aspects that have their name associated with the Gospel are integral or inseparable parts of the Gospel as a whole.

And not knowing that the Gospel is a whole, with multiple facets inseparable from this whole, has been one of the primary reasons why many people have had difficulty understanding the Gospel and, above all, to remain faithful and associated with it.

As illogical as it may seem, a more objective, complete, and even easier understanding of the Gospel occurs when a person comes to see the picture of the Gospel more widely, and not when someone only wants to see one part, even if one tries to see this part in a very detailed way.

If, for example, a person is willing to work very hard to discover how one can achieve the peace offered by the Gospel, but seeks to do so without knowing the righteousness of God and the glory of God, one will be studying peace dissociated from the central aspects through which one can achieve the desired peace indeed.

On the other hand, if a person seeks the peace offered by the Gospel together with the other aspects of the Gospel, such as the righteousness of God, the grace, and the glory of God, one will be able to realize that the so desired peace is, in fact, in the other aspects of the Gospel and that the part of the Gospel of Peace, in reality, points to the Lord and to that which can grant an individual the aimed peace.

Similar to the composition of a remedy, the construction of a building, or the assembly of some equipment, the Gospel is only what it comes to be because it consists of the parts that compose it, for the subtraction of one of the elements of the Gospel would cause it to be no longer the Gospel that is offered to us from the kingdom of heaven.

Concerning the Gospel of God, absolutely no facet can be established independently of the other parts contained in it.

Despite the many facets that are contained in the Gospel, the principle of its oneness should never be forgotten or overlooked by those who want to know this Gospel, to live and walk according to it, or to announce it to others.

If someone, for example, wants to announce the Gospel claiming to be presenting the way of salvation so that people may become free from their condition of unrighteousness and lack of peace, but subtracting the righteousness or peace of God from what one is announcing, this proposition of a supposed altered Gospel would no longer be good news to be received. And as a result, it would no longer be a Gospel indeed for those to whom it is being presented.

Therefore, as was also mentioned in the previous chapters, since the facet of God's glory makes it even more evident that God Himself is the guarantee or guarantor of all other parts of the Gospel or the Gospel as a whole, this aspect also ends up being the point that most exposes the foundation of the Gospel and from which people who aspire to know and experience the Gospel should never abstain.

Besides, the remarkable need to see the Gospel of God as the Gospel of His Glory also needs to be specially highlighted since this point places before us a series of aspects that are associated with terms and expressions little known or familiar to most people, or known to many only superficially.

We believe it is necessary to highlight here that among all the facets of the Gospel that have already been mentioned above, the knowledge of the glory of God and the glory of Christ becomes particularly challenging, for this part is probably the aspect of the Gospel that most covers terms and expressions that are not commonly used by most people in their daily lives or are not known more profoundly by those who even use them eventually.

Nevertheless, it is also in what is new for people that the Gospel manifests its distinctions concerning everything that is in the world and which cannot lead anyone to true righteousness, salvation, and peace.

In other words, the fact that the Gospel, in terms of the glory of God and the glory of Christ, is associated with terms and expressions that are unknown or little known by many people, should not discourage people from knowing this side of the Gospel more widely, for if the Gospel did not offer us new aspects, it would not be the revelation and offer of “good news” or “good tidings” either.

Wanting the Gospel without wanting to know the new aspects it offers is a contradiction to the essence of what is expressed by the term Gospel and to the understanding that the Gospel is a whole that brings newness of life to those to whom it is offered and who also receive it in their lives.

Knowing that the Gospel of God is a whole and that at least some degree of a reasonable understanding of each of its central facets also cooperates to achieve more effectively what the Lord offers us in His Gospel, is a point that highlights that a Christian should never be unwilling to know the new aspects of life in Christ just because a particular term described in Scripture is not common or known to him or her.

In the series called Suggestions for Reading and Studying the Bible, a subject on Colligated or Associated Words and Riddles of Antiquity was presented with a specific purpose, among others, to highlight how significant or essential it is for a person to attain at least basic knowledge of some terms that are particularly highlighted in the Scriptures or the Bible, even if these terms are not familiar to an individual at the first moment he or she comes into contact with them.

To achieve a more global perception of the Gospel of the Lord, deepening the knowledge of terms that sound new to a person will surely require a certain degree of dedication, attention, and effort to be understood and assimilated.

On the other hand, it is also certain that this task can be perfectly accomplished when a person is willing with an open heart before the Lord Jesus Christ and when one allows the Lord to assist him or her in this endeavor.

*John 6: 63 Jesus said to them, **It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.***

*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.***

To take a favorable position concerning the teaching given by the Lord is a path of high and immeasurable benefits in the most diverse areas of the lives of those who are exposed to it and, mainly, in the understanding of the Gospel through which the Lord instructs us and grants us what we need for the newness of life in Him or according to the life of faith in the Lord.

The words that the Lord has chosen to be part of the Scriptures in a way associated with the Gospel are the terms or expressions that the Heavenly Father has chosen to instruct us on what is really relevant and useful for our lives not just for the present time, but also for eternal life.

*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.***

*2 Timothy 3: 16 **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,***

*17 **that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

The Scriptures inspired by the Lord through His Holy Spirit express the terms contained therein not by chance or as mere expressions that could be replaced by any other words. The terms used in the Scriptures associated with the Gospel of the Lord are presented in them as the Heavenly Father established it because they are also the appropriate way, in terms of human language, by which God's truths could be expressed to human beings for their benefit.

When people begin to select only the expressions and terms that they like in the Scriptures, instead of listening to others that demand higher dedication to the word of the Lord or because they require changes in the attitudes of their lives, they begin to put themselves in an unfavorable position regarding the knowledge of the truths of God. They begin to subject themselves under a condition where they are vulnerable to wanting only to know what sounds good to their ears and not what is indeed beneficial and necessary to understand.

2 Timothy 4: 1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Therefore, when in this chapter, as well as in the next ones, we seek to approach expressions and terms less known even to many Christians, we will be addressing these expressions because they are highlighted in the Scriptures and because their approach is also vital for Christians who really want to grow in the knowledge of the glory of the Lord revealed in His Gospel, and, consequently, for those who also want to grow in their own position as Christians.

When we seek to approach expressions or terms such as *the glory of Christ, take away the old, establish the new, the only foundation, take away the first, establish the second, the first covenant, the new covenant, priesthood, the order of Melchizedek, the King of Glory*, and several others, we will only do so because we understand that they are vital to the Christian life and because they are widely and firmly associated with the Gospel of God, the ministry of Christ, and the revelation of the glory of His “Being” and His actions.

Although expressions and terms like those mentioned in the previous paragraph are not commonly known to a large part of people who claim to be Christians, knowing them keeps being crucial or vital for each person who longs to walk in the paths of the Eternal Lord revealed through His Eternal Gospel.

Even though the inclination to seek knowledge of expressions and terms of the Scriptures not so well known requires a good measure of dedication and a certain degree of effort directed towards this task, no one, much less a Christian, for the benefit of oneself, should despise the possibility of access to this knowledge.

When a person, for instance, begins to know more closely the expression related to *the light of the glory of the Gospel* and what the Heavenly Father offers through the revelation of His glory, the glory of Christ, and the glory of this Gospel, this person can come to understand that God can reveal Himself to him or her in an entirely satisfactory way to strengthening his or her faith and hope, even though God does not show him or her all the brightness of His beauty.

Similarly, when a person comes to understand more about the current ministry of Christ and the meaning of the Lord Jesus being the Unique Mediator between God and human beings even in the present time, one will also be more supported in the heart to rely on the fact that in Christ one has all the provision one needs to be instructed to relate appropriately to his or her Creator in each new situation that may come across in his or her present and future trajectory, thus allowing God to guide him or her to go deeper into a whole new time of relationship with one's Savior and Lord.

Since the growth of an individual in the newness of life in God is based on knowing more the Lord and in the fellowship with Him, His glory, and His word, particularly that which is associated with the Gospel, the comprehension of the different terms that show the diversity of Christ's ministries, including those less known to most people, also ends up becoming essential to those who want to understand the firm indispensable foundation of the Gospel and who want to have their lives firmly established in God.

***2 Peter 1: 1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:
2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,
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.***

The more a person knows the Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of the Lord who can cooperate with us everywhere and at all times for us to know more the Heavenly Father and the Son of His Love, the more that person will understand the glory of Him who grants a unique, perfect, full, consistent, and eternal Gospel through which the newness of life in the Lord can also be accessed both in the present and for all eternity.

The eternal life offered in the Gospel has its amplitude, uniqueness, and oneness most widely manifested when we also come to understand that it is in God that the newness of life that is offered in this same Gospel resides, as well as that any proposition of a “gospel” that tries to dissociate an individual from a personal relationship with God is not indeed, and never will be, a true Gospel.

The Gospel, characterized as the offer of the gifts of the heavenly kingdom for the salvation of the lost and a new life in God for those who believe in Him, is only good news indeed because of the joint composition of what is offered in it.

The Gospel of God is a whole and from which nothing can be removed, for the essences of the multiple parts of the Gospel are actually expressions of who is or how is the Only Eternal Creator of Heaven and the Earth and what is in them.

If the Gospel could be divided, God would also be under the possibility of being divided, something that would inevitably end with the support of all life, for in God, there is not even a shadow of turning, much less division and lack of integrity.

*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.***

*John 17: 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.***

The facet of the glory of God associated with the Gospel of the Lord is offered to us so that we may have the conviction of understanding and faith that it is only in God that the Gospel of love, righteousness, salvation, peace, grace, power, and the eternal promises endures, because in reality, as already mentioned, these attributes are the expression of who God is and whose source is found exclusively in the Lord.

*Psalms 89: 14 **Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.***

*1 John 4: 16 **And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.***

Although many people are unaware of this aspect, spiritual life or eternal life is also equated with a building against which there are oppositions and confrontations, which, for this reason, needs a firm foundation or an unshakable ground to remain established forever, also evidencing so the aspect that only the Lord is the firm foundation that can support this kind of life.

*Proverbs 10: 25 **When the whirlwind passes by, the wicked is no more, But the righteous has an everlasting foundation.***

The Gospel of the Glory of God has been offered to us to know Him who sustains both the natural universe and spiritual things. And this, to instruct us not to reject or depart from the central aspect that gives support to all other aspects of present and eternal life, namely: the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Heavenly Father established as the everlasting foundation of all who believe in Him.

John 17: 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

1 John 1: 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.

4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

C9. The Glory of the Lord is the Facet of the Gospel that Highlights the One Who Can Guide and Support Someone to be “More than a Conqueror or Winner”

When looking at the outstanding list of aspects of the Gospel of God highlighted in each of the themes already displayed in the present series of subjects, it would be no wonder if a person asked oneself whether he or she still could or would need to seek the approach of yet other aspects of this same Gospel.

After seeing the perfect origin of the Gospel in the love of the Creator, in Christ, and the kingdom of God, and after seeing the virtues of the Gospel as righteousness, peace, salvation, power, grace, and promises of God, could there still be anything notoriously significant and necessary to be seen in a singular and prominent way in this Gospel?

If the question in the previous paragraph had to be answered by the recipients of the Gospel, some, perhaps, would answer that nothing else would need to be added to what has been exposed so far, thinking that the aspects described above would already be more than sufficient for all the needs they might foresee for their lives.

If, however, we verify what the Creator of the Gospel Himself offers us through it, we may see that there still is indeed an essential facet to be perceived and understood by those to whom the Gospel is addressed.

Although the human being often thinks that one is aware of what one needs to receive and what one does not need to receive from God, it is not the human being oneself who actually has this answer, but the Eternal and Omniscient Lord, as has also been pointed out several times in the previous subjects about the Gospel.

Thoughts according to the human mentality may even present extensive knowledge in some respects. However, when they are confronted with the breadth of what is necessary for sustaining life and, mainly, for supporting life as to its eternal condition, they are not only limited, but also, in most cases, mistaken concerning the will of the Lord Creator of Heaven and Earth.

God's thoughts about us are complete and perfect, and, therefore, different from what the human mentality proposes to people.

Thus, if the Lord chose to inform us in the Scriptures that His Gospel is also constituted by the facet of His glory, He did it because this aspect also contains something essential that we need to know, even though many do not realize it or even if many are not willing to pay attention to this knowledge, as exemplified in the following text:

- 2 Corinthians 4: 3 **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,***
*4 **whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.***
*5 **For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.***
*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.***

The Gospel from the perspective of the glory of the Lord shows particularly unique characteristics. And when we come across this facet of the glory of God and the glory of Christ, we can see that God's sovereignty in instructing us on what we need becomes particularly evident. This aspect of the Gospel informs us of God's desire for us to know both a term little known to most people, which is the term *glory*, as well as what is associated with such a vast subject that is not commonly observed by most people in their daily life.

The facet of the Gospel observed from the perspective of the glory of the Lord is worthy of specific reference also due to the fact that it presents aspects that surprise us even beyond everything that the Gospel of the Lord may have already surprised us, which also makes the task of writing something about this very aspect so challenging.

And among several points, looking at the Gospel from the perspective of the glory of God and the glory of Christ leads us to a challenge comparable to understanding what the expression ***more than conquerors or winners*** is that Paul, an apostle of Christ, narrates in the text presented below:

Romans 8: 37 **Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors (or winners) through Him who loved us.**

In general, human beings are familiar with references to the term *victory*, considering yet that countless people even find themselves continually in disputes and struggles to achieve victories. However, the expression *more than winners* or *more than conquerors* is not so much commonly disseminated and known. In fact, many do not even know well what this expression could mean, which similarly occurs concerning the Gospel being associated with what is presented as the *glory of the Lord*.

When we are faced with expressions like *more than winners* or *the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord*, it seems that we are faced with points that go beyond the limits of what by many is already considered the maximum limit to be reached.

On the other hand, if we are willing in the Lord to break the limits of what seemed to be the end of the line or trajectory to be followed, and accept the Lord's instruction beyond the previously known limits, we may see that the limits that the Lord presents to us are actually those to which we are called to move forward in order to reach an even firmer or more secure position of life in Him.

When the Lord shows us that He wants us to be more than conquerors or winners and that we also come to know His Gospel in what seems to us less popular or familiar, He also shows us that, in some cases, some levels of victory or conquests might not be enough so that what the Lord wants to give us becomes firmly established in us.

In several situations in which people seek to achieve some glory, it is also in reaching the desired glory that they find their worse dishonors.

In many cases in which people aim for victories, it is also in the victories they achieve that they find their worse defeats, becoming people who are not more than conquerors or winners.

How many are not the people who, when they achieve a victory or also called glory, end up subjecting themselves to a succession of defeats due to pride, arrogance, and their dishonorable postures that come from how they positioned themselves in their lives precisely by obtaining victories and glories they aimed to achieve?

Due to the lack of knowledge of what it takes to be “more than a conqueror or a winner,” that is, “to continue to be a winner after being a winner,” many people sink even after obtaining the victories towards which they have made so much effort and dedicated the precious hours of their lives so they could reach them.

And so that a similar situation does not occur in the relationship with what the Gospel of God offers us, the Lord also offers us His Gospel associated with His glory to point out to us “in Whom” and “how” we can be more than winners concerning all the other facets offered by the same Gospel.

Since receiving the Gospel refers to the main victory that a person can achieve in one's entire existence, for it is through it that one receives lasting salvation and eternal life, God also offers, through the same Gospel, access to the knowledge of His glory so that people may know that in the Lord they have at their disposal everything they need to never depart from the gift of eternal life offered to them from the heavenly kingdom.

Therefore, under the purpose that all the other benefits of the Gospel become firmly established in our lives, the Lord also revealed it as the Gospel of His Glory so that we may come to know and receive the Lord as He wants us to know and receive Him in our lives.

We recognize that knowing the Gospel also in terms of the glory of God and the glory of Christ is challenging. However, considering that God also made the knowledge of His glory available in His Gospel, that He wants us to know it, and that He is willing to assist us so that we may achieve this knowledge, we can also have the firm confidence that further progress in this aspect will surely contribute so that the good, perfect, and pleasant will of God will increasingly be known and experienced by us, as well as consolidated in us, as it is also exemplified in the texts repeated below:

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.**

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

As has already been mentioned in other chapters, it is in the renewal of understanding, including advancing on topics that we are not yet familiar with, such as the Gospel of Glory and, above all, the Lord's own glory, that people can break with the limits that the world improperly seeks to establish for them. It is also through the renewal of understanding according to the instruction of the Lord, and which goes beyond the limits of the limited knowledge that is under the sun, that people may achieve the transformation of life to be not only winners, but also more than winners.

The Gospel of God is offered to us so that we may reach the condition of being freed from sin, the body of sin, the bondage of darkness, and from getting lost. However, it is also manifested and given to us as the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord so that we may know that our true victories only come from God and that only in Christ we have firm support for our lives so that the victories achieved also become eternal victories. An aspect which puts us in the condition of being able to be eternally more than winners or conquerors.

As we also mentioned before, the aspect of the Gospel that offers us the knowledge of the glory of God is that which reveals to us the foundation that sustains the whole Gospel and all life, showing that it is only by God and in Christ that someone can be more than a winner.

When the Lord takes us by the right hand and leads us on the paths of life because we receive Him through His Gospel, we can also be sure that the attributes of the Lord manifested in His glory will lead us to the victory of victories and which gives us the condition of eternal winners.

*Isaiah 41: 13 **For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'***

*Isaiah 31: 1 **Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, And rely on horses, Who trust in chariots because they are many, And in horsemen because they are very strong, But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, Nor seek the LORD!***

*1 John 5: 5 **Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?***

*1 Corinthians 15: 54 **So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

The Gospel from the perspective of the glory of God presents the aspect that offers us to know much closer and much more abundantly the One who makes us achieve victories in our journey, but, above all, the One who makes us reach the surpassing victory and the final, sovereign, and eternal prize of our journey with the Lord that begins by receiving His Gospel.

*Psalms 20: 7 **Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.***

*Philippians 1: 3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,
4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with
joy,
5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,
6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good
work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

C10. The Ultimate Benefit that Comes from Knowing the Glory of God

Although we have already addressed some points about the purpose of knowing the glory of God, and still before we delve deeper into some of the various specific aspects contained in the glory of the Lord, we would like to stress this purpose once again by using another angle of the benefit of the knowledge of the glory of God, which is exposed to us in the following text:

*2 Corinthians 3: 16 **Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.***
*17 **Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.***
*18 **But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.***

Recalling that the Gospel is characterized as an offer of “good news,” it is evident that the possibility of being able to know the glory of God is also offered to us essentially for our benefit.

But why does the Lord want us to know His glory and what is the most central benefit of being able, through the revelation of His glory, to know who is the Lord and Creator of our lives?

What can knowing more God affect our lives, and what a more accurate understanding of who the Lord is may contribute to our present and future?

In some ways, understanding and experiencing the effects of knowing the glory of God regarding the life of those who come to know it is the most significant point of the relationship with the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord, for it is in the effects that the Gospel can cause to a person and in favor of a person that an individual's connection to the Gospel and its benefits is established indeed.

If the Gospel, as an offer of good tidings, did not actually have anything good to offer us, it would not be worthy to be an offer of “good news” either.

Expecting good gifts and good results from the Gospel is what the Lord expects us to do, for it is precisely for this purpose that the Lord announces and offers us this same Gospel.

If every good gift and every perfect gift comes from the Father of Lights, who else could we turn to with the hope of receiving the true gifts that we need for life?

When people do not know or know in a distorted way the glory of God, they begin to say, for example, that “we should not disturb God with our requests,” as if listening to and answering our supplications were a heavy burden on the Lord’s shoulders or as if it were a heavy burden for God to take care of the creation that He Himself made or created.

In announcing who God is and how God works, the Scriptures inform us that God's care for His people or those who trust Him is still far superior to the care of a father or mother for their own child. How, then, could anyone say that God is oblivious to the

needs of the people of the world or that God does not see what happens in the earthly kingdoms?

Psalms 27: 10 **When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me.**

Isaiah 49: 15 **Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you.**

Hebrews 4: 13 **And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**

In previous chapters, we have also approached the point that the benefit of knowing the glory of God includes knowing who God is so that the one who is justified in the Lord may live in trust in Him and His love.

Nevertheless, in this present chapter, we would like to highlight that the great benefit of trusting in God, in turn, is reflected in ourselves and in the transformation that we may start to experience by placing our confidence in the Lord.

Although it also includes this aspect, living through faith in God or living in trust in the Lord is not only a means to receive a “free pass” to heaven and eternal life. Faith in God, to the point that we know more of His glory, may have effects on our whole life also to the point of experiencing profound and marvelous transformations in our own being.

The effect or benefit of being brought face to face with the revelation of the glory of God is the way by which we do not only receive various gifts from God through faith but also for us to achieve the profound personal transformation that we need so much.

Through the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus Christ teaches us that a person who is unjust when placed on a minimum of resources does not let the position of unfaithfulness just by being placed over many things. That is, it is not natural wealth that transforms an unjust person into a faithful person.

Luke 16: 10 **He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.**

The Scriptures, also through the writings of Paul, instruct us that it is not a system of conduct and teaching of what is right to do that enables a person to be a practitioner of what is truly good before God.

Romans 7: 14 **For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.**

- 15 *For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.*
- 16 *If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.*
- 17 *But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.*
- 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.*
- 19 *For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.*
- 20 *Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.*
- 21 *I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.*
- 22 *For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.*
- 23 *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*
- 24 *O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

Romans 3: 9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one."

The profound inner transformation that human beings need so much, and for which so many people struggle without even knowing that it is for it that they long for, is not and cannot be found in their natural condition, in their fellow men, in the created things, or even in the gods that people imagined and created in their arrogant minds.

When the human being seeks in the created things and his or her fellow men the solution for one's life and the transformation one thinks one needs, he or she places oneself in a cycle of slavery and corruption similar to what he or she already lives and from which one will never be able to become free without the help of God's mercy, as exemplified by the following text:

- Romans 8: 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*
- 20 *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;*
- 21 *because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

What is corrupt cannot produce something perfect and not corrupt.

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

The fallen human being and subject to the slavery of sin cannot produce the transformation that he or she oneself needs to achieve lasting freedom. From the condition of subjection to what is deficient and corrupted, the human being does not have the minimum elements to produce something that is lastingly good or that provides him or her with the eternal freedom one really needs.

Only what is perfect can offer what is entirely perfect.

Only what is right can create something fully just or can transform what has been corrupted.

Only the Unique One who has a perfect, upright, blameless, and truly free glory can offer a glory that grants true freedom and the path of transformation so that what is perfect and righteous can be achieved.

Returning to the last texts referenced above, we can observe that the creation awaits the revelation of the glorious freedom of the children of God, which is based on the glory of God at their disposal, and this, so that the creation may also achieve the freedom that is given by the Lord to those who trust Him.

We still highlight here that the creation does not wait to know the sons of God only in their mere natural condition, but it awaits the revelation of what makes the children of God enjoy the distinct or true freedom. The creation awaits the revelation of what allows a person to achieve a transformation that transcends what the mere human transformations propose and can accomplish.

God's glory is revealed to us initially so that we may come to believe in God and receive eternal salvation in the Lord. However, after receiving the Gospel, God continues to offer us the revelation of His glory so that we know that He is also the One who, together with salvation, gives us a new heart in which the Spirit of the Lord Himself dwells and that He is the One that offers to operate in us our very transformation in everything that we need to be transformed.

*Jeremiah 24: 7 **Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.***

*Ezekiel 11: 19 **Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh.***

Through the Lord's operation in the lives of those who come to know His glory and trust each of His attributes, the unfaithful can become faithful, and the unjust can become righteous. The sad can turn to be joyful, the hopeless in one who has a firm hope, the corrupted in a person who walks uprightly, the hateful in a gracious individual, the wicked in someone kind, the lost in saved one, the abandoned by father and mother in an eternal son of the Unique Eternal Father in the entire universe.

Through the knowledge of the glory of God and trust in God, a person can know the love of God and understand that, because of this love,

everything that God has and also everything that God is in His most diverse attributes is available for him or her for what is eternally beneficial.

*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?***

Many people, for sure, fail to receive many benefits that are available to them in the Lord because they do not live by faith in God. However, how will they believe if they do not know, in a minimally satisfactory way, the Lord, His principal attributes, and what the Lord offers them for a life according to His eternal purpose?

Therefore, the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord shows us the way to know specifically the attributes of God that we need to know. And, in turn, the specific knowledge of the attributes of God opens the way for us to exercise faith in the Lord concerning His attributes.

Our faith concerning the attributes of God communicates to the Lord that we want Him to manifest them in our favor. And, in turn, the manifestation of God's attributes on our behalf also works in our transformation, from glory to glory, to the condition that the Lord has always intended for our lives, which is a life together with Him, in Him, and under His guidance.

If people were willing to be taught to know at least a little more about how much can contribute to their lives a more comprehensive knowledge of who God is in His multiple attributes, they could also benefit from the transformations in them that can only be achieved through or together with the Unique God who knows them precisely in each of their smallest details.

The text we quoted at the beginning of this chapter informs us that if someone turns to the Lord, the Lord also takes away the veil that blinds, as well as He shows Himself to this person. And if someone perseveres in knowing the glory of God, one will know not only several facets of this glory, but also the beneficial effects for his or her life that result from knowing this glory cumulatively and increasingly.

Finally, in the present chapter, we would still like to mention that the text that we used at the beginning of this chapter also teaches us that the glory of God can be seen as if in a mirror so that the transformative effect that one wishes to obtain through it may also be achieved.

And a first characteristic about seeing something as if through a mirror is in the fact that what one sees through a mirror is always current and contemporary.

When someone sees something displayed in a painting, a picture, a sculpted image, or any other form that records a moment, and however much what was registered might have been the expression of truth in a particular time, that what was displayed expresses a past moment of something that may have undergone significant changes after the work of its registration.

In a mirror, however, and as much as the mirror has defects or is of low quality, what is seen, is always seen in the present. It is characteristic of the mirror to “mirror” what is placed in front of it the moment it is placed.

Given this, the glory of God is transforming for those who accept to see it as the glory of a living and present God, and not of a historical and past God, because a “god” who is no longer alive and active with all his attributes in the present cannot and will never be able to perfect a person.

Thus, at this point, we recall that the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord is also offered to us to communicate that the glory of the works of the past of God transforms us only because it is also a glory that remains equally alive in the present and the future.

Continuing yet, a second aspect about seeing something as if through a mirror is that when someone sees something in the mirror at different times, one may also observe what has been changing from one moment to the next, for the mirror faithfully reflects what remains the same because it was already consolidated in the previous steps, but it also shows what has changed over time.

Therefore, when the Scriptures inform us that we can contemplate the glory of God as if in a mirror, they also announce that the transformations that take place from glory to glory are tangible and practical in the lives of those in whom the Lord produces changes according to His glory, as well as that these transformations are made in the light of the Lord and so that they are visible to those who with God's help achieve changes.

Through various aspects of the Gospel of God, we are offered to know the path and how we can come before God with confidence to know His glory, which represents knowing God Himself and experiencing eternal life.

Nevertheless, **through the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord, we are invited to know even more the attributes of the Lord to the point that the Lord's life begins to produce in us its divine nature and frees us from a life without purpose or according to the fleeting glory of the things of the world.**

*Hebrews 10: 19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,
21 and having a High Priest over the house of God,
22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

*2 Peter 1: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,
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.*

In the world, many people like to affirm and reaffirm that no person can really change who one is. However, many speak so for not knowing or not accepting the glory of God, because for the Lord even what was dead could revive so that we know that many things that for human beings are impossible to be accomplished are entirely possible to be carried out and established by the Lord.

1 Peter 4: 6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

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.

If through the other aspects of the Gospel the invitation, the offer, and the way to come closer to God are evidenced, the facet of the Gospel of Glory highlights the even more central purpose for which God wants us to come closer to Him. And which is that we may become transformed into the same image of what He is like, so that we may increasingly experience the supreme benefit of being in God and becoming able in Him to live and walk according to His will.

2 Corinthians 3: 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

C11. The Glory of God in the Face of Christ

A. The Glory Specifically Emphasized by the Gospel of Glory

After a person comes to understand that the knowledge of the glory of God is very significant to his or her life and that it is through the knowledge given by God about this glory that he or she has the faith built indeed to access the multiple gifts that are offered to him or her through the Gospel of the Lord, the next step, obviously, becomes the aspect of how the glory of God can be accessed or actually known in its multiple characteristics.

If, for example, a person receives a wrapped gift that is very necessary and that can be very useful in one's daily life, one will only really benefit from the gift received if one also unpacks, comes to know, and uses what was granted to him or her.

So, if someone understands that he or she needs to know the glory of God, but does not know it because one is not willing to know it or because one does not know how to do it, one remains as one who does not know the glory of God despite already understanding the importance of knowing it.

Even in the face of the great contingent of gifts that the Lord offers to people through His Gospel, it may happen that people in general, and even Christians, may not realize how these gifts can actually become a reality in their lives and what essentially can sustain the gifts in people's lives so that they are also established for the purpose for which they are given.

In other words, the first step regarding knowledge about the relevance of God's glory also needs to be accompanied by a second step that instructs where the knowledge of God's glory can be obtained, as well as a third step that shows how this knowledge can become a reality for those to whom it is offered.

Nevertheless, the understanding that there are several steps to know the glory of God does not need to be seen as a hard aspect to us, for **just as God offers and gives us His Gospel in a perfect way, so also the Lord grants us a precise place and the perfect way to know and access the knowledge of His glory so that we may know and access everything we need from this same Gospel**, as we can see appointed in the text exposed bellow again:

*2 Corinthians 4: 3 **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,***

*4 **whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.***

*5 **For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.***

*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.***

Although the glory of God is also manifested through the heavens, the firmament, or the whole creation, God has determined that it is in the face of Christ, or in what we can see in Christ and about Christ, that the glory of God essentially is revealed more widely, more understandably, and more objectively so that we may also be transformed by the Spirit of the Lord according to the will of God, as was mentioned in the previous chapter.

When the Scriptures inform us that the Gospel of God is also the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and that the glory of Christ is the very expression of the glory of God, the Scriptures are teaching us that if one really wants to know God, one should first wanting to know Christ, because Christ is the express image of God and God chose to show His glory through Christ and in Christ.

By the perspectives of the Gospel as the Gospel of the Creator and as the Gospel of Christ, we have sought to emphasize how much the Heavenly Father loved us to the point of giving His Only Begotten Son and also how much Christ loved the Heavenly Father and us to also give Himself as a perfect offering for our justification, salvation, and life.

Nevertheless, when we look at the Gospel from the perspective of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, which expresses the very glory of God, we are called to pay more objective attention to the aspect of who is the Christ that is offered and given to us through the Gospel so that we also come to know the Heavenly Father who has given us the Son of His love.

The Gospel of the Glory of Christ, speaking only in an illustrative way, calls us to unwrap the gift that was offered to us with so much love so that we may see that the greatest gift that was wrapped up in the Gospel is the offerer himself who gave us the gift.

The Gospel of the Glory of Christ, proceeding from God and Christ, only figuratively, grants us a ticket that gives us the right to draw close to Christ, through whom we also have a card that provides us with the right to draw near to the Heavenly Father and the Spirit of the Lord.

Christ is the “new and living” way to God.

Christ is the truth and wisdom of God made available to us.

Christ is the life of God offered and given to us.

Christ is the “pearl of great price.”

Christ is the great treasure in which all the other treasures of God can be found.

Christ is the mine of the precious stones of the attributes of God to be mined.

Christ is the love of the Heavenly Father's Gospel.

Christ is the direct expression of the kingdom of God.

Christ is the righteousness for justification through the Gospel of Righteousness.

Christ is the peace of God of the Gospel of Peace.

Christ is the salvation of the Gospel of Salvation.

Christ is the grace of the Gospel of Grace.

Christ is the power of the Gospel of the Power of God.

Christ is the answer to the promises or the fulfillment of the offers of life made by God throughout the centuries of human life.

It is in Christ that the life in the love of God, the life of faith in the Lord, and the life grounded on firm hopes is achieved and established.

Christ is the essence of every good gift and perfect gift that the Father of Lights grants through His Gospel.

Thus, together with the need of faith to live through faith in God and to grow in the newness of life given by the Lord through His grace, people need a closer and more personal knowledge of Christ or His glory, which is the reason or means for an individual to have faith in God.

When people ask where the glory of God is and how they can know God, it is the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God that answers these questions clearly and objectively in two words, namely: “In Christ!”

As we have already mentioned, the heavens or the firmament also proclaims the glory of God. However, it is Christ who sustains the heavens or the firmament, thus having a glory superior to everything that is contemplated in the creation.

In Christ, the glory of Him who sustains the other facets of the Gospel of Glory is revealed.

In Christ, the more profound glory that God wants everyone to know in their hearts about Him is revealed.

In Christ, the glory of God becomes known personally or present in the heart of the one who opens the heart to the revelation of the glory of the Lord.

In Christ, God's justification, salvation, peace, and love for all human beings come to be established as the justification, salvation, peace, and love of the one who comes to know the glory of the Lord in his or her own life.

Christ is the glory of God revealed in intimacy. Christ is the secret or covenant of God revealed to those who fear Him.

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

It is in Christ that we can learn, first, what is true or eternal life, and it is also in Christ that we can obtain the newness of life that comes from God.

Furthermore, it is also in Christ that we can learn to live and walk properly in the newness of life that the Heavenly Father grants through His Gospel.

Christ is the very novelty of life that came from God to everyone who receives His Gospel.

*John 6: 33 **For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.***

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*John 6: 48 (Jesus said to them:) **"I am the bread of life."***

Because they do not know appropriately what the newness of life offered by the heavenly kingdom is and how this life can be lived, many people end up subjecting themselves to many troubles. However, it is because they do not know or have not accepted the glory of Christ that they end up not even knowing the life that is according to God's will for them.

In other words, people end up incurring paths of destruction because they do not know God and His will, but they do not know God and His will because they do not know Christ, the Unique One through whom God has designated that the newness of life of the heavenly kingdom can be known and lived.

The knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ, refers to the glory that all human beings need to see before and above the glory of any other aspect that they may find relevant or valuable in life.

The glory specifically emphasized in the Gospel from the perspective of glory, shows even more strikingly what each of the other facets of the Gospel has already shown, which is the eminence of Christ as the expression and the means for us to know the God of the eternal glory Himself. And this, so that we also may believe and live through the attributes of the Lord.

Whoever accepts God's invitation through His Gospel to contemplate who the Lord Jesus Christ was, is, and always will be, and whoever contemplates the glory of what Christ did, does, and will do, and has fellowship with Him as it is granted through the love and the grace of God, will also know the main aspects of how God is like and what God does, for he or she will know the glory of God.

Christ is the brightness of the glory of God and the express image of His person (according to Hebrews 1: 3).

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

*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.
- 15 He (Christ) 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.
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And, in turn, those who know the glory of God, in Christ Jesus, will also be able to say with conviction what Paul said about his relationship with the Lord:

2 Timothy 1: 12(b) ... for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

The direct or objective way to know the glory of God, or to know God as an individual needs to know God, is Christ.

For this reason, in the same text in which Paul teaches about the glory of God, he also explains what the great and essential aspect that needs to be preached about the Gospel of God is:

2 Corinthians 4: 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

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 faithful preaching of the Gospel always involves preaching and presenting Christ Jesus as the Lord, for Christ is the only alternative so that falling short or the lack of the glory of God caused by subjection to sin comes to be suppressed and so that the life according to the kingdom of God is granted to all who receive Christ in their hearts.

It is in the heart that God enlightens to us the knowledge of His glory, but He does it for those who accept that His glory is exposed by Him in Christ Jesus.

*1 Peter 3: 15(a) **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts!***

Romans 4: 23 till 5: 2

Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

B. The Glory of God in the Face of Christ Sent in the Flesh into the World

As an expression of His love, God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world to present the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven as His good tidings and as His good and eternal gift offered to humanity. And God did this, to reveal the facets of His glory that are necessary so that each person can come to the true knowledge about the Lord and so that, through this knowledge, each person may also believe in Christ for the redemption and salvation of his or her life through the grace of the Lord and by faith in the Redeemer God.

John 3: 17 **For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

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.**

The Lord Jesus Christ has repeatedly stated that receiving the One that the Heavenly Father sent or receiving the Heavenly Father Himself are points that are entirely or inseparably related.

Matthew 10: 40 **He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.**

John 5: 23(a) **He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.**

John 5: 37 **And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.**
38 **But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.**

John 12: 44 **Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me."**

In another passage, the Lord also reiterates that the purpose of His coming in the flesh into the world was to reveal the glory of Him who sent Him so that the glory of God would come to be presented in righteousness.

John 7: 18 **He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.**

The Lord Jesus Christ came to show the people of the world the glory of God for the purpose of calling them to reconciliation and fellowship with the Creator.

The Only Begotten Son of God came into the world to supply the lack of the glory of God that subjection to sin had imposed on humanity.

The Lord Jesus Christ came to make visible the invisible attributes of God that human beings could no longer perceive and without which they could no longer believe in their Creator.

John 1: 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"

16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

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.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, who was since before the foundation of the world, assumed the condition of Son of Man to show also in this position to the world that was created through Him what each person needs to know about who God is or how the Creator God of every human being and all the creation is.

With the coming of Christ Jesus in the flesh into the world, many things that were said to be the glory of God were revealed as not being in agreement with the true glory of the Lord. On the other hand, many things that were not known about the glory of God also came to be revealed in such a tangible and touchable way that people never thought God would come to do.

Before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world as the Son of Man, just a few people or nations knew God, and even this in a very limited way and only through the voice of some God-fearing prophets, priests, and kings. However, most of the other peoples knew even less about the Lord. Their condition was as if they were groping in the dark when it came to the subject about the glory of the Eternal God.

And initially, similarly to the prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ also expressed Himself at various times through announcements of the Lord's word to supply the lack that people had concerning the glory of God.

In the sequence, however, differently from the prophets, priests, and kings that preceded Him, the Lord Jesus Christ also came to demonstrate, in many ways and by a direct and express form, how some of the principal attributes of the Heavenly Father, the God of all grace, or the Father of Lights from whom every good gift and every perfect gift comes are in fact, as exemplified in the following texts:

John 12: 45 **And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.**
46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

John 14: 9 **Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"**

Therefore, who receives the glory and the testimony of Christ, also receives the glory and the testimony of God. And whoever does not receive the glory and testimony of Christ also does not receive the glory of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

1 John 5: 9 **If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.**

10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

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.

To say that Christ is the brightness of the glory of God also means to say that whoever does not accept the glory of God in Christ does not accept as well the glory of God and the Father of all the creation Himself. Or, still, if someone is not satisfied with what God has shown about Him in Christ, he or she will also not be satisfied with what God is, because Christ is the express image of God's person.

Looking at the glory of God and looking at the glory of Christ, to be transformed by God and to obtain the novelty of eternal life in the Lord, are equivalent actions, since the glory of one is also the glory of the other.

If we learn to see the glory of Christ, we will know what we need from the Heavenly Father's glory.

Again, the Lord Jesus Christ is the express image of God, and it is through Him that the great need for the glory of God is met.

Thus, when we see the Lord Jesus caring for a poor widow, for example, it is God Himself taking care of that person.

Psalms 68: 5 **A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, Is God in His holy habitation.**

*Psalms 146: 9 **The LORD watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.***

When we see the Lord Jesus Christ taking care of the blind, both on the natural and the spiritual level, it is God caring for them to see what they need to see not only for the present, but also for eternal life.

*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."***

When we see the Lord Jesus caring for the oppressed and overburdened, it is God showing them compassion and offering them freedom from these heavy burdens.

*Matthew 11: 27 **All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.***
*28 **Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.***

When we see the Lord Jesus Christ taking care of those who have a broken and wounded heart, it is God expressing compassion to each individual in this condition, and it is God offering His presence and reviving power to all those who believe in Him as the Lord of healing or the restoration of the soul.

*Psalms 25: 16 **Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I am desolate and afflicted.***

*Matthew 9: 36 **But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.***

*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.***

*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?"***

When the Lord Jesus announced the love of God and how much the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, desired to benefit all people, it was the Father Himself in Christ, through His Spirit, manifesting Himself to the world.

Luke 4: 17 **And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:**

18 "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

The Lord Jesus Christ, even while He was in the flesh in the world, never spoke or did anything by Himself. He spoke or did what the Spirit of the Lord or the Spirit of the Heavenly Father instructed Him to speak and to do.

John 8: 28 **Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things."**

The Lord Jesus Christ, also as Son of Man on Earth, as already mentioned, likewise was the image of God, the exact expression of the Heavenly Father's person.

The Lord Jesus, also when He was in the flesh in the world, was the living and tangible expression of the glory of God among men.

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

...

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

To look into the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ while He was as the Son of Man on Earth was to look directly at the glory of God. To look at the love of the Lord Jesus in all His actions and words was to look directly at the glory of God's love.

If through the love that was in Him, Christ, for example, was able to forgive the sins of people, including of His most ruthless opponents, God can also forgive the sins of human beings. Christ's forgiveness is the expression of the glory of the forgiveness of the Heavenly Father offered through grace to all human beings.

*Luke 7: 49 **And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"***

*Matthew 9: 5 **"For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?***
*6 **But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" (then He said to the paralytic), "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."***

Why, then, did the disciples of the Lord Jesus so often wonder about the deeds the Lord did before their eyes?

Christ's disciples were so often in awe of the deeds of the Lord Jesus because, on many occasions, they probably still thought that the One before them was an anointed one from God and not that He was God manifesting Himself in glory among them.

*Luke 8: 25 **But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"***

*2 Corinthians 5: 18 **Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,***
*19 **that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.***

The manifestation of God's love in Christ shows us the glory of God's eternal love, shows us how God has always been, is, and always will be: A God of love.

*1 John 4: 16 **And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.***

*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.***

Where coming short of the glory of God was installed, because of the sin of human beings' withdrawal from fellowship with God, there is where God revealed His glory much more abundantly.

Where darkness installed themselves and subjected people because they rejected their Creator, there God sent the abundance of the revelation of His glory so that all who believe in Him can return to fellowship with the Lord's eternal glory.

*Romans 3: 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 1: 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not
comprehend it.*

The glory of God that extends throughout the Universe, and that is absolutely immeasurable, came into the world with a name. The glory of God came as a person, namely: The Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus came to show the Heavenly Father's glory because the glory was in Him and because He is the expression of God's glory.

And what the Lord Jesus came to reveal of the divine glory was, precisely, what we needed to know about God through the Christ who came in the flesh into the world or who also manifested Himself in the condition of Son of Man.

In the most diverse writings and accounts of the Scriptures that we have about the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the expression of the glory of God. From before the creation, until the redemption of human beings from slavery to darkness because of their subjection to sin, God was and is as the Lord Jesus Himself has always been and is.

Even though Christ is not the Heavenly Father Himself, He is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His Being so that each person of humanity can choose, with understanding, whether one wants to approach the Heavenly Father knowing in Christ how the Heavenly Father was in the past, is, and will be forever.

John 10: 30 I and My Father are one.

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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."

In every facet of the Gospel that Christ came to reveal to the world, God was present or it was God expressing Himself so that people may know His glory, and so that in knowing His glory, they may also come to believe in Him knowing to whom they will entrust their lives for all eternity.

C. The Glory of God in the Face of the Risen Christ and Present with Us in the Present

*Luke 12: 31 **But rather seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. (NKJV+AV)***

Considering that Christ is the exact expression of the glory of God, that He is the One through whom God determined that His glory and fullness can be known, that He is the expression of the essence of the kingdom of God, and that He is the righteousness of God made “our righteousness” through the Gospel, Christ should also be sought by us before anything else.

Nevertheless, a crucial point that needs to be highlighted more frequently than many people may think or realize, is that the references in the Scriptures concerning seeking Christ do not point only to a work of looking for the historical Christ revealed to us in the past, but to seek for the Christ alive in the present and forever.

The search for the knowledge of Christ through the Scriptures is hugely relevant for us to know countless characteristics of the glory of Christ and, consequently, of the glory of God. However, all the written attributes concerning the glory of Christ have a higher purpose of awakening people to seek Christ in His present and eternal glory.

When people engage in the practice of only seeking Christ in the Scriptures, even though these are priceless, they may also incur the same misguided practice about which the Lord Jesus Christ warned His disciples as described in the following text and which we have sought to expose more broadly in the subject entitled as The Letter or Life.

*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.***

That baby or little boy Jesus who came to be born among human beings through the virgin Mary, grew up to be an adult man, died, and rose in glory not only so that His glory in the work of the cross would be revealed as a fact from the past, but also so that His eternal glory would become known in all generations and so that the virtues of this glory would become eternally available to all who believe in Him.

*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.***

Both “the baby Jesus” and “the Christ hanging on the cross” no longer exist in that condition. The Christ with whom a person can relate to at present is the Christ who remains meek and humble of heart, for this is His eternal nature. However, He is also

the Christ who later revealed Himself to John when He presented Himself to him so that John recorded the revelation of who the Lord Jesus is in His eternal glory. Glory in which He was reestablished with honor and praise after being resurrected and raised to heaven by the Heavenly Father.

The condition that Christ came as a baby boy into the world was an instrument to manifest that God is the same God under any circumstances. Through Christ as Son of Man, the Heavenly Father showed the glory of His wisdom also when His Only Begotten Son was subject to similar conditions as of the creation. However, the position of Christ as a boy is not the only or the final expression of the glory of the Lord, because His glory also contemplates the condition of Christ as Eternal God. That is, His glory did not become limited to a human position or of being able to be presented to the world only while Christ was in a natural body or in the condition of Son of Man on Earth.

He whom John saw, heard, touched, and contemplated in the flesh in the world or He who was humiliated, crucified on the cross of Calvary, and buried in a human grave did not become subject to a merely natural condition, for He is the One who rose from the dead and who in the present moment is in such a position of glory that no one can stand before Him and contemplate Him if the Lord does not grant him or her the grace to do so.

*Revelation 1: 9 **I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.***

*10 **I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,***

*11 **saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."***

*12 **Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,***

*13 **and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.***

*14 **His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;***

*15 **His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;***

*16 **He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.***

*17 **And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.***

*18 **I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.***

*19 **Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."***

What a position and what glory is this that our Lord Jesus Christ has in the present to the point of being who He is, having the power He has, and yet caring for each person's life and caring about placing His right hand on those who follow Him and say to them, "**fear not**, for **who I am, I am** to grant life and fellowship with God to all those who believe in the offer of salvation granted by the Gospel and who also want to receive it in their hearts?"

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

*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.***

As has already been commented on previously, it is essential to know what Christ did for us when He was in the flesh in the world, as this established or validates firm parameters for the whole work of Christ as Lord and Savior.

Nevertheless, our whole present and future relationship with Christ is not with the "baby Jesus," but it occurs, in reality, with the position and condition that Christ has and exercises in the present and will continue to have forever before the Heavenly Father and the whole universe.

The position in which the Lord Jesus Christ, also as the risen Son of Man, was established by the Heavenly Father after His death and resurrection, is the highest place, except the position of the Father Himself, that can exist in the entire universe and from which the Lord has all authority and dominion over both the heavenly kingdom and all the kingdoms of the world.

Hebrews 1: 3 (Christ) 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.

Philippians 2: 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,
11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Corinthians 15: 27 For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.

When, through the Scriptures, God teaches us that we are called into the fellowship of Christ, He also teaches us that this relationship is with the Christ who was dead for a little while, but who was also raised and is alive forever.

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

*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.***

Although we cannot see the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh as the disciples saw Him in the days when the Lord came into the world as the Son of Man, we too, due to the eternal glory of Christ that transcends the natural conditions of the world, can similarly maintain a fully satisfying fellowship with the Lord through the Holy Spirit and by faith in the Lord as the disciples did after Christ's ascension to heaven.

*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 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.***

*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.***

A Christian should never have doubts about the resurrection of Christ, for, without the resurrection of Christ, the Christian faith would be entirely vain.

Nevertheless, a Christian should also never have doubts about the presence of Christ with him or her during the life trajectory while this Christian is still in the flesh or dwelling in the present natural world, for just before the Lord Jesus Christ was taken up to heaven, to be seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Father and His throne, He explicitly declared to His disciples that He would also be with them every day, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28: 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

...
20(b) ... and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (or world)." Amen.

Although many who claim to be Christians know several details of the work that Christ did on the cross of Calvary on their behalf, and even know several references that the Scriptures make to the Lord's resurrection from the dead, there are many among them who adopt a practical attitude of life as if Christ were not really with them. They position themselves concerning Christ as if He were no longer available to be accessed at all times of their daily lives and as if He were no longer available to act in all areas of life in the present world.

When people lack knowledge of the main details of the purpose and the work of God through the Gospel for the present time and the future, or they lack an understanding of the position that the Heavenly Father has given Christ to lead them to achieve these purposes revealed in the Gospel, they are also limited in perceiving, believing, and living what is already available to them in Christ.

Due to the lack of knowledge of the glory of who the risen Christ is, what position He occupies in the present, and how the Lord Jesus works after He was crucified and raised from the dead, many people, including many Christians, do not relate to Christ how they could and should do, also failing to enjoy many of the great benefits that the Lord wants to grant them at the most different moments of their lives.

It is because of what Christ did, while in the flesh on Earth, that people can receive the justification for salvation and the newness of eternal life in God. However, it is because of who the risen Christ is and the position He occupies, expressed by His eternal glory, that eternal justification and the newness of life can continue to be offered and established forever in favor of a person who believes in the Lord.

When an individual indeed begins to become aware of the various virtues of the glory of Christ, one may also come to believe more broadly in them and truly experience the transformations the Lord provides in his or her life through sharing the characteristics of His glory, as already explained in previous chapters and recalled in the text below:

2 Corinthians 3: 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The psalmist of Psalm 23, who had “the Lord” as “his Shepherd,” and did not have any other men and women as “his shepherd,” knew “His Shepherd” and knew the glory of “His Shepherd.” And for this reason, he could believe, have peace in his heart, and declare that *surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.*

For every Christian who recognizes Christ as “his or her Shepherd,” the question should no longer be whether God wants or does not want him or her to know the glory of the risen Christ and to live in conformity with it. Instead, it should always be about how one can do to know ever more the glory of “his or her Shepherd” and how one can live every new day ever more according to the eternal glory of the Lord.

After we have come to see what Christ came to reveal so that people may know the glory of what God has already done for them and how much He loved them by giving His Beloved Son to be offered as the perfect sacrifice for the forgiveness and restoration of life of those who believe in Him, it is also vital to know that the expression and manifestation of the glory of God to human beings did not end with the acts of Christ's coming in the flesh into the world, nor did it end with His death and resurrection.

The coming of Christ in the flesh into the world manifested the glory of God in all that needed to be revealed to open the way of salvation for all people, which is also granted to those who receive it, through faith, as an offer of God's grace.

Nevertheless, the manifestations already carried out previously through the glory of God in Christ were carried out so that they also opened “a new and living way” so that more of God's glory may continue to be known and accessed by all people also through the grace of God and by faith in this grace.

All the parts already revealed and done concerning the Gospel of God were only done because everything that was accomplished was done under the perspective of an exceeding excellent purpose that is associated with the whole Gospel and that extends to the present, to the near future, and, above all, also to the eternal future.

Despite the greatness of the glory that we can see in what God has already done for each human being through His Gospel, the Lord never intended or intends that what has already been fulfilled might obscure the reason why so many things have already been accomplished.

And to make us fully aware that the glory manifested in the past has been revealed to us for a present and eternal life with God, is that the Lord offers us His Gospel also as the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, through which the Lord also specifically emphasizes His glory at work after Christ's death and resurrection to lead us to the eternal purpose that God has for those who receive Christ in their hearts.

Therefore, Christ expresses the glory of God that has already been revealed to us in all His works done for us. However, Christ remains being the expression of the glory of God for those who believed in the works already done by the Lord on their behalf and who received the Gospel in their hearts.

Christ is the glory that has been revealed so that a person can come to the condition of being saved, born again, or being a “Christian.” However, Christ remains the way and the revelation of the glory of God to those who have already received salvation, were justified in Him, or who already carry the name “Christian” in their lives.

Christ is the “I Am” that was, the “I Am” in the present, and who will always be the “I Am” for those who believe in Him.

John 13: 19 Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.

*2 Thessalonians 2: 13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,
14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Thessalonians 2: 12 ... that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

God has revealed His glory to us in Christ because in Him we are called to live forever according to His glory, and in whom we are even called to be partakers of this same eternal glory.

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

Ephesians 1: 12 ... that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Psalms 149: 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds.

Initially, the lack of glory that a person needs to solve is about what Christ has already done to free him or her from all the bonds of the past, but this is also always associated with the purpose of who Christ wants to be today and forever in a person's life for whom He did what He did.

In this way, some people in the world do not lack the knowledge of who Jesus was and what He did for them, but they seem to lack, and much, the clarity in the

understanding of the purpose for which the Lord did the work of the cross and the knowledge of who the Lord Jesus Christ is in the present.

Again, Christ is not limited only to the positions that He assumed in His time in the flesh in the world, because He continues to be and will always remain the same “I Am,” as we once more present below:

*Hebrews 1: 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.***

A Christian’s relationship with Christ should never be a relationship merely based on terminology, facts, or stories from an ancient and distant past, for the Bible, in the book of Revelation, does not teach that Christ was the Lamb who was killed, but announces that “HE IS” the Lamb who was slain, who was resurrected, and who is seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Father.

What Christ was and did has its priceless value validated in the present and for the future because He essentially remains what He was always, the Only Begotten Son who is the brightness of the glory of the Heavenly Father.

Christ is, in fact, the Lamb who was slain and who has all the legality obtained with it to save all those who believe in Him. However, He is also the one whom God raised from the dead and who lives forever, remaining so forever the Lamb in whom there is the provision of full forgiveness of sins for those who believe in Him.

What Christ did in the past manifested His righteous or legitimate condition so that after His resurrection, people can know, even more clearly, that HE IS the One they absolutely need in the present and the eternal future.

As the Son of Man, Jesus, the Son of the living God, came to manifest to human beings, in the likeness of man, what is the glory of God and His purpose of salvation for them. But after providing everything necessary for the revelation of eternal salvation in the Lord, Christ did not remain restricted to human conditions to which He had subjected Himself. On the contrary, He was exalted by the Heavenly Father for the glory He had eternally with the Father, but now also increased by the fact that He was the only man who lived a holy and upright life for the redemption or salvation of all human beings.

*John 17: 3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.***
*4 **I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.***
*5 **And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.***

*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.***

Why, then, did the Lord Jesus Christ not remain in a human condition or as a king of earthly kingdoms even after His resurrection from the dead?

The Lord Jesus Christ did not remain in a human condition or as a king of earthly kingdoms, even after His resurrection from the dead, because seated in the highest place, beside the Heavenly Father, that He is most helpful and favorable to us.

The Lord Jesus Christ did not take a human position after His resurrection because the place where the Heavenly Father has established Him is the perfect or the best place to continue to manifest the glory of God on our behalf as it needs or must be manifested to us.

The Lord Jesus came in the flesh in the world to provide what needed to be provided in this position or condition, something that no other human being subject to sin could do for people to be saved. But once Christ did what He did, God raised Him to the place where He can be most favorable to all people and the whole universe, which is, as already mentioned, seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Father.

After His death and resurrection from the dead, the Lord Jesus Christ urged His disciples to acknowledge His glory as Son of God and Son of Man raised from the dead, for through this new facet of His glory they also would know that the Heavenly Father's glory remains forever over those who receive it through faith in God.

*John 17: 24 **Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.***

The glory that Christ manifested to His disciples was in no way comparable to some glory that faded as was the glory of Moses and the ministry of the law that was introduced to the people who wanted to try to live by the law, but who never achieved this purpose.

*John 1: 17 **For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.***

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

*13 **And not as Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. (NKJV+AV)***

The Only Begotten Son of God was manifested to us in Christ as the Son of Man who provided salvation to us. However, as the risen Son of Man, God demonstrates to us that the Son of God has always been and forever remains, even in the face of the so mighty power of death.

Thus, to know who Christ is in the present, or to know the present and living glory of Christ, is what a person needs most, for only the One who is alive can be the performer or finisher of the salvation of the people who need it so much.

2 Corinthians 4: 3 ***But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,***

4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

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.

As already mentioned in previous chapters, the approach of the Gospel of God from the perspective of the glory of God and the glory of Christ is singularly significant and indispensable, for since the Gospel does not refer only to a work of the past, but to an ever-present offer of life for those who receive it through faith in the Lord, this facet comes as if to crown all other parts of the Eternal Gospel offered to us.

Therefore, while the approaches of the materials of this series on The Gospel of the Creator and The Gospel of Christ sought to address more particularly the foundation of the origin of the Gospel and what the purpose of this Gospel is, this new subject on the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ seeks to address more aspects of the firm foundation that the Gospel has in God and Christ so that everything that has been offered through this Gospel for the present and the future also comes to be firmly and eternally established.

What Christ did in the past gives validity to the whole proposition of the Gospel. However, it is Christ who remains the unshakable foundation established forever for the salvation and support of all who believe in Him.

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

In many ways, seeing the Gospel from the perspective of the glory of God and the glory of Christ, after the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord, is the most necessary perspective for Christians today, but probably, until now, it is the aspect that has been least preached and announced.

The consideration that the Gospel originated in the Heavenly Father and Christ is the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, also encompassing the glory of Christ after His resurrection from the dead, has been forgotten, by human beings, to be

announced to the world and, primarily, to the Christians themselves, but which, certainly, has not been overlooked by the Lord of all glory.

The Gospel revealed at the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, as the Son of Man, and as already mentioned, did not have a purpose only for the natural level. It was never a work to simply let a fact registered in the documents of human history or in the sense of letting for the other human beings an inspiring work of devotion and selflessness on the part of the Lord.

The Gospel, which began to be revealed more precisely and clearly through the coming of Christ in the flesh on Earth, was introduced into the world with the purpose of giving forever, without end, or eternally the newness of life coming from the kingdom of God to those who received it and continue to receive it, as mentioned in the other subjects on the Gospel of the Lord referenced above and exemplified, again, in the texts set out below:

*1 John 4: 9 **In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.***

*John 20: 30 **And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;**
31 **but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.***

The fact that the Gospel of the Lord offers us a Redeemer who died for us so that we could have the forgiveness of sins is only part of what the Gospel offers us. For despite the fact that forgiveness and the deliverance from subjection to sin are essential for a person finding his or her restoration to eternal life with God, it is not only in forgiveness that the novelty of life, in itself, dwells.

The newness of life that the Gospel comes to offer to those who are first forgiven and freed from subjection to sin, because of the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, is the life that is in the same Christ who also rose from the dead through the power of God and who lives forever.

Understanding that life for those who have received the forgiveness of their sins through the Gospel is in Christ, in turn, is invaluable because if someone receives forgiveness due to the death of Christ to have life in Christ, it is also necessary that the Christ who died is no longer dead, for if He were dead, how could anyone “***live through Him?***” How could anyone live through someone in which there would be no more life?

Although the work of Christ on the cross is worthy of eternal praise, the worship of a dead Christ or who supposedly remains hanging on a cross, and who would thus be with his feet and hands tied, cannot bring life to any person, for how can someone imprisoned by death give life to those who need it?

Through the Gospel of God's Righteousness, we can clearly see that without the crucifixion and death of Christ for our sins, a person's life in consonance with God's will would be impossible to be established. However, through the perspective of the Gospel

of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, we can see that this person's life, likewise, could only be made alive, sustained, and supplied if the One through whom eternal life is given to us also returned to life after His death on the cross of Calvary.

The fact that the Gospel of God is also given to us as the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, and the fact that the Gospel cannot be dissociated from any of the characteristics that compose it, precisely occurs so that we may look at everything that needs to be seen in the Gospel in order that no one falls short or is deprived of what the Gospel actually came to provide.

When a person restricts oneself to seeing the glory of Christ only in the Lord's condition in the flesh in the world, in His crucifixion, and His death, one also restricts oneself to see that the Lord's condition in the flesh, His crucifixion, and His death were only for a short time so that a higher purpose of life came to be established. And because of this restriction, an individual can fail to enjoy that for what Christ died for him or her.

Christ, the living Gospel of God, was revealed as the Author and Finisher of salvation through the death of the cross on Calvary so that, through His death, people could be led to the glory of God's eternal life in Christ and not to the glory of someone who would remain indefinitely in death, for if death could retain Christ on the cross, in the tomb, or in the depths of hell, Christ's work would have been entirely in vain.

The resurrection of Christ and its purpose so that people also can be resurrected in Christ are the aspects that present the real meaning of Christ's work done on the cross of Calvary in favor of all human beings.

A proposition of a Gospel that tries to dissociate itself from the Christ who is risen, who is no longer in a condition of a child, who is no longer hanging on a cross, and who is no longer in some human tomb is not truly a Gospel of the Lord.

In other words, a proposition of a Gospel that even tries to present the glory of the Christ who was crucified, but that seeks to omit that Christ was also resurrected by the power of God, and yet, that He has been placed in a position of honor before the Heavenly Father and above all the creation, is not truly a "good news" or "good tidings," for it lacks the life that is victorious or has power even over death.

Just as the crucifixion of Christ was recorded in the Scriptures by prophets who came "before Christ" and by several apostles and writers who did it "after Christ," so too, through the Scriptures, was prophesied and proclaimed the resurrection of Christ that brings life to all who believe in Him:

*Hebrews 2: 9 **But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.***

*10 **For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.***

- Acts 2: 22 Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know:*
- 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;*
- 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.*
- 25 For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.*
- 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.*
- 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*
- 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'*
- 29 Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.*
- 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,*
- 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.*
- 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.*
- 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.*
- 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand,*
- 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'*
- 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Revelation 1: 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

Without the knowledge of the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ regarding the present time, the perception of the Gospel of God may be blurred severely in the eyes of people. An aspect that may also cause many to try to live from past parts of the Gospel without experiencing what the Gospel has for them for the present and future, going inclusive so far as to create even a series of idolatries concerning this past time of the Gospel of the Lord.

Perhaps out of tradition or cultural habit, gratitude for the provision of forgiveness of sins, ignorance, or even out of contempt, it seems that people repeatedly seek to

speak more of the past than of the present when dealing with the subject about the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in relation to each human being.

An exceedingly sublime or excellent work needed to be done in our favor, but it was done so that we could obtain a distinct and glorious present and future in God.

The coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, the extraordinary announcement of His arrival, the supernatural way of His conception as Son of Man, His birth celebrated and proclaimed by angels, His work, miracles, signs, teachings and, above all, His death on the cross, are indescribably majestic, beautiful, and immeasurably valuable. However, as already mentioned in several subjects of this series, God calls us to see that all these events that are directly associated with the Gospel were made to determine a new present and a new future for the people who believe in it and receive it in their hearts.

The Christian life exists and can only be accessed by an individual who believes in the Lord because of the undeniable and irrevocable past that paved the way for this newness of life to be granted. But still, these past facts were fulfilled as a substantial and indispensable legacy for a new life in the present and the future in God.

In the set of factors that make up a Christian's faith, the presence of past events that the Gospel provided is indispensable. However, we emphasize once again that they are all crowned in glory when a person uses them to receive the life that is available to him or her in the present and for the whole future in God.

Through the text of John 20, already exposed above, we can see that the writings of the Gospel of God were recorded so that people “*believe that Christ IS the Son of God,*” and not only that He was a Son before His death. And this is revealed so that “*THEY MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME AT THE MOMENT THEY BELIEVE IN HIM,*” which, in turn, and as we have already commented, can only be accomplished by Christ being alive to grant His newness of life to those who believe in Him.

We highlight here again, that the relevance of what has already been accomplished through the Gospel in our favor is indispensable and immeasurable. But if what was conquered by Christ on the cross of Calvary were not supported by God in resurrecting Christ and placing Him above all power and all principalities, the Lord's work would have been in vain in the sense of Christ being able to grant newness of life to everyone who believes in Him.

To see the Gospel from the perspective of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ emphasizes that Christ did not stop working after providing the means for salvation. On the contrary, He remains active or engaged in order to continue all the works that come in the sequence of the work that served as a means for His current position or which was accomplished to give life to all those who want to receive it by the grace of God and through faith in Him who gave Himself to save them.

In the subject on The Gospel of the Promise, we approached the point that in the Lord Jesus Christ all previous promises related to His work on Earth, as Son of Man, were fulfilled. The fact that Christ declared the sentence “*it is finished,*” while on the cross at Calvary, affirms and testifies that everything that He had to do and everything that was necessary to be fulfilled in Him, till that specific occasion, was thoroughly done.

Nevertheless, it would be a great mistake to consider the expression "***it is finished***" as a closure of the activities and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ towards all human beings, whether in the spiritual world or the natural world.

When the term *ministry* is used in the Scriptures, it is related to a set of works or duties that someone performs or is in charge of performing. And so, **to say that the Lord Jesus Christ has already done everything that had to be done, or that there are no more "services or works" to be performed by Him so that we can have true life in Him, even while we still live on Earth, would be an entirely inappropriate statement.**

Through Christ Jesus living in the flesh in the world and through the conclusion of the work of God in Christ on the cross of Calvary, the work of the Lord Jesus in the condition of man or the flesh was indeed ended for the benefit of all humankind. The perfect Lamb, who takes away the sin of the world, was sacrificed once and for all, and this work will never happen again.

Never will the Lord Jesus return to Earth in flesh and blood to act among human beings. This is accomplished. It was a unique act, as can be seen in the following texts:

Hebrews 7: 26 ***For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;***
27 ***who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.***

Romans 6: 8 ***Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,***
9 ***knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.***
10 ***For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.***

Jesus' provision for the remission of sins is unique and perfect. It will never need any complement, retouch, or other act, "***it is finished.***" And whoever believes in this provision can access the benefits of it, but whoever does not believe will never have another provision that might grant him or her what is needed for eternal salvation or that can provide him or her with what is provided exclusively in Christ Jesus.

No matter a person's ethnicity or culture, the language one speaks, where one was born, what time of history and place one lives, there is only one provision in the entire universe that matters for human beings to be saved.

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."***

Thus, the facts that Jesus needed to reveal and which He needed to go through as “the Christ in the flesh on Earth” are indeed finished and will never be repeated, for they were entirely accomplished or completed.

Nevertheless, as the Resurrected Jesus or the living and exalted Christ, His works or ministries did not end when His crucifixion and burial ended. These only had their performance intensified in His resurrection and what happened after it, as explicitly declared by God when He informed us in the Scriptures ***that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ***, and also in the text in which Paul declares that it was ***Christ Jesus the Lord*** that he was preaching.

Now, no one can be Lord and Christ of other people if he is not alive or if he simply ceases to be active in his ministries as lord over all life.

From the conclusion of the unique and perfect sacrifice done forever and ever, the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Earth has not found its end. On the contrary, it has further evidenced the eternal ministries of the Lord Jesus Christ now also as the perfect Lamb who has already made the fully satisfactory sacrifice for the salvation of human beings.

The ministries that the Lord Jesus Christ carries out at present are carried out in glory and honor also as He being the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, who is seated at the right hand of the Eternal Father's throne to reign and act on behalf of those who receive His salvation.

*Hebrews 8: 1 **Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,***
*2 **a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.***

...
*6 **But now He (Jesus) has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.***

And still going further, if the Lord Jesus already accomplished a work of such great redemption through the power of God with Him when He was under a physical and territorial condition, to which He voluntarily submitted while living in the flesh in the world, how many things will His ministry not yet reveal concerning this same heavenly salvation now that He is seated on a high and sublime throne at the right hand of the Father of Lights, being so able to fully attend everyone from any place or people who believe in Him?

What God has done for each human being through the Lord Jesus Christ crucified in the “fullness of time” is now, in Christ Jesus seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Father, sustained and guaranteed by the Lord to be maintained for the present and coming time.

The Father of all glory showed us in Christ Jesus what He is like regarding His love for us to the point of sending Him into the world for our redemption. However, this, God did so that we can come to live in Christ and so that we can experience the wisdom, knowledge, and power that is in

the Lord also in the present and for all eternity, and not only in the times that have passed.

Ephesians 1: 15 **Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,**
 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.**

Psalms 102: 12 **But You, O LORD, shall endure forever, And the remembrance of Your name to all generations.**

Christ died and rose from the dead so that people could come to Him to live the life of the New Creature that He grants them through His Gospel.

Christ fulfilled His work in the flesh in the world so that people can know His glory now revealed both as the Son of God and as the Son of Man who rose in victory from the dead so that they too may see the glory of His work according to His reign from heaven over all creation.

2 Corinthians 8: 9 **For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.**

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.**

Salvation by faith that Jesus is the Christ who died on the cross of Calvary is undoubtedly an essential aspect for the deliverance of people

from subjection to sin. However, faith in the risen and living Christ plays a vital role in receiving life and abundant life from the living Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God Most High, and who also manages the giving of this new life in all the details that are pertinent to it.

Life in the name of Christ is not in a supposed Jesus who died and remained in death, but it is in the Lord Jesus Christ who is risen and alive, and who, for this reason, grants a newness of life or life in the spirit that He alone can give.

When the author of the book of Hebrews describes that God speaks to us through His Son Jesus Christ, he describes Him after the resurrection of Christ, informing us that the Lord Jesus, although He no longer acts directly in the flesh in the world, does so ceaselessly from the place assigned to Him by the Heavenly Father, as explained below:

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.

Therefore, the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ was given to us to show what the basis of the whole Gospel is also after the accomplishment of the deeds of God in Christ while He was still in the flesh in the world. Showing us also, through this facet of the Gospel, that the support of all that was conquered and finished on the cross of Calvary is not a partial victory where the winner reaches only a fleeting victory or that is run over by a defeat that appears ahead.

Through the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, the Lord shows, teaches, and guides us, as we have already seen, to the condition that God calls “*more than conquerors*,” to the state in which we become winners who remain victorious until the end and who stand firm in the new life in Christ by being kept and protected by Him in all circumstances.

Through the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, we can begin to discover and experience how Christ manifests Himself to us to fulfill His promise to be with us every day until the end of the age, and this, to know that we can be guarded through His living and real love at every step and every moment of our lives.

Romans 8: 37 **Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**
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.

Only the One who has and is the source of eternal life is also the One who can grant it and multiply it to those who need it and who also want to receive it forever.

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.

If the Heavenly Father glorified Jesus, His Only Begotten Son, before His death on the cross of Calvary as the Son of Man, as the One who came to die for the sins of all humankind to offer each person the justification by grace for eternal life through faith in the Lord, how much more will the Heavenly Father not exalt the Lord Jesus Christ after He has done so perfectly, and with the fullness of love, the work that has been assigned to Him?

The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ shows us that the glory of the Heavenly Father, which was in Christ to grant Him the strength so that He could take our sins upon Himself, likewise came to have a very particular expression after the resurrection of the Lord from the dead, revealing the Lord Jesus, now also as the risen Son of Man, in His most elevated position both before all humanity and before the whole spiritual world.

The glory of the work that God has done for us is, and always will be, indescribably and immeasurably valuable. However, God never did it with the intent that it would be dissociated from the purpose for which He did it.

The glory that was reserved to manifest itself after the glory of the work on the cross of Calvary and the resurrection of Christ is the referential glory for which the work of the cross was accomplished. It is the objective reason why Christ came into the world as the Son of Man.

As we have already mentioned several times, the glory that God particularly wants to make evident through the Gospel of Glory, and which the Lord wants to grant us so that, through it, we may believe in Him and receive the newness of eternal life, is the glory of the Christ who died, but who also rose in glory and lives forever to welcome and sustain us in each of the facets or virtues that are associated with everything that makes up the eternal glory of the Lord.

Ephesians 3: 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

- 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;*
- 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,*
- 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,*
- 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.*

D. The Glory of God in the Face of Christ through Whom God Puts into Operation Everything He Offers in His Gospel

When we begin to see more distinctly that the manifestation of the glory of Christ did not cease after His death followed by His resurrection, a whole new clarity of who Christ is in the present can now be seen, appreciated, and received for the benefit of those who expose themselves to these facets of the glory of the Lord.

When people only pay attention to Christ's past work, their perception may become obstructed as to what Christ does in the present. However, as an individual is willing to be instructed by the present glory of Christ, one may realize that the glory of the Lord reveals many more aspects of who Christ is, what Christ does, and also how Christ works so that we may come to know the glory of the Eternal God.

Knowing that Christ is our righteousness, salvation, grace, peace, and power is undoubtedly marvelous, but in many ways, knowing the glory of how He works to be what He is also for us and in us can be even more practical and objective.

Contemplating what Christ is as a source of life, salvation, righteousness, and peace, for example, is extremely relevant for us to know and come to believe in Him also to understand that only in Him these attributes can be achieved. However, or on the other hand, it is also necessary that this contemplation advances to the point where what Christ is and what He offers us is actually accessed or shared with us.

A gift needs a means to be delivered. However, it also needs someone to authorize and work out the operation of this means for the delivery to take place indeed. An aspect that is exposed in the first subjects on the Gospel of God regarding it essentially being the presentation, proposition, and provision of an offer of salvation and newness of life for all people, also followed by a real concession of what is offered to those who believe in the Gospel of God.

Therefore, Christ is the essence of the gifts of God. But when we come to discover the glory of the risen Christ more closely, we can also begin to see that Christ is the means and the main operator for the glory of God and His gifts actually reaching the point of being shared with people.

Christ is the foundation of the gifts of the Gospel, the gifts themselves, but also the means for the gifts to be granted to us and the One who coordinates the entire operation so that these gifts reach us as the Heavenly Father wants them to be revealed and delivered to us.

The facet of the Gospel of Christ's Glory is also part of the revelation of Him through whom the riches of God in His glory are made operational so that we can have access to everything we need to know and receive from God.

Philippians 4: 19 **And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**

Everything that is in the glory of God or is revealed by it is available to us in Christ, who can put into practice everything that is needed for us to have access to the attributes and gifts of God that the Lord wants to share on our behalf.

To say that the glory of God can be known essentially in the face of Christ is also to announce that Christ is the mediator between people and God, as we will see in some chapters more ahead. However, to know that Christ is the express image of the glory of God and that He is the One who makes the virtues of this glory operational on our behalf is also to know that this glory does not need to be far from us.

When we come to know that Christ is the *Emmanuel*, which is interpreted as *God with us*, we can understand that Christ is not only the God who visited the Earth when He was in the flesh in the world or that He was the *God with us* for a period. The fact that God reveals to us that the glory of Christ also contains the characteristic of *Emmanuel* presents to us the revelation of God that Christ is not a distant and remote revelation if a person also receives Christ so that He may be with him or her.

And not being enough the points exposed in the previous paragraphs, we can still see, in the Scriptures, that the proximity of the revelation of the glory of God in Christ as the *Eternal Emmanuel* might not only become close to a person, but also in the very person who receives it.

God is so interested in revealing and giving Himself to us, because this is also essential to us, that He has appointed Christ to be in our hearts so that the hope of knowing the glory of God is not thwarted by any external factor that might seek to stand between us and the knowledge of the glory of God.

If God makes known to us the glory of Christ, it is because He gives us Christ Himself. And since Christ is the exact expression of the glory of God, God gives and reveals Himself to us in Christ, but all this, still, increased by the fact that Christ is granted to us in our hearts.

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 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.**

Thus, Christ is the glory of God offered to us to be in us and to be revealed increasingly in us.

When Christ told His disciples not to believe people who would declare that He would be inside a house (any building or structures), or that He would be in the desert (remote places or called places of retreat), Christ said it because He knew that the prominent place of the revelation of His glory, after His resurrection, would no longer be in external temples made by human hands, but in the restored hearts of those who receive salvation in the Lord.

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.

Due to the ignorance of the glory of how God puts into operation the revelation of His glory to people and how He reveals it in Christ so that His Gospel reaches the hearts of people, many have multiplied works and ministries that are contrary to Christ despite saying that they invoke the name of Christ upon them. And yet many more have subjected themselves to ministries that do not live and walk according to what the Lord has established for the knowledge of His glory.

People have suffered and even perished not only because they do not know or ignore God, but also because they do not know or do not accept the place, the manner, and, above all, the Unique One through whom God determined that His glory becomes known.

People have been running after places that are like cisterns of broken water, that is, inappropriate places for containing the true water of life, and yet they wonder that their thirst for the newness of life and peace is never satisfactorily quenched.

Nevertheless, when people pay attention to what God offers them, believe in the glory of Him in whom God placed the revelation of His glory, and believe that this glory is given to them to be revealed by Christ directly in their hearts, they can also start to experience the result of the indwelling glory of God in their hearts.

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

39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The Spirit of the Lord makes the rivers of living water flow in us, but only after the source of the living water, Christ Jesus, is known and glorified through the belief that God grants it to dwell in the hearts of everyone who recognizes the glory of Christ as the Emmanuel or as God with us.

When someone believes in Christ as the Scriptures say to be believed, that is, that He is the Christ who comes into the heart to reveal to us the glory of God, Christ as well, through the Holy Spirit, begins to display the facets or aspects of the glory of God that a person needs to know also to be transformed from glory to glory in the Lord.

John 12: 45 **And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.**

When Christ is accepted or received as Lord in the heart to be the performer of the revelation of the glory of God also from this heart and from personal fellowship with Him, that what from God's viewpoint is necessary for us to see, understand, or discern, and could not be reached, becomes displayed, revealed, or clarified.

Christ was not given by the Heavenly Father to the world so that some people depend on others to know the glory of God. Christ was offered by God to the world so that everyone can see Him and can relate to Him directly, just as Job longed to happen to him and which, finally, was also granted him by God, as described below:

Job 19: 25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;

26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God,

27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

+

Job 42: 5 I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.

If a person does not yet see God as one could see, it is because one does not yet see Christ as one could already see Him, for it is Christ Himself who teaches a person to see Him and to see the Heavenly Father as one should know them.

Throughout this material, we will try to give a more detailed exposition of the ministries and actions that Christ has and carries out for us to know His glory and the glory of God. However, we would not like to do so without first stressing that the knowledge of the glory of God is closer to the people and more accessible to them than many have thought it could be.

Isaiah 57: 14 And one shall say, "Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people."

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."

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.

E. The Glory of God in the Face of the Christ Who Lives Forever

Although in one of the previous topics that address the present glory of Christ we already have mentioned several aspects and texts that point to the fact that Christ is also our living and eternal Christ, we present here a specific title for this point to highlight it even more distinctly.

We would not like to repeat what has already been mentioned in the topic referenced in the previous paragraph, but we understand that we may still complement some considerations and texts on the Lord's position concerning His eternal glory.

Although the present condition of Christ's glory is widely described in the Scriptures so that the possibility of fellowship with Him is likewise evident, the fact that we can know that the condition of His glory is eternal serves us to believe even more in the Lord and to surrender ourselves even more to Him in the present, but also so that our hope of life and peace for the future becomes firmly established in our hearts.

The Lord Jesus Christ supports us in the present, but through the revelation of His glory, He also strengthens us in hope so that we become steady to never be shaken or consumed by the present world around us or by our flesh that is so opposed to the Lord's will when it speculates on future and eternal matters.

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.

2 Corinthians 1: 7 **And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.**

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.

Hebrews 6: 10 **For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.**

- 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.**

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

If the glory of what God has already done for us is given to us to enlighten our understanding so that we may have faith in the present glory of Christ, also the revelation of the eternal glory of Christ cooperates for the purpose that our faith and hope in the Lord may remain firmly established concerning what will be revealed to us on the day of Christ Jesus and from the moment we will leave our natural bodies.

Many people who do not know the glory of God and Christ are anguished within themselves when they think of their coming days after their life on Earth. However, through the knowledge of the glory of God revealed in Christ Jesus, the people who receive it can see that the same God who saved them remains firmly supporting everything He set out to do through His Gospel in Christ Jesus, and, still, granting firmly and unwavering hope that it also will be so in the future.

When people, through the Gospel of Christ's Glory, begin to know where Christ is seated after His resurrection and understand what this position encompasses, they may see more widely why grace and mercy can reach and sustain them also in eternity.

While the other compound names associated with the Gospel also intensely call our attention to what Christ has done for us so that we may receive the gifts that are related to the heavenly Gospel, the approach associated with the glory of God and Christ seeks to emphasize likewise or primarily the condition that Christ received from the Heavenly Father after His death and resurrection. And this, to assure us that all the gifts of the Gospel will also be sustained eternally on our behalf and so that affliction does not overtake us, as well as that, already from now on, we may have peace continually in the Lord.

The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ reveals even more broadly the path to the knowledge of the glory of God, showing us, time after time or tirelessly, that the specific hope that all the riches of God's glory will always be supplied to us in all that we need now and forever is also particularly called Christ, and even more, Christ in us.

Even if or when our natural body will be extinguished, the presence of Christ in us will never be extinguished, since it is in the heart, also constituted of an eternal soul and spirit, that the Lord makes His dwelling place.

The offer of the Gospel of the Glory of God and the glory of Christ to us is not, on the part of God, an offer of only a passing or temporary glory for a more pleasant life on Earth. It is the granting of the eternal glory of the forever living Christ into our lives if we believe so and if we receive His glory as it is offered to us through the Gospel of the Lord.

Along with the information that Christ, after His death and resurrection, is the source of life revealed to us and which never ends so that we too may believe in it, the Scriptures also show us why the eternal condition of Christ is revealed to us and why, in His glory, we likewise have the guarantee of eternal life.

The announcement that in the glory of Christ is revealed the condition that He is Eternal likewise means to affirm that there is no more death for Him and neither eternal death for those who remain in Him, as well as it also cooperates with the purpose that we may become even more aware that Christ is the Unique Foundation of eternal life or that He is the unshakable eternal life Himself.

*Romans 6: 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,
9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.*

*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?"*

It is the eternal position of Christ that makes the eternal condition of the Gospel and the everlasting support of all that this Gospel promises for eternity even more evident, as well as it is by the knowledge of the glory of Christ that our hearts are transformed to live and walk strengthened as we walk in the present world towards eternity with the Lord.

Revelation 21: 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

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.

7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

- 1 Timothy 1: 12* **And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,**
13 **although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.**
- 14* **And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.**
- 15* **This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.**
- 16* **However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.**
- 17* **Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever.**
Amen.

Since Christ is the express image of the glory of the Unique Eternal God, Christ could only be this expression also being eternal.

And it is in His sovereign and eternal condition that Christ is worthy of being seen, received, and worshiped in our hearts and served eternally.

Hebrews 13: 8 ***Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.***

C12. The Glory of the One in Whom There Are Multiple Ministries and Who Exercises them Together and in Full Harmony

In the previous chapter, a topic was mentioned where it was exposed that upon the Lord Jesus Christ also lies the glory of being the One who designates the operation of the presentation of the glory of God to people and who designates and works so that the gifts of the Lord's Gospel become living and practical experiences in those who believe in Him and receive Him also according to His Gospel.

Moreover, for something to be put into practice, movement, or operation, it is also necessary that there are conditions and actions so that what it aims to accomplish is achieved.

Therefore, seeing Christ from the perspective of Him also being the One who is appointed by God to conduct all the regency of what is offered to us by the Gospel, opens up a whole new horizon regarding the multiple facets of what is also contained in the glory of Christ Himself.

Considering that Christ is salvation, it is also necessary a savior who accomplishes this salvation.

Since Christ is peace, there is also a need for someone to share and establish peace.

Since Christ is our righteousness, it is also necessary for someone to extend this righteousness to those who need it and want to receive it.

And yet, considering that the increasing contact with the glory of Christ, which expresses the glory of God, is the way determined by the Lord for us to be transformed from glory to glory according to the Heavenly Father's purpose, it is also necessary for someone to manifest this glory so that we can know it or have access to it.

As we mentioned earlier, a gift needs a means to be delivered, and a means of delivery needs someone who uses it to accomplish what is to be delivered, thus connecting the gift to the one to whom it is intended.

Knowing that God has an unlimited supply of gifts and that He gives them abundantly through His grace to all who receive His Gospel is of vital importance for a person to be appropriately informed about what is available to him or her in God. However, it is equally relevant that a person also understands how the Lord works and through which ministry (or service) the Lord makes these gifts reach those who long or wait for them through faith in God.

Thus, the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, in addition to showing that Christ is the essence of the gifts of the Gospel, also reveals to us the ministries that the Heavenly Father assigned to Christ after His resurrection so that in all things we may be supplied in Him in whom we are called to live forever and ever.

Because they do not know how the Lord practically shares the gifts of the heavenly kingdom, or because they are not interested in the ministries through which the Lord distributes the gifts He offers through His Gospel, many people fail to benefit from what is found abundantly in God and what they also need so much.

When people, for instance, do not know that Christ is the light that enlightens the very understanding of the Gospel of Glory, they also deprive themselves of seeing what is already available to them in God.

When people do not know or accept the glory of Christ as the One Mediator between God and all human beings, they fail to access what is most important for their lives, which is the fellowship with their Creator.

When people ignore or do not accept the glory of Christ as the One who helps them to remove from their lives what no longer matches their new position and condition in God, they may also fail to experience the establishment of the newness of life that is freely offered to them by the grace of the Lord.

Obviously, it is excellent and essential to talk about the gifts of God directed to us, because it is through them that the Lord sustains our lives. However, equally vital are the services or ministries of Christ through which the Lord makes these gifts available or accessible.

If we consider, for example, a newborn child, we can see that what supports him or her with natural life encompasses the gifts of oxygen, food, drink, clothing, and, eventually, some medications he or she needs. However, these gifts come to the child only if someone performs services (ministries) that make these gifts available to him or her.

Thus, from the moment that people come to know the glory of Christ also concerning His ministries, through which the Lord shares the gifts He offers them through His Gospel, a whole new tangible experience of God's gifts may start to become a reality in their lives.

In the previous chapters, we also mentioned that the ministries of Christ to which we are referring to in this subject, are not only the ministries of what Christ did for us when He was among human beings also as the Son of Man, but they are the ministries that Christ exercises in the present for all those who receive His Gospel and believe in Him for salvation and the newness of life in the Lord.

Christ came into the world to bring light so that people would know the Gospel offered from heaven. However, Christ continues to have the ministry of light in the present so that people may see what it is like to live according to this Gospel.

Christ came in the flesh into the world to provide mediation so that, even after being enslaved to sin, people could have the way of returning to God. However, Christ continues to be the Mediator between God and all people also at the present time.

Christ is the One who came to make provision so that what needed to be removed came to be removed so that people's reconciliation with God could be restored. Christ came as the Lamb to take away the sin of the world. However, Christ remains the Lamb who was killed and resurrected, and who removes the sin from every heart that surrenders to Him, continuing so to carry out the ministry of establishing people's reconciliation with God in all generations.

As was also mentioned previously, the fact that the works performed by Christ in the past are extremely precious and prominent should never overshadow the greatness of what Christ wants to accomplish for us and in us in the present and the future, because, after all, everything Christ did in the past, He did it to be what we need Him to be in the present and the future.

Therefore, and having addressed in the introduction of this chapter once again some essential points about the knowledge of the glory of the ministries or services that are in Christ in our favor, we would like to advance in some details related precisely to this multiplicity of ministries that Christ has in the present.

When the Scriptures, for instance, mention that Christ also exercises the position and function of being the means or Mediator through which the gifts of God can be given to those who believe in the Gospel of the Lord, this position and function are much broader than might be considered only by some superficial thoughts on this subject.

The fact that the Heavenly Father assigned Christ to multiple ministries that make it possible for people to have practical experience of fellowship with God does not mean that this closer relationship of people with God has become available in any way or that it can be carried out under any conditions to which people choose to subject themselves.

The multiple ministries in which the Heavenly Father has established Christ work as they are defined by God to work and not according to the definitions that people or the world assign to them.

In His multiple ministries, Christ is not only a messenger between God and people. Christ has not a mere function of passing on people's prayers to God and God's answers to people. Christ is a fully authorized and qualified Mediator to establish the fellowship of people with God and of God with people.

*John 17: 1 **Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,***
*2 **as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.***
*3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."***

*Matthew 28: 18 **And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."***

*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.***

The Lord Jesus Christ did not die on the cross of Calvary, was buried, descended into the depths of the Earth or the abyss, and then rose from the dead to serve as a path that allows people to draw close to God in the same conditions and ways in which they tried to draw near to God before they knew Christ as the Lord of their lives.

When the Scriptures teach us that Christ has or performs multiple ministries, they also teach us that Christ is the one who prepares and instructs people on how to draw close to God also to be accepted before the Heavenly Father.

*John 15: 16 **You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.***

If, for example, a person who is full of bitterness or resentment wants to come to the Heavenly Father for fellowship with Him, Christ first offers Himself to this person to shed light on his or her inner conditions and instructs him or her to confess his or her sins before God so that one may then come to be under an adequate state of peace in the fellowship with the Heavenly Father.

*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.***

*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.***

Furthermore, also in the sense of the Heavenly Father's fellowship with people, Christ also works for those to whom the Heavenly Father wants to share His will.

People often ask God what the Heavenly Father wants for their lives without actually being adequately prepared in their hearts to receive the knowledge of some particular aspect of God's will for them, needing, first, the light of the work and direction of Christ to prepare them to be able to know, receive, and accomplish the Heavenly Father's will for them.

*Ephesians 5: 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.***
*17 **Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.***

*John 15: 15 **No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.***

Through the multiplicity of Christ's ministries, we can see even more accurately what the extent is of the glory of the practicality that the Heavenly Father has attributed to the interventions of the Lord Jesus on our behalf and how the actions of these interventions are carried out.

As we have already mentioned above, the position of the Lord Jesus Christ is much more directed to help, instruction, support, and guidance of lives than a position of a simple messenger or a sender of the Heavenly Father's instructions to those with whom God wants to speak or of those who seek to talk to the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who was given all power and authority in both heaven and Earth, was established by the Heavenly Father to exercise the role of government over everything and everyone except the Heavenly Father Himself.

1 Corinthians 15: 27 For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.

*Revelation 19: 11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.
 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.
 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.
 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.
 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.
 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

Yet another interesting aspect to be observed also in the diversity of Christ's ministries is that His multiple ministries work together and are cooperative with each other.

In Christ, each of His ministries complements and supports His other ministries, so that in Christ we can have everything we need to be established in the life that is granted by the heavenly kingdom to all who receive the Gospel of God in their hearts.

Christ does not have a ministry of a partial intervention of the gifts that are in the Heavenly Father for us, neither of a partial intervention of presenting our needs before God.

As the Son of God, as the exact expression of the glory of God, and as the One in whom the fullness of God dwells, Christ has all the authority and all the ministries

necessary to make an intervention based on a perfect provision to represent God before all human beings perfectly.

On the other hand, as the perfect Son of Man, without sin and as the One who made all provision to justify people before God and before the condemnation of sin and the law, Christ also has all the necessary ministries to make a perfect intervention of all human beings before God.

***Hebrews 1: 3 (Christ) 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.***

Hebrews 4: 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

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.

John 12: 45 And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

John 14: 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Dissociated from the understanding of the position and ministries of regency or government that Christ has over all the creation and separated from the comprehension of the position of the priesthood that Christ has in our favor before the Heavenly Father, and which became evidenced even more after His resurrection, also the understanding of Christ's position and His glory becomes greatly diminished or impaired.

Without the understanding that in Christ we also find Him who was given to us to be our Unique High Priest and also to be our King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the satisfactory understanding of Christ's position and His glory becomes much more difficult to achieve.

The attributes of the Lord Jesus Christ form a whole associated with Him. And just as His love, grace, and peace cannot be separated from His righteousness, so also the position and glory of Christ cannot be dissociated from the ministries of High Priest, Lord, and King of Righteousness and Peace that are also in Christ.

When a person chooses to have Christ as the Lord of his or her life, and so through Him obtain salvation and newness of life in God, one also chooses Christ in all His ministries that may act on his or her behalf.

Therefore, it is in the joint and harmonious performance of the diversity of ministries that exist in Christ, that the Lord is fully capable of saving, guarding, instructing, guiding, supplying, and establishing according to His righteousness or according to His right, perfect, and just judgments all who trust in Him.

Jeremiah 23: 5 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth."

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.

...
21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Considering what the last text above describes, if grace reigns through righteousness for eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, we can see that Christ is the One by whom grace and righteousness actually reign, showing us, implicitly, that Christ is the King of righteousness and grace, and through whom grace, righteousness, and judgment are rightly manifested.

When people lack the understanding of the glory of Christ about the multiplicity of His ministries, how these ministries complement each other, and what can be given to them only in Christ, they run the risk of trying to supply what they need through means and ministries that will not indeed provide what they need.

When people do not pay attention to the multiplicity of ministries present in the Lord Jesus Christ, they are at risk of not realizing that it is only through His multiple ministries that Christ sustains those who believe in Him and provides what they need to receive from God in their condition of new creatures in Christ.

Thus, having the eyes of understanding willing to see the glory of Christ also encompasses having the willingness to see associated with Christ all that the glory of the Lord wants to show us, and not just what people think they need to see.

When people focus their attention only on the glory of the gifts that the Lord can give to them, without also focusing on the multiple ministries of Christ, through which the Lord grants these gifts, people do not realize that the gifts are not detachable from the Donor and the ministries through which they are given.

Only the One through Whom everything was created is able to perform the regency of all creation and to mediate this creation with its Creator and with the gifts that come from Him.

Correcting the focus also with the goal of seeing Christ's ministries more closely, therefore, as we have already mentioned, requires higher dedication than only stay in the position of mere spectator or recipient of gifts, for it is also to see the Glory of Christ in its multiple facets that God has called us in His salvation offered to us.

It is also to see His glory, in the face of Christ, that God has given us and gives us the salvation that came down from heaven to reconcile us with the Lord for an eternal fellowship with Him.

Knowing the ministries through which Christ extends the gifts of God to us and how He performs each of His ministries is in no way less significant than knowing about the very eternal gifts that God has appointed for those who believe in Him according to His grace and righteousness.

So, and with the goal of cooperating in correcting the focus concerning the perception of the glory of the Lord, to also grow in the knowledge of the glory of His multiple ministries at present and how these ministries operate together, we will try to continue exposing, in the next chapters, some main points of these different ministries of Christ, which, despite being widely presented in the Scriptures given to us by God, are still too unknown even by many who claim to be followers of Christ.

Through the ministries that God has beforehand prophesied that would be at work in Christ after His death and resurrection, the Heavenly Father made available to us the One who is fully powerful and able to accomplish what kings and priests have tried to reconcile or combine for centuries without, however, achieving success in their efforts.

Zechariah 6: 13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

+

2 Corinthians 6:16(b) For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them, I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

Through Christ in the hearts of those who receive Him, God dwells in His children, walks among them, is their God, and they are the Lord's people. However, it is through the intervention of the multiple ministries of Christ, supported by the diversity and joint operation of His ministries, that the dwelling of God and the walking of God amid His children becomes real and constitutes a truly and entirely satisfactory experience.

Christ, in the Christians' life, is the real hope for the glory of the Lord becoming known by them. However, it is through the glory that exists in the multiple ministries of Christ that hope can advance to a living and practical experience in the daily lives of those who place their trust in the Lord Jesus and the ministries assigned to Him by the Heavenly Father.

Only Christ, the Unique One who has the position and ministry of the Eternal Savior and the Eternal High Priest, according to the Order of Melchizedek, and who is also Lord, King, and Head over all creation, can

deal with righteousness and peace both what people present to God and what God presents for the life of each person.

Hebrews 5: 6 As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek";

7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

10 called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek."

Faced with the knowledge that Christ is the essence of the expression of all life from God and the kingdom of heaven in our favor, we should not be simplistic and taking the attitude of paying attention only to the generic or the impersonal aspect of this knowledge. On the contrary, we should heed the call to advance in a more detailed understanding of this most precious gift that is offered to us from the heavenly kingdom and granted if received through faith in God.

Through fellowship with Christ, also expressed as the fellowship with "the Bread that comes down from heaven" to nourish, instruct, and strengthen us, we are, as well, called to know the ministries through which the Lord shares His life with us so that we may have the eyes of our understanding open or enlightened to recognize more and more the aspects of the Lord's eternal glory and that are in Him to work on our behalf.

Luke 24: 30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

31(b) Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him.

C13. The Glory of the Light of the Gospel of Glory

As we began to look more closely at the theme of the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, we have tried to explain, in the previous chapters, that this facet of the Gospel is given to us, among other points, to:

- ⇒ 1) Exalt the exceedingly great purpose of the Lord associated with His Gospel, which is that we come to know God in a broader and more personal way through the revelation of who Christ is;
- ⇒ 2) Exalt the newness of life or eternal life that comes from Him who “has already finished” everything that was necessary to be accomplished so that this newness of life could be offered to all human beings through heavenly grace;
- ⇒ 3) Exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who sustains what has already been finished and who supports the eternal life that comes from Him;
- ⇒ 4) Exalt the point that it is through His multiple ministries carried out in His position alongside the Heavenly Father, and evidenced even more after His crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection, that the Lord Jesus Christ works so that each of the gifts we need, according to His Gospel, also become a reality or a living experience in us.

Nevertheless, and considering that the knowledge of the glory of Christ and the relationship with it is so crucial for advancing and growing in the novelty of life granted by God, why, then, so many people, including many who seek intensely to know it, know so little about the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in His present condition and exalted by God above everything and everyone, except above the Heavenly Father Himself who bestowed everything to Christ?

To analyze a broader and, at the same time, a more accurate answer to the question in the previous paragraph, we would like to recall below the text that has been adopted on this subject as a basis for the reference to the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ:

*2 Corinthians 4: 3 **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,***
*4 **whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.***
*5 **For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.***
*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.***

If someone is hasty in analyzing the last text exposed above, one may, through a superficial analysis of it, come to a mistaken conclusion that the reason why people do not see the Gospel also as the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God is the blindness that the devil causes in people.

Although the text above declares that the god of this age, also called as the prince of darkness, produces blindness in many people, the text does not declare that this action is carried out indistinctly on all people, nor does it state that this action is performed regardless of the attitude that people adopt in their lives.

The text in the reference should be viewed with close or special attention so that no one incurs the thought that the devil has the power to blind the understanding of anyone he aims to blind.

So, having said the consideration of the previous paragraph on the last text in reference, we may observe that the verses in question show us that **the reason why people do not see what is in the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord, is the lack of access they have to the *light* of the Gospel of Glory itself and that this lack of *light*, in turn, is set on them by the devil because of the unbelief that people themselves adopt in their hearts.**

If we looked at the text in reference from a perspective of several layers, we could perhaps, as an example, say that the blindness caused by the so-called god of this age is the most external and superficial layer of reasons that prevent people from seeing the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord as they should see it. Where, however, the lack of access to the very *light* of the Gospel of Glory, caused by people's unbelief, is the most profound cause for them not to relate to the glory of the Gospel as the Lord intends them to do.

In other words, perhaps we could say that the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God remains hidden for many people because the *light* to see it does not shine on them. However, this *light* does not shine on them because the god of this age intervenes so that they do not see the *light*, using, for this, the unbelief of people to be able to stand between the unbelievers and the *light* of the Gospel of Glory.

The understanding of the text to which we are reporting is particularly challenging since it refers to the distinct performances of three different parts, namely:

- ⇒ 1st distinct part: It relates to the position of faith or unbelief of each person.
- ⇒ 2nd distinct part: It relates to the action of the god of this age on people who take the position or attitude of unbelief concerning what is offered to them by the Lord.
- ⇒ 3rd distinct part: It relates to the performance of the *light* of the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord concerning the people who believe and receive what God offers them through His Gospel.

As much as the text in reference mentions what the god of this age intends to do regarding those who position themselves as unbelievers and however much God wants to grant the *light* of the Gospel of the Glory to those who believe in Him so that they come to understand more broadly and precisely what is offered to them in this same Gospel, it is the attitude of the part that is up to human beings to perform that defines the role of the other parts concerning the blindness in relation to the *light* of the Gospel of the Lord's Glory or regarding the knowledge of this *light*.

Understanding the text in reference is challenging, for it shows us a succession of facts that may come from a position that a person adopts in his or her heart. The text in reference shows us that the position that an individual takes concerning what God

intends that he or she believes may also define what follows the respective choice of faith or unbelief made by a person.

If a person comes to believe what the Lord wants him or her to believe initially, the consequence of this attitude leads him or her to see the **light** of the Gospel of Glory, which, in turn, enlightens that person's understanding to continuing to grow in the knowledge of the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ.

If, however, a person stands in disbelief at what the Lord intends him or her to believe in the first place, the consequence of this unbelief leads him or her to encounter blindness of understanding so that the **light** of the Gospel of Glory does not shine on him or her.

The **light of the Gospel of Glory is what allows a person to see more widely what is in it. However, if a person does not believe what one is called to believe initially about the Gospel, the **light** of the Gospel that allows him or her to know more about it may also be obstructed.**

For a person to be able to see more precisely or in more detail what is in the Gospel, one must first accept the Gospel according to what is initially presented or offered to him or her to believe in this Gospel.

When, for example, a person buys a lamp to have the light in a specific place in his or her home, one cannot have the light of that lamp in his or her home if one does not actually take the lamp to his or her home.

Similarly, the **light** of the Gospel of Glory is also part of the Gospel that is granted to those who receive the Gospel first in its basic points. And this is one of the main aspects why people find such great difficulty in understanding more about the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord.

Many people in the world, including many scholars, and even many scholars who also call themselves Christians, have sought to know the glory of Christ and the glory of God without using the **light** that the Lord offers them. Because they do not believe indeed what God has already presented to them about His Gospel, they have strayed far from the simplicity that is in Christ and the love of God, thus also becoming subject to being blinded by the prince of this world concerning the immeasurable characteristics of the glory of God and His Gospel.

If a person does not have access to the **light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God, one does not actually have broad or true access to this Gospel, but only has access to a set of writings and words about the Gospel and not to the real-life offered by it.**

Without the **light** of the Gospel, a person is unable to distinguish “the letter that kills” from the “Spirit that gives life,” as explained in more detail by the subject called The Letter or Life of the first series of themes of The Systemic Teaching about Christian Life.

*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.***

For a person to have the **light** that enlightens him or her for the knowledge of the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord, one must first have received this **light** in his or her life.

Therefore, the **light** of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and, consequently, of the Glory of God that needs to be received so that an individual can see the very Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God more widely, in turn, is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who is also the essence of the whole Gospel that is offered to us by God through His grace.

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."**

Christ is ***the light of the world***, the light sent by God to shine His glory in the hearts of those who were in the region and the shadow of death.

Christ is the **light** sent from heaven to the world so that people through Him can be reconciled with their Creator, but He is also the **light of God's life** that a person can find only in Christ Himself.

Matthew 4: 16 **The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.**

John 1: 4 **In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.**
5 **And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.**

Apart from Christ, people are deprived of seeing and reaching the life that is in the Gospel offered by the Lord, for they lack the true and only source of **light** that can make them see what is offered to them by God through grace and by faith in this grace.

God has established to reveal the glory of His salvation exclusively in Christ Jesus, His Only Begotten Son, or the Son of His Love. But it is also only in Christ Jesus that God has established that the other aspects of His glory revealed in His Gospel may become known to those who receive this salvation.

It is in the "face of Christ," it is in looking at Christ, through personal fellowship with Him, that the **light** that is given to us from the kingdom of heaven is revealed to us so that we may continue to know the glory of God that we need so much to continue to grow according to this same glory.

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.**

Christ is the name above every name, the word that lives forever, the newness of life, and the *eternal light* through which God has established that His glory may become more broadly revealed.

Psalms 115: 1 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.

*Philippians 2: 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,
11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*John 6: 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.
69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

Christ is the expression of God's beauty and holiness.

Psalms 29: 2 Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Christ did not declare that He is one more *light* in the world or that He is one more *light* for life. Christ stated that He is "*the*" *light* of the world and "*the*" *light* of life, informing us that if a person rejects Christ, one also rejects the only *light* to know more about the glory of Christ Himself and of God in whom all life according to the will of the kingdom of heaven dwells.

Therefore, before moving on to the role of Christ as the *light* of a Christian, it is imperative that people understand that they need to have Christ as Lord in their hearts to, then, have the *light* of Christ to enlighten them on how they can live and walk in the newness of life or eternal life that is offered to them in the Lord.

When the Scriptures show us that Christ is the *light* of the Gospel of His glory and the glory of the Heavenly Father, they also inform us that what is in His Gospel can only be seen more widely through the presence of the Lordship of Christ with the one who wants to know more about this Gospel.

The work of God that allows a person to receive the *light of life* to see the other aspects of the glory of Christ and the glory of God, to be guided by the Lord according to this glory, is and always will be the same, as shown in the texts below:

John 6: 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."***

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

John 1: 11 ***He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.***
 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.***

As the **light** that enlightens the other aspects of the Gospel of His glory and the glory of God, or as the **light of eternal life**, Christ is a gift from God to those who first receive Him as the **light** of the world or for those who receive Him first as the Lord of their lives.

The Heavenly Father revealed His glory in Christ on the cross of Calvary and by the resurrection of Christ so that, through Christ, people may begin to live according to the glory that was previously reserved for them in the Eternal Lord, ***for it is the God Himself who commanded light to shine out of darkness ... to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.***

The glory that was upon Christ so that He would be presented as the perfect Lamb who takes away the sin of the world is also the glory that shone in the face of the darkness of death to enlighten those who believe in the saving glory of the Lord. And this, so that they may also have the **light** of the knowledge of the eternal glory that is in God, revealed in the face of Christ.

When a person believes in the glory of Christ as the Savior and Lord of one's personal life, receives Christ into the heart in this way, and maintains fellowship with the Lord, one also receives the glory of Christ as the **light** to live and walk in newness of life in the present and for eternity.

When a person receives Christ as Lord, one also receives Him as the **light** that enlightens the understanding about the fact that in the other aspects of Christ's glory are found the fullness of virtues that are necessary for his or her life to be guarded and supported in the present and forever in the Lord.

And, in turn, when a Christian recognizes Christ as Lord and receives ***the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ***, a whole new perception about God, about Christ, and how the Lord wants to teach and lead him or her in all areas of one's life may become unfolded before this Christian.

Recognizing and receiving Christ as Lord and as the true **light** for daily personal life in God is the way to grow in the knowledge of the other attributes of God and Christ, for God established Christ Himself to teach us through the Holy Spirit about how we can relate to the Spirit of the Lord, to Christ, and the Heavenly Father.

Ephesians 3: 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 and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

When someone receives Christ as the Lord, the *light* of the Lord is willing to shine in the heart of that individual so that one also sees how Christ can be with him or her continually and how Christ can work in him or her the hope and faith that is according to the Heavenly Father's will.

After a person has Christ as his or her Lord and his or her *light*, Christ continues to show him or her more widely who He is in His most diverse attributes and functions. And this, so that one also comes to trust more in Christ to the point of allowing the Lord to operate what one needs that God carries out in him or her and on one's behalf.

Regardless of whether a person seeks it or not, in Christ is and always will be all the glory that a human being needs to know to obtain a life according to faith and hope in God. However, when someone seeks Christ for Him to be the Lord of his or her life, God grants him or her eternal salvation and also the *light* so that one may see the Lord's eternal glory that is revealed to us by the Gospel of His Glory.

When we look at the Gospel of Glory from the angle of the glory of the Lordship and the *light* of Christ, we see it explained once again why Paul preached so much Christ as the Lord, because it is through the recognition that Christ is the Lord that a person is saved, but also because it is through this recognition that the eyes of this person's understanding are kept enlightened by the Lord of Glory.

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

2 Corinthians 4: 3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.
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.

When a person stands up amidst those who are considered dead in their trespasses and sins, and cries personally and directly to Christ for Him to be the Lord of one's life, Christ is powerful to save him or her and still shine the **light** of the kingdom of God even before the thickest darkness that might try to oppose the shining of this **light** in the heart of the one who cries out to the Lord.

Ephesians 5: 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

7 Therefore do not be partakers with them.

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."

The **light** in which a Christian is called to walk after one has done the work of believing in Christ and receiving Him in the heart is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself whom he or she has received. And it is in the Christian's fellowship with the Lord that Christ enlightens him or her both regarding what is good for him or her to do each new day and from what is better to abstain for his or her benefit.

The broader understanding of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God necessarily passes through the **light** of this Gospel. However, the enlightenment that this **light** gives is achieved by fellowship with the One who is the source of all **light** for eternal life.

As already mentioned above, if a person rejects Christ and His Lordship, one also despises the **light** for one's life, just as if a person refuses the **light** that is offered from heaven, one also rejects Christ, because Christ and His **light** are inseparable.

John 3: 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

There are many books about the Christian life in the world, many books about the Gospel, including, for example, the present subject. However, **living and walking**

according to the will of God is directly associated with a person believing in the Lord, maintaining fellowship with Christ, and remaining under the **light** to understand the other facets of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God, for it is through these other facets of His glory that the Lord guides every Christian on the path that is beneficial to him or her for the present and for eternity.

Without receiving Christ in the heart through faith or without fellowship with Christ, also as the **light** of His Gospel, people can read, write, and even preach about the Gospel and still remain without understanding the glory of Christ and the Glory of God that is announced and offered to us through it.

Without faith in Christ, in the sense of recognizing Christ as the Lord in their hearts, people are deprived of the **light of God**. And, in turn, dissociated from the **eternal light**, people listen, but do not understand, have eyes, but do not see what God has already offered them before their eyes.

Not believing in Christ and His position as Eternal Lord is the same as putting oneself in a state of unbelief, and through which the devil seeks to work to blind people's understanding so that they also do not see the other aspects of the glory of Christ and the glory of God.

*John 5: 36 **But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.***

*37 **And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.***

*38 **But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.***

Although the world, and even many Christians, do not know the glory that is in the risen Christ, and although many do not know the transforming power that is in the knowledge of this glory, and exclusively by the knowledge of it from glory to glory, the devil knows the transformative power that the knowledge of the glory of God and fellowship with it can cause in the life of a human being. For this reason, the god of this age also acts so insistently that people do not come to know the **light** of the gospel that reveals the transforming glory of the Lord.

The devil is intensely opposed to God and does not want people to come to know their Creator. And for this reason, one of the main actions of the devil is to combat the understanding that it is in the **light** of Christ that people can come to know God more broadly. Since the devil can never touch and corrupt God and His glory, he works on the attempt of increasingly obscure the knowledge of God's glory among people who do not believe in Christ.

Using as a basis people's unbelief towards Christ Jesus and His work on behalf of people through His death on the cross of Calvary and His resurrection from the dead, the devil also tries to stand against the light of the Gospel, which is Christ, so that people likewise do not come to know the other aspects of the glory of God and the glory of Christ also revealed in His Gospel.

Let us note again, that the text of 2 Corinthians 4 does not describe that the god of this age seeks to blind the understanding of unbelievers so that

they do not see the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God, but says that the devil seeks to blind their understanding lest they see the light of the Gospel of the Lord's Glory.

Although the devil opposes the whole Gospel of God and although he does not want people to come to know the Gospel of the Lord, his focus is more intensely directed so that people do not see the light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ.

More than trying to prevent people from having access to the declarations of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, what the devil most intends to avoid is that people come to know the light of the Gospel.

*2 Corinthians 4: 3 **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,**
4 **whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.***

The relationship with the light of the Gospel, which is Christ, is something very interesting to be observed, because although darkness cannot prevail against the light, God has allowed and allows people to choose to receive this light or to choose to abstain from this light in their personal lives.

A person's blindness concerning Christ can be caused by the fact that a person does not know that the Lord came into the world to be the Redeemer and Savior of his or her life, but it may also be due to a choice of not believing in Christ as the Lord sent by the Heavenly Father to save us or because of the unwillingness to receive Him as Lord in the heart.

Although a person may have light at one's disposal or in a reachable condition, one may deprive oneself of light by withdrawing from the presence of light or simply by wearing a veil that blocks the shining of the light towards him or her or that prevents light from reaching the eyes of his or her understanding.

Therefore, unbelief concerning the basic aspects of the Gospel or the position of Christ as the Redeemer, Savior, and Lord attracts a veil that may blind a person regarding the light of the Gospel, taking into account yet that the way in which unbelief is practiced might be quite diverse.

Unbelief can range from believing that God does not exist to believing in the most varied religions that worship multiple gods, or even from believing in the religions that propose to worship the One Creator God but which do not propose to do it through Christ as instructed by the Lord in the Scriptures.

*Romans 10: 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.***

No **light** of natural knowledge or religious knowledge, however zealous the production of this knowledge or religion may have been, can replace the only **light** that can shine even in the dense darkness to rescue people who have turned away from God in their hearts, for the **light** that Christ comes to offer, enlightens the human being also for the spiritual things of eternal life which can only be seen through the Holy Spirit that Christ grants to those who believe in Him.

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.**

...

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.**

...

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.**

Whether by trying to deny the existence of God or Christ, or by adopting religious laws as if a person could be perfected before God through these laws and thereby achieve the salvation of one's soul, the veil of unbelief prevents people to understand the Lord's will for them despite the fact that the **light** is already near or available before them, for the veil of unbelief blinds the understanding of those who come to submit and believe in the things associated with this veil.

2 Corinthians 3: 14(a) and 15 **But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament (or Old Covenant), ... But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.**

Although the veil of the Temple of Jerusalem was already torn in two by the power of God when Christ died on the cross of Calvary, showing that the way to God is fully opened through Christ and that there is no need for any other means to reach the Heavenly Father, the removal of the veil over a person's understanding, and which stands against the **light** of Christ in one's heart, depends on a person's particular attitude towards Christ.

The tearing of the veil of the Temple of Jerusalem in two parts was done once and for all to show that only in Christ can a person draw close to God and that no religion based on laws and works for the justification of human beings will succeed before the

Lord. However, the veil of the temple has also been torn in two so that no one else needs to carry a personal veil before one's eyes or over one's heart.

The tearing of the veil of the temple in two, which occurred when Christ was crucified, represented God's action in leaving the way open to Him in favor of all humanity. However, the veil over or in front of each heart represents the position or attitude that each person adopts concerning what God has already done once and for all and which is entirely sufficient for the redemption of all people.

The veil before each heart, which stands against the closer knowledge of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God, is only removed for those who abandon unbelief concerning the basic aspects of the Gospel or the Lordship of Christ.

Regardless of what people believe or stop believing, the tearing in two parts of the veil that manifested the “new and living way” to God, through Christ, remains unchanged forever. However, if a person rejects Christ, in the sense of not receiving Him as Lord in one's heart, one also fails to understand that there is still another veil that is before one's eyes and that similarly needs to be removed.

When a person rejects Christ, in the sense of not receiving Him as Lord in his or her heart, one may not even reach the revelation that there is a veil before him or her that blinds his or her understanding of the glory of God and also that this veil can only be removed in Christ or when someone turns to Christ.

When a person rejects Christ as the Redeemer, Savior, and the Unique Mediator between people and God, one also remains blind to the fact that Christ is the *light* for him or her to understand the glory of God in the other facets that there are in Christ.

2 Corinthians 3: 15 ***But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.***

14 ***But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament (or Old Covenant), because the veil is taken away in Christ.***

When, however, a person accepts Christ as the envoy of God to save him or her from a life distanced from the fellowship with God, that veil that prevented him or her from seeing that Christ Himself is the *light* so that the other parts of the Gospel also become revealed is taken away.

Because of unbelief in the heart regarding the Lordship of Christ, the basic aspects of the salvation offered by God through the Gospel, or the condition of Christ as the exclusive Mediator between human beings and God, people abstain from the *light* that could give them the due understanding of the other aspects that are contained in the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God.

Nevertheless, through faith in Christ and fellowship with the Lord Jesus, people come to have access to the *light* so that the understanding of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God is also granted to them.

If a person accepts Christ as Lord in his or her heart, Christ reveals Himself as the *light* of that individual so that one may know more about

Christ, and this, with the purpose that one too will come to enjoy the other wonderful attributes of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3: 16 **Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.**

17 **Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**

18 **But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

1 Peter 1: 13 **Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Ephesians 1: 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.**

When someone turns to Christ or receives Him as Lord to also receive eternal life, this eternal life, which is Christ, begins to show itself present and active in the life of the one who received it, because, without the veil over the heart, a person can start to see the **light** that he or she did not see before. And through this **light**, in turn, one may come to know the glory of God and the glory of Christ as it would never be possible to know otherwise.

When someone receives Christ in the heart to be free from subjection to sin and the body of sin, one also has at his or her disposal the **light** to see the other aspects of the Lord's glory and which he or she needs so much to grow in the newness of life that is offered to him or her in the Lord through the Gospel.

John 17: 3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

1 John 5: 12 **He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

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, ...**

2 Corinthians 3: 18 **But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

Repeating in other words, when someone believes in Christ as the Scriptures instruct him or her to believe, when someone does God's work which is to believe in Christ as the Lord sent by the kingdom of heaven, the veil is taken away so that one may see the **light** that has always existed in God. And this, so that one may see the glory of God also to be transformed from glory to glory.

On the other hand, there may also be the fact that many people want Christ as their savior, but when they see the **light** that He offers to bring to their hearts or their lives, they oppose themselves to the **light** and, consequently, to the position of Christ as the Lord, for the **light** of Christ is powerful to illuminate all areas of a person's life and not just those that the person would like to see enlightened.

Because they do not understand the glory of Christ as the **light** of their lives or because they do not want the benefit of having **light** in the most diverse areas of life, many people perform many vain religious practices, useless sacrifices, and even follow priests who do not actually lead them to **light**, for, as the Lord said, how can "a blind individual guide another blind person?"

Because they do not discern the glory of Christ as the Lord of their lives, and subsequently as the ONLY TRUE **LIGHT** for their lives, many people are deceived and likewise continue to deceive one another.

When people reject Christ as Redeemer and Lord, that is, they reject the **light of God** in their lives, what they have left are the rudiments of the world, darkness, and being guided by others who fall short of **light** or even by the prince of darkness that rules them according to the course of this world.

John 3: 20 **For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**
21 **But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.**

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.**

When people do not know or recognize who Christ is or they do not know what the glory of Christ is in His position as Savior and Lord, they seek to make others or other things to be what they indeed can never be.

Isaiah 40: 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 42: 8 ***I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.***

Receiving the **light** of the Lord certainly implies challenges of change in thoughts and attitudes towards life, which may also imply major repositioning in life. However, the **light** also points and enlightens the path of peace and good not only for the present time but also for all eternity.

*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."***

Christ is the **light that shows the way of God's salvation to humanity.**

Christ is the **light that came into the world to make all the necessary provisions for the salvation of all people.**

Nevertheless, Christ, likewise, is the **light** that enlightens the hearts of those who receive His salvation and recognize Him as Lord so that, as saved, they may have the

eyes of their understanding open to see even more broadly, through the Gospel of Glory, who the Lord who saved them and who is always willing to be with them is.

*Philippians 4: 19 **And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.***

*John 14: 21(b) ... **And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.***

The **light that came into the world** to save us, shows us that in believing in Christ and receiving Christ as the Lord is salvation for the new life in God. However, it is also the same **light that came into the world** that shows us that in continuing to believe in Christ as the Lord is the **light** for the other aspects of this life. And this, so that we may understand the glory of Christ and the glory of God, the glory that also sustains the life that is granted by the Lord to those who already have received such great salvation.

*Hebrews 2: 1 **Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.***

*2 **For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,**
3(a) **how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?***

*Acts 2: 29 **Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.***

*30 **Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,***

*31 **he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.***

*32 **This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.***

*33 **Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.***

*34 **For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: "The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand,***

*35 **Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."***

*36 **Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.***

C14. The Glory of the One Mediator Between God and People

After considering, in the previous chapters, how essential it is for a person to have an appropriate understanding of the glory of Christ and how the relationship with this glory can be beneficial to him or her in the present and to eternal life, we understand that it is very relevant to follow up on some considerations about the specific glory of other ministries inherent to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Similarly, after considering that one of the first aspects of the glory of Christ that a person needs to know to see the other facets of that same glory is that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the light of the Gospel of Glory, we understand that it is particularly significant to know the ministries of Christ that became especially evident after the Heavenly Father resurrected the Lord and after He was elevated to the position of honor and glory to the right hand of the throne of the Eternal God, and where Christ, in addition to the condition as Son of God, was exalted in glory also as the Son of Man who triumphed over death.

Although we have already considered, in the previous chapters, that Christ is the One whom God has appointed to conduct all the intervention of what is necessary for us in the Lord, in the heavenly kingdom, for the other aspects of eternal life, and even for us to see them through His light, we understand that it is very significant to know even more objectively, individually, and precisely the position and ministries of Christ also so that we may not be entangled by pretenses or false propositions on Christian life and by ministries that propose to do what is exclusively pertinent to Christ.

Therefore, by advancing in the diversity of aspects about the ministries of Christ evidenced after His resurrection, we would like to start this new part by emphasizing once again the character of exclusivity that God attributed to various points of the ministries of Christ, based on the fact that Christ is not only one more means of mediating God's relationship with people or of people with God, but the exclusive means chosen by the Heavenly Father forever.

And to highlight the above even more, the Scriptures inform us explicitly or directly that the Lord Jesus Christ is not one of the mediators between God and people, but the One, Unique, or Only **Mediator**, as explained below:

- 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.
-

Here again, the crucial condition of the relationship with Christ as the light of the Gospel of Glory becomes evident so that we may have the eyes of the understanding enlightened that only He, Christ Himself, is also the Unique Mediator between God and human beings.

By recognizing and accepting the glory of Christ, as He Himself being the light of the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord, we can also begin to see the other ministries of the Lord according to the same glory and the gifts that God has reserved for those who place their trust in Him.

Nevertheless, through the position and ministry of Christ as the One Mediator between God and each human being, it is clear that also the access to the actions and gifts that result from the glory of the Lord can be achieved only or exclusively through the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Thus, as we have done throughout this subject, we believe that it is convenient and very significant to highlight here that also the position of Christ as Mediator is a living, current, and present position, and not just a past position when Christ did the work on the cross on Calvary as the provision of mediation to redeem our lives from slavery to sin and the body of sin.

Christ, in fact, is the Only Mediator because He has done a work of redemption for all and which is already fully accomplished, as was extensively exposed in the subject on "The Gospel of the Righteousness of God." However, the mediation that He did for us when He came into the world in the flesh and gave Himself on our behalf also served to show us that Christ is continually the Mediator between God and those who want to draw near to the Heavenly Father and the kingdom of God.

Christ has always been the way that allows a person to establish reconciliation and fellowship with the Heavenly Father. However, He also and forever remains this unique path.

*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."***

*2 Corinthians 5: 18 **Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,***

*19 **that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.***

*20 **Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.***

Christ was indeed revealed to the world as God's provision so that human's transgressions would not be imputed to them and prevented them from reconciling with the Heavenly Father, but Christ is also the Mediator for a present or current relationship between God and a person and between a person and God.

Christ came to reveal to the world the Heavenly Father's love regarding the provision for the redemption of every human being. However, Christ is the One who continues to reveal the Heavenly Father to us and the Father's will for our lives, for the Heavenly Father's glory is expressed on the face of Christ, as we saw in the previous chapters.

On the other hand, the Lord Jesus also presents our lives to the Heavenly Father because Christ is our perfect and eternal Lamb through whom we can approach in an acceptable manner and through faith before the Heavenly Father.

Because of His broken body and His blood that was shed on our behalf, the Scriptures teach us that Christ opened the “new and living way for the fellowship with the Heavenly Father.” However, the Scriptures also announce that Christ remains the “new and living way” for us to approach our Eternal God.

In the world, many people utter the words that Christ opened the “new and living way,” but several of them think that this way can be walked directly without passing through Christ, as if Christ had opened a road where people could approach God in the most diverse manners they might think. Forgetting, however, that the “new and living way” is a “living way,” it is the person of Christ, and it is never a path dissociated from the Lord Jesus.

In his few, but very profound words that have been recorded in the Scriptures, John the Baptist teaches us that a person can only receive what is given from heaven. And considering that Christ is the Unique Mediator between God and human beings accepted by God, we may say as well that a person can only receive what is given to him or her from heaven through Christ Jesus.

*John 3: 27 **John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven."***

Christ came to reveal the glory of God to the world when He came into it in the flesh and as the Son of Man, as we saw in the first chapters of this material. However, Christ remains the means by which God has established to reveal Himself to all people, and so it will be until the end of the ages of the present world.

*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.***

Whatever a person really wants to know about God, God reveals it through Christ. Anything a person wants to ask God necessarily needs to go through Christ. Whatever a person wants to receive from God, God only delivers it through Christ, for the Heavenly Father has established that in Christ is everything that people need to know about God and receive from God.

*Colossians 2: 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.***
*4 **Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.***

5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

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.

John 15: 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

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.

As we will see later in the present material, when the Scriptures inform us of the glory of Christ as the King who reigns over everything and everyone except over the Heavenly Father to whom He is subject, they are teaching us why the Lord can grant us the gifts that He offers to us and also how He coordinates the entire universe so that all that we need from God may reach us in such a way that all things work together for the good of those who believe in the Lord also as the King, Foundation, Intercessor, and Eternal Provider of their lives.

Romans 8: 28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

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?

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

When the Scriptures inform us of the glory of Christ as the Unique Eternal High Priest and the Eternal King of Righteousness and Peace, they are teaching us the position that the Lord Jesus has so that He can hear and answer all the prayers that

people all over the world say to Him and the Heavenly Father, showing us also why He is able to answer all those prayers that are made according to the will of God.

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.

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Because they do not know or reject the glory of Christ also as the One Mediator between God and each human being, people seek and surrender themselves to the most diverse means and inappropriate actions to try to establish a relationship with God and to try to obtain from God what they aim to receive from the Lord.

When, for instance, people say that it is through discipline and intensity of work that they achieve God's blessings, they deny that it is through Christ and firstly by His grace that they are favored by the Lord, and end up indulging in humanistic philosophies in an attempt to use them as mediation paths between them and God.

Similarly, when people declare that they achieve the favors of God by the knowledge they have acquired and by the time they have dedicated to acquiring knowledge, they also might be trying to place knowledge as a mediator between themselves and God, thereby also denying Christ's exclusive position.

Due to the ignorance or rejection of Christ as the Unique Mediator between God and human beings, people create images, idolize animals and other aspects of nature, worship their fellow men, and even idolize themselves as deities in order to draw close to God or some attributes of divinity.

Because of the lack of knowledge or rejection of Christ as the One Mediator between God and human beings, people follow human leaders, guides, teachers, apostles, prophets, priests, and pastors in order for them to stand in their behalf before the Lord, making yet all sorts of sacrifices, offerings, and handing over tithes thinking mistakenly that, through them, they can obtain the attention and favor of God Most High.

Nevertheless, everything that comes from God to a person according to the Lord's perfect will for him or her comes to him or her through Christ, even though one does not recognize Christ personally.

Even if a person rejects Christ in his or her heart and does not recognize Him as the Lord over all life, the very breath of life that one receives continues to be given to him or her by God through Christ Jesus, as explained in the text that we present again below:

*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.***

Returning to a point previously mentioned, we highlight here once again that it is only through Christ that God allows us to be reconciled to Him, but it is also only through Christ that we can enjoy the reconciliation granted to us.

***2 Corinthians 5: 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,
19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.***

Romans 5: 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have “now” received the reconciliation.

Since only the Lord Jesus Christ gave His perfect, without sin, or blameless life on behalf of all human beings, the Heavenly Father also established that the truth and the newness of eternal life that is in Him should only be granted to all through Jesus Christ.

As we saw above, the Heavenly Father's will is for all human beings to come to the knowledge of the truth, but we have also seen that Christ is the truth of God.

So, as an opponent of the truth and the fellowship of people with eternal life or God, the devil knows that if a person goes directly to Christ to reach the Heavenly Father, that person will see and understand God's salvation, will be reconciled to Him and will receive the new life that is given from the kingdom of heaven. And, for this reason, the god of this age also fights so hard that people do not see the light of Christ reflected on this fundamental aspect of Christ's ministry as the Unique Eternal Mediator between God and human beings.

Understanding the opposition that exists to the exclusive ministry of Christ as the Mediator between God and human beings is crucial, because the devil, through people, distorted teachings, and philosophies, seeks to introduce vain subtleties that try to imply that the way to God cannot be so simple, it cannot be just by faith in Christ, it cannot be only because a person has a fellowship with the living Christ anytime and anywhere, it cannot be because Christ is in a person's heart and can assist him or her every moment and every day of his or her life.

Understanding the opposition that exists to the fundamental aspects of Christ's ministries can cooperate for an individual not to incur what is warned in the following text:

*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.***

The position of having only Christ as the Mediator between a person and the Creator bothers the devil and many people because it is a unique and priceless position of freedom, and in which neither the devil nor other people can continue to exercise spiritual dominion over the hearts of those who come to God through the Lord Jesus.

*John 8: 36 **Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.***

*1 Corinthians 6: 20 **For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.***

*1 Corinthians 7: 23 **You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.***

After Christ's coming into the world as the Son of Man and after His death and resurrection, anyone, any group, religion, or organization other than Christ Himself that sets out to mediate other individuals' relationships with God is offering a service that is false, deceptive, contrary to the will of God, and which none of them will ever be able to accomplish indeed or in a minimally satisfactory way.

God only accepts as Mediator the Unique One who innocently assumed the guilt of all and died in favor of the liberation of all from the yoke of slavery caused by subjection to sin or rejection of the Creator God, for only in Christ could the work of eternal redemption be done once and for all.

Only the One who was sent by God to make a single provision for the forgiveness of all people's sins is worthy before God to represent everyone and to represent God to everyone.

People are called by God to announce the truths about Christ. They may freely preach the Gospel of God to one another, and they may announce the Mediator Christ Jesus Christ to their fellow men. People may proclaim the good news that each human being can draw close to God through this One Mediator. However, before God, no one can play the role of mediation attributed exclusively to Christ, nor does anyone receive the call from God to be a mediator of the Heavenly Father towards other human beings or vice versa.

Those who claim that God needs earthly mediators for people to come to the Lord may even appear to have godliness. However, by doing so, they deny Christ as the One Mediator fully capable and established by the Heavenly Father to assist everyone

everywhere and at all times. And, consequently, they reject the testimony of God Himself about the only source of eternal life made available to dwell in the hearts of all who believe in the novelty of life that is in the Lord.

*2 Timothy 3: 5 ... **having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!***

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

The Lord Jesus Christ is the way or the provision entirely sufficient for people to draw close to God, and they do not need other people, angels, or any other creation or creature of the past, present, or future to be able to access the Lord. A person just needs to ask the Lord Jesus Christ in faith to accompany him or her so that one can approach the Heavenly Father. And Christ will do so, since this role, after His resurrection, is one of His central ministries or attributions widely announced by God to the world.

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

*1 Corinthians 15: 57 **But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

Christ's position or ministry as the One Mediator between God and people is, at the same time, so mighty, but also so simple, so objective, and so direct that for many it is difficult to be believed, accepted, and used.

On the other hand, to understand and live under the condition that Christ is the Only Mediator between God and human beings, and that there is and never will be another mediator, is to know and believe in one of the most prominent and essential aspects of Christ's glory and the glory of God.

When the Lord Jesus instructed people to seek a place of relief from their tiredness and the burdens of slavery to sin, the flesh, and the world, He did not tell them to seek this place in temples made by human hands and in those who officiate, minister, or work in these temples. On the contrary, Christ declared for people to come directly to Him, for He is the only one authorized by God to offer salvation, eternal relief, and the novelty of life that only from the kingdom of heaven can be given to those who seek to approach the Lord.

*Matthew 11: 27 **All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.***

*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.

The risen Christ is the Only Mediator between God and human beings, and since He is eternally alive, He has never delegated and will never delegate this function to any other man, woman, or any other creature, whether in Heaven or on Earth.

Knowing that the Lord Jesus Christ is the light of the Gospel of His Glory and the Glory of God, and understanding that He is the One Mediator between God and human beings, are, undoubtedly, some of the first and main needs that an individual needs to have resolved after being saved in Christ also to live and walk in conformity to these aspects.

It just is not a person via another person or creature that makes an individual's access to God possible. It is not in this way that God established it!

Personal access to God or fellowship with God by anyone living on Earth has been established by God to be done through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by fellowship with Him, which can even occur in the very heart of an individual who has already received Christ Jesus as Lord in his or her heart.

As we have already mentioned, the Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Mediator of Salvation, but He also is the Mediator of all life that comes from God's salvation, as exemplified by some more texts that follow below:

Hebrews 13: 15 ***Therefore by Him (Christ) let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.***

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,***
4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,
5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

2 Corinthians 2: 14 ***Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.***

Romans 5: 1 ***Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our 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.***

Understanding that Christ is alive and that His ministry towards God and us encompasses the position and role of Mediator at all times of our lives, also means that we no longer need to be limited to having only a knowledge "about God," but it allows each one to "know God" personally as the God who is over the Christian, with the Christian, and in the Christian to guard, help, and guide him or her in all aspects of his or her life. (As also explained in the subject on Knowing about God or Knowing God).

Both what we intend to present on our part before God and what comes from God to us can only be accomplished through the Unique Mediator established by God Himself, namely: The Lord Jesus Christ.

And if we are maintaining fellowship with God through Christ, we are indeed keeping fellowship with our Creator.

Just as the lack of the light of the Gospel of the Glory of God leads people to subjection to blindness concerning the other aspects of the glory of God and Christ that are offered to us in the Gospel, so also the gap of a person's relationship with Christ, as the Mediator between God and that individual, results in the lack of one's fellowship with the other aspects that God offers through the same Gospel.

Christ is the central good tidings of the Gospel. Christ is the fundamental gift of the Gospel. However, Christ is also the One through whom the other good news and gifts of the Gospel are delivered, throughout the whole life, to those who believe in Christ as their Lord and as the Mediator of God towards them.

When a person understands that Christ is their One Mediator and begins to live according to this understanding, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will be in charge of leading that person forward in the knowledge of God and the riches of glory that are in Him and His other ministries.

*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.***

*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.***

*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."***

When we read about the example of Saul's encounter with Christ, from the point where Saul was more often called Paul, we can see that Christ spoke to him still in his unbelieving position. In the sequence, however, we see that Christ Himself instructed Paul to await the visit of Ananias, with whom the Lord had also spoken about Paul. Ananias was a co-worker with Christ, but both Paul, who had just met Christ, and Ananias were instructed primarily by the Lord. It was Christ who listened to them and spoke to both about what they should do together.

In concluding this chapter, we emphasize that to believe in Christ as the One Mediator and to live according to this truth also leads us to grow in the knowledge of the other ministries of Christ, through which the Lord shows and teaches us how He performs practically and tangibly the work of Mediator for which the Heavenly Father separated Him on our behalf.

When an individual believes in Christ, as His Mediator towards the Heavenly Father, Christ also leads him or her to understand and experience what other ministries He performs on behalf of that person so that one can have growing access to God and so that one can receive from God everything he or she needs for the new life that has been given him or her through the Lord's Eternal Gospel.

John 4: 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.***

25 ***The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."***

26 ***Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."***

...
42 ***Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."***

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.***

C15. The Glory of Him Who Takes Away the Old and Establishes the New

Since it was previously seen that Christ is the “light of the Gospel of the Glory of the Lord” and also the “One Mediator between God and each human being,” we understand that it is very relevant to carry out a more profound study on some other details of the ministries of Christ, with the firm purpose of knowing more about how the Lord practically performs the functions of ***Lord, Righteousness, Peace, Salvation, Grace, Savior, Mediator***, and others in our favor.

When we mention that there is still a need for more comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the glory of Christ and the glory of God in other functions or ministries, we do not do so in the sense that we do not have everything we need in the attributes of Christ that we have mentioned in the previous paragraph, but in the sense that we also need to know more practically the ministries of the Lord Jesus Christ through which He extends to us what He shows us in His positions of our Lord, Light, Mediator and so on.

As has also been mentioned, since Christ's ministry is the light of His own glory and the glory of God, and because He is the One Mediator between the Heavenly Father and human beings, we can see and access the glory and the benefits of His salvation, love, righteousness, peace, power, and the fulfillment of His promises. However, these ministries of light and as the One Mediator need yet other ministries or actions that are even more specific so that the revelations and gifts reach our lives indeed.

If a person, for example, does not have access to the ministry of Christ, where Christ is the light for him or her to see what is offered to him or her in the Lord, one is subject to not seeing what is already available in Christ through faith. Similarly, if a person does not have access to Christ as the Mediator of the heavenly gifts, one is liable to remain in need of them. However, even if a person has access to Christ as the light and as the Singular Mediator, the light and the ministry of the One Mediator are also manifested by other aspects that are even more tangible so that they come to express their effects towards people.

The lack of many people concerning the glory of God is not always in the fact that they do not have the information that Christ came into the world to manifest Himself as Savior, Lord, Light, and Mediator to save them and that they, through this salvation, can have access to God's love, righteousness, peace, grace, and power.

Falling short of the glory of God often lies in the fact that people do not know and do not understand what the Lord proposes to do in their lives and how He does it so that the aspects of His glory indeed come to act in their favor.

After a person comes to know that God has established Christ as the source of the novelty of life that comes from the kingdom of heaven and everything that accompanies this life, a very significant next step to be understood is associated with how the practical relationship with this source occurs, for without a real fellowship with the Lord, an individual may even have information about the source of life, but still remain in ignorance of how the changes coming from the Lord may occur in his or her life.

Moreover, due to the lack of knowledge of how the Lord may work regarding them, some people may give way to fear concerning this aspect and which may even lead them

to choose to withdraw from a closer relationship with the source of the newness of eternal life.

In many respects, knowledge of the most practical or most tangible ministries through which Christ effectively passes on the newness of heavenly life, the gifts, and the work of transformations in an individual's life is even more important than the detailed knowledge of some gifts that a person can find in the Lord, for without a functional relationship with the means by which the Lord grants His gifts to people or leads them to be transformed, they still may remain in need of these gifts.

- 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.**
- 41* **I do not receive honor from men.**
- 42* **But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.**
- 43* **I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.**
- 44* **How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?**
- 45* **Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you trust.**
- 46* **For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.**
- 47* **But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?**

The central emphasis of Christ's entire ministry towards people who still inhabit the world is noticeably evident. And the Scriptures, again and again, show us that this central emphasis refers to the real, effective, or practical granting of the life of the kingdom of God to all those who believe in the Beloved Son that the Heavenly Father offers them through the Gospel, which also was confirmed repeatedly by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself while He was in the flesh in the present world.

John 10: 10 **The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

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."**

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?"**

The records of the Scriptures concerning Christ were made so that people also in the present would come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to practice fellowship in a living and practical way with the risen, living, and eternal Christ, as well as to relate effectively to the ministries that Christ Himself carries out in contemporary days.

Therefore, as for the aspect of advancing towards a more profound approach and continuity of growth in the knowledge of the ministries that the Lord carried out and continues to perform specifically in favor of the people who believe in Him, we would like to advance, in this chapter, more particularly on the glory of Christ as the One who “takes away the old or the first” and “establishes the new or the second.”

One central aspect of Christ's work when He came into the world, as the Son of Man, is that the Lord came to fulfill everything that was needed to be accomplished to offer us eternal salvation. However, Christ also came to fulfill what was necessary so that many concepts, behaviors, or practices that over the centuries became wrong or outdated could be removed or ended in the lives of those who would receive the salvation offered by God, as exemplified below:

*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.***

*Romans 6: 6 **Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.***

In the theme on The Gospel of Salvation, we sought to show that a central aspect of salvation from God always refers to moving the person to be redeemed from an “unsaved” condition to a “saved” condition, which, evidently, involves changing situations, principles, contexts, and practices.

Thus, when the Lord Jesus came in the flesh into the world to make provision for the salvation of God to be offered to all human beings, He of course also brought the possibility for people to reach a new context of life especially when it comes to their hearts, for if the Lord had made a provision of salvation so that people would remain in precisely the same condition as when they were not saved, particularly in their inner state, He would not indeed be offering real salvation.

*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.
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.

If Christ came into the world to make provision for the reconciliation of people to God through faith in Him, in His work of righteousness on the cross of Calvary, and in the Heavenly Father who sent Him, this whole set of actions would not make sense if Christ also did not offer them a new way of reconciliation and if God did not declare null the ways in which people tried to reach the Lord throughout their lives and through which they never managed to attain their goal.

When Christ came into the world to offer salvation to all human beings and to manifest Himself as the Savior of all who believe in Him, He came to reveal the way by which people could be saved, but also to expose or make clear the means or paths by which people would never achieve this salvation.

The revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ as “the new, living, and unique way” of reconciliation and fellowship with God is also, at the same time, an official revelation of the proclamation of uselessness or non-validity of all the other paths by which people sought to reach reconciliation with God, but by which they never succeeded in the goal they tried to achieve.

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.

Considering, however, that the path that Christ came to offer for the salvation of people also implies changes that occur primarily in the heart of each person, some main changes that Christ wants to make through what He wants to “take away” and some main changes that Christ wants to make through what He came to “establish” are not always so explicitly perceived by those who want to understand salvation only on the natural or superficial level.

The understanding that what Christ did through His work on the cross Calvary and His resurrection concerning the establishment of a new and living way, as well as regarding the declaration of nullity of any other alternative, also needs to encompass the understanding that this historic action accomplished by Christ only becomes a

firmly established experience in a person if one receives Christ in the heart and if one allows Christ, in the sequence, to remove the old also from his or her heart to establish there more and more the new.

Therefore, the lack of understanding that Christ came to take away or remove what is not compatible with salvation and the new life in God that He offers, and, similarly, the lack of understanding of what Christ came to establish for this newness of life, may become obstacles that firmly stand in the way so that people do not indeed experience what is available to them in Christ.

If a person, for instance, was used to trying a relationship with God through human mediators, images, gods, or through one's religious practices and offerings that he or she performed before coming to know Christ personally, from the point of knowing Christ, this person is called to leave behind the ways or actions previously practiced and is called to follow only the new way in which Christ wants to instruct and give direction for his or her life.

The old or outdated ways used to try to reach a relationship with God, inherited by human traditions, cultures, or leaders, are not compatible with the new and living way that Christ came to establish in the life of each person.

And as much as people try to praise, preserve, or even worship their cultures and traditions, what is opposed to the will of God and the relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of the Lord needs to be removed from the life practices of those who want to walk according to the Lord's will.

*2 Corinthians 6: 14 **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?***

*15 **And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?***

*16 **And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."***

When an individual believes in Christ and that the Lord in His glory is also the One who takes away the old to establish the new, believes that Christ takes away what is outdated or obsolete regarding the way God wants to relate to each person, the Lord also will teach and lead this individual specifically on what he or she needs to remove from his or her life to be established more and more on the unique path of eternal life.

When a person relates to Christ also in the essential aspect of His ministry of taking the old to establish the new, the Lord Himself purifies the one who believes in Him from the practices that constitute useless paths or ways of destruction, as well as He also establishes him or her in the practices that constitute the path of salvation and the novelty of eternal life.

*Hebrews 9: 14 ... **how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?***

*Psalms 139: 23 **Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;**
24 **And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.***

The intervention of Christ as the Savior and Lord of a person does not refer to the provision of a set of actions through which the Lord comes to bless people under the same practices of seeking the Lord that they tried to carry out before they knew Christ and through which they were following a path of death and eternal destruction.

Christ's intervention as Savior and Lord on behalf of a person is granted for a new life established in new practices, but which also involves abandoning old practices no matter how much appreciation a person had for them before approaching God through Christ.

When we see Paul's example, when he was still better known by the name Saul, we can see how zealous he was in following the law of Moses. However, when Saul met Christ, the Lord showed him that the practice of following that law could never save him. Although Saul was very used to it and, perhaps, he even enjoyed following the precepts of the law of the old covenant, this practice could never lead him to the desired goal.

Nevertheless, as Paul believed in Christ and followed His instructions, the Lord opened Paul's eyes, enlightened his understanding, and removed from his heart the attachment, devotion, or zeal for dead works and to which he had been so dedicated for so many years of his life, showing him, on the other hand, how much more sublime was the new and living way that he could now come to live "in Christ."

Let us see below some words that Paul himself spoke about the changes in his life concerning his old ways after he knew the eternal and sublime way that exists exclusively in the Lord Jesus Christ:

*Philippians 3: 4 **Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:**
5 **circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;**
6 **concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**
7 **But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.***

Because Paul believed in Christ and acknowledged the ministry of "Him who removes the old and establishes the new," he experienced the quickening of his spirit in Christ, but he also experienced the renewal of his understanding, to the point of declaring, in another text, the following beautiful and highly relevant words:

2 Corinthians 5: 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

As for leaving the old and as for receiving the new, Paul accepted the time and the way that God had established to talk to him both about the newness of life revealed in Christ Jesus and the removal of the time and the way that was no longer valid for his life, as well as for all people in the world.

When Paul had the eyes of his understanding enlightened on the revelation of the Son of God as also the One Mediator Christ of his relationship with God, he readily also accepted the removal of what needed to be taken away in the face of the new that had been revealed to him.

In other words, Paul received the new that God offered him in Christ and was established in it because he also accepted the removal of everything that was not in consonance to the novelty that was offered him.

And yet, Paul did not try to reconcile, mix, or combine the old with the new, also accepting the following instruction that the Lord declared to His apostles while He was still in the flesh in the world:

***Luke 5: 36 Then He spoke a parable to them: "No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old.
37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined.
38 But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved."***

After being taught by the Lord Jesus about what to leave behind and what was necessary or fundamental to be established in his life, Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, writes to us in his letters, also in other words, the same point as Christ had already announced to us in the above verses, as we can see below:

Romans 6: 6 Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

***Ephesians 4: 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.***

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.**

When people do not perceive what Christ came to introduce as part of their salvation, as well as what Christ came to declare as having no validity for this same salvation, they are also subject to not seeing what Christ wants to remove before the eyes of the understanding of their hearts and what Christ wants to establish as the newness of life in their hearts.

2 Corinthians 3: 12 Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech;
**13 unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.
 14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.
 15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.
 16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

When people do not leave what should be abandoned or taken away, they might be putting themselves in a position where they become deprived of experiencing what they could already be enjoying.

Nevertheless, how will people recognize and distinguish what needs to be removed if they do not believe that their vain ways of living need to be left behind or if they do not know the fact that in the glory of Christ's ministry is the establishment of what needs to be established, but also the removal of what should be taken away?

How will people recognize and distinguish what is the old, the first, and the old covenant that must be removed if they do not even know the content to which these expressions refer?

How will people know how to let behind what should have been abandoned if they do not even know the primary points of what Christ came to take away, as well as what He came to establish?

How will people recognize and distinguish Christ's instruction in their lives about what to leave and what to establish if they stay subject to the ways of relationship with God that are no longer authorized by the Lord or if they remain making use of these wrong attempts instead to submit, by heavenly grace and mercy, to the only way that can effectively establish people's fellowship with the Lord at all times and places in their lives now and forever?

When the Scriptures mention that part of the Lord's ministry towards us is to accomplish "the end of the law," that He is the Unique Mediator between God and human beings, that He is the Mediator of a new covenant, and that the Lord has come to remove the first to establish the second, they do not mention the texts related to these expressions only to adorn the Scriptures with words of human wisdom.

According to the examples below, when the Scriptures attribute to Christ the ministry that brings to light the new and takes away or makes obsolete what opposes the new, they do so because there are truths included in each of these references that are necessary for the knowledge or the understanding of those who want to experience more broadly the life that Christ offers them.

*Hebrews 8: 6 **But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.***

*Hebrews 9: 15 **And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.***

*Hebrews 12: 24 **to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.***

*Hebrews 10: 5 **Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.***

- 6 **In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.***
*7 **Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the volume of the book it is written of Me), To do Your will, O God.'**"*
*8 **Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law),***
*9 **then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.***

When the Scriptures inform us that there are aspects of life that need to be removed, but also that there are new aspects that need to be established, they do so that we may also come to understand that Christ's work regarding these aspects is for our benefit even though these actions may require a significant dedication from our part to understand more profoundly the ministries that Christ operates on our behalf nowadays, as we commented at the beginning of this chapter.

If an individual really is hungry and thirsty for the truths of God, one will not allow the temporal things of life to rob him or her of growing in those aspects that are vital also for his or her eternal life.

Colossians 2: 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations
21 (Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,
22 which all concern things which perish with the using) according to the commandments and doctrines of men?
23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.
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.

The experience of living and walking in Christ and with Christ, as Him being the One who has in His glory the ministry of also being the One who removes what needs to be taken away and establishes what needs to be established, is something truly liberating, an exceedingly excellent benefit, and an aspect that cannot be understood by those who do not believe in Christ and do not relate to Him also in this area of His ministry.

John 8: 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.
32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
 ...
36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

Understanding what we need to be taken away from, what needs to be removed from us, and trusting in Christ to guide us in this process, leads to an experience of freedom that only exists in Him who also has all the ministries granted by God to carry out the entirely satisfactory deliverance of all who also believe in this part of the glory of the Lord Jesus.

In the following chapters, we aim, then, to detail more some of the aspects that are not consistent with the life in Christ and from which Christ wants to deliver us, as well as those aspects in which the Lord wants to establish us. However, we would not like to move towards a more detailed view of this liberation without previously emphasizing how crucial this deliverance and the position and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ also in this regard are.

Only through Christ and in Christ can a person achieve an understanding of what one needs to put away, from what one needs to be taken out, and in what one needs to be established to experience forever the newness of eternal life that is granted to him or her in the Lord.

What the Lord Jesus Christ proposes to be taken away from the heart of a person or abandoned by him or her, the Lord does it for the purpose that this person can get rid of false foundations of life and so that one can be established on the only foundation that is firm to support him or her for all of his or her days of life on Earth and also for all eternity.

*1 Corinthians 3: 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.
11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

God has established that the knowledge of His glory is achieved through gifts granted in Christ, but also through services that Christ aims to perform on our behalf and in us, such as enlightening our understanding, being our Mediator towards God, and operate as the One who takes away the old and establishes the new.

And all this, still, so that we may come to know that the excellence of the power is of God, and not from us or any other creature as so many times human beings have tried to imply or propagate through various human cultures that have the objective of not acknowledging the glory of their One Creator and Eternal God.

*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.*

C16. The Glory of Him Who Takes Away the *First* and Establishes the *Second*

A. The Importance of Understanding in More Detail the Ministry of Christ that Made it Possible to *Take Away the First* and *Establish the Second*

Hebrews 10: 7 Then I said, "Behold, I have come (In the volume of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God."
8 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law),
9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

Although the title of this new chapter is similar to the title of the previous chapter, the theme to be addressed next aims to deal with a more specific emphasis on one of the aspects that are globally contemplated in the concepts of the previous chapter.

Despite Christ's ministry in *taking away the old to establish the new* encompasses the Lord's help in all kinds of situations related to the new life offered by God's salvation to those who believe in Him, we can see that the Scriptures are not limited to just showing a general emphasis on what needs to be removed and what needs to be established.

As we advance in knowledge about the multiple ministries of Christ, we will also be able to see more details of what Christ has accomplished and accomplishes in the lives of those who grow in the life of faith that is according to the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ.

When the Scriptures move from the generic or global mention of Christ's ministries and works in our favor to a more specific consideration of them, as is the reference concerning *removing the first and establishing the second*, they signal to us that general knowledge of the Lord's work also needs to become more detailed or specific knowledge and experience, even if, at first, these terms may sound unfamiliar.

When the Scriptures advance to a more detailed level of some points about Christ's ministries and works, they do so because also in the details of the Lord's work on our behalf are manifested several aspects that are essential for our growth and establishment in the new life received by heavenly salvation extended to us.

At first, the person who eminently needs God's salvation may only need to know how to achieve this salvation in Christ to begin experiencing it in due time. However, after receiving salvation, it is also reasonable for this person to come to know and to advance in the details of the life under the salvation that one has received, which also occurs regarding the knowledge of what needs to be removed and what needs to be established in his or her life.

The Scriptures show us generic and broad approaches to what the Lord has accomplished and intends to fulfill in our lives so that we may clearly see what the principal and great purposes of His actions and gifts towards us are. However, the Scriptures also show us more specific and detailed approaches concerning how the Lord works so that each of His purposes may become entirely fulfilled.

The combined use of generic approaches in conjunction with more specific and detailed approaches is not only useful, but also necessary, and which is also carried out daily by people in the world in their most diverse activities.

When, for example, a father and a mother instruct their children to go to school, they try to give their kids the global idea of what going to school aims to add to their lives. However, parents also know that it is in attending school and in the detailed daily approaches, through various activities, that the global idea proposed to their children can become a personal experience and reality in their lives. It also is by living together with the details of daily life that the general purposes proposed to children come to life and can be effectively achieved.

Thus, we understand that the introduction we are trying to present at the beginning of this chapter is of high relevance due to the importance that it may have on the more detailed understanding of what comes to be *the first to be removed* and what happens to be *the second to be established*, for indeed the broader understanding of these two expressions can also turn out to represent a vast enlightening contribution regarding several central aspects of a person's life after receiving the salvation granted to him or her according to the Gospel of God.

Without a more detailed understanding of what is *the first that should be removed* and what is *the second that should be established*, and without comparing them to understand the main differences that exist between these two sets of life instructions, a person can stay exposed to think that the combination of the precepts of the *first* with the *second* is also perfectly acceptable, thus being oblivious to the perception that one is extremely incompatible with the other despite both being described or contemplated in the same compendium called the Scriptures.

Knowing the fact that the will of the Heavenly Father, which Christ came to accomplish in the world through His crucifixion and resurrection, also contemplates precisely *the removal of the first for the establishment of the second* may prove to be vital for growth in the Christian life, for it is also in this will that the Christian is established so that he or she can be more and more aligned with God and sanctified (separated) in the Lord so that one also may live and walk in the will of God for his or her life, as it is exposed to us in the continuity of the text cited in the introduction to this chapter:

Hebrews 10: 9 **Then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God."**
He takes away the first that He may establish the second.
¹⁰ **By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

Although the understanding of what *the first to be removed* is and what *the second to be established* represents may require a more comprehensive degree of dedication than some other topics on the Christian life, the benefits for those who in the Lord

achieve the accomplishment of this task are immeasurable and indescribable, as is the whole will of God.

Moreover, we also remember that the Lord did not leave us alone in the task mentioned in the previous paragraph, but sent us the Helper to be our guide in all aspects of His will and truth.

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.

Psalms 25: 5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.

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.

So that *the removal of the first and the establishment of the second* could come to be realized and offered to us as a way to the newness of life in our Lord and Creator, it was God's will, and also necessary, for Christ to offer His body or His life as a living offering to be sacrificed, crucified, or slain in our place.

Would it be too much, then, to require a Christian to at least dedicate oneself to listening to the Spirit of the Lord and the Scriptures of the Heavenly Father to understand in more detail that what cost our Eternal Lord such a high price and which was made for the very benefit of this Christian?

B. The Central Theme both in What Is Called *First* and in What Is Called *Second*

To advance more specifically on the question of what is called as *first* and what is called as *second*, we are presenting below the text quoted or used as a primary reference in the opening part of this chapter once again, increased, however, of two more verses:

- Hebrews 10: 5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.*
- 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.*
- 7 Then I said, "Behold, I have come (In the volume of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God."*
- 8 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law),*
- 9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.*
- 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

What, then, is this reference that Christ made to a *first* and to a *second* and when He said to the Heavenly Father that He had come into the world, as the Son of Man and in the body that the Lord has prepared for Him, to fulfill the will of God and to announce that it was not sacrifices and burnt offerings that God was looking for so that people could be reconciled to their Creator?

What the reference to the removal of a *first* for the establishment of a *second* shows us to be so significant that a person can be separated (sanctified) for the Lord also to come to know the will of God for his or her life?

Mentioning the questions in the preceding paragraphs at the beginning of the more specific approach of what the *first* and the *second* come to be is not just a mere exercise of a didactic expression. It seems to us to be crucial since the verses of the Bible themselves, quoted at the beginning of this topic, do not directly explain what the terms *first* and *second* are referring to, which, in turn, may lead readers of these verses to merely, but also unfortunately, not realizing the greatness of what they are referring to.

If there is a reference to a *first* and also to a *second*, this statement must obviously be referring to some central theme common to both of them. However, if we do not know the theme to which the two points refer, also what is referred to the *first* and the *second* will hardly be understood.

When a *first* and a *second* are mentioned, this shows us that there are differences between them, including the fact that one comes before the other, but it also reveals to us that the two are a variation of a theme common to both to such an extent of being ordained one after the other.

If, for example, a couple comes to have a *second* child, that child is distinct from the *first*, receives a different name, and is treated as a distinct person. However, the fact that this child was received in the same family also means that he or she is associated with some themes common to the *first* child or his or her sibling, such as affiliation, family, inheritance, etc.

Thus, the fact that there is no more precise explanation of what comes to be the *first* and the *second* in the Hebrew verses mentioned above does not prevent us from knowing the central theme with which they are associated.

If in the specific verses presented above we do not find an explanation of the central theme to which the *first* and the *second* are associated, in the book in which the referenced verses appear, we will certainly have the information we need, because the Scriptures would not leave us helpless in a subject of such high relevance and through which the Lord Jesus helps us to be able to be aligned with the will of God or to be sanctified (separated) in the Lord.

When we are not given a direct understanding of a theme in a particular verse of the Scriptures, the investigation of the context of the book in which the verse is found becomes even more essential and may come to serve us with great support.

Therefore, if the verses that were exposed at the beginning of this topic do not yet directly show us what they are referring to, the book of Hebrews, in which the verses are inserted, reveals us, in turn, repeatedly and abundantly what the central theme is to which what is called *first* and what is called *second* are associated, as exemplified below:

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.

Hebrews 8: 1 **Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,**
2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

Hebrews 7: 12 **For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.**

Although the central theme of the book of Hebrews may also be seen from the perspective of an exchange of a covenant or the *first* pact for the *second* pact between God and human beings, which in a way is also another way of referring to the central subject of the book of Hebrews, the central theme to be unveiled so that we may seek to clarify more broadly and, at the same time, more objectively what comes to be what is called *first* and what is called *second* respectively, is a theme widely dealt with in the

Scriptures which is directly associated with the “communication between God and the people who live on Earth” and which is also called “priesthood.”

Although what is called the *first* and what is called the *second* are distinct from each other, the common theme they both refer to is primarily about the *priesthood* directed to God.

So, what is called the *first* is a type of priesthood and what is called the *second* is another type of *priesthood*, but both deal with the *priesthood* of people regarding God.

If people realized more how much the understanding of what *priesthood* is also affects their lives individually, many would make a more considerable effort to achieve a broader and more accurate understanding of this topic, for it is also in what is related to what is called a *priesthood* that lies the path of people's access to God who gives them life.

Probably because they have heard more about the characteristics of what is to be a *priesthood* according to the idea of what is exposed in what is called as “*the first priesthood*,” many people may come to think that *priesthood* is a subject that is only interesting to be seen by those who are entitled or who call themselves priests in the world and who do it to carry out priestly service in the place of others.

Nevertheless, considering as being *priesthood* only what is mentioned in the previous paragraph, is in no way in accordance with what God expects people to understand about what is associated with the *priesthood* according to the definition established by the heavenly kingdom.

When viewed from the perspective taught to us from the kingdom of God, the *priesthood* encompasses, without exception, all people from all parts of the world, even though many are unaware of it.

Without understanding the central aspects of what constitutes a *priesthood* and without understanding that there are different types of *priesthoods* that seek to establish the relationship of human beings with God, being divided basically between what is called the *first*, or variations of it, and what is called the *second*, people who live in the world are continually subject to postponing the growth or the process of becoming mature that is already available to them in the Lord.

Hebrews 5: 7 He, Jesus, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,
8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.
9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,
10 called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek,"
11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.
12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.
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.

Similarly, or put in other words, if people do not adequately discern what is associated with what *priesthood* is and what each type of *priesthood* is like, they are also subject to walking under *priesthoods* that are not based on the righteousness of the heavenly kingdom and which, therefore, can never perfect those who seek God through them, which is also expressed at the beginning of the text that shows that the *first priesthood* must be removed for the *second priesthood* to be established.

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.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

7 Then I said, "Behold, I have come (In the volume of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God."

8 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law),

9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God."

He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Even if a type of *priesthood* is presented as directed exclusively to the One God Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, if it is established along the lines or with characteristics of the *priesthood* model related to what is called the *first*, this *priesthood* is not grounded on the righteousness revealed by God in Christ. Therefore, it is also not accepted by God and, consequently, it will never be able to perfect, before the Lord, those who make use of this kind of *priesthood*.

Thus, after we know that the *first* and the *second* refer respectively to different types of *priesthoods* and that the distinction between them is crucial for the discernment of an appropriate relationship with God, we understand that the next step that needs to be taken is to know in more detail what is involved with the term *priesthood* and what are the main aspects that make up each of these two distinct types of *priesthood* called, respectively, the *first* and the *second*.

C. The Set of the Main Aspects That Are Involved with What Is Called a Priesthood

As we begin to see that the so-called *first to be taken away* and the *second to be established* are closely and directly associated with what is also called as a *priesthood*, we can also see that a whole range of new points is introduced so that we may grow in the understanding of what comes to be, respectively, the very *priesthood* to which the Scriptures of the book of Hebrews refer.

Even before knowing what the *first* and the *second* are, it is necessary to understand what are the global aspects of the theme that they deal with and which is also approached under the term *priesthood*.

When there is not a minimum understanding of what the Scriptures teach us globally about what comes to be called as a *priesthood*, it is also complicated to attain a minimally adequate understanding of what happens to be the so-called *first priesthood* and the *second priesthood*.

And in turn, the term *priesthood*, speaking in a very generic, concise, and simplified way, basically means the office (function and services) to be performed by one or more *priests*.

Therefore, since the term *priesthood* is practically inseparable from what a *priest* is and what he or she does, the exposure of what *priesthood* is needs, then, to move on to exposing the functional position of *priests* and the services that are assigned to them.

There is no way to separate the *priesthood* from the demand for *priests*, and there is no way to have *priests* without these being associated with a type of *priesthood*.

The word *priesthood*, as well as the words derived from it as *priest*, *priestly*, and *sacerdotal*, present high relevance in the Scriptures, and it is basically around them that an expressive part of the book of Hebrews is structured. At several points in the book of Hebrews, parts of these words are intertwined and almost express the meaning of the other, as exemplified below:

Hebrews 7: 11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?

Nevertheless, when we begin to think about the position of a *priest* and the services that can be attributed to him or her, we start to face yet another matter, which is the need for the position of *priests* and the services to be assigned to them also to be beforehand defined and pre-established, at the risk that a specific *priesthood* will not have an identity of how or what it is composed.

Thus, for a *priesthood* to function, it is necessary that one or more *priests* become established. However, to know the position and services that are expected of one or more *priests*, which is the *priestly* or *sacerdotal* office, it is necessary first to present the concept and the aimed functioning of the *priesthood* or the *priestly office*, which, in turn, is established by a law or a set of definitions about it and that rules the operation of this office.

In other words, every *priesthood* needs a set of instructions, called as the law of the *priesthood*, that defines the office of those who will come to work or operate in that *priesthood* as *priests*, and where this law might be written formally or be based on statements or promises expressed and accepted by the one or those who will operate in the respective *priesthood*.

Hebrews 7: 28 ***For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.***

Whether through formally written law or recognized declarations, a *priesthood* is always associated with a set of instructions, no matter how strong or weak it might be. It is this set that (1) defines the *priesthood*, that (2) determines who and how are the *priests* who are called to carry out the *priesthood* in reference, and it also (3) defines the manner and the structure through which the *priests* are called to operate in that *priesthood*.

Understanding that a *priesthood* has a law or set of instructions associated with it and that defines it, and that a *priesthood* is the expression of services that *priests* perform under this law or set of instructions, is the initial knowledge that is indispensable for the continuity of understanding of the other aspect of what makes up a *priesthood*.

Whether it is a law formally written in a compendium of rules or an informal law or that has its parameters based on recognized declarations and promises, every *priesthood* is associated with a set of aspects that define it.

Thus, continuing in the way of what has been said in the last paragraphs, we also find in the book of Hebrews one of the texts that most objectively and, at the same time, most richly offers us a teaching of what is globally involved in any *priesthood*, as we can see below:

Hebrews 7: 12 ***For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.***

The content that this last text exposed above shows us is of immeasurable richness and meaning, and which should never be neglected or seen in a merely superficial way.

When the last text in reference states unequivocally and globally that **any exchange of a *priesthood* also implies in an exchange of the law**, it confirms what was exposed in the introduction of this topic.

The text of Hebrews 7, verse 12, shows us that each type of *priesthood* is different from other *priesthoods* and, therefore, also unique concerning the other *priesthoods* precisely because each *priesthood* has its own law or set of declarations that rule its functioning and, above all, the functioning of the office of the *priests* around which the entire *priesthood* manifests itself or proposes to operate.

Still, in other words, or to insist a little more on the conceptual approach, for there to be a *priesthood*, the formally written law or the informal or verbally known law associated with a *priesthood* needs to define or establish:

- ⇒ 1) What type of *priests* will perform the *priestly or sacerdotal* activities of the respective *priesthood*;
- ⇒ 2) How these *priests* are called, chosen, or appointed;
- ⇒ 3) What the *priestly or sacerdotal* activities to be carried out are;
- ⇒ 4) What the criteria for carrying out the *priestly* activities of the respective *priesthood* are.

Therefore, although each type of *priesthood* has its own law or its own set of parameters that define how this *priesthood* aims to operate, it is very significant to understand the global concept that all *priesthoods* are associated with a law or a set of parameters that define them, for without this understanding, many people end up giving undue space to types of *priesthood* that do not really act in their favor.

Because they do not know the general concept that the *first type of priesthood* is very different from the *second type of priesthood* mentioned in the book of Hebrews, or that each of them has its own definitions and parameters that are pertinent to it, many people do not reach the understanding of this distinction between the two and that they are not compatible with each other, under any circumstances, because also the aspects that define them are widely different and divergent already from their fundamental points.

On the other hand, after understanding that all types of *priesthoods*, in one way or another, end up being associated with the *priests* connected to them and with a set of principles that aim to designate the position of the *priests* and the services they should carry out (also known as the law associated with the *priesthood*), it seems to us that it is easier to advance to know more details about what a specific type of *priesthood* proposes due to its set of guidelines or its law.

When we get to the point of realizing that all types of *priesthoods* are associated in some way with a more detailed set of what is aimed to be accomplished through their *priests*, the task of separating what is different between them may also be very enriched and at the same time facilitated.

As much as many people want to equate the *first type of priesthood* with the *second type of priesthood* mentioned in the book of Hebrews, when an individual becomes aware that each of them has a very different set of parameters, also the attempts to improperly equate these two types of *priesthoods* become much more evident, and, therefore, they can be more easily discerned and rejected.

Through the detailed knowledge of the office of only one specific type of *priesthood*, it is possible to know several characteristics of this *priesthood*. However, without an understanding that this particular *priesthood* is only truly exposed in the light of the differences in its law or set of parameters compared to other types of *priesthoods*, the general understanding of what a specific *priesthood* is will tend to become very impaired, limited, and even subject to the risk of being highly distorted.

In other words, a specific type of *priesthood* does not necessarily define what the broader concept of a *priesthood* is, because depending on the law or the parameters of

a particular kind of *priesthood*, the concept of this specific type may pass an idea that does not apply to what is defined by another kind of *priesthood*.

When a person, for example, thinks that what all *priests* do or should do is according to the model of some specific *priesthood*, and in which most people are not directly participating in the *priestly* service because in this model it is said that some people are especially called to be *priests* and others are not, this person does not have a well-adjusted global concept of *priesthood*, but a definition of only one particular kind of *priesthood* and only one model of office or services of *priests* according to this same type.

Thus, the knowledge of what comes to be a *priesthood* only from the perspective of some kind that resembles the *first type of priesthood* mentioned in Hebrews, or, on the other side, the lack of a broader understanding of what is generally associated with the *second type of priesthood* exposed in the same book of Hebrews, may lead a person to become much more vulnerable to fall into the misconception that one kind of *priesthood* may serve as a reference model of the structure and understanding of the general concept of *priesthood* or the *second type of priesthood*.

If the global concepts of what characterizes a *priestly* office are not known and understood primarily from the perspective of the *second type of priesthood*, people may become subject to the lack of discernment and the acceptance of inappropriate and undue *priesthood* proposals that are around them. And this happens because they do not realize that a specific proposition made to them may indeed be referring to a very limited view of what the more general concept of *priesthood* encompasses.

Without knowledge of the global concepts of what constitutes a *priesthood* according to the *second type of priesthood* mentioned in the Scriptures, comparisons between different *priesthoods* become profoundly impaired, as well as the knowledge and discernment of the Scriptures.

If in the natural relationships that people establish with each other, throughout their lives, there is already a great need to understand some global aspects of the dynamics that exist in the enormity of issues to be dealt with daily, how much more this need for comparison of some general concepts will also not be present in the relationship of each human being regarding one's spiritual relationships and what is called as *priesthood*?

And once this mention is made that general knowledge about what *priesthood* is can indeed contribute much to a person's life, we will then try to move on to what comes to be a *priestly* service to be performed by a *priest*, but still aiming to see a more global definition about it.

Therefore, speaking more generally, a *priesthood*, that is, the position and the services of a *priest*, is the set that encompasses the structure, position, means, and actions performed by a human being to present oneself before what one considers to be a deity and whose presentation one performs for oneself or on behalf of others.

The *priesthood* is the means to perform functions or services directed, always, by a person to that or to whom one considers a deity and concerning which the person who performs the functions or services is also called a *priest*.

Still, in other words, the *priesthood* in a generic way encompasses the services or functions of *priests* placed as the agents to present themselves to that or to whom they,

or those they represent, consider as divinity and with what or with whom they intend to establish a relationship to present their causes in the expectation of also obtaining answers for themselves or for those they represent.

For example, concerning God, even if a person is not aware of being using a *priesthood* and a *priest*, no one can approach God without using an established *priestly* form and without the person going through a *priestly* service and a *priest*, even him or her having the possibility to be the *priest* of oneself.

On the other hand, the mere fact that someone uses some form or type of *priesthood* also does not automatically imply that God will accept the kind of *priesthood* and the *priest* that someone has chosen to present oneself to the Lord or for someone to represent him or her before God.

Considering that the restoration of fellowship with God is (1) what the Lord Jesus Christ calls as eternal life, (2) that fellowship with the Lord is the greatest gift that a person can receive in his or her entire existence, and (3) that the *priesthood* is the means by which a person can properly relate to God, understanding what constitutes an appropriate *priesthood* before God, or which is according to the Lord's will, becomes one of the most vital aspects that a person can achieve or receive throughout his or her entire life.

What the Scriptures call as a *priesthood* has a primary position in determining the other central aspects of people's lives, for it is from the definition of the type of *priesthood* that a person adopts that most of the main aspects concerning his or her life also are defined.

Therefore, the general concept of what is a *priesthood* aims to collaborate so that people may know the essential condition that this theme represents for their lives, but also, or at the same time, so that they may know that not every type of *priesthood* proposed to them is automatically an adequate, a good, or a beneficial type of *priestly* or *sacerdotal* service.

In the world, there is a multitude of *priesthood* propositions or *priestly* offices that are in disagreement with what the Scriptures present regarding the *second type of priesthood* mentioned in the books of Hebrews, which, therefore, need to be discerned appropriately because of the significant damage that these may cause not only for the present time but also, and especially, for the eternal time of the life of those who associate with them.

Thus, when the general concepts of the *priesthood* are known firmly or appropriately according to the *second type of priesthood* exposed in the book of Hebrews, even the phrases that people want to present with an unpretentious tone and appearance concerning *priestly* life can be discerned under a much more precise level of understanding.

When, for instance, a person says that “*it doesn't matter the manner or the way in which a person seeks God, as long as one seeks Him,*” one is not, in reality, proposing just some unpretentious thought, no matter how much one wants to imply that a phrase like this is a mere expression of freedom and has no major effect on the lives of people who adopt similar principles.

A phrase that says that “*it doesn't matter the manner or the way in which a person seeks God, as long as one seeks Him,*” in reality is an objective proposition of the

attempt to introduce a specific type of *priesthood* and that contains the basic elements of what *priesthood* is in the global concept of the term, for despite that this proposal might seem to be unpretentious and informal, it expresses a proposition of ideas and conduct of the relationship of people with divinity.

A phrase like the example that “*it doesn’t matter the manner or the way in which a person seeks God, as long as one seeks Him,*” besides not being unpretentious, is a direct proposition of *priesthood* and it is still a proposition of a type of *priesthood* which is even contrary to any other kind of *priesthood* that proposes that the search for God and the relationship with the Lord have firmly established principles.

A phrase like the one we are using as an example in the last paragraphs is the proposition of a type of *priesthood* where the main rule is that each individual can make his or her search for God in the way one wants to do or in any way one thinks it is right to do.

The proposition of the type of *priesthood* that the last sentence in reference seeks to introduce is a proposition of a *priesthood* that has an informal law that says “that each person can create one’s own laws, rules, and parameters to seek God,” trying, with this, also to propose that any kind of *priesthood* could be valid before the Eternal Lord.

A phrase like the one exemplified in these last paragraphs is not just a simple or meaningless sentence or a mere proposition thrown in the wind. It is a statement that contains sufficient concepts, definitions, proposals, and elements to associate it with the global term of *priesthood* even if people want to pass the idea that the phrase in reference is not intended to match what could be considered as another peculiar proposition of a type of *priesthood*.

Because the general concept of the *priesthood* refers to a relationship with that or with what a person considers to be a deity for him or her, being the case of sometimes consider even one's fellow man or oneself as such, any proposition or definition that proposes a path or a way in which this relationship could supposedly be established is a proposition of what generically speaking is called as a *priesthood*.

The mere contempt, disinterest, or demonstration of not wanting to know about topics related to what a *priesthood* generically comes to be, does not guarantee that an individual is not involved in some kind of *priesthood*, because any action that a person performs under hope or belief in an expectation of obtaining through this hope or confidence what is necessary for life, whether natural, spiritual, or eternal, already causes a person to be involved with the general concept of *priesthood*.

Passive disregard or active contempt for understanding what *priesthood* generally is and even for what represents the general concept of the laws of each *priesthood* does not constitute a guarantee that a person will position oneself correctly concerning the types of *priesthoods* that are around him or her. On the contrary, ignorance or contempt puts a person even more at risk of being associated with a kind of *priesthood* that is incomplete, invalid, useless, and damaging.

On the other hand, as a person begins to grow in the understanding of what kind of relationship a *priesthood* proposes to attend or fulfill, that *priesthood* is also constituted by the law or parameters that are associated with it, and that each *priesthood* acts through *priests* that are inherent to it, a significant part of the knowledge of the main aspects about the *priesthood* is already beginning to be paved to advance towards a more complete or appropriate understanding of this theme.

D. Central Aspects of a Priesthood when Seen from the Viewpoint of a Relationship

In the previous chapter, a definition was exposed that the priesthood expresses the interaction or the attempt of an interaction of a priest with what one considers to be a deity concerning his or her life.

This definition, mentioned in the previous chapter, shows that the priesthood, then, is strictly associated with what is called a specific relationship between very specific parts.

Moreover, to observe the priesthood from the perspective of relationships, in turn, allows us to investigate yet another set of central aspects that are inherent to priesthoods in general and which, similarly to what we saw in the previous chapter, aim to instruct us so that we can make a distinction of the intentions or pretensions that are behind of the types of priesthoods that are presented to us. And this, obviously, so that we may also recognize that priesthood that is accepted by God and reject any proposal that is contrary to the priesthood to which God wants us to be associated.

Knowing what is involved with the priesthood in the particularity of the relationship perspective is highly relevant and can be remarkably interesting, for the priesthood is not a normal relationship of parents and children, suppliers and customers, siblings, and so on. The priesthood refers to a person's relationship or the attempts of a relationship with that or whom a person has under special consideration in the sense of attributing to it or others a status of divinity, which makes the relationships proposed by the various priesthoods also distinct.

Seeing the priesthood through the relationship angle does not change what the priesthood is and what we already have seen about it. However, it may expand the understanding of what kind of relationships might be associated with the most diverse priesthoods and may clarify some points about the priesthoods in a more varied or exemplified way.

Thus, as the first point of this new topic, we may, for example, observe that although the priesthood is always associated with a relationship, the attempt to establish some priesthoods does not always aim at the relationship between two living parties, and may even seek to create a relationship between two different positions that one same party seeks to assume.

While what we call the relationship between people presumes that at least two living individuals participate, the Scriptures inform us that some priestly forms that people propose to follow are propositions of relationships of people with parts of the creation or with things that they created that even lack a soul or a life with which a person can actually establish a bilateral relationship, as exemplified below:

- Isaiah 40: 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.***

- Psalms 115: 1 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.*
2 Why should the Gentiles say, "So where is their God?"
3 But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.
4 Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands.
5 They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see;
6 They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell;
7 They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat.
8 Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.

Similarly, as we mentioned above, while what we call “relationship between people” always assumes that there is the participation of at least two living and distinct persons, when it comes to the priesthood, there even are people who place themselves in two different positions to exercise the priesthood, namely, the position of “creature” and the position of a “god,” as also exemplified by the following verses of the Bible:

- 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 we begin to see the priesthood from the perspective of a relationship, we may also come to understand that when people start to trust and hope to get from other sources, including themselves, what they should obtain only from God, they likewise are carrying out a type of priesthood.

When people try to ascribe divine attributes to the creation that are not pertinent to it and start to practice hope of receiving the things they crave from these supposed attributes that they confer upon the creation, they are exercising confidence in something that they consider greater than themselves. An attitude which, therefore, or at the very least, constitutes an attempt to establish a priestly relationship even if they are not aware of what they are doing or however much they deny that they are practicing any priestly conduct.

A second point that we may come to see when we look at the priesthood from the perspective of a relationship is that who or that with which a person seeks to interact from a priestly perspective also comes to have an influence on him or her, even if the relationship to which one comes to dedicate oneself is with an inanimate and lifeless object.

Still, in other words, the priestly relationship to which a person inclines oneself, follows, or practices also ends up having an influence on his or her life or showing what

is in the heart of this individual, regardless of whether this relationship is with another living being or with aspects devoid of life.

*Psalms 115: 4 **Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands.**
5 **They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see;***

...
8 **Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.**

Both those who make objects to which they try to attribute characteristics of divinity and those who trust these objects and make use of them place themselves under the influence of this involvement, and this, due to the fact that they are getting involved with the aspects that characterize a type of priestly relationship.

Therefore, the matter of being influenced by what results from the relationship through an inadequate priesthood or contrary to what God established from the so-called second type of priesthood always points to negative and harmful aspects to those who are subject to this type of relationship.

On the other hand, when the priesthood to which someone inclines oneself, follows, or practices is according to the will of God, the influence resulting from this practice brings numerous benefits, for this relationship also applies to the priesthood that is directed to the Eternal Lord and His glory, according to the text that has already been quoted several times in the present subject and repeated below:

*2 Corinthians 3: 18 **But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.***

The influence on the people themselves of who or that to which they pay reverence as a deity over them is a characteristic common to all priesthoods, showing us this, that the understanding of this global concept common to all priesthoods is crucial for people to be aware of how significant the choice to what kind of priesthood they want to be subject or exposed to is.

It should be emphasized here that even when a person trusts oneself or others as the central force of his or her life, and does not attribute the strength of one's life as coming from the Eternal Lord, one is practicing a priesthood that is not directed to God, but to oneself or one's fellow men, and from whom one will not be able to reap what can only be given to him or her by the Heavenly Father.

*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."

Thus, as we move forward in addressing the general aspects of the priesthoods when viewed from the perspective of relationships, we can observe that some points of the priesthoods become noticeably evident, for when a person starts to put under observation the global aspects of the priesthoods concerning the relationships inherent to them, one will also be more able to observe from this perspective that there are useful and complete priesthoods, as well as there are priesthoods that are useless, harmful, and incomplete.

And, in turn, if we begin to see the considerations of the previous paragraph primarily from the viewpoint of usefulness or uselessness of a particular priesthood, we may also come to observe, as a third point of this topic, that **a specific priesthood is only useful if what people need of it can also be indeed accomplished and if what can be fulfilled is also really beneficial to them.**

A particular type of priesthood may have its worthlessness exposed by the fact that it is not indeed able to accomplish what people need to achieve through it or because what the priesthood grants them is not really for their good.

When people choose to worship their fellow men, idols, images, sculptures, religions, or anything else according to their understandings, cultures, or traditions, they are naming the types of deities they want to serve, but also by which they want to be served. And people can only reap from the priesthoods to which they are subjected what these priesthoods really or indeed can offer them.

If a person seeks a priesthood relationship with gods that are dumb, blind, and unable to act, it is silence, blindness, and inability that one will reap.

If a person, for example, worships the sun, which is devoid of soul, virtues of thought, and decisions concerning what its worshipers present to it, the sun can only continue offering itself as a sun, leading people to reap the uselessness, the deception, and the loss of the time in which they dedicated themselves to a "god" that will never be able indeed to answer any prayer addressed to it.

When people try to relate to their peers expecting from them the fulfillment of what they actually should have sought in God first, their peers might even attend to some things they are asked to do, but this does not mean that what they grant will be indeed for a truly beneficial purpose or, primarily, satisfactory also for eternal life.

John 3: 27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.

...

31 He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

32 And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.

33 He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.

34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.

35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.

36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

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 Scriptures warn us that in the last days, the days that began after Christ came into the world as the Son of Man, would be days when people would seek one another to teach themselves what they want to hear and not what the Lord has to say to them.

And when they do so, they are associating themselves with deceptive and profoundly evil priesthoods even if these priesthoods meet part of people's desires and longings in what they want to be served.

2 Timothy 4: 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Finally, when we look at the considerations about a priesthood concerning it being complete or incomplete, as mentioned in a few paragraphs above, we may also see, as a fourth point associated with the priesthood also as a relationship, that **a particular priesthood is only useful if it is also complete, that is, if it meets the minimum requirements necessary for the proper functioning of a priesthood.**

And, in turn, for a priesthood to be complete, it must be valid. And to be valid, it must also be accepted by the party to which the priesthood is directed.

That is, for a specific priesthood to be valid, it needs to be accepted by the divinity with whom or with what this priesthood proposes that the relationship of the people might come to be accomplished.

Many types of priesthoods have already been proposed in the world, and many of them are still being proposed. However, the validity of each of them depends much more on "the one" to whom the priesthood is directed than on the people who propose a specific type of priesthood.

It is useless for people to constitute the simplest or the most elaborate priesthoods if the party to whom the priesthood is directed does not recognize it or does not give it proper credibility.

When a particular type of priesthood, for example, aims to establish a relationship with God, the fact that a person uses this priesthood or puts oneself in a priestly position does not automatically make him or her accepted by the Lord, because if a person seeks God through a false god, an idol, or a means not authorized by the Lord to seek Him, this priesthood, or the priest who practices it, is also false or called an idolater, as mentioned in the texts previously exposed.

Similarly, it also happens with the other example mentioned more above, where a person who says that God can be sought in any manner or in any way. A person may indeed propose a priesthood according to his or her own propositions, but that priesthood will never be complete since it will never be validated by the Lord towards whom the priesthood seeks to be directed.

God has always made it very explicit in His Scriptures that He would not accept any priesthood that would seek to establish alternative paths to Him through worship, ministries, and services towards images or sculptures, nor would He validate any priesthood directed at Him that, simultaneously, would also be directed at what people, in their own understanding, would like to consider as divinities for their lives, as exemplified by some more texts below:

*Isaiah 45: 6 **That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting That there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other;***

...

*21 **Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me.***

*Isaiah 42: 5 **Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it:***

*6 **"I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles,***

*7 **To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.***

*8 **I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images."***

*Isaiah 48: 11 **For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another.***

Understanding (1) that the priesthood is a relationship that influences those who are exposed to the respective priestly services and (2) that a particular priesthood can be useful or useless, complete or incomplete, depending on what, on whom, or through whom a person seeks to establish the priestly relationship, is a heavenly gift for a person who comes to have this understanding (1) to become aware of how crucial is what is associated with priesthood and (2) so that one may also choose to relate to a priesthood that can truly give him or her lasting life, a right and proper influence over him or her, and a path that truly leads him or her under the will of the Lord.

When Christ said that no one could come to the Heavenly Father except through Him, since He is the only way, the truth, and the life, He was not speaking only of an impersonal way for people to come to the presence of God or without really relate to the Christ of their lives.

When the Lord Jesus Christ said that He Himself is “The Way” for people to come before God to receive eternal life offered through the Gospel, He was declaring and showing that the priesthood He came to establish is the only proper or suitable priesthood that people can associate with to have, through it, a meaningful and eternal relationship with the Heavenly Father.

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."***

E. The Priesthood Being Changed, of Necessity there is also a Change of the Law

After we saw that what in the book of Hebrews is called first and second refer to the same central theme named the priesthood, and that the priesthood, in turn, is basically composed of the office of the priests and the law that are associated with the respective priesthood, and yet, that the priesthood is characterized mainly by a relationship between people and what they consider to be divinity, we would like to return to a text that was mentioned in the previous topics to approach it more specifically.

*Hebrews 7: 12 **For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.***

The last text quoted above is of extreme relevance or vital to the continuation of what has been mentioned so far about the priesthood and also about what is called the first priesthood and the second priesthood.

The text in reference is of such high relevance because it, in a very practical and objective way, shows us an orderly path for a more consistent assessment of the other subjects that are associated with the various priesthoods that are offered to human beings while living on Earth.

The fact that the text of Hebrews 7, verse 12, informs us that any change of priesthood also necessarily generates a change of law, shows us that each priesthood has its own law of operation so that it can be manifested, offered, and used. This, in turn, also allows it to be observed and evaluated.

The change of priesthood is a triggering event for an individual also switching to the respective law of the priesthood with which he or she has chosen to associate oneself.

Nevertheless, knowing that the change of priesthood necessarily generates a choice for its respective law, also shows us that each type of priesthood, with its own law, is, ultimately, incompatible with any other priesthood because of the incompatibility that exists in its specific parameters.

The fact that each type of priesthood is associated with a set of concepts and principles peculiar to each of them, whether formal or informal, opens up a whole new perspective of the reflection on the theme of priesthoods.

Knowing that each priesthood has its own law, formal or informal, greatly facilitates the understanding of the priesthood as a whole, for it also opens the way for us to know that the broad set of requirements that exist in each type of priesthood, in one way or another, is always revealed so that all the priesthoods also become disclosed in order to be able to be evaluated, rejected or chosen.

If people in the world may become deprived of an adequate relationship with their Unique God and Creator due to ignorance of what in general is a priesthood, and, consequently, deprived of living life according to the Lord's will, they may also become deprived of the knowledge of what a priesthood really is or what the priesthood they are associated with is because of the lack of understanding of the fact that each priesthood

has a law related to it and that changing the priesthood necessarily also implies changing to a set of distinct parameters.

Knowing that every priesthood has a formal or an informal law associated with it, and knowing that the change of priesthood necessarily implies a change of law, may contribute a lot for people to come to understand the central characteristics of what happens to be the priesthoods in general, but also to be informed about the main particular characteristics of each specific type of priesthood.

The realization that each priesthood is associated with a law that pertains to it, and that a priesthood cannot be dissociated from this law, may also generate a much broader, robust, or transparent understanding of what is actually incorporated and what is proposed by a particular priesthood.

If, for instance, we take for analysis the possible rules or parameters associated with a type of priesthood that makes use of images and sculptures to perform its priestly services, we will soon be able to observe that the composition of this type of priesthood will also involve a whole set of concepts of how these images must be made, also generating an industry of images and sculptures, an industry by which these idols and sculptures will be exposed to be served and worshiped, as well as it will also involve an entire service industry for the storage and protection of these images or idols.

Let us see, then, below an example of what is mentioned in the last paragraph:

*Acts 19: 23 **And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.***

*24 **For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen.***

*25 **He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade.***

*26 **Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.***

*27 **So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."***

If, on the other hand, we take for analysis a type of priesthood that in its law does not predict or does not accept the use of images and idols, a very complex part that is associated with the type of priesthood that uses the images and idols will no longer need to be contemplated in the new priesthood that is under evaluation.

Through more detailed observation of the law associated with each type of priesthood, whether the law is formal or informal, it can be seen that some kinds of priesthoods trigger an enormous chain of aspects for those who want to be associated with this type of priesthood, while others may have much more simplified models.

Only for the sake of a brief mention, since we will try to see its characteristics more broadly later, when we look at the law of the type of priesthood called first, we can observe that it refers to a kind of priesthood highly complex to be operationalized even

though it did not foresee service or worship to images, idols, or sculptures, for this type of priesthood, for instance, is dependent on an enormous number of mediating priests, Levites, sacrifices, and physical structures for the performance of its priestly services.

Therefore, it is also through the clarity about the association of a priesthood with a law that is pertinent to it that the understanding of the distinction between the so-called first priesthood and the second priesthood acquires more meaning and may be reached more broadly and precisely.

It is through this same clarity of the association of a priesthood with the law that it is pertinent to it that, for example, terms such as *law*, *the old covenant*, and *the new covenant*, so often referenced in the Scriptures, may also be seen more widely and known in the way that the Lord wants us to understand them.

When we come to see that each priesthood is associated with a law that serves as a parameter for it, even though it is informal, also the understanding of the other specific aspects of each priesthood becomes subject to the comprehension of the central points of the law of each priesthood.

Through the law of each priesthood, whether it is formal or informal, people have a more comprehensive range of information to come to know the proposal of how each priesthood works, what each one proposes to achieve, and how each one proposes to achieve its goals. And all this, so that people may compare and choose with which priesthood they want to be associated.

Once a person begins to understand the general aspects that are associated with what is called a priesthood and that each priesthood is related to a law or a more detailed set of parameters associated with it, one can move on to a more direct, meaningful, or practical matter for his or her life, which is to know which priesthood one wants to be associated with, because all people, in one way or another, are related to some type of priesthood and the law that governs it.

To consider that an improper priesthood may deceive, nullify many life practices, or blind the understanding of those who are subject to it, as we have already shown above, but that a proper priesthood can also connect a person to the source of life and life for eternity, reinforces and once again praises the Lord's exalted dignity and mercy in being willing also to instruct and teach us that it is in the laws associated with the priesthoods that each type of priesthood is also revealed. And this, so that we may recognize and choose the one that is truly beneficial to us.

And in addition to the above, the approach that each priesthood is associated with a law pertinent to it and that the change of the priesthood also implies a change of law still needs to be seen under another view so that some points of what is stated in the text that we are taking as a reference in this topic are not confused or inverted.

When the Scriptures inform us that the change of priesthood necessarily implies the change of law, which in turn establishes the principles that govern the office of the priests and the people associated with it, the Scriptures show us that the change of law may imply in the exchange of virtually all the characteristics that existed in the priesthood law that a person previously adopted, except, of course, the general concepts of what comes to be a priesthood.

Thus, *the priesthood being changed* may also represent, for instance:

- ⇒ 1) Different mediators and a different way of designating mediators and their functions;
- ⇒ 2) A different form of designation and establishment of priests;
- ⇒ 3) A different way of designating those who will not be considered as priests if a particular priesthood has the division of people between those who are considered priests and those who are not considered priests;
- ⇒ 4) A different priestly structure for the allocation of the priests;
- ⇒ 5) A distinct set of services that the priests are called to perform;
- ⇒ 6) A change in the way of justification and obtaining blessings for those who exercise the priesthood and those who are represented by the priests;
- ⇒ 7) A change in the way of joining or associating with the specific type of priesthood;
- ⇒ 8) A change in the meetings or worship system;
- ⇒ 9) A change in the need for a gathering and worship place;
- ⇒ 10) A change in the system of offerings and sacrifices.

The expression that “*the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law*” encompasses much more than the vast majority of people even think that it could be covered because of the departure from one type of priesthood to join another.

As already mentioned above, if changing from one priesthood to another necessarily implies switching from one type of law to another that defines how priests are established and what they are called to do under that priesthood, changing from one kind of priesthood to another inevitably also implies that there is a change in the type of priests and what they do.

There is no way that the priests of a particular priestly service are not linked to the law of that priesthood, unless they also resign and leave the position of priests in that specific type of priesthood with which they have been associated.

A priest is connected to the type of priesthood one serves and is not free to officiate the priestly service in another priesthood even if one tries hard or applies much effort to do so. For a priest of one type of priesthood to officiate freely in another kind of priesthood, one must first dissociate oneself from the prior priesthood and become associated and recognized as a priest in the type of priesthood under which one wants to become a priest.

The way and the whole set of principles in which priests are recognized and constituted are specific to each type of priesthood, and they do not serve as a principle, nor as an example, of how priests are acknowledged and constituted in another kind of priesthood.

When, for example, the Christian priesthood is described in the book of Hebrews, it can be clearly seen that Christ was not associated with the priestly lineage of the priesthood of the old covenant or the type called first, just as it is explicit that Christ also did not associate Himself as a priest with that type of priesthood, as shown in the following texts:

- Hebrews 7: 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.*
- 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.*
- 14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.*
- 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest*
- 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.*
- 17 For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."*
- 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.*

- Hebrews 8: 1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,*
- 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.*
- 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer.*
- 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;*
- 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."*
- 6 But now He (Jesus) has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.*
- 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.*
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When we come to understand that a priesthood basically revolves around what is assigned by the respective law to one or more priests, and that the actions that are expected from people who want to join a particular priesthood are defined based on what is specified for priests, we may, then, begin to focus more closely on the exposition of what a priest is and what activities are expected of the priests in each type of priesthood.

The knowledge that the basic principles for priests are found in the respective law that is associated with each type of priesthood is really crucial, for one of the most considerable difficulties that many people have when they want to understand how God's relationship with human beings is proposed in the Christian life lies in the fact that they mistakenly think that the relationship of Christians with God should follow the model of priests and priestly services according to the type of the priesthood of Moses or the Levites.

When people do not realize that the Christian priesthood is a specific type of priesthood, implying in a distinct law or set of parameters and, consequently, different principles of how priests are recognized and constituted, as well as what the services of these priests in the new priesthood are and how these services should be performed, they confuse different types of priesthoods and mix priesthood laws that are entirely different from what the Lord wants from Christians.

Moreover, let us note well here that although a person may also become associated with a type of priesthood by adhering to parts of its law, it is primarily the choice of a particular “type of priesthood” that defines the priestly “law” to which an individual subject oneself or with which a person will become associated, and not necessarily the other way around.

Looking at the Scriptures and in a practical way at life in general, we see that the lack of a clearer understanding of the point mentioned in the last paragraph is so high and, at the same time, so crucial, that we even lack words to try to highlight this more incisively or intensely.

The text of Hebrews 7, verse 12, which we are using as the title of this topic, does not say that the change of law is what generates a change of priesthood, but that the change of priesthood is what causes, necessarily, a change of law.

Therefore, we understand that it should be stressed here that although the two approaches in the last paragraph appear to be the same, they do have considerable distinctions.

Although changing from one type of priesthood to another necessarily implies changing the law, attempting to change only the law of a particular kind of priesthood, with the goal of not incurring the need of leaving the association with this specific type of priesthood, is an invalid process or contrary to what is described in chapter 7 of the book of Hebrews.

That is, it is useless, for instance, for an individual to want to live in the new covenant and the freedom that God offers him or her in Christ, a new covenant where God speaks directly to the heart of each person, if he or she continues to choose to associate oneself with priests who act according to the type of priesthood that is inconsistent with the priesthood that God established in Christ and for those who follow Him.

If a person who claims to want to follow Christ does not leave the prior priesthood to which he or she was subject or if after beginning to follow Christ one returns to be subject to another priesthood, one will not make his or her situation before the Lord become adequate only by following some principles that are in the law of Christ, for it is, primarily, the priesthood that defines the kind of law to which a person is also subject.

If a person, for example, is under the priesthood also called as the priesthood according to Moses, and which has the law that says that a person only is blessed if one fulfills all the rules of the law of that priesthood, the practice of some so-called good Christian works may not be of much use to him or her, for a single unfulfilled work of the law associated with the priesthood according to Moses places this person in a condition of being cursed.

If a person is associated with a type of priesthood that is in agreement with or similar to the priesthood according to Moses, the mere practice of some acts of the priesthood according to Christ, and without dissociating from the first priesthood, does not imply that one will find one's justification before God.

The choice of an individual for a type of priesthood may also result in his or her subjection to or association with the law of this priesthood and the consequences that come from this law, even if this person does not agree with all the points of the law of the type of priesthood with which one has chosen to be connected.

Galatians 3: 10 **For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."**

And what was exposed in the previous paragraph, similarly also occurs with people who trust themselves or their peers for their justification or as their reference of confidence or strength, as we have already seen in the text that we repeat once again below:

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."**

Furthermore, considering that the choice of a type of priesthood also implies a change of law, when people choose human mediators between themselves and God, they likewise choose the laws and precepts that these mediators will end up presenting to them.

A specific type of priesthood establishes the existence of the law that is pertinent to it, for although a priesthood needs a law associated with it and that defines and exposes it, if a particular type of priesthood does not exist, it also does not make sense to have a law about what is non-existent.

The law associated with a priesthood exists so that the characteristics of a priesthood can be established in the most diverse details. However, if a priesthood is not previously established, the law will have nothing to refer to.

Therefore, stressing this point once more, it is also because of the set of the main points to which a person becomes subject when choosing a type of priesthood, such as the law or the set of parameters of this priesthood, that it is so crucial to know the central aspects that are connected to each type of priesthood before starting to submit to or associate with a specific priesthood proposition.

F. Differentiating the *First* and the *Second* Priesthoods from Other Priesthoods in the World

Once we know from the Scriptures that a priesthood is also specified by the criteria that constitute it in a more detailed way and that are expressed in what is called the law associated with each priesthood, whether informal or formal, we understand that we can go a step further or more objectively in the task of differentiating the main aspects of the priesthoods and which, in a way, classify them in large groups with very evident and distinct characteristics from each other.

In the world, there is a very wide variety of priesthood propositions. On the hand, however, these proposals also end up having some general characteristics that allow them to be distinguished and positioned in groups from a few basic points that compose them, making explicit already from few aspects which are the most general lines that are part of these priesthoods.

So, we understand that the first central or fundamental aspect that differentiates a priesthood from other priesthoods is who or what is considered as divinity in each priesthood.

And, as a consequence, we understand that the second basic aspect that differentiates a priesthood from other priesthoods is related to the point of whether it is recognized and authorized or not by who or what is considered as a deity in the respective priesthood.

Furthermore, yet due to the first differentiation between priesthoods, it may also be said, then, that the first big division of priesthoods into different groups ends up dividing the priesthoods only into two broad groups.

When we see the different priesthoods in the light of the Scriptures and in the aspect of the divinity to which they are directed, we can see that in this aspect all the priesthoods end up being divided into:

- ⇒ 1) Those priesthoods that claim that in addition to the Eternal One God, there are other gods and deities that might be invoked and sought or who do not even recognize the One Creator;
- ⇒ 2) Those priesthoods that seek or invoke the Unique God Creator of Heaven and Earth and what is in them.

If a specific type of priesthood believes, teaches, and accepts that in the universe there may be several gods or deities that people may seek and to which they might devote themselves, even considering the possibility that the very human being may represent a type of divinity or be self-sufficient to define natural and eternal life according to his own understanding, this priesthood, together with all the others that also have similar characteristics, form, in this sense, the same common group of priesthoods even if they may have very different characteristics when compared with each other.

And the fact that there is such a significant first factor of dividing the types of priesthoods, could perhaps make someone thinking that the priesthood named *first* in the book of Hebrews could eventually be that group of priesthoods that abstain from the One Creator God or which do not accept the condition that there is only one sovereign and eternal God.

However, when we look at the first group mentioned above more closely, we can see that it is not this group of priesthods that the text of Hebrews refers to under the name of *first*.

Although the so-called *first* and *second* priesthods are very different from each other, both do not belong to the first group that we have presented in the paragraphs above.

Both the priesthood called the *first* and the so-called *second* belong to the group of priesthods that seek the One God Creator of Heaven and Earth, which in turn differentiates them significantly from all other priesthods in the world that do not have this same characteristic in common.

Nevertheless, after classifying the priesthods as those who do not seek the One Creator God exposed by the Scriptures and as those who do, we saw above that there is still a second basic aspect that classifies the types of priesthods in groups, which is the acceptance or validity of the priesthods before the divinity to whom they are addressed.

If a type of priesthood does not seek the One Creator God, it is also to be expected that it obviously will not be accepted and validated by the Lord, for this type of priesthood seeks to abstain and alienate people from their Creator.

The second aspect of classifying priesthods into large groups, however, opens up space for there to be also significant divisions within each large group of priesthods.

Thus, if we consider only the second great group of priesthods, which are those who seek the One Creator God, we may also find in this group another second great division regarding their classification.

Therefore, the group of priesthods classified, primarily, as the group of those who seek priestly service directed to the One Creator God, may still, according to the second criterion for the classification of priesthods, be further classified into:

- ⇒ 1) The priesthods that seek the One Creator God, but that have never been accepted or authorized by the Lord to be practiced;
- ⇒ 2) The priesthods that seek the One Creator God and that have been authorized by the Lord to be used by people, even if only temporarily, as is the case of the so-called *first* type of priesthood.

There are some types of priesthods that are proposed to people in the world and that present themselves as priesthods that seek the One Creator God, but that never had any instruction or validation from the Lord to be used by them, which makes these types of priesthods a set of propositions that were unilaterally elaborated by the creature as if the creature could establish to the Lord how He should accept people and how He should relate to them.

Therefore, the priesthood called *first* in the Hebrew text that has been adopted as a reference in this chapter also does not refer yet to this set of priesthods that seek the One Creator God without any endorsement from the Lord to do so.

Both the priesthood named *first* and the priesthood called *second* are part of the same group of priesthods that seek the One Creator God, but also of the group of priesthods that were authorized by the Lord to be

practiced by human beings, even though the *first* was authorized only for a specified period.

And the fact that the priesthood named the *first* and the priesthood called the *second* have some basic characteristics that place them in the same classification of such a specific set of priesthoods is probably one of the most challenging aspects of the task of understanding the distinctions between these two particular types of priesthoods.

When we come to see that the priesthood called *first* is also a priesthood very close to the priesthood named as the *second* in terms of classifying priesthoods into groups, we may likewise come to have a more accurate perception of how challenging and necessary it is to make a more specific and more precise approach towards the distinction between these two priesthoods in particular.

Thus, it is from the proximity that the so-called *first* priesthood has with the so-called *second* in terms of classifying priesthoods into groups, but, at the same time, also based on the fact that there are still vast differences among other of its fundamental characteristics, that the understanding of the distinctions of the so-called *first* and the *second* priesthoods may be better or more objectively achieved.

G. Introducing the Distinction Between the Priesthood Called *First* and the Priesthood Named *Second*

Hebrews 10: 8 (Christ) Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law),
9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God."
He takes away the first that He may establish the second.
10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

So close, but at the same time, so different!

After seeing that both the named *first* and the so-called *second* priesthods belong to the same group of priesthods that seek God and that both were authorized by God to be practiced or followed in their respective times, it is no wonder that some people even think that these two types of priesthods might not be so different from each other.

Nevertheless, or despite the proximity that one might try to attribute to some points of the priesthood named *first* regarding the so-called *second* priesthood, it is fundamental and essential to know that the difference between the two is indeed enormous, to the point that these two priesthods can never come to be harmonized or combined.

If there is a *first to be removed* and a *second to be established*, it is also reasonable for there to be significant differences or distinctions between them.

The fact that there is, to a certain extent, a closeness between the named *first* priesthood and the so-called *second* should not be confused with the idea that if both seek the Eternal Lord, they, in the end, could also be equal or could perhaps achieve the same results.

Although the priesthood named as *first* and the so-called the *second* seek, in different ways, some similar goals, they do not, in fact, have the same foundations, they do not converge to the same essential principles, nor do they share the same results.

When, for example, we look at some hazardous and poisonous plants of nature, it might be seen that some of them look very similar to others that are even fruitful and beneficial to those who feed on them, thus exhibiting proximity or visual similarity, but hiding a profound distinction between species.

Therefore, as much as the *first* was made as an attempt at a very elaborated replica of the so-called *second* priesthood, some similarities of the named *first* priesthood with the so-called *second* priesthood do not make the basic or fundamental factors of the novelty of true life that exist in the *second* priesthood able to be incorporated into the so-called *first*.

It is precisely in the proximity of the so-called *first* priesthood with the so-called *second* that many people become confused about these two priesthoods. However, it is also in the proximity of the two priesthoods in reference that the most profound and subtle differences between them become much more clearly revealed and evidenced.

The differences or distinctions between the named *first* priesthood and the so-called *second* are not only extremely high in quantity, but also in the principles, law, structure, functioning, and, ultimately, in the results that each person associated with them may achieve or may fail to reach.

The differentiation or distinctions between the two priesthoods that we hope to show more evidently from the next topics extend over many practical areas of life and extend from the basic foundations of their conceptions to an enormity of small details that are associated with them.

Despite the seeming proximity of the entitled *first* priesthood to the so-called *second*, the differentiation between the two is one of the themes that most occupied space and was most evidenced in the Scriptures. This aspect shows us that the understanding of what is related to these two priesthoods also represents one of the biggest challenges for people to understand what the priesthood to which the Lord wants people to associate is indeed, and which are the types of priesthoods with which the Lord does not want people to be associated.

The differences between the two priesthoods mentioned in the last paragraphs are so expressive in relevance and number of aspects that this subject has been recurrently addressed for thousands of years in the Scriptures and continues to be equally needed to be understood today.

Considering that the priesthood is a person's primary operational means of relating to God, understanding the differences of the basic principles that are associated with the so-called *first* priesthood and the named *second* priesthood also plays a vital role so that the newness of life granted by the heavenly kingdom or eternal life is achieved or attained more abundantly, which makes this matter even more essential or crucial for every human being.

Moreover, the lack of understanding that the *first* and *second* priesthoods are fundamentally distinct is probably also one of the most significant reasons why many non-Christian people are afraid of approaching the Christian life, for many think that if they would come to Christ, they would also need to adhere to the religious principles, precepts, or practices of what is called the *first* priesthood or similar to this *first* type.

Because they do not know that the *second* priesthood is not a type of priesthood linked to the religious precepts of the *first* priesthood, which is linked to rules devoid of a path of victory concerning eternal life, many people end up abstaining from the *second* priesthood through which they could be victorious in Christ, but also more than conquerors, as described in previous chapters.

It is interesting to note that it is due to the proximity, but also due to the vast difference that exists between the so-called the *first* and the *second* priesthoods that it is necessary to expand this matter and even to break it down into other several approaches to understand it more satisfactorily, as we will try to present in the next topics of this same chapter and even in the following chapters.

As we divide the theme in reference into more topics and chapters, we are also confident that this is a more comprehensive and enlightening path than an attempt to excessively summarize what, ultimately, will have to be detailed in one way or another so that a satisfactory explanation is minimally structured.

H. The Temporal Factor and the Record in the Scriptures of the So-called *First* Priesthood

When we proceed to advance in more detail in investigating the distinctions between the so-called *first* and *second* priesthods, we can observe that three aspects in particular have generated big practical difficulty for many people to differentiate these priesthods, which are:

- ⇒ 1) The fact that both priesthods are recorded in the Scriptures;
- ⇒ 2) The fact that God has authorized a *first* weak and unprofitable priesthood;
- ⇒ 3) The fact that a priesthood authorized by God has proven to be temporary and had to have its authorization revoked.

The three difficulties mentioned in the previous paragraph are very interesting and important to note, for they, in a way, precede the specific analysis of the two priesthods in reference.

The difficulty in understanding a subject often does not even lie in the very subject that one aims to know, but it lies in the lack of understanding some aspects that precede the particular subject and that may even generate an almost insurmountable barrier to achieve the most specific objective.

To reach a specific end, it is often necessary, first, to remove some previous obstacles that prevent people from grasping the point that they aim to achieve, as it is the case of the three barriers mentioned above.

So, in the first place, if a person, for example, persists in thinking or does not move from the idea that everything recorded in the Scriptures should be followed and applied by all those who want to follow what the Scriptures describe, one will have enormous difficulty in understanding the differences between the so-called *first* and *second* priesthods.

The Scriptures themselves teach us that all its parts were inspired by the Lord and that all are useful for instruction and improvement. However, the Scriptures teach us that all its parts are also useful for correction, reproof, and for education in righteousness concerning what is wrong in the life of the one who longs to live and walk in the will of God.

2 Timothy 3: 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Scriptures teach us vital aspects concerning life and that every human being should aim to understand and follow. However, the Scriptures also show and teach us about the ineffective and deceitful ways from which each person should abstain.

To claim that everything presented in the Scriptures is exposed in them to be followed by the letter, not only is contrary to the Scriptures themselves, but it is also

incoherent and contradictory, because how could a person succeed in trying to follow, at the same time, what is favorable to him or her and what is contrary to his or her life?

All Scripture was indeed given by the inspiration of God, but it was also inspired by the Lord to expose or clarify those aspects that present themselves in life with subtleties to try to entangle people in false propositions of a life of fear or reverence for God.

The fact that the Scriptures show us that there is a priesthood called the *first* that needed to be removed and the fact that they show us that this *first* priesthood was allowed for a period so that its temporality and weakness also became evident, despite its enormity of details, should not become a cause of scandal regarding the Scriptures, but quite the contrary, a cause of much more respect for the Lord, the Scriptures, and what is recorded in them.

The Scriptures are given to human beings to teach them the way of life in which each person is called to walk, but they also show us clearly and in detail what are the paths and the results of the ways that do not lead to life, as, for example, the priesthood called *first*.

The Scriptures are given to us by the Lord to show us the way of life and the paths of death so that we may find life and walk away from the paths of death. That is, the Scriptures should always be read with discernment to understand that their themes point to several different aspects, as we have described more widely also in the subject on Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.

Thus, if the Scriptures make special mention of a series of details of the so-called *first* priesthood, they do so because it is also necessary to highlight the details of this type of priesthood so that people may see its fragility and uselessness, and because humanity is highly attracted to propositions similar to this priesthood.

*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.***

The fact that the priesthood called *first* is specially described in the Scriptures is not to give it credibility in the sense that people should be associated with it, but it is given to show that as close as it might be to the true priesthood that God wants people to associate with, this priesthood called *first* can never match what the true priesthood in Christ can provide for those who receive Him as Lord.

Because the priesthood so-called *first* aims so much to show that it could provide the newness of life that only the *second* priesthood can offer, but which is never able to do it in fact, it was also necessary to record the *first* in the Scriptures with so many details so that its weakness and uselessness were amply evidenced, showing that a seeming copy can never replace the true one given by the Lord.

In the second place, as mentioned at the beginning of this topic, another point that generates difficulties for many people to understand the distinctions of the so-called *first* and *second* priesthoods, is the fact that God, in the past, authorized a group of people to try to live their lives based on the principles of the priesthood so-called *first*.

The fact that God authorized the *first* priesthood, despite its weakness and unprofitableness, is the reason for there to be the so-called *first* and *second* priesthoods. That is, only the priesthoods authorized by the Lord to be practiced also received a prominent mention under specific names of “*priesthoods*” in the Scriptures.

When the Scriptures show us that the Only Begotten Son of God came into the world so that the 1st could be removed and that the 2nd could be established, they do not mention the need to remove other priesthoods that exist around the world, because none of the others was authorized by the Lord to be practiced and, therefore, they did not need to be removed by the Lord Himself.

Nevertheless, the fact that the Lord authorized the *first* priesthood does not imply that it represented what the Lord wanted for those people who were authorized to follow the path of this *first* priesthood.

In the words of the prophet Jeremiah, we can clearly see that the Lord did not intend the *first* priesthood, its law, and all acts derived from this law, but these aspects were authorized because the people whom God wanted to guide did not want the direct direction of the Lord.

The *first* priesthood was authorized because the people wanted God to allow them to walk on the option made by the people themselves.

Jeremiah 7: 22 For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.
23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’
24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.

The *first* priesthood was the result of a fleshly yearning of the people in opposition to the proposition that God was offering them to guide them, as it is also exposed in the book of Hebrews chapter 7.

At this point, however, some people could still come up with the question of how is it possible for God to authorize a type of priesthood that is contrary to the kind of priesthood that the Lord Himself intends people to follow?

The understanding of this last aspect is highly significant, especially in the light of the Gospel of the Lord, which has the characteristic of being an offer. And since the Gospel is an offer, it cannot be characterized as an imposition.

The invitation to associate with the priesthood that God intends for all people, which is called the *second* priesthood, refers to a priesthood that is offered to be received by choice and not by imputation. An aspect that shows us that people, on the other hand, also have the option of choosing to associate with other types of priesthoods even though they are contrary to the will of God.

Therefore, in the case of the so-called *first* priesthood, and in response to a demand contrary to God of the people who were called to be guided by God, the Lord made a

particular and very differentiated concession so that people could see more ahead that the priesthood for which they were choosing, in contrast to the will of the Lord, was a priesthood that, after all, would not work even if the Lord would be favorable to them and grant them all they needed from God to walk in the priesthood that the people themselves chose to walk.

The Lord indeed authorized the *first* priesthood for the people to walk according to the type of priesthood that was chosen by this group. However, this was done so that the whole world would also come to know that this type of priesthood would never be able to attain what it proposed to achieve even if God would authorize a people to follow it for a specific time and would not be opposed to the people of this group doing so.

If, on the one hand, the so-called *first* priesthood could not lead people to achieve what they wanted, on the other hand, the fact that they tried exhaustively to accomplish what God did not want them to follow would prove to be a benefit to reveal to the whole world that this kind of priesthood *made nothing perfect*, no matter how much people strive and insist on following it.

When the people who were called to be guided by God asked the Lord to give them an alternative way, so that they could try to serve God according to a proposition that most pleased the people themselves and that was according to their natural intents, most of those people had already made a choice in their hearts that opposed what the Lord had offered them. However, the authorization for the *first* priesthood to be established and adopted by those people was only granted because the world was not yet conscious and had not yet witnessed the weakness and uselessness of this *first* priesthood.

And finally, in this topic, we saw that there is a third aspect that may try to interpose in the understanding of the differentiation between the so-called *first* and *second* priesthoods.

This third point, however, is practically already answered and evidenced by the *first* two points that we saw above. That is, the fact that God recorded the so-called *first* priesthood in the Scriptures and the fact that God authorized, for a specific time, that people sought to live according to this *first* priesthood, shows us that God is sovereign to remove the authorization of what He allowed to be followed during a period of history for our teaching.

When Christ announces that He was introduced in the flesh into the world and that God had given Him a body so that the Lord's will to *remove the first* and *establish the second* would be fulfilled, He shows us that God is fully sovereign to remove the validity of what was authorized for the purpose of revealing and teaching the world what the people who inhabit it should not follow.

The record in the Scriptures of the existence of a *first to be removed* because of the *establishment of a second* also clearly informs us about a division of time and a division of ways of approach or practices related to one or the same theme.

The fact that the Scriptures inform us that there is a *first to be removed* and there is a *second to be established*, enriches the challenge of understanding some matters of life in line with the will of God and also shows us that the life of the human being has passed and passes through different periods. And, still, that in these distinct periods, there are also aspects that had a temporary expression before God and whose time of

acceptance or tolerance was changed by aspects that came later and took the place of what was previously at work.

Although “*all Scripture*” is given by inspiration of God and useful for teaching and perfecting those who allow the Lord to instruct them through the written word, it should be remembered that in “*Scripture*” itself, there are instructions on what God wants people to follow and that are eternal, but there are also temporary teachings in it. And as such, some teachings were or are recorded in “*Scripture*” precisely to instruct people of specific times not to guide their lives on them anymore.

The fact that God establishes or allows something to be practiced for a particular time or the fact that God has manifested Himself by some means during a specific time and through other means in another period does not mean that God cannot interrupt or disallow what has been useful or allowed for a while, or that God cannot merely stop using some forms of temporary manifestation that have been used in the past moments of human history.

If we look at human history more globally since its creation, we can see that God never repeated the great or major events that occurred in it.

In human history, there was only one creation process like the initial one, and there was only one global flood. There was only one call like the one that the Lord made to Abraham and Sarah. Only once happens to be an opening of the Red Sea for the people to pass with dry feet and be released collectively from Egypt. There was a unique intervention of Christ to make the provision of salvation for all human beings from their condemnation because of sin.

Besides, in each of these major unique events, there has also been a change of various living conditions and instructions for living life after each of these interventions.

The prophet Daniel teaches us that God, as Sovereign over everything and everyone, is the Eternal Lord and, therefore, He is also the Lord of the times, of the seasons and periods in which something can be temporarily released or can be interrupted according to the righteous government of God both on Heaven and Earth.

*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."***

From the moment that Adam and Eve received the promise that a descendant of them would be constituted to defeat the serpent that rose against them and from the moment that Abraham and Sarah were called to walk in faith according to the instructions that God would grant them, the Lord always announced changes of times or periods that would occur due to the actions carried out through His righteous interventions concerning human beings, as exemplified in the words below that God announced to Abraham:

Genesis 15: 12 **Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him.**

13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.

14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

And if through various calls directed by God to the men and women of the world, the Lord has already introduced so many changes also to remove situations and conditions practiced until the time of these changes, how much more would the Lord not do together and after the introduction of His Beloved Son in the world to be the Savior and Christ of all people who believe in Him?

Galatians 4: 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!"

7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Galatians 3: 24 **Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.**

25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

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.**

Without understanding that several points established or authorized by the Lord Himself also had a specific purpose for some particular moments in human history and that several of these points were only released under a temporary condition, a person who seeks to understand the Scriptures may face significant difficulties in separating what applies to all generations, to his or her generation, and what was applicable only for some generations of the past.

The lack of perception that God can release something temporarily and the lack of a crystalline and straightforward understanding that what is called *first* was only consented by God for a specific time until the *second* priesthood was more widely revealed, has been one of the more central, remarkable, and active items in the attempt to prevent people from perceiving what God no longer wants them to follow and, consequently, also from understanding what the Lord wants them to see, believe, and receive in their lives.

Thus, once exposed the diversity of some peculiarities that exist in the approach of two different perspectives on the same theme, respectively called *first* and *second*, and once exposed the fact that these two perspectives were also allowed to highlight the temporariness of the *first* in the face of the *second*, we understand that we are now better supported to advance in more detail about each of the two priesthoods in reference and their particularities.

I. The Proximity of the *First* Priesthood to the Other Priesthoods of the World and the Exclusive Present and Eternal Validity of the *Second* Priesthood

Hebrews 10: 8 (Christ) Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law),
9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.
10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

If we return a little to what was exposed in the previous topics of this chapter, we may remember that in them it was said that the so-called *first* and *second* priesthoods are distinguished from all the other priesthoods in the world, basically, because the two seek the One Creator God and due to the fact that only these two received a specific reference of priesthoods that were formally authorized by the Lord to be associated with and practiced, causing that only these two have specific priesthood names expounded more widely in the Scriptures.

Nevertheless, when we go a little further in the Scriptures and in the reasons why the *first* priesthood was also included in them in such a detailed way, we can start to see that this *first* priesthood is not, in reality, so different from the other priesthoods in the world and that are not approved by the Lord.

If for a time the *first* priesthood distinguished itself from the other priesthoods in the world because it was a priesthood authorized by the Lord to be practiced, this priesthood was no longer in the group of authorized priesthoods from the moment when God sent His Only Begotten Son to, through Him, also to revoke the validity of the *first* priesthood, by this manner or thus equating this *first* with the other priesthoods in general in the world in terms of not being valid before the Lord.

After Christ's death on the cross of Calvary, His burial, and His resurrection from the dead, the *first* priesthood also came to the condition of being rejected or not being accepted by God even though people continue to try to establish a relationship with God through this priesthood.

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.

After God allowed the *first* priesthood to be practiced so that the attempts to establish a priesthood in the strength of the flesh also demonstrated the weakness and uselessness that exist in this type of priesthood, the *first* priesthood, ultimately, was revealed as a more complete or a more elaborated model than the other priesthoods in which human beings themselves try to establish, in the strength of the flesh, the accomplishment of the various actions to be followed in the priesthoods that they create and with which many people associate themselves.

After its weakness and inability to achieve what a true priesthood should establish were exposed for centuries, the *first* priesthood came to be evidenced as a priesthood similar to other human priesthoods because it had shown itself equally useless to provide what can only be provided by a true priesthood or by the priesthood eternally accepted by God.

After the exposition until the exhaustion of the so-called *first* priesthood, it can be observed that this priesthood is not so different from the other priesthoods in the world, because similarly to the other priesthoods spread over the Earth, the *first* priesthood was also based on the search for divinity according to the strength of the human being or according to the natural or carnal strength, by which no one can, ever, inherit the kingdom of God because no one can reach it by human efforts and merits.

In the book of Galatians, Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, also shows us that after the coming of Christ into the world, the *first* priesthood, established on Mount Sinai through Moses, ended up being revealed as associated with a law of fleshly commandment and that it cannot inherit the heavenly kingdom together with the *second* priesthood established by God through Christ.

Galatians 4: 21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,

24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar.

25 For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children,

26 But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband."

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.

30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

5: 1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

If, on the one hand, God allowed the *first* priesthood to be authorized to be practiced by those who insisted on receiving such a priesthood, with the coming of the *second* priesthood, the *first* lost all validity before God to continue to be practiced, since the *first* priesthood itself exposed its weakness and uselessness after having been practiced for years, centuries, and even more than a millennium.

From the revelation and evidence, through Christ, of the *second* priesthood to the world, and that only the *second* priesthood was authorized before God, the *first* priesthood should be seen basically as the record of a broad historical example of facts and of principles that can never lead a person to a profound transformation of life and to a condition of relating in freedom with the Lord.

And finally, since the so-called *first* was a very broad and complete priesthood in its proposition of the human being trying to perform all the priesthood that he aspired to establish before God, despite never being able to do it through it, this priesthood ended up becoming a generic model of all the other priesthoods elaborated by human beings, because all the other priesthoods elaborated by people over the centuries end up being a variation of the model of the *first* priesthood and everything that is in its respective law.

The *first* priesthood, in a sense, was made known to the world so that from the knowledge of it, people can also discern the other priesthoods that are contrary to the will of God, because, essentially, all the priesthoods proposed by human beings will end up incurring into propositions based on the weakness of human wisdom or nature and not on the wisdom and the power of God.

Therefore, because the *second* priesthood is the only one that can indeed lead a person to achieve a relationship with the true divinity, that is, with the One Creator and Eternal God, it is also only the *second* priesthood that came to have the authorization and approval before God after a comprehensive revelation of this *second* priesthood was presented to the world.

To insist on the practice of the *first* priesthood and to insist on making defenses to this priesthood currently is, then, a position of resistance to the will and the proposition of the saving righteousness that God offers to humanity, even if people who practice the *first* priesthood or similar to it try to demonstrate zeal for God.

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.

In Christ is the end of the *first* priesthood, because in Christ is also the end of the law of the *first* priesthood.

After the clear revelation of the weakness and uselessness of the *first* priesthood and the perfection and eternal glory of the *second* priesthood, this *second* priesthood, established through Christ and in Christ, became the only valid priesthood before God and which remains the only recognized in the present and for all eternity.

Today and forever, the *second* priesthood is the last and the exclusive priesthood accepted before God and will never be shaken or removed.

Hebrews 7: 20 And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath

21 (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: "The LORD has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek' "),

22 by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.

23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.

24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.

J. The “Two”, not “Three”, Life Positions that are Revealed in Understanding the *First* and *Second* Priesthoods

After seeing that the temporality of the *first* priesthood leads this priesthood to be equated, in many aspects, with the most various priesthoods that exist in the world and that seek to establish the righteousness of people before God by the works they do, we may also see that the work of God towards human beings, through Christ, deals with profound thoughts and attitudes that for many did not even seem to be practices that are not approved by the Lord.

When people only remain in the condition of seeing generically and superfluously what is contemplated in the ministry of Christ regarding the removal of things that do not match the newness of life granted by the Lord through His salvation, they may easily fall into the mistaken idea that Christ only came to act in removing that which is related to the sins that directly seek to take away all people's interest in the relationship with God.

Since sin essentially aims at breaking people's proper relationship with God, as exposed in the subject on The Gospel of God's Righteousness, perhaps many could easily come to think that all that Christ wants to take away from the hearts of those who receive the salvation of God is directly linked to people's total disinterest in their Creator.

Nevertheless, when we look more closely at what the Scriptures have to say specifically about *removing the first* and *establishing the second*, we can see that the set of aspects that Christ wants to deal with to take away what is undue with the newness of life in Him, is much broader than just the sins that seek to act in people's direct disinterest in God.

The search for withdrawal from the Lord and contempt for the Creator of Heaven and Earth is undoubtedly a very objective and practical form of the work of sin. However, seeking the Lord in the ways not instructed by God, and even doing it with a high degree of zeal or intensity, is also a very objective and direct form of sin.

In the Scriptures and practical life in general, we can see that it is precisely some aspects that have the appearance of godliness, devotion, and the search for God that most attract many people to what they should no longer be associated with after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ from the dead.

It is often precisely concerning the actions of seeking the Lord, but in an inappropriate way, that people are more reluctant to accept Christ's orientation of what needs to be taken away in their lives and in what they need to become established.

Due to the ignorance or contempt of the Scriptures, many have failed to realize that the establishment, ever more firmly, of the newness of life that is offered together with the salvation granted by the Lord, also occurs by the willingness of people to allow Christ to teach them about the truth and to remove of their lives even those sins that are committed precisely in the intense, but inadequate, search for the Eternal Creator God Himself.

This theme related to becoming free from beliefs, creeds, religions, and actions through which a person seeks God and even recognizes Him as the only Creator of

Heaven and Earth, but by which they try to do it in ways that are no longer approved by the Lord after Christ's coming into the world also as the Son of Man, is a topic that should never be looked at with little attention and that should never be considered as a theme of little relevance for each of the human beings that inhabit the Earth.

The mere fact that people seek the One Almighty God and even show themselves to be very zealous towards the Lord does not imply that God automatically justifies them and that it may cause them to be rescued from sin to live a life reconciled with the Lord.

The mere intention of seeking the same God Creator of Heaven and Earth does not mean that all those who seek Him are equally received and accepted by the Lord when this search is done according to the way chosen by people to seek God and not according to the way that God appoints for people to be found by them.

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!'

When people try to seek God based on their actions and through the paths they want to establish on their own to seek God, they are not indeed seeking God in the sense of receiving what the Lord has to offer them.

When human beings want God to accept them based on the terms that they themselves want to establish, they do not indeed want the Lord to be their "God," but for "God" to be their servant and serve them with all His power and with all His gifts in the terms established by those who seek God and not according to the terms that God has established for the fellowship with people.

When people aim to seek God based on their own beliefs, creeds, actions, paths, or even according to the *first* priesthood, they seek to subject God to themselves because, in reality, they do not want to submit to the Creator God of their lives and His way.

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.

The work of searching for the Lord through the very methods of those who seek Him, or even through the law of the *first* priesthood, may become one of the most hostile and perverse sins against God and other human beings.

In many cases, the actions of seeking God, through the ways that people want to seek God, are sins carried out under a subtle banner of religiousness that tries to show an appearance of true devotion and intense search for the Lord Creator of Heaven and Earth, but that, in practice, work to prevent people from truly drawing close to the kingdom of God.

Matthew 23: 13 **But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.**

...
15 **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.**

Colossians 2: 20 **Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations,**

21 ("Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,"

22 **which all concern things which perish with the using) according to the commandments and doctrines of men?**

23 **These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.**

Regarding yet the *first that needs to be removed*, the Scriptures clearly show us that there are a series of services or attempts of worship directed to God but which are of no use to those who perform these services, and which also are not accepted by God because they are outward expressions of worship and not expressions of a new heart given by the Heavenly Father to those who received Christ as Lord.

Hebrews 9: 9 **It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience.**

Isaiah 29: 13 **Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,**

14 **Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden."**

15 **Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, And their works are in the dark; They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?"**

16 **Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; For shall the thing made say of him who made**

it, "He did not make me"? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

As impressive as it may seem, the Scriptures even inform us that, in a sense, it is easier for those who do not seek God to accept the offer of reconciliation with the Lord than those who have already insisted on seeking God through ways proposed by themselves or proposed according to the *first* priesthood.

Isaiah 65: 1 I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' To a nation that was not called by My name.

Matthew 21: 31 "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you."

Romans 9: 30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith.

Despite the contempt for the Creator God being intensely manifested by the fact that people try to deny His existence or by the fact that they try to deny His glory that He is the Unique God over the entire universe, or even in attempting to elevate the creature to the status of God, the search for God through actions and ways that are not offered by the Lord is also an expression of contempt for God.

People reject what God offers them also through the search for the Lord through the ways proposed by the flesh or the creature. And thus, showing that they believe that human beings are wiser than God Himself in defining which is the appropriate way of reconciliation and fellowship with the Lord.

The denial of God's existence, the rejection of the search for the Lord, and the proposition to corrupt the glory of God regarding the creation are undoubtedly forms of resistance to the sovereign position of the Lord. However, the non-acceptance of the actions and paths offered by the Lord for people seeking Him also or equally is to resist the Lord's sovereign position over everything and everyone.

And when people resist God, either by denying His existence or trying to seek the Lord through the religious ways of human beings, they also oppose the granting of righteousness, grace, salvation, and the novelty of life that come from the Lord.

James 4: 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

7(a) Therefore submit to God.

In addition to Christ having a global function in His ministry to remove or take away what needs to be removed from people who want to live according to God's will, the aspect of removing what needs to be left behind precisely concerning the various inappropriate ways of seeking the Lord also shows itself highly relevant due to the number of records that the Scriptures present specifically on this topic.

Although the Scriptures broadly cover sin in general as an agent that causes the hearts of many people to turn away from the Eternal Creator, even to the point that many of them come to deny the existence of the very God who created them, the Scriptures also dedicate a vast space to expose the whole complex with which people associate to seek God through the actions and paths chosen by them or according to the *first* priesthood in opposition to the way and the *second* priesthood offered by the Heavenly Father in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, without knowing what the Scriptures expose on the temporality of the *first* priesthood and the sovereignty and exclusive validity of the *second* priesthood, a person could even consider that people in the world are distinguished between (1) those who do not seek the Creator God, (2) those who seek the Creator God through the *first* priesthood or priesthoods similar to it, and (3) those who seek the Creator God through the *second* priesthood, and, still, that God would equally accept people who seek Him through the *first* priesthood or through the *second*.

Nevertheless, after the revelation and the declaration of the weakness and unprofitableness of the *first* priesthood or similar to it, it becomes evident that people in the world end up being distinguished only between (1) those who are related to the ways or priesthoods not accepted by God and (2) those who are associated with what is called the *second* priesthood.

Thus, consequently, the lack of knowledge of the possibility of people to place themselves only in two different positions, and not three, has been a cause of many people's frustrations and misunderstandings regarding the Scriptures themselves and, mainly, concerning God.

In the world, there are many people who long to know more about God who created them, but who are afraid to seek Him because they think that to do so, they would also need to start doing what people associated with the *first* priesthood or similar to it follow or practice. In this way, they confuse the *first* and *second* priesthoods for not knowing that the *first* has already been revoked and that those who practice it end up equating themselves with those who do not relate to God, as exemplified in the texts below and also exposed more widely in the material on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God:

Romans 3: 9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

- 10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;
11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.
12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."***

Romans 10: 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."

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."

The propagation of the position of seeking God through paths not authorized by the Lord, and more specifically by the principles similar to the *first* priesthood, has often confused those who want to approach the Eternal Lord, for many realize that what people practice to seek God even with great effort under the precepts similar to the *first* priesthood does not really sound like the true path to freedom, peace, and the newness of life in God.

The announcement that people should seek God through the ways that are based on human effort to fulfill a set of beforehand established precepts or rules is not only opposed to the path that God offers for reconciliation with Him, but it may also become an instrument to keep some individuals from any search for the Lord.

When they think that the only way they can find the Lord is that they also have to become partakers of the same religious acts of those who inappropriately seek God, many individuals are disappointed and choose not to try a relationship with the Lord at all.

Without the distinct and clear perception that people can only adequately position themselves towards the Lord through the *second* priesthood, and that the contempt for God and the search for God through inappropriate means end up being equivalent, as it is the case with the *first* priesthood, it may also become very difficult to try to teach people about how they can achieve a truly satisfying relationship with the Eternal Lord and the Eternal Lord with them.

In many ways, it is more challenging to distinguish people who truly want to relate to God through the path offered by the Lord from those who want to relate to God through inadequate means and principles than to distinguish those who truly want to relate to God from those who do not even have a goal to relate to the One Creator God of Heaven and Earth.

If the previous paragraph were said in other words, perhaps we could say, in a sense, that it might be much more challenging to distinguish the position between people linked to the *first* and *second* priesthoods than to distinguish the position between people associated with the *second* priesthood and those who do not effectively seek the One Creator God.

The proposition to seek God through actions and paths that are not in line with the proposition offered by the Lord is challenging to be understood, because, throughout

history, it has triggered enormous and complex proportions and that may obscure the understanding of those who do not have the eyes of the understanding enlightened to see the way God proposes to relate to each human being.

Nevertheless, the Scriptures do not leave us unattended in the task of also distinguishing the central aspects of the inadequate ways of seeking God. Due to the crucial condition that this distinction represents for the life of each human being, God allowed that in human history, and also in His Scriptures, the ways of the inadequate search for Him became exposed widely and treated as a separate chapter called the *first* priesthood.

When the Scriptures cite that Christ came to us also to remove from our hearts the mentality of the “old” practices of the fallen human being who opposes the newness of life given by the Lord through His salvation, they are taking into account both the position of not seeking God as of seeking the Lord through inadequate paths. However, due to the relevance that the distinction of seeking God through inappropriate ways requires because of its attempts to appear as true godliness, the Lord also explicitly teaches us that Christ is the one who came to *take away the first* and to *establish the second*.

While the mention in the Scriptures about “taking away the attributes of the sinful old man,” generically speaking, refers to both positions mentioned in the previous paragraph, the expression *removing the first to establish the second* is directly aimed at clarifying that also in seeking the Unique God, a position may be hidden through which people cannot find reconciliation with the Lord if this search is done through the ways that people want to determine for God and not through the path in Christ offered by the Heavenly Father.

To enable that the ways of the inadequate search for God did not remain concealed in any way, even if they seek to hide themselves through the appearances of godliness, the Lord gave us the example of the weakness and uselessness of the *first* priesthood, showing that contempt for the search for the Lord and the search for God through an inadequate path are both ways that abstain people from the fellowship to which the Heavenly Father calls them in Christ Jesus.

K. The Historical Factor That Introduced the Priesthood Also Called the *First*

One of the aspects that makes the subject about the *first* and the *second* priesthoods so crucial and, at the same time, so challenging to be known is its breadth, but this because this theme also encompasses a large number of practical aspects related to the life of each human being.

From the first human being created to the individuals who live on Earth in the present day or who will live in the future, each person is directly involved with the theme of the priesthood, whether they are aware of this term or not.

Since the beginning of a child's life, one already has been involved in a relationship with the Creator of one's life, as shown in the following texts:

Psalms 8: 1 ***O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!***
2 ***Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.***

Matthew 21: 15 ***But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant***
16 ***and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?'"***

Mark 10: 14 ***But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God."***

The subject of priesthood has always been present in some way in human life, and that is also why a large part of what we need to learn about it is exposed throughout the history of humankind presented to us by God through His Scriptures.

Without knowledge of some basic points of human history, as it is presented to us by the Scriptures, the task of understanding some fundamental aspects of how human beings seek to associate with the priesthoods and what are the basic characteristics of the priesthoods may become quite limited and even impaired.

The historical aspects of the Scriptures about the priesthoods not only tell us facts, but they also expose reasons, motivations, and purposes related to the types of priesthoods that have been most evident throughout this history, allowing the visualization of a broader picture of how fundamental the matter of priesthood is for the life of each individual, beginning already with Adam and Eve.

The first man and the first woman in the world, Adam and Eve, right after they were created, performed priesthood service directly before God every time the Lord approached them to speak with them. Since they had no sin and walked in the ways the

Lord instructed them, they themselves were their own priests and did not need anyone to mediate their relationship with God.

God visited Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and the Lord Himself instructed them, they themselves listened directly to God, and they had free access to talk with God and to present all their matters to Him.

In the beginning, before Adam and Eve became associated with sin, their priesthood position before God was so “natural” that they did not even know they were practicing it.

Adam and Eve themselves were the priests of their lives before God, where God spoke and taught them directly, as exemplified in the following text:

*Genesis 1: 27 **So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.***

*28 **Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."***

*29 **And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food."***

Nevertheless, when the serpent presented oneself to them saying that they could have the same knowledge that God had or that they could become equal to God as to the knowledge of good and evil, the devil not only proposed to them an offense that would result in a transgression, but he also presented himself as a mediator of Adam and Eve's relationship with their Creator. The devil used the idea of him being able to tell Adam and Eve who God was and how they could change their relationship with the Eternal Lord.

In his proposition, the devil was implying to Adam and Eve that they would no longer need to turn to God to be sufficient in themselves. That is, the serpent was precisely attacking the condition of the “priesthood” that Adam and Eve had before God.

And if the devil managed to affect Adam and Eve's relationship with God, he intended to exercise dominion over them, because as a creature, the devil saw himself more astute, stronger, and mightier than the human being.

If the devil could cause the discontinuity of an appropriate relationship between man and woman with God, this man and woman would no longer be able to exercise the “free priesthood” before the Eternal Lord as they always did, because between them and God would be slavery to sin and the body of sin, according to the proposition and domination of the kingdom of darkness.

Later on, a temptation similar to that which was presented by the devil to Adam and Eve was also exposed by him, centuries later, to the Lord Jesus Christ, offering Christ all the kingdoms of the Earth if only the Lord Jesus would “prostrate Himself and worship” the devil.

In approaching the Lord Jesus, the devil was proposing “a change of priesthood” to Christ, claiming that the basic rule of the “law” in the “priesthood” he was offering was

worshiping Satan in exchange for wealth and domination, but also trying to hide that this proposed “priesthood” was entirely built on the foundation of lies and deception.

Matthew 4: 8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.
9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."
10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Therefore, the “priesthood,” that is, rendering reverence, honors, worship, and service to someone or something superior to the human being or that the human being considers superior or a deity, is something that is part of the creation of humanity. And each person in the world, in one way or another, will always be doing so.

And since the human being will always be worshiping someone or something, the central point in question becomes the aspect regarding whom each individual will be directing one's priestly service and through which priesthood each person will try to perform that which is part of his or her nature as a creature.

If a person does not worship or serve the Creator God, one will end up worshiping oneself and his or her own ideas, or will worship other people, idols, images, or religions of all sorts and even evil spirits, thus handing over or lending the priestly service of his or her life to those who can never save him or her and truly protect him or her for eternal life.

Every human being is a “born priest,” and this can never be taken away. The bigger question, then, is not whether one is a priest or not, but to whom one addresses his or her “priestly” condition and what kind of “priesthood” one is willing to serve.

The most precious treasure a person can have is the appropriate fellowship with his or her Creator. And, in turn, the proper priesthood is how fellowship with God and communication with the Lord under a condition of freedom can be practiced or maintained.

Considering that a person's living and walking in line with God's will depends on his or her relationship with the Lord, an adjusted priesthood condition between the person and God is also what will define whether that person will achieve or not achieve the understanding and accomplishment of the Lord's will for his or her life.

Continuing to verify the human history, we emphasize here that despite the reference to the text of Hebrews chapter 7 appoints to a *first* to be removed and a *second* to be established, this *first*, as we have already seen, is not actually the first form of people's relationship with the Eternal Lord described in the Scriptures.

Thus, to highlight that the priesthood was already in practice even before formal knowledge of this topic and that it already existed before the establishment of the so-called *first* priesthood and its law is of great need and relevance, for it is impressive how the mentality more focused on the law of the *first* priesthood seeks to rise obstacles so that people do not see that the purpose of God, since the beginning of the creation, has always been that each person understands that he or she is the priest of his or her very life before the Eternal Lord and that everyone may also act according to it.

The first form of relationship between man and God was the direct relationship in which God visited Adam and Eve in Eden at the so-called hour *in the cool of the day*, as we commented in the previous paragraphs.

This direct and continuous relationship, as we have also seen above, was greatly affected when the human being welcomed an offense against the Lord and when the human being continued to admit this offense in the heart to the point of advancing to the sin of the transgression of the instruction received directly from God, as explained in more detail in the material on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God.

From the moment that the human being joined the offense against God and the sin, the relationship of humanity with the Lord was hugely altered, beginning a period where people oscillated between despising God and seeking God through the more varied forms, as it is described, for example, in Genesis 6 referring to the period before the flood, as well as later in the construction of the tower of Babel described respectively in the book of Genesis chapter 11.

Nevertheless, knowing that people could not restore their priesthood position according to their own actions because they were subject to sin, the body of sin, and slavery due to the lack of a broad light in their hearts, God began to manifest Himself to some people more specifically and objectively about what He, the Lord, would do as to the provision to restore the priestly position of human beings.

In manifesting Himself to some people in antiquity, the Lord always had in mind the purpose of introducing in the world a path that could serve so that all human beings could, once again, relate to the Lord in a continuous, free, and entirely satisfactory way, and this so that they too could return to live and walk according to the instruction or will of God for their lives.

These interventions of God became carried out in an increasing way, where, through Abraham and Sarah, God began to separate a people through which He would introduce the establishment of a way of reconciliation of the fellowship of human beings of all peoples and nations with the Eternal Creator.

Through Abraham, God was separating a people, for a certain period, to show the individuals of this people how they could live under the direction of God so that what this folk would come to experience could serve as an example and model so that the individuals of other peoples would also know how they could have their fellowship with God restored.

Thus, regarding the trajectory of this group of people, God called Abraham to leave his native land, Ur of the Chaldeans, to go to the land that God would show him and that later was manifested as the land of Canaan, symbolizing the place where the people would be instructed and guided freely by the Lord.

Nevertheless, before being established in the land of Canaan, the people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob went to Egypt for provision and sustenance, but where they also ended up experiencing the weight of slavery imposed to this folk by the pharaohs who came to reign after the life of Joseph and who did not fear the Creator God of Heaven and Earth and all that is in them.

When, however, the iniquity of the people of Egypt and other peoples who did not want to submit to the Creator God became complete before the eyes of the Lord, God also continued the project that He had already promised to Adam and Eve and which He passed on to perform in a more tangible way to human understanding through Abraham and Sarah and their son promised by the Lord and called Isaac.

Before the descendants of Abraham and Sarah headed for the promised land, God allowed them to be exposed to an experience of what comes to be under the domination over their fellow men performed by those who do not fear the Lord. And this, also to teach the separated people never to want to make use of this same type of oppression and domination towards their fellow men, to whom they should bear witness to the guidance of God in their lives.

Subsequently, when slavery in Egypt became more severe, reaching the edge of becoming unbearable, Abraham's descendants saw how the behavior of the peoples who were not walking under the direction of the Eternal God was and began to cry out to God to deliver them from such terrible slavery. And as soon as they cried out to God, the Lord also answered them, sending them Moses, through whom God worked with great power, signs, and miracles to free the people from the land of Egypt which had once housed them in aid, but that had now become very cruel as a consequence of the contempt of the fear of the One Creator God of Heaven and Earth.

Even before we continue on the emergence of what comes to be the *first* priesthood, there is something interesting to note at this point in history, which is the aspect that when Abraham's descendants were under the intense affliction of slavery in Egypt, they did not have priests who mediated them, and not even because of this, they were afraid to call directly to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who also heard them, answered, and released them.

At this point in history, it is interesting to note that when the descendants of Abraham became enslaved by the Egyptians and when they were under intense oppression, they, in the priestly matter, in a sense, were freer to draw closer to God than after they became free from the Egyptians but subject to the *first* priesthood.

Anyway, there in Egypt, even though as slaves and despised by the Egyptians, and even though the individual priesthood still was not in the condition of what needed to be restored by the Lord, the individuals of the Hebrew folk cried out directly to God. Although in very precarious external conditions, each person of this group could exercise one's personal position as a priest, and so they addressed themselves directly to God. And since the individuals of the people themselves sought God directly, the Lord also heard and sent a deliverer and the deliverance that had already been promised to them centuries before to Abraham.

Even as slaves, Abraham's descendants practiced what would later be written in Psalm 65. And the Lord heard them and answered their cry, whether they were slaves or free, old or young, men or women, with money or without money, for all this does not matter to God when someone cries out straightly to Him.

*Psalms 65: 2 O You who hear prayer, To You all flesh will come.
3 Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, You will
provide atonement for them.*

Those who were slaves in Egypt and who exercised their priesthood right that was already included in the creation of human beings, although this right had been harmed by sin and subject to slavery, saw the deliverance that the Lord had provided for them, they saw that God took them out of a circumstance who had stayed behind to establish them in a new condition.

After leaving Egypt, that people freed and also experienced in what life is like under those who oppose God and who do not exercise a priesthood position before the One Eternal God, was now free from their oppressors to, from the desert, receive instructions on how each person could come to live life according to God's will in the land to which God had promised to lead the descendants of Abraham.

After the called people left Egypt, this group was indeed a people politically free from the Egyptians and experienced in life under slavery. This group, however, was not yet instructed on how the Lord wanted each person to live in the freedom provided by Him and so that, being free, people would not come to behave in the same ways that Egyptians and other people behaved.

When the people finally faced the end of the time of slavery or the period when the iniquity of Egypt and other peoples who opposed God was fully manifested and rejected, God freed these people who cried out directly to Him. However, afterward, God also presented Himself to those who were freed to show that He had provided this liberation to relate directly to each family and each person of this group still under greater freedom, calling each of them to be a "kingdom of priests."

God brought a people out of Egypt into a condition of broader freedom where all people or all individuals, in general, could exercise a personal and direct priesthood to God, and where God would speak and instruct each family or individual until the coming of the promised descendant, the descendant who would also provide them with full deliverance from sin and the body of sin, and not only from Egypt, as also exemplified in the text below:

*Exodus 19: 3 And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him
from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of
Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:
4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on
eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.
5 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My
covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people;
for all the earth is Mine.
6 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'
These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."*

Nevertheless, when God proposed to speak directly to the individuals of the people freed from Egypt, just as He had spoken to Noah, Abraham, Sarah and others who exercised faith in the Lord, that is, when God presented His proposal to instruct each family and each person of it personally, the people did not want to accept this way

offered by God to them, starting at this point a whole context that led to the emergence, precisely, of what later in Hebrews was called the *first* priesthood.

Exodus 20: 18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.

19 Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

20 And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."

As strange as it might be, either because of the fear of continually living under the direct light of God's instruction at every moment of their lives or simply because they did not want the Lord's direction in their daily lives, the people of the group freed from Egypt made a proposition to God of how they thought it would be the best way for the Lord to talk to them.

In contrast to the proposition of a "kingdom of priests," as proposed by the Lord and where each person would begin to return to the position and function of a priest that is innate to each human being, the people of the recent freed group suggested to God that He should speak to the members of this folk through a fellow among them and who would lead them in this task.

In opposition to what the Lord had offered, the people proposed that God should speak to each person through someone who was separated to carry out the communication or the relationship with God on behalf of the other individuals.

What is described in the context of chapters 19 and 20 of the book of Exodus is a very significant point, as it contemplates the propositions of two types of "very different priesthoods." What God proposed was a type of priesthood where each person would be a priest in the kingdom being constituted, but what the people were proposing was that only a few members of it should be considered as priests, actually proposing to God a "new priestly order" or a "new kind of priesthood."

The proposition that the people had made to God suggested segregation or a division of the same people between those who would be priests and those who would not be priests, thus generating a "priestly clergy" who would be distinct from other individuals.

In the new type of priesthood that the people were proposing to God, the vast majority of people would be giving up "all being priests" or "individually being priests" for the sake of only "some being priests in everyone's place," proposing a priesthood very different from what was intended by the Lord from the beginning regarding each human being to be a direct priest before God.

Moreover, as each change of type of priesthood also implies a complete change or switch of law, the proposition made by the people was not as simple as it might even have seemed in their eyes.

The option for “a kingdom in which not everyone is a priest,” would also need a constitution of a set of definitions and rules of how a kingdom of this type could come to work and how the functions of the priests and the people would be distributed to each group in this Kingdom.

Therefore, the preceding choice for “a priesthood where not all of those bound to that priesthood would be considered as priests,” was the birthplace of the constitution of the *first* priesthood, but also, consequently, of the constitution of the law that defines this priesthood and its complex structure.

What the Scriptures, in the book of Hebrews, call the *first* priesthood, and which later would also have to be “taken away” to make way for the *second*, arose from the fact that the people did not accept God's proposal to establish each individual with a “personal priesthood” before the Lord and the fact that the mediation model chosen by the people postponed the way God wanted to speak to each of the families and persons of this people.

Precisely at the point between “leaving the old to be established in the new,” and where people could start to relate more freely to God who accomplished their liberation from Egypt, is where the so-called *first* that *would have to be removed* later emerged.

Although Adam and Eve's relationship with God practiced in Eden before their sin was the first way or the first priesthood performed by the human being towards the Lord, the so-called the *first* in the book of Hebrews does not refer to this first condition of the first couple who inhabited the Earth, but it points to the first condition that was established between the descendants of Abraham freed from Egypt and God.

The so-called as *first* in the book of Hebrews arose in the people liberated from Egypt precisely during the political and territorial liberation that occurred and before their establishment of the life according to this freedom, just as many people today still want deliverance from the oppression in which they find themselves, but do not want life and what God who liberated them offers them directly for the establishment of their lives as free individuals in the Lord.

The so-called *first* in the book of Hebrews arose from the fact that people wanted God as the liberator of their lives, but they did not want God to the point of allowing Him to become the direct instructor, guide, and Lord of their lives at the time of the establishment of the freedom offered to them by the Lord.

The so-called *first* is the expression of what is called a priesthood in which people seek to establish their relationship with God by supporting and using the mediation service of others between themselves and the Eternal Lord. And this, so that they do not need to be exposed directly before God to whom all things are known and revealed fully and without any obscurity.

The priesthood named *first* is the expression of what is called a priesthood in which people have sought, and still seek, to outsource totally

or partially the part of the relationship with the Eternal Lord that they themselves should carry out directly before the Creator of their lives.

Still at this point in history, it seems to us to be very significant to highlight a very peculiar aspect that, perhaps or probably, may have cooperated for the people to make the proposition that God would agree to establish an indirect way of talking to people and people speaking to God, and which also shows us why, later on, this very priesthood called *first* became closer to the other priesthoods in the world than to the eternal priesthood presented more ahead by God and also called the *second* priesthood.

The idea of a priesthood where some people mediated or represented other people was not so unusual for the people who had been freed from Egypt, because in Egypt, and many other peoples of the world, the position and function of priests who mediate people's relationship with that they considered deities was already widely practiced.

The priesthood that later came to be called *first* had at the origin of its proposition an aspect that the people freed from Egypt had already seen being practiced by the Egyptians and by the other peoples from whom they received information about their religious life.

Although the people freed from Egypt understood to a large extent that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was the only God worthy of being worshiped and that the Egyptians and other peoples worshiped strange gods, the freed people did not understand or did not want to accept that the appropriate way of the priesthood to relate to the One God was also entirely different from the form of the priesthoods that other peoples practiced.

Perhaps, in other words, we could say that “the people who left Egypt had not yet understood that the possibility of worshipping God more freely would also mean changing the type of priesthood and the law of what they understood as a priesthood till then.”

Although the people followed the Unique God and who brought them such a significant liberation, the people knew this God from what they heard about Him and from the mighty intervention He had made to provide their deliverance from Egypt. However, the recently liberated people still did not know what it was like to be continuously instructed and guided by this God in daily life, probably thinking that the relationship with the One God, in parts, should be through ways similar to the attempts at relationships that people of other nations or folks sought to establish with their strange gods.

The people who were freed from Egypt had indeed received physical, political, or territorial freedom from what previously restricted them. However, the greater liberty they still needed to find, was the freedom to understand how a truly free priesthood functions towards God.

What we are trying to say in these last paragraphs is not so unusual, for similar situations also happen even today when a person is willing to receive the salvation offered to him or her by the Gospel of God.

That is, many people mistakenly think that when they come to Christ and the Christian life, they have to perform acts similar to what is practiced in other religions, not realizing, many times, that the priesthood in Christ is entirely different and based

on a law enormously distinct from the *first* priesthood and other priesthoods in the world.

The so-called second priesthood is based on its own priestly law, which is called the “*law of freedom*” or also the “*law of Christ*.”

From the experience of Egypt, the released people probably run into the thought that the previous central problem was the king of Egypt or the pharaoh of Egypt, and that if they now placed a just “leader” like Moses over their lives, they would have a life of freedom and a satisfying priesthood, not realizing that true freedom also is indeed associated with an appropriate priesthood of each person performed individually towards God or the Creator of their lives.

Because of their time in Egypt, the people were probably inclined to think that the biggest problem of slavery they faced before was the pharaoh and not the priestly system of the Egyptians, which now, in their new condition, could also lead them to want a better new “pharaoh” over them, that is, Moses. And along with this, they were also inclined to desire a system of priests similar to Egypt or a model that similarly had mediators in the relationship with the Lord.

Most of the people of the liberated group of Egypt were not, in those days, aware of the fact that the biggest problem of an evil government over a nation was not primarily or only in the government itself and its occupants, but was in the priesthood model with which people were associated.

Many central aspects or consequences of people's lives are primarily associated with the type of priesthood to which they are associated, as the Lord later taught His people as presented in the Scriptures below:

2 Chronicles 7: 14 ***If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.***

God did not say that He will hear the prayers of priests or kings who are “especially” separated, but the Lord said that ***if My people*** pray and seek My face, He will also answer their cry.

Pharaoh, with all his power, could not keep under slavery the people who cried out to the one true God. No government or ruler can.

Nevertheless, if the individuals of a people live dissociated from a priesthood accepted by God, do not humble themselves, do not seek the true God directly or by themselves, and are unwilling to turn from their wicked ways, they also choose a path of continuous error.

There was nothing to stop God from bringing out of Egypt the people who cried out to Him directly. Neither Pharaoh, his mighty armies, nor natural obstacles, such as the Red Sea, could prevent what God had determined in response to the prayers of people addressed to Him.

Similarly, nothing and no one can prevent God from saving the soul of a person who cries out directly to Him. However, if someone cries out to mediators and the mediators

do not cry out to God as they promise or if the mediators are not accepted before God, the prayer of whoever does it through mediators is not accepted by God either.

When the people chose the way of human priests to mediate them, they actually walked backward and not forward, as taught by the Lord also many centuries later through the prophet Jeremiah, according to the text already exposed in this material and repeated below with the addition of a few more verses:

- Jeremiah 7: 21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat.*
22 For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.
23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'
24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.
25 Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them.
26 Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.
27 Therefore you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not obey you. You shall also call to them, but they will not answer you.
28 So you shall say to them, 'This is a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth.'

And if God heard the prayers of the individuals of a slave people under the dominion of mighty Egypt and delivered them from such hard oppression, could He also not instruct each family or person of this people how to live outside the slavery they were taken from and how to live and walk in the new time of life in that they had been inserted?

- Psalms 106: 9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up; So He led them through the depths, As through the wilderness.*
10 He saved them from the hand of him who hated them, And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
11 The waters covered their enemies; There was not one of them left.
12 Then they believed His words; They sang His praise.
13 They soon forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel,
14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, And tested God in the desert.

When people suggest to God what is best for themselves and resist what the Lord proposes to them, they still have not realized that only God is the one who can predict and propose what is indeed good and perfect for them.

Isaiah 40: 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?

Proverbs 8: 14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength.

Proverbs 19: 21 There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the LORD'S counsel, that will stand.

Physical, territorial, and political liberation was granted to a slave people and called out of Egypt so that a greater deliverance could take place. However, it was this latter proposition of freedom that the people ended up avoiding through a proposal that they presented instead of accepting what the Lord had proposed to them.

The people who left Egypt wanted freedom from the oppression of the Egyptians that only the God of their fathers could provide. However, they did not want to take responsibility for establishing personal contact with this God as their fathers did, leading them to propose, as we have already mentioned above, something much more complicated to be established and lived than God had offered them.

In other words, the people who were freed from Egypt wanted to be free from the burdens that Egypt imposed on them, but they did not want to take personal responsibility for having fellowship in freedom with the God who delivered them.

God had His own plan to offer His approach to each person, but those people wanted to do it according to their own proposal and goals. In other words, the people had an alternative parallel to God's proposition.

The people freed from Egypt did not want a system or a type of priesthood that would expose them directly before God. They wanted a priesthood where they, like the Egyptians and other peoples, could appease the "wrath of the gods" and "get favors from the gods for their prosperity" through mediators, where the difference, in their case, was that they were making an option for one and the Unique Creator God of Heaven and Earth.

And so it was, then, that the agreement or the covenant around the so-called *first* priesthood emerged, which we will continue seeking to explain from the historical point of view also in the next topic.

L. The Law and Covenant Introduced from the Historical Introduction to the So-called *First Priesthood*

Following on from the previous topic in this same chapter and as already mentioned, the constitution of a priesthood, “according to the people's suggestion,” was not something as simple as people perhaps thought it was when they presented this suggestion to the Lord.

If we also observe what has been addressed in other topics that precede this new point, we may recall the relevant aspect that ***when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.***

When the people suggested a priesthood with mediators in their relationship with God so that, through them, they would hear the Lord's instructions, the process to establish what the people asked for would also of necessity involve the constitution and the establishment of a law according to the type of the requested priesthood, as well as the constitution and the establishment of an associating covenant to the suggested priesthood.

If a new priesthood model were to be accepted and established, the definitions of this priesthood and its functioning would also need to be specified, as well as the terms of the association with this new priesthood.

The constitution of a new priesthood model involves, among others, mainly and at least the following aspects:

- ⇒ 1) The definition, as a major item of the entire process, the very proposition of the priesthood model and who will be the priests in this model; which is what the people did in suggesting Moses as their mediator before God;
- ⇒ 2) The definition, following the first point, of all the different rules of this priesthood; which is called the law of the priesthood;
- ⇒ 3) The definition of the covenant that allows the involved parts to associate with the proposed priesthood.

That is:

→ (1st) a proposal for a type of priesthood is defined; → (2nd) the specific law of the suggested priesthood is defined; → (3rd) the set of aspects or a covenant is defined so that multiple parts can adhere to the type of priesthood.

A priesthood model without a set of explicit terms that define its functioning and without a clear covenant of adherence to it already demonstrates in these aspects the incoherence and fragility of this priestly model.

A type of priesthood that does not have a clear definition associated with it, is already obscure by the simple fact of not being transparently exposed to whom it is presented.

A standard of priesthood without a set of explicit terms is subject to change according to the desire of those who want to lead it, showing that those who propose it are not trustworthy indeed, for they do not act with transparency or clarity.

Many priestly models proposed in the world even have their own gods, created by the creators of the priesthood model themselves. And human beings like to create god figures because, concerning the gods they themselves create, they can also define the rules of how they should relate to these gods.

Nevertheless, if people determine how the gods should accept them, how their gods behave, and how they are to serve them, these gods are, in fact, subject to people.

In the latter case, in reality, people are the gods of their gods and that is also why many individuals appreciate both the gods and idols created by them or their fellow men.

Due to the withdrawing of people from the fellowship with the One Creator God, as discussed in the subject on The Gospel of the Creator, people began to think that many things might be gods and that they could be the dominators of the gods, buying them with offerings, sacrifices, and other attempts of pleasing them.

However, looking at the matter more profoundly, the intention of pleasing the gods aims to find a way to obtain control over the gods. And when this does not happen, people change their priesthoods' rules, thus also disqualifying their priesthood models because they do not have a well-established law and covenant.

Therefore, defining and establishing the law of a priesthood is undoubtedly not a simple matter. On the contrary, the constitution of the law of a priesthood is such a complex process that no human being can carry it out completely or in a minimally satisfactory way. That is why the Lord did only recognize two official priesthoods during the period of human life on Earth.

Only the law of the so-called *first* priesthood, also called the Law of Moses, and the law of the *second* priesthood, also called the Law of Freedom or the Law of Christ, were defined and established by God, even though the *first* priesthood came from a model suggested by the people freed from Egypt.

The way the people freed from Egypt suggested that God should speak to the individuals participating in this group, for example, and to begin the conversation, could not be limited only to Moses as the people suggested. The people freed from the cruel dominion of Egypt was heading for a land and also for a way of life where Moses would not be able to serve people in the most diverse regions that they would come to live and farm, just as Moses could not remain among the people as the years progressed and the new generations started to emerge.

In asking Moses to act as the mediator between each of its members and God, the people trusted Moses as being a good representative, but what would this look like when these people would be dispersed in the land to which they were heading?

And how would the type of priesthood they proposed to God work if Moses would not be more among them?

So, from the proposition that the people made to God for Him to speak with its individuals through Moses, there was also the need to establish a set of principles that would govern this way of God speaking to the people over the years and generations when it had passed the desert and would be inhabiting the promised land.

After people asked God for a different priesthood than the one that the Lord had proposed to them, it was also necessary that this priesthood became clearly defined so

that the people, at every different moment, would not desiring to abandon its choice and so that the people would not remain wanting to change the chosen priesthood at every step that it would advance in its journey, for without a precise definition, the priesthood of this people could easily become completely equal to the priesthoods of the peoples from which this group was freed.

When people asked God to establish a priesthood for them where one of their peers would act as a mediator before God, in reality, there was also an implicit request for a priesthood where several of their peers, throughout history, would have to be raised for this service to serve people in the most diverse regions that they would come to live, and also so that those who could no longer practice the office of mediator could be replaced due to the rules of the priesthood itself, giving up, illness, or death.

When people suggested that God should establish a priesthood for them where some of their fellow men would play the role of mediating them before God, it was also implied that among them, a division of classes or categories of people would have to be created, where some could and should present themselves to the Lord and where the majority would be dependent on those who would be “chosen to be priests” so that their requests would reach God and for the Lord's instruction to reach the majority.

What appeared to be a simple suggestion from the people in exchange for what God intended to do for each individual of it, was, in reality, the emergence of an extremely complex system to be instituted, operationalized, and maintained.

Suggestions or choices to seek God through ways not chosen by the Lord are never choices of simple paths or that do not involve a large contingent of concepts and consequences that are implicit in the presented suggestion or the chosen option.

Due to the choice of people opposing the search for the Unique God Creator of Heaven and Earth, many sets of concepts, philosophies, theories, religions, projects, and structures are triggered or created to try to support the theses that do not accept this position of existing only one God.

Nevertheless, also due to the position of people wanting to seek the One God through their own ways and in opposition to the way suggested by the Lord, many sets of concepts, philosophies, religions, projects, actions, structures, and paths are similarly triggered or created to try to establish and sustain their supposed priesthood alternatives.

Therefore, the option for a priesthood model with mediating priests between the people and God implicitly also represented that that people and their descendants were as well making an option for a specific law and a particular type of covenant in which the most diverse aspects of the priesthood suggested and chosen came to be described.

Stressing this point once again: It was the people who suggested a priesthood with mediating priests. However, it was God who gave the people a law according to what the Lord established in this law, because the people would never have the slightest condition to establish a law that would foresee everything that would have to be foreseen so that the suggested model would also have a complete or holy law associated with it.

Thus, something very intriguing in the matter of the constitution of the so-called *first* priesthood is that God, to whom no one can teach or give advice, accepted the suggestion of the people to establish mediating priests so that those who were originally called to do so, that is, all individuals of the people, would transfer or outsource their personal priesthood so that others would do it in their place.

How, then, was it possible to happen this fact that God accepted a suggestion from the people liberated from Egypt even though the request of this group was not according to the Lord's will or with the "priestly kingdom" that God had proposed?

It is very challenging to understand God's position in which He authorized a group of people or a nation to follow a type of priesthood that would not succeed.

Nevertheless, it was also in this way that God acted perfectly and righteously to respect the freedom of choice of the people freed from Egypt and to set an example recorded in the Scriptures and amply detailed so that future generations, even today, would come to be duly informed so that they could choose to no longer incur the model of this *first* priesthood or similar to it.

God offered the liberated people of Egypt a condition to be a kingdom of priests. And respecting its condition as freed individuals, the Lord did not present His suggestion to that people as an imposition, just as God today also offers the Gospel to people to receive it by free choice and not by imposition.

In inviting those people freed from the dominion of Egypt to be guided by the voice of the Lord, God also wanted them to understand that the heavenly model of the priesthood was the only real option of life according to the kingdom of heaven and that so, freely, they could choose for it.

God presented His proposition as an offer so that the people that He released could freely choose what God was proposing to them.

However, as the liberated people of Egypt did not choose what God offered them, God accepted to accompany them in their choice so that the practical manifestation of this choice would also be exhaustively exposed, to the point of setting an example for people, by understanding and by choice, no longer need to lean towards the model of the *first* priesthood or models similar to it after the *second* priesthood has been widely revealed to the world in Christ Jesus.

Thus, although the proposition of the people of a priesthood with mediating priests had probably in mind parts of the models used in Egypt and the world, the model that God would authorize, even if temporarily and according to the carnal desire of the liberated people of Egypt, would have to be a model with a holy law and that would also grant the desired purpose of people if all the criteria of this model would come to be fulfilled.

For this reason, the law of the so-called *first* priesthood is called, at the same time, the law of a fleshly commandment, but also a holy law.

Hebrews 7: 15 ***And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest***
16 ***who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.***

Romans 7: 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

The fact that God agreed with the suggestion of people and presented them with a holy law for the fleshly priesthood that they proposed proved itself, in the practical manifestation, as beneficial in allowing people to see more intensely the evil of sin and human propositions influenced by sin to try to serve God from the concepts, strength, or works of human beings.

If, on the one hand, the suggestion of the *first* priesthood was inspired by fleshly models, on the other hand, what God agreed to do concerning what was called the *first* priesthood was a priesthood based on a just law despite that proposed model.

To establish what was mentioned in the previous paragraph, the law of the *first* priesthood had, then, to be faithfully transcribed by Moses according to what the Lord showed him from heaven.

The establishment of the so-called *first* priesthood was a very delicate or complicated process to be carried out, for although it had similarities to the mediating priesthoods that other peoples adopted, the law of this priesthood would have to be holy to receive God's authorization since God could not be part of the approval of something that ultimately would not aim at some benefit for the human beings. God could not make a covenant with people related to something that would not result in any benefit for them at some point, even if in a future moment or even if the proposed priesthood itself could not provide people with what they needed.

God only accepted to establish the so-called *first* priesthood with a very transparent and defined law, and because this path would become an instrument for teaching all peoples about what people all over the world should not adopt in their lives, allowing, thus, the authorized practice of this priesthood for centuries until it was utterly demonstrated that people would not be able to fulfill the type of priesthood that they propose to the Lord.

God suggested to relate to the people liberated from Egypt in a way, but the people wanted to do it according to their own perspective. And God allowed it, but only with an appropriate law so that, later on, people would see that the type of priesthood suggested by them would not work adequately even with a holy law, and also to show that only the unique kind of priesthood offered by God was indeed the one who works in true love and for the true benefit of each human being.

And is it also not through children trying to do some things they still cannot do that they learn some of their limitations? And often, under proper supervision and care, is it also not productive to let children try to do what they are unable to do to understand

better the abilities that are available to them, as well as those on which they depend on complementary assistance to achieve?

So that the lesson derived from choosing a priesthood that could never improve people would become notoriously recorded in history and for all generations, God granted a holy law for the so-called *first* priesthood. Moreover, God even offered to help those people to try to fulfill that law so that people would see that that priesthood would not be good for them even if they were under a position where the Lord was not opposing them.

Even though God authorized the attempt of the path suggested by those people who were liberated from Egypt and did not oppose them, the so-called *first* priesthood would never be able to provide what people really need to receive from the Lord, which is the inner change or of the heart and which cannot be carried out satisfactorily through other mediators likewise not perfected in their hearts.

God did not resist the people freed from Egypt concerning their choice for the type of priesthood they wanted to associate. On the contrary, the Lord was willing to accompany these people and support them as long as they remained in the option they made so that, through their own experience, they would come to know that a priesthood mediated by other human beings who are also sinful and weak can never perfect both the mediator as the mediated ones. And all this, to awaken people to see the glory that exists exclusively in the priesthood called *second* or called the priesthood according to Christ.

*Hebrews 9: 9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience,
10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.*

The so-called *first* priesthood was composed of external rules so that each person did not have to face their personal internal issues before God, for it was a system that proposed the execution of external acts to please God without the need for inner changes in the heart, as was the priesthood of other peoples.

And God agreed to meet the demand of those people delivered from Egypt, because if they had already established in their hearts the way they wanted to live, God would not impose on them His proposition, for this could mischaracterize the state of freedom that had just been granted to them.

The so-called *first* priesthood was only a shadow in opposition to what God initially proposed to the people. And just as a shadow only resembles the original, is not the original, and cannot indeed accomplish what can only be obtained through the original, so also the so-called *first* priesthood could never accomplish what the true priesthood offered by God could provide.

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.

The so-called *first* priesthood was allowed to contribute to the teaching that never an alternative priesthood to the one that God offers can accomplish what only the true one can do.

The priesthood named as *first* was allowed by God as a practical testimony of the weakness and uselessness that are in people's attempts of creating ways for their relationship with God even if the Lord would grant them a holy law to try to be successful in their goal.

For this reason, at the end of this topic, we emphasize again that once it has been exhaustively demonstrated for centuries that the so-called *first* priesthood could never make perfect those associated with this type of priesthood, God intervened in history, in due time, manifesting and offering the perfect and eternal priesthood widely according to the heavenly proposition, but not without first also revoking, forever, the authorization and validity of the so-called *first* priesthood, its law, and the covenant corresponding to it.

M. Taking even a Little Closer Look at the Context in which the So-called *First* Priesthood Was Suggested

Without wanting to overextend ourselves on the historical factor of the introduction of the so-called *first* priesthood, but also trying not missing to highlight some more relevant points about the context in which this priesthood was introduced, we would like to address some more aspects of what, in a way, has guided or might have guided people's decision to propose what they proposed to the Lord. And this, so that we may also advance better supported to understand the distinctions between the so-called *first* and *second* priesthoods and so that we may move towards a more transparent understanding of how the choice for the priesthood called the *second* can be done.

When we mentioned in the previous topics that a particular group of people chose to suggest a priesthood that came to constitute the so-called *first* priesthood, also composed of the law called the Law of Moses and a covenant that was later called the old covenant or the covenant that God had made with the people in Sinai after leaving Egypt, we are not aiming, in any way, to criticize the position of people in those days, because they, unlike us, had not seen the so-called *first* priesthood, its law, and the old covenant having been practically exposed till exhaustion without being able to indeed lead people to the victory they sought.

In His eternal and perfect sovereignty, God also allowed events to occur in history according to human beings' choice so that these same events, in due time, could serve as a testimony and teaching for other generations as well.

1 Corinthians 10: 6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

...

11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

The conduct of the people territorially and politically liberated from Egypt's domain expressed what most people of all generations would also adopt in similar circumstances.

The people of the liberated group from Egypt went through centuries of slavery and where they did not have access to many acts or practices that “their masters” could do, possibly generating, in many, an appreciation for what was not available to them and also a mentality in which the idea of freedom is to have access to what “their masters” had.

And is it not precisely the kind of mentality expressed in the previous paragraph that often occurs among those who are deprived of something that other people have? But cannot this often also be the definition of the greed of the things of other people and that, in the end, are not indeed beneficial to those who aspire to have them?

Nevertheless, God did not take a specific group of people out of Egypt because they did not have access to what the Egyptians had. God took them out to lead them to an incomparable or very distinct life condition than that they had seen in Egypt or other peoples on Earth.

The slavery to which Abraham's descendants were subject in Egypt was not defined primarily by the abstention from what the Egyptians could practice and access, but it was defined, in many respects, precisely by what the Egyptians could access and by what they practiced towards their fellow men.

When a person, for example, tries to receive Christ as the benefactor of his or her life to achieve the material prosperity that the rich have, one does not want indeed Christ and the life that accompanies this decision. What one wants is the life that the individuals one considers most fortunate have, not realizing, however, that the kind of life he or she longs for might also become a path that will drive him or her away from Christ and the most sublime life, that is, from the life that matters for eternity.

People in contemporary centuries do not think so differently from people of the time when Abraham's descendants were liberated from Egypt so that they would no longer live as in Egypt. On the contrary, the human character, dissociated from its Creator, has not progressed, but sometimes goes even backwards.

*2 Timothy 3: 1 **But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:***

*2 **For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,***

*3 **unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,***

*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!***

Although it may seem that slavery in Egypt occurred primarily because of the pharaohs who exercised government there, the origin of slavery exercised by the pharaohs over other peoples was closely linked to the priesthoods and whom or what these priesthoods worshiped.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was revealed to the Egyptian pharaohs and became known through what He had done through Joseph, resulting in the provision of food to many peoples during seven years of exceptional scarcity that befell many nations. However, when Joseph passed away, the pharaohs who rose to rule next also forgot about Joseph's God, surrendering themselves entirely again to their pagan worship, resulting in hostility with Abraham's descendants and in their slavery.

*Exodus 1: 6 **And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation.***

...

*8 **Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.***
*9 **And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we;***

*10 **"come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land."***

*11 **Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses.***

When people turn away from God, they end up indulging in a series of fantasies of other gods and a series of fantasies about how they can relate to these gods, or even, as in the case of the pharaohs, they start to adopt the posture of entitling themselves or to be entitled by their priesthoods as gods, as if a human being could achieve this position.

Under this condition of priesthoods totally dissociated from worshiping the One Creator God, the Egyptians presented tithes, offerings, and all sorts of sacrifices to the priests they had established to represent them before their gods and pharaohs. Already long before the so-called *first* priesthood was established, the Egyptians made enormous contributions from their harvests and delivered countless sacrifices to their priests. In their priestly model, these were the ways they thought they could obtain the benevolence of the gods.

So, after centuries under the Egyptian sacerdotal model, although they did not have access to join it because they were slaves, it is not surprising that the individuals freed by God had in mind a priesthood as was the priesthood of “their previous lords.” It is no wonder that people now freed from Egypt also had in mind what those who were “the free ones” in Egypt had, even more because many of the Egyptians were accumulated with goods and wealth.

The Scriptures do not expressly state that people liberated from Egypt wanted the same model of priesthoods practiced by the Egyptians. However, their practical proposition reflected what Egypt practiced, even though they were now addressing only “one new God.”

Moreover, at various future points in the story narrated in the Scriptures, we can observe that the people liberated from Egypt and their descendants were in a position to need to be admonished by God for the fact that they repeatedly inclined their hearts and confidence towards the things of Egypt or even a possible return to the land of Egypt.

Therefore, suggesting Moses as a mediator for all the people was not so different from the pharaohs' position and in which they supposedly embodied the representation of the gods on Earth.

And yet another factor that may have contributed to the matter of suggesting a mediation priesthood of Moses on behalf of the people, is that Moses, following a suggestion from “*a priest of Midian*,” namely his father-in-law Jethro, had already or practically established himself above the people as a leader over the new nation that was being formed, just as pharaoh was a leader over the entire Egyptian nation.

When Jethro, “*priest of Midian*,” shortly after the people left Egypt, suggested to Moses the establishment of a governmental system in the form of a pyramid, Jethro, in practice, was also implying that Moses should sit at the top of the pyramid.

In practice, Jethro's suggestion was a proposition where Moses would be the mediator of the people's bigger needs regarding God and where the leaders in the pyramid chain would answer the simple causes of the people, even if these leaders had still been minimally instructed by God about how to live the new life that God had reserved for the liberated people.

Therefore, if Moses could be the mediator of the “great and special causes” of the people towards God, why could Moses also not be the great priest who would speak the things of God to the people?

Through the experience of Jethro's counsel to Moses, narrated in Exodus 18, we see how crucial or fundamental it is to discern which priesthood a person serves before listening to him or her and before taking the advice he or she proposes, even if one is a relative or someone very close.

In other words, when Jethro spoke to Moses, despite being Moses' father-in-law, he did not speak as a father-in-law, but spoke as a “*priest of Midian.*”

And still, considering that a priesthood is also associated with a law that corresponds to it, Jethro, together with his council, also suggested a whole system and a government law to Moses, but which, in practice, was not so different from what Moses saw in Egypt and the chain of hierarchical rulers that other peoples established in their governments.

After forty years outside the Egyptian system of government, Moses, perhaps, did not realize that what Jethro suggested to him, as a *priest of Midian*, was very familiar to the system in which he, Moses, had grown up and been taught by the Egyptians, advice that, therefore, was also a form of government that resulted in the enslavement of peoples under dominant leaders and tutors.

Thus, it is often also in the most familiar things exposed as if they were a proposition from God that there may be a need for a more profound discernment between what comes from God indeed and what does not come from the Lord.

*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.***

In the Scriptures, we do not see God making any rebukes to Moses for adopting Jethro's advice, for even Moses had not yet been taught how God wanted the freed people to come to live. However, similarly, we also do not see God endorsing Jethro's advice, for it was fragile and impractical for the future that God had proposed for these people.

When the people would arrive in the land of Canaan, the Jethro system could never work with the people spread over several territories and divided into their different tribes, for it just would not be practical and functional unless it would be governed with an iron hand.

Furthermore, later we see that God attests to the condition of not wanting a human king to rule over all His people or when He says that people of the group freed from Egypt would not need to have a king like the Gentile peoples did.

Yet another example that God had plans different from Jethro's proposition for the individuals of His people is shown when the Lord tells Moses to separate, even in the time of the wilderness, seventy men and to share the anointing that was upon his life so that the people would be better served.

Whether by the hardness of heart, by greed as mentioned in one of the texts presented above, by ignorance, by the influence of Jethro's priesthood according to Midian, or by the model of the Egyptian's priesthoods that they had in mind, the people of the group freed from Egypt, in a way, wanted a God who would bless them in their claims, but who would not be fully present with them in all their affairs.

The members of the people freed from Egypt did not want a priestly system that would expose them to God. They wanted a priesthood by which they could, like the Egyptians and other peoples, placate the "wrath of the gods" and "obtain favor from the gods for the prosperity of the individuals of the people," having the difference that, in their case, they were choosing to serve one God.

People freed from Egypt wanted a God to guide them, but with a certain distance. And for this, they were willing to pay a high price, but not the cost of God reaching each of them directly or each of them having to present themselves continually and directly before God.

In a sense, the people freed from Egypt wanted to be in control of when they wanted to draw close to God and when God should draw close to them so that their daily living and walking would not suffer direct restrictions from the Lord's continuous presence with them.

The individuals freed from Egypt were willing to perform some acts before God or directed to the Lord with a certain distance to have the guarantee that God would bless and protect them. However, they were not willing to have God too close to them so that their most intimate or personal attitudes would not have to conform to the Lord's way and continuous instruction.

*Jeremiah 7: 22 **For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.***

*23 **But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'***

*24 **Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.***

And as for modern days, is what was exposed in the previous paragraphs so different?

And in recent times, are there also people who want God, but as long as they can set the limits of how much God might approach them and how much they should approach the Creator of their lives?

The individual who chooses to be guided by God only partially or through external rules may often be putting oneself in a worse position than the one who chose not to be guided by God, for the person who is distant from God is sometimes more aware that he or she needs to return to the Lord than the one who is willing to follow in the Lord's way, but not in a way that the presence or the light of God is very close to him or her.

We believe it is necessary to be aware of the contexts mentioned above, for the *first* priesthood is based on the attempt of this “half-dedicated” life condition towards God.

The *first* priesthood is the priesthood model that is concerned with appearances and external acts, but that does not go deep enough into the internal issues of the heart and a closer and more transparent position before the Lord.

Under the affliction of Egypt, Abraham's descendants cried out directly to God and did not allow the fact that they were slaves to interfere in their cry directly to the Lord. However, when they were free to be guided continuously and directly by God, they wanted something that resembled what they saw in Egypt, for they focused on greed and outward things, as it also is seen repeatedly in each new generation.

In practice, the people liberated from Egypt demonstrated that they did not want the pressure of work that the Egyptians imposed on them, but, on the other hand, they did not want to reject the system of priesthood and governance of the Egyptians entirely, not realizing, however, that it was not only the people of Egypt who enslaved them. Egypt enslaved them because of the system of priesthood and governance that was adopted in that nation.

Therefore, to receive and keep the new wine, a new wineskin is needed. And to be clothed with the newness of life, one also needs the respective new clothes.

When people asked God to deliver them from Egypt, God heard the cry to free them from Egypt indeed, but not to release them only from the territory and dominion of the Egyptians. In the wilderness and before entering the land of Canaan, God wanted people physically free from Egypt's control also to be free from the models of priesthood and governance that existed in Egypt and other peoples of the world.

Nevertheless, once again, as God's suggestion was not accepted in those days when the people freed from Egypt stood before Mount Sinai, it still needed to be demonstrated that the priesthood according to human thought would not be successful in the hands of the human beings, even if God authorized them and favored them. This model could never free people from their deepest prisons, could never free them from the deep slavery of sin, and could never free people from the selfishness of trying to control their own lives.

Without the true priesthood offered by the Creator being established in the heart of a person, one cannot be freed from oneself, for the so-called *first* priesthood is a proposal to maintain a certain purposeful distance from the One who can provide full deliverance in the inner life or heart of an individual.

The priesthood called *first* does not work indeed, because, in its practical operation, it tries to mix the old yeast for the purpose of living the new. The *first* priesthood proposes to attain the new through the same operating principles of the old that can never actually reach the novelty of life.

In the material on The Gospel of Salvation and others, it is highlighted several times that the topic that God's salvation is not limited to deliverance, but that it is an offer of salvation that proposes to bring people to a condition of living effectively in newness of life from a new heart.

Similarly, when the slave people in Egypt cried out to the One God for deliverance, the Lord saved them to offer them a new kind of life that would imply a new type of

priesthood. However, those people, also for our teaching and instruction, chose to follow a hard path and of many sacrifices that never pleased God, allowed by the Lord so that, in the fullness of time and in an altogether sublime way, the glory of the *second* priesthood or that which God offers us exclusively in Christ Jesus would become evidenced to all nations.

Thus, at the end of this topic, let us look again in the text below at the central point about what God wants to teach us about *removing the first* and *establishing the second*:

Hebrews 8: 1 ***Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,***

2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer.

4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;

5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

6 But now He (Jesus) has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.

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."

13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

N. The Glory of Christ as the Unique One Who Fulfilled the Law of the *First* Priesthood so that It Could Be Taken Away

Hebrews 7: 11 **Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?**
12 **For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.**

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.**

Hebrews 10: 8 **Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

After seeing so many aspects in the previous topics about the *first* priesthood, we have probably reached the most significant point in the knowledge we need to have about this priesthood, which is to know that no one else in the world needs to follow the law and the covenant related to this priesthood because of the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, through whom the validity of this *first* priesthood was removed and the *second* was established.

At this point, there is something very interesting to note about the *first* priesthood, its law, and its covenant, because once a person adhered to this type of priesthood, one was also subjecting oneself to what one was choosing and from which one could not merely disconnect, unless the disconnection was according to the terms of the law and the covenant of the priesthood itself to which one was associating.

When someone joined the priesthood that also was called as the Levitical priesthood, as seen above, one joined the law and the covenant based on that priesthood or vice versa. That is, if someone became associated with the *first* priesthood, its law, or its covenant, one also became subject to the whole set of aspects of this priesthood.

And in the case of the *first* priesthood, the association with it was especially complicated, since this priesthood was based on a proposition where people declared before witnesses and before God that they would strictly follow all items of the law of the *first* priesthood, under penalty of becoming a target of severe curse or condemnation if they did not comply with a single rule of the law of this priesthood.

In a way, the *first* priesthood covenant was simple: If the person who joined it fulfilled the whole law, one would live. However, if one did not fully comply with its law, one was worthy of a death sentence, for a single item of the law not fulfilled disqualified him or her in general, even if the enforcement of some condemnations would not be carried out right after the transgression.

The highly complicated and challenging aspect of the *first* priesthood's law was the obligation to fulfill "all the items" contained in this law to, then, obtain life.

James 2: 10 ***For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.***

Romans 10: 5 ***For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them."***

Galatians 3: 12 ***Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."***

...
10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

It should be remembered at this point once again that God did not initiate the offer of a priesthood where people would receive laws or commandments through mediating priests, but this was a suggestion made by the people to God, where God, then, presented the people with a law by which the person who fulfilled it in full would also reach life for having achieved a condition of righteousness through the fulfillment of all items of this law.

When people of the group freed from Egypt chose the way of being instructed by God through their fellow men and according to what the Lord spoke to the mediators, and not by God's instruction to each family and the individuals in them, they made the choice of a "code of rules" transcribed by those who would mediate them so that through the "written rules" they could live righteously or without incurring a sin that would distance them from God and, consequently, from eternal life, because it is God who provides everlasting life.

And why should "the whole law" of the so-called *first* priesthood have to be fulfilled by those associated with it or submitted to it?

The law of the so-called *first* priesthood needed to be "entirely" fulfilled because those who joined it declared that they, in their own effort, would be just "in everything" as long as they were provided with a set of external rules that they could use as their reference point.

Therefore, just as Adam was subject to sin and unrighteousness because of one sin in which he tried to equate himself to God, so the one who committed oneself to live and walk just in everything that the law had established, but did not do it, similarly would also be subject to sin and unrighteousness.

The commandment of the priesthood called *first* is also considered fleshly because those who join it make a commitment to walk uprightly in the present and the future based on trust in their own word and strength, not even knowing if the next day they will be able to do what they promised. The position that the future is in the hands and under the control of those who associate with the so-called *first* priesthood is an attitude based on pride or arrogance. It is a posture of confidence that, by human forces and promises, a person will fulfill what one undertakes to do.

The so-called *first* priesthood is based on the type of positioning where the human being puts oneself in a position of guarantor of the future as if one indeed could do so.

James 4: 13 **Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";**
14 *whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.*
15 *Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."*
16 *But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.*

The Lord suggested accompanying each family and each person in a specific or particular way. However, people chose a path of law previously established so that they had it in advance and so that they could try to live and walk under this law without having to consult with God every moment how they should behave in righteousness to guarantee the "blessing and protection of God" over them.

The members of the people freed from Egypt refuted one of the main aspects of God's purpose for having liberated them from Egypt. The Lord released them to have fellowship with the freed individuals, but the path of the law was a position contrary to fellowship because anyone who wants to walk by the law or beforehand established rules may quickly become subject to thinking that one does not need to have fellowship with God since supposedly one already knows in advance everything one should do in his or her life.

Similarly, the idea of living according to a law or set of commandments previously established also works to make people think that they do not need faith in God to live their lives, because if someone fulfills the entire law or the predefined set of rules and supposedly agreed with God, the Lord would also be "obliged" to bless and protect those who fulfill the settled law.

Nevertheless, also because the so-called *first* priesthood is based on a life proposal dissociated from the faith, trust, and continuous fellowship with the Lord, the Scriptures inform us that God was not pleased with any of the sacrifices, offerings, and burnt offerings that were carried out under this *first* priesthood, for the Scriptures teach us that "***the just shall live by faith***" and that "***without faith, it is impossible to please God.***"

God was not pleased with the so-called *first* priesthood because this priesthood, in addition to not saving people from the sin to which they were already enslaved, enslaved them even more.

If, after joining the so-called *first* priesthood, an individual failed to fulfill a single item of the respective law, one would be doubly enslaved forever because, in addition to the condemnation caused by subjection to sin, one would also be subject to the punishment established in the law of this priesthood.

Once an individual has incurred the death debt settled by the law, a person could only get out of it if this debt was paid, which could only be paid off by being exposed to the execution of the condemnation associated with the so-called *first* priesthood.

Anyone who joined the so-called *first* priesthood was previously a slave to sin, whose debt was death. However, by associating with this *first* priesthood, one became once again or doubly indebted to death when one failed to fulfill only one item of this priesthood's law.

Therefore, to be free from the death sentence, the person associated with the so-called *first* priesthood would, then, need to find both the payment of his or her debt to sin and the payment of his or her debt to the priesthood to which one joined, because he or she undoubtedly would not fully comply with what he or she assumed to fulfill.

In principle, it may even appear that the debt of sin and the law are the same, but they are not. They are two separate debts with the same penalty, but they are still distinct. And whoever became subject to them needs the discharge of both parts to be free of the death sentence.

Thus, the supposedly simple choice suggested by the people for establishing a priesthood with mediators also implied the choice of a priesthood and a law to which the individuals who adhered to it became enslaved by their own suggestion, option, and adherence. And so they would remain forever if salvation and deliverance from this priesthood were not provided for them in addition to the redemption and deliverance from sin that they already needed.

Incurring in the association with the so-called *first* priesthood meant incurring the need for God to make provision not only for the liberation of people from sin, but also for the redemption of individuals associated with this *first* priesthood by the fact that an individual could never leave it through one's merits once he or she had transgressed only one of all items of the respective law.

While people who did not associate themselves with the so-called *first* priesthood were indebted to sin, those who joined this *first* priesthood ran into double debt, one to sin and one to the correspondent law.

Just as sin required death as a salary or payment of the debt, as explained more broadly in the material on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, so the law of the *first* priesthood likewise required death as a wage or payment.

Therefore, the demand for a solution to redeem people from the yoke or body of sin became increased by the need to save them also from their association with the *first* priesthood.

And how, then, people subject to the law of the *first* priesthood, already cursed and condemned for their transgressions of this law, could be free of the debt to the law and

the priesthood with which they were associated if the debt was death as well as was the debt of sin?

Thus, if the price for the redemption of people from sin was the death of an innocent in their place, so the death of an innocent regarding the law could likewise redeem those under the law or the so-called *first* priesthood.

Supposing that Christ had come in the flesh into the world only to be the innocent regarding sin that was crucified to redeem people from sin, individuals associated with the *first* priesthood or similar to it could never have been saved.

When Christ came into the world to provide salvation for everyone, it was necessary for Him to be born as the Son of Man and without personal guilt to be crucified to pay off everyone's debt regarding sin. However, to be able to pay off the debt with the law of the *first* priesthood, it was necessary that Christ, as the Son of Man, also came to be born under the condition of being under the law and so that, in this condition, He would fulfill the requirements of the law so that, by being crucified as an innocent also concerning the law of the *first* priesthood, He could pay off at once everyone's debt regarding sin and also of the law of that kind of priesthood.

When God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world through the condition of Son of Man plus the condition of being born under the law of the *first* priesthood, God did it so that all those enslaved not only to sin but also to the law of the *first* priesthood, or similar to it, could be freed from the yoke they placed on their lives by associating themselves with this type of priesthood.

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.

Therefore, just as in Christ the glory of Him who saves and delivers people from sin was revealed, so in Christ the glory of Him who saves and frees human beings from the law of the *first* priesthood was likewise unveiled.

When people who left Egypt chose the so-called *first* priesthood, God was not pleased with their choice despite allowing this alternative. However, even though people chose a path of death and not of life, the Lord did not leave them to be condemned forever according to the law of the *first* priesthood, showing mercy also to those who, in addition to sin, choose to submit to a law from which they could not be freed by themselves.

And so, in the fullness of the time, where the works of darkness through both sin and the law of the *first* priesthood had already become widely exposed to the world, God sent the provision of salvation even to every individual who became subject to the double wages of death.

Romans 3: 19 **Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.**

20 **Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

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.**

The Gospel, therefore, saves both the lawless person and the individual who became subject to the law, showing that God's grace extends to anyone or everyone who believes in the work of God manifested in Christ Jesus, our Eternal Lord, and our Savior.

Acts 13: 37 **But He whom God raised up saw no corruption.**

38 **Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;**

39 **and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.**

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."**

Choosing the so-called *first* priesthood brought a weight of condemnation to all associated with it, whether they had worked hard to comply with the rules of the law related to this priesthood or whether they did not even try to keep any of its commandments.

Nevertheless, even though the people themselves chose a type of priesthood that would surely lead them to become sentenced to death, the Lord once again did not leave them abandoned to the consequences of their own choices.

Just as God, in Christ Jesus, revealed His mercy, grace, and salvation for the liberation of people from the yoke of sin, so God, also in Christ Jesus, revealed and made available the perfect provision for the redemption of

everyone who became indebted to the law of the *first* priesthood or similar to it.

Romans 10: 4 **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.**

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them."

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."

12 **For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.**

Thus, after the revelation of Christ to the world, to insist on sustaining the so-called *first* priesthood, or priesthoods similar to it, is to insist on something that not only has no more credit before God, but that also resists and opposes the priesthood of grace that has been offered to us from heaven.

Galatians 2: 16 **Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.**

If until the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, people could still come to think that they could be saved through their own works or the works of the law, even though for centuries it was demonstrated that they could not, since the coming of Christ and the provision for deliverance from both sin and the law, the testimony of the uselessness of the *first* priesthood and the exclusivity of the *second* priesthood in terms of salvation for eternal life became more than clear and evident, fully justifying the revocation of any validity of the *first* priesthood.

O. Removing an Entire Set Implies that also All Items of the Set Are Removed

As we mentioned earlier, the institution of a priesthood as the so-called *first*, where some people in a group would come to mediate others in their relationship with God, required the elaboration of a very complex system to foresee this functioning not only at the moment of being established, but also during the subsequent days, years, and centuries, needing to consider in advance the most diverse possibilities of conduct that would arise in the days to come.

When people did incline towards a type of priesthood such as the so-called *first*, and when God accepted that it would be constituted, a vast set of rules, conducts, positions, and structures had to be defined and instituted, which, later, also ended up serving for teaching and testimony that this priesthood could not supply what people needed indeed.

God did not try to impose on the people a kind of boycott regarding the functioning of the *first* priesthood to lead this attempt to failure, because if He did, the people could continue wanting a new opportunity to try to follow this model of priesthood.

Despite knowing that the type of priesthood suggested by people could never supply the main aspects that they would need in their lives and that this priesthood would not achieve success no matter how well-supported the individuals were, God did not restrict any resources that were expected to be provided by Him.

The fact that God agreed to institute the so-called *first* priesthood, although it was not what He proposed, did not cause God to commit Himself only partly to the establishment of this priesthood or to try to hinder its functioning.

When God agreed to make a covenant concerning the *first* priesthood, He was willing to fully help people according to what was established in this priesthood covenant and also made available everything that was necessary for the covenant to have, from the part of the Lord, the full provision of resources to be put in operation.

Nevertheless, considering the point of the future teaching on the weakness and uselessness of this type of priesthood, the Lord also intervened so that each aspect of this complicated priesthood became recorded so that, more ahead, people would know precisely what was tried to be practiced under this priesthood or to know each of the points considered for it to be constituted.

So that each point of the so-called *first* priesthood would not become unnoticed when its validity would be removed, God made the various aspects encompassed by it explicitly notorious.

God went far beyond the requests of people. And without people even being aware of something that would be needed more ahead, the Lord also established ways of mercy and some means of postponing the curse or the death sentence that people imputed to themselves for incurring non-compliance with the items of the law with which they associated themselves.

Therefore, to make it explicit or evident what would be necessary to consider in the so-called *first* priesthood, God's description of it also happened to be very long, since it would need to foresee several groups of instructions, such as:

- ⇒ 1) Who would be and how would be the priests among the people who would represent everyone else and who would be the individuals who would make up the represented people;
- ⇒ 2) What services would be performed by the priests towards God, and which would be their services regarding the people;
- ⇒ 3) How and where the services of the priests would be performed so that the people could also monitor, at least externally, whether their representatives were doing the services for which they would also be separated;
- ⇒ 4) Which would be the services of people who were not priests, how they would present their causes to the priests, and how people should follow what their priests would instruct them.

Through the short list of items of a priesthood type such as the one mentioned in the previous paragraph, but a list where each item has a vast number of aspects, we can see that the establishment of a people's relationship with its priests, and vice versa, ends up exposing priests to a vast demand of aspects to be fulfilled.

Since the priests, in the mentioned priesthood, assume the role of representatives of the people towards God and God towards the people, they also put themselves in a condition where they should be able to listen to all people of the respective group in practically everything that God would need to hear them, just as they should be able to respond to these people in all that God had instructed them, but having the enormous difference that the priests of the *first* priesthood were also mere men and subject to their own weaknesses.

Hebrews 7: 28 **For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.**

The choice for the so-called *first* priesthood is an attempt at an alternative way to achieve what could be available in God but put in operation by priests who are not “God,” who are mere men or who are subject to the same weaknesses as those who try to use the services of the priests.

Thus, the choice for the so-called *first* priesthood would also need to foresee the implications of living with the factors generated by exchanging what was good and perfect for what was imperfect and permeated with many limitations and flaws.

Choosing the *first* priesthood also represented having to consider how people would have to deal with the consequences of the rejection of the direct way and the choice for the tortuous path filled with many dangers and imperfections.

Choosing the *first* priesthood also meant considering how people would have to deal with the consequences of exchanging the right for the uncertain, the safe for the unstable, the eternal for the temporal, the perfect and personal access for what would be much more complicated, imperfect, and that would never actually be able to reproduce the direct and personal access to the Lord.

Since, in the *first* priesthood, the priests are humans, limited, and subject to many deficiencies, they fail in their service, and they die, which is why repeatedly they need to

be replaced, which, in turn, led to a need for the prediction of the constitution of many priests.

*Hebrews 7: 23 **Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.***

Because of the weakness of the priests of the *first* priesthood, an entire priestly contingent had to be defined and instituted, generating a structure where there was a need for a high priest, priests, and even a vast group of Levites who would assist the priests in the extensive set of services that they would have to perform before God and people they represented.

If by chance, someone tries to think of something complex to establish the relationship between “*people to be represented, → the mediating people, → and God,*” or “*God, → the mediating people, → and the people represented,*” the *first* priesthood will always be even more complicated than any human mind can conceive.

So, to offer at least a minimum of care to the people, God defined that for every eleven individuals or tribes, it was necessary a person or a tribe that would represent the others and the services of this representative position before God.

This enormous contingent, now made up of a high priest, the priests in general, and the Levites, had to be always available to the people, thus creating a need for a place for this “priestly group” to be able to perform their services. This place was initially called the tabernacle, and in which it was also necessary to have an altar to distinguish when the representatives were working towards God or when they were serving the people.

Nevertheless, this large set of servants and representatives of the people also needed a different life supply condition since they were in a “full-time” dedicated service towards the people, thus also generating an obligation of being supported by those who used their services.

Considering that the *first* priesthood represented an “outsourcing of people’s relationship with God instead of each person doing it directly with God and at no cost,” it also became evident that this “outsourcing” needed to be foreseen and regulated in terms of the support of priests and their sets of helpers, the Levites, so that the people “would not take the service of others without providing the due wages.”

Thus, a tabernacle, altar, tribe, priesthood cities, and places of residence of the priests and Levites became necessary because of the apparently simple but indeed overly complex option for the so-called *first* priesthood.

Tithes and a wide variety of offerings were foreseen and regulated so that the relationship “priests + Levites” with the people could be a relationship of “taking service” with a payment at least minimally satisfactory for the subsistence of those who would be elected to serve the people as mediators of the others.

All this not being enough, if the people would travel, it was necessary that the whole priestly structure also accompanied them. And if the people came to settle somewhere else, the entire priestly system also needed to be settled there, generating in this sense a whole contingent of specific instructions.

Yet another aspect that needed to be considered in this complicated context was the necessity of a whole set of rules to regulate the misconduct of the parts involved,

generating a vast group of rules for compensations, restitutions, and even convictions in case one of the sides did not perform what was assigned to it, whether it was the people or the set of priests.

The global set of rules and aspects to be foreseen beforehand became something unimaginable for a relationship that would not even need to have been formed if people did not insist on serving God according to the mentality or the way suggested by the creation itself and not by the Creator.

And although this relationship was overly complicated and also highly costly, it was evident that the priests who were supposed to mediate the people were not really able to do it as it should be done, because if they likewise made a mistake concerning the law, they would also already compromise the representation of others before God. This aspect, then, generated the need for a system of sacrificial offerings, both because of the errors of individuals in general and of the priests to try, in some way, to appease the condemnation of the transgressions committed.

In this way, it becomes clear that the *first* priesthood could never be pleasing to God, for if not even those who would represent the individuals of the people regarding their relationship with God could reach an appropriate condition before the Lord, much less would the people, in general, be able to achieve it.

Therefore, considering that neither the priests nor the people would actually comply with the law of the *first* priesthood that they assumed to fulfill, added to the point that they certainly would try to circumvent the law or abandon the law in an attempt to achieve some relief, but without indeed being able to reach it because in their consciences the guilt of the law would continue to accuse them, it was still necessary to foresee other aspects to allow some representation of the people before the Lord.

Ultimately, no one would be able to come before God with true freedom, for no one would reach a condition sufficient worthy to perform it.

Thus, considering that the purification process to at least be able to be heard by God would be something harsh and even impractical if many had to carry it out, it became also evident the need to foresee and define in this priesthood a role of someone who would assume a position of the representation of priests or called as “high priest” that would represent all other priests, the Levites, and people in general before God at least from time to time.

The process of purifying the high priest to represent himself, for he was also a sinner, to represent later the other priests and the Levites who were likewise sinners, and, ultimately, to represent the individuals of the people in general, who as well were sinners, was a highly complicated process, full of details, and concerning which, God defined that only one priest, only once a year, could try to make this representation before the Lord. And, still, running the risk of not being accepted if the purification had not been adequately carried out as described in the law of the *first* priesthood.

Let us note once again that it was not God who suggest a priesthood where some mediators would have to present themselves to Him in others' place. This was a suggestion of people and which caused God to give them a law according to the type of priesthood requested. However, God also considered in this law some aspects that would allow some interventions of God's mercy and that would enable to point out the type of the future and eternal sacrifice that would have to be carried out in Christ to free people from the ultra-complex system to which they submitted themselves by their own choice.

Therefore, as the enormity of aspects that would have to be foreseen in the so-called *first* priesthood became unveiled, and as people sought to follow its law, this priesthood, evidently, became an unbearable burden and that made all involved with it becoming discouraged by the attempt to practice it, just as the people who today try to please God through the works they think they need to do for the Lord, but without asking God what the primary work He wants them to do is.

John 6: 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."

The so-called *first* priesthood could never definitively lighten people's heaviest burden. On the contrary, since this priesthood did not have an appropriate provision to eradicate the debt of error against the law and the subjection to sin, but only to cover it to gain a postponement of the condemnation, the *first* priesthood was becoming an accumulative burden, which later was exemplified in the Scriptures by the cases of the woman who was bent over and could in no way raise herself up, by the man with the withered hand, the thousands of lepers, the spiritual blind who guided other blind people, by the pool of Bethesda crammed with the sick, and so on.

The so-called *first* priesthood was the proposition of a solution that procrastinated the encounter with the true solution, imposing heavy yokes and burdens on those who did not have the strength to carry them.

Thus, shortly after the establishment of the so-called *first* priesthood, the great challenge became to obtain a solution so that people could leave or disengage from the priesthood to which they chose to be subject. However, no one could do so because they had already incurred in the curse and death sentence resulting from their choice, not being able to leave this priesthood if the debt concerning its law did not get fully paid, as explained in the previous chapter.

In this way, and since in the previous topic we already presented that Christ came to fulfill the whole law of the *first* priesthood to have authority to release the people subject to this law, the central point that we want to highlight in this current topic refers to the matter that since the *first* priesthood is such a complicated and inadequate priesthood, it makes no rational sense to try to preserve the validity even of some parts of this priesthood, because:

1 Corinthians 15: 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

Romans 3: 19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

If, because of everything that comprised it, the so-called *first* priesthood generated a weak and useless set of rules and actions regarding the primary purpose of salvation and the relationship of people with God, its removal, of course, would also imply the removal of everything that was instituted or established in it.

Therefore, considering that *for the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law*, God made sure that all aspects of the law of the *first* priesthood were described in detail by Moses so that there was no doubt about everything that comprised the set of factors associated with this priesthood and so that people also knew precisely the whole set of things that would cease to be valid when the *first would be taken away* and the *second would be established*.

In other words, God brought together the aspects of the composition of the *first* priesthood or the Levitical priesthood under the law of Moses not only with the goal that people who choose to follow it would come to know the complexity of aspects to which they would be subject, but also that later on it should be noted that at the end of the validity of the *first* priesthood, the validity of everything that existed under the model of this priesthood would also end, such as or for instance, the human and weak high priest, the other priests, the Levites of this priesthood, the altar, the temple, and all sorts of sacrifices and offerings that they practiced under this priesthood.

Similarly, with the end of the legality of the priests of the old covenant, the period of validity of the services of these priests also became outdated, leading, consequently, to the condition of no necessity of tabernacles, temples, altars, or any other structure used to perform the services of the *first* priesthood or similar to it.

And equally, or in turn, when the legitimacy of priests, their services, and their tabernacles is taken away, the period of validity of the provisions, tithes, and offerings related to them also end, for if there is no longer a type of priesthood that needs mediating human priests and everything associated with it in terms of the law, services, and structure, it no longer makes sense to maintain the system of sacrifices, tithes, and offerings of this priesthood.

Thus, when the *second* priesthood was revealed and also established regarding the aspect of settling people's debt concerning the *first* priesthood, everything that was in the law of the *first* priesthood became also revoked.

As mentioned in the previous topic, the same Gospel of God that came to provide the liberation of people from their eternal debt to sin and death also came to provide the redemption of people from all their association with the law of the *first* priesthood and with the eternal condemnation related to it.

Romans 6: 14 **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

Romans 7: 5 **For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.**

6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Romans 8: 1 **There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

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.

Considering yet that the *first* priesthood is also equated with a fleshly commandment in terms of the inspiration of its proposition, as we have already seen in the text of Hebrews, to lean to the *first* priesthood is also to incline to a path of death.

Therefore, the so-called *first* priesthood and the whole set of details of its law, covenant, and structure are not aspects that one should deal with lightly and without expecting to be exposed to severe consequences if one becomes associated with it.

Associating with the *first* priesthood was the choice towards an arduous path for those who did it after leaving Egypt, but they still did not practically or profoundly know what they were choosing, which was widely witnessed only in the years more ahead.

Nevertheless, a person joining the *first* priesthood in recent days, or models similar to it, may have even worse consequences, since the weakness of this priesthood and any of its items has already been demonstrated, exposed, recorded in writing, and declared outdated so that no one else may incline to it or choose this same path.

Associating with the so-called *first* priesthood in recent days, or similar to it, may not only have the effect of blinding the understanding of those who are exposed to this type of priesthood, but it may also cause the result of taking them away from the benefits of what has already been made available in the *second* priesthood, the priesthood of righteousness, peace, and eternal life that is found in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3: 13 **Unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.**

14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

- 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**
18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

- 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.
7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?
8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.

God agreed or authorized the use of the so-called *first* priesthood for some time for our teaching, because God knew that in each generation, there would be people who would seek to use similar ways or means to try to relate to the Lord.

Nevertheless, once the ineffectiveness of the *first* priesthood has been demonstrated in human history for centuries and even millennia, and considering that God has already declared outdated the alternative of the old covenant in all its aspects, no one else is authorized to keep some items of the law or the structure of the old covenant, as well as no one should even try to do so.

Considering that the association with the *first* priesthood adds a second condemnation to the one who associates with it and that God has already revoked its validity for having been revealed as weak and useless for so many centuries, it is no longer reasonable to try to continue insisting on living and walking according to the precepts of the law of this priesthood and nor trying to insist that perhaps some items of this law should still be applied.

Romans 3: 19 **Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.**

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.**

2 *For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.*

3 *But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.*

4 *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*

5 *Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.*

6 *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.*

7 *Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the volume of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God.'*

8 *Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law),*

9 *then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God."*

He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

10 *By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

And since God has already declared that it is necessary to take away the *first* priesthood, why resist God as the people did in the wilderness? And why not accept the removal that God has already established so that also the *second*, the perfect, and the true eternal priesthood revealed by the Lord may become established in people's lives?

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

17 ***For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.***

18 ***But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.***

Trying to follow the path of the *first* priesthood or parts of it was, from the beginning, a desire of people to trust in their natural strength or the strength of their fellow men instead of establishing their trust directly in God, which is also expressed today when someone still insists on following a path similar to that chosen by the liberated people of Egypt, having, however, the difference that in antiquity, people were authorized by the Lord to try to walk in the path chosen by them and today they are not.

As much as many try to sophisticate or refine their attempts to reintroduce the legitimacy of some aspects of the *first* priesthood's law or that are in line with their greedy interest, or however much they try to pretend that it is Christ they are following and that they want to redeem some aspects of the old law to serve the Lord better, their attempts will always incur resistance or stubbornness regarding God's will. And therefore, they also run into the risks that may arise from serving fleshly desires and not indeed the Lord.

*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.***

7 ***Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD.***

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."***

*Galatians 6: 12 **As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.***

13 ***For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.***

14 ***But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.***

Finally, in this topic, we would like to emphasize a point that we believe needs to be especially highlighted so that it does not become forgotten and confused either, which refers to the aspect that the law of the first priesthood is not what the Lord calls as His perfect and just law of life, but it is called the *Law of Moses*, for, without this perception, many aspects might be confused while reading the Scriptures.

When in Psalm 1, for instance, the Scriptures announce that blessed is the individual who takes pleasure in the law of the Lord and meditates in it day and night, it is not the law of Moses or the law of the *first* priesthood that the Psalm is referring to.

The law of the so-called *first* priesthood is not the *law of life*. It is *the law that makes sin and condemnation evident* so that we may know that it is not in this priesthood that the newness of life is found, as well as for us to understand that eternal life is granted by the *perfect law of God*, which, in turn, is also revealed to us as *the law of the Spirit and life, the law of Christ, the law according to the second priesthood, the law of freedom, and the law according to the New Covenant*.

*Romans 8: 1 **There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.***

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

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.***

Therefore, how sublime the patience, the long-suffering, the mercy, and the love that God had and has towards human beings are, to the point of not only allowing people to be instructed about the choices contrary to God revealed through such widely written testimony, but also or mainly because the Eternal Lord already has offered Himself in Christ to assume the curses, debts, and condemnations of all people to offer them a provision and a way of returning to what has always been the will of God for each person.

Galatians 3: 10 ***For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."***

(but)

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.

P. The Faithfulness and Temporality of Moses, Joshua, and Several Other Prophets Despite the *First* Priesthood

We have previously mentioned that when God sent Christ in the flesh into the world so that the *first* priesthood would be taken away and the *second* would be established, the Lord did not only come to do the work of taking away that which was directly related to the subjection of people to sin, but also that which had a temporary use or was allowed temporarily until a complete testimony for record and teaching became established.

Not everything that came to be declared outdated after the coming of Christ to the world and His work through the cross of Calvary had necessarily been wrong. Some of the aspects removed were simply temporal and served for a specific time and generations or served temporarily and as an auxiliary way to demonstrate and establish eternal positions that only were more widely revealed after the non-fullness of the temporary things became shown in practice.

In the sense of what is exposed in the paragraphs above, we can then understand, for instance, that Moses served God faithfully, even though he had served the Lord so that the *first* priesthood became established.

Since God had agreed to make the *first* priesthood covenant at Sinai, the Lord would also need people to faithfully represent Him so that the law of the old covenant and the old covenant itself would be presented faithfully and in full according to what God had declared.

The fact that Moses was a co-worker with the Lord to establish something that the people had proposed, instead of what God had offered, did not put him in a position of opposition to God. On the contrary, it is because of his faithfulness to God that Moses could be a channel or cooperative instrument of the Lord so that what the people asked for and which was agreed with the Lord could be correctly established, as it is also shown in the book of Hebrews in the following verses:

- Hebrews 3: 1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,*
- 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.*
- 3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.*
- 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.*
- 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,*
- 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*
- 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice,*
- 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,*
- 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years.*

10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.'

Although the people liberated from Egypt choose to walk under a commandment originated by carnal will, for the *first* priesthood did not foresee God close to the hearts of people to change their understanding or correct their beliefs, Moses was faithful in everything that God showed him to be established and built up. And this, for testimony regarding the details of the *first* priesthood for all generations and all the peoples of the Earth, as we have already mentioned previously and as we can see in the last text above.

Moses was not a man without defects and mistakes, but he was a man who had a very deep and very intense fear of the Lord. And also because of this, he was called by the Lord to lead the people out of Egypt.

Moses' faithfulness received a remarkable prominence before the Lord, for even though he had a prominent position in Egypt, Moses continued to put God and the Lord's people first in his life.

Until the age of forty, Moses had the position of the son of the pharaoh's daughter and was part of the most prosperous and powerful family of the entire generation in his days, materially or naturally speaking. Moses had a place secured among the so-called "great" by the peoples, and there was no pressure or threat on him that would make him have to give up his comfortable or outstanding condition in the world. But still, in his heart, Moses did not depart from the Lord, which was also notorious before God to the point that, many years later, he received the following special mention in the Scriptures:

Hebrews 11: 23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.
24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,
25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,
26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

Therefore, it is necessary to dissociate Moses' life and his person from what is called "Moses" or "Law of Moses" when his name is associated with references to the *first* priesthood.

When the Scriptures instruct people to leave "Moses" behind to come to the new priesthood or the new covenant established in Christ, they are not teaching people to begin to dishonor and despise the person of Moses and his example of faithfulness, for God Himself did not do it, and yet, He exalted Moses' personal position or attitude of loyalty towards Him.

Nevertheless, despite Moses' faithfulness, the Scriptures also teach us not to consider Moses more than a man who faithfully served the Lord and who did it for a

temporary purpose that would need to be replaced by something more glorious, something perfect and eternal.

Moses was faithful to God because he served the Lord in what was pertinent to be done in his generation and so that the testimony of what would happen in those days would become appropriately established. Despite his weaknesses, Moses chose to serve God, and the Lord directed Moses to do what was pertinent to be done in his specific time of life.

Unlike Moses, over the centuries, many people have announced an intention to serve the Lord, but despite what they declare, they do not indeed want to serve God in what is necessary or pertinent in their generation or a specific time of life.

Nowadays, for example, many individuals who claim to want to serve the Lord still insist on doing so according to the *first* priesthood faithfully instituted through Moses only for a specified period, or they spend the precious time of their lives with future projections concerning the things that are not yet possible to be experienced.

In all generations, there are many who deviate from what is relevant to their times, either trying to return to what belongs to the past or trying to anticipate what is not yet applicable to the present time. And, in this way, they do not submit to the Lord to do God's will as it should be done at the current time so that the preparation for the future times may be properly hurried up, as Peter instructs us in the following Scriptures:

2 Peter 3: 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

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?

If only there were, in today's world, many more men and women with Moses' faithfulness to serve the Lord precisely according to what God asked him to do in his day and generation without wanting to do what is past or what the Lord will only ask people to do more ahead.

If someone who lives in this generation longs for serving the Lord, it is also according to what God wants to do in that specific period that he or she should want to serve the Lord.

God alone is the one who has been present in all generations and remains from generation to generation that inhabits the Earth. And only God sees the whole picture of His work done over many generations.

The human being is not God and is not responsible for the general picture of events, being able, at most, to find the grace of the Lord to have a portion of participation in the whole work of God. And this, at a specific time and according to what is relevant to each period. It is not up to a particular human being to know and tell God what is best to be

done in each season, for people cannot see what exactly is best for each period unless the Lord shows it to them, and they also believe and receive what God reveals to them.

Moses knew that the Lord was God of all generations, the Eternal I Am. And he realized that what mattered to be done in his days was what God asked him to do, even though he knew that the real rest was yet to come through a future descendant of Abraham who would be greater than he was.

Moses waited on God and understood that even though the descendant expected by the world would come only years or centuries after his life on Earth, the action of this descendant would also come to redeem even those who served the Lord in times that preceded the revelation to the world of this so awaited eternal descendant.

Also through the Psalm presented below, Moses showed his perception of God's sovereign and eternal position and the need for him to be gifted by the Lord to do what was particularly necessary for his days:

Psalms 90: 1 A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

3 You turn man to destruction, And say, "Return, O children of men."

4 For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it is past, And like a watch in the night.

5 You carry them away like a flood; They are like a sleep. In the morning they are like grass which grows up:

6 In the morning it flourishes and grows up; In the evening it is cut down and withers.

7 For we have been consumed by Your anger, And by Your wrath we are terrified.

8 You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.

9 For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh.

10 The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

11 Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath.

12 So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

13 Return, O LORD! How long? And have compassion on Your servants.

14 Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy, That we may rejoice and be glad all our days!

15 Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, The years in which we have seen evil.

16 Let Your work appear to Your servants, And Your glory to their children.

17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.

When God agreed to establish the *first* priesthood at the request of people who had been freed from Egypt, the Lord also did it to expose what was hidden in their hearts, but not before God. And this, so that what was hidden from human knowledge would also become known to everyone for testimony and so that each person could decide to reject what later, in the light of God's truth, was exposed more widely as inappropriate to everyone in the whole world.

Jeremiah 7: 23 **But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’**

24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.

Matthew 10: 26 **Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.**

If the matter of the *first* priesthood could be attributed only to Moses, and mainly in the sense of someone wanting to blame him for choosing a type of priesthood like this, the *first* priesthood could have ended in the wilderness when Moses died or could have been ended when the people entered Canaan. However, the *first* priesthood did not cease in the desert and accompanied the people for many years and even centuries after crossing the wilderness and entering the land of Canaan because it was the people in general who had made this choice and continued to make it.

Although the law of the *first* priesthood is called the Law of Moses, Moses was not the focus of the problem. On the contrary, he was a faithful servant of God, as already mentioned, and he even prophesied that the people needed someone greater than himself.

John 5: 45 **(Jesus said,) Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you trust.**

46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.

47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?

Moses knew that more ahead, a particular descendant of Abraham would come to grant people a definitive rest and that this descendant was not even Joshua who succeeded him, as instructed by the Scriptures and as we will also see below.

Thus, even if Moses had died and people freed from Egypt would already be in Canaan, the land that God had given them as an inheritance because the previous peoples in that land were abominable and filled the measure of iniquity before God, they would still be separated from the central freedom that they needed because also in the new land they remained subject to the priesthood associated with the name of Moses.

The person Moses or the individual Moses did not enter with the people in the land of Canaan, but the priesthood, according to the Leviticus law, entered because it was the people who had asked for this type of priesthood and not Moses. And for this reason, people could not find the rest they longed for in their hearts, not even in the land that became their property.

Although he also made mistakes, Joshua was likewise wonderfully faithful to God and a righteous ruler. However, because people remained subject to the *first* priesthood even in Canaan, they continued similarly apart from entering the “land of rest” for the heart.

Another interesting point to note yet in the period of history that started in the wilderness, and although people freed from Egypt were under the *first* priesthood or which is according to the “Law of Moses,” is that even Christ, because He is the Eternal Son of the Eternal God, was always with those people.

Nevertheless, the problem of that group was that Christ was not placed in the position that He was supposed to be, and for this reason, people did not find the rest they needed most. They wanted to walk in their own ways and not be guided by Christ, as can also be seen in the two precious New Testament texts quoted below:

- Hebrews 4: 1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.*
- 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*
- 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*
- 4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works";*
- 5 and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."*
- 6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,*
- 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."*
- 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.*
- 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.*
- 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.*
- 11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.*
- 12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*
- 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*
- 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.

1 Corinthians 10: 1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,

3 all ate the same spiritual food,

4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

When God accepted to make the covenant according to the so-called *first* priesthood, He, from His part, always manifested His faithfulness and even placed Christ, figured as the spiritual Rock, with these people. However, in this *first* priesthood, because people wanted it so, Christ was the one who followed them and not the one who was ahead of them.

Therefore, the true or real rest for the soul is not in the *first* priesthood, but in having Christ as Lord and living according to the priesthood revealed by Christ, in which, in turn, there is a throne of grace and abundance of mercy to everyone who comes to it through faith. Having Christ as the Lord is the only condition for real rest for the afflicted heart, but the people freed from Egypt had other intentions in their hearts.

Christ in us is the hope of glory. It is the place where God dwells when a heart is broken and contrite before the Lordship of Christ and when a person is willing to let God guide him or her.

Christ in us is the way of the new creature, the new covenant, and of peace and rest, and not the things of the world or to be guided according to the things of the world that oppose the Lord both for not seeking Him and for insisting on seeking God through ways that are contrary to God's will.

Galatians 6: 14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

Romans 9: 30 **What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;**

31 but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

33 As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

Romans 8: 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.**

Romans 11: 32 **For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.**

Matthew 11: 27 **All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**

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.

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Advancing still in the course of history, we may see that David, too, was faithful to God and served the Lord wonderfully in his generation, even though he was also not a perfect person to be placed as the perfect high priest over all or as a priest in the place of his fellow men.

Therefore, even under David's reign, the most substantial expected rest had not yet been achieved, even though the people had conquered more territory and achieved peace with neighboring peoples.

Through faith in God, David was a man who had the privilege of receiving the grace of the Lord to see in advance much of what would happen in the future through Christ. And so, he prophesied that in his descendant, that would be the Christ, God would establish something much superior to what he, David, achieved and made available to people, to the point that David called his descendant Lord who sat beside his Lord, that is, at the right hand of the Heavenly Father.

And throughout history, there have been many others who have served God faithfully throughout their generations and despite being under the yoke of the Law of Moses. However, because of the need for a higher or superior priesthood to be revealed in the future, much of what was instituted through them had only a temporal character, for, under the *first* priesthood, they would never fully reach real rest.

Even when they were overflowing with land, territorial peace, and wealth, the liberated people of Egypt oscillated between seeking God through the old priesthood and getting tired of trying to serve God because of the harsh or complicated reality of this same *first* priesthood.

Under the government of powerful and wealthy kings, the liberated people of Egypt still tried to build temples, thinking that a larger or more sumptuous physical place for the *first* priesthood, materially speaking, could solve the need for the glory and rest from God that the *first* priesthood could never provide them.

And in this eagerness or desperate search to make the priesthood chosen by the people in the wilderness viable, kings charged them more taxes, and people paid them thinking that they could find peace in expanding the place of service of the *first* priesthood. However, each new attempt only increased the yoke of costs and covered sins because those attempts were never effective in getting them out of their hearts.

Thus, amid all this arduous and heavy scenario of the *first* priesthood, it became necessary to rise or increase the ministries of the prophets even more, because as people started to fading under the law of the *first* priesthood that they chose to follow, the prophets reminded them of the commitment they had made, but they also brought a word of encouragement to the afflicted hearts and who waited for the revelation of some way of release from that so heavy burden on their lives.

Life under the *first* priesthood had the prophets as one of the exhaust valves to release part of the pressure that this priesthood generated on people.

In other words, some of the prophets were those that God found willing to hear His voice again directly, despite also being part of a people under the law of the arduous Levitical priesthood.

God always left an open channel to talk to people, even if they put themselves in severe and obscure limitations or imprisonments. And in the case of the *first* priesthood, it was the prophets who played this role of introducing a hope for the future that God did not want people to forget.

Through some prophets, the Lord showed people how they continually moved away from the *first* priesthood they promised to follow. However, it was also through them that God exhorted people to keep hope in their Lord, pointing to the day when the old priesthood would be taken away from their shoulders and a new priesthood of life, a priesthood according to God, would be offered to them.

Through Malachi, for example, the last of the prophets who had his words recorded in the Scriptures, we find God showing very clearly the failure of the *first* priesthood, both on the part of the priests and the Levites and on the part of the people in general that were associated with that priesthood.

Through Malachi, God made it explicitly known and recorded that neither the priests, nor the Levites, nor the people in general were faithful, and also that they would never be if they remained under the same priestly condition, for even the individuals who sought to pay tithes faithfully to the Levites and priests complained about God's delay in intervening on their behalf, although they were also failing to comply with several other items of the law of Moses.

Considering that in the *first* priesthood the priests were the mediators of the people in general, if by chance the people were inclined to be faithful to the assumed covenant,

it could occur that the situation of the priests and Levites would not be so. Similarly, it could happen that a priest would be trying to be faithful to his priestly calling, but he could still be prevented to freely declare blessings on people in general if they were behaving under infidelity.

The so-called *first* priesthood did not even function in the wilderness, where everyone was grouped together and under Moses's strict supervision and the pyramidal chain of leaders implanted there by him. Thus, how much more would this priesthood not degrade and become ill due to people's fleshly positions when they would be spread across their various tribes, territories, and even in future generations?

When, in the book of the prophet Malachi, God raises the matter of people becoming faithful in paying tithes, it may even seem to some that the Lord was calling on the people to do so, but this is in no way consistent with the context of the entire book of the prophet Malachi. When God mentions the matter of tithing in this book, He did it as a hypothesis because it was already evident that in that system so-called *first* priesthood, there was always or continually someone or a contingent of several people in a position of unfaithfulness to God and their fellow men.

The result of trying to follow the so-called *first* priesthood inevitably led people to behave like infidels and thieves towards the law of Moses and their brothers.

But how, then, could God intervene on behalf of people under the *first* priesthood if continually both mediators and people in general incurred something undue concerning some point of the law they agreed to follow?

Therefore, also through the prophet Malachi, the Lord declares once again that only “a new day” could change that circumstance of subjugation to the old priesthood or the Levitical priesthood, an aspect later ratified by John the Baptist and in several texts of the Scriptures inspired by the Lord after the revelation of Christ to the world, as exemplified below:

*Malachi 4: 2(a) **But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing (or salvation) in His wings.***

*Luke 1:68 **Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people,***
*69 **And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David,***
*70 **As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began,***
 ...
*77 **To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins,***
*78 **Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;***
*79 **To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.***

*Romans 8: 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.***

In the final part of his words, the prophet Malachi announced that a “new day” would come for the Law of Moses to be remembered. However, this law would no longer be remembered to be followed, but as a testimony that something incomparably superior was being established to allow people also to receive superior salvation and finally rest in their hearts.

*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.***

If by the continuous non-compliance with the rules of life under the Law of Moses it was clearly demonstrated that through that priesthood people would never come to obtain God's instruction in the way that was necessary, in the fulfillment of all the law to rescue the enslaved to this same law, Christ also manifested His greatness and glory concerning what none of the so-called “men and women of God of antiquity” could accomplish in the past, even those who loved the Lord most intensely.

However great the service of any person faithful to God in antiquity was, in Christ, it was demonstrated that only the Lord could open, also from His condition as a Son of Man, the path of an eternally useful, true, and perfect priesthood before God.

*Hebrews 8: 6 **But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.***

When God proposed to speak to the individuals freed from Egypt, the people wanted the priesthood to be done by a way that a man would open before God for them, and for this, they suggested the priesthood order according to Moses.

Nevertheless, in Christ, God assumed a condition similar to that of men. And out of love and mercy, Christ, also as the Son of Man, did what no other human being could ever do.

In Christ, God did what people wanted other people to do in God's place, but for this to be done, the Lord also needed to come and save people from the prison they chose to submit according to their own will.

So that human beings would know that God understood their situation as creatures and that He knew their affliction in the context of the created world and that departed from fellowship with the Creator, the Lord, in Christ, became similar to the creature to be the perfect High Priest that the creature wanted to have before God.

Thus, to dissipate any doubt regarding God's love for each person, the Lord, in Christ, assumed the condition of the Son of Man and opened the new and living way for fellowship with the Creator also from the perspective of human affliction and anguish.

Isaiah 53: 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

...

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

Hebrews 4: 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.

Hebrews 7: 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

Hebrews 8: 1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

Under the priesthood of Moses, an individual who was tempted by evil and sinned had to be ashamed and afraid of the condemnation that would come upon him or her. However, in Christ, one can approach Christ with a sincere heart, knowing that if he or she comes to Christ to be helped and forgiven by the Lord, he or she will also find refreshment in the One Eternal High Priest who suffered afflictions, overcame the world, and who knows how to save and instruct perfectly those who come to Him.

Therefore, it is in the fellowship with Christ, with Christ in our hearts and us being in Him, that the real rest and eternal glory that accompanies this rest dwells.

John 14: 1 (Jesus said,) "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me."

It is not where a tent or a temple according to the *first* priesthood or similar to it is built that the glory of God is, but Christ in the heart of each person is the place of the awaited rest and a place for the glory of God beginning to shine more and more before an individual until it is "perfect day."

Why, then, seek in external things or other people, in temples, in books, in spiritual guides, or any other aspect of the creation what Christ has reserved to reveal to each one in the fellowship and intimacy that He offers according to His perfect and eternal priesthood?

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.

When, in Christ, God took away what had been established for a period through Moses and what was tried to be supported with care by other men and women throughout history, God was not despising these individuals' faithfulness and service to God, but these people, and their temporary works, simply did not have the qualities of being "the Christ" coming from God to humanity. And what they did, which was temporal and allowed until the fullness of time matured, also needed to be removed to make way for the perfect and eternal.

In many constructions of houses and buildings, temporary beams are used to support these works, but these temporary beams, however useful they have been during the construction, are not kept for people to live with them after the work is ready. To revoke, to take away, to remove that which was temporarily useful in some way so that the aimed purpose could be established is part of life's dynamics.

As the sovereign builder, God has all the rights and prerogatives to remove, in due time, what must be taken away. And the human being, who is a beneficiary for a time of what God allows to be used temporarily, should not resist, for his or her own good, what God wants to take away from his or her life at the appropriate time.

When a person resists in recognizing as outdated what the Lord has already declared inadequate for a new period, one not only resists what God wants to remove, but also what the Lord wants to establish next.

In many ways, the *first* priesthood made evident the adverse effects of postponing the encounter with the will of God, but this priesthood proved necessary to demonstrate to the world and its generations how useless and harmful it is for a person to postpone the good that God desires for him or her.

Thus, although the law of the *first* priesthood, Moses, Joshua, David, and several other prophets have played very significant roles throughout history, several aspects related to them were left behind after the fulfillment of the work of God through the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, His burial, and His resurrection from the dead to free people from the yoke of sin, as well as from slavery to the law of the *first* priesthood.

*Luke 16: 16 **The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.***

*Romans 10: 4 **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***

To insist beyond time on maintaining what was done to be temporary, however useful it may have been in the past, or to insist on sustaining, beyond what is pertinent, the position of the servants who did what was temporarily necessary, is to try to elevate the temporary to a definitive status, and is to try to value the servants beyond what is due, as it is the case exemplified in the book of Matthew, chapter 21, from verse 33 to verse 46.

Insisting on elevating the temporary or its co-workers to a definitive status is an attempt to introduce a proposition that subtly seeks to equate a small stone used during the process with the foundation of the entire construction only because the little stone was in evidence during a particular time. It is an attempt to invert the glory due to each part.

In short, the human being is not God, is not able to be God for the lives of others or in the lives of others, and nor should one be considered beyond what is appropriate.

*Isaiah 48: 11 **For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another.***

*1 Corinthians 4: 1 **Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.***

Romans 12: 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

When Christ came to fulfill the old covenant law to rescue those imprisoned under it, as well as to have the *first* priesthood removed afterward, He also ended what was temporary concerning the prophets, since in the light of the *second* and perfect priesthood, no one else needs to continue living under that outdated system.

After Christ revealed the *second* priesthood, the Lord still announced prophecies about people's lives and through other people, but He started to do it through a gift given by the Spirit of the Lord to those who believe in Christ and not through the office of prophets. Therefore, the condition that a Christian might be used to declare some prophecies through a gift from Christ never equates him or her to the prophets and their offices at the time of the *first* priesthood.

In the new priesthood, each person can directly access Christ if one receives Him in the heart and can directly validate with Christ some prophecy that was addressed to him or her, and, mainly, how and when to apply the prophecy if it indeed came from God, something that in the old priesthood was not available to those who wanted to live subject to that priesthood.

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.

In Christ, people are called to the peace of Christ in one body, which has only one Head over all and who is all in all. In Christ, there are no divisions in multiple heads or multiple mediators of this body's members in their relationship with the Head of the body.

God's work, through Christ, to take away the *first* priesthood, was not a work of disrespect for those who loved God and did temporary works before Christ came in the flesh into the world. On the contrary, God's work through Christ to remove the *first* is also a work of love and consideration even for those who have faithfully served in temporary things so that the eternal priesthood could be manifested in glory in the fullness of time.

No one, except Christ, has fulfilled the law of the *first* priesthood to the extent that it should be fulfilled. And because the Lord did it perfectly, it was only through Christ that the *first* priesthood could be taken away and the *second* priesthood could be established according to the Heavenly Father's will.

In Christ, a Christian has an even more complete priesthood than Adam and Eve had before the fall, for in Christ, God revealed His eternal and sovereign purpose of the continuous fellowship of people with the Lord from the innermost of the hearts, where, then, the Lord is our God, and we are His people, as well as our Heavenly Father and us His children according to the lineage of the redeemed in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 11: 11 Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Through the testimony of the history of the so-called *first* priesthood, we can see that neither in Egypt, the desert, in Canaan under the direction of Joshua or David, in Babylon, nor scattered among the nations, people were able to find true rest or peace for their souls, for it is only in Christ, and Christ in the heart of a person, that the provision for the fundamental, primary and most vital human needs can be found.

Galatians 3: 16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

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.

Acts 10: 36 (This is) The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching the Gospel of peace through Jesus Christ; He is Lord of all.

Q. The Differences Between the *First* and the *Second* Priesthoods Are Gigantic or Striking already from their Essential Points

In the various previous topics of the current chapter, many differences between the *first* and the *second* priesthoods have already been exposed, and many more will be addressed in the later chapters due to the highly significant condition that exists in this matter.

Each of the distinct details of the *first* and *second* priesthoods corroborates and adds up to show that, in fact, these two priesthoods are hugely opposed to each other. And this, to demonstrate, through the most different angles, that there is no condition of equality regarding life under each one of them, nor about the results that come from associating with each one of them.

The many different details in each of the priesthoods in reference also demonstrate through many different ways how the proposition of the so-called *first* priesthood initially seeks to present itself as a small variation of the *second*, but which subsequently ends up in a sea of principles and outcomes completely distinct.

Nevertheless, before proceeding to further details on the distinctions between the *first* and the *second* priesthoods, we understand that it is very significant to highlight that all the differences between these two priesthoods, in reality, are a succession of details that come from the main distinctions that are in the fundamental parts of each of the priesthoods in reference.

The many differentiated details between the so-called *first* and *second* priesthoods are born or have their origin, in fact, in very few and fundamental aspects, making that the approach, in the Scriptures, of the many differences between them always ends up returning to the primary points that make them so divergent.

Knowing in detail many points of the differences between the *first* and the *second* priesthoods might be very beneficial. However, to not incur excessive attention to the details of these distinctions to the point of failing to see the picture of the main divergences, we also understand to be highly relevant to emphasize repeatedly the fundamental differences that are already present since the bases and the initial principles of each of the two priesthoods in reference.

Knowing several aspects of each priesthood aims to allow to know a more detailed distinction of each priesthood, but if this also does not seek to recognize the different foundation of each one of them and the destination to which each one proposes to take people, there is a high risk to proceed as the Lord Jesus stated in the following text:

Matthew 23: 24 ***Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!***

The *first* and *second* priesthoods, as we have already seen, are completely incompatible in thousands of points, but not only that, the differences between them in every detail are also striking and separated by chasms that prevent any agreement between them, for their distinctions are already established from the initial and

essential points of each one of them. And this is what is crucial to always keep in mind throughout the comparative approaches between them.

Recalling that the essence of a priesthood is the establishment of practical actions so that a person's relationship with God occurs in a way that is satisfactory to both parts, it is also in this essential point that the *first* and *second* priesthoods have entirely different propositions in its initial constitutions, even though the *first* also proclaims the need that people have of the One Creator God.

Despite its appearance of godliness, the *first* priesthood is a proposition of denial of God's purpose manifested in the creation of the human being. This *first* priesthood proposes that only a few people relate directly to the Creator and that the rest be placed in subcategories where they depend on others to draw close to God, thus proposing class divisions, domination, or forms of subjugation that God never intended to create for people to draw near to Him.

As we have already commented, the so-called *first* priesthood arose from a proposition of how a people freed from Egypt wanted to relate to God, but from the understanding of its members and not from God, not from a heart first instructed and taught in God's will.

Behind its appearance of outward godliness, the *first* priesthood essentially seeks to hide a desire of people not wanting indeed to relate to God individually, even though they say otherwise. For this reason, perhaps, the proposition of the *first* priesthood is also the exposure of a lack of boldness of people who associate with it to openly recognize that they do not want a closer relationship with God, but who, on the other hand, also do not want to take the position of not wanting God because of fear of losing the benefits they supposedly could receive from the Lord.

The *first* priesthood proposes a conflicting stance in itself, in which it suggests that not everyone should approach God personally, but where it proclaims that everyone needs God in order to receive the benefits they hope to obtain from the Lord.

The aspects such as those mentioned in the previous paragraphs are the ones that need to be highlighted to not become like “camels” that are not appropriately filtered through the straining out process exemplified by Christ.

Therefore, an initial and central point that defines whether a priesthood proposition is similar to the type of the *first* priesthood lies in the question of whether there is or not some kind of mediators between people and God that are not exclusively the Lord Jesus Christ, whether the mediators offer prayer services to God in place of others, whether they propose to lead others to services said to be presented to God, or whether they offer specific directions of what others should or should not do and which would only be up to being instructed directly by the Lord to each person.

Whether it requires payment or not, the *first* priesthood is the type of priesthood that, in one way or another, tries to put someone or something in between the relationship of people with God and Christ, even if it tries to proclaim that each person could seek God directly.

Some priesthoods similar to the *first* priesthood even make a point of claiming that they do not deny personal access to God by those who associate with them. However, or

on the other hand, they still offer people alternative mediating options by which they also say that it is possible to perform the relationship with God.

In these alternative options, they offer priests that propose to do partial mediation, but saying that people are also free to seek God personally if they prefer or need.

In other words, in the world, there are several priesthoods that propose more than one concomitant way for people to reach God, presenting what is contrary to the teaching of Christ in which the Lord tells us: ***I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*** They are priesthoods that subtly try to divert people to the paths that naturally seem more accessible to them, but gradually pushing them away from the only true path.

The *first* priesthood, figuratively speaking, could perhaps still be compared to the son's relationships with a good and wise father, where suddenly the sons, to no longer be directly exposed to the kind father and his wisdom, propose that one or two brothers represent them before the father, and may even go so far as to be willing to pay for the services of the brothers chosen to speak in their name with the kind father.

Now, how would a kind father who loves each of his children deeply feel knowing that his children no longer aspire to speak and relate directly to him?

How would a father feel if some sons or daughters proposed the mediation of one or a few brothers or sisters in the others' place for some price and toll so that the relationship of the others would be minimally maintained with the father?

How would the father feel even if they did not do it for a price, but his sons and daughters did it to avoid the father for lack of love for him or for fear of relating directly to him?

The last example described above is something similar to what happened to human beings in the proposition of the *first* priesthood regarding God or similar to it, but in a much more damaging way and more extensive in terms of the number of people represented, since no one could ever satisfactorily represent the other brothers before God and no one, much less, could represent God before one's brothers or even before a people or multitudes as some priests of this type of priesthood claim they can do.

Considering that God is a perfectly wise Father, and whose wisdom is above all and any wisdom of the creation, able to attend and listen to everyone, and respond to everyone individually in their hearts, who could, then, equate oneself to the Lord? Or who would be able to establish some brothers to mediate others in the endless universe of questions or points concerning which people need to interact with God?

How can a human priest be every morning with those whom he or she proposes to mediate before the Lord? How can he or she instruct a person at every moment of the day when one needs specific instruction? How can a human priest advise people even when they are sleeping, as the Lord does?

Psalms 16: 7 ***I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.***

How can a human mediating priest assist people in all their weaknesses and the sum of the weaknesses of all people he or she mediates, just as Christ does through the Spirit of the Lord for those who believe in Him? How can a human mediating priest

understand that most profound pain and distress of others that cannot even be well expressed in words and feelings?

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.

***Isaiah 40: 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.***

Can a human priest and supposedly mediator who says that God does not directly instruct people, but that the Lord only does it through the Scriptures, answer all the individual questions of life when people come across the matter of how to apply the Scriptures in their most diverse singular or peculiar situations?

Will this supposedly mediating human priest, or even a group of several priests, have the minimum ability to understand each specific question of other people, even the most complex and technical, to present them to God properly? And, afterward, will one have the ability to understand God's answer and pass it on faithfully to those waiting for the answer?

Is it not contradictory for human priests who want to mediate others to say that God “only speaks by the Scriptures” and, then, pray to God to receive the Lord's answers to the questions they themselves have about the Scriptures?

If God only would respond through the Scriptures and the “most relevant” questions through mediators, why, then, would those who want to be priests of others insist that people should pray much to God so that God might be favorable to them?

The so-called *first* priesthood is the one that was established under a “detailed and written law,” but it was also this priesthood that imprisoned people to a “letter that kills” and to a group of priests who could not fulfill that for what they were designated, preventing these same people from living life according to the “Spirit that makes alive,” as it is also exposed in the subject entitled *The Letter or Life*.

If God is supposed to only speak to people through written laws, how, then, do we understand that the writers of the Scriptures themselves heard God and were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write them? How can we understand that the first century Christians could be guided and instructed by the Spirit of the Lord if the Scriptures of the so-called New Testament were not yet established?

At this point, we can also see how much the *first* priesthood is opposed to people's relationship with God and wants to distance them from the direct instructions that God

Himself established in His Scriptures by telling people to live by the Living Word, by the word of His mouth and by contemplating the God of their lives to the point that they can be transformed from glory to glory, as also exemplified by some other texts below:

Matthew 4: 4 **But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"**

Isaiah 45: 22 **Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.**

Isaiah 48: 17 **Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go."**

Isaiah 31: 1 **Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, And rely on horses, Who trust in chariots because they are many, And in horsemen because they are very strong, But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, Nor seek the LORD!**
2 Yet He also is wise and will bring disaster, And will not call back His words, But will arise against the house of evildoers, And against the help of those who work iniquity.
3 Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; And their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out His hand, Both he who helps will fall, And he who is helped will fall down; They all will perish together.

Isaiah 50: 4(b) **He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.**

As glorious, holy, profitable, and indispensable as the Scriptures and a life based on the teachings contained therein are, it is not the Scriptures that give life to people, but it is God Himself and also His daily instruction that gives life to each heart, as explained in the material named as The Letter or Life already mentioned above.

The human being was not created to live without God's continuous living instruction in his or her life.

God did not create people for them to live separate from a living and personal relationship with the Eternal Creator.

Thus, for a human priest to be able to supply the life of God in the life of his brothers or his fellow men, this priest would also have to be made a "god," like the Eternal God, to supply everything that everyone needs at all times and everywhere, something that the Babylonian ruler always wanted to do in the congregation, as presented below:

Isaiah 14: 13 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'
15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

Wanting to be a priest of others can resemble the desire to be like "God" in others' lives. And to want to have a human priest as a mediator over one's life is to see a fellow man in a condition above what should be attributed to him or her, and which Paul continually refuted vehemently.

To want to be a priest of others can become to be equivalent to competing with the Holy Spirit regarding one same heart. And the one who accepts other human priests over his or her life is separated from how a spiritual Christian guided by the Spirit of the Lord is called to walk, becoming carnal from the moment one begins to walk according to men, no matter how much they claim that they are serving God.

1 Corinthians 3: 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?
5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?
 ...
16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.
18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.
19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness";
20 and again, "The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."
21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours:
22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours.
23 And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.
4: 1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

The so-called *first* priesthood or similar to it offers a destructive proposition or an opposition to the appropriate functioning of the true inner temple aiming to give rise to the establishment of an external and false sanctuary, where no one is perfected as one should while connected to this outer tabernacle and its offerings, laws, and practices.

Hebrews 9: 6 **Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.**

7 But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;

8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.

9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience;

10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,

14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Apart from a direct priesthood in Christ between a person and God, an individual will never find true satisfaction, instruction, rest, and inner peace in his or her heart.

How, then, could anyone propose a person to receive Christ directly as the Prince of Peace, Light of Life, Counselor, Mighty God, Wonderful One, Father of Eternity and after that presenting to this individual a proposition that denies him or her the direct access to Christ and the Heavenly Father through the Lord Jesus?

If a person is instructed to pray directly to Christ and call on Him as Lord to be saved, why, then, would one have to pass through others to approach the One who he or she already could approach directly before?

Why should a person go to others to come to Christ if Christ comes to the door of each person's heart to offer fellowship with him or her?

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.**

Questions like the ones we saw above are points that can be compared to the "camels" that many blind guides and the people guided by them have

let going through their sieves or straining out processes while discussing the details of their services or meeting systems and offerings that they claim to promote to “help others to worship God,” as if the Holy Spirit could not help people in their weaknesses and also in how to worship the Lord.

Christ is the perfect High Priest for humanity because Christ offers the way of relationship with God to all who want it, but also because Christ offers this way so that each one can do it personally. Christ is the Only “Personal” High Priest for every individual who wants to have personal and direct fellowship with God, and which everyone needs so much.

Christ does not instruct people to go to houses or some so-called special rooms (physical places) or deserts (remote areas or places of retreats) that some point out saying that there He will be, as we have seen before, because Christ is the one who comes into the hearts of those who believe in Him and receive Him in their hearts.

As we will see in more detail in later chapters, Christ is the perfect High Priest to represent everyone, but in Christ, also each person is made a priest of his or her life to relate directly to Christ, and, in Christ, to relate from the heart with the Heavenly Father and the Spirit who is given by the Father to the one who believes in the Lord.

*Revelation 1: 4 **John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,***

...
*5: 10 **And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.***

*Romans 5: 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.***

Therefore, the difference between the first and the second priesthood is enormous, extreme, or in no way compatible.

The distinction is so striking that the priests of the *first* priesthood may go so far as to see themselves superior to others, to the point of imposing to their fellow men heavy burdens that they do not want to carry and to the point of seeking to stand out from simple people and that by the priests are called sinners, but who are also their brothers.

In Christ, however, we find that everyone is elevated, equally and directly, to the same position before God. In Christ, we find that Christ Himself became similar to people in the world and took on the guilt of their sins also to be a fully assisting High Priest so that each person may carry out, in Him and through Him, one's own condition as a priest before the Lord.

Let us look at the distinction exposed in these last paragraphs exemplified yet by some more texts:

Matthew 23: 4 **For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.**

5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'

8 But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.

9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.

11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

13 But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

Philippians 2: 5 **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,**

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

The *first* priesthood tries to corrupt the purpose of the creation and human relationship with God to such an extent that the Lord instructs us in His Scriptures that anyone who wants to continue serving in the old tabernacle or the *first* priesthood is not part of the same altar of Christ and cannot participate in the fellowship with the Lord as proposed by God, for those who “serve in the *first* priesthood do not truly serve Christ and His position of Eternal Lord,” but a fleshly commandment that resists the priesthood in Christ offered by God equally to all.

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.**

10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

The idea associated with the *first* priesthood or similar to it seeks to corrupt even what is highly clear or explicit in the *second* priesthood, trying even to teach that the foundation of the apostles and prophets are the apostles and prophets themselves, opposing so the fact that in Christ there are no mediating priests and nor mediating foundations.

When Paul writes that Christians are God's family and built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, he is not saying that Christians are built on other men as in the *first* priesthood, but that they are all built directly on a same and unique foundation, just as the apostles and prophets were.

And who has always been the foundation of the apostles? Is it not only Christ, as Paul unquestionably declares?

And who is the foundation to which the prophets pointed? Was not all their hope converged on Christ that would come and be the everlasting and direct foundation of every person who would believe in Him?

When the Scriptures teach us that each Christian is of the family of God, fellow citizens of the saints, and built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, they are declaring that each Christian is built individually directly on Christ just as Paul, Peter, John, Matthew, and others were, and never on these men or others, whom we should consider as servants and stewards of God, but never as the foundation of personal life in God.

A Christian is not called to build his or her life on “a little stone or a small rock,” as the meaning of the name Peter represents, but on the eternal rock of the revelation that the Lord Jesus is the Christ.

A Christian is not called to build his or her life on any other Christian, but on the Unique One who died and delivered this Christian from sin, from the body of sin, and also from the bondage of the law of the *first* priesthood or similar to it.

Ephesians 2: 17 And He came and preached (evangelized) peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3: 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

Paul never contradicted himself by stating that Christ is the only foundation, that each one sees how one builds on Christ, and that he, Paul, was only a minister, servant, or steward of Christ and then, elsewhere, saying that people should build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, for the foundation of all of them has also always been exclusively Christ.

Those who have the conscience seared by the *first* priesthood and lean towards it or part of it, seek to present these distorted thoughts that try to put men or women as mediators in everything and who try to corrupt the principle that each person can have Christ as the only eternal foundation of life. So, in addition to trying to corrupt or block people's direct access to God, they also try to distort what sustains people or gives them support for the newness of life in the Lord.

And just as Paul did not contradict himself by announcing that Christ is undoubtedly the only everlasting foundation worthy for a person to build his or her life, also Christ did not contradict Himself in saying to those who follow Him that there is only one Guide, Master, and Heavenly Father worthy of being followed and that all others who follow the Lord are brothers to each other in Christ and servants of each other, not priests to each other, much less foundations, guides, leaders, or fathers of each other.

The well-adjusted building in Christ is the one where one brother does not put oneself over another brother and nor tries to be the foundation of others. It is the building where everyone has Christ in the heart and where each person is directly grounded in Christ, just as each one can also be instructed by the One who offers the only everlasting support.

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.

Announcing and teaching others that everyone can have Christ in the heart and that everyone should also live and walk in Christ, without the need for mediators, is a teaching genuinely aligned with the so-called *second* priesthood granted by God and that a Christian can share with others if he or she really loves them and wants everyone to have free access to the Heavenly Father who loves everyone with His perfect love.

Anyone who wants to rely on the priesthood and the instructions of others who do not lead him or her to seek the Lord in the first place to be instructed directly by Him, should be aware that when he or she will give account to God concerning his or her life,

one will not be able to rely on the excuse that he or she followed others, because ***each of us shall give account of oneself to God.***

If a person came to the point of trying to mediate others, one will give an account in this regard before God of oneself and why one did it. However, those who submitted themselves to others will give an account of themselves because they did not accept the direct priesthood offered to them by God in Christ, opting for mediators not authorized by the Lord after the revocation of the *first* priesthood.

*Romans 14: 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."
12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

If a person chose to follow a priesthood that maintains similarities to the one named *first*, one will also be required to be accountable according to this choice. If, on the other hand, one opted for the *second* priesthood, and not even one similar to it, because shadow and appearance do not constitute a true priesthood, one will respond according to the *second*, which is established in a better and higher covenant, full of mercy and forgiveness for those who accept to receive it from God without associating this forgiveness with the merits of having accomplished works similar to those proclaimed by the *first* priesthood.

Attempts to establish a relationship with God through a priesthood that seeks to do it outwardly, through others, or through rules of external worship, while the other does it from the heart and as Christ guides an individual to do, show that the *first* and the *second* priesthoods move respectively towards totally different targets, namely: death or life, darkness or light, law or grace.

The *first* and *second* priesthoods do not mix and can never be merged or made compatible. Just as death and life are opposed and antagonistic, so the *first* priesthood is opposed and unfriendly towards the *second*, no matter how hard a person tries to fulfill the *first* priesthood in detail, because if one does not meet just one item of the law of this priesthood, one is already condemned by the respective law that one chose to follow.

If a person is more active or less active in the *first* priesthood, this ends up not being so essential in the end, because if one is guilty at one point, one is guilty of all as well as those who break many more principles of this priesthood.

The *first* priesthood's mentality is to achieve a condition of dignity on self-merit, which makes it not viable for anyone that remains subject to it to be saved, for ***all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.***

There is only one solution for a person concerning the *first* priesthood: to accept that this priesthood before God has no validity, legality, or credit at all for salvation and life according to the Lord's will. The unique solution is to accept the testimony that God gives both concerning the removal of the *first* priesthood and about the newness of life that is granted in the *second* priesthood.

Galatians 2: 16 ... knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

*1 John 5: 10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.
11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*

Trying to live and walk in line with the priesthood called *first* or Levitical is like an individual running into the mud and failing to get out of the place, getting even dirtier the more one tries to get out of the mire by one's own effort.

The *first* priesthood is like quicksand from which a person can no longer get out. If one tries to come out forcefully, one sinks even deeper. If one does not try, it might take longer, but ultimately one also sinks. The *first* priesthood is an endless priesthood of rules, but it never achieves what it seeks or proposes.

On the other hand, through the experiences of the Hebrew people under the *first* priesthood and despite all the repeated sins and the insistence of people wanting to remain under the *first* priesthood, it was also shown that God always loved people and was always ready to extend His mercy when they asked for the Lord's help while there was still time to do so, pointing to the fact that only with God's help can an individual find freedom from the oppressive yoke of the *first* priesthood.

Thus, at the appropriate time, God made it abundantly evident that only in Christ does a person have God's provision to get out of the *first* priesthood and leave it behind, for also only in Christ is the novelty of life granted through the grace of the heavenly kingdom.

In the fullness of time, the Heavenly Father revealed Christ as the provision of a priesthood of life and not death. Revealed Christ as the expression of His eternal mercy, showing Christ as the essence of the *second* priesthood and the expression of the opportune time to choose the priesthood in which God's eternal life is granted to those who believe in the Lord and receive Him in their hearts.

Psalms 100: 5 For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.

*2 Corinthians 6: 2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you."
Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

In the *second* priesthood, the individual who accepts that Christ has justified and justifies him or her is saved and invited to relate directly to His Eternal Creator and to remain forever in this eternal justification offered only by Christ, as addressed more

widely in the subject on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God and of which we recall below the following text:

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.

And since Christ is the greatest good in the life of a Christian, the ever-present Savior and Lord, and that through the Lord Jesus one can also relate to the Heavenly Father, the Father of eternal love, and the Spirit of life, peace, and grace, what remains so important in the rites and rules of inferior, old, or outdated covenants for someone to continue to cling to them or even to an isolated item of these types of priesthoods?

1 Peter 3: 18 **For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,**

...
4: 1 **Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,**
2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

What on Earth could be worth more than the One who created the whole Earth, the heavens, and what is in them?

The so-called *first* priesthood was allowed to show that not even the human being oneself, the most sublime aspect of all of God's creation on Earth, is worthy to take God's place or mediate God in His relationship with people whom He personally loves, whom He wants to help and benefit, and whom He invites to also be constituted in the condition of His eternal children if they freely choose to believe in the Lord.

Psalms 73: 23 **Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand.**
24 You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory.
25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.
26 My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Psalms 16: 1 **Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.**
2 O my soul, you have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You."
3 As for the saints who are on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight."

- 4 ***Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, Nor take up their names on my lips.***
- 5 ***O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot.***
- 6 ***The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance.***
- 7 ***I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.***
- 8 ***I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.***
- 9 ***Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.***
- 10 ***For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.***
- 11 ***You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.***
-

A Christian can rejoice and take pleasure in those who walk according to God's will and who also have the Lord as their portion, but no other person is "our portion or our inheritance." First of all, our inheritance is the Lord in whom all equally can have an inheritance if they have received Christ in their hearts and remain in Him.

The distinction between the *first* and the *second* priesthods, in one of the most central and absolute aspects, is the difference between whom a person wants to have seated as "lord" in one's heart, which may respectively be the idea of something created, another person, or oneself, or the Eternal Creator of his or her life.

Thus, when someone chooses Christ as his or her Lord, it is also the Christ-based priesthood that one should choose to follow to live based on eternal righteousness.

- Romans 5: 20* ***Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,***
- 21 ***so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

The *second* priesthood is the offer of a life of relationship with God according to the proposition of the Lord Himself, and which is according to the knowledge that the Lord has about the human being, his limitations and weaknesses, and in which the Lord remembers that the human being lives in a body that is dust and that will return to dust. And because the proposition of the *second* priesthood is just and full of mercy, it is also perfect for everyone who receives the Lord Christ Jesus by faith.

- Psalms 103: 13* ***As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him.***
- 14 ***For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.***

The proposition that some are called to relate more to God than others and that some can mediate others in their personal relationship with the Lord, in contradiction to the proposition of a life of personal and direct relationship with God offered equally to all in Christ, is a fundamental matter that establishes an irreparable separation between the *first* and the *second* priesthoods and from which the other or the enormous diversity of incompatible distinctions between these priesthoods derive.

If the so-called *second* priesthood, the priesthood of Christ, did not foresee that all those who associate with it would be able to come personally to God, what to say about the following texts?

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

2 Corinthians 13: 14 ***The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.***
Amen.

R. The Application of the Removal of the First and the Establishment of the Second in Personal Life

If there is a *first* to be removed and a *second* to be established, this indicates that the two must also be different from each other so that there is a need for a change, even though both deal with the same topic.

If there is a *first* to be removed and a *second* to be established, it is also because the two are incompatible with each other to the point that a possible joint coexistence between them is not viable.

And if there is a *first to be removed* for a *second to be established*, it is because the *first*, for one or several reasons, actually has in its constitution a temporary and disposable characteristic regarding the one that is introduced last.

In the eyes of God, after establishing the facts that revealed more broadly what came last, the so-called *second* priesthood's availability also implied the non-acceptance or rejection of the so-called *first* priesthood.

There is much information that teaches us about the historical change that took place regarding the so-called *first* priesthood in the face of the revelation of the *second*, but, still, one of the main points that stands out ultimately refers to what the implication of this historical change is also for people of the present and how it can be reflected individually in each person's life.

Today, the one who faces the subject of the *first* and *second* priesthoods already finds defined what the Lord has established in the past, already comes across the condition that the *first* priesthood has been taken away before God and considered outdated to the world, both natural and spiritual, as well as one also comes across with the reality that the *second* priesthood has already been established forever before the Lord and presented as such to the world.

Nevertheless, one fact needs to be noted with particular attention, and which is the point that although the *first* priesthood has already been taken away, people still insist on wanting to associate with it or to models that partially adopt the characteristics of the so-called *first* priesthood.

In this last sense, the Scriptures inform us that although the *first* priesthood, its law, and its old covenant have already been declared outdated in the face of a new priesthood, it still remains exposed to the world for a certain period, even it will soon disappear entirely.

And looking at the Scriptures more broadly, it seems to us that the brief time for the *first* priesthood to disappear entirely will only occur coincidentally with the end of the world as it is known at present.

Hebrews 8: 13 ***In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete.***

Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The remark on that something already revoked, obsolete, or outdated still remains in some way may sound strange. However, the Scriptures show us that this is a fact that occurs in the world and that many people continued and still continue to seek the *first*

priesthood after its revocation, even hoping that the Lord still will recognize their association with this priesthood.

Nevertheless, the Scriptures also compare the attempt to reestablish the *first* priesthood in people's lives as an attempt and proposal of spreading a fascination or enchantment, as a work of subtle cunning and perversity.

Galatians 2: 19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.

3: 1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

2 Corinthians 3: 14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament (or Old Covenant), because the veil is taken away in Christ.

Given that it was necessary for Christ to die on the cross of Calvary for the law of the *first* priesthood to be properly repealed and for God to make the provision for the liberation of people from slavery to this law, seeking to affirm that the obsolete priesthood is still legitimate is a distorted or perverse attempt to try to keep active what enslaved people to try again to subject them to a yoke from which they have already been released, as we are warned in the following text:

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.

This whole matter of taking away a priesthood, its law, and its covenant may seem like a topic not known to many, but in the world, people are continually exposed to changes in laws and repeals of others, creating different rights and obligations at different times and where a person, either by choice or because one is not informed, may try to live under a revoked law even if this no longer gives him or her any rights.

And if perhaps a person consciously tries to live according to an old law after it has been repealed, one cannot claim ignorance concerning the new law and might be deluding oneself that his or her personal decision could overcome the condition of not being subject to a new law because one personally chose to subject oneself to an outdated law.

Thus, although the choice for a law that has already been repealed appears to be devoid of purpose, there are always people in the world who try to live according to outdated laws even after they have already been warned of their obsolete situation.

Attempts to uphold an outdated or repealed law may seem absurd to many, but in practice, this nonsense is not always seen in the same way by everyone, especially when the attempts to maintain an outdated law represent the pursuit of preserving some interest or the wishes of those who think that the maintenance of the law that has been revoked can still provide them with benefits.

In this way, let us think, for example, about the revocation of the position of the high number of priests of the *first* priesthood and that through mediation services also extracted their material supply, in addition to the privileged social positions that this ancient priesthood guaranteed them.

How would those priests, who would have their functions revoked by the so-called *second* priesthood, see a law being declared to them and that made their office not only an invalid service but also an office that came to oppose what God was establishing in favor of those that the priests hitherto mediated, allowing each person to approach God directly without needing the mediator priests anymore?

Those priests who were more godly, God-fearing, and who were waiting for the revelation of the *second* priesthood would most likely receive willingly the newness from God they loved and would also begin to trust in the Lord to be instructed by Him on how to live from that point on, but how many would not pass to oppose and resist the new that was revealed to them?

Although the change from one type of priesthood to another is primarily a spiritual definition before God, the practical impacts on professional, family, economic, and social life may also be very broad and significant.

From the moment that a priesthood comes to lose its valid condition or function, its priests, temples, buildings, services, sacrifices, and offerings likewise lose the validity they had until that moment.

In human history, some interventions may cause much more change than many people even begin to realize. And some interventions in human history are not accepted by many people as they should be not even after centuries and nor if they are granted for the benefit of all, such as the revocation of the *first* priesthood and the establishment of the *second*.

A small phrase in the Scriptures expressed at the beginning of the book of Hebrews saying that “God once spoke to us in certain ways, but now He speaks to us in another way,” can unfold into many spiritual and natural implications that will not be welcomed by all people.

When Christ came in the flesh into the world, there were thousands of priests and Levites associated with the *first* priesthood who were supposed to act as mediators for the people and what also resulted in thousands of negotiations of sacrifice, offerings, and tithes that were carried out daily.

And since tithing was one of the precepts of the *first* priesthood and that this priesthood was adopted practically on a national level, the collection of this priesthood comprised almost a tenth of the entire economy arising from the plantations and the increase of the nation's herds, in addition to other taxes that the people paid to the other rulers.

So, observing the breadth of aspects involved in changing the type of priesthood, that perception that many do not want to accept the new priesthood with a new law and a new covenant does not longer seem so absurd.

Knowing these general aspects of the revocation of the *first* priesthood and the non-acceptance of this revocation by many can be very relevant or crucial, for it shows that although the *first* priesthood is already obsolete before God, many still want to associate with it. And many do this to try to create before society an idea that each person can choose what seems best to him or her and still have God's approval or to try to support the idea that even the coexistence of an individual with two priesthoods simultaneously could become acceptable before the Lord, where people supposedly could choose parts of one and parts of the other as they think that better suits them.

And in practice, many people indeed have the idea of simultaneously associating with more than one priesthood, doing so even because of pressure from their spouses, family members, and other interests. However, no matter how many people choose these attempts to live associated with multiple priesthoods, they will never be able to reestablish before God the *first* priesthood or part of it.

The *first* priesthood has already been declared outdated or revoked by the Lord, and Christ has already been revealed as the end of the law and, consequently, also of the *first* priesthood's covenant. However, many people still present the *first* priesthood as an option because many individuals still insist on wanting priesthoods according to the model of the *first* and contrary to the *second* despite the *first* having already been taken away by the Lord.

Therefore, understanding that people today still use their prerogatives to be able to make choices to choose priesthoods with characteristics of the *first* priesthood also becomes a fundamental point for the position that each person takes concerning what God offers him or her.

After the Lord took away the *first* priesthood, He no longer accepts a person's association with this priesthood, to priesthoods similar to the *first*, or to mixed positions of a person wanting to combine the *first* with the *second* priesthood. At the same time, however, people in the world still have the option of choosing by themselves what God has already declared outdated.

The fact that God has already announced that the *first* priesthood is contrary to His will does not mean that the Lord will prevent people from continuing to choose it or associate with it.

Nevertheless, considering that in its most recent definition in the Scriptures, circumcision has also come to represent a symbol of any act of association of an individual with the *first* priesthood or similar to it, the choice to join the *first* priesthood or something similar to it, currently not authorized by the Lord, may cause severe consequences such as the detachment of the person from the priesthood of Christ and an individual falling from the grace of the Lord, according to the exhortation 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.

Considering the impossibility of jointly responding to two opposing and contradictory laws regarding one same theme or the unreasonable situation of association with two entirely antagonistic laws, God does not associate with an individual if one decides to join a priestly covenant contrary to the priesthood in Christ.

Since it is not possible to establish common terms between a priesthood that resists God and has already been declared outdated with the priesthood that acts according to the Lord's will, God does not associate with those who want to associate with priesthods opposed to Him even if an individual intends to associate only in part with what has already been revoked.

Before God, for example, it is not acceptable for a person wanting to be justified by the law of the *first* priesthood, which is based on the fulfillment of the works of this law and where one is guilty if a single item is not fulfilled, and, at the same time, wanting to be justified by grace through faith.

Paul explicitly warns that if a person deliberately joins a system of a priesthood where the person is justified by carrying out the works of the law, the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary will not be to his or her advantage. After Christ has already been crucified, a person still insisting on trying to live according to a written law is no longer something recognized by God and expresses a position of dissonance towards the Gospel of Christ.

Even if people do not respect their own decisions, God respects their decisions or choices of the type of priesthood they want to join, even if they choose an already outdated or revoked priesthood.

Does it make sense, for instance, for a person to buy a car and wanting the competing manufacturer to take responsibility for the warranty on the purchased car? Does it make sense for people to associate themselves with a flawed type of priesthood, unable to save and perfect them, and yet expect God to always intervene in their favor when the priesthood they want to be subject does not serve them as desired?

Therefore, repeating what we have mentioned in the previous topics: The differences between the *first* priesthood and the *second* priesthood are striking, opposing, extreme, and without any possibility of conciliation, combination, and partnership, which is why the only way to start living associated with another priesthood is to leave one to associate with the other.

In civil laws around the world, sometimes a condemnatory law is partnered with an acquittal law, but in the case of the *first* and *second* priesthods, this does not apply because the opposition of one to the other does not allow them to be merged or combined.

The *first* and *second* priesthods are distinct and not compatible since their constitution and foundation, as we have already seen.

Choosing the so-called *first* priesthood excludes, automatically, the choice for the *second*, and vice versa. The association with one of them automatically implies opposition and rejection to the other since they are opposed as the flesh and the Spirit are opposed.

Galatians 5: 17 **For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**

Thus, an observation that seems to us to be very pertinent at this point and that perhaps afflicts some people is that if someone accepts the removal of the *first* priesthood according to what God has done, one is not dishonoring the Scriptures nor God. On the contrary, one is no longer resisting the Lord as to what is not beneficial for his or her life also to be free to receive what God has always wanted to offer to every human being.

Christ did not come to merely announce the imperfection of the old, to revoke what was imperfect, to take away that which in practice was shown to be inefficient and for this reason was also considered outdated or obsolete by the Lord. Christ did not come to merely take away what people had trusted for so many centuries and let them without guidance, direction, or assistance. Christ came to show the imperfection of the systems in which people were inserted in the world, but not without offering them what is superior, perfect, and eternal.

Christ came in the flesh into the world to fulfill all the requirements of the law of the *first* priesthood that were necessary to free people from the weight of sin, the body of sin, and the Law of Moses in order to take away the condemnation that these aspects imposed on people, but Christ also came to establish people in the life of freedom that they can have in the Lord who set them free.

When Christ died for His disciples to free them from the “old man” and from the conditions in which this “old man” was inserted and subjugated, He also said that He would not let them helpless or unassisted. On the contrary, the Lord said that he would always be with them through the Holy Spirit that He would send into their hearts.

God does not become intimidated concerning announcing the need that people have to abandon what is not beneficial to them even if they think otherwise, because the new that the Lord offers is superior, helpful, and aims at the true salvation of those who receive it.

In many ways and words, the Lord has announced and announces what needs to be taken away and what needs to be established. However, due to the crucial implications that these changes can have in the life of a person who accepts or rejects them, the Lord has given us an entire book of the Scriptures aimed at understanding what these changes are and which understanding is so vital to people's life, namely: The Book of Hebrews.

The book of Hebrews is not only introduced with a narrative about the radical change that took place in God's relationship with people after Christ's death and resurrection. It also sets out in detail what changes have occurred and the actions that were provided so that these changes could be carried out legitimately in order that people can also have the certainty of faith and hope in the righteousness and grace of the Lord if they so wish.

Also through the book of Hebrews, for example, the Lord allows us to draw parallels between ineffective ways as to the goal of saving people perfectly compared to the way

that leads them to a relationship with the Lord that is indeed beneficial. And this, to allow people, under an adequate understanding, to choose which path they want to follow.

The coming of Christ in the flesh into the world or the introduction of a living manifestation of the kingdom of God through the Lord Jesus Christ also by the death on the cross of Calvary, followed by His resurrection, introduced a time in which God started to show His glory to the human beings in an entirely new way. However, God did not do it without taking away the old system practiced by many until Christ came into the world as the Son of Man.

After Christ's death and resurrection from the dead, God explicitly announced both the unique way of salvation and reconciliation of people with Him and the rejection of any alternative paths that do not indeed save people for eternal life, and this, so that people also know what they are called to reject or take away from their lives.

On the other hand, if people do not accept the removal of what through the work of Christ was considered obsolete, they will not only oppose the new established in Christ to become part of their lives, but they also will no longer be able to have the old system with God's authorization as it was in the wilderness and before the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, because for God, that old system is already outdated, without validity, and about to disappear.

From the death and resurrection of Christ from the dead, trying to reassure the affirmation of the *first* priesthood's validity has become a proposal or an attempt to maintain a deception, enchantment, or some sort of fascination.

The fact that people do not know or do not believe that in the glory and the ministry of Christ is also inserted the “taking away or revoking the validity” of what God declares as revoked and what does not match the new that the Lord came to “establish,” causes people to try to continue to live associated with something whose approval has already expired. They try to live under something that no longer has legitimacy before the Lord, by this refraining from achieving what really has God's approval and is beneficial to them indeed.

Moreover, some people even know that certain permissions and actions already have their approval expired, but out of pride, greedy interest, family tradition, or any other purpose, they do not adopt an adequate posture concerning what has already been revealed and determined by the Lord and do not adopt the attitude that John the Baptist adopted when the new time became manifested before him, as shown in the text below:

John 3: 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

31 He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

32 And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.

33 He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.

On the other hand, if an individual does not know with an appropriate clarity that ***Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes***, if one does not know the ministry of Christ as the one who removes the old and establishes the new, or if one does not even know to what law do the Scriptures refer when they expose the *first* priesthood, how may he or she come to understand the need to abstain from what is already obsolete and to know more precisely the new that the Lord offers him or her?

Therefore, about this last point mentioned in the previous paragraph, we emphasize once again the mercy of God and the call of those who are already in the new priesthood to pray to the Lord, asking that He may extend His mercy to every human being, and to bear witness about Christ in due time:

2 Peter 3: 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

***1 Timothy 2: 1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,
2 for kings and all who are in authority (or in eminent positions), that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.***

***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.***

In conclusion, we understand that it is worth mentioning here that God's mercy should not be confused with the idea that God will somehow be permissive or complicit with people's mistaken option for the *first* priesthood or similar to it, for although the Lord's mercy extends itself to saving sinners and those subject to the laws of priesthoods that cause profound oppression, it will never act in contradiction to the Lord's righteousness.

Hebrews 12: 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.

As seen at the beginning of the current series of subjects, The Gospel of God is the expression of the offer of the new priesthood in line with the newness of eternal life in the Lord. And for a proposal to be kept under the characteristic of an offer, it cannot be imposed, and, thus, being up to the recipient of the offer to receive it or reject it.

So, in the case of the priesthood of Christ, it is offered to us through the grace of the Lord, but also because of this same grace, the receiving the new implies afterward the need to withdraw from the *first* priesthood so that an individual may be firmly established forever only in the novelty that is offered from heaven.

Hebrews 7: 12 ***For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.***

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.

And, in turn, the way to receive the new priesthood offered by God through the Gospel, different from the complicated ceremonies of the priesthood that was taken away, is straightforward, remarkably simple, and personal before the Lord, namely:

Romans 10: 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.

In Christ, no one needs, nor it is accepted, that someone outsources one's relationship with God, for the Father Himself wants everyone to relate to Him, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit through Christ.

Therefore, leaving behind the temporal priesthood called *first*, or similar to it, and choosing life under the lordship of Christ is the way offered by God to those who receive the salvation that is offered to them from heaven, through the grace of the Lord, also to reach the perfect priesthood for eternal fellowship with God.

Acts 10: 36 ***The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ; He is Lord of all.***

Leaving the old one already announced as disapproved by God after the resurrection of Christ is vital not to delay the deepening of the relationship with the new priesthood, the priesthood in Christ, in which there are so many precious and immeasurable novelties of life waiting to be lived. For this reason, the Lord sent us the Gospel, and in which we will try to continue to advance in the next chapters of the present material, now knowing a little more that, in Christ, there is a whole newness full of grace and goodness of God awaiting us.

C17. The Glory of the Mediator of the New Covenant, and Not the Old

Although the title of this new chapter and what we intend to address in it may appear to be initially the same as the chapter on the Glory of Christ as the Only Mediator between God and Men and the Glory of Christ as the One who Removes the First and Establishes the Second, the subject that we would like to expose in the sequence is both singular and complements the referred themes.

As the Only Mediator between God and Men, Christ has a general position of Mediator between God and all human beings, causing that everything is sustained and known by Him, even if a person does not recognize or accept Christ in his or her personal life, as we can see in the texts exemplified again below:

- 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 (the Son) 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.

- 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.
5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"?
6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."
7 And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire."

8 ***But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.***

9 ***You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."***

10 ***And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.***

11 ***They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment;***

12 ***Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail."***

Nevertheless, as for being the Mediator of the new covenant, the position of Christ refers to a much more specific mediating position, which, unlike mediation in general, refers to a function focused only on those who receive Christ in their hearts and who want the Lord Jesus as the Mediator of this new covenant.

Similarly, when we saw that it is through Christ that the first priesthood was removed and the second was established, we saw God's action through Christ both in the sense that He was the general provision so that all people enslaved to the law of the first priesthood can be redeemed and that He was the One through whom God generally established the second priesthood. However, when we see Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant, we can also see His position and work so that what was done in general may become personal for everyone who wants to see the first priesthood taken away and the second established in his or her personal life.

Christ is the One through whom God established and made available to all the general provision of salvation and of deliverance from slavery to sin and the first priesthood. However, Christ is also the Mediator of the new covenant so that the general provisions made by God and the purposes arising from them can become individualized and sustained in the lives of all those who want to receive them through grace and the faith in the Lord.

There is, for instance, a big difference between a person finding the solution to some matter concerning human life or one also being the one who is able to distribute and apply this solution to all those who need it and who want to receive it.

Christ was the means for the provision of the solution of human salvation or the very provision for this salvation. However, Christ is also the One who performs the distribution of this salvation or its establishment in the lives of all those who need it and also want to receive it.

Christ is the provision of salvation for people to be delivered from the bondage of sin and the bondage of the priesthoods that can never bring people to a life that is according to God's will. However, as the Mediator of the new covenant, Christ is also the one who provides the offer of salvation to all and extends it to everyone who wants to receive it according to heavenly grace and the faith in God and Christ Himself.

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.***

As we go deeper into knowing the glory of Christ, which is also the exact expression of the glory of God, we begin to see the magnificent glory of the Lord extending to the smallest details and showing that all aspects of both natural life and spiritual life are entirely covered by God's care and regency over everyone and everything in all the infinite aspects.

No one needs to fear growing in the broader knowledge of Christ's multiple positions and actions and the details of God's action on our behalf. God shows us the diversity of aspects of His glory so that we may have firm confidence that in Him everything is foreseen in beforehand and so that we may become familiar with the different fronts of the Lord Jesus' work in our favor. And this, for us also to be willing to allow His work in us more and more and so that we are not found as those who place obstacles that oppose what Christ wants to accomplish in us and through us every new day.

When someone entrusts his or her life to the lordship of Christ, the Lord does not take unilateral control of this life and imposes His will on it. Even though He was placed as the Lord in the heart at the option of the person who made it, Christ continues to act according to each person's agreement concerning each step that one advances in life. And that is why it is so significant for a person to know the positions and functions of Christ regarding him or her so that one also knows how to decide or position oneself appropriately in the various steps of the path that Christ will reveal or show to him or her.

God, undoubtedly, will always be ready to carry us if we get to the point where we need His intervention in this way, but, in general, the Scriptures instruct us that Christ goes ahead of those who believe in Him, leaving the final decision to adopt or not each step suggested by the Lord to each person to whom the path is exposed.

Christ's lordship in a person's life is not an imposition or some domination of the Lord in one's life regardless of an individual's will. The lordship of Christ is a suggestive, instructive and which fully supports those who receive and follow the Lord's instructions, but which does not force a person to take steps that one does not want to follow, despite that all the Lord's suggested steps are for the good of those who follow Him.

The Lord invites people to live and walk in Him, and calls each individual to be instructed and sustained in the will of God, but the decision to live and walk in Christ remains with each person who relates to the Lord.

*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.***

*30 **For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.***

*John 7: 17 **If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.***

Mark 8: 34 **When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."**

As glorious as the power of Christ is and as much as He has full right over all lives, either by creating them or by making provision, by His blood, to save them from slavery to sin and the laws of inadequate priesthoods, the Lord lets it to each person to deny oneself and follow Him through the daily choices that one makes before the Lord, oneself, and the world.

Thus, the aspects mentioned in the previous paragraphs are essential when the theme of the priesthood towards God begins to reach the point of the covenant that is associated with each priesthood, for it is concerning the aspect of the covenant that the matter of the access and joining a priesthood or the matter of the rejection and non-acceptance of this priesthood become a reality or specific in the life of an individual.

The aspect of the covenant with a priesthood is the point at which the generically made provision and its purposes become applicable or not applicable to a person's life, depending, respectively, on the choice of associating with it or rejecting it.

If, for example, a person only hears about the second priesthood and its benefits, but does not make a covenant according to the covenant of this second priesthood, one may come to have a lot of information about this priesthood without having any part in it.

The full provision for a person to be able to join the second priesthood certainly needs to have been made previously. And, of course, establishing this provision is the first and most important aspect for a person to have access to this priesthood. However, from a strictly personal point of view, the covenant aspect is the most crucial factor for a person to have access to the second priesthood and what it offers to the life of those who associate with it.

The covenant with the second priesthood is such a central aspect that it has led people to discuss it vehemently for centuries and since the beginning of the most specific manifestation of the kingdom of God to human beings, for it is the point where the connection between a particular person and the provision already revealed to the world regarding the second priesthood or the priesthood available in Christ Jesus is established indeed.

The Lord Jesus said that once the kingdom of God was available among human beings to be accessed, everyone would be struggling or forcing to enter it. However, this does not mean that everyone who tries to do so will also be able to achieve this goal, as the kingdom of God can only be accessed through the "new" covenant.

Luke 16: 16 **The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.**

Matthew 7: 13 **Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.**

14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

The fact that someone is before the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God, in Christ, is even knocking on a person's door, does not mean that an individual by oneself or by one's efforts will be able to enter this kingdom or that one will be able to make that the kingdom comes into his or her heart, as it has been exposed more widely in the subject on The Gospel of the Kingdom of God and as it is reminded in the text exemplified below:

- 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."**
- 9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"**
- 10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?**
- 11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.**
- 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?**
- 13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.**
- 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,**
- 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.**
- 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."**
-

Entering the kingdom of God occurs through the new birth, but the new birth, in turn, occurs through the covenant proposed by Christ, where Christ Himself is the Mediator of the new covenant.

People's attempts to enter the kingdom or receive the kingdom in their lives have multiplied and diversified over the centuries. Nonetheless, no attempt to achieve this goal can be established unilaterally according to the will of human beings, since the

association with the heavenly kingdom is only made through the new covenant and, therefore, it can only be done around a proposition accepted on the part of the one who offers the kingdom and not by the one who wants to enter the kingdom.

For someone to be accepted to enter the kingdom of God or for the heavenly kingdom to be granted to a person, this does not depend, first of all, on people, but on Him to whom the kingdom belongs from the beginning. Although people strive, some at all costs, to try to enter the kingdom of God, it cannot be taken by effort or some payment according to what human beings want to establish. What makes the kingdom of God available to people is not for them to establish, but for the One who holds the property of the heavenly kingdom in His hands.

The fact that the Lord allowed people to have some power over His kingdom and Christ during the time of the process of the crucifixion of Christ does not mean that the Lord will allow this to happen again. Christ gave Himself once and for all to all human beings. However, after His resurrection, He only gives Himself to each individual if one receives Him according to the terms of the new covenant that the kingdom of heaven has established.

What establishes a person's right to enter God's kingdom and for the kingdom of God to be present in a person's life is a covenant between these two parts. And in the case of the kingdom of God, the terms of the covenant, so that people can voluntarily associate with the heavenly kingdom, are all defined by the holder of this unique kingdom.

Although the subject that we intend to address in this new chapter has already been exposed from various angles in the previous chapters and especially in the chapter that deals with the removal of the first priesthood and the establishment of the second, we believe it is necessary to address it in a more specific way also from the angle of the covenant, because although the covenant is an integral part of a priesthood, it is also, in a way, a part that stands between what is pertinent to a priesthood and what is not part of this priesthood.

Although the priesthood covenant is an integral part of the respective priesthood, it plays a role in defining the boundaries of the priesthood, and it divides what is connected to it or what is dissociated from the priesthood in reference.

The covenant, for example, is like the entrance and exit door of a house.

And although the entrance and exit door of a house is an integral part of it, the door separates what the house is and what it is not. It divides what parts of the structure make up the house and what parts do not belong to the house. On the other hand, although the entrance and exit door of a house is part of it, the door, in itself, is not the whole structure, just the point that connects and disconnects someone from the house and separates the interior and exterior of a building.

Knowing the principle that the door of the house is part of the building, but also that it establishes the boundaries or the separation of what the house encompasses and what it does not, may help us to understand the manifold glory of Christ, where He is the essence of the priesthood offered to us from God, but where He is also the door of access to what God offers us through His love and His eternal grace.

John 10: 7 **Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep."**

When we see the details of a priesthood also concerning the covenant related to it, we can see that the priesthood's essence is what the covenant offers, but the priesthood is not the covenant itself. The covenant is an instrument through which a person may come to be associated with everything that a priesthood offers, just as it may prevent access to what is offered if a person does not join the respective covenant.

Thus, understanding a priesthood covenant together with what a priesthood in a broader way is, is vital for there to be an adequate measure in approaching a priesthood and its covenant, for if an individual only stays in the act of the covenant, one will not see the essence of what the covenant actually offers.

And on the other hand, if an individual tries to focus only on the essence of a priesthood, without understanding the covenant, one may come to incur only to contemplate external parts of the essence without actually taking part in this essence.

Nowadays, much has been said about "*The New Covenant.*" Nonetheless, in many cases, many people have been talking about it without actually exposing what is behind the covenant or what is associated with it, and without instructing people that the covenant expresses only the beginning of a new life in a new priesthood to which a person comes to be associate through the acceptance of the covenant offered to him or her.

Just as in the days when the Lord was in the flesh on Earth, many today have even brought people to the door, but, still, without teaching people to enter what is beyond this door or even taking actions to prevent them from entering through the door, as if a person could enjoy what is inside a house living only at the entrance of this house or without actually entering it.

Matthew 23: 13 But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

Speaking redundantly, the covenant is the point through which an offer designed to be granted to others is actually offered and by which the offer presented can actually be received and accessed.

In a way, the covenant is the initial step and guarantee that a person will have access to what is contained under the covenant's terms.

Thus, regarding the first and second priesthoods, we have for each one of them the following central points:

⇒ A priesthood; → The law pertinent to this covenant; → A covenant; → Access to the priesthood and its law.

Presenting the elements that are involved in a priesthood's covenant may sound strange to some people, but in the world, human beings are continually establishing agreements and covenants in the most diverse areas, which extend, for example, to contracts of services, schools, jobs, rents, as well as they even are applied to marriage unions. And in each of these items, there are groups of elements similar to those that

make up a covenant around a priesthood, although the content associated with each one is, of course, specific and distinct from the other types of covenants.

Therefore, since the covenant represents a point of access to what is proposed through it and that it is also the point that links an individual to what one agrees concerning the same covenant, we may observe the diversity of covenants a little more closely, what leads us to realize that there is a variety of levels of complexity and ways for a covenant to be defined and established between the multiple parts involved.

The definitions of covenants, properly speaking, may vary significantly from one to the other, being possible that some might be established under an extensive list of details, others under short terms, others through several stages, and, still, others only through a few verbal expressions.

Let us note here, then, that what is defined in a covenant and how the covenant between the parts is established or carried out are different aspects.

There are, for example, covenants with long written terms and an enormous number of mutual promises, but whose establishment between the distinct parts is carried out only by a simple signature of those who want to become part of the pact. On the other hand, there are also covenants whose terms and promises are shorter, but whose establishment between the parts involved is surrounded by several stages or even several extremely complicated and intense rites.

As for the length of time of a covenant or the consequences of breaking it, some covenants are not extensive and have very short-term results, while others are under a long continuance or effects that may even have an eternal duration.

Some covenants are for the good, and others that are for evil.

In the world, some covenants are more comprehensive or better defined, and there are others that are incomplete, dubious, flawed or even written under the purpose of hiding intentions to entangle other parts to make commitments of which they are not even aware.

Some covenants may only be confirmed between two parts. In contrast, others require witnesses and formalities before persons or organizations formally established to recognize committed covenants, without which the covenants are not indeed valid.

In some covenants, the parts involved demand exclusivity from each other. While in others, those involved in a specific covenant are also allowed to associate with different parts or other similar pacts freely.

And yet, there are other covenants, pacts, or contracts that involve specialists in evaluations of the establishment of agreements or that even put themselves as mediators and guarantors of the arrangements that others try to establish between them, either due to the complexity and breadth of what is involved in the agreements or because of the requirement requested by the parts that intend to establish a covenant.

Although the adherence to a covenant, a pact, or a contract represents the starting and introductory point of a person to what is considered under the terms of the agreement, joining a covenant may also represent joining a path of improvement and life, or it may mean joining a path of destruction and death.

Therefore, joining a covenant or pact without knowing, at least, the basic terms of it and what sustains and guarantees an agreement, is like a person signing a contract without previously having known the terms of it. And doing so, one may, in the

sequence, come to reap a series of displeasures and even for a long time, showing us this, that the actual establishment of a covenant is also a specific, crucial, and very significant topic.

The word *covenant* or *pact* is a term that needs to be associated with the specific set to which it refers, for alone, it does not express what is behind it or everything that a person associates with when joining it.

Thus, when we come to see the glory of Christ as ***the Mediator of the New Covenant***, we should look at this characteristic in a particular and punctual way as it is stated and exposed in the Scriptures, but also without losing the focus of the other aspects that we saw about Christ and what is behind this covenant or associated with it.

When the Scriptures declare that Christ is ***the Mediator of the New Covenant***, they objectively inform us about many more aspects than most people even think are involved in this statement.

Starting with the expression ***the Mediator of the New Covenant*** in itself, we can come to know that the covenant that God offers through Christ is the type of covenant that can only be made through a “mediator” and cannot be made without going through Christ. Reaffirming, so, that what has already been declared as a reference for the establishment of the reconciliation and the fellowship of people with God also applies to the context of the ***New Covenant***, according to the text exposed once again below:

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.

And a second aspect explicitly expressed in the statement that Christ is ***the Mediator of the New Covenant*** and that we would like to highlight here once again, is that Christ is the Mediator of the ***New Covenant*** and not the mediator of ***the Old*** or ***the First Covenant***, as exemplified once more in the following texts:

Hebrews 8: 6 ***But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.***

Hebrews 9: 15 ***And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.***

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

*22(a), 24 **But you have come to ... Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.***

It is interesting to note that what is explicit is sometimes not accepted as evident by human beings, especially when it seems hard for them to understand or when it is not to their liking.

For this reason, it is also necessary to emphasize numerous times that Christ did not come into the world to mediate people to associate, through a covenant, with the first priesthood, which is also called by the names of the first covenant or the old covenant.

Christ did not come into the world to propose and carry out the association of those who were not yet associated with the first priesthood with this same first priesthood.

In other words, Christ did not come to associate the so-called pagans, gentiles, Greeks, barbarians, or other peoples of the Earth who were not Hebrews, to the covenant of the first priesthood, to the covenant of the people of Israel made according to the model of the priesthood and the law associated with Moses and the covenant made after the people left Egypt.

Christ was not revealed to the world so that the uncircumcised, non-associated, or “without covenant” with the priesthood according to Moses would be taught about the first priesthood or circumcised to become part of the covenant mediated by Moses with the people who were freed from the dominion of Egypt.

What we are trying to say above is a need or meaning of indescribable value, because over the centuries, those who are associated with the old covenant and a priesthood already revoked by God through Christ, or those who want to support at least some parts of this obsolete priesthood, have tried, in the most varied ways, to produce a type of concept that conveys the idea that the first priesthood is still standing and valid before God.

If it is not by presenting the direct proposition that the first priesthood is still valid before the Lord, people and institutions, referred to in the previous paragraph, try in some way to conceal the revocation of the first priesthood by subtly expressing, for instance, that Christ did not actually come to revoke the first priesthood, but that the Lord Jesus, according to their proposition, came to grant the “Spirit of the Lord” so that, then, people supposedly could have the strength to fulfill the law of Moses, the strength they did not have before Christ came into the world.

Now, if Christ came to grant the Spirit of the Lord so that people could associate themselves with the first and obsolete priesthood or with some parts of this outdated priesthood, Christ would not, in fact, be a “*mediator of a new covenant for something new and for the novelty of life,*” but “*the mediator of a new covenant for an old and the same priesthood that could never lead people to experience real newness of life while under this old priesthood.*”

Thus, the above shows another reason why it is so necessary to understand in more detail that Christ came to remove the old or the first and to establish the new or the second, and to know the total incompatibility between the two, for these points show that Christ never came into the world to reveal a new capacity for people to become

empowered by something new to fulfill the old that they had never been able to perform.

Some people say that Christ did not come into the world to remove the law of Moses, but that He came to take away some kind of “literal aspect” out of the law of Moses so that the “spirit of the law of Moses” could be followed by the strength of the “Spirit of God,” but how to explain, then, the following texts that we also have already quoted previously?

Romans 10: 4 **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.**

Romans 7: 6 **But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.**

Romans 3: 19 **Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.**

20 **Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

Romans 6: 14 **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

Being under the law of the first priesthood or being under sin, in a sense, are similar expressions. Being under the law of the first priesthood or being under sin are only variations of conditions or attitudes that have led people to be subject to a similar yoke of condemnation and from which no one can escape or be released unless by mercy and salvation provided by God that only exists in the new priesthood.

If Christ had come into the world to reveal and offer a new way for people to associate with the old, this would be a duplication of what already had been done through Moses' covenant and would represent a waste of Christ's effort for people to reach the same that they could already access through the first or old covenant.

Galatians 2: 21 **I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.**

Yet another distorted thought that many people have sought to evoke and sustain over the centuries, after the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, is the claim that Christ came to offer a “new covenant” for a “new priesthood,” but only for those who did not yet have the opportunity to become associated with the “first or old priesthood.”

Now, if the first priesthood was declared obsolete and God sent Christ to save all people from sin, and not only those who were not associated with the first priesthood,

since the individuals subject to the old priesthood were also under the yoke of sin, it makes no sense, in the face of the work of Christ, to say that the Lord does not want to rescue people subject to the first priesthood or that He wants to leave them to the fate of the old priesthood that cannot save anyone and only accentuates the condemnation of those who are subject to it.

God allowed people to live without any association with the first priesthood, and God also allowed people to associate with the first priesthood. And this, to show that both those apart from the law and those under the first priesthood needed and still need salvation and the priesthood that from heaven is offered to them, which is not according to a commandment established based on fleshly motivations and yearnings, as we saw in the previous chapter and as we exemplify again through the following texts:

Galatians 3: 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

Romans 4: 9 Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Romans 11: 30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,

31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

Romans 3: 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.

- 27 ***Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.***
- 28 ***Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.***
- 29 ***Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,***
- 30 ***since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.***

Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant precisely because the new covenant of a new type of priesthood comes to save everyone for the new and to free them from the old, whether they have been associated with the first and obsolete priesthood or whether they have not even known this first priesthood.

The Lord Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant precisely because what the covenant that He presents and offers is also entirely new and for every human being, regardless of the belief, creed, or any covenant that a person became associated before knowing Christ.

As the Mediator of people only for the new covenant, the Lord Jesus only mediates people for this new covenant. And as much as this is so obvious or explicit, many people still insist on contradicting this truth so explicitly stated in the Scriptures since the promises declared to Abraham and also announced by Moses, by David, and so many other prophets.

Trying to say that Christ would be willing to mediate people's relationship with an obsolete priesthood is an attempt to claim that Christ would mediate people with what He came to save people from, which is nonsense and absurdity against all God's work through the Lord Jesus Christ for the sake of all human beings.

The glory of Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant is perfect also precisely by the fact that He is not a mediator of a covenant that could never provide the real newness of life so necessary to every human being as was the covenant in which Moses had been the mediator at Sinai.

Hebrews 8: 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

- 2 ***Corinthians 3: 7 But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away,***
- 8 ***how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?***
- 9 ***For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.***
- 10 ***For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels.***
- 11 ***For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.***

- Acts 13: 32 And we declare to you glad tidings (or the Gospel of the promise); that promise which was made to the fathers.*
- 33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'**
- 34 And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'**
- 35 Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'**
- 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption;**
- 37 but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.**
- 38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;**
- 39 and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.**
-

When we see the matter of the new covenant regarding the new that is associated with what the new covenant makes available to those who associate with it, and not just the covenant as an isolated item, we can see what Christ did in an even more exalted and sublime way when He came in the flesh into the world so that "the first would be taken away" and for "the second to be established."

- Hebrews 10: 9 Then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.*
- 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

- 2 Corinthians 5: 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*
-

Therefore, to achieve reconciliation or enter into association with God through Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant is also expressed as to be in Christ, the Mediator Himself, where the first and former priesthood becomes past and in whom the newness of life of the second priesthood becomes our right through the new covenant.

- Romans 6: 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

The new covenant, mediated by Christ, is exclusive. It is a covenant that frees people from subjection to sin in general, but also from what is of the first priesthood so that

people can be established on righteous and unshakable bases that the Lord Himself has established and in which no righteousness (or indeed unrighteousness) of the first priesthood is accepted.

Romans 3: 20 **Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

...
28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Although many people claim that there are different ways for a person to establish fellowship with God, the Scriptures in general and the words of Christ show us that this is only possible through the eternal and exclusive Mediator and through the only covenant that He mediates, and there is no other alternative for a priesthood to be recognized and accepted before the Lord.

We stress this repeatedly because, especially concerning the new covenant, many teachings in the world have voiced some misconceptions that may lead people to think that the old covenant and the new covenant, ultimately, could be merged or even that the second covenant is a continuation and improvement of the first, which, in fact, is not the case.

When we see that the covenants in reference in the previous paragraph are expressions of ways of association with a type of priesthood, more specifically with the first or second priesthoods, and that the first and second priesthoods are, in practice, opposed and not compatible, we can see that the first and the second covenants refer respectively to aspects that are not merely distinct, but unfriendly and not possible to be merged under any circumstances.

Recognizing the opposite position between divergent covenants may represent a crucial aspect for people, because an individual's option for a covenant that contradicts the unique, singular, glorious, perfect, and exclusive covenant that Christ offers may dissociate him or her from the covenant of everlasting life, grace, and mercy that exist only in the second priesthood, the law of Christ, and the new covenant.

Everything that God offers us in the priesthood and in the covenant in which Christ is the Only Mediator is equal to what the Lord offers us through His Gospel. However, everything that the Gospel offers us may also become null for a person if one does not choose the new covenant in Christ or if one wants the covenant of Christ, but not exclusively.

Due to the fact that the new covenant is exclusive regarding the other priestly covenants, and remembering that circumcision is also a type or a figure of a person's association with a covenant and the respective priesthood, we understand that it is appropriate to emphasize once again the text that has already been mentioned several times in the present material, namely:

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.**
- 7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?**
- 8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.**
- 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.**
- 10 I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.**
- 11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.**

When God wanted to introduce Christ as the spiritual stone from whom the rivers of life flow, or as the Angel who would go ahead of the people in the wilderness and Canaan, Christ was not accepted in this way and went on to follow people instead of going in front of them. And this the Lord did for centuries.

Nevertheless, when the fullness of time became complete or the opportune time for a profound change to occur reached its appropriate condition, the old priesthood or the outdated proposition of relationship with God lost its place before the Lord entirely, giving space precisely to the One who for so long had been rejected or neglected.

Psalms 118: 22 **The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.**

23 This was the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.

24 This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.

1 Peter 2: 7 **Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,"**

8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Romans 9: 33 **As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."**

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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."

Finally, in this chapter, looking again at the last texts quoted above, we would also like to emphasize that Christ is, on the part of God, the guarantor of the new covenant that associates us with the second priesthood or to the priesthood according to Christ, and not according to the law of Moses or a fleshly commandment.

And since, through Christ, God has already established the removal of the old priesthood model, the Lord no longer has any commitment to this priesthood, to the point that if someone who has already joined the new covenant rejoins the old priesthood or similar to it, this individual also places oneself under the condition of becoming estranged from Christ or dissociated from the priesthood that is established according to heavenly grace.

Thus, perhaps even because of excessive care, but due to the conflict that has been generated around this theme, we would like to reiterate once again that:

- ⇒ 1) The Lord Jesus never died on the cross so that people would receive some special strength to practice the law of Moses, for Christ came to take away the validity of this law and to provide deliverance to people from the heavy yoke of the old law;
- ⇒ 2) The Lord Jesus Christ was not, is not, and will never be a mediator of people to the old covenant, the first or ancient priesthood, the law of Moses, or any aspect similar to these or any of its parts;
- ⇒ 3) The Lord Jesus was never, is not, and will never be a mediator of people to the old covenant, the old and obsolete priesthood, and the law of Moses, this being true for all people in the world or all people figured or named in the Scriptures both as "Jew" and as "Greek" (or Gentile).

On the other hand, the one who associates with Christ and remains voluntarily choosing in his or her heart the association with the new covenant also has the guarantee of the Lord that he or she will be sustained forever in this new covenant, even if oppositions or rejections may arise against him or her precisely because one is associated with Christ in the only new and acceptable covenant before the Lord.

As we have also seen before, Christ is the firm foundation of every individual associated with God through the new covenant. Christ is the unshakable rock that sustains the priesthood according to God's will. Christ is the one who instructs and teaches those who associate with God through Him in all that is necessary for full and eternal salvation.

- Hebrews 7: 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.*
- 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.*
- 14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.*
- 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest*
- 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.*
- 17 For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."*
- 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.*
- 20 And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath*
- 21 (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: "The LORD has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek' "),*
- 22 by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.*
- 23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.*
- 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.*
- 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*
-

Through the mediation that Christ offers us for the new covenant, and not for the old one, the Lord Jesus offers us to be in Him, because He also is the guarantor or support in whom the New Covenant stands forever or can never be shaken.

Through faith in Christ, considering Him as the One sent by God for our redemption from the old covenant or the subjection to the yoke of sin, we can come to experience or live that Christ rescues us, introduces us to the new covenant, helps and mediates us concerning everything necessary for reconciliation and fellowship with God and His kingdom, and, finally, that Christ still sustains us so that we may eternally enjoy the precious conditions and gifts that are associated with the Gospel and that are exclusively associated with the new covenant.

- Romans 8: 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*
- 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?*
- 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*

- 34 ***Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.***
- 35 ***Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?***
- 36 ***As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."***
- 37 ***Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.***
- 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.***

Be the Heavenly Father and Christ exalted by the Eternal Glory that is manifested to us so abundantly through God's glory in the face of Christ also as our eternal and unshakable ***Mediator of the New Covenant***, associated with which there is still so much to be known and experienced or lived.

Hebrews 8: 6 ***But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.***

C18. Propositions Proclaimed as New Covenant, but which, in reality, Are Based on the Motivations of the Old Covenant

A. The Role of Motivations in Turning towards Aspects Similar to Those Associated with the Old Covenant

Continuing with the aspect discussed in the previous chapter that Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant and not of the old, we understand that it is necessary to dwell even more on this topic, for, besides the fact that many people try to claim that Christ came to offer a new covenant as a renewed ability to live the old covenant, there are also many who claim to believe that Christ came to offer a new covenant for a new condition, and not the old one, but who, on the practical matter of their propositions, end up turning to try to associate the Christian life with some aspects of the old covenant.

Therefore, those who claim to believe in Christ as the envoy of God for their salvation, but who do not conform to the fact that, after the crucifixion of Christ, God has already established the revocation or complete removal of any valid condition of the first priesthood, the law of Moses, and the old covenant, in one way or another persist in looking for alternatives so that those old and obsolete aspects, or parts of them, might be kept active in their lives.

Whether by the claim that Christ brought a new covenant to live the old one or by the claim that Christ indeed came to provide a new covenant and newness of life but without this implying the need for a total withdrawal from aspects of the old covenant, there are many people in the world who do not want to conform to what God declared established from Christ's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, as well as His ascension into heaven to sit on the right hand of the Heavenly Father's throne.

And here we understand that it is opportune to make way to ask why so many people still insist on the aspects inherent to the old covenant if God has already manifested Himself so objectively and explicitly regarding the obsolete condition of the first priesthood, its law, and its covenant?

Considering that God, through Christ, has already expressed so explicitly and firmly that Christ did not come to strengthen people to try to live again what Christ came to deliver them from, why do people still insist on trying to keep that or part of what works to enslave them?

Bearing in mind that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes in Him and that through Christ has been canceled all spiritual writing of debt that was against people both because of sin and because of the old covenant, why, then, do people insist on wanting aspects of the old covenant or similar to them?

If Christ's intervention on behalf of human beings through His death on the cross of Calvary and the offer of the new covenant means the so much needed opportunity to receive liberation from subjection to sin underlined by the law of the old covenant, why do people still feel so attracted to have a connection with what they have been freed from and that only aims to keep them under the heavy yoke of the "letter that kills"?

Thus, aiming at answering at least a significant part of the above questions, we believe it is crucial to address the theme of the new covenant and the old covenant not only from the point of view of the facts themselves that have occurred throughout history, but also from a more detailed perspective on the motivations because of which people joined the first priesthood and through which, in some way, they continue to try to associate the Christian life with aspects of the old covenant and its law.

Considering that the Scriptures explicitly teach that the first and the second priesthoods are already incompatible since their fundamental aspects and that, before the Lord, the first priesthood is already considered to be obsolete and revoked through the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, it may seem that it would be more reasonable or even obvious that people would no longer insist on carrying the flag of the first priesthood, parts of it, or similar priesthoods. However, this is not the case because the removal of the first does not necessarily mean the removal of the motivations of the human beings that led them to long for the first covenant.

Even though God has already allowed the world to come to know in a practical way the weakness and uselessness of the first priesthood, the law of Moses, and the old covenant, people resist to depart from this type of priesthood or parts of them not necessarily because they lack the proper information about what the Lord has already done, but because they let their motivations speak louder than what God has already revealed widely and explicitly to the world.

It should be noted here, then, that by revealing the historical facts of the establishment of the first priesthood, its removal through and from the work of God in Christ Jesus on the cross of Calvary, and the explicit declaration of the weakness and uselessness of the first priesthood, the Lord has not been calling our attention merely to the historical facts themselves, but so that through the facts we may have our hearts instructed on what motivated the facts and whose motivations continue to be present in the hearts of human beings even after the removal of the first priesthood.

When we recall that the first priesthood had its origin because of an attraction to a carnal commandment and that God described the association with it as the choice of people for their own ways instead of how the Lord wanted to instruct them, we see that the aspects accentuated by God in the years and the centuries that followed the establishment of the old covenant began to be highlighted primarily in the direction to what was in people's hearts or to what motivated them to lean towards the types of aspects associated with the first covenant.

*Jeremiah 7: 22 **For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.***

*23 **But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'***

*24 **Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.***

*25 **Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them.***

26 Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

After the entire historical period from the establishment of the first priesthood until the declaration of its obsolete condition, weakness, and uselessness, we see that one of the resulting essential aspects was not only to expose the vast set of details associated with the old priesthood, but to make known those points that are driving agents for people to repeatedly continue to crave many of the aspects related to that type of priesthood.

At first, nowadays, some people may think that the context of the first priesthood was related only to that moment in history and that they are currently no longer at risk of being involved in that context after the old one has been declared obsolete by the Lord. However, when we start to see that what motivates people to incline to aspects similar to the first priesthood is still equally active in the hearts of human beings, despite the first covenant having its legitimate condition before God ended, we can see that the Lord allowed those facts to make known in all generations what drives people to incline entirely or partially to priesthoods contrary to the will of God, as the following Scriptures similarly teach us:

1 Corinthians 10: 6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

In referring to the past time of the people freed from the dominion of Egypt and who chose the way of subjection to the old covenant, the text of 1Corinthians 10 is given to us by God as another narrative that is not limited to external facts, but, similarly to the text of Jeremiah 7 and several others, it highlights the motivational aspect associated with people's attitudes when choosing this type of path.

Furthermore, the text of 1Corinthians 10 makes it clear that the same motivational issues did not end with the end of the first priesthood before the Lord and that people in any generation are equally at risk of incurring similar situations.

Nowadays, many people do not longer propose the fulfillment of the whole law of Moses because they already know that it is an unbearable and impractical burden. However, many of them still elect the parts of that law that they think will best suit them, and they do it for the same reasons that have always led people in the past to propose the first priesthood.

We emphasize here, then, that it is the personal posture of each individual that gives space or not to the law of the first priesthood or the aspects associated with the old covenant even though, in the general sense, the first priesthood, its law, and its covenant have already been declared obsolete or revoked before the Lord.

Under the new covenant, Christ does not lead people to associate with what separates them from Him and enslave them again. However, since the new covenant is established under the concept of being an offer of life and not an imposition, people continue to have the option of choosing according to their own judgment what they themselves want to choose.

And when we look at the more global or summarized reference that is made in 1Corinthians 10 to the motivations that seek to move people in all generations to incline to what is not appropriate for them, including the aspect of trying to seek God according to their own propositions, we also find described that one of the main points among them is that which is called *lust* or also translated in some versions or languages as *desires*.

Because of what they *lusted after* or *desired*, people, many centuries ago, craved things that were not indeed paths of the newness of life, but of condemnation and death. On the other hand, as the text of 1Corinthians 10 and others explains to us, this was also allowed to become an example for all generations so that people are informed of these inadequate motivations and do not repeat the mistake of equally inclining to follow the same paths.

Therefore, considering that associated with the word *lust*, mentioned in 1Corinthians chapter 10 and several other texts of the Scriptures, there are such significant and crucial factors for the choices of the central aspects for the life of each person, we believe it is necessary to investigate more extensively at this point, what was intended to show as associated with this word and also because its current use has some variations that may limit or even distort the meaning that this term had in the times when the Scriptures were produced.

At present, for many, and even so some dictionaries describe it, the word *lust* resonates as an inappropriate desire or even as a synonym for words like *greed*, *envy*, *covetousness*, or *inconvenient sexual passion*.

Nevertheless, while the word *lust* nowadays tends to be related by many to a negative connotation or in which the negative condition always prevails, in the old days, this term also had a neutral connotation as to what someone desired, wanted, or longed for, to the point of the text of 1Corinthians chapter 10 instructing us *not to lust after "evil" things* and to the point that this word *lust*, even nowadays, still remains being described by several contemporary dictionaries as a yearning or desire for something, according to several examples below:

Lust:

Notes in the Online Bible associated with Strong's lexicon:

- a) *Desire;*
- b) *Covet;*
- c) *To turn upon a thing;*
- d) *To have a desire for, long for;*
- e) *To lust after (including of those who seek things forbidden).*

Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

In addition to negative use:

- a) *An intense longing; Craving;*
- b) *Enthusiasm, Eagerness.*

Use considered obsolete:

- a) *Pleasure, Delight;*
- b) *Personal Inclination: Desire.*

Definition Presented by Google (in English + Portuguese version and translated into English):

- a) *Desire, wish, want, craving, longing;*
- b) *Lechery, luxuriance, carnality, sexiness, eroticism;*
- c) *Concupiscence;*
- d) *An ardent desire to own something or achieve something;*
- e) *Immoderate desire for goods, riches or honors;*
- f) *Ambition, greed, lust.*

The New Dictionary of the Bible:

Translated from Portuguese edition:

- a) *Any intense desire, which, if misdirected, can be concentrated on money, ... possessions, ... immorality, ... addictions, ... avarice, ... having as its essence the worship of "myself," featuring in the end in idolatry.*

From English edition:

- a) *The English word lust was originally a neutral term describing any strong desire;*
- b) *In its modern restricted sense of sexual passion, it cannot adequately render many familiar contexts in its ancient use;*
- c) *In its old use, it expresses any strong desire, the context or a qualifying adjective determining its nature, whether good or evil.*

Thus, if we do not limit ourselves to just the most commonly used meaning for the word *lust*, and make use of the broader concept by which it expresses people's intense desire for something, we may also broaden the understanding of what motivated and continues to motivate people to crave so persistently for aspects similar to those associated with the old covenant or the first priesthood.

Although the word *lust*, in its original condition in the Scriptures, was used more often related to improper desires, we emphasize that this was not always the case, because, in the past, it could also have the connotation only of an intense desire, just as it was not applied only to some desires, but to the concept in general of what people crave or generally desire more intensely.

Therefore, when the Scriptures urge us *not to lust after the evil things* that were desired by those who chose a priesthood with human mediators in their relationship with God, that we should not give way to evil desires, or that we should not allow ourselves to be guided by fleshly passions, they are warning us to be aware in general of the motivations to which our hearts may lean towards so that we do not give way to evil desires and do not run into be guided by them and not by the Lord.

In other words, what we are trying to address here is that although the Lord has already declared the first priesthood obsolete and revoked, people continue to be inclined towards attempts to merge the new covenant with the old covenant because they end up giving place or preference to their desires and not to what the Lord has already done, announced, offered, and instructed for us to follow.

We are repeatedly insisting on this point because although *lusting after the evil things* can include greed for money or more specific fleshly passions, as we will see later, **it is the general inclination for personal desires to prevail that causes people to end up incurring propositions in which they want God's blessing, but do not want the Lord so close to them that they may have to give up many personal desires in their hearts, similar to what happened in ancient times.**

Just as the people freed from the dominion of Egypt wanted God's care for them, but they did not want the Lord so close as to have to turn away from their inappropriate desires, therefore suggesting a priesthood based on the commandments of visible or external behavior and with human mediators, so many people also want the new covenant in Christ, but with certain similarities with the old covenant so that they may also continue to follow their inclination towards "*evil lusts*."

So, the evil lusts of people who claim to want the new covenant, but at the same time also act in an attempt to distort this new covenant, are a reflection of their insistence on wanting God's favor, but without this implying that God might be Lord in their lives indeed so that they also do not need to depart from the evil plans of their hearts.

The attitude of *lusting after evil things as they also lusted*, ends up leading people to want the good things from God as far as it seems favorable to them, but without needing to expose themselves too much to the Lord so that they do not come across God's light so that they also are not enlightened about the desires from which they do not want to depart. It is a position in which people want the benefits they expect to achieve in the Lord, but without wanting God to intervene in their thoughts and desires to which they want to be attached.

One of the central points found in *lusting after evil things as they also lusted* is trying to maintain the objective of not losing the favors arising from the relationship with God, but, at the same time, trying to keep the heart independent of the Lord.

The attitude of *lusting after evil things as they also lusted* has proven to be very dangerous because it may lead people to the thought that a seeming devotion to God may justify the inappropriate desires of the heart, and may lead people to the idea that there is not so much problem if a person has surrendered to something inadequate as long as one abides by some religious rules.

The more space people give to *lusting after evil things as they also lusted*, the more they run into becoming subject to the thought that their desires justify what they desire, even if what they want is not at all reasonable. It is the kind of thinking that leads some to believe that it is the desire that justifies the search for something or the realization of something even if it is contrary to God's will.

The more space people give to *lusting after evil things as they also lusted*, the more they begin to feel entitled to define by themselves what their rights are, such as claiming to have the right to be happy at any cost. And it is from this type of concept that many begin to think that they can associate the new covenant with what they by themselves believe that should be part of the new covenant.

Thus, the specific details or aspects by which people want to modify or distort the new covenant are many, but what equates them to those individuals who desired a priesthood with external rules ends up, in one way or another, being connected to the thought that the creation can propose, or at least partially propose, how human beings' relationship with their Creator should be.

The attitude of *lusting after evil things as they also lusted* is to want the blessings of God that are assigned from the spiritual world, but without the natural man having to give up his desires according to his human nature and thus be enlightened to pass to live and walk according to the understanding and spiritual will of the kingdom of heaven.

The position of *lusting after evil things as they also lusted* reflects the desire for spiritual benefits to be added to living and walking according to the flesh and not by the instruction of the Spirit of the Lord, mirroring the desire of not to give up a supposed position of prominence of the natural man.

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.

John 3: 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

God is noticeably clear or explicit about Christ's exclusive position as the Mediator of the new covenant for the newness that exists exclusively in the new priesthood. However, when the natural man wants his desires to prevail according to his limited natural perspective and dissociated from the light of the Lord in his heart, it is according to the natural man that he too will try to understand, shape, or establish his relationship with the Lord.

When, on the one hand, people do not want to depart entirely from the care and favor of God, but, on the other hand, they do not desire God as the Lord in their lives, they inevitably end up inclining to paths in which they will try to combine the new covenant with what they aim to do or obtain, incurring in seeking, in some way, to make the natural man's desires compatible with the proposal of a new covenant offered by the Lord.

When subject to the creature's limited mentality, the natural man thinks that he can define forms of relationship with the Lord, where God is welcome to serve him, but not to be indeed his Lord to the point of intervening in his evil goals, lusts, or wishes.

Therefore, despite that before God the first priesthood is already considered as revoked and that Christ is the Unique Mediator of the new covenant and not the old, many people in all generations will continue to look for ways to try, somehow, to maintain parts or concepts of the first priesthood, even if they need to surrender to the most varied dissimulations to try to justify their inappropriate options or their inclinations of the heart, as we are also informed in the Scriptures below:

2 Timothy 4: 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;
4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

That is, just like the people who suggested a priesthood where some of their peers would be their mediators because they did not want to depart from their lust for evil things, but, at the same time, they did not want to become entirely estranged from the

God who had liberated them from Egypt, aiming to maintain the protection and blessings of this God towards them, so also, in all generations, there are still people who somehow seek fanciful paths where they imagine that in their propositions they may harmonize the maintenance of a life with a certain measure of devotion to God without needing to depart from the evil desires of their hearts.

In their search for models that appeal to their fleshly interests, there are people in all generations who seek to surround themselves with teachings that please them to support what they desire, but through which they also incur surrender or subjection to a variety of pernicious and misleading fables.

In their search for models that work in line with their *lusts after evil things*, there are people, in all generations, who seek to surround themselves with teachings that give them the idea, although illusory, that they can continue to suggest to God some priestly forms that they like, and that they can even establish and follow propositions of what they themselves understand that would be appropriate to consider as what makes up the second priesthood or the new covenant, calling, still, these propositions as their doctrines or doctrines of the groups they form.

In wishing to maintain a certain measure of devotion to God, but also to allow their *lust for evil things* or *other longings of the flesh* to take the lead in the direction of their lives, and not the good, perfect, and pleasant will of God as the Lord presents it in the new covenant, people, in one way or another, will seek to establish mixed priesthood models where they are inclined to try to group a little of what pleases them in the new covenant with what attracts them in the first or other priesthoods opposed to Christ, still thinking, in their fables, that this may even be acceptable before God.

Thus, in their subjection to fables from the teachings they choose to surround themselves with, many people, for example, continue to dare to propose that they can still elect the mediators that suit them, even after the resurrection of Christ and the fact that the Heavenly Father has already established Christ as the One Mediator between God and human beings.

In their misdirection, many even go so far as to propagate or teach that even in the new covenant in Christ, it is tolerable before God that some members of this covenant are raised as mediators of others associated with the same covenant, and, yet, that these human mediators even continue to have the right to collect tithes and offerings similar to the old covenant as if this were still in line with God's will.

Therefore, once again, knowing the historical facts narrated in the Scriptures about the first priesthood, so that the undue motivations that try to afflict the hearts of the people in each generation become more widely revealed, becomes a crucial point for that which is beyond the visible or the superficial aspect to be revealed, because although God has already established the revocation of the first priesthood, the motivations that led people to incline to it are now channeled as resistance to the new covenant in Christ Jesus.

To discern what tries to appear as aligned with the kingdom of God, but which in reality is a set of assumptions and distorted propositions according to the natural man, we understand that it is crucial to know that the motivating factors of resistance to the new covenant in Christ, similar to what occurred in the proposition of the so-called first priesthood, may not express themselves in explicit or necessarily direct opposition against the new covenant. However, when seen beyond superficiality, several

resistances will present motivational characteristics like those associated with people's longings in antiquity for the first or old covenant.

Although the time to the so-called first priesthood to try to show itself appropriate has already ended, to know the motivations of people to join it may cooperate in highlighting the reasons why so many people, from generation to generation, end up giving way to similar resistance to the relationship path with God in the way it is offered to them by the Lord.

The attempts to insert propositions that try to merge items from the old and the new covenants may even present a speech of a supposed agreement with the will of God in Christ to remove the old to establish the new, but these propositions, in practice, have played a role of opposition to Christ, for they continue to reflect what reigns in the heart of the natural man who does not want God as his Lord.

The fact that the first priesthood came from a carnal proposition, rather than a spiritual proposition from heaven, explains, in several ways, what were the targets that people had when proposing a priesthood of this type, which also ends up explaining the attempts at propositions and current implantation of mixed ministries and contrary to the will of God or the position of Christ in the new covenant.

Finally, in this topic, we would like to emphasize that when the Scriptures call us to be attentive to the motivations of the people who were present in the context of the option for the first priesthood, they still call us to take heed to a fact already addressed previously and which mentions that ***a little leaven leavens the whole lump***, and that although the new covenant can never be corrupted, a good soil, a good lump, or a good heart, if allowed, might, yes, be corrupted by the “leaven of the lusts for evil things” that was also present in the proposition of the first priesthood.

1 Corinthians 5: 6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

B. The Motivation to Walk by Sight and Not Through Faith in God

After seeing that Christ is the exclusive Mediator of the new covenant and that the Lord Jesus in no way acts as a mediator of the old covenant, but that it is because of the motivations in their hearts that people move to try to mix the new covenant with the aspects of the first priesthood, we understand that it is also interesting to move a little further towards observing some specific motivations by which people try to associate parts of the priesthoods contrary to God with the new covenant.

And as a first more specific point to be seen in this chapter, we remember that a primary reference of life under the old covenant is walking by sight, by what is palpable, by the materialized tabernacle, by the previously written commandment, by the natural or fleshly effort, and by the outward works. And as we have seen before, it is the walking that is not through faith in the Lord.

Galatians 3: 11 ***But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."***
12 ***Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."***

When people do not want to live and walk in the light of Christ in their hearts because they do not wish to become enlightened to the point of seeing the need of changing their personal desires, they close themselves to the things of the Spirit of God, which, as seen in the previous topic, puts them in a condition where they also fail to understand or discern spiritual things, being restricted to the knowledge and wisdom of the natural man.

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.***

And, in turn, when people do not live and do not walk through faith in God, they begin to have their hearts inclined to try to carry out their own plans or agendas, associating them primarily with external and repetitive acts as if they, by this, could come to please God and obtain the justification and blessings they hope to receive from the Lord.

When people start to focus their attention predominantly on earthly things, they do not only commence to move away from the understanding of the will of God, but they also begin to lean towards paths contrary to life in conformity with the kingdom of God, running the risk of reaching the point of incurring the condition of enmity towards the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, for they claim to want to follow the Lord but prefer the earthly or natural things, or of the flesh, instead of what is associated with life according to the Spirit of the Lord.

Let us see below some more texts that exemplify the attitudes mentioned above:

Galatians 4: 8 **But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.**

9 But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

10 You observe days and months and seasons and years.

11 I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

Philippians 3: 17 **Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.**

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.

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.

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.

Colossians 2: 20 **Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations,**

21 ("Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,"

22 which all concern things which perish with the using), according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

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.

Furthermore, in order not to stick only to the aspect that the human being in his choice to walk by sight and not by faith ends up being even more subject to value his relationship with God inappropriately and also with the natural things, we would still like to consider about some reasons that corroborate for people to pay too much attention to tangible things or that are naturally visible.

Thus, the motivation that we would like to analyze here when an individual chooses to walk by sight and not by faith, and, therefore, fails to understand spiritual things, refers to his or her feeling of vulnerability concerning what one does not know and, because of it, incurring to render oneself to the attempts of mitigating this feeling of vulnerability with the action of surrounding oneself with things that one can understand and control at least in part or to some extent.

Since the natural man cannot understand the origin of life and his destiny after his natural death, because of choosing not to want God as his Lord, he tends to cling to what is tangible or seems closer, even starting to place his trust in natural things to glimpse somehow some level of security.

Psalms 49: 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.

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

The human being has a need for trusting. And even if someone says that he or she does not trust anything and no one, one is still trusting that his or her option to trust nothing and nobody is the parameter of his or her trust.

Proverbs 28: 26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.

And, in turn, in his or her demand to put one's trust in something, if the human being does not place his or her trust in the Lord and does not become instructed to perceive life also from the spiritual perspective of the kingdom of God, one will tend to place his or her confidence in what one can see or materialize in some way, even going so far as to create idols and then put one's trust in what the human being oneself created.

Isaiah 44: 14 He cuts down cedars for himself, And takes the cypress and the oak; He secures it for himself among the trees of the forest.

He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes it.

15 Then it shall be for a man to burn, For he will take some of it and warm himself; Yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; Indeed he makes a god and worships it; He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.

16 He burns half of it in the fire; With this half he eats meat; He roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He even warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire."

17 And the rest of it he makes into a god, His carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, Prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!"

18 They do not know nor understand; For He has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, And their hearts, so that they cannot understand.

19 And no one considers in his heart, Nor is there knowledge nor understanding to say, "I have burned half of it in the fire, Yes, I have also baked bread on its coals; I have roasted meat and eaten it; And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?"

20 He feeds on ashes; A deceived heart has turned him aside; And he cannot deliver his soul, Nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

So long as the human being does not accept that he or she needs God in everything, including so that one's motivations become exposed to the light of the Lord and one comes to know the central aspects of life also through the spiritual perspective that only the kingdom of God can grant him or her, one will continue to try to establish oneself in material things or that are naturally tangible as a reference to place one's trust.

Therefore, it is also because of their lack of trust in God and their inclination to trust tangible things that people try to distort the new covenant and try to add to it some items that give them a feeling that is more naturally tangible. And this, under the pretended allegation that they want to solidify even more their association with this covenant.

Under the pretext of making the new covenant more consistent and more tangible to people, many want to add to it the old covenant's leaven, creating rules and rituals from which Christ came to deliver them and not to subject people to them again.

The firmness of the new covenant is in God, in the unshakable spiritual kingdom, in the eternal foundation that is the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we can believe even though we cannot yet see Him. And all this, precisely so that our trust is in God and not in the visible or shakable things that the natural man admires and values so much.

Thus, the assertion of the need of officially join groups that claim to be Christians because it represents security for their members is an example of how people do not accept the fact that their association with the Lord in the new covenant is in the Spirit and that the name of the one who received the status of a son of God in Christ Jesus is registered in heaven and does not need to be in any human list in the present world to have reaffirmed his position as an eternal son before the Heavenly Father.

In their eagerness to want to secure themselves in things that are visible or natural, as if they could represent some guarantee before God, many depart from the simplicity that exists in the association with Christ of everyone who believes in Him, and, as a consequence, they create the most absurd things under the name of supposedly being Christian or parts necessary for the new covenant with the Lord.

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.

...

7 Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD."

Psalms 20: 7 **Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.**

Psalms 146: 1 **Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!**
2 While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.
3 Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.
4 His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish.
5 Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the LORD his God,
6 Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps truth forever.

2 Corinthians 5: 7 **For we walk by faith, not by sight.**

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.

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.

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.

1 Corinthians 6: 17 **But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.**

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.

...
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.

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.

C. The Motivation for Being in Control

A second more specific point in terms of why many people try to associate aspects similar to those of the first priesthood with the new covenant is their desire to be in a supposed position of control or dominion over life, things around them, and even over God.

In their devotion to their own wills, many people lean towards the attempts of controlling things and even those around them. However, to avoid their goals becoming too explicit, many try to hide the inappropriate inclination to their bad lusts through seeming or external devotions to the Lord, as exemplified by the following text:

- Matthew 7: 15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*
- 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?*
- 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.*
- 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.*
- 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*
- 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*
- 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!'*

In their eagerness to remain in control of their own wills and the surrounding situations, many individuals reach the point where they even seem to be very dedicated to God, but in reality, even when they show themselves serving God, they want what they want to do to prevail as the justifying aspect of their lives, which, in turn, is an attempt to justify themselves again by works as it was in the old covenant.

The outward devotion of the false prophets was called by the Lord Jesus as a practice of iniquity, for they were trying to use their achievements as the central point of their justification to enter the kingdom of God, contrary to the fact that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes in Him, an aspect addressed more widely in the subjects on The Gospel of God's Righteousness and The Gospel of God's Grace.

In their desire to control even the right of access to the heavenly kingdom, false prophets establish services, works, and measurable goals that can be seen with the natural eyes to use the fulfillment of these goals as parameters to be justified before the Eternal Judge.

- 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.**

In the new covenant, people are not saved by the outward works they practice, by the number of sacrifices they make, by the volume of offerings or tithes they give, but they are saved by grace through faith in the justifying work done only once and forever by Christ Jesus. However, precisely regarding this point in which the natural man cannot boast in his deeds and cannot have control over life and God that many seek to corrupt the new covenant, inevitably incurring the attempts to give back credibility to the aspects associated with the old covenant.

We understand that it is highly significant to note, then, that in the new covenant, God does not want people to do things for Him as they think they should.

God does not want people devoted to Him according to human motivations, as it was in the old covenant.

In the new covenant, people are invited to be in Christ and the fellowship with Him so that God may first lead them to know His will and to walk in God's will not out of obligation or to be justified through works, but because they understand that God's will is good, pleasant, and perfect in everything.

The iniquity of the people who did works supposedly under the “name of the Lord” and called Him “Lord, Lord,” was not, in the first place, the deeds they did, but the position of having done what they wanted to do to try to justify themselves in the way in which they themselves wanted to justify themselves before the Lord, therefore being rejected by God.

The iniquity of the people who supposedly did works for the Lord and called Him “Lord, Lord,” but were not accepted before God, was trying to reestablish one of the central principles of the first priesthood, doing it only with other types of works chosen according to their will or according to what they liked to accomplish.

And when a person says that he or she is free to do what God Himself has revoked, is he or she not declaring that one thinks that he or she is free even from God to do what one intends to do?

Some people even claim that they want to follow some practices similar to those of the first priesthood not because they feel compelled to do so, but because they like to do it or appreciate those practices. However, it is also in this type of consideration that they fall under the fascination of the old covenant as in all other past generations, for in declaring that they want to follow some aspects similar to the old covenant because they like them, they are taking a position in which they claim that what they like is more relevant than what God has declared as obsolete and not beneficial to human beings.

When an individual seeks to use his or her personal desire or one's willingness to justify his or her choice for aspects similar to the old covenant, one is seeking to justify his or her desire to do by oneself what one wants to do and understands to be appropriate for his or her relationship with God, despite the Lord having already declared that life subject to the principles of the first priesthood is not according to His will and cannot lead a person to the newness of eternal life that is in Christ.

Ephesians 5: 15 **See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,**
16 **redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**
17 **Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.**

Freedom in Christ is not a proposition by which a person supposedly can do what one wants to do or how one wants to do it. Freedom in Christ is the condition by which a person can receive the understanding of the will of God accompanied by the strength in the heart to decide and act according to this will, even when this implies to stop to practice what the Lord has already declared revoked.

Whoever remains in me, says the Lord, will bear much fruit. But He also says that without Him, nothing can be done. That is, if someone does something thinking to be for God without having stayed in Christ and without the work being an extension of this fellowship and the instruction of the Lord, that person may be trying to raise a concept of the first priesthood where one tries to place the accomplishment of works above fellowship with God, as in ancient times.

A Christian is called to do works together with God because one understands that what the Lord suggests to him or her is right, just, and good for his or her life and those around him or her. And one does not need to do works dissociated from the Lord or to please Him to try to accelerate the blessings one wants to obtain from God.

For this reason, many of the false prophets that Christ mentioned are those that the Lord still calls *like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly* and that have the objective of transmitting the idea that they are devoted to godliness and purity, but which, in reality, are like paths of oppression, destruction, and death.

Matthew 23: 27 **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.**

Matthew 23: 4 **For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.**

Finally, in this topic, we emphasize that in their motivations to be in positions of control, many people, even when they supposedly are serving, work to achieve positions of prominence that should never be desired by someone who truly aims to live and walk according to the new covenant in Christ.

In the old covenant, people, in general, depended on others to be able to present their causes to God and be instructed by the Lord. And this, was also because there were those who wanted to be dependent on others and those who appreciated that others depended on them, which is why many continue trying to insert these aspects into the new covenant.

In their yearnings to be in control, many despise Christ's direct words regarding the relationship between Christians and still seek to rise above their fellow men, similarly to the divisions between clergy and people that existed in the old covenant.

*Matthew 23: 1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,
2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.*

*...
8 But you, do not be called 'Rabbi' (or masters); for One is your
Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.
9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He
who is in heaven.
10 And do not be called teachers (or guides or leaders); for One is your
Teacher, the Christ."*

Throughout history, many have tried to formulate the functioning of the Church of Christ based on the model of the first priesthood, generating teachings that tried to insert the newness of life in Christ in the old model that does not support it or vice versa, failing time after time and creating a cycle of dissimulations over dissimulations.

And so, it is also from the distorted models that were created from the attempts of combining the Church of Christ with some parts of the law of Moses that many have tried to explain the Church of the days of Paul, Timothy, Titus, and others, generating a cycle whose root is always the attempt to make some connection with the first priesthood and from which it seems that they can no longer withdraw.

To try to see the Lord's Church from similar positions to those of the priesthood according to the Law of Moses or to try to see the Church from the current models full of positions, offices, titles, and divisions of clergy and people is simply not seeing the Church of the Lord indeed or at all, for the Lord's Church is not subject to the control of clergy or people who take possession of their groups of people, their structures, and still call them their own Churches. It is not seeing the Church in agreement with the second priesthood and the new covenant, where Christ is the One Mediator of the new covenant and the Eternal High Priest of all who come directly or personally through Him to the Heavenly Father.

Just before He was crucified, the Lord Jesus told His disciples that He would not leave them orphans, but that He would return to them. Just before the time when the first priesthood's validity would be removed, the Lord Jesus announced that He would never leave His disciples unattended as to their relationship with God.

Close to the days when the period allowed by God for the old covenant came to an end, the Lord Jesus said that He would not leave orphans those who believed in Him, would not leave them without knowing what to do, and that He would return to them after His resurrection. And so He did by being with the disciples after His resurrection and by sending the Holy Spirit or the Heavenly Helper to the hearts of those who believe in Him, as well as the Lord Jesus continues to do so even now as the Eternal High Priest chosen by the Heavenly Father to attend all who through grace and faith in God welcome Him into their hearts.

Christ, the Heavenly Father's Eternal and Only Begotten Son, became our older brother, born of a woman, so that all the other children of the family of those who believe in God no longer need any other mediators to draw near to the presence and fellowship with the Eternal Father, as well as they no longer need the supposed brothers who, somehow, say that they received a special anointing to manage or control the lives of their fellow men.

Thus, a Christian can pray to the Heavenly Father on behalf of other Christians and is even called to do so, but as a brother or helper, and never as a mediator of a person's relationship with the Eternal Father or as a master, guide, leader, or pastor of his or her neighbor's life.

In the new covenant, each person is called to understand and make use of the direct fellowship available to him or her in the Lord so that one also enjoys the love and abundance of life that is in God through Christ Jesus.

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

D. Motivation for Glory Before People or the Present World

Following the more specific points because which many seek to associate aspects similar to those of the first priesthood with the new covenant, we can see in the Scriptures that people's concern for personal glory before their fellow men also plays a very representative role, as exemplified in the texts below:

*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.*

*Galatians 6: 12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.
13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.
14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.*

Matthew 23: 5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

*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.
3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,
4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*

Since the first priesthood revolved around walking by sight and not by faith, and since it was entirely associated with the observance of written or outward rules, it is practically inevitable that it would not accentuate people's motivation for glory or recognition before their fellow men.

Considering that in the old covenant, people sought approval for visible or materially tangible works, offerings, and sacrifices, also the appreciation for being seen as a practitioner of these works became an inevitable aspect, to the point that even what should be done in private or in a more reserved condition started to be done as a public

exhibition, as, for example, the practice of prayer and fasting, as mentioned also in the text of Matthew 6.

And given yet that the first priesthood is based on a fleshly commandment or a set of motivations of the natural man, it is not surprising that many people also persist in trying to associate the new covenant with their longing for glory, recognition, and fame before their fellow men.

Fame or glory before the world attracts many people because, for those who rely on walking by sight, it is also a way to attain goals, favors, control, and material goods.

By making use of their fame, many people seek privileges, to be served, gifts, power, and many other aspects.

Therefore, as for the new covenant, many people try to associate it with various performance measures, titles, offices, or positions that, although they may have different names from the first priesthood, are propositions very similar to the old covenant.

When people, for example, seek to transform the roles of elders, deacons, and bishops mentioned in the so-called New Testament into positions and titles, they are not aligned with the new covenant in which everyone is a brother in Christ and where everyone is called to serve one another with the gift that the Lord gives to each one, but they are trying to include in the new covenant the structure of what has already been removed eternally by the Lord because it is weak and useless.

Due to the longing for fame and also for greedy interests, as we will see later, many have sought to transform that which represents only a gift of service and cooperation with the brothers into structural positions because of their evil lust for power, dominion, control, and profit.

Nevertheless, one of the central problems that accompany the ambition for fame or glory before others or the world is also the growing meaning that the opinion of other people starts to have for the one who longs for fame, to the point where the attachment to fame or desire for glory may begin to compete with the will of the Lord and become more relevant than hearing the voice of God.

Thus, in their ambitions for human recognition or approval, people start to feel pressured to act according to the human way of thinking, also running by this way into walking by sight and not through faith in the Lord.

In their ambitions for human recognition, people, then, are willing to be bold, to take the initiative and the lead in their actions, to break with their conditions of peace, patience, and quietness before God, and reach the point of even thinking and declaring that by themselves they can choose where and how to do good to their fellow men. And yet, claiming that if the motivation is to do good to themselves or even to their peers, they can risk doing it even without consulting the Lord about where to do it and how to do it, similar to what the false prophets mentioned in the book of Matthew chapter 7 did.

When fame before others and the world becomes the reference point of a person's life, it is no longer God who is first in his or her life. And in this way, people also deny what the Lord teaches us, for example, in the following texts:

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.**

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.**

Isaiah 30: 15 **For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." But you would not.**

- 1 John 2: 15* **Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**
16 **For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.**
17 **And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.**

May, then, a Christian or someone associated with the new covenant ever be exalted or have any glory or position of honor before his or her fellow men?

In response to the question above, we return once again to the aspect of the old covenant where one of the biggest problems was not that people wanted to reject God entirely, but they wanted Him to come after them to bless them on the paths that they themselves wanted to walk.

Therefore, in the new covenant, it is not the role of an individual to seek fame or glory before his or her fellow men, but to come in humility to Christ, who is gentle and humble in heart, to come before God with a broken spirit, leaving in the hands of the Lord whether or not to be exalted and when to be exalted.

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.**

- James 4: 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"?**
6 **But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."**
7 **Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**
8 **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**
9 **Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.**

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

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."

Matthew 6: 5 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

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.

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 (or manifests Himself), then you also will appear (or be manifested) with Him in glory.

E. The Motivation for Traditions, Cultures, Familiar Things or Collectivities

Similarly to the previous topic, yet another more specific point in terms of which many seek to associate the new covenant with parts similar to those of the first priesthood, refers to the inappropriate attachment to traditions, cultures, things that are familiar to them, or things that have been transferred to them.

Looking at the matter of the desire for fame or glory before others and the world from yet another angle, we may see that one of the points by which some people wanted Christ in the days when the Lord Jesus was in the flesh in the world but were not willing to follow Him indeed, was the fact that they were not willing to face the break with what the first priesthood had introduced into the life of the societies in which they were inserted, according to the text repeated below:

*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.***

And here too, there is another aspect that is very characteristic of life propositions similar to what the first priesthood or the old covenant proposes.

Since the first priesthood proposes to operate through mediators representing the people or a group of people, the collective, group, or non-individual condition is also highly accentuated. Which, in turn, also accentuates a virtually inevitable dependence on the collectivity for the attempts of the relationship with God.

And when the collectivity status comes to have a position of the representation of a group of people, such as the first priesthood, the things that are practiced under it start to become confused with the traditions, cultures, or legacies that are passed on to people and generations that come to be under the regency of this collectivity. Under collective aspects, several individuals begin to do many things by mere continuity or by their position of heritage or succession of those who preceded them.

Thus, when God began to reveal the new covenant in Christ Jesus and that in this new covenant each person can approach the Lord individually and directly without the need of the collectivity, God not only announced a new and living individual way for the relationship with each human being, but He also proclaimed the path that makes it possible for a person to break with one's dependence or subjection to many collective aspects to which one was previously subjected.

Therefore, it is to oppose the so sublime and singular freedom that life in Christ provides also concerning the dependence on the collectivity for the relationship with God that many raise proposals with the purpose of distorting the new covenant to maintain their traditions and cultures or with the goal of passing on their religious legacies so that others may continue the beliefs, works, and structures to which they dedicated themselves so much, even though the dedication to them was in vain.

Here it also becomes highlighted how much walking by sight and not by faith is highly attractive to the natural man, because, to the natural eyes, the idea of the

collectivity may be very comforting or give the feeling of security, besides that, in the collectivity, people do not necessarily need to adjust or correct the desires of their hearts, for they may think that they can follow the momentum of the collectivity and of those who are ahead of it, as it is characteristic of the old covenant.

Many appreciate being formally part of a group to indulge their desire for fame and glory, as we saw in the previous topic. However, many also appreciate being formally part of a group due to the feeling of security or acceptance that this gives them.

Similarly, walking by sight and not by faith also appreciates traditions, cultures, or familiar things because most of its practices are already known to the soul. However, the newness of life in Christ and the continuous dependence on the Lord are aspects to be known spiritually and in a renewed way with each new day, a reason why the Lord Jesus warns us that:

*Luke 5: 39 **And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'***

Faced with the new covenant proposal, many people perceive the importance of it, but still do not receive it entirely willingly because this challenges them to leave the old that tastes better for them than the new or in which they think they are safer. For this reason, similar to other lusts for evil things, they seek to harmonize what seems attractive to them in the new covenant with what they appreciate in the old covenant, incurring by this, an attitude through which they also fall into the basic principles of the first priesthood, which corresponds to living by sight and not through faith in God.

Therefore, it is inevitable that the characteristic of the first priesthood of trying to make the human will prevail over the will of God comes to propose an appreciation of traditions, cultures, human legacies, or familiar things above the will of the Lord or what God offers us in the new covenant in Christ Jesus.

*Matthew 15: 6(b) **Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.***

*Mark 7: 8 **For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men (the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do).***
*9 **He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."***

Some aspects of traditions and cultures certainly do not compete with God's will, such as some aspects of cooking, the language of a nation, and others that a person receives as a legacy.

Nevertheless, when something is opposed to an individual's personal relationship with God or when something seeks to take the positions and functions that belong exclusively to Christ, this represents a resistance of the natural man to the things of the

Spirit, and which, therefore, should be rejected and left behind by the one who wants to walk the path of salvation and newness of life that the Lord offers him or her.

The new covenant in Christ offers freedom from subjection to sin and also from subjection to the old covenant or the law of the first priesthood, or even similar to it, which also means a possibility of withdrawing from those things that are behind and advancing to things that are ahead, however much the things that are behind are recognized by many as almost untouchable traditions or cultures.

*Philippians 3: 13 **Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,**
14 **I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

*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.***

As also commented on another point, since everyone who has tried the old wine prefers the old, not the new, we emphasize here that advancing to the life in Christ may also include a positioning that is initially not pleasant to the person who does it, because the new covenant offers a path that may hugely displease the motivations of the natural man.

On the other hand, when a person chooses the new and living way of life that the Lord offers him or her, one will soon realize that it is a way of life that frees him or her from slavery to the very fleshly desires to which one was subjected before and from which one could not achieve liberation on his or her own.

Thus, since the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary was also carried out to free people from traditions, cultures, and legacies that were passed on to them and that oppose the direct relationship with the Lord or that they created in opposition to God's will, no Christian has an obligation to continue the maintenance of any of these aspects that have been transferred to him or her by other generations or that others want him or her to continue to support.

A Christian, in the first place, is called to live and walk according to God's will and not the will of one's fellow men, the collectivity in his or her surroundings, or the world.

*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.***

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 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.***

- 2 Corinthians 1: 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,***
- 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.***

When we look closely at the Scriptures, we can see that there is no doubt that God wants Christians also to have fellowship among themselves and to benefit from the fruits of this fellowship. However, this does not mean that the collectivity should mediate or rule a person's life or that people, through this fellowship, are called to give continuity or support to the traditions and cultures taught to them in their context of life and that are contrary to the new covenant in Christ Jesus.

- 1 John 1: 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.***

F. The Motivation for Material Things or the Motivation of Greed

In addition to the more specific motivations that we have addressed in the previous topics, and because of which many people try to associate aspects similar to those of the first priesthood to the new covenant, there are still several others, such as the desire for power, making many want to have the right to use the “name of Christ” and the power associated with it, but without having the willingness to accept the lordship of Christ or the will of God in their lives, as stated by the Lord Jesus regarding the false prophets in the text of Matthew previously seen.

Nevertheless, in order not to stay too long on these aspects so that we may move forward to know several other points of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will consider still in this chapter only the matter of the motivation for material things, goods, and money when it is associated with a greedy lust to try to distort the new covenant.

As we have also commented previously, the fact that the old covenant was directed to walking by sight, according to the will of the natural man, and not through faith, plus the fact that many central services of the first priesthood were associated with material structures and offerings, resulted in a growing appreciation of the material aspects and also in increasingly intense and enhanced greed regarding them.

Walking primarily according to what is tangible makes people start to keep their eyes focused more and more on natural things, also leading the heart to appreciate these things to the point that the interests of the heart become more and more imprisoned to the issues of this world and leaving aside the focus on the matters from the perspective of the Heavenly Father, the Father of Lights.

Thus, because the first priesthood has its focus on material things, people also began to run into the thought that “the essence of blessings” to be received from the divinity they worship is to achieve prosperity in earthly or material things.

The first priesthood, because it has always focused on so many external aspects, in reality, or in practice, ended up cooperating to give way or increase in people's heart a mentality based on bargaining, negotiation, on the offer of some goods or resources to primarily receive an even higher material return.

From the motivations that were in their hearts, the people freed from the dominion of Egypt reached the point where they were readily willing, for example, to sacrifice and offer many of their belongings so that the “golden calf” could be made under the intention that they could achieve material prosperity similar to the nation from which they were delivered.

In this way, the proposition of godliness associated with the old covenant ended up being evident to many as a devotion to this priesthood's law under the main objective of obtaining profit, material enrichment, welfare, and social and territorial security.

Nevertheless, since the bargaining or greedy mentality is not something exclusive to the first priesthood, but it is inherent in the heart of the human being subject to sin, people continue to look for ways to try to keep the concepts of the first priesthood active even after God has already declared the old priesthood as revoked or obsolete.

In order not to be faced with the challenge of giving up their greedy interests, but trying to hide them from God and even from their peers, many people insist on not departing from what has already been demonstrated as a vain or useless way of godliness, advancing to the point of incurring attempts to distort even the sound doctrine or words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And even though they try to do it in ways that appear different from the first priesthood or using connotations that are supposed to be of the new covenant or the priesthood revealed in Christ, many end up adopting behaviors or attitudes that they call Christian, but that end up, in one way or another, repeating or reflecting people's behavior under the first priesthood with their bargaining mentality. A reality described in a very enlightening way by the text exposed by Paul when writing to Timothy to warning true Christians to withdraw themselves from those who do so, as follows:

- 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.***
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Although the last text above is more widely exposed in the subject on Another Gospel or a Different Gospel, which is also expressed as a supposed gospel of what has an appearance of godliness but is associated with greed, and in the theme about The Christian and the Riches, we may see that the most accentuated problem often is not even centered only on the ritual acts of the first priesthood, but on the mentality that leads people to build an idea of a godly life in which they themselves come to assume what this godliness or priesthood is, and not according to what God defines about what a life or a priesthood according to true godliness is.

- 1 Timothy 6: 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.

Paul's instruction to Timothy in saying *from such withdraw yourself* reflects what is also taught in the Scriptures about the need for people to depart from the first priesthood, its law, and its covenant, for in subjection to the mentality of the first priesthood, people incur in deprivation of the truth because the mediation of the relationship with God and the truth through men or women will never lead people to know the truth and the will of God in the daily course of the most varied areas of their lives.

In the world, many who claim to want Christ, in reality, desire the Lord according to a priesthood proposition established according to their intentions or under the concept that godliness is the way to seek the satisfaction of their greed or for “Christ to bless them to be prosperous in their intentions primarily directed to earthly, material, or carnal things.”

Many people want Christ, but they want Him as the One who follows and blesses them in every decision they make, even when they are opposed to the righteousness of God, similarly to the same evil desires that a large part of the people freed from the dominion of Egypt carried in their hearts.

And by choosing not to give God the first place in their lives because of their pursuits for what they call *prosperity, advancement, development, growth, or even enjoying life or good luck*, many people move towards evil lusts, or to that which in their eyes seems appropriate, and surrender to their most diverse endeavors. They even start to trust more in what they propose and their endeavors than in God, similar to when an individual chooses to put the desire for human fame or glory above the Lord's will.

Nevertheless, when they come to think that people or ministries can set the material goals that seem appropriate to them and that God will bless them in their purposes only because they call themselves Christians or because they use the “name of Christ,” they fail to take into account that these paths are also compared with those in which thorns gain space, multiply, and choke the word of God in their lives and lead them to be subject to conditions that will torment them with many sorrows, as the following texts also teach us:

1 Timothy 6: 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.

Matthew 13: 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.

Luke 8: 14 Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

When Christ told the parable of the Sower who went out to sow the word of God, He said that many would receive the word of God with joy, just as the people freed from

Egypt's dominion received with joy their liberation from those who outwardly oppressed them.

Nonetheless, the Lord also drew the attention of His listeners by saying that, in the sequence, many who welcomed the word would let the thorns of the demands of the cares of this world, the riches, and the pleasures of life receive an undue space to the point of choking the word of salvation and life that God allowed them to receive.

And similarly, at this point, as in many aspects seen in previous topics, many people, by not wanting to take an explicit position to depart from Christ, seek some alternative to combine the first priesthood bargaining system with the new covenant.

From the point we are trying to highlight in this topic, it does not seem to be so difficult to see why people initially received Christ with great joy, but then started to be scandalized in several aspects of the new covenant proposal that He came to offer them, as exemplified below:

*Matthew 6: 19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;
20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.
21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

*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."*

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."

Many people rejected the new covenant not only because they did not appreciate some new aspects that Christ came to offer them, but also or even mainly because of what, in the new covenant, they would need to leave behind or give up.

The acceptance of the full rejection of the first priesthood or also known by the association with the name of Moses, as we have commented in other words previously, would also imply the retreat of spaces that the flesh, human nature, men and women, especially the religious and powerful, had already reached, generating enormous discomforts and confrontations between the proposal of the new covenant and the removal of the old covenant and the whole context involved with this priesthood.

What started as something where people promised to fulfill, according to their efforts, a set of rules and sacrifices to supposedly be blessed by God in return for the fulfillment of the regulations and the sacrifices, became a vast structure where many raised their gains to the detriment and oppression of others in far greater numbers than at the beginning of the first priesthood.

Christ did not come in the flesh into the world just to make a general provision that frees people from the condemnation of their subjection to sin, which even the greedy would want to receive. Christ also came to provide deliverance to people of the priestly system that was an enhancer of greed and came to be the reference of life for many. And this was what caused so much discomfort for many individuals who had material gains with the entire structure developed from a so-called “simple tabernacle in the desert,” for the yeast grows and leavens the whole mass, even reaching to leaven almost an entire nation.

In the days when Christ was crucified and then resurrected from the dead, there were many priests, groups of scholars, and religious leaders such as the Pharisees and Sadducees, the scribes and doctors, interpreters of the law, Levites of various classes, the musicians Levites, the Levites who slaughtered the sacrifices, the Levites who took care of the general functioning of the temple courtyard, the Levites of the treasury, and many other situations in which people obtained their material gains from what revolved around the old covenant.

In the days when Christ came into the world in the flesh, everyone should go to Jerusalem at least once a year. With this, in addition to the transit of people and their expenses, 10% of agriculture or livestock was designated to come to the religious system according to the old covenant.

In the vast flow of resources that were moved around the old covenant, even a system of money exchangers came to be instituted in the country by which people could transform the original offerings and tithes into monetary value so that people could travel to Jerusalem without having to carry the heavy loads of their offers in itself.

The lodging system and commerce in general also extracted substantial material and economic gains from all that religious movement.

Nevertheless, suddenly, faced with the offer of the newness of life according to the new covenant, from one day to another, a whole segment of the economy of a nation that had been operating for centuries had no more reason to exist.

From Christ's death on the cross of Calvary for the atonement of all human beings' guilt towards sin, no attempt to obtain the forgiveness of sinners and salvation through various sacrifices according to the law of Moses remained authorized by the Lord, but likewise, no priest who received sacrifices and the confessions of sinners remained needed or required.

Besides, the coming of the new covenant and the end of the law of Moses also made it evident that any priesthood similar to that of Moses, that is, any priesthood with mediators and focused primarily on sacrifices and material works, was no longer necessary, as many people understood in Ephesus after Paul announced the Gospel of Christ to them and where he was persecuted by those who had their earnings associated with the temple of the so-called goddess Diana.

With Christ's death on the cross of Calvary and the establishment once and forever of the payment of the debt of all humanity to sin and the law of the first priesthood, or any other priesthood in the world, the ancient sacrifices and offerings from the first priesthood or similar to it no longer made any sense, just as the need for mediating priests also altogether ceased to have any purpose.

Christ allowed His blood to be shed on the cross of Calvary to make the provision of salvation for all to eternal life. However, He also died on the cross to free people from old and obsolete covenants so that they, from the encounter by faith with Christ, could also be released from the obligation of earthly priesthods and so that the heavenly priesthood would take its rightful place in the hearts of those who received the salvation offered to them by God through His eternal grace.

When priests, kings, and rulers induced the people to ask for the crucifixion of Christ and gave their approval for this crucifixion to be carried out indeed, they jointly endorsed the end of any validity of the first priesthood, as well as the end of the validity of all the functions of priests, Levites, temples, services, sacrifices, and offerings that were practiced up to that point, because with the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary, everything for which the priests of the old covenant existed lost immediate and full effect, lost the effect entirely before God.

*1 Corinthians 2: 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.***

From the establishment and offer of the new covenant in Christ Jesus, God again reiterated what He had said to David, namely, that He does not dwell in temples made by human hands, declaring that the very purpose of the temple to show the weakness and the uselessness of the old covenant had also expired and that whoever insisted on the point that the Lord dwells in temples made by human hands would be opposing the Spirit of the Lord.

*Acts 7: 46 **Who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob.***
*47 **But Solomon built Him a house.***
*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.***

*Acts 17: 24 **God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.***

When, in the book of Acts, we see that an angel of the Lord instructs the Lord's apostles who had just been released from prison to also preach the "complete message" to Christians in general and those who were still going to the ancient temple, he was not saying that people in Christ needed to go to the temple, but he was instructing them to preach "the full message" that in Christ each person is the temple or the Lord's dwelling place if one also remains in the Lord and the new covenant in the way it is offered.

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

If the Christian life depended on temples made by human hands, God would not have allowed the destruction of the temple of the old priesthood. However, as the kingdom of God is not established on shakable things, but on unshakable things, as we saw in the subject on The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the Lord allowed many things considered unshakable to be shaken because they did not belong indeed to the heavenly kingdom revealed in Christ Jesus through the new covenant.

God is righteous and does not show partiality towards people. That is also why the old priesthood system, which always shows partiality towards people already by the fact that it requires people to come to their priesthood places, could no longer be tolerated beyond the fullness of time when its weakness had already been fully exposed.

Because God considered the first priesthood's time to be over, God is also no longer committed to these types of structures, laws, priesthoods, and covenants that oppress and enslave people. God is committed to people or individuals of all races, peoples, and social classes who seek Him to receive Him in humility in their hearts.

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."***

In the first priesthood, "God was to be found in the temple," "if the priests and the people would be fully in order with their religious services." In the new covenant, however, God allows Himself to be found anywhere, in any village, in any house, in any place where someone opens one's heart to Christ, even if no one else around a person wants Christ as Lord of one's life.

Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, there are no more reports that He entered the temple made by human hands after He rose from the dead and was among His disciples with a glorified body.

If before, the Lord Jesus Christ followed or fulfilled the law of Moses to rescue those who were subject to it, now resurrected, the veil of the temple having been torn, that ancient temple was a building of natural stones like any other human construction and without God's endorsement to continue being called the house of God, also no longer needing human priesthoods to mediate the relationship with God. And this, because Christ, the very way to God, was established as the New and Living Way of the New Covenant and that comes to the heart of the one who believes in Him so that, from

there, each person, in Christ, may be a priest of one's life before God and so that Christ may be the perfect High Priest who perfectly assists all who come through Him to God.

After His resurrection, Christ showed His disciples that He was fully qualified to enter a house without opening its material doors that were locked so that they also knew through this that there were no more restrictions for Him to go where it was necessary to go and to demonstrate that He could be anywhere where a heart longs for Him.

Thus, if in the priesthood of the old covenant, for example, those imprisoned for various reasons could not go to the temple, in the priesthood from heaven, it is the Lord who goes to the imprisoned to comfort and strengthen their hearts if they receive Him as the offer or the gift of the love of God for one's redemption and salvation.

After being resurrected, Christ was revealed by God as the perfect High Priest for all because He can perfectly serve any heart in any place and at any time that one needs the Lord, but also because He entered heaven forever "***now to appear in the presence of God for us.***"

Colossians 1: 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.

Hebrews 9: 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9: 23 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another.

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.

After He made the provision for the end of the law of Moses, the risen Christ never again subjected Himself to anything connected with that ancient priesthood, law, covenant, or structure.

What was once extremely broad, complex, costly, full of thousands of details, sacrifices, agendas, and so many other things difficult to be accomplished in natural terms, both in the short time and in the long term, from one moment to the next, with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, has become so simple, very simple, to the point that anyone, illiterate or educated, Jewish or Greek, male or female, slave or free, could receive it and be a participant in it from the own heart, wherever one went and at all times.

In His sovereign wisdom, the Lord allowed the first priesthood, as we have already mentioned, also for people to see how greed and inappropriate attachment to the goods, structures, temples, and resources of this world generate mutual oppression among those who claim to want God over their lives, but not in their lives.

The weakness of the first priesthood was being revealed day by day for centuries before all the people until it had the veil of its earthly sanctuary torn from top to bottom by the power of God when Christ was crucified, announcing that the time of permission to attempt to live through this priesthood had come to an end, for what is according to the flesh does not produce the will of God and can never do so.

*Romans 8: 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.***

Thus, despite what God did through Christ, many people were very interested in maintaining that system that had been practiced for centuries, not because the old covenant was indeed beneficial to people, for it was already proven and testified that it was not, but because of the greed and ambitions of those who had profits or who received power with that system, an attitude that endures being done for centuries.

Therefore, given the fact that the process of making evident the motivations that present themselves in the heart of the natural man in his search for a relationship with God was one of the central aspects by which the Lord authorized people to try to live for a time according to the old covenant, we emphasize that God also calls our attention to be careful not to give in to greedy behaviors in our days that try to associate the new covenant with old practices already revoked, as exemplified by another text below:

*2 Peter 2: 1 **But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.**
2 **And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.**
3 **By covetousness they will exploit you (or make commerce of you) with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.***

Therefore, when people propose that tithes and the old offerings that interest them could also be applied to the new covenant, no matter what argument they are using, they are looking to corrupt the new covenant by associating it with the old covenant precepts, its system of bargaining, or their evil lusts similar to the evil lusts of antiquity, for the old priesthood was declared entirely obsolete by the Lord, and not only in parts.

The Lord Jesus, in one specific situation, told the Pharisees to practice tithing. This, however, He said because they were still under the law of Moses and because Christ had not yet been crucified under the same law to rescue those who were under the law of the old covenant.

Nevertheless, after Christ's resurrection, there is no teaching for a Christian to come to practice tithing or any other offering from the old covenant. And this, also for an obvious reason, namely: If there is no longer a need for priests, Levites, and temples made by human hands, if what was done in the old covenant was to serve the shadow that cannot perfect those who perform their acts, there is also no reason to keep tithes and offerings exclusively created and implemented to meet the structure of the first priesthood or similar to it.

The priests and Levites had to spend hours and hours every day slaughtering animals for sacrifice and preparing to enter the tabernacle or temple made by human hands, and then still attending to the people who often gathered in crowds before them. But once the need for any sacrifice for the justification of people ended because of the perfect sacrifice that God presented to the world through His Son Jesus Christ, no service of the type of mediating priests and Levites remained necessary, not even the need for priests and Levites mediators since Christ was revealed to be the Only Mediator between God and human beings.

In their eagerness in the attempts at justifying tithes, some still try to claim that Abraham was a "tithe payer," but this is also a distortion of the facts since Abraham offered tithes only on one occasion and did not even give tithes from part of his own assets or possessions, but of spoils of war from other kings and which he even returned to them, as we will see in one of the later chapters.

On the other hand, we understand that it is worth remembering here that it was not the priests and Levites who asked for the old covenant, but the people in general did.

Thus, the evil desire or greed for maintaining the old covenant tithes and offering system, or similar to it, cannot be attributed only to those who want to be priests, Levites, ministers, leaders, pastors, fathers, apostles, reverends, patriarchs, or any other names or titles that are attributed these functions, because the people who are willing to follow the systems that propose tithes and the most varied offerings also see in these systems a possibility of bargaining, of obtaining "profit," or to try to meet their lusts for security, control, goods, or material resources.

And in their greed, it is interesting to observe how several of the proponents to receive the offerings and tithes, as well as several of those who want to submit to this system, are incoherent in not bothering to declare, for example, that the tithes are still valid, but that it is no longer necessary for people to keep the Sabbath because this is an item of the law repealed with the revelation of Christ to the world.

Subject to their greed, people even come to think that they can select the old covenant items that interest them financially and discard those that appear to be excessively heavy, forgetting, however, that the one who wants to live subject to one aspect of the law is also required to comply with all the items of the law.

Therefore, after Christ's resurrection, the Lord Jesus, Peter, John, Paul, the author of the book of Hebrews, as well as all the Scriptures of the so-called New Testament never taught about keeping the Sabbath, going to Jerusalem on feast days, establishing priests and Levites, and their complete services and worship structures, as well as they also did not teach about the old system of offerings and tithes, for Christ is the end of the “whole the law” of the old covenant and not just the parts that people find interesting to leave behind.

In the old covenant, there were taxes that people were obliged to pay for choosing to transfer their priesthood or personal relationship with God to others. They decided to “outsource” their personal relationship with God to others and were obliged to “pay for this service.” And where there is a similar concept being applied, this characterizes the use of a basic concept of the old covenant regardless of how offerings or tithes are called and regardless of the names or titles by which those who perform the supposed services to God are called, or even, that in contemporary times they have titles that seem milder or less evident than the old ones.

When some people establish a relationship with each other in which some act to perform supposed services before God in the place of others, both those who are willing to offer the services and those who are subject to this type of services of their fellow men incur a system similar to the old covenant, even though they want to propagate that they are part of the new covenant with Christ.

A person who really wants to live and walk according to the new covenant or in Christ is not called by the Lord to “falter or waver between two paths with opposite purposes,” with no possibility before God of harmonizing the desire to participate simultaneously in two priestly covenants that cannot be mixed or combined. That is why the insistence on associating with aspects of the old covenant, even if only a few, is so dangerous, for it can cause a person who has already been freed from this system by the new covenant in Christ to turn away from Christ and fall from grace, as has been mentioned sometimes before.

Still regarding tithes and offerings, we believe it is important to emphasize here that it is also not the mere withdrawing from paying or giving this type of offer that exempts a person from being associated with a priesthood similar to the old covenant if one is otherwise related to this type of priesthood.

Withdrawing from giving tithes or offerings to a system does not dissociate a person from this type of priesthood if one continues to use it or otherwise participate in that system, because although tithes and offerings are a way for people to associate with systems with characteristics of the old covenant, they are not the only way.

If a person supposes that being under a priesthood similar to the old covenant exempts him or her from being part of that priesthood because one does not give tithes or the offerings required by that priesthood, one is in danger of wanting to “strain out or filter a gnat and let pass a great camel.”

What is greater, the tithes and offerings or the priesthood, the priests, and the structure that receives them?

If a person subjects oneself to the greater part of a priesthood that uses parts of the aspects of the old covenant or similar to it, that individual remains associated with this priesthood even if one chooses not to fulfill some items required in it, as it was in antiquity.

Moreover, there are still those who try to do the opposite. That is, they try not to participate in any aspect of a human priestly system, but even so, either for fear of ceasing to be blessed by God or out of greed, they pass on their tithes or a portion of their resources to human religious systems, as if they could not be part of these systems, but rely on their supposed blessings. An attitude that is also an association with covenants like the old covenant, because it is enough an item of the law for a person to associate with the whole law of a priesthood similar to the first.

Using a popular expression, it will not be helpful “to sweeten or gild a damaging pill” supposing that it will turn out to be beneficial.

It is useless “gilding” a priesthood similar to the first under a “flag” that it is of the new covenant and according to the priesthood in Christ. If a proposition of life with God, in practice, presents some placing themselves as mediators or leaders of others, even though Christ has expressly told not to do so, if it contemplates some offering themselves as special workers to lead others to God and to “worship services to God,” claiming to have a special calling to do so, if it is based on a system that revolves around physical places considered special for worshiping God, or if it tries to sustain any other aspect of the old covenant, this proposition has the characteristic of being old leaven even if people vehemently declare themselves followers of the new covenant.

As much as people try to adorn something corrupted as something worthy of being accepted or followed, no matter how much they try to prove themselves devoted or godly, and no matter how big the volume of offerings and gifts that they claim to be offering to God might seem to be, God looks at their hearts, knows their motivations, and does not let Himself be corrupted by them.

*Jeremiah 17: 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.***

*Deuteronomy 10: 17 **For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.***

*Hebrews 4: 12 **For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.***

*13 **And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.***

From the revelation of Christ to the world as the eternal Savior and Lord, the mystery kept for centuries was revealed, showing that the glory that people need so much is not found in the tangible things of the present world, but in the God who created all of them.

And in this way, the whole system of seeking God through material things and which works to corrupt even more the human heart was declared weak, useless, obsolete, or revoked, remaining accepted before God only the mystery kept for centuries and revealed in Christ Jesus, who is Christ in us, the hope of glory, and us in Christ.

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.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Your will, O God.'

8 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law),

9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Colossians 1: 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.

G. Under Similar Motivations Even What Seems Very Different Becomes Similar

Finally, to conclude this chapter on the propositions proclaimed as a new covenant, but which in reality are based on the motivations of the old covenant, we would like to reiterate that Paul taught that the attempts to merge the law of the first priesthood into what is associated with the new covenant are attempts to generate fascination, deception, and enchantment in people's understanding so that they depart from the simplicity of access to God that can be done through Christ and from the justification by grace done forever and that can be received individually through faith in the Lord.

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.***

Galatians 3: 1 ***O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?***

2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Galatians 5: 7 ***You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?***

8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.

9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

The Scriptures teach us to reject old and obsolete fables that try to sustain aspects of the first and obsolete priesthood, its law, and its covenant.

1 Timothy 4: 7 ***But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.***

Titus 1: 14 ... ***not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.***

And due to the severe consequences that can befall a person who wants a relationship with God under the new covenant, but also longs for aspects of the old covenant or is fascinated by them, Paul still writes Christians some considerations that show that even what may appear to be very distinct, may come to be equated in several of its fundamental aspects when seen from what motivated the emergence of a life proposition in particular.

- Galatians 4: 21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?*
- 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.*
- 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,*
- 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar.*
- 25 For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.*
- 26 But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.*
- 27 For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband."*
- 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.*
- 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.*
- 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."*

Through this last text, Paul shows us how various aspects that seem to be very different end up similar when they are seen from the perspective of what is common to them regarding their origin or human nature and the results they produce in people's lives, to the point of Paul comparing and considering aspects that seem that could never be equated as similar, such as, or for example, declaring that Hagar, mother of the descendants who came to constitute what was called Arabia, is the Jerusalem which is now or is Mount Sinai on which Moses received the law of the first priesthood or the old covenant.

Now, Moses was not a descendant of Hagar, how, then, can the law of which he was mediator be compared as if it were of Hagar's descent or covenant?

So, in other words, what Paul is teaching in the book of Galatians is that regardless of the natural origin of a priesthood, whether it is the first priesthood or what descends from Hagar, if something has its origin according to human nature or also called a work of the flesh, it ends up being based on the human will that resists the will of God and that aims to enslave people who submit to what is proposed by the creature in opposition to the path pointed out by the Lord.

And when people try to shape or conform the Christian life that Christ offers to their carnal yearnings, to greed, to a type of bargaining proposition, to supposed godliness that deep down has its priority directed to walking by sight and not by faith, to the goal of being in control, to the attraction for human glory, to profit or material gains, to religious models that seek to establish mediators in the relationship of others with God, they are actually operating in an attempt to institute propositions that appear to be related to the new covenant, but that, in practice, are veiled versions as to their origin and other points that are only variations of some form of the first priesthood or the old covenant.

Even if they show a visible or partial interest in the new covenant, or even if the propositions that they follow appear to have very different

outward rules and formats, when people cling to the things to which the flesh leans, to their ambitions, or their concupiscence, they end up being attracted to aspects similar to the first priesthood.

Therefore, we understand that it is appropriate to recall here the following texts:

1 Samuel 16: 7(b) ... For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Matthew 22: 16 And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men."

John 7: 24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.

Due to their lusts for evil things mentioned in the topics of this chapter and several others, many people have created, multiplied, and expanded works and ministries that claim to be in conformity with the new covenant, the covenant of the Jerusalem from above, with Christ or the Christian life. However, in reality, they are according to the son of the flesh, the son of the figurative covenant called Hagar, the Jerusalem that is now, or the old covenant established on Mount Sinai, a mount of Arabia, or yet other variations of what is born of the flesh and not of the Spirit of the Lord.

And in their corrupted ambitions, many works, ministries, or workers who call themselves Christians have still tried to extend their propositions worldwide, thus incurring the previously mentioned text in which Christ warns those who seek to recruit their proselytes even in remote places, but that in addition to not really showing them salvation for the liberation from their sins, still want to enslave them to similarly greedy propositions as those of the old covenant, an aspect also repeatedly warned by Paul.

Matthew 23: 13 But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

...

15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

Acts 20: 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

To insist on the old covenant today, even if partially, is to continue to insist that the understanding of the freedom that is in Christ does not reach the people who need it so much. It is to continue to insist on leaving people under the shadow and the region of death, remembering, however, that if before the coming of Christ, before the coming of the new covenant, the first priesthood already led people to condemnation, how much more severe is it to try to follow it after the Lord has already announced its obsolete condition?

**Hebrews 10: 26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,
27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.**

28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

Therefore, the matters related to walking according to the natural man, the flesh, the first priesthood, the law and the Sinai covenant, the characteristics of the son of the covenant called Hagar, and the godliness that seeks to be based on outward things and associated with evil lusts, should never be seen lightly, for they invariably work to enslave everyone who submits to them.

Nobody, ever, should despise the power that is in the attraction for the old covenant, for the covenant called Hagar, Jerusalem that is now, the first priesthood, the law of Moses, the Levitical priesthood, and anything similar to this, for the fascination that this type of proposition presents goes much in line with what the natural man or the so-called flesh aspires to reach, plus the fact that in his natural condition, and not under the direction of the Spirit of the Lord, the natural man even resists everything that proceeds from the Spirit of God.

2 Corinthians 3: 14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Luke 5: 39 And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'

The reasons that once worked to attract people to an ineffective or deceptive priesthood are the same in all generations, namely: the flesh or human nature wanting to command God with human and limited suggestions of how God should act. That is why its attractiveness repeats itself from generation to generation.

When, for example, Christ mentions the attraction that the scribes and Pharisees had for distinctive or long garments, for the first places at banquets, for the principal chairs in the areas of meetings and teaching, for being greeted in the squares and in front of people or crowds, and by being called masters or by differentiated titles, He was not exposing only the motivations that were in the hearts of the leaders of that generation, but what people have been repeating in the most diverse groups from generation to generation.

Mark 12: 38 **Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces,**
39 the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts,
40 who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

Matthew 23: 5 **But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.**
6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,
7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi,
Rabbi.'
8 But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.
9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.
10 And do not be called teachers (or leaders or guides); for One is your Teacher, the Christ.

From the motivations of specific groups of people, Christ was warning us to abstain from these types of motivations, and also teaching us to discern those who claim to serve God but are actually serving their own interests.

The aspect described in the previous paragraph is also ratified again by Paul, as follows:

1 Corinthians 5: 11 **But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; not even to eat with such a person.**

If we also recall the text of Matthew 7 about false prophets, about those individuals who present themselves in sheep's clothing, but who are inside stealing wolves, we see that the emphasis of their speech was "on them and what they had performed."

Everything turned to them, and the motivation to do what they supposedly did “in the name of the Lord” was aimed at power to claim things from God. In the “name of the Lord,” “they” cast out demons, “they” prophesied, “they” performed miracles.

And how different was not Christ's attitude when John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask the Lord Jesus if He was indeed the Messiah who was to come?

When asked by John's disciples, the Lord did not direct the emphasis of His response to extol each of the things “He” did, but pointed to the people who benefited from them so that the action of God's love, mercy, and grace towards human beings in need of these aspects would be exalted.

Matthew 11: 2 And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples
3 and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"
4 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:
5 The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.
6 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

Luke 18: 9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:
10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.
11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.
12 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'
13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'
14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The lack of knowledge of the glory of Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant, and never of the old or any variation of it, has blinded and may blind many to the reality of the new covenant, as well as it may generate almost unbelievable and unimaginable fascination for the old covenant to the point that people no longer see that the essence of the new covenant is the Light of this covenant, which is, and always will be, exclusively Christ Jesus, the Lord of all.

And considering that Christ is the Light of God that illuminates a person's heart, it is also what He declares about the first and the second priesthoods that brings light on what, respectively, the old and the new covenants indeed are.

Nevertheless, when people choose to place other mediators in their relationship with God, they put blocks on the light, put veils over their eyes, block their ears, put roofs that stand in their relationship with the Lord, and are subject to those who are not transparent and true in what they say and propose.

The propositions that try to associate things from other covenants with the new covenant or that are contrary to it are so cunning because they act on the broad spectrum of people's inclination towards flesh desires or lusts. And if they fail to attract a person by a particular type of lust, they try to work through others to which an individual is most attracted, for this reason:

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

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

So, knowing that many aspects are seen under some equal characteristics before God because of their similar fundamental points, even though they present external elements that seem to be very different, is a point that can be very cooperative in the discernment that the Lord is willing to grant so that people may distinguish and reject those propositions that appear to be a new covenant but are not indeed.

Before God, there is no such thing as a “half-new covenant.” There is no new covenant with a little of the old. There is no new covenant with the addition of what a person likes of the old, for the new covenant is pure, and the Lord also wants to purify and sanctify (separate) from the old covenant those who come to Him to have fellowship with Him and to walk in Him.

Luke 11: 23 ***He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.***

Hebrews 10: 9 ***then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God."***

He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Besides the risen and alive Lord Jesus Christ, working through the Holy Spirit, there is no one who can lead each Christian to know one's new reality in the Lord and guide him or her step by step and in such a way that the interruption of the association of the first covenant, already provided on the cross of Calvary, also takes place in the personal lives of those who believe in the Gospel of God.

Hebrews 9: 14 **how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**

15 **And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.**

John 8: 31 **Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.**

32 **And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**

...

36 **Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."**

In conclusion, in the face of so much resistance from human beings in general and individually towards God and the new covenant, it is not surprising that some of the first aspects that can be found for those who come to the throne of grace, through the new covenant, are mercy and grace itself to help them in their weaknesses.

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.**

C19. The Glory of Christ as the Heavenly High Priest

An aspect that seems to us to be very relevant in the approach of the first priesthood and the second priesthood, or the approach of the old covenant and the new covenant, is that in changing from one to the other, there may be a risk of not being practiced an adequate measure of attention to both the old and the new, which may result in a loss concerning the target of this change, which is to leave the old and move on to live indeed in the new.

Knowing what is left behind can be crucial so that, in the sequence, a person knows how to reject any proposal that wants to make him or her return to what one should not incline one's heart after having been released from the subjection to it. On the other hand, moving towards the new becomes vital for an individual to be firmly established in what the Lord offers him or her. Ultimately, it is the firmness in the new that will sustain a person in the newness of life so that the new target is also reached and established forever.

Throughout this subject, we have addressed several aspects of people's condition before they met Christ to highlight the need for their salvation and the greatness of the salvation offered by the Lord. But at the same time, we have also insisted with the readers of this material to feel encouraged or exhorted to place their attention more and more or in a continuous and growing way on what has become available to them in the newness of life in Christ Jesus.

If a person does not understand that there is an old part that needs to be left behind and does not see the main things from which one should withdraw, one runs the risk of becoming stuck to what wants to hold him or her back and prevent him or her from advancing to what one needs. However, if a person does not know that it is precisely in the new that there is the support or help to be able to withdraw indeed from the old, one may incur the attempt to commit oneself to ineffective actions to achieve freedom from what he or she so badly needs to be released and remain free.

Some of the main facts why many Christians have had so many frustrations in trying to resist sin may often have their origin not in the Christian's lack of effort or desire to overcome its temptations, but because the Christian might not be fighting, first, the good fight of faith and for not being fighting the good fight according to the conditions, strength, gifts, and weapons that are offered to him or her only in the new covenant in Christ Jesus.

Since a person will never be able to achieve one's release from slavery to sin and the law of the first priesthood through the conditions and weapons of the old things that imprisoned him or her, it will also not be these old conditions and means that will grant him or her victory over new propositions to run again into slavery to sin and the old law after one has already received the salvation of God.

The deliverance and newness of life that Christ offers people do not express freedom for people to have a new opportunity to try to accomplish again the old things that were left behind, nor it is an opportunity to live and walk in the novelty of life using the old conditions, forms, and means or declared obsolete by the Lord.

In Christ, everything is according to the novelty of the new covenant, the perfect law, or the law of freedom in the Lord. And everything that has been declared obsolete remains weak or useless both to overcome the propositions based on the old priesthood and to live in the new condition of life in God.

In their right mind, nobody mixes, for example, contaminated or spoiled old food with new and healthy food, hoping that the old will provide more conservation to the new. As costly as acquiring the old food might have been for a person, the solution of throwing it away is still much more beneficial than exposing oneself to the damage it may cause if used or consumed.

Therefore, if in the last chapters perhaps we may have adopted a broader approach to the old priesthood, its law, and its covenant, from now on, we will try to increase attention to the new that is offered to us in Christ so that, ultimately, the new may be highlighted to a broader extent and so that the emphasis of the new becomes more and more prominent over the old, bearing yet in mind that the glory of the new, as we have already seen, is infinitely and incomparably superior to the glory of what we are exhorted to leave behind forever.

And in the face of the broader revelation of the aspects of the priesthood that God offers us in Christ, we would like to move forward to the fact that the Scriptures show us that one of the central points of the glory of Christ that is most needed, after the Lord introduces us in the new covenant, refers to the knowledge of the revelation that Christ is the Heavenly High Priest established by God for everyone who is introduced into this new covenant.

So, in the first place, when we begin to look more closely at the condition of Christ as the Heavenly High Priest, we may better understand not only what the Lord Jesus did as Christ on Earth, but also what Christ did and does from heaven and the heavenly kingdom after He was resurrected and was raised to the present condition that He exercises in heaven.

On the cross of Calvary, the handwriting of requirements that was against us was exposed before human beings and before the principalities and powers, becoming exposed to shame and showing that both the writing of deb to sin and the law of Moses were paid off in full through Christ's death in place of the debtors or in place of those on whom the curse of death resided.

Nevertheless, regarding the condition of Christ as the Eternally Perfect High Priest, we can see more clearly that it was still necessary for the risen Christ to present the holy and upright offering that He had made on Earth in favor of all human beings also before the eternal throne of the Heavenly Father. And this, so that the forgiveness granted to people concerning their debt to sin and the law would also be consolidated before God and serve as a way of reconciliation of people with the Eternal Creator.

Through His death on the cross of Calvary and the shedding of His blood before human beings, principalities, and the powers of the world, Christ made provision for the liberation of all people from their writings of debt before their cruel creditors, namely, sin, law, and death. We recall here, however, that the offense of human beings did not only represent a subjection to sin and the law of the old covenant or similar to it, but it also expressed an offense against God and that caused an obstruction of people's free fellowship with their Creator, an aspect covered more widely in the material on the Gospel of the Righteousness of God.

When human beings sinned, in addition to subjecting themselves to sin and then many also to the law of the first priesthood, they as well sinned against God and lost the condition of being called children of God, because God has no part in sin and neither

with the unrighteousness of the first priesthood that proclaims justification through human works and not justification through the redemptive grace offered by the Lord.

Therefore, **after the provision had been perfectly accomplished for the liberation of people from the yoke of sin and the law, it was still necessary that the provision for the offense of human beings towards the Lord also became perfectly resolved before the heavenly throne of God.**

Christ's work on the cross of Calvary immediately established the provision for absolution of all the eternal writing of deb regarding sin and the law that was upon all people, but reconciliation with God still needed to be established in heaven.

In one of the parables presented by the Lord Jesus, we see that the youngest son who left his father's house to try to live a life dissociated from his father stated that the main issue he needed to solve, when he later came to himself and recognized his sin, was to present himself before his father to declare his condition as a sinner also against heaven and the father, as follows:

*Luke 15: 18 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him,
"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,
19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one
of your hired servants."
20 And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great
way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on
his neck and kissed him.
21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and
in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*

If, for example, Christ had died on the cross of Calvary but did not resurrect, humanity's debt to sin and the law could even be solved, for it was through the death of an innocent man who assumed the debt of everyone on the cross of Calvary that sin and the law of the first priesthood lost the right to collect their debts or became fully solved. However, what good would it do people to have their debt paid off to sin and the law if they could not have access to the eternal life exclusively found in God?

In this way, it was necessary for someone to ascend to God's high and sublime place also to witness there what was accomplished on Earth and to establish peace between God and human beings also before the heavenly or eternal court.

God sent the Son of His Love to do a particular work on Earth, but He also did it so that Christ would return to the Heavenly Father's presence to witness and present before Him the completed work of redemption. And this, in order for it to become approved before the throne of God so that also in all heavenly regions, the impediments that human beings placed between themselves and God regarding fellowship with their Creator were removed.

Christ was sent in the name of the Heavenly Father from His high and sublime throne, and it is also for this reason that the work of Christ needed to have its final validation or approval before the same point from which He was sent to the world.

When Christ completed the work he came to perform in the world through His condition as Son of Man or when He surrendered His spirit to the Heavenly Father and

died on the cross in faithfulness to the purpose for which the Father had sent Him into the world, the Father raised Him up so that Christ could also bring before His throne the result of the work for which the Father had sent Him in the flesh to the Earth.

The One whom God sent into the world to carry out the heavenly will for the redemption of people from subjection to sin and the old covenant law was also the One from whom the Father wanted to receive the presentation of the conclusion of what had been done on Earth in favor of all human beings.

Thus, if the presentation of the risen Christ before His disciples was in shining glory and never before conceived by the human mind, how much greater was not, then, the glory when Christ presented the fruit of His work, the innocent blood shed in favor of the redemption of the sinners, before the Heavenly Father and before all the Lord's angels?

*John 20: 17 **Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"***

He who descended into the world and descended into the most profound abyss of the Earth to remove the captivity in which humanity was imprisoned, is also the One who ascended above all the heavens to present before God the entirely perfect offer for the reconciliation of people with the Creator and Heavenly Father.

*Ephesians 4: 8 **Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."***
9 (Now this, "He ascended," what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?
*10 **He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)***

*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.***

If before the work of Christ, as the Son of Man in the world, there were insurmountable impediments for human beings to be reconciled with the Creator and to be called eternal children of the Eternal Heavenly Father, because of their unworthy condition and slavery to sin and the law, now, through Christ, the provision for deliverance from this unworthy condition was entirely or perfectly realized and presented before the heavenly throne of God so that everyone, through this provision, may also be forgiven and accepted by God.

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 Corinthians 5: 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,
19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

Christ “finished” the work on Earth, but He also “finished” it in the heavens so that a new covenant of reconciliation and newness of life could be established before God and offered by the Lord to all human beings, which can be received by all through faith in God and the justification provided for all in Christ Jesus.

*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.*

We needed a perfect Christ on Earth to make a perfect sacrifice for our debts, but we also needed a resurrected and living Christ to come before God in heaven as a perfect offering so that forgiveness, reconciliation with the Heavenly Father, and the condition of children of the heavenly kingdom could be granted to us.

We understand that it is very significant to note well what happened in this period of history to realize that the end of the mission of sending Christ into the world was not, therefore, wholly ended before Christ appeared before the Heavenly Father on our behalf as the perfect sacrifice that encompassed everything necessary both to be freed from what wanted to keep us imprisoned forever and to grant us the perfect path to reconciliation with God and eternal life.

1 Peter 3: 18(a) For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

When we see that the work of redemption that Christ did for all human beings culminated in Him presenting Himself before the Heavenly Father as the perfect and eternal sacrifice for us to find forgiveness before God, we see that the Lord Jesus has not only been revealed to us as the perfect offering, but also as the perfect High Priest who presents the perfect offering before the Heavenly Father and who perfectly represents before Him those for whom the eternal sacrifice was accomplished.

Besides, recalling what was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, God's purpose in freeing us from the yoke of sin and the law of the old covenant, or similar to it, and the fact that we can be reconciled with the Heavenly Father through Christ, again are not limited only to deliverance or leaving the previous condition, but they reveal themselves as something new and perfect in that they also offer the way for redeemed people to effectively become participants in the newness of life that the Lord offers them.

And among several of the main points by which we see that the priesthood that is according to the new covenant is a priesthood entirely distinct from the priesthood of the old covenant, we find the aspect that in the priesthood of the new covenant, the High Priest not only represents people before God and presents a perfect offering for their forgiveness, but He also *brings people to God*, as described in the last text of the first epistle of Peter showed above.

Thus, a second point that we would like to highlight here is that also Christ's work of presenting Himself before the Heavenly Father as the perfect sacrifice, to complete the provision that needed to be made for people's eternal reconciliation with God, again did not represent the end of the purpose of the Lord's work of love towards human beings, but the completion of a stage that allows the beginning of another for which the first was done perfectly and once forever.

The fulfillment of a particular stage through the sending Christ to the world, and whose results have eternal validity, was made in full once and forever to inaugurate a new phase that will remain eternally before God.

Christ's condition, as the One who presented Himself on our behalf before the Heavenly Father as the perfect offering of redemption and reconciliation, perfectly and fully satisfactorily ended the Father's mission to have sent Him in the flesh into the world, but it also revealed the mission of the new covenant and the new priesthood in Christ after He established the path of redemption and reconciliation for people before the Heavenly Father.

Yet in other words, in addition to the Heavenly Father, through the Son of His Love, having established the perfect provision for the liberation of human beings from the eternal yokes of condemnation to which they were subject and having recognized Christ as the High Priest who presented Himself perfectly before His throne to present the perfect offering for all people to be able to reach forgiveness before Him, the Heavenly Father still revealed Christ as the Eternal High Priest who not only stands before Him on behalf of others, but who also brings people and assists them so that they themselves may personally relate to God.

Christ, the One who offered Himself as a perfect and complete offering, is also the One who came to be revealed as the High Priest who presented the perfect offering before God, but this, so that He too would become the Heavenly High Priest through whom people may access the new covenant to be supported by this same High Priest and to be able to relate personally to God.

The position of the Lord Jesus as the unique Eternal High Priest is vital or fundamental, for it is only through it that the work of Christ completed on the cross of Calvary was also completed before the Father, but, at the same time, also because this position has been revealed to us as eternal

concerning everyone who believes in Christ and receives Him as the Lord of his or her life.

In the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Christ, as Christ the One who was revealed by the Heavenly Father as the Eternal High Priest, we have evidenced the Lord's redemptive work in Christ in a broad, complete, and objective way, but likewise what came from this work and can still come to those who receive this same Christ in their hearts also as the Eternal High Priest who is above the heavens before the Heavenly Father.

In Christ Jesus, as He being the High Priest of the true tabernacle, and not the one made by human hands, we can have a general picture of what was done in the past for redemption to be complete on Earth and in Heaven, but also so that the purpose of redemption and the way in which redeemed lives are sustained are evidenced, as well as how the rescued may achieve the instruction and direction of life according to the One through whom they were redeemed or saved.

In Christ, also revealed as the Heavenly High Priest, we can see both the conclusive aspects that the Lord has done for us and what He continues to do to help us remain confident in God and be more than conquerors through the abiding in Him.

Christ is the High Priest who was necessary for our redemption, salvation, and to establish our reconciliation with God, but who is also essential for us forever, as exemplified in several texts below:

*Hebrews 9: 23 **Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.***

*Hebrews 2: 10 **For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.***

...
*17 **Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.***

*Hebrews 7: 26 **For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;***

*27 **who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.***

*28 **For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.***

*Hebrews 8: 1 **Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,***

- 2 ***a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.***
- 3 ***For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer.***
- 4 ***For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;***
- 5 ***who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."***
- 6 ***But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.***
- 7 ***For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.***

Hebrews 4: 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.

Hebrews 7: 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

In Christ made Son of Man, to the point of dying on the cross of Calvary, God revealed to us the greatness and depth of His plan to redeem us. However, in Christ risen, alive, and established as the unique Heavenly and Eternal High Priest, God reveals to us the greatness of what Christ did and continues to do after having made the provision that allows people to access the new covenant with God and the new priesthood that the Lord offers to all through His Gospel.

Therefore, if anyone supposes that with the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the Lord Jesus also ended His practical and continually active work on our behalf, it is because that person does not yet know the glory of Christ as the Heavenly High Priest for all those who believe in Him.

After the death and resurrection of Christ from the dead, it is primarily through His condition of the eternally established Heavenly High Priest that the Lord Jesus practically carries out His lordship, shepherding, instruction, and care over all those who have allowed Him to be His Eternal Mediator also to be part of the new covenant with God.

And if a Christian still cannot understand how, first, the Lord Jesus wants to help, instruct, and strengthen him or her to live, walk, and grow in the newness of life in the new covenant, it is because one still needs to know the glory of the Lord Jesus in His facet or function of the Eternal High Priest.

So, when we speak of the diversity of God's attributes and actions towards a person's life, it is very challenging to highlight what is most vital or to define those points that are most necessary for each individual's life. However, after receiving salvation in Christ Jesus, those who allow the Lord to teach them about His glory, will see that Christ's position as their Eternal High Priest definitely may also become one of the most central, essential, and glorious aspects to be known more closely for one's present and eternal life.

The very book of Hebrews, which begins with an extraordinary statement about God and the revelation of His Son Jesus Christ, announcing that these days God speaks to us through Christ and no longer through the prophets and the structure of the first priesthood, as we have already seen previously, is the same book that, when faced with the point of talking about the Lord Jesus as the Eternal High Priest of our lives, seems to lack words to explain and expose, in terms of human language, how sublime it is what it really wants to communicate through its texts.

When throughout the book of Hebrews, the author seeks to show us the convergence of the preciousness and the greatness of God's glory in Christ, the elevated position that the Heavenly Father attributed to His Only Begotten Son because of the work on the cross of Calvary, and the function of the risen and forever alive Christ also as the Heavenly High Priest seated in heaven, he seeks to give a particular emphasis so that this sequence of converging aspects in Christ may also be observed with the attention that is due to it, as we see below:

*Hebrews 8: 1 **Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,**
2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.*

May the grace of God, which teaches us to live a sober, righteous, and godly life also in the present world, help us to see more clearly and comprehensively this “***main point,***” the “***essential point of things,***” “***the essence of what has been said,***” as well as help us to experience its effects in a practical and growing way in every day of our lives.

Thus, it is also through the position of Christ as the unique Heavenly High Priest that the Lord instructs each Christian on how to exercise one's own priesthood, which is equally conferred on all Christians who join Christ through the new covenant.

It is in Christ Jesus that the Heavenly Father established everything that a perfect Heavenly High Priest does before God on behalf of a Christian and what the Lord wants to do in the heart of a Christian, just as it is in this condition of Christ that God reveals what a Christian, as the priest of his or her very life, is called to do before Christ and the Heavenly Father.

The comprehension of the ministry of Christ as our Eternal High Priest shows us what the Lord Jesus does for us also to help us to do what is due for us to do before God.

On the other hand, without understanding the position of Christ as the Eternal High Priest, also the understanding of the individual priesthood of each Christian before God may be significantly impaired, for, in this way, the Christian may also be deprived of knowing what belongs to the Lord perform in one's behalf and what it is for the Christian to cooperate with the Lord.

Some Christians practice more than others their personal condition as priests bestowed on them in Christ Jesus. This condition in the new covenant, however, is conferred equally and absolutely on all Christians. Whether through ignorance or negligence, if a Christian does not practice and does not exercise his or her personal condition as a priest before God to present oneself before the Lord, this does not nullify, alter, or deny the fact that every Christian equally receives the position and function of a priest in Christ Jesus.

In Christ, in His position as our Eternal High Priest, we have at our disposal all the provision of the past that was necessary to us for redemption. However, under this same condition, He continues to work to save to the “*uttermost*” those who *come to God through Him*, even *living always to make intercession for them* to remain continually in the novelty of life that the Heavenly Father offers us in the new covenant.

And if we look at the text of Hebrews 7, verse 25, as to the aspect of Christ *always living to make intercession for them*, we can know that if the situation occurred in which all Christians would fail to pray for their brothers of faith in Christ, every Christian remains yet with a brother acting in prayer for him or her, that is, the older brother who is seated at the Heavenly Father's right hand.

If nobody has prayed today for a specific Christian, Christ, as the perfect High Priest who always lives to make intercession for those who believe in Him, has already done so, for He lives for this and because He does not need to make sacrifices for Himself and neither for others, for the sacrifice He made was made once and for all.

The Lord instructs Christians to pray for all their brothers in the world also to be participants in the prayer work that Christ does before the Heavenly Father, but at the same time, the Lord never forsakes any of those entrusted to Him by the Father in His position of the Eternal High Priest.

John 10: 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

If the first priesthood with the law and the covenant of Moses represented a priesthood of demands, rules, and condemnations, the second priesthood, according to the law of Christ and the new covenant, begins by offering mercy, forgiveness, help, and intercession of the Lord Jesus Himself forever before the Heavenly Father on behalf of everyone who comes to God through Christ for salvation and newness of life.

Christ does the job of not allowing anyone to appear before the Heavenly Father under an unacceptable condition, but Christ is also the One who is in the hearts of those who want to relate to God to instruct them each day in love and how they can present themselves justified in Him before the Lord.

As the Heavenly High Priest and as the High Priest who works in our hearts, Christ is the one who teaches us to find all the other attributes, virtues, and gifts of God through a living relationship with Him.

*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.*

Christ is the way for us to come closer to the Heavenly Father, but He is also the one who takes us by the hand, as our Eternal High Priest, for us to know how to follow the way to reach the peace, grace, truth, and newness of life that is in God.

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."

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."

As our Redeemer, Christ is the way for the reconciliation of our relationship with God. However, as our Light and as our Eternal High Priest who assists us in the heart and before the Heavenly Father, He is the One who instructs and sustains us in our weaknesses so that we too, in peace and by His abundant grace, may indeed follow the path of life proposed to us by God.

Christ is the path to the truth and life that there are in God Himself, but Christ, as the Eternal High Priest, is also the One who guides and sustains us to live, walk, and grow in the newness of eternal life offered to us in the Lord.

*1 Peter 2: 4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,
5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."*

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

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

25 I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.

26 He is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed.

27 Depart from evil, and do good; And dwell forevermore.

28 For the LORD loves justice, And does not forsake His saints; They are preserved forever, But the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off.

29 The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell in it forever.

30 The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, And his tongue talks of justice.

31 The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide.

32 The wicked watches the righteous, And seeks to slay him.

33 The LORD will not leave him in his hand, Nor condemn him when he is judged.

C20. The Glory of Christ as the High Priest According to the Order of Melchizedek

A. The Introduction to the Expression *Priestly Order* and the *Order of Melchizedek*

The *Order of Melchizedek* is an expression that may cause some discomfort to some people by the mere fact of their lack of knowledge both in terms of what, according to the Scriptures, might be a *priestly order* and concerning what or to whom the name *Melchizedek* is referring.

On the other hand, when the initial barrier of relating to what is unfamiliar is overcome, we may see in the Scriptures that the expression *Order of Melchizedek*, presented in contrast to the *Order of Aaron*, is extremely useful to enrich and clarify even more broadly and precisely what has already been commented on in the last chapters about the first and second priesthoods, the laws, and the covenants associated with them, as well as about the importance and purpose that the priesthood theme represents for the life of all human beings.

Remembering that it is through the type of priesthood to which a person joins that one may also succeed or not regarding an appropriate relationship with God, thus establishing the theme of the priesthood as one of the most essential subjects of all life, it is no wonder that the Lord, through the Scriptures, seeks to show us the indispensable condition and details of this theme through a variety of angles and approaches.

The perspective from several points on the same theme does not only aim to reaffirm or strengthen the understanding that the Lord wants people to have on this theme, but also so that some aspects that have not yet been evidenced might be perceived in a more notorious way.

So, especially in the book of Hebrews, we see that the person through whom it was written makes a very explicit exhortation of the relevance that the theme of the *Order of Melchizedek* represents for a Christian.

Nevertheless, even before we try to advance in the deepening of some more specific characteristics of the subject in reference, we understand that it is worth mentioning that this subject has a very special particularity to be approached and learned more appropriately.

The theme of the *Order of Melchizedek* is presented in the book of Hebrews so that all Christians may access it without distinction, but, at the same time, it is also presented with an alert that if a person does not take a proper attitude towards it, one may come to think that the book of Hebrews presents the theme in reference as a subject of difficult interpretation or hard to explain, which is not what is described by the author of this book.

What the book of Hebrews informs us is that the theme of the *Order of Melchizedek* is hard to explain if a person makes oneself negligent or becomes dull of hearing concerning actually understanding it, showing that an individual does not achieve its understanding through a frivolous or superfluous attitude that many people who even call themselves Christians adopt regarding the Lord's Scriptures.

The Scriptures equated the theme of the *Order of Melchizedek* with the subject of the *word of righteousness*, which has been explained more broadly in the material on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, showing that it is solid or very substantial food for those who want to become exercised by the word of God also to be able to discern not only good, but also evil.

The proposition of the Scriptures to present the *Order of Melchizedek* as a theme associated with the *word of God's righteousness* intends to cooperate so that a Christian who dedicates oneself to this theme also passes from being an infant or immature in the faith to a condition of being a mature person and firmly established in the Lord and the new covenant He offers.

Let us see, then, a part of the book of Hebrews that introduces us more specifically to the *Order of Melchizedek* and that presents us an exhortation so that, in no way, we should abstain from this theme:

Hebrews 4: 13 ***And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.***

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.***

5: 1 ***For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.***

2 ***He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.***

3 ***Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.***

4 ***And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.***

5 ***So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."***

6 ***As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek";***

7 ***who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,***

8 ***though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.***

9 ***And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,***

10 ***called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek,"***

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11 ***of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain (or of difficult interpretation), since you have become dull of hearing.***

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

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.

The subject of the Lord Jesus being also the High Priest according to the *Order of Melchizedek* is not a mere elementary subject; it is solid food. On the other hand, it is also not a difficult subject to be understood when a person is willing in God to do it.

Because of contempt for topics such as the *Order of Melchizedek*, many Christians have fallen short in understanding the *word of the righteousness God and the heavenly kingdom*. That is why, too, so many people have been repeatedly and for a long time deceived by “ministries” that preach a “different or pretended gospel” and by “ministries” that try to use principles of the first and outdated priesthood in parallel with the Christian life, as if the Eternal Lord would accept a combination of both.

Those who play infants and negligent with themes such as the *Order of Melchizedek* and the so-called *word of righteousness* become vulnerable to being deceived by “mentors and instructors” who only repeatedly offer them spiritual milk or even perverse teachings, for many of these “mentors” know that the day people start to eat solid food, they will also stop being under their tutorship and will follow the path that the Heavenly High Priest Jesus shows them.

After the possibility of living and walking through faith in Christ has been revealed to the world, no one needs the help of tutors, educators, and the law of the first priesthood to relate to God, because according to the *Order of Melchizedek*, all who receive it are also called to live and walk guided by the Eternal and Supreme Heavenly High Priest also called the Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3: 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

4: 1 Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,

2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

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!"*
 7 *Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*
 8 *But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.*
 9 *But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?*

Sometimes, it “seems” to us that up to the present moment in history, most Christians have not yet grasped the greatness of what is offered to us in Christ in His condition as Heavenly and Eternal High Priest because they have only been interested in looking at the history of salvation provided by God through the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary and what happened before that, and have not yet appropriately looked at what started with the new covenant whose only Mediator is the Lord Jesus Himself.

And by not advancing in the understanding of the current position of Christ as the Eternal High Priest according to the *Order of Melchizedek* and the relationship with the Lord in this attribute, many have again become prey to the things already declared by the Lord as obsolete.

Due to the fact that they do not grow and become established in what is new for them in Christ, as we mentioned in the previous chapter, many people have fallen again into slavery from which they had already been freed or from which they could already be freed.

We used the expression “it seems to us” in one of the paragraphs above because it is unknown to us how millions of Christians lived over the centuries and because it might be that many of them found these truths and lived them without being reported in the written history, being recorded perhaps only in heaven. That is why it is always risky to say, for example, that there was never a large group or that only the minority sought this truth. But the fact is that there is currently little literature, except the Scriptures, that seeks to address Christ's position as the Heavenly High Priest and who is alive, active, and interacting with those who believe in God through Him.

Thus, once this initial consideration is presented about the theme of the *Order of Melchizedek* having been made available to all Christians and that it can be learned satisfactorily by all those who are willing in the Lord to grow in the life of faith also through the knowledge of the *word of righteousness*, we would like to move on to a more specific approach to the term *order* and the expression *Order of Melchizedek*.

First, then, **the *Order of Melchizedek*, to put it briefly, is another way of expressing, in other words, and from different angles, what comes to be the second priesthood or the priesthood in Christ and that God manifested to the world through the Lord Jesus when also, through Christ, He**

declared the first priesthood, its law, and its old covenant as revoked, obsolete, or outdated.

If, on the other hand, we go a little further on the particular way that the *Order of Melchizedek* is treated in the book of Hebrews, we may see that this theme, in a sense, as we also commented at the beginning of this chapter, is divided into two topics that complement each other, namely:

- ⇒ 1) The aspect of the term *order* or the expression *priestly order*;
- ⇒ 2) The aspect of the specific name of the *order* that receives a higher highlight, that is, the name *Melchizedek*.

Looking, then, first, at the aspect of the word *order*, we point out that its use in the book of Hebrews is more related to the general set of facts that took place, foundations, instructions, positions, functions, and services of a priesthood to which it refers. The name *Melchizedek*, on the other hand, is more related to the profile of the High Priest who acts in the respective order, which the Scriptures also present in contrast to the *Order of Aaron* so that we have highlighted some points of opposition between them even though the glory of the *Order of Melchizedek* is described as infinite and incomparably superior.

Therefore, so that we may approach both the aspect of the term *order* and the name *Melchizedek* in a more appropriate way, we understand that it is more productive to address the two points in more than one chapter, where, in this chapter, we will seek to approach more the matter of the *set* or *order* called according to Melchizedek, letting the more detailed observation on the specific name of the *order* to the next chapter.

Associated with the priesthoods highlighted in the book of Hebrews, the word *order* has seemed to us to have been presented as a term that seeks to express in a grouped way the whole set of factors that could be associated with the *Order of Melchizedek* or the *Order of Aaron* without having to mention all their details repeatedly, which would also be impossible. And this, in the sense of defining these two types of priesthoods as sets that can be compared to show their differences and make evident that they are entirely different and incompatible concerning each other.

By observing the use of the term *order* in the book of Hebrews, we may notice that it seeks to encompass, at the same time, a systemic or global perspective of the *priestly orders* mentioned in it and also a perspective on some central points regarding how they operate.

Throughout the book of Hebrews, the use of the term *order* seeks to cover not only some main characteristics of the two *orders* mentioned in them, but also to point to the origin and even the system of succession and genealogy that is adopted in each type of priesthood exposed in it.

When the book of Hebrews provides a reference to the removal of one type of priesthood for the establishment of another different, and this under the name of *priestly orders*, this reference informs us that one “whole” priesthood is removed and a “whole” other priesthood is established, without failing to remove any of the details that make up the priesthood declared as obsolete and without failing to establish any of the aspects that make up the priesthood revealed by God in Christ Jesus.

It is worth remembering here again that the main focus of the book of Hebrews is to highlight and exalt the *Order of Melchizedek*, but, in part, this might also be done by showing what the *Order of Melchizedek* is not in comparison with the *priestly order* that was taken away by God through Christ Jesus.

Considering that on the present subject it has already been seen several times that “changing from one priesthood system to another necessarily implies a change of the law pertinent to each priesthood,” it is also by comparing their respective laws and their characteristics that the things that make them up and what respectively are not pertinent to them may become more evident.

The *Order of Melchizedek* is indeed vastly different from the *Order of Aaron*, and for this too, it is why the knowledge of the characteristics of one *order* helps to understand the definition or the characteristics of the other.

Seeing the theme of the priesthood from the perspective of a *priestly order* allows, in this way, to see in a grouped way some of the main characteristics that should not be overlooked in a subject of such relevance and greatness.

Thus, and to make the analysis of some of the main characteristics of the *Order of Melchizedek* more productive, we will try to present some of its comparisons with the *Order of Aaron* in a more structured way in some new topics exposed below in this same chapter.

B. The Multiplicity of Names and References Associated with the Two Priesthoods Highlighted in the Book of Hebrews

During the various chapters leading up to this topic, several mentions were made regarding the two main types of priesthoods that we find in the Scriptures.

Nevertheless, when we come across with the expressions *Order of Melchizedek* and *Order of Aaron*, we probably come to have one of the best points before us to realize that the different names and references made to the two major priesthoods in consideration, in reality, only exposed us to several angles through which these two priesthoods have been narrated in the Scriptures, but which, at the same time, always referred to the very two priesthoods that we can now observe once again and in a more objective and condensed manner.

Thus, so that we may know to which priesthood, respectively, the *Order of Melchizedek* and the *Order of Aaron* point out, we seek to present below a list of names that somehow apply to these priesthoods, also aiming to facilitate the possibility of grouping and identification of what is associated with each one of them.

The *Order of Melchizedek*, then, is the order or type of priesthood that is also mentioned in the Scriptures, among others, as:

- ⇒ The second priesthood;
- ⇒ The priesthood that was firmly manifested with Christ's death and resurrection;
- ⇒ The priesthood according to Christ;
- ⇒ The new covenant priesthood;
- ⇒ The eternal priesthood;
- ⇒ The priesthood of the promise;
- ⇒ The priesthood according to the law of Christ;
- ⇒ The priesthood of God's law written on the heart through the Holy Spirit;
- ⇒ The priesthood where “all are taught by the Lord Himself;”
- ⇒ The perfect priesthood;
- ⇒ The heavenly priesthood;
- ⇒ The priesthood of the true tabernacle.

The *Order of Aaron*, in turn, is the priestly order or priesthood that is also mentioned in the Scriptures, among others, as:

- ⇒ The first priesthood;
- ⇒ The priesthood revoked with Christ's death and resurrection;
- ⇒ The Levitical priesthood;
- ⇒ The priesthood according to the law of Moses or simply the priesthood of the law;
- ⇒ The priesthood of the first or the old covenant;
- ⇒ The priesthood according to the covenant held at Mount Sinai or made with people after they went out of Egypt;

- ⇒ The earthly priesthood;
- ⇒ The priesthood of a fleshly commandment;
- ⇒ The priesthood of weakness and uselessness;
- ⇒ The priesthood of the tabernacle of Moses or the first tabernacle;
- ⇒ The priesthood of the earthly temple or temples made by human hands;
- ⇒ The obsolete or outdated priesthood, and which is about to disappear entirely;
- ⇒ The priesthood that has become “a parable for the present time.”

Looking at the list of names and references that are assigned to each of the priesthoods under consideration, we understand that having the possibility of seeing them named through a name that covers all aspects and adds some more fundamental points can undoubtedly help to elucidate many points that without this complement could perhaps remain dispersed or even disconnected.

C. The Origin and Succession of the Characters Acting in the Priesthood of the Order of Aaron and the Order of Melchizedek

Beginning this new topic with the Order of Aaron, we can see in the Scriptures that this order bears Aaron's name because the first high priest who was officially established in it was Aaron himself, the brother of Moses.

The Order of Aaron, according to the law of this order, only allowed someone who was born of the descendants of Aaron to exercise the high priest's service in it, generating a lineage of biological descent designated to exercise this function of a high priest while this order was under the validity of being practiced before God.

On the other hand, the Order of Aaron is also called the Levitical Order, because according to the law of this same priesthood, the Levites and other priests had to be from a tribe that was separated from the other eleven tribes of Israel to perform the services necessary to the priesthood according to the Order of Aaron. All the priests and Levites of this order had to be descendants of the tribe of Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, for it was the tribe designated and separated to serve the other brothers and tribes in all services that the type of priesthood chosen by the people would require in the years and centuries that would follow after that choice was made.

The Levites were set aside to assist priests in all the ordinary activities of the priesthood, which, in turn, were set aside to assist the high priest of the order that was named after Aaron or Levi.

And once this lineage of succession was established within the tribe of Levi, no one outside it could ever become a high priest, priest, or Levite of this same order.

The information about the priestly lineage inherent to the law of the Order of Aaron is highly significant to be recorded because of the weakness of this lineage, as we will see later, but also by the fact that in the present days, there are many people who have no biological link with this lineage who want to call themselves "Levites" or want to name their "ministries" as "Levitical," as if they could be introduced into the Levitical line in an acceptable way without being blood descendants of Levi, which according to the law of Moses is unacceptable.

Nowadays, any person wanting to become a "Levite" is not only inconsistent because one wants to establish oneself in a service that has already been revoked, but one is also inconsistent with the very law of the priestly order that instituted Levites and Levitical services.

Therefore, the idea of introducing Levites into Christianity does not only demonstrate ignorance of the teaching of God about the Christian life, but also shows a vast ignorance of the very law that instituted Levites.

Wanting to make Christians "Levites" or "ministers who do Levitical services" is inconsistent from any angle that addresses this aspect.

Furthermore, this principle of genealogical lineage is also very significant to understand why the priestly order that God established in Christ is entirely dissociated from the Order of Aaron.

When the Son of God came into the world as the Son of Man, born of a woman, with the name Jesus and called Christ, adopted as a son by Joseph to have official recognition towards the law, there was no possibility of Him becoming a priest of the Order of Aaron, because His lineage from His mother and by being adopted by Joseph was, in both cases, from the tribe of Judah.

The fact that the lineage of Christ was associated with the tribe of Judah is further irrefutable evidence that the Lord Jesus never came in the flesh into the world for the purpose of becoming high priest, priest, or Levite in the Order of Aaron, nor to try to overthrow anyone of this order to take their place, and not even to continue the work and the order started in Aaron.

Considering, then, that Christ is a descendant of Judah regarding His birth as Son of Man and adoption by Joseph, the Lord Jesus trying to be part of the Order of Aaron would be illegal among the Hebrew people and before the covenant that the people had previously chosen to follow, even though they had never been faithful to God or the covenant they asked God to establish with them.

Christ was born as the Son of Man through another offspring and is explicitly declared to be of another offspring than the lineage of Aaron, as we see below:

*Hebrews 7: 13 **For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.**
14 **For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.***

The Lord Jesus was never sent by the Heavenly Father into the world to be the great high priest of the law of Moses or the Order of Aaron, and who would make an offering of a perfect animal to continue the priesthood under the law of Moses.

On the contrary, Christ was sent by God to be the perfect offering that would free the people from sin and even from the law of the Order of Aaron, because by the Levitical priesthood, no one could ever achieve salvation, but only the knowledge of the condemnation that would come upon people if they remained subject to this order.

When Christ was born through the tribe of Judah, God showed that the Lord Jesus had no offspring link with any human priestly lineage, for no one in Judah's lineage had been assigned any priestly assignment under the Order of Aaron throughout all centuries in which this was in operation.

Because Christ was introduced in the flesh into the world through the offspring of Judah, of which no one served the altar of any priesthood under the Order of Aaron, He was also free to receive His priestly line from heaven according to Melchizedek, whose profile we will address in more detail in the next chapter.

Let us see below another text that shows us that Christ had no connection with the succession of the Order of Aaron, declaring Him, therefore, free for the priestly order that God would be revealing more directly from the resurrection of Christ from the dead:

Hebrews 8: 1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.
3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer.
4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;
5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."
6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

In Christ, everything is different from the Order of Aaron, for Christ never had and could not have any right in the Levitical Order. Christ did not have the prerogatives of birth that would grant Him any of the respective rights.

If Christ had a valid bond to be a priest or Levite of the Order of Aaron, the validity of His own priestly or Levitical service would also have been revoked when God revoked the first priesthood and declared it obsolete.

If Christ had come to be active in the old priesthood, He would have come from heaven to be removed along with what from heaven He came to remove. Something totally incompatible and absurd.

Thus, **understanding that Christ has nothing to do with Aaron's lineage is fundamental for those who join the new covenant in Christ, for, in this new covenant, the maintenance of any high priest or priests according to the Order of Aaron is not accepted and in which neither remains any need to have Levites. In Christ, no son of God needs to come before God in the place of another son of God.**

Christ was not only not born according to the Order of Aaron, but He also has no link of continuity with this ancient order and now already revoked by God.

In Christ, or in the Order of Melchizedek, Christ is the One and Eternal High Priest of all and in which each child of God is a priest of one's own life in Christ before God.

D. Corruptible Lineage and Incorruptible Lineage

Another aspect directly resulting from the distinct lineages between the Order of Melchizedek and the Order of Aaron is that the one of Melchizedek does not become corrupted, but the one of Aaron is constantly corrupted because it was already constituted from the desire of a corruptible nature.

The Order of Aaron is an order of an inferior covenant, for the basis of its priesthood, which are the human high priests, their priests, and their Levites, is likewise corrupted and because it has inconstant mediators in its attitudes and that also often need to be replaced.

No matter how much a particular high priest or priest of the Order of Aaron remains in his position for longer than the average of the other priests or as much as he shows more determination and vigor than the others, sooner or later he ends up leaving the priesthood even because he is totally fragile in the face of the last enemy that the human being has to overcome and that the Scriptures name as death.

*Hebrews 7: 22 **By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.***

*23 **Also there (in the old covenant) were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.***

*24 **But He (Christ), because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.***

If a high priest or a priest of the Order of Aaron cannot deliver himself from death and offer eternal life even for his own life, being a full-time priest, how much less, then, can he free the people who are served by him and who are equally subject to the conditions that lead them to death without provision for eternal life?

The Order of Aaron is the order that places in their “functions or priestly offices” individuals subject to the same weakness as those they represent, hoping that something perfect will come out of something imperfect or something incorruptible will come out of something corruptible.

That is, the more attributions the priests of the Order of Aaron assume, and the more they expand their ministries, the more their defects and weaknesses will appear, the more exposed to imperfection they will become, the more the veil that tries to hide their imperfections will need to be used to hide from people the many failures and weaknesses to which they are subjected, and which all workers according to the Order of Aaron likewise have before the most expressive enemies of the human being.

*Hebrews 7: 28 **For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.***

In the Order of Aaron, at each change of shift of a priest or each transition of an individual to become subject to another priest, the person loses one's previous representation, since the other priest who takes the new shift, many times, does not

even know the person who is handed over to him to be mediated and instructed from the shift change.

In the Order of Aaron, when it seems that a priest begins to understand a little more in detail the people one intends to represent, there is always a change of priest, either because they changed the shift of this priest for the convenience of the order and its leaders, or because the person assisted by the priest had to change places due to work or any other detail of life, either because the priest came into contention with other priests and was disqualified from the order, or because people began to perceive more clearly the failures of their priests, or yet, because all human priests die.

The priestly lineage of the Order of Aaron will never reach its perfection also because those who lead it are fickle people and more temporal than many of them think they are.

Now, in the Order of Melchizedek, nothing that occurs under the weakness of the line of priests of the Order of Aaron affects it, because **in the priesthood of Christ, neither the High Priest is passing or temporary, nor there is the exchange of the High Priests, *for the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever and because Christ, who continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.***

Understanding the immutable, permanent, or the eternal condition of the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek may sound somewhat evident to many Christians, but, at the same time, many of them are not aware that they speak precisely the opposite when they say that “they are like sheep that have no pastor” when they lose or change the “human shepherds they have chosen or elected for themselves.”

Therefore, if in the Order of Melchizedek, the High Priest, who is also the High Priest and Bishop of the souls of those who believe in Him, is an immutable High Priest, who cannot be changed, who is eternal and will never be subject to any action of death against Him, how can a person who says to be from this Order of Melchizedek still want to declare that he or she is a “sheep without a shepherd?”

Considering that everyone in the Order of Melchizedek has an Eternal High Priest and Shepherd for one's life, if someone of this order says that one is still “a sheep without a shepherd” for not having human shepherds over his or her life, one is actually saying that he or she is not a member of the new covenant or is showing great ignorance both about the new covenant to which one joined and the old covenant that has already been removed and from which one has already disconnected.

Only those who are dissociated from Christ can also be like “a sheep that has no shepherd,” but this, in no way, applies to those who are in Christ.

Some people find it “cute” to say some phrases formulated in their communities and repeat them because they “seem to be fancy.” However, they may forget that their words can be denying before men that there is an Eternal Pastor and High Priest who never leaves or abandon the sheep that the Heavenly Father has entrusted to Him.

“Playing around with denying” Christ's eternal and continuous position and work of shepherding because it seems “cute” or because of wanting to present oneself as a victim before other people is not indeed a joke, but it is a highly dangerous thing to deal with, as the Lord Jesus warned us:

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.

In the Order of Melchizedek, the High Priest is eternal and immutable. If, however, a person wants to deny Him in one's own life before men, Christ says that the testimony of this person who does so will establish the type of harvest one will have in heaven before Christ and the Heavenly Father.

After being freed from the order that made people enslaved to other people equally enslaved under the law and temporal life, it is no longer up to a Christian to continue to walk "according to men," for Christ is always present with everyone who believes in Him, and continually He lives to manifest this presence to all the children of God.

1 Corinthians 3: 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

*1 Corinthians 1: 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."
 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*

*Romans 6: 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.
 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*

Because of the corruptible condition of the main agents of the Order of Aaron, the Order of Melchizedek could not have any association with the old covenant. Thus, also for this reason, the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ is not of Levi's lineage, but according to the Order of Melchizedek, as we evidence once again below:

*Hebrews 7: 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest
 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.
 17 For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."
 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.*

E. Corruptible Promises or Incorruptible Promises

Another angle that shows the superiority of the Order of Melchizedek and the express inferiority of the Order of Aaron is the whole system of promises that each order presents, as well as the ability to sustain the promises that each one announces.

The Order of Aaron presents defective or even deceptive promises, but which attract people by the illusions and expectations they promote to their listeners, being compared in the Scriptures to fascinations or enchantments.

The promises of the Order of Aaron are distorted by the fact that this order cannot even sustain what it promises or because if it can keep any promise, the promises it offers, ultimately, are earthly and, therefore, fleeting and ephemeral.

The Order of Aaron has no support to fulfill what it promises because the fulfillment of the promises therein is conditioned to a perfect functioning of the entire collectivity of people and the whole set of precepts that are associated with it, and not even a single individual of it can fulfill what one promises before God and others.

A person associated with the Order of Aaron could only achieve the promises of this order if one fulfilled all the precepts of the law of this order, which has already been demonstrated, in history and in the Scriptures, to be impossible to be accomplished by a human being subject and enslaved to weaknesses, sins, and heavy yokes of condemnation.

And since the Order of Aaron promises what is temporal and which in the end is not beneficial for a person concerning eternal things, and also because it cannot even fulfill what it promises, it is an order that needed to be exposed and then removed by something perfect and superior to it so that people could come to have an appropriate hope and true promises.

Hebrews 8: 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

Propositions to serve God for the primary sake of material, social well-being, and enrichment have always attracted and enticed many people in antiquity as well as in recent days, but it is also in these promises that the temporality and weakness of its promises reside, as is more widely exposed as well in the subject on The Christian and the Riches, of which we recall below the following texts:

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.

*1 Timothy 6: 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.***

God is a broadly generous Lord. However, in the priestly order He offers, which is that of Melchizedek, never something of earthly, fleshly, or material value will surpass the value of a soul's eternal salvation.

Aaron's Order is a bargaining order for material well-being and which puts eternal salvation in the background. The Order of Melchizedek, in turn, is an order that expresses its promises with truth because what it offers is the true and eternal blessing that each human being needs.

The Order of Melchizedek is not based on promises of positions and titles in human structures or infinite material gains and so many other haughty things that are repeatedly desired by those who submit to the Order of Aaron. On the other hand, it promises and can entirely sustain a person for eternal life and to be forever with the Most High God who offers righteous and true love to all who remain in Him.

If a person does not appreciate the Order of Melchizedek for its origin and constitution, at the very least one should look at it with affection, respect, reverence, and fear for what only this priestly order can offer and support, as it is the only one that can promise and sustain life in the present and for eternity.

*2 Corinthians 1: 20 **For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.***

F. Earthly Priestly Service and Tabernacle or Heavenly Priestly Service and Tabernacle

Following the topics that highlight the differences between the priesthood of the Order of Melchizedek and the Order of Aaron, and recalling a text of the book of Hebrews just exposed above, we can also see that in addition to the distinct lineage or origin of each of these priesthoods, there is also an extreme difference concerning the place where the priestly services of each priesthood are performed.

Let us review a part of the text previously quoted:

Hebrews 8: 1 **Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,**
2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

The Order of Melchizedek is not only distinct from the Order of Aaron in having an Eternal High Priest who is not according to the lineage of Aaron or Levi, but also because in the Order of Melchizedek, the priestly functions are performed in eternal places and not in shakable or temporal locations.

Since all things that are natural or that belong to the Earth are shakable and will be shaken again according to God's promise, it is necessary that the priesthood of the Order of Melchizedek also operates in eternal places so that its services and fruits arising from them may remain forever.

Considering that only that which is part of God's kingdom will remain eternally in fellowship with the Lord, as already explained in the subject on The Gospel of the Kingdom God, only that which is produced in the kingdom of heaven and from this kingdom will bear fruit for eternal life.

Therefore, considering that the kingdom of God is in heaven and in the hearts of people who receive Christ Jesus as Lord, it is also in these two places that the priestly services of the Order of Melchizedek are performed and ministered. As the Eternal High Priest, Christ performs His functions in heaven before God and in those who believe in Him.

In this way, there is an eternal tabernacle in heaven that is associated with the Heavenly Father's throne and there is also a heavenly and eternal tabernacle in the heart of every person who has Christ in one's life, as has been exposed previously in other subjects and texts referenced above and as confirmed in the verses exemplified again below:

Revelation 7: 14 **And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**
15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them."

2 Corinthians 6: 16 **And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."**

1 Corinthians 3: 16 **Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells 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 who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones."**

Christ came in the flesh into the world, died on the cross of Calvary, and was resurrected not to build earthly priesthods and tabernacles, and will never do so now or in the future.

Christ coming into the world to build earthly priesthods and temples would be inconsistent with the words that God Himself revealed through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah mentioned above, as well as through the words that Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke and which were recorded in the book Acts, as follows:

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.**

Christ never intended to be an earthly priest, and also for this, He was never part of Aaron's lineage. However, He likewise never intended to be a Heavenly High Priest to minister as a High Priest in the temple of the Hebrew people or any other earthly temple, for if He had wanted to do so, He would be going in the opposite direction to what God said about Himself and temples made by human hands.

God allowed the people under the Order of Aaron to raise a tabernacle as the one of Moses and then even allowed them to build a larger one than the first and in the form of a temple, where Solomon's temple was the most sumptuous of all. However, this the Lord allowed to show them that even by increasing Moses' tabernacle and building a vast temple, this would not solve people's primary needs.

The problem of people concerning their relationship with God was never the size of the place, the tent, or the temple to worship God or, even, in what mount or valley the sanctuary would be raised or built up. The matter was always the type and the form of the mediating priesthood that they tried to use or to which they subjected themselves,

where all of them, in one way or another, presented some variation of what has always been and continues to be “a priestly service supported by earthly priests and earthly sanctuaries.”

If the essence of something wrong is not removed, the wrong in the small remains incorrect in the big or even enhances, even more, its inadequate condition when it grows.

The unjust in what is least remains unfaithful also in much if one remains following bases or principles that are unfaithful and fleshly, as was the Order of Aaron.

*Luke 16: 10 **He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.***

Faithfulness and righteousness are not related to the size of the work or the temple but are associated with the attitudes and principles that people adopt in their hearts, regardless of whether it is related to a small or large measure.

The Order of Aaron is the old covenant made by the people who left Egypt. It is the order or covenant made in the desert from hearts contrary to God's will, thus becoming the entire old covenant in a covenant of continuous or repetitive unfaithfulness of people towards God, regardless of where on Earth the priestly services would be performed or the types of buildings in which they would be practiced.

*Hebrews 8: 8 **Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:***
*9 **Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them," says the LORD.***

If a person wants to dodge so that the Light of God does not shine individually in his or her heart, will the increase in the size of the tabernacle change one's heart's intention?

If in the services of a tent, called the tabernacle of Moses, there was already unrighteousness and unfaithfulness in the service of the priests, how much more would there not be in the temple where the number of priests, services, sacrifices, and the economic amounts became significantly increased?

Recalling the previous chapters, it is always worth remembering that the Order of Aaron is also the “system where the services of the priesthood are made on Earth.” In other words, individuals on Earth try to make the mediation of other people towards God for earthly things. And for this reason, in this order, there is so much search for “glory in things that are material, visible, or related to external appearances,” relegating, in practice, what happens in the heart to secondary plans, no matter however much people declare that their hearts are willing to follow God.

Mark 7: 6 **He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.'"**

Matthew 13: 15 **For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.**

The priesthood of the Order of Aaron is not the priesthood of God's true light that enlightens a person inside or in the heart, but it is a version called as a shadow of the true things. And a shadow might give a slight idea of what is being projected, but being under the shadow, on the other hand, also obscures the one on whom it is projected.

The earthly priesthood or the Order of Aaron, in its versions both in tents and in temples, had ample time to try to establish itself for centuries, but it repeatedly showed its ineffectiveness because it was, in essence, inefficient, weak, useless, and subject of becoming exposed to shame by its unstable condition or imperfections. The book of Hebrews presents this in several ways, which is interesting to note again below:

Hebrews 7: 11 **Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?**

...
15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest
16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.

As we have already commented on this topic, if neither the Earth nor the natural human body is eternal, if the Heavens and the Earth as we see them in our day will pass, and all that is material in them, everything that the Order of Aaron builds is also fleeting, except the testimony it left so that its temporality would be registered and evidenced before all people.

Hebrews 9: 1 **Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. ...**
9(a) It was symbolic for the present time ...

As we also already mentioned, the Order of Aaron was constituted out of a yearning for a human or natural priesthood for having been suggested from fleshly motivations. And because of its origin, it will never be able to reach the perfection that would demand from the mere human beings divine and full knowledge of humanity in its most varied circumstances.

The Order of Aaron is rudimentary or mirrors the rudiments of the world, thinking that by a set of fixed rules, the human being will be able to govern all the circumstances of life that is highly dynamic.

*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.***

The veil that the priests and Levites of the Order of Aaron must wear to hide their imperfections from their fellow men, and this, so that their fellow men do not entirely lose confidence in them, stop associating with this order, and stop giving their offerings to it, is also associated by the Lord Jesus Christ with *hypocrisy*. Remembering here, yet, that the word *hypocrisy* is based on the dissimulation that actors use on the theater stage when their simulations do not occur as planned.

*Matthew 16: 6 **Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."***

*Mark 8: 15 **Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."***

*Luke 12: 1 **In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."***

The priesthood of the Order of Aaron revolves around pretending to be heavenly. It represents a set of many aspects that only simulate to provide newness of life, for, as mentioned above, it proposes that the novelty of life can be reached through the shadow and not the substance. It tries to make earthly things, which are fleeting, eternal and lasting things.

In the Order of Aaron, priests serve in models that only appear to be grounded in truth and what is eternal. And by being only under what seems to be true, an individual is extremely limited to understand God's heavenly perspective or to attain more precise knowledge on what concerns spiritual matters.

*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.***

Aaron's order has no access to the "mind of Christ," for its priests present themselves as opposed to what the Heavenly Father always intended to do through Christ and the righteousness that Christ offers to people.

The high priest, priests, and Levites of the Order of Aaron compete with Christ to try to take the primacy that belongs to Christ in people's hearts.

Thus, it is evident that when the workers of the priesthood of the Order of Aaron are asked to answer how the true priesthood actually is, they will not know how to do it, generally appealing to the path of concealment, lying, uttering prophecies that in the future this will be revealed, or even in the sense of threatening the individuals who inquire them. Moreover, since they do not have the knowledge of the real because they are subject to a veil, they still hide behind the dissimulation or deception that anyone who questions them is “opposing their authority.”

Therefore, when God did tear the veil of the temple in two parts in the time when Herod was the king, the Lord also tore it in two to show that in that priesthood the presence of God was not continuous or that it was not there that the Lord was found as He should be found by every human being.

The tearing of the veil exposed the temporal and fragile things so that no one else would seek the Lord in that place once any validity of the old covenant became annulled before God, for the priesthood that could only see a little of the glory of God once every year, and only through one individual, would never perfect any person associated with it.

In due time, together with the weakness of its temple and its veil, the ancient and earthly priesthood was exposed so that people would no longer let themselves be deceived by the thought that there could dwell the presence of God as the Lord wanted to reveal it to human beings and for people to become aware of the kind of presence of God that was really necessary for them not only for the present time, but also for eternity. Which, in turn, is in the heavenly kingdom, in Christ, and in the hearts of those who receive Christ as the gift of the newness of life and the presence of God with them granted from heaven.

With its earthly temples and its priests limited in many ways, the Order of Aaron can never provide access for people before God as they need it, nor can it provide for them the Immanuel, God with us, wherever people need the presence and instruction of the Lord with them.

The end of dryness and scarcity concerning the access to God and the presence of God with people in the condition of their Immanuel comes to an end only when the one who is hungry and thirsty respectively for the bread and water of life comes to believe in Christ or the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek.

*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 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.***

From the broad revelation of the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek, everyone “who comes to me and believes in me,” says the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, can receive the water that will become in the believer a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, and not in any external temple, camp, house, or any other mediator.

In the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, there is not only the perfect water that quenches a person's deepest thirst, but also the power to establish the flowing of rivers of living water through the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of those who believe in Christ, those who believe in the Lord according to the revelation that the Scriptures give us about Christ and not according to the teaching that Aaron's priestly clergy proposes.

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.

Considering that Christ is the Singular High Eternal Priest who can attend everyone anywhere and can represent them at all times also before the heavenly throne of God, and considering a person's heart as a cistern or well from which Christ reveals rivers of living water to those who believe in Him, we may understand why the book of Proverbs teaches us not to depend on the manifestations of the great congregations, but on what God deposits in our hearts.

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?

+

Proverbs 4: 23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

Considering that Christ, in Spirit, is fully capable of being seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Father's throne and also in the hearts of those who believe in Him, He does not depend on other physical places, facilities, hills, or mountains to manifest the Lord's divine presence in the heart of an individual at all times and in all places, nor does He depend on an imperfect, inconstant, or unfaithful priestly caste that tries to mediate people's relationship with God.

Therefore, we believe that it is very significant to particularly emphasize at this point the position from which the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek carries out His priesthood, for, also through this aspect, we can see the enormous difference that this priesthood has with the Order of Aaron.

Since in the Order of Aaron people wanted to walk by sight and not by faith, they were also rejecting the High Priest who was not visible to them and to whom they could only have access through faith in God.

When the people who were delivered from the dominion of Egypt wanted a priesthood based on palpable things or visible to their natural eyes, it was also implied that they were opting for a natural high priest or according to the visible, human, non-celestial, or non-spiritual nature. This point, in turn, did not merely represent an inversion of the position of the high priest's service, but also the place from which God would manifest Himself to this high priest so that he would represent the people before the Lord.

Considering that the high priests of the Order of Aaron could not ascend to heaven because they were subject to the same weaknesses as those they represented, these high priests needed separate places on Earth to perform their priestly functions in an attempt to make *“God come down from heaven and come to Earth.”*

In their obstinacy for wanting to transform spiritual things into things visible to the natural eyes so that they could continue trying to manage the spiritual world, and this for not having to depart from the evil lusts of their hearts, people began to place the expectations of their divine representation on their equally flawed fellow men, and who, for this reason, would have to try to represent them under conditions, places, and sacrifices that also were visible or natural.

Although the manner and some details are different from what happened in the construction of the so-called Tower of Babel, when people freed from the domain of Egypt wanted visible or natural mediators to relate to God, they repeated the mistake of the builders of the Tower of Babel in wanting to have a natural point of reference for the relationship with the Eternal Creator.

If for the builders of the Tower of Babel the tower itself would be a point at which they could determine when and how they could seek God, in the case of the Order of Aaron, the tangible high priest and the whole apparatus around him played a similar role to that of the Tower of Babel.

And the attitude mentioned in these last paragraphs continues to the present day when the most varied religions seek to establish the fixed points where people should serve their divinities, but, mainly, where their deities also “should” hear and serve them if they only fulfill the rituals established by the respective religion. A point that also applies to a vast number of groups or institutions that call themselves Christians, but that rely on their temples, human priests, and rites instead of being directly and individually grounded in the Lord and the priesthood that is according to the Order of Melchizedek and not of Aaron.

Thus, in an attempt to resemble a priesthood and a fleshly high priest to a priesthood and a spiritual high priest that minister before a spiritual God, it was necessary, in the Order of Aaron, to separate several individuals from the people or to sanctify them for the priesthood, just as it was necessary to provide them with a visible structure where they were supposed to live in prayer and sanctification in expectation or with the intention of making *“God come down from Heaven and come to Earth”* to meet the separated individuals in the sanctified places for them to have their so-called *“encounters with God.”*

A vast number of rituals of animal sacrifices, washing the bodies of priests and high priests, separated garments, and their preparation during a whole year were dedicated to invoking “*the coming down of God to Earth*” without this high priest and neither the people being killed by the powerful presence of God near them.

Since people wanted a priesthood that walks by sight and not by faith, or that is supported by natural or earthly things, and not spiritual or heavenly things, they were wanting God not only to accept a fleshly high priest but also to change the jurisdiction of the heavenly priesthood to an earthly location so that the presence of God among them would also be visible to their eyes, showing once again that inadequate attachment to material things leads to increasing devotion to the natural aspects.

And, in turn, the preparation for the so-called “*coming of God down to Earth*” required a structure with a very expensive cost, because if the place to try to shelter God on Earth intended to present some appearance similar to the perfection of the place of God's presence in heaven, it was also necessary to make use of the most outstanding resources existing on Earth.

Ultimately, the Order of Aaron represented the human being trying to finance the search for the presence of God similarly to the model of the Tower of Babel, the Egyptians, and all the peoples of the Earth, and who tried to please their gods with natural things so that the deities they worshiped would “come down to people to bless them” or so that their cry would reach God accompanied by their attempts at bargaining with Him or bribe Him.

When the human being seeks to establish the “modus operandi” of his relationship with God, he invariably ends up falling into similar propositions that millions and millions of people unduly and unsuccessfully have tried to do throughout human history and that in one or another way present proposals in which people think they can define how to justify themselves before God and how they can be accepted before the Lord.

When human beings seek to take the lead in their reconciliation and relationship with God, they invariably fall into what several generations have already tried to do in their limited attempts to establish themselves in high places, in earthly tabernacles, in religions managed by human priests or mediators, or in their philosophies, because when the proposition starts from human beings, it always incurs some proposal of earthly and non-heavenly priesthood.

As much as the natural human being tries to be spiritual, to show himself developed in his spirituality, or to speculate on spiritual things, he ends up falling continuously in the models of priesthoods that in some ways are earthly, for, dissociated from the instruction of the Spirit of the Lord, the human being does not understand the things of God or the heavenly kingdom.

1 Corinthians 2: 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.

Therefore, in his limited understanding, the natural man thinks that a broader level of relationship with God depends on the human being. However, who is the natural man to affirm that this is the only alternative?

Could it not be the other way around?

Could it not be the case of having a representative in heaven on behalf of the people who live on Earth?

Well, it seems that no one had ever thought about the inverse possibility of what human beings have thought for so many centuries, for, after all, what other alternatives could the human beings in their limited perspective suggest to God?

Nevertheless, **someone thought about the possibility of having a representative of men before God in heaven.**

Although human beings did not consider the possibility of a High Priest that represented them in Heaven and not on Earth, God already had this proposition prepared before the foundations of the world had already been created, but for many centuries the vast majority of people did not want to hear the offer of God.

When the human being, the creature, thinks that the created world is his final destiny or that it is up to the creature to find the solutions to his problems, he begins to tangle in thoughts that bind him to the creature's limited perspective, not seeing and not understanding what the Lord sees from heaven and wants to instruct him.

Furthermore, if the representative of human beings was on Earth to mediate their relationship with the Lord, who would do so after their natural lives came to an end, as we saw in the topic of the temporal and corruptible lineage of the Order of Aaron?

Considering that God did not create us for purposes limited to the natural world, but to be with Him for eternity, it is far more crucial to have an eternal High Priest in heaven than a temporal and limited priesthood on Earth, and which cannot accompany a person when the day of one's final judgment before God will happen.

God created us to be His and be with Him forever. He created us to be eternal and to have life in Him also eternally, showing yet another incompatible difference between the Order of Melchizedek and the Order of Aaron.

The thinking of the priesthood according to the order of Aaron is subject to the idea that everything relevant in priestly terms must occur in the material world or earthly tabernacles. However, the history around the Order of Aaron has already shown that people were not satisfied with this priesthood even concerning their material provisions and worldly desires or longings.

Initially, the people who were slaves in Egypt wanted to be free from the harsh slavery that afflicted them. After being freed, they wanted the shade, fresh water, and free bread given to them in the desert. And these aspects not being enough, God granted them good and fertile land, and even allowed individuals who were once slaves, now in freedom, to receive cities they did not build and vineyards they did not plant.

The people freed from the dominion of Egypt longed for land, God granted them. They desired wealth and abundance, it was added to them. They wanted kings like other peoples, so it was established. They also aspired to grand temples as well as other peoples in order not only to stay with the tent of Moses, and this too was allowed, resulting in the building of one of the most beautiful and imposing temples that ever existed on the face of the Earth, if not the most beautiful and sumptuous that has ever existed.

Nevertheless, as much as attractive as the material blessings might have seemed, they did not complete or supply what people sought or really needed, for the priesthood they followed was not endowed with provision for the anguish of the soul when it comes to heavenly things and the eternal life.

The Order of Aaron wanted God on Earth to serve people in the things of the Earth and did not want God in heaven so that people could draw close to the heavenly God according to the kingdom and heavenly principles.

In Christ, however, everything changed completely. In Christ, aided by Him as the Eternal and Heavenly High Priest, a person can seek things that are from above. A person can come to the throne of heavenly grace. One can, in Christ, by faith in Him, sit in the heavenly places. One can enter the true Most Holy Place, and not the shadow, by the new and living way which, in turn, is also Christ in us, and we in Christ.

In the priesthood of the Order of Melchizedek, we can be justified before God in Christ and Christ can be in us, and not in temples made by human hands or in some natural separated places, as Christ Himself warned us explicitly or directly.

*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.***

For the natural men, it is very challenging to conceive that there is no need for a temple or tabernacle built by human hands for one's relationship with God, nor even earthly houses that people want to transform into sanctified temples for God.

Recalling what was mentioned at the beginning of this subject, we emphasize once again that the priesthood is what allows a person to present oneself to God or be presented by someone to God and vice versa. For this reason, since the priesthood is the means for the primary and most necessary relationship of a human being, this should only be entrusted to that High Priest of the Order who can offer a relationship that is established adequately or indeed for eternity.

The Lord Jesus did not come to erect a temple on Earth and will never come to do it. That is why the mentality of a temple on Earth is a remnant of the Order of Aaron or, seen more broadly, of the natural man trying to solve, in his own way, his relationship with God.

Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Rahab, Ruth, and Daniel in exile, for example, did not have a sanctuary or a temple to attend. And even so, they were men and women with whom God spoke and whom He instructed by their faith in the Lord even before Christ came in the flesh into the world. How much more, then, will God not relate to people after Christ triumphed on the cross of Calvary over sin and slavery associated with the law of the Order of Aaron?

Thus, the problem of a priesthood and its sanctuaries commanded by human beings, even though they claim that it is God who guides them, is not the size of the ministry, the place of meetings, how many people fit in these places, whether it is simple, luxurious, or sumptuous, but it is its concept of dependency on earthly things and which, in one way or another, is correlated with the Order of Aaron that corrupts like leaven if space is given to the principles it tries to propagate.

*Hebrews 7: 11 **Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?***

In the Order of Aaron, many works were done, and numerous sacrifices were presented so that God “eventually would come down to a particular physical place.”

Nevertheless, as we have already commented, **in the Order of Melchizedek, Christ opened a new and living way for anyone to receive the Heavenly High Priest in the heart so that one may also reach God at any time, moment, and place, no matter the people, race, tribe, nation, or language from which one comes, nor if one is limited to physically staying where one is placed or free to move.**

In the Order of Melchizedek, salvation is offered to all equally, and the position of the High Priest is eternal in the heavenly places and as well with those who receive it through the new covenant in Christ.

The Order of Melchizedek did not provide us with a path to an earthly tabernacle, but a way to the presence of God free from the dependence on earthly buildings or places, or even other people.

*Hebrews 10: 19 **Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,**
20 **by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.***

What was impossible for human beings to even think or imagine, God provided through Jesus Christ, our Lord, so that anyone, from anywhere, at any time, can draw close to God.

And it is also for all this that Paul recorded the following words:

- 2 Corinthians 3: 7* **But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away,**
- 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?**
- 9 For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.**
- 10 For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels.**
- 11 For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.**
-

If God sometimes agreed to show Himself glorious in the tabernacle of Moses, in the temple of Solomon, and other fixed places, as part of the process of teaching the weakness of these systems even if for a time God was favorable to them in some situations, how much greater glory would not be or is the new and living way that allows people on Earth to have access to the Most Holy Place, to the true tabernacle, to the presence of God in His heavenly kingdom through Christ Jesus and according to what God has always intended for every human being?

- Ephesians 2: 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.**

Christ came to offer an Order of Priesthood that always allows people from anywhere, through faith, to access God individually, and this, even in His heavenly places.

Melchizedek's Order is not offered to function from earthly temples or sanctuaries made by human hands, even if they are raised in prominent or specially chosen locations. It is offered to work in the heart that believes in Christ, and that addresses God personally, for through the Spirit, the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are everywhere, at all times, and whose free action from heaven can never be confined to human walls and buildings.

Aaron's Order is the order of confinement in sheepfolds from which people need to be delivered by the Lord. The Order of Melchizedek is the order of freedom in the Spirit of the Lord.

- 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: 16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

Christ did not come to free people from the captivity of an earthly order, and therefore limited and imperfect, to guide them again to this same temporal and weak order or any similar to it.

Christ did not come to reform the Order of Aaron to try to change it to a heavenly order.

The change that God established through Christ was to remove the entire set of the first priesthood, with all its imperfections, to establish and offer before human beings an entirely new priestly order for them. A priestly order born in the heavenly kingdom to also minister, from the heavenly places, in the hearts of those who welcomed the kingdom of God in their lives.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was asked by a Samaritan woman who was thirsty to know about what mountain was right for someone to worship God so that the emptiness of one's heart would be filled, the Lord taught us one of the most precious and objective aspects of life under the Order of Melchizedek, and with which we would also like to close this topic to let the principles of this text echoing to the other parts of this subject.

When speaking with the Samaritan woman, the Lord Jesus taught her that to receive the newness of life from God, it would not be necessary for her to go through services, ceremonials, rituals, priests, Levites, pastors, spiritual fathers, patriarchs, tithes, and various offerings, and it was not even necessary for her to go up a hill or meet the agenda of small or large groups. What she needed, from the knowledge of the revelation of Christ, was to believe in Christ in her heart and, thus, she would receive the newness of life for which she longed so much. And yet, she would receive it not only temporarily, but for eternal life, because the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek Himself is the One who dwells in the hearts of those who receive Him to be strengthened and supported by Him eternally.

*John 4: 19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.
20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."
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."
25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."
26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."*

G. Human Righteousness or God's Righteousness

Another aspect that in no way should be overlooked when someone aims to know the Order of Melchizedek more widely also through comparison with the Order of Aaron refers to the aspect of righteousness respectively associated with each of these two orders.

Recalling that the Lord also presents the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ to the world as the Gospel of the Righteousness of God, we can observe in the Scriptures that the aspect of righteousness is undoubtedly one of the most prominent points to highlight how distinct and how incompatible are the Order of Melchizedek and the Order of Aaron or any other priestly order that has some characteristic similar to the Levitical Order.

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."**

On the other hand, since this topic has already been addressed in the subject on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God and that it will still be addressed in a chapter later in the present material under the theme of the Lord Jesus Christ also being the King of Righteousness, at this point we would like to mention briefly only a few of the aspects that seem to us pertinent to be mentioned in this context of the comparison between the two priestly orders referred to in this chapter.

And one of the first points that we would like to emphasize here, is that the righteousness of the Order of Melchizedek and the righteousness of the Order of Aaron receive, before the Lord, distinct identifications or classifications, where the righteousness of the Order of Melchizedek is called *the righteousness of God, of Christ, of the heavenly kingdom, of faith, or the one that comes from God*, and where the righteousness of the Order of Aaron is called *human own righteousness, of the law, which proceeds from the law, which is in the law, which comes from works done by us, or which is according to the creature*, as exemplified, in part, also in the following texts:

Romans 10: 3 **For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.**

Philippians 3: 8 **Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ**

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.

Therefore, **if we look at the aspect of righteousness under the concept of its glory, we may notice that each priestly order also presents its particular righteousness whose glory corresponds to its respective foundations and laws, which again emphasizes the point that the Order of Melchizedek and the Order of Aaron have main criteria that do not allow them to be compatible.**

The Order of Melchizedek, the order of the righteousness according to God, and the Order of Aaron, the order according to the righteousness of human beings, self-righteousness, or according to the effort of the flesh, present regarding true righteousness, one of its most accentuated and significant differences.

For this reason, **God is so emphatic and even repetitive in the Scriptures as to urge people not to incline their hearts towards the Order of Aaron, for it, in terms of the glory of its own righteousness, is a source of generation of many injustices, increased by the evil aggravation of trying to hide its unrighteousness under the appearances of godliness or devotion to God.**

If we return to considering the text of Romans 10 quoted above, we can see that the origin of the attempt to uphold the Order of Aaron, also called a fleshly commandment in the book of Hebrews, may similarly be expressed through the rejection of God's righteousness when people prefer to try to establish their own righteousness.

Also from the perspective of righteousness, the Order of Aaron, in contrast to the Order of Melchizedek, proves to be a cradle that bears unrighteousness already from its constitution based not on God, but on the human being or on the efforts of people to try to achieve their justification and acceptance before God.

In one of its angles, the Order of Aaron does not want to deny or reject God, even wants God to support people, but wants God's support to be achieved through the paths that people themselves choose for God to bless them or by merit for having completed a set of works according to the law of the respective priesthood.

Nevertheless, considering that the sacrifices of the Order of Aaron could never remove people's subjection to sin and the body of sin, only cover the guilt of subjection to sin for a while to generate a postponement of the condemnation arising from obedience to sin, the righteousness of this order is laden with unrighteousness. It is a righteousness proposition that requires devotion to its law full of precepts or rules without ever being able to solve the most severe problems of those who serve it and which it claims to want to serve, which, in turn, are the need for the liberation of people from subjection to sin, of the body of sin, and the justification to indeed be accepted before God.

Among other aspects, the righteousness of the Order of Aaron is a source of unrighteousness because it:

- ⇒ 1) Cannot redeem people from what it proposes to save them;
- ⇒ 2) Calls people to do works for God that can never please God;
- ⇒ 3) Requires services, works, and resources under the pretext of benefiting people, but which work exactly against the main benefit that people need for their lives, which is reconciliation with God;

- ⇒ 4) Attracts and encourages people to want to depend on God, but, then, it intervenes at the door of the relationship with God so that no one, in practical terms, can relate to God satisfactorily.

Thus, in addition to not freeing people from subjection to sin in general, all other derivations of the unjust righteousness of the Order of Aaron are born of the main unrighteousness it imposes on those who subject to it, which is to keep people distant from true reconciliation with God, increased, however, by the goal of putting people under a torpor or an illusion that by doing the works of this order, they will be on the path where, one day, with even more human effort, they will be able to be reconciled with God.

The interruption of an appropriate relationship between the creature and the One Creator God has always been and continues to be the source of any or all unrighteousness, but the Order of Aaron has in its proposal of righteousness to put a veil over people so that they believe that it is from the human works and efforts that reconciliation with God can be achieved.

Many people who in recent days remain subject to sin and the body of sin are so not due to the lack of volume of natural knowledge, which is abundant in the most varied areas, just as many are not in this condition for lack of effort regarding the precepts of the Order of Aaron or similar to it, but they are subject to this type of unrighteousness because, in trying to establish their own righteousness, they also deprive themselves of knowing the righteousness of God and the just and upright Lord in the appropriate measure as they should know Him.

Romans 10: 3 **For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.**

Titus 1: 16 **They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.**

Jeremiah 7: 23 **But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'**

24 **Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.**

Hosea 4: 1 **Hear the word of the LORD, You children of Israel, For the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: "There is no truth or mercy Or knowledge of God in the land."**

1 Corinthians 15: 34 **Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.**

God is love, truth, and our righteousness, but how will people know this reality if they insist on remaining subject to an “unjust righteousness” that, in addition to not being able to remove obstacles for people to be reconciled with the Eternal Lord, still adds another huge set of more obstacles that oppose the righteousness of the heavenly kingdom?

For this reason, **in the Order of Melchizedek, one of the first points that the High Priest of this order highlights to be sought by everyone associated with His new covenant refers precisely to the righteousness that is true and eternal before God**, an aspect recalled in the following text:

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

In contrast to the Order of Aaron, which is based on people's unwillingness to know the righteousness of God and God personally, resulting in one of the main reasons for the spread of unrighteousness or for people to seek to establish their own righteousness, the Order of Melchizedek repeats what was said, for example, by the prophet Hosea, as follows:

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.**

Hosea 10: 12 **Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.**

In the Order of Melchizedek, its righteousness is:

- ⇒ 1) **Justifying righteousness through the grace of God;**
- ⇒ 2) **The merciful and forgiving righteousness;**
- ⇒ 3) **The righteousness whose initiative to reconcile people's relationship with God was done by the Eternal Lord Himself;**
- ⇒ 4) **The righteousness that rains from heaven over those who receive it and does not emerge from the creature trying to justify itself by its own efforts;**
- ⇒ 5) **The eternal righteousness that grounds God's own throne.**

Romans 4: 6 **...just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works.**

Romans 3: 28 **Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.**

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.

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.

2 Corinthians 5: 19 **That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

Psalms 89: 14 **Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.**

Therefore, only the flawed aspect of the Order of Aaron in proposing the justification of people before God through undue means or the aspect of proposing people to live an alleged or false way of seeking this justification, consuming people's lives in vain services, would be more than enough for no one else to want to lean their hearts to this type of priestly order.

Nevertheless, just as the knowledge of God leads to receiving rains of righteousness and the knowledge of the truth that makes free indeed, so the lack of knowing God and the lack of an appropriate relationship with the Eternal Lord lead to successive injustices, and, therefore, the Order of Aaron also spreads in many other ways of unrighteousness.

The Order of Aaron may even praise and satisfy for a time the ego of the one who presents worship under it, attends its meetings, or offers sacrifices, or yet, may show different types of “self-help” propositions in the attempt of justification before God, which is another way of referring to self-righteousness. However, it is never able to present a provision to indeed deal with the root of the central problems of human beings or the sin that generates other sins, since the solution against the action of the source of their troubles can only be found in the fellowship with God and which is grounded in the righteousness of the Creator and not of the creature.

Without the righteousness of the heavenly kingdom, it is not possible for an individual to be reconciled to God and to have proper fellowship with the Lord, without which, in turn, a person cannot even discern what is going on in one's heart. Only God can enlighten both the unrighteousness that is in the heart of an individual and the

path of righteousness to which a person is called to live and walk. An aspect that has been exposed since antiquity also by the prophets and psalmists:

Jeremiah 17: 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.

Psalms 139: 1 **O LORD, You have searched me and known me.**

2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.

3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.

...

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;

24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalms 23: 1 **The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

And in addition to the above, returning once again to the point of earthly high priests and tabernacles in contrast to the priesthood and the tabernacle of the kingdom of God in which the Eternal High Priest Jesus Christ operates, we recall that the Order of Aaron could not offer a lasting solution and priesthood because both it and its high priests were temporal, but also because in its proposal of action, this order was discriminatory and resulted in many injustices towards God and people.

In the format and the way of thinking of the Order of Aaron, the concept of righteousness for all does not fit, because if for the strong and healthy according to the flesh it was already impossible to follow the whole law, how, then, would the weak or debilitated be able to meet the law of the old covenant?

The Order of Aaron was established under the concept of the need for physical places so that priests could exercise their priestly services, and for this reason, it already depended on earthly temples or sanctuaries, as it was also exposed before.

Thus, any religion that is established under a concept of temples or earthly reference points cannot be fair to everyone, for, in some way, it ends up inclining to recognize

differently those who are able to go to their temples or the meeting points that they establish.

Looking only at its proposition of worship or service, the Order of Aaron is already discriminatory at this point in the sense that not everyone can reach the temples it builds or the places it establishes for people to meet with its priests.

In the Order of Aaron, the physically disabled, the sick, the weakened by age, children, those who do not have the financial means and time to travel to the meeting places, and so on, are deprived of contact with the manifestation of God because in this order God is expected to manifest Himself in the temple and places predetermined by the priests of the priestly order. In the Order of Aaron, essentially, God was invited and expected to come to pre-established places.

And under the concept that God must come to a place defined by people for them to gain access to the presence or manifestation of God, the righteousness of the Order of Aaron will always be discriminatory towards someone, under which it is of no use building bigger and better temples, smaller or simpler sanctuaries, concentrating the meetings in one place, or spreading them through the houses.

If restrictions on access to the places where God supposedly has to manifest Himself continue to exist for some, which will always happen in the Order of Aaron, regardless of the most elaborate strategies, techniques, or technologies that it seeks to use, injustice remains present, varying, perhaps, in the number of people, but some will always be left out or excluded by the rules that require people to access some remote point and mediators to try to relate to God.

Since the Order of Aaron, in contrast to the Order of Melchizedek, was constituted based on people “not wanting God in their hearts or continually very close to them,” which results in walking by outside parameters and not by faith, there is no way for it to become free from the need of attracting people to things that are also visible, whose access, in turn, in one way or another, generates discrimination between people.

Therefore, a priestly order based on the weakness of human righteousness will not produce God's righteousness. On the contrary, a priesthood based on human weakness tends to grow on the scale of unrighteousness.

On the other hand, in His Priestly Order, that of Melchizedek, Christ said that He would always be both with each person individually and anywhere that those who believe in Him would gather in His name, making no mention of any specific types of places or means for their meetings.

Since the Priesthood of Christ is free and works by the Spirit of God, and not according to the limitations of the flesh and material things, this priesthood is also free to always be with those who believe in the Lord, as well as to accompany them wherever they are, not being subject to the unrighteousness of depriving people of being continually in fellowship with God through Christ wherever they are.

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

In the Order of Melchizedek, the High Priest is with people in their personal lives all day and not only partially as the high priests of the Order of Aaron or their representatives invariably do.

Matthew 1: 23 **Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, "God with us."**

Matthew 28: 20(b) **And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.**

Matthew 18: 20 **For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.**

Let us note well that Christ says that He is always with each one. That is, there is no need for two or three to be together for Him to be with each person who believes in Him.

Nevertheless, **Christ also says that “where two or three are” gathered in His name, there He will also be, teaching us that for there to be a joint meeting of Christians, two or three may already make it happen as long as they meet in the name of Christ and not in the name of “institution a, b or c,” or in the name of “group x, y or z,” or even in the name of “leader, pastor, priest, bishop, reverend, or patriarch a, b or c.”**

No matter how many workers the Order of Aaron raises, how many service points it offers, how many so-called “leaders” it trains, doing it even despite what Christ taught about “there being no leaders among the brothers of faith in the Lord,” the Order of Aaron will always continue to be unfair in its proposition of spiritual covering, for it cannot be with all and even with just one individual at all time of his or her life.

Only in the Order of Melchizedek we have a High Priest who can continue to teach us even when we sleep or are otherwise limited to relating to other people.

When the Lord Jesus Christ came to reveal the new and living way to the new covenant, according to the Order of Melchizedek, He began to attend people on the streets and to go to the towns and villages in which they lived, signaling that a remarkable inversion of God's care for people would occur after Christ would reveal the heavenly righteousness also by His death on Calvary's cross in favor of all human beings.

The Lord Jesus began to show that God was willing to go, always, where each person was.

The Lord Jesus did not come to establish another earthly order, for if He did, this action would inevitably also incur the same limitations and unrighteousness of the Order of Aaron.

The conception and execution of the services of the Order of Melchizedek are utterly different from any concept that the human being had ever seen and entirely established in the righteousness on which the throne of God is also eternally established.

Romans 5: 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.

It does not matter if an assembly or groups of people meet in a large temple, in small groups in the houses, or even through some digital technology, if people do not leave the concept of the Order of Aaron behind to live according to the Order of Melchizedek as it is offered to be in the heart of each person, they remain subject to the idea that the central point of God's blessing is somehow associated with natural reference points and not with the presence of Christ and the kingdom of God in the heart of every Christian.

Christ in us and us in Christ is the first and primary condition through which the Order of Melchizedek aims to manifest the glory of God to each person.

God, surely, can manifest Himself in different ways, through various gifts, and grant many additional benefits when Christians meet with each other, but this is never intended to replace the full-time support that the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek offers to every person who believes in Him.

Returning to this aspect once again, if, in some priestly order, people need to establish external ties, either with people or places called "sanctified or sacred" to be able to relate satisfactorily to God, this system is subject to a condition of unrighteousness towards those who cannot have access to these referential points.

The righteousness of the Order of Aaron or similar to it produces unrighteousness from the moment of its conception when it already establishes a select target audience that it wants or can reach, contrary to the righteousness of God that shows no partiality.

We can see in the Scriptures that the choice of points called "sanctified" and a particular class of people to perform priestly services in place of others inevitably ends up dividing people between leaders and followers, but it also ended up causing the leaders of the Order of Aaron to advocate themselves as being righteous and distinct from the "spiritually lay or poor people" who supposedly do not understand what they,

the leaders, say they comprehend about God. However, in the eyes of God, those who called themselves leaders were called a brood of vipers, for they ended up prioritizing their places called “sacred” or their religious structures, no longer having mercy on their fellow men, much less on those who did not participate in their joint meetings.

Thus, God declared the Order of Aaron obsolete also because, in its own righteousness, it was always unrighteous to the people created by God for not showing the true path to reconciliation with the Lord, but also for dividing people between those who would have the right and those who would have no right to be attended by God, completing the cycle of its unrighteousness before God and people in the world.

Once the fullness of time became complete for the Heavenly Father to reveal the priesthood that He would come to offer in Christ Jesus, God would not allow people to continue without a righteous provision for all, in due time, to be able to relate to God and achieve eternal life.

- 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.*

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.

When human beings filled the measure of their iniquity, when they exhausted their attempts and ideas, when everything was just a repetition or variation of what had been done unduly for centuries, God said enough, intervened, annulled the old covenant, and introduced a superior one, righteous, eternal, and available to everyone who receives righteousness through the grace of God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, after Christ's coming into the world and Christ's provision made to redeem people from sin and the Order of Aaron, insisting on the precepts of the Order of Aaron already revoked is even more aggravating than it was before Christ was revealed to the world, for it is an attempt to uphold the unjust righteousness and already declared by God as such before the world and before all the heavens.

When some priestly order seeks to reestablish concepts of the Order of Aaron after Christ's coming into the world, it tries to reassign again on people the writing of debt or guilt already exposed and canceled by Christ on Calvary's cross.

In other words, since a priesthood under the Order of Aaron basically exists to try to justify and reconcile people with God through works of the law of a fleshly commandment, trying to reestablish the Order of Aaron is an attempt to give back credit to a debt of the individuals associated with this order that has already been fully paid by the Lord, because if someone still needs works of the law or to attend meetings to be justified and accepted before God, Christ would have died in vain or His death and resurrection would have been ineffective and invalid.

In its escalation of unrighteousness, the attempt to reestablish the Order of Aaron not only opposes the righteousness of God in Christ, but it also turns against people, for what the Order of Aaron proposes to people is that they return to be subject to debts and guilt that they no longer need to take on their shoulders. In other words, the attempt to reestablish the Order of Aaron is an attempt to reintroduce the guilt of sin and the law that already had its debt paid off before sin, the law, death, and God.

And are these actions and intentions similar to the Order of Aaron not a clear expression of the imputation of unrighteousness to those who already have at their disposal the receipt of the discharge of their debts to the law and sin?

*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.***

Going yet a little further, another point of unrighteousness that the righteousness that is according to the law of the Order of Aaron or similar to it generates in contrast to the Order of Melchizedek is related to the fact that, sooner or later, it incurs the inversion of the order of who serves and who is served.

For those who know the stories of the Bible around the temples and for those who know the history of various groups that over the centuries have called themselves Christians and also have called themselves according to the names of the groups they formed, may easily see that temple services or around different castes of people in the group ended up culminating in services to the temples and their clergies to the detriment of the people to whom the priests supposedly should serve.

In the Order of Aaron, the flow of the proposal of the priests to serve the people soon becomes reversed, and it is the people who become charged to serve the priests who presented themselves or were presented to serve the people in general.

Once the set of aspects of a priesthood that is somehow subject to some characteristics of the Order of Aaron is constituted, the people are required to make great sacrifices so that the temple, the sanctuary, or any other earthly structure comes to be established. But afterward, people still need to make the same amount of efforts, and even more, to support the erected structure and its classes of workers and priests, generating enormous demand for external and material services to seek the guarantee of some blessing or even not to be accused of being negligent towards the whole established structure.

Since the Order of Aaron is associated with a weak self-righteousness and with the concept of condemnation that its law emphasizes precisely for the ineffectiveness of its righteousness, this order also incurs the demand for the engagement of people in many works to be displayed before others and in the use of fear, continuous threats, or the accusations of their fellow men promoted by their leaders as some of their primary instruments to try to keep people subject to its unrighteousness.

*1 John 4: 18(a) **Because fear involves torment.***

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."

The heavy legacy of Solomon's temple, for example, caused unrighteousness to fall on the people in the form of a heavy burden of taxes, which later sparked wars and a political and territorial division of the nation, weakening the people who had previously been freed from Egypt to such an extent that a significant part of it was spread for centuries to many nations of the world.

The legacy of Herod's temple, who was king in the days when Christ came in the flesh into the world, became a "den of thieves and robbers," even with the expressive participation of the priests and Levites themselves as if all that heavy burden supposedly was being attributed to the people "in the name of God."

As we have already mentioned, the supposed devotion to God primarily through external things invariably corrupted those who were subject to this type of priestly order, from people in general as well as the clergy.

Isaiah 1: 21 How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers.

22 Your silver has become dross, Your wine mixed with water.

23 Your princes are rebellious, And companions of thieves; Everyone loves bribes, And follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, Nor does the cause of the widow come before them.

Jeremiah 5: 30 An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land:

31 The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?

Jeremiah 12: 10 Many rulers have destroyed My vineyard, They have trodden My portion underfoot; They have made My pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

Isaiah 56: 11 Yes, they are greedy dogs Which never have enough. And they are shepherds Who cannot understand; They all look to their own way, Every one for his own gain, From his own territory.

12 "Come," one says, "I will bring wine, And we will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink; Tomorrow will be as today, And much more abundant."

Thus, looking at various so harsh historical facts and which were so often repeated in the history of attempts to subject people to the Order of Aaron, it is not surprising that God many times, in advance, prophesied that when the fullness of time would be at hand, He would establish, in contrast to the weak Levitical priesthood, a priesthood provided by the Lord Himself. And in which, the Heavenly Father would establish a Unique and Eternal High Priest and Shepherd from the descendants of Judah and David, and not from the line of the priesthood to be removed, as described, for example, in chapter 34 of the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

Finally, in this topic, we can see that the Order of Aaron is also based on human righteousness and not on God's righteousness because it seeks to invert the glory of God in people's lives so that the glory concerning aspects that are only pertinent to God is attributed to the flawed and corruptible human beings.

The Order of Aaron is so hostile to Christ also because it wants human beings to be exalted before God and the world for their deeds or works, and not for the human being to present oneself in humility, weakness, and as one who needs mercy, forgiveness, and care of the Eternal Creator in all aspects of one's life.

In its eagerness to promote the human being, submission to the Order of Aaron or similar to it soon reaches the point of wanting the glory due to God in the life of each person to be attributed to the people who are in the most prominent position in this order, because the one or those to whom a person submits in terms of a priesthood, or from whom an individual seeks spiritual cover, also are those to whom one begins to confer the glory concerning his or her life.

For this reason, considering that the Heavenly Father has established Christ as the Head of every man, when a man covers his head spiritually with the covering of his fellow men or some aspect of creation, he dishonors Christ. He dishonors Christ's unique and perfect sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, which was also presented before God in the eternal heavens by the One who was made our Eternal High Priest so that we never again will need other mediators for an appropriate relationship with the Heavenly Father.

*1 Corinthians 11: 4 **Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.***

...
*7(a) **For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God.***

In its own righteousness that seeks to be justified by zeal and human deeds, and not by the justification offered by God in Christ Jesus, the Order of Aaron also ends up incurring the desire to receive for itself or its leaders the glory concerning the deeds of those who are subject to it, incurring the search for increasingly elevate the figure of the human being through his alleged acts of righteousness.

Thus, if in any priestly proposition there is an attempt to establish spiritual coverage of people over people or institutions over people, it has symptoms and characteristics of the Order of Aaron, regardless of the name that a person tries to attribute to the position of being a spiritual mediator of another or to the condition of being subject to the coverage of others over his or her life.

We highlight here, then, that **in the Order of Melchizedek, it is very explicit that Christ is the new and living way to a personal and appropriate relationship with God. And Christ is the only way of the novelty of life and not together with another group of people who want to elevate themselves to priests or a covering position towards others and who claim to have been specially selected by God for this purpose.**

*1 Corinthians 1: 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."
13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*

*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.*

Entirely different from the Order of Aaron, the Order of Melchizedek works so that the glory of eternal righteousness is always attributed to whom it is due forever.

*Romans 3: 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.***

*2 Timothy 2: 19 **Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity (or unrighteousness)."***

H. Priesthood Symbolic or Figurative for the Present Time, or True and Eternal Priesthood

Hebrews 9: 1 ***Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.***

...

6 Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.

7 But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;

....

9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience;

10 which concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

Hebrews 8: 13 ***In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.***

When we begin to look more closely at the Order of Melchizedek also in contrast to the Order of Aaron, and when we get closer to the aspects of how the Scriptures expose them after Christ's death and resurrection, which is the perspective also pertinent to our present time of life, we can also see how the Scriptures reposition each of these orders after the Order of Aaron was declared obsolete or outdated by the revelation of the Order of Melchizedek to the world.

This point is a crucial aspect to be known and whose lack of understanding has led millions and millions of people not to realize the current condition of the Order of Aaron and caused many to be still influenced inappropriately by the principles of this order.

Therefore, in the present day, it is necessary to pay special attention to a point mentioned in the last texts of Hebrews exposed above, and which is the following reference made regarding the priesthood of the Order of Aaron, namely: ***It was symbolic for the present time.***

When the letter of Hebrews was written, Christ had already been resurrected by the Heavenly Father, had already sat at the right hand of the Father, and the priesthood of the Order of Aaron had already been declared obsolete, as it is also exposed in the text of Hebrews 8 quoted above.

How, then, may we understand that the Order of Aaron could still be ***"for the present time"*** if it has already become obsolete?

Thus, the combination of Hebrews 9, verse 9, and Hebrews 8, verse 13, may initially seem incompatible, but it, on the contrary, is very enlightening.

After the new covenant made the first covenant outdated or also called obsolete, the old covenant was relocated to the level of being equated with a parable or a symbol. That is, it no longer has validity before God for anyone to adhere to it, but, at the same time, it began to remain as a parable, symbol, or figure for teaching so that no one would try to live through it and continue to waste gifts and sacrifices that, in the end, *cannot make the one who performs the service perfect in regard to the conscience.*

The above point is very relevant, for considering that the Order of Aaron always proposed the attempt to live and walk under the shadow of the true and not the true itself, it ended up, ultimately or practically speaking, becoming a parable, an icon, an allegory, or a symbol very exposed and proven for centuries about something that can never make righteous those who want to return to live in *the present time* subject to things similar to this parable. And this, precisely so that no one else tries to do so without having been warned beforehand about the end to which this parable leads the individual who wants to live subject to the old covenant.

The fact that the Order of Aaron *is symbolic for the present time* exists precisely because people from generation to generation will try to do something similar to the Order of Aaron. And to warn and instruct them not to do so, there is already a parable, figure, or symbol from hundreds and thousands of years showing the weakness and the uselessness of any attempt of subjection to something similar to that what has been considered as *symbolic for the present time.*

Thus, that what became *symbolic for the present time* serves, at least, for two primary points:

- ⇒ 1) Warning people not to start a priesthood order with similarities to the Order of Aaron because it will consume gifts and sacrifices with no benefit to anyone who associates with this option;
- ⇒ 2) Supporting people so that they are able to discern and recognize formal, institutionalized, or even informal activities that have already been placed or that want to put themselves on paths similar to the Order of Aaron and that give shelter to the precepts related to that which *is symbolic for the present time.* And this, to grant them abundant guidance so that they may avoid becoming involved again with activities similar to the Order of Aaron and having their gifts and precious time consumed by these types of priesthods.

Even after the resurrection of Christ and the wide dissemination of His Gospel, people continued and still continue to try to live according to that which should only be *symbolic for the present time*, which means that those who want to live according to the new covenant also need to be attentive to what is proposed or offered to them. Therefore, if they know that the Order of Aaron *is a parable for the present time*, they may also use this understanding, in conjunction with their personal relationship with the High Priest Jesus, to clearly discern from what they definitely should get away.

Regardless of the time that a person was exposed to the Order of Aaron, this order, before being revoked, never managed to perfect the people who under it performed services or offered gifts, offerings, tithes, or sacrifices, because it never managed to provide what was necessary to free people from the most significant or profound

problems in their hearts. How much more ineffective, then, is this order not after being relocated to the condition of **a parable for the present time?**

Let us see again the text below:

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.**

...
11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

If any human high priest in the Order of Aaron was established in weaknesses, and people, in general, were also perfected only according to these weaknesses, both remained limited to what they came to serve, making it necessary a perfect High Priest of another order, as previously mentioned.

Nevertheless, how much more aggravated, then, has the weakness of the Order of Aaron not become after God has already reallocated it to the status **of symbolic for the present time** so that everyone has a firm testimony of its fragility and so that no one else may try to associate with it?

The Order of Aaron calls people to be strong in their efforts, but what it offers them to practice is what keeps people weak under a fascination that their services might one day bring improvement. However, how much more evident did the weakness of this order not become after being revoked, declared outdated, and made obsolete?

The Order of Aaron has become symbolic for the present time to exemplify what this order is like. And being contrary to Christ, this parable also shows what the Order of Melchizedek is not.

When we read the letters of Paul and his companions, of James, Peter, John, and also the book of Hebrews, we can see that the human being's tendency to want to justify oneself through one's own works is explicit. And for this reason, the Lord evidenced this inappropriate human behavior in many ways.

Thus, for several generations, God allowed people to try to establish and exemplify the weak functioning of the most perfect system of human works and religiousness that could exist in the world, the Order of Aaron. Which, however, never succeeded in establishing an appropriate and individual relationship between human beings and God.

However, coming to the fullness of that time, that is, there being nothing more to try to do in the Order of Aaron that was not repetitive or where people only lived or walked in the same vicious circle already adopted several times, God, through His mercy, interrupted that fruitless flow by sending His alternative of salvation and life to people, which is also called the Order of Melchizedek.

In this subject, we have already seen the text that says that if the Order of Aaron had been successful, God would not have sent His alternative, for it would not be necessary, and the creature would have shown God that it could, from itself or its own

righteousness, find the way or the ways for the salvation of the human beings, as repeated as well below:

*Hebrews 7: 11 **Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?***

In the so-called first covenant, an aspect also explained in this material, God allowed the creature to try and exhaust the attempts of this form of priesthood. When they were unfaithful and sought God's mercy, the Lord renewed His care towards them even though they were doing something that God already knew that would not be successful. God did not boycott them in their attempts; on the contrary, He granted them the conditions they asked to carry out these attempts.

In other words, perhaps, we could say that God gave them support in their stubbornness for the first covenant for them to see with their own eyes, and through their own experience, that the model of the Order of Aaron, even if explored to its extreme limits, would not be able to give them what they needed indeed.

Nevertheless, once that experiment was explored to its extremes or that, by all means, was proven the ineffectiveness of the Order of Aaron, God revealed the central problem of the human being, which is the longing to live and walk independently of God or partially independent of God, and sent His solution to the world in contrast to the old covenant.

Mentioning this again, in Christ, God provided a complete and eternal solution for human beings to be freed from eternal condemnation arising from subjection to sin and man's rebellion against God. However, what we would like to emphasize here, yet in other words, is that this provision of God also represented precisely the closure of any purpose of continuity of the Order of Aaron, because where there is remission of sins through a single, perfect, and eternal offering, there is no longer any need for other offerings and sacrifices to free people from subjection to sin and the resulting condemnation.

*Hebrews 10: 18 **Now where there is remission of these (sins and their lawless deeds), there is no longer an offering for sin.***

From the moment that a Priestly Order distinct from the Order of Aaron solved what the priesthood according to Moses sought to solve for centuries, and would never succeed, the whole reason for the existence of the Order of Aaron completely lost its reason for being considered valid, remaining only the purpose of being kept as *symbolic for the present time* so that people know of its weakness and uselessness in order not to fall into similar paths again.

*Hebrews 7: 15 **And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest**
16 **who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.***

17 For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

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.

Acts 13: 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption;

37 but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.

38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;

39 and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Looking only at the last three texts mentioned above, we would already have enough to understand that there is no longer any sense of any association with the Order of Aaron, because this order:

- ⇒ 1) Has no more reason to exist, since the mediation service to try to cover sin is no longer necessary because the Lord Jesus already died on the cross of Calvary to pay everyone's debt and free them forever from the yoke of the condemnation of sin and the law of the Order of Aaron;
- ⇒ 2) Was revoked or annulled by God. Once its weakness and uselessness have been demonstrated, God no longer endorses any link with the Order of Aaron. And if a person chooses to submit to this order, one is associating with it in opposition to the will of God, for God no longer has a commitment to the Order of Aaron except to allow it to serve as **a parable for the present time** to demonstrate its weakness and uselessness;
- ⇒ 3) Can never justify anyone before God, even more as **a parable or a symbol**, since justification is only achieved by faith in the justification offered in the Order of Melchizedek, as also shown by the list of texts below:

Romans 3: 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.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

*Romans 5: 1 **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

*Galatians 2: 16 **Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.***

Due to its weakness and uselessness concerning what the human being needs most to solve in one's entire existence, and due to the human being's infidelity in the old covenant or one's self-righteousness proposal, the Order of Aaron was revoked, but not without being relocated to the status ***as symbolic for the present time.***

Thus, **the Order of Aaron is probably the "largest parable" that exists in the history of humankind. And this, so that everyone may have at one's disposal a remarkable vast testimony that there is no path of salvation and reconciliation with the Creator coming from the creature, nor by the creature's contempt and withdrawal from God, but also not by the creature's attempts to come to God by self-efforts or the ways of the flesh.**

Despite the creature's insistence on seeking salvation through works that cannot really save people, God did not, for this reason, abandon people, neither those without the law of Moses nor those of the Order of Aaron. Despite the opposition to the Eternal Creator, God offered and still offers everyone an option to get out of their conditions contrary to the Lord, offering them salvation through the only priestly order that can grant new life indeed, namely: the Order called Melchizedek.

The Order of Melchizedek is not an improved or perfected version of the Order of Aaron. The Order of Melchizedek is based on a perfect, unparalleled, and unique offer from heaven to humanity, and which also is expressed as the Gospel, the good news of eternal life according to God's proposition.

*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.***

*Romans 10: 4 **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***

The Order of Melchizedek is the order of the new covenant precisely because it is nothing like the old and has no part in it. That is why the old covenant is now limited to being just ***symbolic for the present time*** after God revealed His new covenant to the world.

The Order of Melchizedek was manifested by God to the world also revealing the obsolete priesthood as *symbolic for the present time* to make it evident that there is the removal of the human debt to sin and the law only in the Order of Melchizedek, and so that there is no doubt as to whom all the Scriptures refer to as the One to whom the Heavenly Father has given all authority over all life and to grant eternal life, namely: The Lord Jesus Christ.

John 1: 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

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."

*John 17: 1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,
2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.
3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*

Christ came into the world in the flesh through *a tribe of which Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood*. And this, so that Christ could introduce before all the eternal priesthood coming directly from heaven or the only priesthood that will never become just a parable or teaching figure, because the priesthood of Christ came from the throne of God, works in heaven, and forever will continue to work for everyone who receives Christ as Lord in his or her life.

Hebrews 7: 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

Hebrews 5: 6 As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

I. A Priesthood that Consumes Gifts, Sacrifices, and Life or A Priesthood that Grants Grace, Novelty of Life, and Gifts

The Order of Aaron, the so-called first priesthood, was based on the ordinances of worship or services according to the nature of the flesh, for since their temples or sanctuaries were earthly and material, the requirement to maintain them would also cause the larger quantity of services to be around material things.

Without temples or natural points of reference, the Order of Aaron, or those similar to it, have enormous difficulties in functioning. Since these orders are not intended to enlighten the heart of each person and to lead people to strengthen themselves directly in God, but to subject them to their own priestly orders, they need to deal with material things or in some way visible to keep the target audience connected to them, even if they call their activities spiritual and distribute them in multiple and smaller meeting or reference points.

Through their systems of liturgical and repetitive services in their temples or points of reference, priesthoods with characteristics similar to those of the Order of Aaron perform their routine services and call them “sacred” even though they never manage to perfect the hearts of those who offer gifts and services, both those of the priests and the individuals of the people.

What happens, then, in meetings or services similar to those of the Order of Aaron, in priesthoods similar to ***a parable for the present time?***

Let us look again at the text that we have already seen in the previous topic, but under the emphasis directed to types of meetings or services:

Hebrews 9: 1 ***Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.***

...

6 Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.

7 But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance;

...

9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience;

10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

Thus, the answer to the last question above about what happens in the services or meetings of ***a parable for the present time*** is: ***in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience and which concerned only in fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.***

The Order of Aaron is insistent and demanding in its routines towards those who perform worship or services in order to keep them associated with it, and still charges high prices for its services. However, the Order of Aaron cannot separate itself from its

condition of weakness and uselessness even by charging high prices and continuous efforts from those who associate with it.

Regardless of the extent of people's dedication to the Order of Aaron, it remains under the condition of not being able to cooperate so that the individuals who join it achieve justification or improvement in terms of conscience, because, mentioning this again, the biggest problem is that this order does not perfect the heart of the one who in this order performs worship or service.

An order that continually subdues some brothers to a group of other brothers of the same family does not work for the freedom of all before God, placing itself as an expressive obstacle for the personal growth of the members of this family.

*Hebrews 7: 5 **And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham.***

Therefore, **since the Order of Aaron fails to accomplish what it intends or promises to do, it also represents an industry of wasting gifts, sacrifices, the most diverse resources, and, worst of all, the strength and the valuable time of people's lives on items that do not collaborate for their eternity.**

The Order of Aaron, or others with similar characteristics to it, represent a priestly system where the individual who attends it, the ordinary person, thinks that one can “outsource” one's relationship with God so that others can do it in one's place, which, in most cases, also implies some form of payment for the service taken even if this system does not produce a beneficial change in the person who participates in it or is unable to grant what is necessary for an individual to achieve justification for eternal life.

But even if a person does not have to “pay anything” to use some system that has characteristics of the so-called old covenant, if one exposes oneself to mediators in one's relationship with God, mediators that work in line with some aspects of the Order of Aaron, even if they call themselves by another name, this person who uses mediators, at the very least, is lending one's ears and the time of one's life in something that will not be of real benefit to him or her to live and walk in the will of God.

Even if a person “does not need to pay” to participate in some priestly order with characteristics of the Order of Aaron, if one exposes oneself to this type of order, one is not acting to redeem the time of his or her life to live and walk according to God's will that each person should be willing to seek in Christ directly, as the following text teaches us:

*Ephesians 5: 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.***
*17 **Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.***

Priestly systems like the Order of Aaron are those in which it is claimed that the offerings of gifts, sacrifices, meetings, or other services are made for God, but where, in reality, resources are administered by those who claim to seek God in the name of the people and in place of the individuals of the people they claim to represent.

Nevertheless, let us see again what the Lord says about the offerings and sacrifices of the Order of Aaron or according to what is ***symbolic for the present time*** when people claim that these offerings are made not to men, but to God, according to the texts below:

Hebrews 10: 5 **Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:
"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have
prepared for Me.**

- 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.
7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the volume of the book it is
written of Me) To do Your will, O God.'
8 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and
offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them"
(which are offered according to the law),
9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He
takes away the first that He may establish the second.
10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the
body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

- Jeremiah 7: 21* **Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your
burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat.
22 For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day
that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt
offerings or sacrifices.
23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I
will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the
ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'
24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the
counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward
and not forward."**

Isaiah 29: 13 **Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw
near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have
removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is
taught by the commandment of men."**

Thus, if before the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world the Lord already did not want the burnt offerings, other sacrifices, and tithes of the people, for all these aspects were means to try to uphold some order that had always been opposed to justification by heavenly grace and faith in God, much less the Lord wants any of these aspects after Christ came into the world in the flesh, died on the cross of Calvary as the perfect offering for all and forever, rose from the dead, and was seated at the right of the Heavenly Father as the Only Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek.

In the text of Hebrews 9, verse 10, shown above, we can see that those who were subject to the law of the Order of Aaron also adhered to a system in which it was “mandatory” to offer gifts and sacrifices. However, with the removal of the so-called first priesthood, this imposition expired together with the transformation of the Order of Aaron into the status of just *symbolic for the present time*.

God does not want people to continue to repeat the offerings and sacrifices of resources and gifts as it was done in the Order of Aaron. Quite the contrary, what God wants is for people to believe and accept what He has done for them forever, namely: God “removed the old priesthood,” and this so that only the “new priesthood” already established in general in heaven may also be accepted through grace or freely to be established individually in each heart.

Now, who in their right mind, and in order to find a true novelty of life, would put gifts and resources at the disposal of something that has already proved unable to provide newness of life, what has already become obsolete, and what is currently represented as symbolic only to indicate how inappropriate any association with it is?

Even if someone calls a meeting or service as “Christian service,” if this meeting or service has characteristics of the service of the *parable for the present time*, it will also have the characteristic of waste, for it will not be able to justify or perfect the one who gives the material offerings or who makes sacrifices to obtain God's favor.

God does not grant justification and improvement to “His children” based on the exchange of gifts and sacrifices. God perfects “His children” because of His love and grace when these “children” only trust the Lord and His direct action in their lives.

Life and what God gave and gives men and women to use to be channels of blessings, salt of the Earth, and light of the world, to be used in their families and society in general wherever they go and in every day of their lives, the Order of Aaron seeks to take from people to perform services that do not provide the benefit of a transformed life, according to the will of God, to those who serve this weak and obsolete order.

Moreover, why would God want someone to return a gift that He Himself gave to a person to use it in one's life and for the benefit of others?

When priests or leaders of the orders similar to the Order of Aaron, of the order of the *parable for the present time*, begin to take what was granted for a person to use according to the guidance of the Eternal Lord, they are not only taking a gift or resource that was for an individual to use in one's life, but they are also acting to keep the person as an infant and insecure about faith in God precisely by depriving him or her of learning to use the gift or resource as the Lord would instruct him or her.

God grants gifts to people for them to use them in their lives and to bless others, but the Lord also gives gifts and resources for people to be perfected through the very way they are taught directly by God Himself to use these gifts.

The Order of Aaron, in one way, inhibits a person's direct access to God and, on the other hand, inhibits the person from being instructed by the Lord Himself on how to use what God grants to that person.

The Order of Aaron may even go so far as to produce human leaders who come to assume and even believe that they indeed will be able to report to God everything that the people who are subject to them need to report to the Lord, plus a presumption that they will know how to listen to God to instruct people how each individual may use the gifts of God in the most varied activities of one's life, as if the anointing they received from the Order of Aaron made them so highly skilled.

Thus, the Order of Aaron is surrounded by such great weakness and uselessness also because it is so illusory as to what the leaders established in it imagine supposedly to be able to accomplish.

*Hebrews 7: 28 **For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, ...***

*Hebrews 7: 18 **For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness.***

Becoming associated with a priestly order that takes gifts and resources from others to use them according to the direction of those who lead that order, and not according to the Lord's personal guidance for the one to whom the gifts were given, is also to be associated with a condition of bondage that diverts resources and, mainly, lives from the purpose for which they were granted.

Christ paid an inestimable price to grant the gift of life that can be lived under the direct and free direction of the Spirit of the Lord. For this reason, Christ does not want anyone to entrust the guidance of one's life to those who do not have a valid designation from God to mediate others before the Lord.

Only to Christ belongs the glory of having made provision for the liberation of people from the yoke of slavery to sin and the laws associated with the priesthoods that want to act according to the creature's self-righteousness. For this reason, too, only to the Lord belongs the glory of being the primary teacher and guide of those who were delivered by Him.

*1 Corinthians 6: 20 **For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.***

*1 Corinthians 7: 23 **You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.***

*2 Corinthians 5: 14 **For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;**
15 **and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.***

Orders similar to the Order of Aaron appreciate clerical hierarchies, for as they are inefficient to attend those they intend to serve, they end up seeing themselves forced to multiply their workers and divide them into different levels, which also ends up leading to an even higher demand for resources.

And, in turn, their hierarchies begin in the figure of the “Senior” priest or a chief manager, a position for which there are outstanding disputes of those who want to be the next to inherit the first seat. And then, they go down to several other levels, varying between different types of auxiliary priests, a long chain of “ministers, Levites, or workers” of all sorts, staying at the lowest part, at the end of the line, or at the base of the pyramid, the people they should serve. In the last place is the set of people who are subject to the priests or leaders, but who, ultimately, end up being charged for providing the resources for the whole structure or accused of being guilty of not acting enough when the entire priestly order inevitably does not work as expected.

The entire structure necessary to try to support and accommodate the various clerical hierarchies, or also called the “ministerial group” of the priesthood or the “ministerial group” of the “ministry” a, b, or c, obviously has a “cost” that is added to the cost of maintaining the temple and that also is imposed on the people who are supposed to “make use of” the “ministry” to which people associate.

Besides, another aspect related to the whole issue involved with the cost mentioned in the previous paragraph is that it does not include only a material cost.

Because the structure of the priestly orders similar to that of Aaron generates a cost that cannot, through what is offered, save people's lives or improve them for a life according to God's will, the price even higher for those who join this type of priesthood encompasses not only the material goods that one makes available to the order, but the greater good that is the precious time of one's life.

If eternal salvation could be achieved through the Order of Aaron or ministries that resemble it, the cost, perhaps, would be only a mere detail, but the point is that this order charges for what it can never deliver.

We understand that special attention should be given here to the last point in reference, for many people believe that the most considerable losses that a person may have in associating with the priesthoods similar to the Order of Aaron are mainly related to the aspect of the financial values that one spends there with his or her offerings. However, as the priests or workers of this order come to say that they are the ones who play the prominent role of presenting the causes of the people to God, one of the leading and most damaging losses that this type of priesthood imposes on those associated with it is the atrophy that it creates and produces in people regarding their personal or individual relationship with God.

As people try to “outsource” their relationship with God to others, they also deprive themselves of learning how to relate directly to the Lord in all the details of their lives. And so, they increasingly move away from the certainty that they themselves could approach God without the need for mediators.

The “outsourcing of the spiritual life” to others generates a dependence on others and atrophy concerning the practice of what a person could do personally towards the Lord.

And this atrophy or state of torpor may reach the point where the very announcement that an individual does not really need mediators to relate to God will sound, to some, even as an offense, something strange, or that could not be achievable indeed.

Since in the Order of Melchizedek, the Lord grants to us and in us the Holy Spirit, or since the Lord gives us the Spirit of Grace and Peace so that the Peace of Christ may be the ruler or reference point of discernment in our hearts, is it not, at the very least, strange to say that a Christian needs to “outsource” his or her relationship with God to others or do it through others?

Considering yet that personal fellowship with the Lord is compared to have supper with the Lord, is it not at least strange that some want to supper with the Lord in the place of others who are left out to not receive food directly from the Lord's table?

In the Scriptures, it is clear that Christians are called to share with other brothers several aspects that the Lord has shared with them and various parts of what they have learned from the Lord in His Scriptures, which even may help to facilitate mutual learning about these Scriptures. However, this is very different from a proposition where some want to imply that some children are invited to participate more in the fellowship with the Lord than others, as it is the case with the Order of Aaron or similar to it.

The specific or final direction of what a Christian should or should not do concerning his or her life is a prerogative that belongs to Christ, who is the One Eternal Lord of this person. And for this, Christ offers Himself to us as our perfect Eternal High Priest and gives us, in our hearts, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth that God grants us to guide us in the Lord's will.

As already mentioned in the text above in Ephesians 5, when someone presents oneself to Christ, willing to receive the Light of Christ and willing to know and do God's will, it is Christ, as the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, who instructs directly each of God's children about what the Heavenly Father's will for his or her life is.

*Romans 8: 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.***

...
*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."***

Now, a son of God is not afraid to be guided by the Spirit given by the Lord who died to provide his or her salvation and is not afraid to be guided by the One he or she has chosen as the Lord of one's life or to whom one entrusts one's eternal life.

The Order of Aaron, on the other hand, runs away from personalized questions, for it has no individualized answers. And for this reason, it appeals to what can be seen by the collectivity or to what is accepted externally or outwardly in the community.

The Order of Aaron has no emphasis on what happens in the heart of each person and the intimacy of each individual before God in their daily lives. And for this reason, it is also exposed to producing situations where people, despite being in large assemblies, continue to be under destructive evils that, on many occasions, are not even perceived or that are hidden under the attempts that the Order of Aaron seeks to use to maintain external appearances of godliness.

Colossians 2: 23 ***These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.***

Proverbs 5: 14 ***I was on the verge of total ruin, In the midst of the assembly and congregation.***

The collective aspect found in the Order of Aaron attracts and fascinates many people because they do not need to deal with some more in-depth personal conditions there. However, it is also in this fascination of the Order of Aaron to attend everyone primordially in a collective and superficial way that people may be heading towards paths that will never produce a true liberation from bondage concerning their greatest fears.

It is also to maintain the collective appearance or before their community priestly orders that many unduly offer gifts, sacrifices of resources, but mainly the precious time of their lives, as we have already mentioned.

The Order of Aaron offers a proposition of collective cloud and consolation through honors to apparent works for people to hide and keep hidden from the direct contact with the Light of God, still working under the repeated proclamations that they are seeking God with offerings and sacrifices. However, it is in this proposition that lies one of the greatest dangers if an individual becomes subject to it.

Although the Order of Aaron focuses on things that are visible or superficial, and not on a personal and more profound intervention of God in the heart of each individual, it is not as exempt as it wishes to appear concerning the hearts of people, for it is precisely in its proposal to avoid that people need to have an individual and continuous contact with the light of God that a priesthood according to the Order of Aaron ends up leading those who are associated with it also to live and walk superficially or according to what is visible outwardly.

The Order according to Aaron is the priesthood that instigates people to offer gifts and sacrifices to run in vain or for a corruptible crown, and where life consumed for these useless purposes is the most precious gift of all that is sacrificed in services that do not improve those who live and walk according to this order.

In its highly attractive propositions to the flesh or the soul, or in its proposals of pleasant fragrances that attract crowds to submit to it, the Order of Aaron, or others similar to it, also resemble the posture of the adulterous woman who with her smooth words attract and entice people to give the best of their lives and their own lives to propositions contrary to the will of God and to those who are in charge of these orders.

*Proverbs 5: 6 Lest you ponder her path of life, Her ways are unstable;
You do not know them.*
*7 Therefore hear me now, my children, And do not depart from the
words of my mouth.*
*8 Remove your way far from her, And do not go near the door of her
house,*
*9 Lest you give your honor to others, And your years to the cruel
one;*
*10 Lest aliens be filled with your wealth, And your labors go to the
house of a foreigner;*
*11 And you mourn at last, When your flesh and your body are
consumed.*

The Order of Aaron, or those that use its principles or part of them, are orders that want to take for themselves what God has given people to use under the Lord's direction and not of others or their institutions.

The Order of Aaron, or similar to it, are those that want to make people give what they have received from God to those to whom the Lord never intended to give it and who are not even in a due position to instruct an individual how to make use of what the Lord granted him or her through heavenly grace.

When people stop looking at Jesus Christ through a living and personal relationship of dependence on the Lord, they may be subject to running driven by the most various distractions that present themselves in their lives, including those that seem to be works for Christ, but which Christ never asked to be done.

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.

To look firmly at the Lord Jesus is to look at “the things that are from above.” It is looking at the place of regency that Christ has besides the throne of God over all life. It is looking at and receiving Christ as the Only Mediator and Only Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek.

In the Order of Melchizedek, a person does not need to be under a cloud of religion, of the collectivity of the law that promotes the search for self-righteousness, because in the Order of Melchizedek, the life of the one who is associated with it, is hidden in the Eternal High Priest Himself of this order and the Eternal Heavenly Father.

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.**

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.**

In the Order of Aaron, the entire Levitical priestly structure received the gifts, offerings, and sacrifices to offer them to God in the name of others and also to live by them, but this always associated with the concept of the search for own righteousness of the people who brought the offers. However, in the Order of Melchizedek, Christ was made an offering for all and shed His own blood to be eternally the High Priest of those for whom He died.

Hebrews 9: 24 **For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;**
25 **not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of others;**
26 **He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**

And if God gave us Christ by grace and if Christ also gave His precious life through grace to save people, will He not give us even more of His life also “through grace” for us to be guided in life by Him?

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?**

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.**

Galatians 3: 1 **O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?**
2 **This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**
3 **Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?**

Christ does not need people to offer Him gifts, offerings, and earthly temples to be justified from the guilt arising from subjection to sin or to grant them grace from the heavenly kingdom, because as the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek and the Heavenly and Eternal tabernacle, Christ does not even need material temples and their activities. And since there is no need for material temples or sacrifices and gifts to justify people eternally, Christ also does not need clergy to maintain temples and services that take gifts, offerings, or sacrifices.

Since Christ does not need or require material gifts and sacrifices from people for temples and their justification, the places that are established to promote services to take offerings and tithes from “brothers” do not do so according to the priesthood of the Order of Melchizedek. These places, instead, come to match the Order of Aaron, servant of the law of Moses, even if partially, and where the person who pays (or gives) offerings, gifts, and tithes puts as priests over oneself those who receive from his or her hand the offerings, tithes, and gifts one delivers, generating a repetitive flow of weakness and uselessness like it was under the Order of Aaron that was already so even before it was revoked.

Therefore, since Christ grants His priesthood through grace to give us virtues and gifts from God to live and walk according to righteousness and faith in God, and not through the righteousness of the creature itself, those types of priesthoods that seek to maintain people's efforts or offerings as a tangible means to achieve the Lord's justification and blessing end up repeating, again and again, the actions of what can never please God and neither cooperates with the eternal good of their lives.

*Hebrews 11: 6 **But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***

*John 6: 29 **Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."***

The only priesthood that perfects people for their need to relate to God and to obtain eternal life is also the one that does not charge for the salvation and the perfecting of hearts, much less for the relationship of a child of God with the Heavenly Father, for the basis of the Order of Melchizedek is *God's free gift*.

*Romans 6: 23 **For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

The Order of Melchizedek is the priesthood that grants grace, life, and gifts. In contrast, however, the Order of Aaron and its priests require gifts, offerings, sacrifices, and lives to consume them in what is no use and in what has already been revoked by God after the Order of Aaron was repositioned to be remembered only as *symbolic for the present time*.

Concluding, then, this topic, we would like to suggest once again the reading of some texts below with special attention, reflection, and with the hope that the Lord may open the eyes of our understanding and also keep them open so that the clarity of Christ's condition as the Everlasting High Priest of the Order of the Free Gift is always present and evident in our hearts.

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.**

2(a) **For then would they not have ceased to be offered?**

Hebrews 9: 9 **It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience;**

10 **concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.**

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.**

20 **And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath**

21 **(for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: "The LORD has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek' "),**

22 **by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.**

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(a) **and you are complete in Him.**

J. A Priesthood that Dissimulates Concerning Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Solutions or A Priesthood that Illuminates the Heart and Offers True Diagnosis and Solution

Depending on the need or the problem that a person has in one's life, obtaining the solution, in many cases, will depend on a satisfactory understanding of the symptoms of the problem, the diagnosis of the problem, and the expected solution to the problem.

The symptoms manifest what is already present, what is already going on, while the diagnosis seeks to define the cause or triggering event behind those symptoms. And this, so that the root of the problem may be confronted and, preferably, eradicated.

There are symptoms that signal a problem to be diagnosed so that only then can a solution be prescribed. However, if the symptoms are dissimulated, the diagnosis can be severely affected, which will also have a differential impact on the prescription of the solution.

Nevertheless, even when the symptoms are not concealed, if there is not enough knowledge about them or if the person evaluating them is not sufficiently qualified, the diagnosis stage may suffer severe difficulties in obtaining correct results, also causing the prescription of the solution to suffer from this process.

The fact that a person is surrounded by symptoms does not automatically mean that one will be able to make an adequate diagnosis of the problem.

When some problems start to grow and generate a demand for a solution, but without a proper diagnosis about them, one of the resources that people often resort to, improperly or adequately, is for the phase of trying to apply some solutions by some proximity of problems, but without having a more pronounced certainty about the effects that these attempts may generate throughout the process.

Thus, when we see this picture of symptoms, diagnoses, and prescriptions of solutions in the face of one of the most vital aspects of life, which is the theme of the priesthood, we may see that this is likewise very relevant to this specific subject and also, in particular, when the comparison between the Order of Aaron and the Order of Melchizedek is carried out.

And why is the alignment of symptoms, diagnosis, and prescription of a solution so crucial for a topic as essential as the priesthood and more specifically for the two priestly orders in reference?

A more precise or accurate perception of the theme of symptoms, diagnoses, and solutions when related to the priestly orders of Aaron and Melchizedek becomes particularly relevant because also in these aspects, there is an enormous contrast or distinction between these two orders.

While the Order of Aaron is offered to people to avoid more intense contact with the light that can make symptoms, diagnoses, and solutions more evident, the Order of Melchizedek is offered so that people may know more precisely not only the symptoms of what is contrary to them, but also the root of what seeks to keep them away from the diagnosis and the solution they need for their lives.

As already mentioned in previous topics, to try to avoid the need to depart from their evil lusts, people freed from the cruel dominion of Egypt preferred the option of a system of priesthood focused on external rules so as not to reject God entirely, but, at the same time, so as not to have God too close to their hearts, incurring what was also later announced by the Lord Jesus Christ as follows:

*John 3: 19 **And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.***
*20 **For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.***
*21 **But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.***

Therefore, **the option of becoming subject to the Order of Aaron or similar to it is a choice for a system of life that not only seeks to be based on the own righteousness of the human being, but that also rejects the assessment of God on the quality or integrity of the self-righteousness of those who are associated with this order.**

In other words, **the Order of Aaron is unproductive in the matter of assessing symptoms, diagnoses, and solutions that are truly necessary for people because it is an option for the rejection of the knowledge of the truth that makes free.**

Saying it yet in another way, **a life subject to the Order of Aaron, the old covenant, the first priesthood, or similar to it is a choice for wearing a veil of concealment or dissimulation that obscures and keeps obscuring people's understanding concerning their own real condition of life.**

Just as there are people who get used to some abnormal physical symptoms to the point that they think they are normal, so we have already addressed the aspect that there are many people who choose to put themselves and remain under conditions of a spiritual anomaly to the point where they no more perceive the symptoms that alert them about their inadequate life situation, as we exemplify again below:

*2 Corinthians 3: 14 **But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.***
*15 **But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.***

The situation mentioned in the text above seems to be very challenging to understand, for it also points to the fact that a person who already has the veil of the Order of Aaron placed on one's heart may even fail to realize that he or she is under this veil. One may even fail to notice symptoms that are widely evident or notorious for those who are not under the same type of veil.

Nevertheless, would there still be any solution for a person who ended up incurring in being subject to priestly orders that also imply being subjected to a veil over the eyes of the understanding and that stand in the way for an individual not coming to know the Priesthood of Christ or that which is according to the Order of Melchizedek?

Certainly there is a solution, because just as there is the possibility that a person may not notice a disease because one does not feel its symptoms, but may see it detected when going to a periodical examination with a doctor, so there is also the possibility of issues related to the priesthoods to be pointed out if someone seeks the One who is the appropriate physician concerning these aspects.

There are several illnesses that a qualified doctor may perceive more accurately even before they have expressed themselves in symptoms more noticeable to the patient. In principle, a doctor is trained to notice many symptoms that people in general are not trained to see or detect.

Therefore, what we are trying to say is that no matter how confident a person is that he or she is in the place where one should be in what concerns the priestly life, an individual is, in fact, unable to make a full assessment by oneself and also unable to make this assessment without someone more specialized to do it.

In one's own evaluations or limited to the natural perception of life, the human being may incur one of the worst pretensions of his or her existence, which is to come to consider that one can diagnose oneself in what goes beyond one's ability to diagnose, even when one is very committed "to serve God" according to human understanding.

In many parts of the Scriptures, we find instructions that alert us to the fact that a person is not able to evaluate oneself in all aspects of one's life and that, for several spiritual reasons, even other people are also not able to assess each other.

Let us look at just a few examples below since several others have already been mentioned previously:

1 Corinthians 4: 3 **But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.**

4 **For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.**

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.**

Psalms 139: 23 **Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;**

24 **And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.**

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.**

When God declares, through the words of the prophet Jeremiah, that ***cursed is the man who trusts in man***, He also says it in the context that the human being oneself is not able to perceive all the aspects that work in his or her heart against one's own life. Therefore, a human being guiding another human being in the spiritual or priesthood matters may also be compared to an individual with a blind understanding leading another blind person.

And also in the same context, the prophet Jeremiah writes that only the Lord is the one who knows the depths of the human heart, who, therefore, may only have one's deepest secrets or even deceptions exposed when revealed by the Eternal Lord who knows all and everything.

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.

...

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."

So, no matter how much a person thinks one is correct in what one is doing, one should be careful not to close the door to the One who sees the whole picture and accurately sees what is in the most intimate parts of each heart.

If a person closes oneself off from any possibility of being diagnosed by the Lord or one only turns to one's fellow men to reach an assessment of his or her life, one may put oneself in an extremely complicated position of not even being able to perceive the symptoms of an inappropriate situation to which one might be subject.

When Christ came into the world and shed light on the blindness that subjection to the Order of Aaron caused in people's hearts, He also came to offer a possibility for people facing the reality that they might not have been on the right path as much as they thought they were.

Christ also came into the world to offer people a possibility to become enlightened even about the symptoms they did not perceive. And this, to likewise show them a diagnosis that pointed to the root of the biggest problems with which they were associated, obviously offering them together also the path to the solution or salvation that they needed so much.

Returning, then, once again to the Order of Aaron, why do people under the veil of this order, of the law of Moses, or the orders similar to it do not see with clarity the symptoms that work against their lives?

People subject to the veil of the old covenant do not see what they should see because the Order of Aaron is an order that proposes the withdrawal of people from a personal relationship with the only source that can make them see what they need to see, which is the Eternal Lord and from whom they withdraw when they choose other people or their structures to partially or fully mediate them.

People under the veil of priestly orders that are an expression of *the parable for the present time* do not see the reality of their own situation for a straightforward reason: They ask men and women about the condition of their own spiritual life instead of asking it directly, intimately, and personally to God, opposing what the Lord Jesus instructed people to do.

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.**

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.**

If people dared to ask God and come closer to the Lord with a sincere desire to know the instruction of the heavenly kingdom for their lives, and were not limited to the mentality of the natural man to discern the condition of their hearts and the relationship with their Creator, they would also receive the light of Christ and would be able to see many aspects from God's perspective.

The opposite path to the subjection to the veil of the Order of Aaron, to the inappropriate dependence on the thought of the collectivity, or the dullness caused by religions with an emphasis on the self-righteousness of the natural man, is to personally answer the call of the Lord to willingly stand before Him even if in the context around many are like asleep concerning the Lord's will, as remembered in the following texts:

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

2 Corinthians 3: 15 **But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.**

16 **Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.**

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."**

No one should review or evaluate one's life only based on what other people say, for the Lord's call also includes people willing to stand before Him with a willingness to be enlightened by Him for the truth.

In the Scriptures, God teaches that it is by invoking Him as Lord in one's heart that an individual is saved by the Lord Himself from what he or she needs to be saved to receive eternal life.

The Lord is free to guide an individual in various situations to seek other persons to receive some knowledge of the Scriptures from them, but it is still the Lord who instructs a person to seek one's fellow men. Although God cooperates with the growth of people through the gifts where they serve each other, every Christian is called to realize that the preeminence of instruction for his or her life will always belong to the Lord.

The Lord may consider and indeed considers people's help to announce to others that they can personally or individually seek Christ. But to establish a closer relationship with the Light of Christ, God calls each person to stand up in faith before Christ, willing to be enlightened by the Lord Jesus Himself or to receive light from Him, for He alone is the Heavenly High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek who can grant the novelty of inner life and instruction entirely grounded on truth to all.

People can cooperate and announce the truths of the Scriptures, proclaim them to their fellow men to encourage them to seek instruction for their lives in God, but who convinces people in the world of everything that is most relevant in life is Christ, through the Holy Spirit:

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.

....

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.

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.

When a person is willing to have one's real condition evaluated by Christ through personal fellowship with Him, the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, sends him or her the living word which is sharp and powerful to divide all divergences between what is according to the soul and what is according to the Spirit of God. The word that makes it possible to distinguish what is temporal help and what is a source of eternal life, and which separates what has the appearance of truth from eternal truth, and so on.

*Hebrews 4: 12 **For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.***

*13 **And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.***

*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.***

Several orders similar to the Order of Aaron do not even care much when a person wants to move to another similar order. However, they are often vehemently opposed when someone tries to go directly to Christ, in whom is found the light against which the most disguised darkness or deception cannot prevail.

The orders similar to the Order of Aaron aim to keep people away from personal and continuous contact with Christ, the Head of the whole body. And for this, they even create some so-called special services around preachers or messengers (angels) to spread the most bizarre visions they created in their minds, even going so far as to claim that God chose them to speak of their dreams to others so that these do not even need to seek God individually about what "vision" they should follow.

And is this not one of the central aspects of what the Order of Aaron has always proposed, that is, a relationship of people with God based entirely or partially on weak human mediators and inconstant in their purposes and actions?

*Colossians 2: 18 **Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels (or messengers), intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,***

*19 **and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.***

*20 **Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations,***

*21 **(Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,***

*22 **which all concern things which perish with the using) according to the commandments and doctrines of men?***

As already mentioned in the previous topic, the Order of Aaron is like an adulterous woman who claims to belong to one, but in practice leans towards relationships with others to the point of not even knowing what the symptoms of her own disloyalty and of those who associate with it are. It claims to be from God, but it is the one that least wants its associates to have intimacy and personal relationship with God.

The Order of Aaron wants the “name of belonging to God” to obtain benefits from this name, but does not want fidelity to the One and Eternal God to the point of having to give up following the evil lusts of the flesh. And for this, it gets associated with precepts that obscure the understanding of the evils to which it subjects itself.

*Proverbs 5: 1 **My son, pay attention to my wisdom; Lend your ear to my understanding,***
*2 **That you may preserve discretion, And your lips may keep knowledge.***
*3 **For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil;***
*4 **But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword.***
*5 **Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell.***
*6 **Lest you ponder her path of life; Her ways are unstable; You do not know them.***

God has already revoked the Order of Aaron through Christ Jesus. However, it has also been relocated to a condition of **symbolic for the present time** to serve as instruction that the root or cause of the problem that generated the Order of Aaron remains equally present among human beings in all generations.

The fact that the Order of Aaron remains as **symbolic for the present time** is for this parable to serve as a parameter for detecting or perceiving similar situations in people's lives when propositions and actions like those of the Order of Aaron try to trouble people in each new generation again.

The source of unrighteousness has always been derived from the disconnection of individuals from a personal and appropriate relationship with God, which, to this day, still seeks to manifest itself also through propositions with the appearance of godliness, but which hide the attempt to disconnect people from Christ, the High Priest of the only Priestly Order accepted by the Heavenly Father.

If people may even come to the point of not realizing that they are under a veil when dissociated from fellowship with Christ and His light because of the association with priestly orders similar to Aaron's, or if they may not even see the symptoms and spiritual state in which they find themselves in this situation, they will be even more limited to reach an appropriate diagnosis and solution for their lives on their own.

In this way, the non-exposure of an individual to the light of God in one's heart not only obscures an appropriate perception of one's precarious spiritual condition, but also leads him or her to act without the adequate light in the most diverse practical or productive aspects of his or her life.

When people do not have the light of the Lord at work in their hearts, they replicate this absence of light also in their family relationships, in their professions, and in the most diverse works they carry out in their lives.

Therefore, once again reiterating this aspect, **an adequate assessment of symptoms, diagnoses, and prescription of solutions for the spiritual life, and consequently also the natural, not the reverse, only occurs together with the One who sees everything and everyone, namely: The Lord Christ Jesus, the Lord above everything and everyone.**

Matthew 11: 27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

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.

Considering that the Lord knows everything and everyone, and has authority over everything and everyone, even if a person is not aware of the state of one's own heart, if an individual in prayer comes to Christ and calls for His help, one can find the real light in the Lord to see both the symptoms and the diagnosis of what causes them, as well as to find the so necessary salvation.

In the Scriptures, we find many descriptions of symptoms, diagnoses, and about God's solution for people in all parts of the world, but it is still Christ who wants to guide each person to understand how one can have the Scriptures applied in his or her personal life.

Christ is the one who instructs each person appropriately so that one also can indeed experience the "removal of the priesthoods similar to the so-called first priesthood" over one's life and that try to prevent him or her from even seeing one's precarious condition, as well as for the so-called second priesthood to become established in one's life, the priesthood of the Order of Melchizedek.

In the Scriptures, there is a broad description of where the newness of life is found and where it is not found, but just as reading the instructions about how to use a medicine does not characterize a person actually being exposed to the medication, so it is also necessary that a person who wants to know God's provision for one's inner life does not restrict oneself to the written letter and advances towards a living relationship with the Christ who is the Eternal High Priest and in whom dwells the novelty of eternal life.

Therefore, also at this point, we understand that it is appropriate to repeat one of the texts that are the basis of the material entitled The Letter or Life, as follows:

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.

It is in Christ Jesus that the Scriptures are associated with the wisdom so necessary for each individual to discern good as well as evil, and also to come to experience salvation for the newness of life offered to him or her by the Heavenly Father.

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.**

Psalms 25: 5 **Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.**

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."**

K. Here is the Question: Periodically Changing Priests, Temples, Structures, and Methods or a Unique Change to a Unique, Perfect, and Permanent Priesthood?

After addressing several topics in which the Scriptures show us the enormous contrasts between the priestly Order of Aaron and the priestly Order of Melchizedek, we would like to conclude this chapter by highlighting once again the aspect of the inconstancy that exists in the Order of Aaron in contrast to the firmness or unshakable condition of the Order of Melchizedek.

Bearing in mind that the Order of Aaron is associated with the weak, unfaithful, and volatile own righteousness of the human beings or with the inconstancy of life under the rule of the flesh, or yet with walking by sight and not by faith, the attempts to live and walk under this order or similar to it invariably end up in inconstant paths and propositions.

Because in the Order of Aaron (1) neither the high priests are constant and permanent but are subject to several weaknesses and death, (2) the lineage and promises of this order are corruptible, (3) their structures are earthly and, therefore, subject to the fragility of natural things, (4) this order consumes gifts, resources, and life without being able to match what people really need, and because (5) it proposes a path of negligence towards heavenly light and an assessment of the real condition of people's souls, the Order of Aaron inevitably also leads people associated with it to a vicious cycle of inconstancy.

And, in turn, in this cycle of inconstancy, it is evident that people associated with priesthoods that use principles similar to the Order of Aaron very often become dissatisfied with the condition in which they find themselves, leading them to yet another equally inappropriate thought that the solution for them may lie in making changes in their priestly order or even moving to other segments similar to the order in which they were participating.

Under the veil generated by the association with priestly orders that have weak and unstable foundations, and without returning to Christ and His eternal, constant, and unshakable order, many people still try to improve or modify what they are associated with or even create new branches of what they imagine be a possible solution for their lives, exposing themselves to a continuous or periodic challenge of attempts of changing the types of priesthoods they serve and of readapting to these changes.

Under the veil generated by the association with priestly orders with weak and unstable foundations, and without returning to Christ and His eternal, constant, and unshakable order, many people end up giving their precious lives to a cycle of trial and error in the hope that they will be able to perfecting that which has no constant foundation and which, therefore, can never be perfected by more effort and resources that might be applied in these attempts.

When people insist on remaining associated with priestly orders that oppose personal and direct fellowship with God, people start to think about the most diverse alternatives to try to eliminate the flaws in these orders, ranging from the attempt to replace mediators to variations in their reference points of meetings and what they carry out in these meetings.

By neglecting the light that can illuminate the root of the problems from which they need to be freed, many people in orders similar to the Order of Aaron go from segment to segment of these orders, go from temple to temple, or choose to change the priests to whom they are exposed, thinking that changing to another segment, temple, location, workers, or group of people of a part of the Order of Aaron will solve the problem that can only be solved if they leave this order and turn to the priestly order of Christ.

Since the orders that have characteristics similar to the Order of Aaron are based on propositions of the natural man or also of the so-called fleshly commandment, it is inevitable that many divisions also occur in them, for some of the works of the flesh most evidenced in the Scriptures are precisely the contentions, disputes, dissensions, and so on.

Galatians 5: 19 till 21 **Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: ... idolatry, ... hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, ... and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Throughout the Scriptures, we have already seen in previous chapters that if a person claims to be of Paul, Apollos, Cephas (or Peter) or of anyone other than Christ, one shows a clear symptom that one is acting contrary to the Order of Melchizedek and under the concept of the Order of Aaron, evidenced by Paul when describing that this is “to walk according to men or the flesh” and not according to God.

And it is also in this option of “walking according to men” that an individual places oneself under a condition of being exposed to the inconstancy of the “things of the natural man.”

Some priesthoods that are subject to the precepts of the Order of Aaron, even if only in part, might even be those who claim that the “Church of the Lord” are their temples, institutions, or “the people who are called out of their homes to come to the temples, congregations, or assemblies,” but do not know or refuse to recognize that the “Church of the Lord” are those who individually have Christ in their lives, who remain united to the One Head of the body, and who do not accept Christ to be divided according to the banners and denominations that many in their lusts invent and attribute to themselves.

Nevertheless, no matter how many changes a person tries to make in the precepts of the orders similar to Aaron's Order or how many times a person tries to change segments or priests in one of the branches of this order, one will never find in them the solution of being truly free in the Spirit of the Lord, because the orders that come from the Order of Aaron have the DNA of the old covenant and which opposes the free and direct living and walking of a person with God.

If the priests or the workers of the Order of Aaron or orders similar to it came to teach the truth without distorting it afterward, they would be militating against their own orders, for if they recognize the fact that only the Order of Melchizedek is the true priestly order that grants the newness of life from the kingdom of heaven, they would once again be reaffirming the weakness, uselessness, and the reason why these orders are not acceptable before God.

Something very relevant to be observed with special attention in the priesthoods similar to that of the Order of Aaron is that their first or biggest problem is not the people who minister in it, but the very concept of this priestly order that is constituted on weak and corruptible bases of a fleshly commandment.

The association of people with priesthoods with characteristics similar to the Order of Aaron corrupts the individuals who associate with them because they are essentially weak and corruptible systems, and which corrupt those who associate with them. And it is this what the Scriptures mention in Galatians 5, in several other texts, and when, in various places, they refer to the corrupting leaven or yeast.

The orders with characteristics of the Order of Aaron even preach and teach the word of God, but they do so with the leaven of the doctrine of dependence on mediators embedded in their messages and teachings. And where yeast is allowed to act, it is also it that prevails in that lump.

Galatians 5: 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

In the old covenant, for centuries, people had the expectation that in each situation of replacement of their high priest, a better and lasting solution perhaps could occur. However, the expectation was always in vain because what needed to be changed was the entire priestly system, which was finally declared obsolete by the coming of the revelation of the superior covenant, not according to the Order of Aaron, but according to the Order of Melchizedek.

Moses' tabernacle, concerning which people rejoiced or celebrated at the beginning of its establishment, subsequently became a burden hard to carry with each move to another place that the people made.

Let us note well: once people wanted God's visit in a limited and confined physical place, every time the people moved from one place to another, they had to take the tabernacle with them to the new location, because if they did not, they would let the place in which God should visit them behind. However, due to the tiredness of carrying such a heavy burden, they, in fact, often let that tabernacle fall into contempt or forgetfulness.

In yet another of its items related to the attempt to vary their activities and to hide their opposition to the will of God, the priesthoods that use the precepts of the Order of Aaron praise themselves for the fact that they are a valuable means for the teaching of the children of those who are associated with them. However, what benefit do they bring to children and youth by teaching them to be dependent on religions and human mediators, and not on the Lord Jesus Christ as is the Heavenly Father's will?

Thus, the contrast between the Order of Aaron and the Order of Melchizedek continues to have the same central matter that has accompanied humanity since the day it was approached by the serpent in the garden of Eden, which, respectively, is to live and walk instructed and guided by some part of the creation regarding the fundamental aspects of life or to live and walk in fellowship with God and instructed by the Lord.

If a person tries to get away from God or also tries to live by the Order of Aaron, which is a veiled way of wanting to stay away from God and remain guided by the flesh,

one may try to change countless priests, temples, structures, activities, systematic offers, events, and so on, but in all these attempts, one will still be trying to escape the personal and essential encounter with the Unique One before whom one may place oneself to be enlightened for both the present and eternal life, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

John 17: 3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

Since the priesthoods with characteristics similar to Aaron's are opposed to the essential aspect of what God teaches us to be eternal life, for they, in one way or another, try to separate people from a continuous personal or direct relationship with God, what they end up proposing will also end up being dissociated from the characteristic of being unshakable.

Since the orders with characteristics similar to the Order of Aaron offer alternatives of justification according to the unstable self-righteousness of the human being, what they end up proposing will also vary according to their own instability.

Now, regarding the Priestly Order that proceeds from the heavenly kingdom, God teaches us that there is only one way for a person to find an adequate and living relationship with the Lord. And this path is, and always will be, the Only Eternal High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, the One who eternally is seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Father's throne to attend and grant full salvation to all who come to God through Him.

Hebrews 7: 23 **Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.**

24 **But He (Jesus), because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.**

25 **Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

Reviewing here, then, some aspects of the Order of Melchizedek, we recall that this order is the expression of the unchanging, blameless, incorruptible, and unshakable priesthood forever, just as the Eternal High Priest assigned by the Heavenly Father to this order is.

Therefore, regarding the choice of a type of priesthood, we return to the considerations of the title of this topic, that is: **Choosing a priesthood that will periodically be exposed to changes of priests, temples, structures, or methods, or making a single and eternal choice for the unique, everlasting, and perfect High Priest who is established according to the Order of Melchizedek that remains forever?**

How wonderful it is to know that despite being in such a fickle context around us, we have in God a perfect and eternal option to save us from all human inconstancy and to set our feet on the foundation that can also provide us with a condition eternally unshakable.

*Hebrews 12: 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.***

C21. Who was Melchizedek?

In the previous chapter, we mentioned that the understanding of some of the main characteristics of the Order of Melchizedek could be more widely achieved if we understood both what the term *Order* is and what comes to be the name of *Melchizedek* itself.

Referring to a type of priesthood also by the term *order* is a way of making a reference that aims to cover, at the same time, the whole set of laws, covenants, structures, and behaviors adopted in a priesthood, as well as the type of lineage of the high priests who have served or serve in a particular priesthood.

To refer to a type of priesthood also by the term *order* is to group absolutely everything pertinent to a kind of priesthood, making, however, a particular reference to the origin and the profile of the high priests of this order.

The profile or type of the high priests of a particular priesthood is what, in practice, will define how this priesthood will actually work. A type of priesthood, after all, cannot achieve more than the high priest of that order can achieve, even if the law of this priesthood aims and promises to achieve more than the respective high priests can perform.

Therefore, the name of a priestly order, based on the first high priest of the order, defines the limit, the capacity, and the defects of all high priests of that type of priesthood or, on the other hand, it also defines the unlimited and perfect condition of the high priest of an order, if this is the case.

The Order of Aaron, for instance, was introduced in the family line or genealogy of Levi, son of Jacob, showing us that Aaron was the first high priest made official in this order, but also showing us the kind of profile that the other high priests would have.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the line of high priests of the Order of Aaron was subject to weaknesses like all people they intended to represent. Besides being sinners like the people, needing to offer sacrifices for themselves even before they started offering sacrifices in the name of the people they mediated, the priests of this order were subject to death and inevitable replacement.

Since in the Order of Aaron not even the high priest was perfect, or even he could not reach perfection through the same priesthood in which he served, it was evident that all the people to whom this type of priesthood served would not be perfected either.

Thus, following the same general concepts about a priestly order, we may come to see that the concept that the first high priest defines the whole continuity of a priesthood also applies to the Order of Melchizedek. And this, so that we may know the lineage of the high priest of this type of priesthood and the guarantees we have in this lineage.

Initially, then, **it is essential to remember once again that the Order of Melchizedek has nothing to do with the lineage of the Order of Aaron. The Order of Melchizedek is not heir to the Order of Aaron, and so, it has no commitment to the continuity of the kind of priesthood also called Levitical.**

Let us see once again the text that exposes this principle:

- Hebrews 7: 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.*
- 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.*
- 14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.*
- 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest*
- 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.*
- 17 For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."*
- 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.*
-

But when or how, then, was the first priest of the Order of Melchizedek introduced to anyone in the world?

Who was this Melchizedek who served as a reference to the priestly order in which God established Christ as the only Eternal High Priest?

Who was this Melchizedek who preceded the revelation to the world of the High Priest who does not die, who has no defects, and who also has the perfect provision to help in their weaknesses those who come to God through Him?

And precisely concerning this theme, we find a beautiful enigma or mystery of antiquity that was revealed to us in Christ, ***in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*** to be revealed at the appropriate time for those who seek to understand them in the Lord.

Levi, one of Jacob's descendants, begot children. And from one of his descendants, was born Aaron, who was made the first High Priest of the people freed from slavery in Egypt, having this priesthood also become considered as one that is according to the law of Moses.

Nevertheless, with Melchizedek, everything was very different.

When he first appeared mentioned in the Scriptures, Melchizedek was not even a descendant of Abraham.

Melchizedek was already a priest of God Most High before Abraham even had a son.

Therefore, **although the Lord Jesus was considered to be a descendant of Abraham, He did not receive His priesthood from Abraham or anyone from the line of Abraham.**

The first reference made in the Bible to Melchizedek is in Genesis 14 when it is described that Abraham returned from a war where he released Lot, his nephew, and several other people who were imprisoned by evil kings, as shown below in a part of the text in reference:

Genesis 14: 17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet Abram at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him.

- 18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.*
- 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;*
- 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.*
- 21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."*
- 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth,*
- 23 that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich',*
- 24 except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."*
-

Despite the brief account of this last text, it is highly significant to understand the origin of the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek.

After Abraham returned victorious from a great battle, and when he was still called Abram, he was in the valley of Shaveh, which means the valley of the King.

Abraham was not a king. He was an ordinary man whom God had visited in Ur of the Chaldeans, calling him to leave his homeland to follow, by faith, the instruction of the Lord to where He would lead him to go.

And Abraham, by faith, indeed followed God who had spoken to him. In his heart, Abraham trusted that the Lord was speaking to him, and, for this reason, he adopted the attitude of continuing to follow His instructions until he reached the land in which God promised to establish him and make him a great nation.

Through faith, Abraham was a man who freely chose to trust God and follow what the Lord instructed him to do, thus also reaching the place that God appointed him to be established.

Later, however, when Abraham was already living in the promised land, there was a war of which we saw the result in the last text exposed above.

Still following the text in reference, we can see that after Abraham returned from the battle mentioned above, two kings presented themselves to him in the valley of Shaveh.

At that time, it was customary for people to form covenants with kings to count on their support and protection.

However, as far as we can draw from the story of Genesis 14, no king had sought Abraham to make a covenant with him till the time referred to in the text.

Furthermore, in the same context, we can also see that for the first time the figure of Melchizedek appears. And this Melchizedek was entirely new on the scene, while the king of Sodom had lived there for some time and apparently had never sought Abraham until the days after the battle described above.

The kings who attacked Sodom and took Lot and his family captive also plundered the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and took part of the people from these cities captive.

In this way, it is clear that the king of Sodom, and other kings who were associated with him, had an interest in a meeting with Abraham, for as the winner of the battle, Abraham now had under his tutelage the people of these kings and a broad part of their goods.

What five kings were unable to do against four kings who attacked them, Abraham did only with the brave who lived in his house. And for this reason, this man called Abram at that time certainly was under significant evidence among the people of his region.

Nevertheless, before Abraham's encounter with the king of Sodom who lived in lands close to the place where Abraham was settling, or even together with this encounter, or yet amid this encounter, an unusual king appears, the king called Melchizedek, or also referred to in the text as the king of Salem.

Moreover, Melchizedek, when introducing himself to Abraham, brought something with him. He brought bread and wine, for this Melchizedek was also a priest of God Most High, the Creator God of Heaven and Earth, and the Lord from whom Abraham had heard the voice and whom he followed through faith.

And as a priest, along with the bread and wine he had brought, Melchizedek, upon arriving or from the start, already blessed Abraham, saying:

***Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;
And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into
your hand.***

By going over the above text again, we may see several details of what Melchizedek said, such as:

- ⇒ 1) He declared the blessing of God Most High over Abraham;
- ⇒ 2) He declared that this Most High God is the God who possesses everything in Heaven and on Earth;
- ⇒ 3) He declared that God Most High was also blessed for what he did for Abraham;
- ⇒ 4) He declared that it was God who delivered Abraham's adversaries into his hands, and so, that it was not primarily the strategy and the strength of Abraham's warriors that enabled him to achieve victory.

What, then, was this Melchizedek, who suddenly introduced himself to Abraham, doing?

When Melchizedek presented himself before Abraham, he presented himself as the one who was “mediating and showing more broadly” the relationship of God with Abraham and Abraham with God, where the basis of this “mediation” was the bread and the wine that Melchizedek himself had brought.

Now, **bread and wine are the symbolic elements throughout the Bible to refer to an appropriate fellowship.**

Melchizedek introduced himself to Abraham so that Abraham could become more aware of how God was with him in practice, protecting him and making him victorious when he stood up to walk by faith and to do good.

Melchizedek also said that “God should be blessed” for what God Himself had done through Abraham.

Melchizedek presented himself before Abraham to show him that God had already blessed Abraham even before he entered the battle, as well as to make it clear to Abraham that he had only conquered his enemies because God had been with him.

Thus, the service of the Priest Melchizedek was to “mediate” God's blessing for those who trust in God and, on the other hand, to bless God for what the Lord does on Earth, for people, and through the people whom the Lord blesses.

Let us also note that Melchizedek did not expect to receive anything from Abraham to offer him fellowship, just as Melchizedek did not wait to receive anything from Abraham to bless him.

Melchizedek came “in the name of God” and blessed Abraham, and this, without asking anything from Abraham.

Whatever Melchizedek did in the encounter with Abraham, he did it previously or regardless of any action of Abraham in return.

In the text in reference, we read that after Abraham was blessed by the words of Melchizedek, he gave, of his own free will, the tithe of the spoils of the battle to this priest who had come to meet him. And let us also note that “he gave,” “he did not pay.”

***Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.
And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;
And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."
And he gave him a tithe of all (of all the spoil of battle).***

And after the above, the text found throughout the book of Genesis no longer speaks specifically about the relationship between Melchizedek and Abraham.

Continuing a little further, we see that after the descriptions of the actions between Melchizedek and Abraham ended in Genesis 14, the king of Sodom introduces himself and offers an agreement or even a payment to Abraham for what Abraham had done on behalf of the people of Sodom.

Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

The position that the king of Sodom did take even seems to be a reasonable attitude to be taken.

Nevertheless, Abraham realized or knew that the king of Sodom was not a reliable king, as also was not his proposal.

But why did Abraham understand the King of Sodom's proposition as not correct or not appropriate?

Let us see below some more details about the facts in reference.

Did not Melchizedek just show Abraham that it was God who gave him the victory, not Abraham's arm, strength, and the army of his household?

Therefore, **if Abraham had received payment from the king of Sodom to release the people of this city, he would have accepted the glory of the conquest for himself and his own army, and would have taken for himself the glory belonging to God Most High. And in this way, he would also have neglected the fellowship, blessing, and words that Melchizedek had just given him.**

Abraham understood that he could not receive payment from men for what God had done in that situation to free his nephew Lot and the people who had been taken captive.

Abraham understood that God could use him to save lives without having to charge or take from the saved lives what belonged to them before they were saved, probably also signaling that the salvation to be offered centuries later by the Lord to deliver people from the bondage to sin and the law would be granted by grace and not by payment or work of human righteousness.

Through fellowship with Abraham, Melchizedek clarified that it was God who granted that specific victory to Abraham to save the lives that had been imprisoned by evil kings.

The war between the mentioned kings, in principle, was not a war that had been waged directly against Abraham, his home, or his belongings. Abraham ended up being part of this war scenario to save the life of his nephew Lot and his family from the slavery and oppression of those evil kings. And in this attempt to free his nephew and, consequently, also many other people, God blessed Abraham.

After the end of that battle, Abraham did not need to charge for the action he did, for he was already a man blessed and well provided by God before this war. Because he was following in faith what God had instructed him to do, Abraham already enjoyed the grace of being considered a blessed man before God. He did not need to plunder or take the spoil of the people who were freed in battle, much less receive payment for what God had done through him in this event.

Likewise, because he was able to act to benefit the people who were freed in battle, Abraham did not claim that those people should become subject to his domain.

Moreover, Abraham made yet another noble gesture. He did not impose on others his personal option of not accepting the payment for the liberation that through him was provided for many, letting the others free to decide for themselves whether or not they would adopt a similar posture.

So, after the war was over and Melchizedek had come to meet him, Abraham refused to take anything from the king of Sodom that could tarnish what God had allowed him to accomplish:

Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich', except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

Following still the facts mentioned above or after Abraham refused the proposal made to him by the king of Sodom, and this to remain under the words and blessing of Melchizedek and God Most High, we see that the Scriptures, from Genesis 15, inform us that God made a covenant with Abraham, saying that He would give him a descendant, an heir of all the promises that God had made him for the blessing of all the peoples and families of the Earth, whose text begins as follows:

Genesis 15: 1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

What was announced to Abraham in those days after Melchizedek's visit was by no means words of little significance and little repercussion for the coming generations of Abraham's descendants, but also for the whole world. A repercussion which became much more evident when Abraham's eternal heir was widely revealed by God to the world, as it is also explained to us in the following text written several centuries later:

Galatians 3: 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

...

16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

In returning to these facts in the story of Abraham, we understand that it is very significant to highlight once again that God's promise to grant Abraham an heir in whom the peoples of the Earth and their families would be blessed was given before the existence of any aspect of the law of Moses or the Order of Aaron, and it was granted in

such a way that the law of Moses, which came later, had no strength or value to revoke the promise previously made by God.

The promise that God made to Abraham, shortly after the visit of Melchizedek and which made reference to an eternal heir who would represent a blessing to people of all nations and peoples, was superior to any law that could be introduced later.

God allowed the law of Moses to be introduced only centuries after the promise and for an interval with an established beginning and end so that, in due time, and not according to the law, the promise made to Abraham would be fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3: 18 **For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.**

19 **What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.**

20 **Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.**

21 **Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.**

Therefore, as one of the first points about who Melchizedek was, we would like to point out that the fact that he is mentioned only once and very briefly in the book of Genesis does not mean that this mention is of little significance or clarification regarding the matter of priestly orders, for this singular mention of Melchizedek in Abraham's lifetime also confirms that a priesthood under the Order of Melchizedek even precedes the heir's promise. Thus, it also precedes Aaron's existence and the existence of any aspect of the law of Moses, the first covenant, the so-called first priesthood, or the Levitical priesthood.

Advancing a little more in the Scriptures, as a second aspect in the investigation of who was Melchizedek, we can see that his name is mentioned once more in the Psalms before being mentioned and clarified later in the book of Hebrews, namely a psalm written by King David, as follows:

Psalms 110: 1 **The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."**

2 **The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!**

3 **Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.**

4 **The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."**

We can notice that in this Psalm, it is said that "**the Lord said to my Lord**" that He, the second Lord in reference, was an eternal priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Centuries later, the Lord Jesus Christ quotes the above psalm, referring to Himself as the Christ to whom the Lord spoke and to whom David referred, as follows:

*Matthew 22: 41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,
42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?"
They said to Him, "The Son of David."
43 He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him
'Lord,' saying:
44 "The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make
Your enemies Your footstool"?"
45 "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?"
46 And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on
did anyone dare question Him anymore.*

*Mark 12: 35 Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?
36 For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."
37 Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?"
And the common people heard Him gladly.*

Yet Peter, in his first speech described in Acts, also refers to the superior condition of Christ, stating that the Lord Jesus is the Lord of David to whom the Lord of the Lord had spoken.

*Acts 2: 25 For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.
26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.
27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'
29 Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.
30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,
31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.
32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.
33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.*

*34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:
 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand,
 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool. "'*
*36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has
 made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Thus, the references of the Lord Jesus Himself and Peter to Psalm 110 also point to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another interesting aspect to be observed in Psalm 110 is that the Lord God says to the Lord of David, that is, to the Lord Jesus Christ, that:

"You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

In Psalm 110, it does not say that the Lord to whom the Lord refers was a priest or that He would become a priest, but says that "***You are a priest forever.***"

Still following in the Psalms, another reference by which the eternal or heavenly matter of the Order of Melchizedek can be observed is the mention of Salem, where the priest Melchizedek is also the king, and when Salem is equated with Zion, the place of God's eternal dwelling, as follows:

*Psalms 76: 1 In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel.
 2 In Salem also is His tabernacle, And His dwelling place in Zion.*

The Order of Melchizedek comes from Salem, which means *peace*. That is, it comes from the dwelling place of God, from the place of God's eternal peace. It comes from the heavenly tabernacle that was already prepared in heaven before the earthly existed, for Moses' tabernacle was only a shadow of the real that already existed.

Who, then, was Melchizedek?

Let us look at Psalm 110 again from the perspective of the Lord Jesus Christ having considered the words spoken in this psalm to be related to Himself.

When the Lord Jesus correlates David's words to Himself, He announces that although He was considered to be a descendant of David, He, Jesus, was already the Lord of David when David uttered that Psalm.

Similarly, in his testimony, and although John the Baptist was born before the birth of Christ as the Son of Man, John the Baptist declares that the Lord Jesus had primacy or preeminence over him because Christ already existed before him.

*John 1: 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we
 beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full
 of grace and truth.
 15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of
 whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He
 was before me.'"*

When the Lord Jesus said that David said that He, Jesus, was his Lord, David was saying that the king who would descend from him was and would also be the Lord of his life. That is, David was ahead of time prophesying that despite Christ would become his descendant, the Lord Jesus was greater than him because this Jesus is the One who sits at the right hand of God's throne.

As king and ancestor in the matter of royal lineage, David was saying that his descendant was and would be king even over him.

Furthermore, yet in another conversation of the Lord Jesus Christ with some Jews, He said:

- John 8: 49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.*
50 And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges.
51 Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."
52 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.'
53 Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?"
54 Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.
55 Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word.
56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."
57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"
58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

Who, then, was the one who appeared before Abraham as a priest of God Most High by the name of Melchizedek and brought bread and wine, the elements of Christ's covenant with us?

To focus the answer to the above question more objectively, let us also see the text in the book of Hebrews that exposes the subject to us more widely:

- Hebrews 6: 20 ... where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*
7: 1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,
2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"

3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

Now, let us look closely at the text of the book of Hebrews mentioned above.

The Melchizedek, who presented himself to Abraham, had no father and mother in the sense of human genealogy, just as he had no beginning of days or end of existence. Who, then, could he be?

Who existed before any human being was created? Who came from the Heavenly Father to provide the perfect offering for a perfect high priest to present it to God on behalf of all human beings so that they can have a path of reconciliation with the Heavenly Father?

If a priestly order only has one active high priest and Melchizedek has no end of existence, and Christ was made the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, who else could be this Melchizedek except the One who was with God, was God, and has always had preeminence over all creation?

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.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

...

9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

The reference in Hebrews 7 regarding Melchizedek still informs us that: ***made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.***

Therefore, **who else but the Lord Jesus Christ has always been presented to us by the Heavenly Father as His Only Begotten Son and who also assumed the condition of Son of Man to provide us with redemption and eternal salvation?**

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.

If we also remember the aspect that Melchizedek was king of Salem, which means *peace*, does this not likewise lead us to the only one who is called the ***Prince of Peace*** in the Scriptures and who is offered to us as the way to peace with God?

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.

*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.*

Furthermore, still looking at the last text above, **through whom was Abraham enlightened to know that the victory he had attained over evil kings had been granted to him by God Most High?**

Who taught Abraham to attribute all glory to God but the One through whom all eternal glory is attributed to the Unique and eternally wise God?

*Romans 16: 24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.
25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began
26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith;
27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever.
Amen.*

Yet another aspect related to Melchizedek and the Lord Jesus Christ is the fact that *Melchizedek* means *my king is Sedek* and, in turn, *Sedek* means *righteousness*, or, still, that *Melchizedek* is also equivalent to saying *king of righteousness*. (Definitions according to the comments associated with Strong's Lexicon in the Online Bible).

And as we have already mentioned in previous chapters, in the subject on the Gospel of God's Righteousness, and still will address it in chapters more ahead, **the Lord Jesus Christ is also the one who was made “our righteousness” or “our justification” forever and ever, and who, therefore, is the eternal “King of Righteousness.”**

*Romans 3: 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.*

1 Corinthians 6: 11(b) ... but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

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."***

Romans 10: 4 ***For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***

Therefore, although there is no direct expression in the Scriptures saying that Melchizedek is the Lord Jesus Himself, all the characteristics point out and show that Christ, the eternal Son of God Most High, has always been eternally the Only Eternal Priest before the Heavenly Father.

After the Son of God came in the flesh into the world, being born of a woman, and becoming the Son of Man, the Eternal Melchizedek also began to be revealed to the world through the name of Jesus. And in Jesus, the Christ, the Eternal Son of God who has always existed, we have the Eternal High Priest and now also the risen Son of Man revealed in one person or as the One who has ever stood before God as the Eternal Melchizedek, *having neither beginning of days nor end of life.*

The Son of God has always been the High Priest before God. However, after He was made the Son of Man, now He is also the Eternal High Priest who lived the condition of man and demonstrated that He can sympathize perfectly with the weaknesses of those who come to Him to, through Him, also come to God with confidence.

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.***

The Son of God, who also presented Himself to Abraham as Melchizedek, was always before God. However, to manifest Himself perfect to humankind for people to believe in Him, He became flesh, dwelt among us, took the guilt of our sin upon Himself, died as the perfect sacrifice, but also rose from the dead and returned to the position of Son of God and Eternal High Priest before the throne of God.

And now, as Son of God, Eternally Sovereign, existing before Abraham, David, and John the Baptist, but as well as the Son of Man descended from Abraham, Judah, and David, He is at the right hand of God to assist us also in the present and in the eternity to come.

John 8: 56 Jesus answered, ... "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

Hebrews 2: 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

*11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,
12 saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."*

13 And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.

17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

3: 1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,

2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.

3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.

4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.

5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,

6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

Hebrews 7: 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

The Lord Jesus owes His priesthood to no man or any human lineage. As the Son of God, He was already established by God in heaven before human beings elected human priests for themselves.

The priesthood of Christ is free also because it has always been free.

So, let us also note the following: Before the law came, Abraham had already consented to Melchizedek's condition to be the Priest or Mediator between God and him and him and God.

When Melchizedek presented Himself to Abraham as greater than him, and Abraham recognized Him as such, Abraham did as David stated in one of his Psalms. Abraham, also in advance, already established that his descendant would also be his High Priest before God Most High.

That is, Melchizedek was the Son of God who would become a descendant of Abraham to be Abraham's High Priest even though He was a descendant of Abraham, for before He was a descendant of Abraham, He was already the Son of God and the Priest of God Most High.

David declared that his descendant would be his king because his descendant was already king before him.

Abraham chose his descendant as his High Priest because he was already High Priest before him.

John the Baptist testified that the Lord Jesus, although born afterward and as his relative as the Son of Man, had the primacy or preeminence over his life because the Lord Jesus was before him.

When Abraham accepted the Son of God, the eternal Melchizedek, as his priest, God granted Abraham that this Melchizedek would also be his descendant among the children of man to be the Perfect Lamb who would have compassion on all peoples and on every one of the individuals in these peoples, who was also revealed later by the name Jesus, which means "God is salvation."

Therefore, Abraham could only have Jesus as a descendant if he, first or beforehand, consented that Jesus was greater than himself and despite him, Abraham, being the father of the human genealogy through which Christ would be born as the Son of Man.

*John 8: 57 **Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"***

*58 **Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."***

In the days of Abraham on Earth, the Lord Jesus had not yet been manifested to the world as the "Incarnate Word" to provide everyone with the path of redemption and salvation.

Nevertheless, **as the eternal Melchizedek, with no beginning or end of days, He had personally served Abraham with bread and wine because he had settled in his heart to have the Lord as his eternal God and because Abraham already in his time related to God through the faith that in due**

course would be revealed more widely as one of the central points of the new covenant offered by God to all human beings.

Considering that Christ is the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek and also revealed to us as the only Mediator between God and men, and since Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant that has bread and wine as a referential symbol of fellowship with God, it was also only He who could have beforehand presented Himself to Abraham to signal the kind of superior and exclusive covenant that Abraham's descendant would offer later and in the fullness of time to all human beings.

*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.*

Hebrews 8: 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

Hebrews 12: 24 ... to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

*Luke 22: 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."*

The fellowship that Melchizedek offered to Abraham with God Most High was entirely distinct and could not be equated by any other kingdom in the world, even if they would offer their protection and their many riches to Abraham.

*Psalms 146: 3 Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.
4 His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish.
5 Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the LORD his God,
6 Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps truth forever.*

Finally, in this chapter, regarding the identification of Melchizedek, we would still like to address some aspects related to the matter of the tithe that Abraham gave to Melchizedek.

In addition to the text of Genesis, let us also see, then, what the text of the book of Hebrews has to say about Abraham's tithes or the act of tithing that Abraham performed before Melchizedek:

- Hebrews 7: 1* **For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,**
2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"
3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.
4 Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.
-

First, it is crucial to make a clear distinction between Abraham's act of tithing and the tithes described in the law of Moses, as also complemented below:

- Hebrews 7: 5* **And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham;**
6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.
7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.
8 Here (in the order of Levi) mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.
9 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak,
10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.
11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?
-

The tithe Abraham gave was an act done only once and, still, on the spoils of the battle from which he was returning.

Abraham's tithing is an isolated fact, and it never referred to a tithe regarding what God had already blessed Abraham for the years he had walked in faith with God.

The Bible also never again mentions any other situation in which Abraham practiced the act of tithing, not even for a second time. Nor does it describe a periodic return of Melchizedek to receive other tithes.

The tithe that Abraham gave to Melchizedek, therefore, represents a single or isolated fact!

What, then, was the significance of this singular or isolated act of Abraham giving a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek?

Although we have no direct explanation on this point other than the text of Hebrews 7, we understand that **the fact that Abraham gave the tithe to Melchizedek only once in his life, and specifically regarding the spoils of a particular battle, represented the expression of a personal decision and a public testimony valid forever that Abraham made in recognition and agreement that Melchizedek was great, worthy of honor and total trust, the legitimate representative or priest of the God Most High, and, therefore, superior to Abraham himself.**

Hebrews 7: 4 Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.

...
7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.

The reason why Abraham chose to tithe to show recognition of the glory associated with Melchizedek, and not in any other way, perhaps, was the way or custom practiced in his days to recognize someone's unique or distinct condition, and it does not receive much attention in the texts of the Bible.

The Scriptures have their emphasis much more focused on Abraham's attitude of heart and faith in demonstrating his recognition and acceptance of fellowship forever with the One who was Priest of God Most High and the King of the true and everlasting Righteousness and Peace.

What the Scriptures highlight as essential is that Abraham recognized Melchizedek as the One Mediator between him and God. He accepted Melchizedek as the priest who would bless him and acknowledge him as the priest who would bless God for what God had done for him.

If Abraham had misbehaved towards Melchizedek and had recognized as his king, protector, or priest a mere man like, for example, the king of Sodom, God would never have made with him the covenant that had promised him a descendant in whom would converge the fulfillment of all the promises made by God as to the path of redemption and blessing to the people of all peoples.

And if we look at the text of Hebrews 7 with due attention, we can see that this unique act of Abraham of giving the tithe to Melchizedek represented a unique act applicable even to all descendants of Abraham, therefore, no longer necessary to be repeated in any generation.

The tithe that Abraham gave Melchizedek only once was considered by the Lord as a testimony applicable to all ages, with no need to be repeated in future times by anyone in the world.

*Hebrews 7: 9 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak,
10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.*

In Abraham, yet in his loins, still a future seed in Abraham, Levi had already passed on tithes forever in the person of Abraham. That is, that act of Abraham done before Melchizedek was a unique act for all his descendants.

The text of Hebrews 7 divides the matter of tithing by explicitly distinguishing Abraham's tithing to Melchizedek from the tithes that the sons of Levi took from people, which were passed on according to the law of Moses or the Levitical priesthood. And it ends still by stating that the tithes related to Levi or the law of Moses proved to be entirely ineffective.

That is, long before Levi was born, Abraham had already elected Melchizedek as the Eternal High Priest of his life. And as a testimony of the recognition of Melchizedek's superior condition forever, Abraham spontaneously gave Him the tithes of the spoils of the battle in which he had been victorious. Therefore, the law of Moses, which came later, and which constitutes by law a form of people tithing to their brothers, was accepted only for a determined interval so that the people's attempt to live differently from what God had agreed with Abraham was evidenced as weak and useless.

Because the Order of Aaron or the priesthood according to Levi and Moses is entirely ineffective as to the justification of people and the life that is through faith, the so-called first priesthood or of the law of Moses could never remove the covenant and promise that God had presented at the beginning or earlier to Abraham.

What we see in Hebrews 7 is the same concept as Galatians 3 verse 17 seen at the beginning of this chapter. That is, the law that came after God's unchanging promise to Abraham cannot change or revoke what God promised that would come to be fulfilled through Abraham's eternal descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The tithing system that was practiced in the Order of Aaron, and in which the Levites were ordered to take it from their brothers according to the law of Moses, has never been and will never be comparable to the tithe that Abraham gave once and for all from the spoils of war and which Abraham even gave for Levi and his children even before Levi was born.

*Hebrews 7: 5 And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham;
6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.*

Tithing according to the Levitical priesthood, which is a tithe of people who agree to outsource the priesthood to those who pretentiously say they will mediate or guide them, is a tithe that links people to systems according

to the Order of Aaron, a type of priesthood already declared weak, useless, and obsolete by God.

Levi's sons receive, according to the law of Moses, tithes from their own brothers. However, Melchizedek, whose genealogy is not counted among the sons of Levi, who was never part of Levi's actions and the law, does not receive tithes from His brothers, but only received them from Abraham in a particular situation, for Melchizedek had previously blessed Abraham and his descendants for all generations if they only remain in life through faith and fellowship with the descendant Jesus Christ, in whom is the right of access and fulfillment of all the promises made to Abraham.

In other words, Melchizedek, the One about whom it is testified that He lives forever, but also the One who was never a participant in the Order of the Levites, never received tithes from His brothers, as the Levites did. He received tithes only once from Abraham, who did so freely, and not by law, as a gesture of testimony to the people and kingdoms around him, as well as to his descendants, announcing in advance that Melchizedek was the Eternal Priest and that he, Abraham, accepted Him in this way in his life and so that all his generations would also have the possibility to believe in this same Eternal Lord.

When in the desert, after leaving Egypt, people suggested human mediating priests separated from the people themselves, brothers mediating the relationship of their brothers with the God of all, this structure of priests began to receive tithes from all the brothers, but its priesthood was ineffective, and the people were never continually faithful in giving tithes as the law ordered. Both the people and the priests acted inappropriately because both chose not to walk according to the Order of Melchizedek that the father Abraham himself had chosen forever.

In addition to the priesthood under the Order of Aaron being contrary to God's proposition for the people, it was also an attempt to establish a priesthood contrary to what Abraham himself had previously chosen and longed for his descendants to follow.

When the Lord Jesus Christ began to reveal and restore what God had agreed with Abraham, the Lord Jesus explicitly said:

*Matthew 23: 8 **But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.***

...
 10 ***And do not be called teachers (leaders ou guides); for One is your Teacher (or Guide), the Christ.***

If we had only these last two verses above to understand the Order of Melchizedek, this would already be enough to realize that any priesthood that considers some brothers as guides of their fellow men or mediators of others before God is expressly opposed to what the Lord has declared and contrary to what God and Abraham have already agreed with each other since antiquity.

*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.

The Order of Levi, or similar to it, divides the brothers into different categories, and, for this reason, they divide families, peoples, and nations, still charging for this “disservice” of strife, provocations, division, and ineffectiveness in the attempts to bring peace between people and God.

Considering that a little leaven leavens the entire lump, the priesthoods that currently mirror what interests them of the Order of Aaron, despite it has already been revoked by the Lord, become, for this very reason, even harsher than the Order of Aaron itself.

Priesthoods that currently try to make use of an obsolete law, for this very reason, are not shy about even proposing the old law with additions according to their own interpretations.

In their eagerness for people's resources, these priesthoods associated with the yeast of the Order of Aaron charge tithes of all the income of their members and some even from their time, while in the Order of Aaron, tithing was only limited to the production of harvesting and raising cattle, never concerning transactions, services, or trade between people, much less on the individuals' time.

In their eagerness for people's resources, many who call themselves “ministries of God” create all kinds of weird and abusive formulas to collect tithes or offerings from their associates, often hiding them even behind the discourse that they encourage voluntary and non-mandatory tithing, but, at the same time, they also do so under the banner of a threat, saying that if an individual is not generous in tithing, one is running into very high risk of becoming subject to curses or damages.

And even though they indeed might not emphasize tithing, many of the priesthoods mentioned in the paragraphs above are already characterized by similarities to the Order of Aaron in that they demand that people who are part of them perform an external or tangible act of association with them, something that is in no way necessary in the new covenant with Christ and that ends, even if through another outward act, being equivalent to what is associated with the idea of the old circumcision. A point which is dealt with more widely in the subjects on The Gospel of God's Righteousness and The New Creature in Christ.

Besides, it should be noted that the tithes foreseen under the law of Moses should still be divided or shared with the poor, widows, and foreigners so that those in need could be assisted, something that many who take tithes today do not even think about doing it or do so in part to maintain an appearance of godliness.

Currently, there are priesthood propositions that tax tithing on everything and everyone, showing that some remnant of mercy that eventually could have been for a while in the Order of Aaron is also consumed by the yeast over the years, becoming so, with each new version, more demanding, more severe, and increased by even more ungodliness and greed.

Therefore, those who believe in the Priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek, also accept what Abraham did once and for all, not wanting to try to repeat what does not need to be repeated when Abraham recognized the One who was before him, whom Abraham chose as his One and Eternal High Priest, and who, for the purposes of redemption and salvation of the people of all peoples, became his descendant also coming into the world as Son of Man.

God blessed Abraham, through his faith, before Abraham gave anything to God, for it is by faith that justification, salvation, and eternal life are achieved in God, and never by works of self-righteousness or human sacrifices.

Galatians 3: 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Romans 4: 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

What justifies a person is not giving tithes supposedly to God, but it is the grace that can be received through an individual's faith in the person and work of Christ Jesus, just as Abraham believed in the Lord.

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.

In the whole context of Melchizedek's visit to Abraham, the focus was on pointing to the glory due to God Most High and to fellowship with the Lord, and not to the glory of people's works as if they could by themselves perform works of justification and salvation.

Galatians 5: 4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Titus 3: 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

- 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,**
7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Moreover, if someone received salvation and then had to give periodic “tithes” and “offerings” to the Lord, one would not have received salvation through grace, but a title of debt, which, in turn, is the basis of the priesthood under the Order of Aaron and not according to the Order of Melchizedek.

In Christ, we are called to fellowship based on the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, based on the broken body through the mercy and grace of God for us and the innocent blood shed on our behalf, symbolized respectively by the bread and the wine that Melchizedek Himself brought and offered to Abraham.

And after we are justified freely by the righteousness of Christ, and we begin to participate in an active fellowship with the Lord also to be restored, strengthened in Him, and instructed by Him to understand the will of God, is that we may, with understanding, do what is right in the eyes of the Lord not because it can justify us before Him, but because we understand that what is upright is the right thing to be done, and because what is right is how the Just and Righteous High Eternal Priest works for the good of all people.

John 6: 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

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.

Galatians 3: 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.
25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Romans 10: 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

First of all, was it not the fellowship that Melchizedek came to offer Abraham?

And is it not also the same fellowship that Melchizedek came to offer to everyone who also firstly believes in God and in that Melchizedek that the Lord sent as Priest of God Most High to be the Mediator between God and the human beings?

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

Abraham chose a priestly order, and a part of his descendants chose another order. However, only the priestly order that was chosen by faith, and not according to the works of men, did prevail, and before which, the Order of Aaron was considered obsolete in due time so that people know that only in the priesthood of faith, the Order of Melchizedek, or Christ is where there is salvation and eternal life with God Most High.

Thus, Christians paying or giving tithes to their brothers, sisters, or their institutions so that, through them, they will be more acceptable before God or for receiving protection or direction from them is inappropriate in many ways, for Christians should be aware that they are considered as descendants of Abraham through faith and not because of precepts similar to the law of Moses.

Many of those who claim to be Christians and who today require tithes and ongoing offerings from their fellow men still do so because they continue to think unduly that they themselves and Christians need to do works to be justified and accepted before God or because they find themselves among those who are guided by their greedy eyes and who see godliness as a source of profit, as described in the text of 1 Timothy 6 mentioned previously.

On the other hand, many Christians have allowed themselves to be repeatedly or continually despoiled by other people or their institutions because they do not indeed recognize that ***Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes***, that they are called to the new covenant that is according to the Order of Melchizedek and in no way according to the Order of Aaron, and that they are called to be guided by God and no longer by unnecessary tutors concerning those who choose to walk by faith and not by sight.

Figuratively speaking, deciding for a priesthood that does not come from God is like entering through a bifurcation path that at first may seem similar to the Order of Melchizedek and even presenting the declaration that it aims at the same goal and the destination of the new covenant, but that, in the sequence, goes further and further until it manifests itself as an opposite path and entirely contrary to what God offers according to His heavenly wisdom.

That is why it is so crucial to know the origin of the lineage of a type of priesthood, because if it started on a temporal foundation, in a carnal, weak, and limited by death priestly line, and not on an everlasting foundation, it also can only, at most, attend to what is temporal.

*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.***

A priestly order that is contrary to the righteousness of God offered to us in Christ Jesus, contrary to the peace that comes from reconciliation with the Heavenly Father through the fellowship that is granted by the grace that is in Christ, and yet, that is

contrary to the Spirit of God, because it prefers the effort and works of the flesh, will never be able by its works and sacrifices to provide the heavenly kingdom to the hearts of people, because:

Romans 14: 17 ***For the kingdom of God is ... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.***

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.

Who, then, has always been, is, and always will be the Melchizedek who does not depend on the offerings, sacrifices, and tithes of people to exercise His priesthood before the Heavenly Father and to bless those who receive Him in the heart through a faith similar to that which Abraham exercised towards God Most High?

Who, then, has always been, is, and always will be the Melchizedek *who had neither beginning of days nor end of life*, which precedes and is greater than Abraham, David, and John the Baptist, who was seen in vision by Isaiah as the perfect sacrifice for our redemption and salvation, and who was revealed by the author of Hebrews as the One High Priest who can assist us forever because He lives forever?

Hebrews 13: 8 ***Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.***

C22. The Glorious Work or Living Ministry of the Unique High Priest Jesus for the Newness of Life, Conscience, and Fellowship with God of Each Person Who Believes in Him

Since Abraham recognized Melchizedek in advance as a Priest of God Most High and gave testimony about it to be believed by all his descendants that are so through faith in God, and since the Lord Jesus, also as Son of Man, already was exalted by God as the One High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, we now have evidenced by the Scriptures that we have in Christ Jesus the perfect Eternal High Priest and the perfect Mediator between God and human beings.

The Lord Jesus Christ has already been exalted by God to the position referred to in the previous paragraph. This matter is not something yet to be done in the future. And it is essential that we know the central points why He is established in this condition, as well as it is also vital that we know that regardless of what we do or fail to do, He will remain the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek and nothing else can change this.

Thus, it seems to us highly necessary to go further and know what the work or ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in this role of the Eternal High Priest is.

What, then, would be the practical functions of a High Priest in a Heavenly Tabernacle on behalf of people on Earth?

Finding appropriate words to describe how significant Christ's position as the Eternal High Priest is, is very challenging in the face of people's earthly mentality and how soon many people forget to look at *those things which are above* while they still inhabit the present world.

To know Christ personally as the Eternal High Priest is to know Him not only by the historical facts that tell that He came into the world as a baby boy, died on the cross of Calvary, and rose from the dead, but it is to know Him alive, present, and in the condition in which He finds Himself today and in which He will remain eternally in favor of those who believe in Him.

A person's encounter with the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ and the understanding that this causes a change from one type of priesthood to another, together with the change of the respective law, may affect more areas and many more aspects of the lives of those who have received this understanding than even they may have imagined before they knew Christ also in this position and function.

In several cases, it may even occur that the understanding of Christ's position as the Eternal High Priest is even easier to reach for a person who has never been involved with any system of organized religion than for those who are or were already in one of these systems that feature human priesthoods over their fellow men.

*Luke 5: 39 **And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, "The old is better."***

Those who have been involved with structures similar to the first covenant, priesthoods similar to the Order of Aaron, may have gone through certain aspects that

led to intense frustrations and disappointments with human priesthoods. For this reason, they may put themselves in a position of undue caution concerning the matter of priesthood as a whole or in general.

Nevertheless, a relevant aspect to be highlighted here is that it is not the priesthood theme, in itself, that has caused frustration for many, but the type of priesthood with which they have been associated.

For this reason, we emphasize here again that Christ is not comparable to anything in the world in terms of priesthood. This aspect is also why the Lord Jesus came *to take away the priesthood called the first or old covenant and establish the second*, in which the Lord Jesus is also the Mediator of the *new covenant*.

The fact that someone leaves behind the old covenant does not automatically imply that one already knows the new covenant and knows how to live according to it. And it is also to serve the purpose of teaching us to live and walk in the new covenant that the Lord Jesus is offered to us as Mediator.

That is, Christ is the One who helps a person to be introduced to the new covenant, but He is also the One who helps this person to understand the novelty of life that is available to him or her after one is already associated with God in this new covenant.

Recalling the subject on The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, we emphasize that the process of renewing the understanding of the new covenant or the new priesthood begins in the heart. The kingdom of God comes to the hearts of people in the present world, and it is from the heart that the Lord starts to guide individuals in understanding the novelty of heavenly life, but also in the practical changes that follow when this newness of life becomes known.

Therefore, we would like to highlight how relevant it is for a Christian to have the information and the understanding that the Lord Jesus is the One through whom God manifests His love for all the people of the world and even more after someone receives salvation from the Lord.

*Romans 5: 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.***

In the Order of Melchizedek, no person is just another number to be counted in the statistics, but each person is an individual personally loved by the Lord and Eternal High Priest of our lives.

Given that Christ loved all people when they still were subject to sin, the body of sin, and the condemnatory law of the religions they followed, to the point of giving His life on the cross of Calvary in favor of all human beings, will He not manifest even more His love for each individual who receives His salvation after He rose from the dead and lives to assist forever those who believe in Him?

When God calls us into fellowship with Christ, He already declares the intention of relating to each person, not offering it only collectively, but personally between the parties that participate in the fellowship.

*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 Lord Jesus is at the Heavenly Father's right to answer the cry and provide salvation to "everyone who calls on His name." However, He is also in this position for an extensive range of other functions that we need for our lives and of which those who believe in Christ and approach Him are the primary beneficiaries.

*Hebrews 7: 22 **By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.***

*23 **Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.***

*24 **But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.***

*25 **Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.***

Let us note how marvelous also this last text presented above is!

In addition to the Lord Jesus being the Mediator for a person to become part of the new covenant, Christ was also established by the Heavenly Father to be the surety of the new covenant, that is, the sponsor and guarantor of this new covenant.

In other words, the Lord Jesus is the provision of justification and the way to salvation and the newness of eternal life. However, He saved us so that we may have the novelty or abundance of life in Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ offers us eternal salvation to give us newness of life precisely together and by fellowship with Him.

And *therefore*:

- ⇒ 1) **He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him;**
- ⇒ 2) **He always lives to make intercession for them.**

The Lord Jesus is not only our means for eternal salvation. He is not only the Mediator for us to join the new covenant or the Mediator of the beginning of this covenant. On the contrary, He continues to be with us and accompanies us in everything concerning the life that the new covenant provides us.

Christ is the One who is before the Heavenly Father and in our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, for us to grow in this salvation and to be fully saved through Him to enjoy in Him the life that God offers us in the new covenant that is according to His Eternal Gospel.

The Heavenly Father established the position of the Lord Jesus Christ as Eternal High Priest at His side so that, from this elevated position above everything and everyone, Christ is on continuous readiness to help us grow in the eternal salvation and for this salvation reach all areas of our lives.

Since Christ does not need to continue to offer sacrifices every day like the priests of the Order of Aaron, He is with the Heavenly Father to continually make intercession for us so that the Father releases His grace, His mercy, and all the provisions we need to be freer and freer in the Lord and to enjoy the novelty of life that accompanies the salvation that God offers us in Christ Jesus.

Nevertheless, we understand that it is crucial to emphasize once again that the work of Christ as our High Priest on our behalf is not automatic in all things.

The Lord Jesus makes His role as High Priest available to all who come to God through Him. If, however, one refrains from approaching Him, His role as High Priest in favor of this individual may also be restricted.

The Lord Jesus Christ said that if someone remains in Him, and He remains in the one who remains in Him, this individual also places oneself in a position of becoming abundantly fruitful in one's new condition of life in the Lord. However, if one does not remain in the Lord, the possibility of being fruitful in the newness of heavenly life also becomes significantly impaired.

God has established the provision of salvation and the remission of sins regardless of any favorable opinion of human beings. When the iniquity of human beings became evident in the most varied forms, God, instead of destroying them, caused the debt of the practice of sin and the law to fall on His Beloved Son so that sinners could have a choice of salvation from their subjection to sin and an obsolete law that could never bring them new life and eternal salvation.

The world, however, which was scandalized and still becomes scandalized by this Heavenly Father's attitude of having given His Only Begotten Son for the redemption of sinners, did not know the power of God to overcome death by Christ's resurrection from the dead once the debt of sin and law were paid off.

So, God has already made provision for salvation for all and regardless of the agreement of sinners. This aspect is already done once and for all, or ***it is finished*** forever.

Whether people accept it or are in favor of what God has done for them, or whether they reject and even intensely oppose this work of God, nothing can change or nullify what has been done for everyone once and for all. What the Lord already has done, has eternal and immutable effects that cannot be changed.

Nevertheless, concerning the service as the Mediator of the new covenant and as the One High Priest, we saw in the last text above, that Christ accomplishes it for those who receive Him in their hearts and for those who continue to draw close to God through Him.

The last text presented above does not say that Christ is the Eternal High Priest who is available to realize the complete salvation of all who try to draw near to God by any means or ways, but that He is the High Priest who can save to the uttermost those who draw close to God through Him.

In other parts of the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus further stated that His work on behalf of each individual before the Heavenly Father is also associated with how a person acknowledges Him in front of one's fellow men, as follows:

*Luke 9: 26 **For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.***

*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 salvation offered by God is available to all people!

Nevertheless, the glory of Christ regarding His interaction as the Eternal High Priest before the Heavenly Father in favor of an individual, so that one becomes perfected in Him and the newness of eternal life, is for those who come through Him to God, who confess Him as Lord before men, who are not ashamed of Him as Lord of their lives, and who do not try to approach Him and the Heavenly Father through other priests or means that were used in the Order of Aaron or similar to it.

*Psalms 118: 8 **It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man.***

*9 **It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in princes.***

*Psalms 146: 3 **Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.***

*Psalms 20: 7 **Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.***

When a person settles in one's heart that the Lord Jesus is one's only Mediator of the new covenant and the One who perfects those who adhere to this covenant, and is not ashamed of this in front of other people, one also has, before the Heavenly Father, a Perfect High Priest who never ceases to intercede for him or her so that the Heavenly Father will lead him or her to be saved entirely and to be fruitful in one's new condition of life in the Lord.

*John 15: 4 **Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.***

- 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.**

Let us note well the last text above. It does not say, at first, that someone might be thrown out because one has not produced fruit or any work together with God, but because one “*does not remain in Christ,*” for it is through Him that one can draw near to the Heavenly Father and walk in the Lord's way.

If someone reached the point of becoming disconnected from the vine, it is because, in practical life, one has already lived disconnected from it and not because one does not bear fruit, for a person is only entirely fruitless before God if, first, one does not remain in Christ.

Christ declares that no one can snatch a person out of His hand. However, by one's own will, a person may withdraw from Christ, one may cease to remain in Christ or allow others to make him or her depart from Christ.

As we have seen several times in previous chapters, when a person returns to a priesthood that has some mediation characteristic of one's relationship with God other than through Christ, one is subject to the risk of disconnecting from Christ and becoming dissociated from the grace of the heavenly kingdom.

When, however, someone remains in fellowship with Christ, one experiences what is associated with Christ and His name. And the name of our Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, the perfect and everlasting High Priest so that we too may live under a gracious and entirely fitting priesthood before Him and the Heavenly Father.

When a person responds to the call one receives from God to fellowship with Christ to the point of being in Christ and of Christ remaining in one's heart as one's Eternal Lord, that person may begin to see aspects of Christ's salvation and action that one could never think that one needed or could be accomplished in his or her life.

And to highlight here one of the central aspects that result from the work of Christ as the High Priest in favor of those who believe in Him and who remain in the fellowship with Him to which they are called, we would like to see below again a text that exposes a particular aspect that presents an enormous distinction when viewed, respectively, according to the Order of Aaron and according to the Order of Melchizedek:

Order of Aaron:

Hebrews 9: 9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience.

Order of Melchizedek:

- Hebrews 9: 11* **But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.**
- 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**
- 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,**
- 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**
- 15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.**
-

In the previous chapter, we have already addressed several considerations about the Order of Aaron. And at this point, we do not aim to return to what has already been mentioned. Here, however, we would like to highlight, once again, one of the central aspects of what the Order of Aaron **does not accomplish**. That is, the Order of Aaron does not offer conditions for the conscience of those who worship or who perform the service under it to be perfected.

On the other hand, we have the Order of Christ or Melchizedek, which also fulfills exactly the aspect mentioned above, and all that follow, that the Order of Aaron is unable to provide.

Considering that the point mentioned above is presented in chapter 9 of Hebrews as an essential differentiating aspect of the result of the action of the two orders, it seems to us, then, to be of great significance to know this particular aspect more closely.

Thus, we can see that the last text presented above teaches us that the blood of Christ, shed in our favor when Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our redemption, “***will clean or purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!***”

Now, what *dead works*, then, are those that are also considered to be associated with the first covenant or the Order of Aaron?

What is the mentioned *conscience* that needs to be cleansed from *dead works*?

Among one of its main aspects, the word *conscience* is associated with:

- ⇒ 1) *Being aware of something;*
- ⇒ 2) *Having a belief that something must be done;*
- ⇒ 3) *Having a surety that something must be done or set aside respectively because of the awareness of feeling obliged to do something or the awareness of being forbidden to do something.*

The Order of Aaron was an order full of exterior obligations that had to be fulfilled, and even under severe threats if someone did not fulfill them.

Thus, for example, “a child who grew up hearing that he or she had to go to a worship meeting weekly to avoid being in serious sin and subject to condemnation,” may have come to have constituted an “unquestionable personal conscience,” conviction, or awareness that one needs to go to a service every week to fulfill the will of God, even though the will of the Lord does not match this surety that one has in one's heart.

That is, a person may become subject, restricted, or even enslaved to what one carries in one's own conscience!

Considering that it is widely possible that a person's convictions or certainties may be contrary to God's will, even without one realizing it, what has been stored in a person's most profound set of certainties (or in one's conscience), may also come to restrict an individual or imprison him or her to a life subject to its own convictions when one adopts the attitude of “never acting against the set of parameters that make up his or her conscience.”

An individual who only follows one's own conscience, or one's set of parameters formatted over the years by human traditions and cultures to discern what is good and what is evil, may go so far as to become insensible to symptoms that signal that one needs help, as we saw two chapters ago.

The effect of the works required by the priesthoods with characteristics of the Order of Aaron or the first covenant might be so intense in the hearts of people that although their works are contrary to God, many individuals continue to practice them because they have a conviction or awareness that it is for God that they must do these works.

The result of the works of the priesthoods that follow precepts similar to those of the Order of Aaron, even if only in parts, may lead those who submit themselves to them to have a deep and sincere desire to please God, but that, at the same time, is contrary to God because of the nature of the works that they teach people to practice.

There are many situations in which a person resists something different from what his or her conscience says, for he or she, honestly or sincerely, does not want to go against one's conscience, but, even though, one might be wrong despite all one's intention of honesty and sincerity.

The “conscience of a person” or “the set of inner certainties” may become an almost impenetrable system or set of parameters.

We said almost in the previous paragraph because there is no impossible for God. And for the Lord, there is no darkness that the Light of Christ cannot illuminate.

If someone says to the child exemplified above, after he or she has become an adult, that, before God, one is not obliged to keep the command to go to services or worship meetings every week, this may seem to him or her absurd or even a big offense, because that individual has registered in one's conscience, or profound convictions, some principles that are very difficult to be contradicted by him or her.

Thus, if, on the one hand, the Order of Aaron presents an emphasis on exterior works or that seem godly before people, on the other hand, it seeks to sediment, settle, or establish rules and concepts through constant repetition so that they are assimilated in the most intimate parts of an individual's mind, seeking to generate in the soul a high appreciation and

dependence regarding these works, but which, not even for this reason, have any value before the Lord.

Isaiah 29: 13 Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,

14 Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden."

15 Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, And their works are in the dark; They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?"

16 Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; For shall the thing made say of him who made it, "He did not make me"? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

The Order of Aaron is based on weak foundation. For this reason, it resorts to attempts at discipline or the use of resources to write its precepts in “thresholds, on the forehead, on the wrists,” just as it needs meetings and periodic events to announce or amplify its precepts so that the people do not leave them and do not forget them. This effort, however, is vain.

The Order of Aaron needs firm disciplines and agendas to stay active. And in the beginning, for a very undisciplined person, it even may seem that discipline and repeated agendas have some benefits. However, over the years, all these obligations and agendas become burdens, for they are external impositions on hearts that have not been transformed through an appropriate inner change.

And since the Lord has already declared the first priesthood, the old covenant, or the priesthood of the Order of Aaron revoked, obsolete, and relocated to ***a parable for the present time***, how much more will not be considered dead the works that are done nowadays according to this priesthood declared weak and useless?

On the other hand, the attitude of a person not wanting to contradict one's conscience, in itself, is good.

It is not good for an individual to adopt a life attitude of acting against one's own conscience, for the conscience is a tool of protection that God Himself gives to human beings. However, when the conscience is based on inadequate parameters or concepts regarding God's will, this conscience needs that it is taken from it what does not come from God in order for a person, then, live and walk indeed according to a “good conscience.”

In its attempts to keep individuals subject to it, the Order of Aaron even praises a good virtue of people, which is the alert system that the conscience generates concerning their decisions. On the other hand, however, it acts in a harmful way to people when it tries to instill in them content or precepts that are inadequate, according to its law, or that indeed are not good parameters for each person's conscience.

Therefore, regarding this last point, **we believe it is crucial to emphasize that the Priesthood of Christ does not aim to remove the gift of having a conscience and the warnings it produces, but it is offered to us by the Lord so that we may change the content that is in our conscience.**

The work of Christ as our High Priest is offered to us according to the Order of Melchizedek, and not the Order of Aaron, for it alone is able to purify our conscience or our set of certainties so that we indeed come to be freed from the old, revoked, or obsolete content. And this, so that, now without the veil of the old covenant and under the care of Christ in His condition as High Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, we may begin to understand the instruction of God that Christ wants to teach us so that we may also live and walk according to the truth.

It is for a renewal of understanding, to the point of correcting the most profound convictions or certainties of the conscience, that the Scriptures declare that ***much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!***

A person who easily or lightly acts against one's conscience may become a very vulnerable person also to become insensitive and lean more and more towards evil or perverse ways. For this reason, the Lord Jesus does not act to nullify the conscience. On the contrary, the Lord works on those who trust in Him to strengthen their consciences for them to be supported to know how to reject evil, or that which does not come from God, and to cooperate with them so that they may become established in the teaching or instruction of what is according to the eternal will of God.

1 Timothy 4: 1 ***Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,***
2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.

Titus 1: 13 ***This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,***
14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.
15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

Philippians 2: 12 ***Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;***
13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

As we have already mentioned, in His ministry as High Priest, the Lord Jesus does not want to act in order to lead a person to “violate” one's conscience and make it inactive. On the contrary, Christ wants to help the person to have a correct conscience or which is aligned with the truth.

The Lord Jesus wants each person to have certainties of understanding, but this, in true things before God and not in the things that the natural man has tried to impose on him or her, an aspect also confirmed several times by Paul, as exemplified below:

1 Thessalonians 1: 5 ***For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.***

Acts 24: 16 ***This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.***

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.

Colossians 4: 12 ***Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.***

The assignment of working both “to will and to do” in the one who follows the instruction to seek Christ as the Eternal High Priest is due to God. And as the will and the working it out also pass through the approval system of a person or one's conscience, it is also in this set of assurances that the Lord Jesus is willing to help those who yearn to live and walk in the will of God and not in the will of the world, of their fellow men, or in the will that seeks to rely on the self-righteousness of an individual or the works that one practices.

As for an individual's set of convictions or certainties becoming aligned with the truth or the will of God, no Christian has the right to try to impose one's will on one's neighbor or to try to get others to do one's will and not the Lord's will. The attempt to impose the personal will to one's fellow men is a return to flirting with the principles of the mediation system or the law of the covenant of the Order of Aaron.

Therefore:

*2 Corinthians 1: 12 **For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.***

*1 Timothy 1: 5 **Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,***

*19 **having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck.***

Thus, the texts that we saw above show us that there is both *good conscience* and *defiled conscience*, and also that there are even those who have their conscience as if seared with a hot iron or become insensible, which is evil and leads them to be even more perverse.

As we have already mentioned, **God does not aim for people's consciences to become inactive, but to provide them with a conscience that is in line with the Lord's will and the way of doing it according to *the things which are above*.**

And still, in terms of the condition of each person reaching a renewed conscience in God also concerning past contact with the dead works and the transgressions under the first covenant, it seems to us to be productive to quote, from time to time, the example of Peter's life, one of Christ's apostles.

When Peter had an encounter with the Lord Jesus for the first time, he believed in Christ and promptly followed the Master.

Later on, when the Lord rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples, the Lord told His apostles to go to the nations and make "disciples of Christ," not of themselves, and to do it in all peoples and preaching the Gospel to every creature, a statement that was clearly also addressed to Peter (cf. Matthew 28).

In these same days, the Lord Jesus also told His disciples that they would be witnesses of Him to the ends of the Earth after receiving power through the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them.

It seems to us, then, so far, that Christ's instruction that God's salvation was for all people, and not just for the Jews or Abraham's descendants according to the flesh, was apparent and did not need to be more objective than it was.

Nevertheless, in Peter's conscience, what Christ said so explicitly was not so clear and was not so objective. Although Christ said what He said, Peter's conscience did not register, at that moment, the meaning of what Christ said to him.

Thus, when later, even after Christ had already been taken to heaven, the Lord Jesus calls Peter to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (to non-Jews according to the flesh), the Lord first, according to Acts 10, had to deal with the conscience of Peter, because even after finding salvation in the Lord, Peter's conscience still contained in its filter system several instructions from the Order of Aaron. Although saved, a disciple of Christ, and one of those who had seen Jesus being crucified, killed, buried, and resurrected in his

favor, Peter still had some convictions or certainties associated with some concepts of the Order of Aaron that still held him back from following God's will in some areas.

To count on Peter's willingness and free will to carry out the Heavenly Father's will, the Lord Jesus had to deal with the content of Peter's conscience so that he could go in peace and preach the gospel to Cornelius who was a Gentile, a man of the court or the army of the Romans.

But had not the Lord already objectively told the disciples and Peter, at least twice, that they should go to all peoples and proclaim the Gospel so that their individuals could also become disciples according to this same Gospel?

Yes, the Lord had already declared that the Gospel to be preached is for all people. However, according to the filter of his conscience, Peter just did not perceive or did not see what Christ spoke to him or, at least, did not see how Christ saw what He announced to His disciples.

The Lord had to deal with Peter separately or personally to show what was in His disciple's heart and to provide Peter with deliverance from profound or deep-seated convictions or certainties in his conscience so that Peter, then, could continue serving the Lord as the Lord wanted and not according to the obsolete content that until that moment was still in Peter's conscience.

- Acts 10: 10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance*
- 11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.*
- 12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.*
- 13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."*
- 14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."*
- 15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."*
- 16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.*
- 17 Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.*
- 18 And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.*
- 19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you."*
- 20 "Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."*
-

According to the narrative in the text above, Peter was not having difficulties in "wanting and being willing" to do God's will. Peter was having a hard time agreeing with the Lord's will because what was presented to him contradicted what was firmly embedded in his conscience, but which, at the same time, also needed to be removed from it in the light of the truth of Him who is our Eternal High Priest.

Peter was convinced that what he thought about a particular subject was right, but which, in reality, was not true in the light of the Priestly Order of Christ. What Peter considered to be true was still a remnant of the old covenant that had already been declared obsolete.

Nevertheless, since Peter had chosen to be under the Order of Melchizedek, the High Priest of this order came to Peter to help him *for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant* and to *clean his conscience from dead works* so that he could *serve the living God*.

As the High Priest of the Heavenly Order that is according to Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus knows our insides and how to deliver us from those convictions that seem to be good but which are not, which are contrary to Him or contrary to the heavenly will.

The Lord Jesus knows how to expose to us even what we strongly think is correct, but which indeed is not according to the truth or that we are not seeing how it should be seen because of the cultures and traditions that have been taught to us. And yet, the Lord knows how to do it perfectly and without destroying our conscience.

Thus, the same Peter mentioned above, several years after the experience narrated in the book of Acts, writes:

- 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.***
*22 **Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,***
*23 **having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.***

That Peter, who thought he was sincerely doing something right by abstaining from the Gentiles, and who still had reservations in the conscience concerning that God wanted to save people who were of different peoples from the one in which he was born, later in his life describes that God acts without partiality and that the Lord, because of His blood shed on the cross of Calvary on behalf of all, is also fully powerful to purify the conscience and soul of all those who expose themselves to Christ as the Lord and the High Priest of their lives.

Only after Peter was personally exposed to the work of his High Priest Christ that he came to see that it was no longer appropriate to call unclean for what God had made a

perfect provision to reconcile everything with Himself, whether on Earth or in Heaven, as Paul also describes in the following text:

Colossians 1: 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.

Considering that sin and the law of the Order of Aaron are means to subject creation to slavery, once Christ condemned sin and the law in its ineffectiveness and weakness, or removed the obstacles that prevented the reconciliation of everything with God, also the whole concept of what was pure or unclean under the law of Moses was condemned or made obsolete. And this was one of the central points or certainties regarding which Peter needed to have his conscience adjusted.

Peter had heard Christ saying that the Gospel was for everyone. However, he still needed a more profound intervention from the Lord on his behalf to also appropriately understand what was previously said to him by the Lord Jesus.

Although Peter was exposed several times to the word of the Lord Jesus on the matter of the Gospel being revealed to the world as an offer of salvation and newness of life to all human beings, Peter only came to understand what the Lord had said to him because he remained in fellowship with Christ even after the Lord Jesus had already been taken into heaven to carry out, from there, His current ministry of the Eternal High Priest.

Therefore, let us note that the Scriptures teach us that the power of Christ also manifested through His blood shed on the cross of Calvary to forgive us of our sins and the association with priestly laws contrary to God is not limited to the past and the aspect of forgiveness, but it continues to act vividly on those who have fellowship with the Lord so that their hearts may be searched for the purification of their conscience so that they may leave the evil ways and so that they may see and follow the path of eternal life.

Psalms 139: 1 **O LORD, You have searched me and known me.**
2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.
3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways.

...

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;
24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

1 John 1: 9 **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

What the order of Aaron can never bring to light, much less purify, the Lord Jesus is powerful to expose and instruct us in such a way that we may receive the forgiveness that He offers us and have our conscience purified from the deepest convictions or certainties that do not come from God.

The benefit of being able to reach a renewed mind besides the forgiveness of sins is indescribable, and it is real, powerful, and available to those who allow the Lord Jesus Christ to be the daily and eternal High Priest in their hearts and on their behalf before God.

*Psalms 19: 14 **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.***

And what about the example of Paul, better known previously also by the name Saul? How many sincere but wrong convictions, certainties, or zeal did this man not have in his conscience?

Nevertheless, through continuous living fellowship with the Lord Jesus, Paul was cleansed of those sincere certainties and zeal that were not grounded on the truth and the righteousness of God.

Thus, in describing the baptism that God offers us in Christ, Peter says that baptism in the Lord Jesus is not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a “good conscience” toward God.

The Baptism in Christ, lived daily in fellowship with Christ, makes us dive or immerse in the Lord Jesus. And through this process, the Lord shows us that He is able to purify our conscience, exposing to us for what we were included in His death and burial, as well as for what we have been included in His resurrection for the newness of life granted by God.

*1 Peter 3: 18 **For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,***

*19 **by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,**
20 **who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.***

*21 **There is also an antitype which now saves us, baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,***

*22 **who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.***

The figure of immersion in water is a didactic example, a symbol, or a picture of what it means to be baptized with the baptism of fellowship with the Lord in His condition as our Only Eternal High Priest and the results that we may expect for our soul or conscience arising of this fellowship with this High Priest and Eternal Lord.

Through our association with Christ or through being baptized in Christ, we have in Him the benefits provided by His death on the cross of Calvary or by the blood that was shed for us in His death.

Nevertheless, **the benefits provided by the death of the Lord Jesus, in turn, are offered to us so that we also may have the benefits of fellowship with the risen Christ, eternally alive, and present before the Heavenly Father and in our hearts, being one of them to be cleansed of convictions, certainties, or understandings contrary to God so that we also may have a good conscience towards the Father of Lights.**

To remain in the baptism granted to us by God in Christ is also expressed by the permanence in the relationship with the Lord Jesus's living work, who was exalted in favor of those who were inserted in Him and abide in Him.

Therefore, many principles or practices of life dissociated from the will of God, including those from the old covenant or the Order of Aaron, remain so active even in the lives of many Christians who have already believed in the salvation provided by the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary because many Christians do not know, have not been taught, or do not access the glory of Christ as the Eternal High Priest capable or powerful both to purify their conscience and to grant them the necessary understanding of what God's will truly is for their lives.

It is not surprising that the devil is so committed to the attempts to keep the Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ obscure before people, as we have already seen in the chapter on the Glory of Christ as also the Light of the Gospel of God.

*2 Corinthians 4: 3 **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,***
*4 **whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.***

And yet specifically regarding having an appropriate conscience or set of convictions before God, or having a renewed conscience in Christ, we would also like to highlight that one of the main strategies that the devil tries to use to try to confuse people so that they do not reach a good conscience is the way of preaching parts of the Gospel itself, but under the focus or the banner of exalting the supposed preachers.

That is why Paul declared:

*2 Corinthians 4: 5 **For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.***

In other words, one of the devil's most cunning strategies is to try to promote preachers who use parts of the Scriptures associated with the Gospel to preach themselves and not Christ Jesus as Lord, the Unique Mediator, and the only High Priest for the life of a Christian.

Instead of preachers pointing to the exclusive greatness of Christ and the need for the help of the Lord that they themselves present because of their many weaknesses,

the strategy against Christians aims to seek to exalt the preachers more and more, thus trying to obscure the glory of the One Pastor and Bishop of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although every Christian already has a High Shepherd of one's soul, in the world, there are many who also want to be the shepherds of Christians and who use their preaching to try to persuade people to follow them. They are preachers who partly preach the Gospel, but who do so to attract the trust of individuals and even multitudes to their own priestly systems, which, in one way or another, will present characteristics of the Order of Aaron since they are based on fleshly intentions as was the old covenant priesthood.

In one way or another, preachers with the above characteristics try to rescue the class differentiation that existed in the old covenant in order to rise above others instead of indicating that there is only one way that can purify the depths of a person's conscience, and which is the personal relationship of each individual with one's Lord and Eternal High Priest Jesus Christ.

Contrary to the teaching that Christ is present with every Christian also as the High Priest of those who believe in Him, many men and women try to impose their words that seem to be of godliness on the consciences of their fellow men to overshadow with subtlety their personal, simple, and direct relationship with Christ so that they come to walk according to the precepts that they teach and not according to the Lord's will.

*1 Corinthians 1: 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."
13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*

...
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?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?

Acts 20: 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

32 So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

What, however, the Lord Jesus Christ has provided for each individual is:

Hebrews 10: 19 *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,*
 20 *by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,*
 21 *and having a High Priest over the house of God,*
 22 *let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*
 23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

Concerning the last text above, someone may still think: “But I still cannot approach God, for I still do not have a sincere heart and a cleansed conscience.”

Nevertheless, it is also precisely concerning this point that Christ assists us as Our Eternal High Priest seated at the Heavenly Father's right hand.

If someone still thinks that one needs some self-righteousness to approach the Heavenly Father, one should review this position, for one can always draw close to Jesus, who, as the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, is readily willing to assist that individual to be released from things that could prevent him or her to come to be reconciled with God. And Christ Himself can teach this person about the certainty that because of the Lord's blood shed on Calvary's cross, one can come freely to God in faith with the assurance that one too will be accepted by the Heavenly Father.

The priests of the Order of Aaron entered into earthly tabernacles in the name of others to try to represent them before God so that their sins could be covered for some time, as a manner of postponing the execution of the condemning sentence of those who were associated with it. But under the old covenant, no one was ever definitively forgiven, nor had the soul purified from the dead works of the Priestly Order itself to which one was subject, for, in this priesthood, no one was able to go beyond the confession of sins and advance to a continuous fellowship with God.

In Christ, however, in addition to having in Him the forgiveness of sins and the dead works of the old covenant or similar to it, we may advance, through Him, to the stages of becoming perfected by the Lord even in the conscience towards God and for the rejection of what is opposed to the way of the newness of life in the Lord.

The Lord Jesus represents before God those who come to Him. But in the heavenly tabernacle, in the true and eternal Most Holy place, He goes much further than that. In addition to representing those who believe in Him as their One High Priest, the Lord Jesus prepares them so that each one of them may also continually come before the Heavenly Father and have a renewed mind to understand the will of God and not be in a position of resistance to the Lord.

The ministry of the Lord Jesus is a priesthood of compassion and mercy, but also of grace and love that, unlike the Order of Aaron, does not leave the person away from fellowship while the High Priest goes into the holy place.

In His ministry as the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, Christ prepares those who believe in Him to be able to live together with Him each day before the Heavenly Father.

*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,***
*4 **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.***

*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.***

Thus, through His position as the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, and not of the Order of Aaron, the Lord Jesus Christ:

- ⇒ 1) Presented before God the perfect and unique sacrifice for the salvation of all human beings;
- ⇒ 2) Provides that salvation becomes the personal experience of everyone who calls on Him as Lord and believes that God raised Him from the dead;
- ⇒ 3) Through living, continuous, and growing action toward those who believe in Him, He purifies their conscience of convictions, understandings, or certainties that are contrary to the will of God and that produce dead works;
- ⇒ 4) Introduces the saved individual to the presence of the Heavenly Father for fellowship with the Creator and for one to know the Father's will for his or her life;
- ⇒ 5) Continues to show mercy toward those who believe in Him, continually acting as an intercessor and helper of those who receive Him also in His condition as one's Exclusive Eternal High Priest.

As we saw at the beginning of this material, **God has appointed the Lord Jesus Christ to speak with us in the present time, in the days after Christ's death and resurrection, because the Heavenly Father knows that He will also be entirely faithful in bringing those who believe in Him to the presence of the Father Himself.**

The Father designated the Lord Jesus as the living messenger and as the exclusive Mediator of the relationship of every person with God because Christ in everything is the faithful and the living way for people, through the righteousness of the heavenly kingdom and not of men, to return to the

Creator and Heavenly Father for an intimate fellowship with Him in His condition of the Eternal Father.

- John 16: 23 And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.*
- 24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*
- 25 These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.*
- 26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;*
- 27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.*

When someone approaches the High Priest and the Lord Jesus also so that the Lord may instruct him or her for the purification of conscience and grant him or her a conscience aligned with a life according to the perspective of the will of God, the Lord is strengthening him or her to advance to experiencing what it is called in the Scriptures as “*LIVING IN CHRIST.*”

The revelation of the glory of Christ as Savior is also increased by Christ in His position as Lord and later as the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek. And if we accept the fact that Christ is our representative before the Heavenly Father and God's representative in our hearts, He will continually be in us, and we will continually be in Him before the Father of Lights.

When are we “His?”

When we trust that Christ represents us fully before the Heavenly Father and when we accept that the Lord Jesus in everything can also represent the Eternal Father in our hearts, we advance to position ourselves in what the Scriptures call *to be His* or *to be in Him*.

And if Christ is in us, and we are in Christ, we also may be in the Spirit where He is, that is, before the Heavenly Father.

If someone merely declares that one is seated in the heavenly places, this does not make that he or she will indeed find oneself in this condition, for it is through fellowship with the Eternal High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, who assists us before the Heavenly Father, that someone is *in Christ*.

We can only be in God's heavenly places if we are in Christ, for it is in Christ that we have Him as our eternal righteousness so that we may stand before the Heavenly Father and be appropriately assisted to also remain before the Heavenly Father.

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.

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."

Ephesians 2:11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands;

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.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

As our Eternal High Priest, Christ brings us closer and presents us before the Heavenly Father as priests as well. Christ never wants to work for us to keep us away from the Father of Lights and all true love, for to reconcile us to God and also to assist us as the High Priest who lives forever is that He died in our place.

When we come to have Christ as our light, we can get to know the Father of Lights more, for the Lord is the perfect Mediator of the New Covenant and is also the perfect High Priest who assists us to reach the Heavenly Father and to stand before the Eternal Father every day of our life.

Revelation 1: 4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,
6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The Heavenly Father's call for people to daily relate to Him or continually practice the priesthood before Him is a call to a condition offered by the Lord to all that can really be experienced.

Nevertheless, the call to be continually before God also refers to a personal experience that can only be achieved together with Christ in His eternal position as the High Priest of those who believe in Him.

After a person begins to allow Christ to teach him or her to see and relate to Him as the Eternal High Priest and who offers him or her a light and easy yoke, where Christ is the Eternal High Priest and the Christian is a priest together with Christ, the Lord Jesus teaches him or her to rest in Him and to see, believe, receive, and act more and more in the Heavenly Father's will, leading this Christian to enjoy the Heavenly Father's presence, the Heavenly Father's will, as well as to live a life that glorifies the Lord.

Therefore, our prayer at this point is that God may grant grace also to the Christians of our day and future generations so that they always may have their eyes enlightened with the "Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ and the Glory of God" so that they never depart from the understanding that Christ is also the One Eternal High Priest who can help each Christian to carry out the position that each one has as a priest of one's life before the Heavenly Father.

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

Philippians 1: 9 ***And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,***
10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,
11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

C23. The Glory Full of Love and Mercy of the High Priest Jesus Who Leads Us to the Other Facets of God's Glory

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 so-called new covenant is the only means by which a person can come to have an adequate, satisfactory, continuous, and growing relationship established with God.

On the other hand, the new covenant is a covenant or agreement between parties so unique and sublime that it needs an entirely appropriate Mediator so that it can be adequately put into practice or established, and concerning which, Christ is the only authorized Mediator by God, for Christ also became the Son of Man promised as a descendant of Abraham who died on the cross of Calvary for the redemption of sinners and to be the legal representative of all human beings before God.

As the Mediator of the new covenant, Christ knows all aspects of life both from people who have not yet become reconciled with the Eternal Creator and from people who are already reconciled with God, for He is the Only Mediator of God concerning all aspects of the life of all human beings, as we have seen before.

As the Mediator of the new covenant, Christ hears the cry of the afflicted who do not yet know the salvation offered by God, offers the Gospel of this salvation to all people in the world, introduces into the new covenant those who receive the salvation offered by God, and continues to give support and instruction to everyone who receives the salvation and eternal life granted by the Heavenly Father.

On the one hand, Christ is the perfect and unique Mediator of the new covenant because He alone is the express image of the glory that manifests to human beings who and how God is. On the other hand, He is the unique Mediator because He alone is a perfect and a legal representative of human beings before God and who has a full or perfect provision made through His death on the cross of Calvary to demonstrate before God that all human beings have had their eternal debts with sin and the law of the first priesthood, or similar to it, paid off.

Christ, on the one hand, is the perfect and unique Mediator who allows people on Earth, even in their weaknesses, limitations, or deficiencies, to know God in the full measure they need it, but also as much as they can endure while still in the present world. And on the other hand, Christ is the perfect and only Mediator who allows people to present themselves to God properly justified and supported so that God does not reject them for their faults, sins, and works that would put them in a condition of eternal condemnation before the righteousness and the judgment of God.

Christ is the perfect heavenly revelation of God to the world and the ideal means of connecting God with human beings, but the Lord Jesus is also the one who can present each imperfect human being in an acceptable way before God so that each person, individually and by one's own choice, may reconnect (relate) with God as it is indeed necessary and not only remain as if one were merely another element existing in the creation or the world.

Nevertheless, when we still move further to see Christ as the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, in addition to seeing the confirmation that Christ is the only living way for us to reach the fellowship with the Heavenly Father, we may also come to learn and experience more closely other aspects related to this Lord Jesus who provides us with the reconciliation and fellowship of God with human beings and of human beings with God.

To know Christ as the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek is to go beyond the informative and general knowledge that Christ is the Way to Eternal Life, passing to a more practical or tangible understanding of who this Lord is, who is readily willing to guide us on this Way, to grant us the Truth and the Novelty of Eternal Life, and to teach us to live and walk in the Truth and Newness of Life that is granted by God along with the Gospel.

To know Christ as the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek is to advance in the practical knowledge of how Christ acts in His functions of Way, Truth, and Life, and also, how He is willing to support and teach us so that we too may live and walk in what is offered to us together with eternal salvation.

To say that Christ is the One Mediator of the new covenant, never of the old covenant, to say that Christ is the Way without which no one has access to God, or to say that Christ is the Only Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek are, in a way, synonyms, having, however, as a difference, the fact that when we also know the Lord as the Mediator of the new covenant and the High Priest according to this new covenant, we also have access to several aspects of how Christ, in a practical way, performs the function of being for us the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Without a person being exposed to the position of Christ as the Eternal High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, one may have more difficulty to understand the access to an appropriate relationship with God, for this position of Christ as the High Priest is a tangible means by which Christ fulfills His function as the Way, the Truth, and the Eternal Life towards us.

Although over the centuries, many people have had access to Christ and an intense relationship with God even without more specific knowledge about the fact that the Lord Jesus is the High Priest of their lives, they only had this relationship closer to God because of Christ's position as the High Priest of their lives.

We emphasize here, then, that Christ is the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek whether people recognize Him as such, whether they do not recognize Him, or whether they do not even know this truth. However, if people reach a more precise or comprehensive understanding of this aspect, they may also become able to grow even more intensely in their relationship with God.

The fact that people are unaware of the truth that Christ is the Eternal High Priest of their lives is not an impediment to salvation. If someone calls out to Christ as the Lord of one's life, one already receives salvation by this act. However, if those who receive Christ also come to know the glory of Christ as the High Priest of their lives, they may benefit even more in practical aspects of their new condition of relationship with God.

Because they do not even know what Christ's position as High Priest represents for a person's life or because they only know superficially what this glorious condition of Christ means, many people have abstained themselves from benefiting from countless

aspects that may arise on their behalf from a more appropriate relationship with the Lord also in His priestly position.

Therefore, **the position or function of Christ as the Eternal High Priest is not something to be despised or feared, for Christ was not established eternally by God in this condition for the condemnation of human beings, but He was placed in it so that, through mercy, love, and peace, He may help people even more in their reconciliation and relationship with God.**

As the Eternal High Priest, Christ presented a single eternal provision before God so that all people's eternal debt to sin and the laws of damning priesthoods became paid off.

Nevertheless, **Christ presented the eternal provision once and for all precisely so that now, and in every new day, we may benefit from the benefits of this work already accomplished by the Lord, and regarding which, the greatest gift, undoubtedly, is the relationship with God, for it is also through this relationship that the Lord manifests to us more widely the provision of other aspects of the newness of life that is found in Him.**

Let us look again at some texts already mentioned in the present subject, but with the attention more emphatically directed to the reconciliation with God and to the great condition of help and mercy that is offered to us in the position of Christ as the Eternal High Priest who has been granted to us eternally by God:

Romans 5: 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.**

2 Corinthians 5: 18 **Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,**

19 **that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

20(b) **Now then, ... We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.**

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.**

Hebrews 2: 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

...
 4: 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.*

When we come to see more closely the condition of Christ as the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, placed in this position in our favor, we come across a challenge to even highlight what is most precious and sublime among so many other aspects that also are so precious and sublime.

Nevertheless, **if we highlight the purpose for which Christ was established as High Priest, we can see that everything that Christ has done in the past has always sought and still aims to benefit us from the greatest good that all His actions may provide us, which is: The relationship with the Heavenly Father, with Christ, and with the Holy Spirit through the eternal grace of God.**

In the subjects on The Gospel of Salvation, The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, and The Gospel of the Grace of the Lord, we have repeatedly addressed the aspects that salvation is offered to us in Christ not only for our remission from the condition of being lost, but so that, after receiving redemption, we may come to live and walk under the condition of people saved and free in the Lord.

Similarly, we addressed the aspect that God's righteousness is offered to us as a means of justification and reconciliation with the Heavenly Father also to live and walk as people free from eternal condemnation, just as the redemptive grace is offered to us as well for us to live and walk under the Lord's everlasting grace.

Here, however, we would like to emphasize that **in the condition of Christ as the Eternal High Priest of those who believe in Him, God wants to show us and teach us about the One who is readily willing to support and lead us to live and walk as justified, saved, and through the Heavenly Father's eternal grace.**

As the Eternal High Priest of the Living God according to the Order of Melchizedek, Christ was established in this condition by God as the New and Living Way precisely so that, after we have received salvation, we may continue to approach freely and continuously to the one and sublime throne of grace and mercy, and so that from this throne, the Lord may continue to assign His superabundant and endless goodness to us in all the days of our lives.

Christ is the Way or the Mediator revealed by the mercy of God towards all and so that all may choose to receive salvation in the Lord, as already explained more widely in the subjects mentioned above.

*Psalms 25: 8 **Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.***

- 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.***

Nevertheless, **when the Scriptures teach us that Christ is the New and Living Way for us to come near to God, they are not restricting themselves only to the means for an individual to receive God's salvation, but also so that the saved individual may keep approaching God or even continually remain in the Lord.**

Christ's position as the Eternal High Priest who is willing to work on behalf of those who already believe in Him comes to emphasize that we continue to need Him as the Way to advance in the knowledge of the Truth and the Novelty of Eternal Life, as well as to be instructed and supported to live and walk according to the Truth and the new condition of life that is offered us in the Lord.

We also emphasize here that, on the one hand, the book of Hebrews can undoubtedly serve as a support for a non-Christian person to come to receive information to come to decide in favor of Christ and receiving eternal salvation through Him. But on the other hand, we would like to point out that the book of Hebrews is primarily addressed to Christians so that they may come to know with whom they can count on in Heaven and on Earth to live and walk in the new condition they received through the salvation that was given them by the Lord.

In one of its central or primordial aspects, the book of Hebrews was given to us by God so that Christians realize whom they need and whom they can count on after they have been saved!

The book of Hebrews is a gift from God to those who believe in the Lord to know that it is in Christ Jesus that they have the Way to know the Truth and Novelty of Life that is available to them after salvation, to be instructed and strengthened in the Truth and the Novelty of Life in the Lord, and so that they may attain the benefits that accompany living and walking in the Way of God, in the Truth, and in the Newness of Life that is in the Lord.

Although we can never fully express with human words the sublime and the greatness of the grace and mercy revealed to us in the redemption offered to us by God in Christ Jesus, Christ's position as High Priest adds even more glory to this grace and mercy, showing us God, that grace and mercy continue to be offered to us abundantly to accompany us every day from the moment we receive salvation and eternal life in the Lord.

As discussed in the subject on The Gospel of God's Righteousness, the heavenly righteousness that justifies a person through the Lord's grace and mercy for salvation is

the same righteousness that continues to justify him or her according to God's grace and mercy after having received salvation in the Lord.

*Romans 5: 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.***

Just as Christ is the Mediator for people to come to receive salvation to be part of the new covenant, so Christ is the expression of grace and mercy for people to be guided and helped by God to live and walk under this new covenant and to continue to receive abundant grace and mercy every day of their lives.

In the Scriptures, we can explicitly see that the Lord's favor is not limited to leading people to an encounter with eternal salvation. The kindness of the Lord is also offered to them so that it may also accompany them from the moment they come to be under the condition of redeemed by the Lord, as exemplified below:

*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.***

*Psalms 23: 6 **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.***

Through Christ, a person is called to receive salvation to be part of the Lord's Heavenly House. However, through Christ, a person is also called to enjoy the benefits of this Heavenly House of the Eternal Father.

Through Christ's position as the Eternal High Priest in the heavenly tabernacle, God has reserved an abundance of blessings to those who, also through Christ, received the salvation that the Lord offered them through His grace and mercy.

*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.

If one does not yet know how to receive the redemptive grace of God, it is because one does not yet know the glory of the Lord and Savior who can lead him or her to receive, through faith, this saving grace.

Nevertheless, if someone who has already been saved does not yet know the Way to advance towards the abundance of grace and mercy for all the days of one's life, this may be because one does not yet know the glory of Christ as one's only and personal Eternal High Priest according to the Priestly Order of love, peace, and heavenly grace, and not according to the limited and fleshly conditions of priesthods similar to the Order of Aaron.

Because Christ, both on Earth and in Heaven, accomplished the entirely satisfactory consecration of the path of reconciliation between God and human beings and between people and God, the Heavenly Father also revealed the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ as the Eternal High Priest by whom the relationship with God can be achieved by those who have received eternal salvation granted to them through the Lord's mercy and grace.

Therefore, **considering that Christ loved us to the end in His time as the Son of Man on Earth so that the Way of reconciliation with God would be perfectly established, will He not manifest much more of His love so that we too may know much more the Heavenly Father's love after the path of reconciliation has been revealed so wonderfully both on Earth and in Heaven?**

John 13: 1 **Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.**

John 17: 25 **(Prayer of the Lord Jesus) "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.**

26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Romans 5: 17 **... those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**

Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life because through Him and in Him, we have access to the One God of all Truth and Life. However, it is also through the function of the Eternal High Priest, according to the Order of Melchizedek, that Christ strengthens us in God so that we may always be receiving in a living and practical way the Truth and Life of God also in us.

Christ is given to us as the eternal salvation because He is the perfect provision for our forgiveness of the eternal yoke of sin and because He is the High Priest who introduces us to reconciliation with God. However, along with salvation, He is also given to us as the High Priest to instruct and guide us to live reconciled with God and to continue to access the throne of grace to, thus, also be in us the Helper and King of Glory who in everything can guide us to be more than conquerors in Him.

Every access to God and every access from God to us passes through the position of Christ also as the High Priest. It is also from Christ's position as our High Priest, and our reconciliation with God through this position, that all other facets of the grace and glory of God and Christ are manifested and made available to us, such as having Christ also as the Supreme Shepherd and the King of Glory over our lives.

Thus, together with salvation, we receive Christ in our hearts for Him to lead us to be in Him, because by being in Him, we are before God in the heavenly places so that, from this highest place, Christ may be our fortress, our Shepherd, and King of Glory over our lives. And this, in turn, so that we may also walk according to the will of God so that we may see the glory of God instructing us in every day and things of our lives.

If a person already knows that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, one will already be able to benefit a lot from it and relate to God under this understanding. However, when someone comes to know more closely the love, grace, and mercy through which Christ, as the Eternal High Priest, wants to instruct that person and grant him or her the Truth and the eternal Life, one may be strengthened even more to advance in trust in the Lord or towards life through faith in God in the most diverse areas of one's life.

The human being does not even know how to pray appropriately to God. Therefore, as the Eternal and unchanging High Priest, Christ, through the Holy Spirit, offers to help Christians in everything and at all times if only they remain in Him.

And in addition to helping us pray to God, Christ Himself also intercedes for us in Heaven before God and being in us on Earth through the Spirit of the Lord that has been granted to us in our hearts.

In Christ, we have continual representation before God both in Heaven and on Earth, showing that in everything, the love of Christ is with us to protect, strengthen, and help us to live and walk continuously under the goodness and eternal grace of God.

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.

27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

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?

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Hebrews 7: 23 **Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.**

24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Finally, in this chapter, we understand that yet another reason why God wants us to know the Glory of Christ in His position as the High Priest on our behalf before the Heavenly Father, and by which He has already acted on our behalf by presenting before the Heavenly Father the perfect provision of love for our redemption, is that we may know that the love with which we were loved to receive eternal salvation is not a source of temporary love or that we might just be saved, but it is a source that allows us to be forever clothed with the Heavenly Father's love.

While in the condition of the Son of Man in the world to demonstrate God's love for us while we were still sinners, to the point of giving His life in sacrifice for us, Christ promised abundant life and rivers of living water to flow from within those who believe in Him.

Thus, as the Son of God and now also as the Son of Man raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Father as the Eternal High Priest, Christ lives to continue to extend His grace, mercy, and love so that what has been promised many centuries ago may be fulfilled through heavenly love in the life of everyone who believes in the Lord and what Christ promised.

1 Corinthians 13: 8(a) ***Love never fails.***

As the Eternal High Priest of those who believe in Him, Christ is our Way to know the depths of God's love, God Himself, the virtues of God, or the characteristics of the fullness of God also under the consideration that God is love.

*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 **and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***

Just as the salvation offered to all by the Heavenly Father is based on His love revealed to us in Christ Jesus, so also life in the Heavenly Father's love is revealed to us by God in Christ Jesus in His position as the Eternal High Priest who is readily willing to support, help, and instruct us so that in everything we may be firmly established in this unshakable and eternal love of the Lord.

*Romans 8: 37 **Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**
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.***

The book of Hebrews begins by declaring that these days God speaks to us through the Son of His Love because this Son is the express image of His person. However, this same book of Hebrews does not stop at this part. It goes on to teach us that one of the main ways that this Son of God's Love speaks to us is through His position, condition, or function as the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek and who knows to help, through love, perfectly all those who come to Him also to be close to the eternal love of the Heavenly Father.

The book of Hebrews begins by informing us through whom we may continually communicate with God. However, by describing Christ as our Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, and not the Order of Aaron, it clarifies how we may have our communication and fellowship with God properly established or how we may come to be under a priesthood that is characterized by the Heavenly Father's grace, mercy, and eternal love.

Therefore:

*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.***

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.

C24. The Glory of the Priesthood whose Freedom to Act and Accept People Is Not Limited to Natural Barriers: In Christ There Is “Neither” and “Nor”

A. Freedom and Acceptance of Persons that Accompanying People

As we begin to advance on the theme of the Eternal High Priest that God has offered us in Christ and as we begin to allow this same High Priest to renew our understanding and grant us a renewed conscience according to the heavenly kingdom, not according to the kingdoms of human beings, Christ also begins to reveal or show the most relevant aspects of the life in God of those who come to Him and remain in Him.

When a Christian, in confidence, allows one's Eternal High Priest to be more present in his or her life, Christ begins to reveal the truths of the kingdom of God in a more intense, deep, and precise way, but also begins to shed light on the most intimate thoughts that the person holds in one's conscience, even if the very person is not aware of some thoughts that one keeps in one's heart, as already mentioned in previous chapters.

When a person, in trust, starts to relate more closely with the Eternal High Priest Christ to know more about God and to know more about the glory of the One who calls him or her to an ongoing personal relationship, the Eternal High Priest Himself also helps this individual to search one's own heart so that one may also be set free in one's mind to know God and His will according to the understanding granted by the heavenly kingdom.

When a person knows Christ as the Eternal High Priest who mediates all aspects of the new covenant and remains in fellowship with Him, one can also rest in the Lord knowing that Christ will also help him or her to see what one cannot yet see or to correct what needs to be corrected so that one can see clearly what the Lord is showing him or her.

And among the various central aspects that Christ offers to show in the light of the heavenly kingdom to those who receive the Lord in their hearts, there are those that exalt the eternal glory of God, but also those that allow us to come to know more widely how we can or should see the human being or ourselves in the face of the fact that Christ has already died in our place as the provision for redemption and has already been resurrected by the Heavenly Father to grant us newness of spiritual life.

Therefore, as the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, Christ works so that people may know more fully the glory of God in His majesty, but also so that they may see themselves more appropriately after receiving salvation and so that they may know better how God sees human beings from the spiritual perspective of the kingdom of God or in the light of the redemptive work that Christ has already manifested to the world.

2 Corinthians 5: 14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

- 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.**
16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

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.

- ...
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.
-

Through the Holy Spirit, and in His position as the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, Christ reveals the glory of God to people, but He also shows what people are like in God's perspective so that they may leave behind what is not of God and so that they may be transformed by the renewal of understanding according to the glory of God, and not according to the glory of the world or humanity.

Remembering that *priesthood*, in its general concept, is expressed by a person's relationship with God and that the Priesthood in Christ according to the Order of Melchizedek has the references of this relationship established according to the heavenly kingdom and not the natural human mentality, it also becomes very relevant that those who come to the new covenant come to know how they are seen from the perspective of the heavenly kingdom.

An individual, for example, might be in a condition of apparent prominence before the world but that is negligible before God, while another might be under a situation that seems insignificant before other people but which is exalted and sublime before the Lord.

1 Samuel 16: 7(b) For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

- 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.

*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 16: 15 **And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."***

Thus, knowing what is exposed above may prove to be crucial because, under the new covenant with Christ, a person may have a condition on the spiritual aspect that is very different from one's situation on the natural level.

The Priesthood according to Christ, sees people under much broader, favorable, or different principles of acceptance and freedom than the natural man considers as parameters of liberty and the possibility of people being accepted before God, as also mentioned in the following texts:

*John 8: 36 **Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.***

*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.***

*Galatians 3: 26 **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.***
*27 **For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***
*28 **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***
*29 **And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.***

We understand that looking at the aspect of a person's freedom together with the aspect of acceptance of an individual is very necessary in the theme of the priesthood or relationship with God, for in many circumstances in the world, the freedom or the lack of freedom of an individual is also seen, respectively, as a factor of acceptance or rejection of this person.

For this reason, when the texts of Colossians and Galatians presented above mention that **in Christ there is neither slave nor free**, they show us that in the Priesthood according to Christ, the application of barriers concerning the relationship of people with God similar to those that people attribute to one another is not accepted.

In the world, there are many situations in which people may find themselves restricted or even imprisoned on the natural level, whether due to physical weaknesses, an offense committed, or even because they have incurred slavery. However, even so, they can be widely free people in Christ and enjoy access to God much more than many individuals who have a natural condition of ample freedom but who are not in the Lord.

In the priesthood under the law of Moses, for example, a prisoner had no way of accessing the temple and tabernacle, being deprived of the priestly services performed there. But in Christ, on the other hand, also as an example, we can see that it was in prisons or jails that Paul wrote an expressive part of the greatest revelations that human beings had never heard before about God and His Gospel.

Paul went so far as to declare that the fact that he was imprisoned contributed a lot to manifest or demonstrate the freedom of God's word or the Gospel of the Lord in the world even in the face of opposition and resistance.

2 Timothy 1: 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,
9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,
10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,
11 to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.
12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

2 Timothy 2: 8 Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,
9 for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.

On the other hand, if Paul were in the Order of Aaron, the prison could prevent him from continuing to exercise his ministry. In Christ, however, even though physically imprisoned, Paul's life continued to cooperate so that the word of the Lord would gain even more strength of expression.

The prisons to which Paul was subjected were never an impediment to his relationship with his Lord and High Priest who was with him in his heart, but who was also before the Heavenly Father interceding so that the Father would support him even in situations of extreme adversity concerning the things of the present world.

Previously, when he was still better known as Saul, Paul himself tried to oppose Christ as the unique High Priest of each person, thinking that external actions of

resistance to Christians could stop the Gospel of Christ and those who adhered to the Lord Jesus. However, the more Saul tried to do it, the more the Gospel spread.

*Acts 8: 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.
4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.*

Although his actions in opposition to the Gospel were mighty before human eyes, Saul's understanding of the Gospel was very limited and fragile, for what he knew about the priesthood or the relationship with God was only according to the Order of Aaron, where anyone could easily be prevented from entering the tabernacle or the material temple.

That Saul who tried to stop the Gospel through external actions, even of extreme violence, later came to know what kind of power of Christ can be freely manifested to an individual when the Lord Jesus dwells in one's heart and when a person also stands before God so that He can be sustained in all moments or circumstances.

Looking here, then, still at the aspect of freedom, we emphasize that natural liberty is subject to many variations, but regarding spiritual freedom, people, in reality, are restricted to two divisions, namely:

- ⇒ 1) Those who are free to relate to God through Christ and, through Him, are instructed by the Lord in their hearts whether or not they are deprived of natural freedom;
- ⇒ 2) Those who do not yet make use of the access to God that the Gospel offers them, being, therefore, subject to life merely from the natural or temporal point of view or that does not discern the spiritual things that come from God, for these are only rightly discerned spiritually and through the Holy Spirit that the Lord grants those who have become children of God through Christ Jesus.

After Saul personally met Christ and remained in the Light of the Lord, he discovered that the Church of Christ is not made up of temples, houses, or any material edification, but of people to whom Christ can freely manifest Himself wherever they are.

When Saul met Christ and recognized him as Lord of his life, he learned that “he could not imprison what could not be imprisoned,” and that the Church of Christ is where the people who are of Christ are, for Christ is in the hearts of those who believe in Him.

Years later, now serving the Lord Jesus and suffering restrictions on the natural level that others were putting on his life, Paul also personally experienced that even if a Christian suffers external constraints, Christ is with this Christian, and, therefore, that the Church of the Lord, the Body of Christ or the Bride of the Lord is where a Christian is.

And if the Lord Jesus is with a Christian even in circumstances of external restrictions, the heart of that Christian remains free despite external factors, for ***the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.***

Christ is all and “in all,” and not in temples, retreat places, mountains, tents, or even houses. And this is one of the central points because of which the freedom and acceptance of people in the Order of Melchizedek are incomparably different from what the Order of Aaron offers in its conditions limited to so many material, earthly, or natural aspects.

We return here, therefore, again to a question presented in the subject on the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. That is, if the kingdom of God is revealed on earth in the hearts of people who believe in Christ and not in the visible and apparent things, why, then, do people seek so much outside and in the most diverse external places what can be in them by the presence of Christ in their hearts and even if they may temporarily be under several constraints of the natural world?

Matthew 1: 23 ... and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

B. Freedom and Acceptance of People that Operate According to God's Mercy and Not According to People's Self-Judgment

Advancing here a little more, but still taking note of Saul's aggressive action in trying to imprison people's freedom of relationship with God and the transformation that took place in his own life when receiving Christ as Lord in the heart, we may notice another aspect that may also be decisive in recognizing the glory of the freedom of action and acceptance of people in the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek.

Using the Lord's mercy and kindness towards him as an example, Paul seeks to emphasize several times in his letters how significant it is to recognize that the glory of the Priesthood of Christ regarding people's acceptance is not according to what people think and define about it neither according to what the Order of Aaron or similar to it define regarding this point.

Even though people have the freedom to come to Christ at any time and in the most diverse places they find themselves, they often do not perceive this freedom because of restrictive thoughts that they created in their minds or that were passed on to them and in which they started to believe.

Although we have commented in the present material that each person has a crucial role as to the aspect of approaching God, we believe it is necessary also to approach this point from the angle that, in several situations, people may not approach God not because they would not like to do so, but because they have in mind some inappropriate concepts about how an individual can draw near to God.

If we look closer at the aspect of people approaching or not approaching God also from the perspective that some do not do it because of how they think or have been instructed about the possibility of an individual approaching the Lord, we may observe that many people do not approach Christ freely, in His position of the Eternal High Priest, because (1) they do not see themselves worthy to do so, (2) they do not understand that in Christ all barriers of natural division have already been abolished, or because (3) they have not yet noticed that in Christ all restrictive limitations of access to God that existed in the propositions of the law of Moses have already been abolished.

For this reason, in his condition of having been previously active and intense against Christ, but later reached by the redemptive grace of God, Paul says that he has become a model for all people to know that, in Christ, they find mercy, redemption, and the newness of life however opposed to Christ, unbelievers, or religious they may have been before in the world or under the priesthoods with which they were associated.

*1 Timothy 1: 12 **And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, 13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.***

*14 **And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.***

*15 **This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.***

*16 **However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.***

17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

That Saul who vehemently opposed the Heavenly High Priest, the Eternal Christ, and the Redeemer of his life, later declares that if despite having been so opposed to the Lord, he could be saved and achieve free access to the Lord either in natural freedom or whether in men's prisons, all other sinners may also know that the same possibility of forgiveness and access to God is available to them in Christ.

In the face of the glory of the freedom that the Lord offers people to be able to come to Him in Christ Jesus, Paul says that even the fact that he saw himself as the chief sinner among men could not be considered as an obstacle or impediment to being accepted by the Lord and to being able to relate to the High Priest Christ in all places and moments of his life.

While many other people perhaps only despised Christ, Saul was objectively and intensely against Christ, and this, even after Christ had already been raised from the dead. However, no direct opposition to Christ that Paul had practiced before recognizing Christ as Lord in his life was imputed to him as an impediment to being accepted before the Lord and having a personal and direct fellowship with God.

Therefore, here, again, we remember the following text:

*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.***

*30 **For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.***

If the Lord Jesus had restrictions on people who are tired or burdened with the yoke of sin, law, and the concerns of the world to come to Him, He would not have invited precisely these people to come to Him.

If someone could not come to Christ to confess one's sin, how could an individual come to Christ Himself to be forgiven and purified by the Lord?

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself invites us to come to Him in confidence by bringing to Him all our burdens to be relieved by Him and instructed in the way of truth, thus showing that the concepts or thoughts that someone could be prevented from coming to Christ for something that one has committed or carries in one's heart are not in line with the type of priesthood to which the Lord calls all people.

In Christ, all the work for a perfect provision of forgiveness of the sins of all human beings has already been accomplished, but when a person presents oneself to Christ to receive the eternal provision of forgiveness already made on one's behalf, the Lord purifies specifically the individual who presents oneself to Him.

Concerning the payment of the debt to sin and the law of condemnation, Christ did it once and on behalf of all. However, considering that the Gospel refers to an offer to be accepted by those to whom it is addressed, the specific purification of an individual occurs before the risen and living Christ, and established as the Eternal High Priest, when a person in faith presents oneself to the Lord to be purified by Him.

Christ is fully capable of granting forgiveness and deliverance to anyone who comes to Him. Therefore, He also does not restrict anyone from coming to Him.

In the Order of Aaron, a single high priest entered the Most Holy Place once a year on behalf of himself and the people to seek acceptance before God to cover sin for a while longer or to postpone due condemnation.

Nevertheless, ***in Christ, everyone is invited to present oneself personally and directly also to be forgiven and purified individually, even those who, like Saul, persecuted, tortured, and even participated in actions that sentenced Christians to death because of their faith in Christ Jesus.***

Even with our weaknesses, tiredness, and mistakes that we have done, the Lord Jesus receives us to make us aware of the forgiveness that He offers equally to all, to cleanse us from unrighteousness, and so that the fellowship with Him becomes more and more firmly established.

God wants each of us close to Him. And if there is anything that needs to be confessed, He is faithful to forgive us of sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1: 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

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.

If only sinless people could come to Christ, no one on earth could do it. However, as Christ is not of the Order of Aaron, but of the Order of Melchizedek, ***He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him.***

The world, the people in the world, and the devil try to create all kinds of barriers and obstacles for someone to draw close to God. On the other hand, God has already established in Christ the full provision for overcoming these barriers. And who shows us what this provision is like is the Lord Jesus Himself, our Eternal High Priest towards God.

If someone feels unworthy because of any natural characteristic or because someone has brought an accusation against him or her of any order based on human rules or said to be from God according to some order similar to that of Aaron, or if someone has committed crimes worthy of death before the human courts, there are still no restrictions for him or her to access salvation in Christ and the mediation the Lord offers him or her to come to relate to Christ Himself and through Him with the Eternal Father.

In God, both the opponents of the Lord and those condemned by men, and in a way all are, can be quickened if they believe in the offer of reconciliation that God offers them in Christ Jesus and if they receive this Christ as their Eternal Lord.

*Luke 23: 39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."
 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?
 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."
 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."
 43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

1 Peter 4: 6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Romans 10: 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

...
*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.*

Finally, in this topic, we emphasize that all this freedom for everyone to be able to come to Christ should, obviously, never be confused with the permissiveness of a person to continue to surrender to sin or with some idea of Christ's collusion with sin, as it was expounded more widely in the subject on The Gospel of God's Righteousness.

The Lord calls everyone to receive forgiveness and eternal salvation, but He also calls those who receive salvation to remain in Him so that they are helped by Him to no longer need to be subject to sin and the works of the law of human priesthoods.

The fact that Christ accepts everyone without differentiating the state of the people before they come to Him is so that everyone can also start to be in Christ so that they may also enjoy a new living and walking according to the will and the doing of God, and not to return to the state from which they came.

*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.*

...

5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.

6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

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.

Thus, we recall below once again the type of priesthood that is offered to us in Christ and the invitation that is offered to all, but which, at the same time, is to be used individually by each person who accepts the invitation that the Lord makes to him or her.

Hebrews 4: 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.

C. Freedom and Acceptance of Persons Not Based on Individuals' Natural Characteristics

After seeing that the freedom and acceptance of people in the Order of Melchizedek are not subject to the natural limitations of places and the judgments that people make of themselves because the work of the Order of Melchizedek occurs primarily in the hearts of those who believe in the Lord and operates according to the mercy and forgiveness that God offers people in Christ Jesus, we would like to address in this topic a third point that emphasizes that Christ's call for people to relate to God has as parameter freedom according to the attributes that people come to have in the heavenly kingdom.

In this way, attempts to hinder or differentiate people's relationship with the Lord who seek to draw upon the natural characteristics of individuals are not accepted or have no value in the Priesthood according to Christ.

Let us see below, then, again the texts of Colossians and Galatians mentioned in the previous topics:

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 (Christ) 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.

Galatians 3: 26 ***For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.***
27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Although we have seen in previous chapters the example of the Lord's work in Peter's life as to him come to be aware that Christ is the provision of salvation not only for those who were of the people of Peter, but also for those considered to be Gentiles and alien to the old covenant, we understand that the scope of this point is even more widely exposed in the texts presented above.

The texts presented above are very comprehensive because, in addition to showing the fact that the natural divisions related to the natural man are not relevant to a person's life concerning one's condition of *being in Christ*, these texts still describe some of the reasons why the divisions to which the natural man is subject do not apply to the Priesthood according to Christ.

That is, **in the condition that is called in the Scriptures by the expression *in Christ*, which also covers the aspect of people's freedom of relationship with God according to the Order of Melchizedek, the bases of this**

relationship are unique because the conditions that allow a person to be in the position of relating to the Lord with freedom are also singular or very distinct.

In the last text of Colossians presented above, it is exposed that it is not the *natural man* who is called to relate to God based on his understanding and his deeds, but that *in Christ*, it is the *new man* who is called to be in the Lord and to remain in fellowship with one's Creator.

Similarly, in the text of Galatians, the Lord teaches us that a determining factor in an individual's relationship with God that is provided to those who believe in the Lord is the fact that all who come to be *in Christ* are seen equally as *children of God through faith in Christ, heirs of the promise, descendants of Abraham according to faith in God, and able to put on the new man or Christ.*

Therefore, **the glory of the Priesthood according to Christ is not only distinguished from the glory of the Order of Aaron or any proposition of the natural man because it offers a New and Living Way for people to draw close to God, but also because people who approach Christ to receive salvation likewise receive, along with it, a new condition of who they themselves are or who they come to be before God.**

In other words, **in the Priesthood according to Christ, people are called to relate to God based on the condition of a *new creature* that they have received through the *new birth* that is granted to those who receive Christ as the Lord in their hearts.**

In the new covenant, people are not called to relate to God based on the understanding and deeds they were associated with before this *new birth*, which, in turn, is covered more widely in the subject on The New Creature in Christ.

As children of God, a new man, a new creature, or Christians, people are called to see the possibility of their relationship with the Eternal High Priest Christ no longer according to the flesh, but according to the spiritual condition that they have come to have in the Lord from the moment they become part of the new covenant in Christ and in which *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, male nor female, slave nor free.*

So, in their natural condition, people are born in specific nations, they are part of peoples in particular, they move to other peoples and countries, they are born male or female, they are subject to greater or lesser freedom on the natural level, and so on.

Nevertheless, **because the *new birth* represents what is called in Scripture as *born not of the flesh, but of the Spirit*, none of the divisions applicable to the natural man is applicable to the new creature in Christ. Therefore, they are also not the parameters for each person's priesthood or individual spiritual relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Father, and the Spirit of the Lord.**

In this way, the principle of how people are seen in their condition *in Christ* and the reason they are seen in this way in their relationship with the Lord reveals not only aspects of the glory of Christ in His position as the High Priest, but also central aspects of the glory of the condition that people have when they receive from the Lord the *new birth* or the condition of a *new creature in Christ*.

Christ is the invitation for all to be reconciled to God, but Christ is also “the ticket” to be adopted as children of God and not to remain as born only of the natural man.

Through Christ, we are regenerated to the condition of being made alive in the Spirit to be spiritual children of God, for God does not want us only in a temporal way, as is the state in the natural body. God's will is for everyone to be His spiritual children in Christ to also relate to Him in Spirit and Truth for all eternity.

*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.*

*John 3: 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.*

*John 4: 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.*

In Adam, we are born according to the nature of man. In Christ, by the new birth that a Christian receives when one receives Christ in one's heart, we are born according to the eternal nature of Christ, in which we are brothers of Christ, heirs of the Eternal God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Flesh and blood do not inherit the kingdom of God, so if someone was disqualified by the world by some natural aspect, in Christ, there are not the same distinctions that the world makes of people.

*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!"
7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

The freedom of access to Christ and the freedom for anyone *in Christ* to be able to approach God without natural and resource restrictions are so vast and for everyone in all peoples that for many it seems like a scandal, and for others, madness, but for those who believe in this heavenly and eternal truth, it is power for salvation and eternal life.

1 Corinthians 1: 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

...
*22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;
 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,
 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

The meaning, the value, the power of Christ's blood poured out on the cross of Calvary is the same in favor of man or woman; it is the same in favor of the child and the elderly; it is the same in favor of the Jew and the Greek; it was poured out equally for the free and the slave; for the healthy physically speaking or the sick; and it is the same that was shed for the mentally healthy and the one who lacks mental health.

In His work of provision for the redemption of all, Christ loved all equally, suffered equally for all, and died for all in the same way.

*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.*

And just as Jesus did not divide “the drops” of His blood by profiles of people or because of the distinct natural characteristics that people have in the natural world, so He does not divide people according to their natural attributes in terms of who may come to Him for a personal relationship with Him, with the Heavenly Father, and with the Holy Spirit.

Bearing in mind that Christ died on behalf of all without making a distinction between people of all places and peoples so that everyone can choose to be reconciled to the Lord, we can know that Christ also does not distinguish people by natural criteria concerning their relationship with God.

If, for instance, a person considered mentally weakened before men understands that Jesus receives him or her even in one's madness, one understood more than many who are considered mentally healthy and who do not understand the “madness of God's love in Christ for all.”

God be praised because salvation is given to all who believe in Him, as likewise is the call to personal fellowship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We also remember here that in the condition that is called *in Christ*, God also has no grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nephews, and so on, because ***you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.***

I don't know if we would be saying this in an entirely correct way, but it seems that a large portion of Christians today have considerable difficulty in understanding the principle that God does not look at people's natural or external characteristics to relate to them because they confuse individual and personal access to fellowship with Christ with the flow of performing works in general in life or for the Lord, which is a very different matter.

Although God may call people to perform different functions or works due to the natural characteristics they have or under which they are, which is a topic to be seen later, **concerning the freedom of relationship with the Lord, it is the state of a new creature in the Lord that prevails and not the varied natural conditions of an individual or to which one is subject.**

Therefore, **in the matter of accessing the Lord Jesus for fellowship with Him, regarding being in Christ, and regarding being before God, also no distinction of a hierarchy of people is taken into account, just individual faith and the personal search for Christ as the Lord and the Eternal High Priest of those who believe in Him.**

A wife, for instance, does not need to ask her husband for permission to pray personally to the Lord Jesus; the husband does not need the consent of his wife to have fellowship with Christ; a son or a daughter does not need to ask his or her parents for permission to personally pray to the Eternal High Priest who is seated to the right of the Heavenly Father's throne; a slave does not need to ask permission to the one who keeps him or her in subjection to be able to pray personally to his or her Eternal Lord and Savior; an employee does not depend on the boss to be able to pray to Christ; a student does not need the authorization of one's teacher to relate in one's heart to Christ.

A woman with a son or daughter in need, and who at some point does not have access to her husband, does not need to wait for her husband to ask God to help her and help her child, for both the mother and her child have access to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, something that also applies in case the husband incurs some similar need.

Since the Kingdom of God (addressed in the subject on The Gospel of the Kingdom of God) is given to the hearts of people who believe in Christ, it is unshakable, and it does not come into the world to be outside of an individual, a person may pray to the Lord and listen to the Lord through the Holy Spirit from one's heart and does not, therefore, depend on the authorization or mediation of others to do so, nor does one depend on any natural function that he or she performs or any function of others to which one might be temporarily subject.

In His sovereign and perfect wisdom, God provided a free Way for all people in their most varied circumstances and functions to relate to Him, to His Only Begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit. And this Way is the same for

all people everywhere in the world, namely: The Lord Jesus Christ dwelling in the heart of the one who received Him as Lord and Eternal High Priest.

What we are trying to say above does not mean, for example, that a Christian employee, as it pleased him or her, will start to confront one's boss at some controversial moment for in the middle of work to stop one's activities to kneel on the ground just because one has freedom of access to the Lord and acceptance of God at all times of one's life. A Christian does not need to do this because it is not necessary for him or her to do it this way, as he or she can pray to the Lord from the heart, in one's quietness, and humbly ask God in faith that the Lord may also help him or her at one's functions or concerning any other situation.

Romans 14: 22 **Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.**

When a Christian remains *in Christ* and his or her verbalized testimony becomes necessary or significant at a given time, Christ can provide the opportunity for that Christian to express his or her testimony to others.

The Christian who has sanctified Christ in one's heart should always be ready to explain the reason for his or her hope, but one should also be in fellowship with Christ to know when and how to do it.

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 (or manifests Himself), then you also will appear (or be manifested) with Him in glory.**

1 Peter 3: 13 **And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?**
14 **But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."**
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;**
16 **having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.**
17 **For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.**

When Christians, however, do not remain hidden in Christ and are very active in their own thoughts and actions in the flesh, they do not become aware of God's will concerning when and how to act or not to act.

Still regarding prayer to God, when asked by the disciples on how to pray, as already mentioned, the Lord Jesus instructed them, saying:

Matthew 6: 5 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

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."

The word *hypocrite* derives from *hypocrisy*, which, in turn, means *acting as an actor on a platform, on a stage*.

Therefore, to pray to be seen by others is to do a stage performance that the Lord in no way appreciates.

Thus, besides the private room that some people have in their homes, what is the only individual and private room that a person can close the door, even those who have difficulty finding a material room to be really alone? Would it not be the heart of each person?

Let us note the intimacy to which the Lord Jesus refers when speaking about prayer, namely: *When you have shut your door!*

Many aspects of an individual's life are personal and should first be dealt with before the Lord before they go public.

When you have shut your door, pray to the Father who is in the secret place, and then follow the instruction that the Lord grants.

When in another part of the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus says that He is at the door and knocks to have fellowship with the one who opens the door, it is not of the physical doors of the places where people are living that the Lord is speaking, but about the heart of each person.

*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.***

*Psalms 62: 8 **Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.***

*Romans 5: 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.***

*Proverbs 4: 23 **Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.***

Besides, through the Scriptures, we know that the hiding place that reveals God's glory to us is Christ. And when we are hidden in Christ, we are also in God.

Therefore, *the secret place of God* mentioned by Christ when answering the disciples' question about how to pray is the Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek. And in whom, we can be by faith and in spirit as if seated in the heavenly places before the Heavenly Father.

It is necessary to observe the text of Matthew 6 on prayer carefully so that we do not come to think that the Lord Jesus was referring to a secret place of ours, for what Christ said is that the Heavenly Father is in *the secret place*.

If we consider the whole context, no individual has a place that can indeed be wholly considered as *one's secret place*, for before God, no one can hide completely. God sees everyone, knows everyone, and knows everything about each person.

Hebrews 4: 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Psalms 139: 7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me;

12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.

It is through *His own secret place* that God hears and answers the prayers that each person says in one's most intimate room, the heart. That is, it is through the only Mediator, which is Christ, that the Heavenly Father invites us to pray to Him regardless of the most varied natural characteristics that we may have or to which we may be subject.

When someone prays and exposes one's thoughts, ideas, and confessions of sin freely and directly to God, regardless of one's natural condition, one is telling God that one wants Him to participate in one's life on that subject. God already knows all aspects of an individual's life beforehand, but He is pleased to be invited to participate or act in a person's life according to the concession that a person gives to the Lord.

If we could make a "secret place," materially speaking, as if it were a "little prayer room," would we not be returning to Aaron's Order, wanting to confine God in a temple made by human hands and confine God at the times when we could go to this "our secret place?"

Is this last thought not a concept of a "mini tabernacle" of Moses personalized or inside people's homes?

It is not that a person cannot have a favorite prayer room, but if one does, there is always the risk that one will be induced to think that it is there that God answers him or her, that is, in one's own "little place" or "little prayer hill."

The Lord Jesus has already declared that it is not "on this or that mountain" that someone should try to "worship," "serve," or do priestly service before Christ and the Heavenly Father.

And if this person who has the "special prayer room" is in his or her workplace or traveling, would he or she merely stop praying, or would God stop listening to him or her wherever one finds oneself?

Thus, access to Christ as our High Priest is direct, without mediators, available anywhere and anytime. And for this very reason, it is equally available to everyone regardless of their natural characteristics. It does not depend on where a person is or what one has in terms of natural aspects.

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.

4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade at your right hand.

6 The sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul.

8 The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.

The help that most people need does not come from the high hills, from the high places on Earth or that people build, nor from the "mini hills or home temples." The help that the human being most needs comes from God, who can grant it anytime and anywhere to whomever He wants to.

Even children who have learned that the Lord Jesus is the High Priest of daddy and mommy, but also personally of them, can, for example, in their school, pray to the Lord in their hearts and count on Christ to guide them even when their natural parents are not close to them.

Matthew 19: 14 But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Proverbs 22: 6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

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."

Teaching the child the way one should walk is teaching the child that Christ is the Way, the Mediator, and the Exclusive High Priest to the most vital relationship in this child's life. It is to teach the child that he or she can relate to the Heavenly Father through Christ already from one's childhood. It is to teach the child that anyone in the whole world can draw close to God if one also draws close to God through Christ, whom God appointed as Mediator of the new covenant.

The priests according to the Order of Aaron wanted to rebuke the children when they cried out to Christ saying, "*Hosanna, Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord,*" because the children bothered them for being another group of people that they would have to attend to in their priestly services and also because they already were not able to serve even the other individuals of the people.

Christ, however, is never bothered to care for a child, an adult, or an aged person. The kingdom of God is also of children, and for this reason, they have access to God always available through Christ.

Therefore, the fact that the Lord Jesus says that the Father sees it in secret and that prayer, in the first place, is something intimate or personal that any Christian can do towards God is another way of declaring that in the aspect of prayer before the Lord and in fellowship with Him ***there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, male or female, servant or free, for all Christians are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.***

In thinking that prayer should be primarily before their peers, many people incur several setbacks because they make things public before they have addressed them privately or in secret before God.

There are several things, for example, that a person may come to think that are good, but that are not appropriate in the eyes of God and concerning which the Lord can warn him or her about when one prays to Him and waits for Him to answer. If a person waits on God before rashly exposing something to others, that person may avoid experiencing the inconvenience of spreading inadequate information or sharing it at an inappropriate time.

If a Christian considers that Christ is one's Lord, Savior, High Priest, and Eternal Shepherd, the Lord Jesus should always be the first one to whom one should confide everything, because, repeating this point, the Only Lord and High Eternal Priest accepted by God and able to be the Mediator of the new covenant and what is given in this covenant to Christians is, and always will be, Christ Himself in the hearts of those who believe in Him.

Not even the husband can meet the need that his wife has to relate personally to God, neither the wife of her husband, nor the parents of the children, nor the children of the parents, nor the natural brothers of their other brothers, nor brothers of faith of their other brothers of faith. Neither the world nor the angels of God can supply what the Heavenly Father has assigned to Christ to be provided by Him. Only Christ can come in response to each person's need for God.

It is *in Christ* that all creation finds reconciliation with God, according to the text that was displayed in the previous chapter.

Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, who came into the world in the flesh to provide what was necessary for our reconciliation with God, is the only one who gave His life equally for all so that this reconciliation could take place. For this reason, too, the Heavenly Father has established only Christ as the unique High Priest and Good Shepherd who knows each of those who come to believe in Him.

- John 10: 11 **I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.***
- 12 **But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.***
- 13 **The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.***
- 14 **I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.***
- 15 **As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.***
- 16 **And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.***
- 17 **Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.***
- 18 **No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.***

Let us look again at the words of the Eternal Christ: ***I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father.***

Who else on Earth, then, can know each person as Christ knows them to be the High Priest of each individual before God?

And who else can know the Heavenly Father as Christ knows to be a perfect High Priest and Mediator of the new covenant in the heart or before each person?

- John 1: 15 **John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"***
- 16 **And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.***
- 17 **For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.***
- 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.***

We emphasize here, then, once again, that **something extremely crucial for every Christian to understand is that in Christ, absolutely everyone, without exception, has the same path open to God, the provision of salvation to be able to become children of God, and the condition of direct access to Christ as one's Heavenly High Priest and to the Eternal Heavenly Father.**

So, as another example, a Christian teenager also does not need to wait for one's father or mother to know Christ so that one can pray to the Lord Jesus directly. On the contrary, he or she can even personally pray freely to God on behalf of his or her parents, asking the Lord to grant kindness and grace to his or her natural parents so that they too may come to know the offer of salvation in Christ and a direct relationship with the Lord.

On the other hand, this does not mean that the exemplified teenager, who already prays to God personally, is allowed to do whatever he or she wants in the home of his or her natural parents. As he or she is at the parents' house, there is an order for the house to function, there is a need for respect and obedience to parents concerning several points, but this is another subject that will be seen in chapters more ahead.

What is being addressed in this chapter is related to personal access to God, concerning which all people, without distinction as to their natural characteristics, can reach God without any need for a mediator other than the Son of God and also the Perfect Son of Man in everything, namely: The Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek.

Still concerning another circumstance, the Scriptures warn those who are in any position of “masters” not to mistreat those who serve them, for the same Scriptures also teach that the Lord listens to people regardless of their social condition or hierarchy, even for the purpose that the servants may present their complaints regarding their masters and to ask God to intervene on their behalf in their state as servants or concerning some bad posture that their masters may adopt.

*Ephesians 6: 9 **And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.***

*James 5: 4 **Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.***

Once the trust of the servants mentioned above is in God and not in their social conditions or abilities, they can hopefully seek the Lord, as free individuals in Christ, to ask God to intervene on their behalf or give them guidance on how to proceed. And the Lord is fully able to listen to them and guide them so that they do not have to act in the flesh or by their own understanding and strength.

In yet another situation, something interesting to be observed in people who “subject themselves to others in the matter of searching for God,” or who claim that “they need leaders or pastors to guide them in their relationship with the Lord,” is that when they are in “imminent danger,” they themselves suddenly cry out to God directly.

That is, the same people who seek other mediators, as if they indeed needed them, are often also those who seek to address God directly when the mediators they chose fail, something that is narrated in the Bible as an attitude that surely needs to be reviewed and reconsidered, as exemplified below:

Jeremiah 2: 25 "Withhold your foot from being unshod, and your throat from thirst. But you said, 'There is no hope. No! For I have loved aliens, and after them I will go.'

26 As the thief is ashamed when he is found out, So is the house of Israel ashamed; They and their kings and their princes, and their priests and their prophets,

27 Saying to a tree, 'You are my father,' And to a stone, 'You gave birth to me.' For they have turned their back to Me, and not their face. But in the time of their trouble They will say, 'Arise and save us.'

28 But where are your gods that you have made for yourselves? Let them arise, If they can save you in the time of your trouble; For according to the number of your cities Are your gods, O Judah.

29 Why will you plead with Me? You all have transgressed against Me," says the LORD.

Now, when the matter is urgent, people think they can access God directly, why, then, when the case is not urgent, they think they need others to pray for them as if serving as mediators in their relationship with the Lord?

One of the great evils generated by the continuous or repetitive dependence on others in the attempt of a personal relationship with God is that in the proportion as a person becomes dependent on another person, one develops an "atrophy in the personal relationship with God." When the supposed external protection is not present, one feels vulnerable, helpless, and, often, desperate and distressed in one's soul. And even if one cries out to God, one is confused whether God hears him or her.

One of the great evils generated by the idea of dependence on others and their supposed functions in the search for a personal relationship with God is the triggering of "distorted thoughts and feelings" that God hears some who are "more special than others" and does not listen to "ordinary" people.

As we have also commented previously, Christians can pray for one another and are called to do so even when they are in personal prayer before God. However, this does not make them a substitute for each person's "personal" relationship with the Lord, just as a brother who helps another brother does not become, because of this, the father of one's sibling.

*Ephesians 6: 17 **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;***

*18 **praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints;***

*19 **and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,***

*20 **for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.***

When Paul calls Christians to pray for one another, he urges “everyone” to pray for “everyone” and not just “some for everyone,” as is customary in priesthoods with characteristics like the Order of Aaron.

And Paul also calls on “all” to pray “all the time in the Spirit,” showing that the prayer of Christians for other Christians is much more a condition of personal prayer before God than a joint prayer meeting, because “everyone cannot be together with everyone at all times.”

Going back to the example of the prophet Jeremiah quoted a little above, we may see that the people who called themselves as the people of the One Creator God, but who were under the Order of Aaron, ended up incurring more and more confidence in aspects of the creation and not in God, such as the trust in “trees” and “stones,” to the point that in each of their cities, or each concentration and gathering of inhabitants, they had at least one “god” of “stone or a piece of wood.”

Now, those who know the Scriptures more widely, know that “trees or a piece of wood” are also symbols for human beings. People are compared to the trees planted by the rivers of water, or the trees on which the ax might be placed at the root, etc. Similarly, “a stone” is also a symbol for people. The Lord Jesus told Simon that he would be called *Peter*, which means *a small stone*. And Peter later says that Christians are living stones built on Christ.

Thus, when the prophet Jeremiah warns the people about their deviation from personal, direct, and exclusive trust in God, placing this trust in a priesthood with human mediators, this may be symbolizing “the trust of people in people” as their “gods, idols, or guides.”

And when the trust that an individual should place in God is channeled to “living people,” the issue of idolatry is often even more challenging to detect or accurately diagnose than when people have inanimate or lifeless gods.

Moreover, this dependence of people on people for attempts at a relationship with the Lord might be in various spheres. It might be the dependence that people have on a community priest, the disproportionate confidence of people on the leader of the home Bible study, the excessive reliance on a social leader, the dependency on a government leader, and it might also be within a home.

The husband, for instance, might think that his wife is “more spiritual” than him and, therefore, think that he can let his wife represent him before God. On the other hand, the wife may think this of her husband.

Nevertheless, as for *being in Christ*, there is neither man nor woman or neither male nor female. The Lord welcomes or receives them both equally.

There are personal things in the wife's heart that the husband will never be able to supply and vice versa. There are personal aspects that will only be met when each person has a direct relationship with God, and vice versa.

Christ is the High Priest personally of the husband as much as He is personally of the wife, and in Christ, all are one.

When a woman prays to God, her prayer is not inferior to that of her husband and vice versa, nor that of children is inferior to that of one's parents and vice versa.

And to show us that the point mentioned in the last paragraphs is so, the Lord Jesus still teaches us that when He will come to take for Himself eternally those who believe

in Him, it may happen that one spouse will be taken to be with Christ and the other will not. The husband might be taken to be with Christ and not the wife or it might be taken the wife and not the husband. Christ may take one of the parents to be with Him and not the son. The Lord may take a son and not one of the parents, showing that “each one” is individually responsible for one's life before the Lord.

Romans 14: 12 **So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.**

For married people, for example, learning to live together with Christ and listen to the Lord Jesus as Eternal High Priest is something that each of the two spouses need to be willing to do personally. It would even be very beneficial for the husband, the wife, and the marriage if both man and woman were already aware of and practicing the personal relationship with the Lord when they joined in marriage.

The Scriptures teach us that when a man and a woman marry, they become one flesh. However, they remain two entirely distinct souls. In Christ, each spouse has a spirit to be strengthened in the Lord. And, in reality, the two, spiritually, are only one if both are living each one personally or individually in Christ.

Thus, **anyone who receives Christ as the Lord in the heart may also address Christ as the Eternal High Priest of one's life regardless of his or her natural context and even if no one else around this individual wants to do it.**

It does not matter to God whether the person who comes to Him comes from what people consider to be of noble or noteworthy descent, whether one is exquisite or if one is rude, whether one is *Jewish, Greek, Barbarian or Scythian*, remembering that the *Scythians*, in ancient times, were considered, among the barbarians, one of the most barbaric, rude, or fierce people.

God's provision for the forgiveness of all people's sins did not elect distinct profiles according to the natural man. For this reason, this factor was also never established as a disqualifying parameter for people as to being accepted by the Lord Jesus Christ to be forgiven, purified, and loved by God in the new covenant.

It does not matter to God whether a person has a background in fine or rude ways, whether the person is sophisticated or has a more rudimentary background, for God did not send His Son into the world only for some and according to the profile that people think that qualifies them better than others.

God sent His Only Begotten Son “equally for all,” for all were subject to sin and its condemnations, even if some think they did not have an equal need for salvation because they adopted some different natural attitudes or because they have a particular natural or social condition before their fellow men.

Romans 3: 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.**

...
10: 12 **For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same
Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.**

The Order of Aaron proclaims that the strong are the ones who reach the favor of God; that it is those who strive to keep the commandments by their own effort that are entitled to God's blessings; that those who do many works visible to the world to show how they serve God that are the ones that the Lord attends; or that those who can be favored by the Lord are those who give great gifts, even if they have obtained their resources through oppression, manipulation, and fraud.

Those who belong to the orders referred to in the Scriptures as ***symbolic for the present time***, that is, similar to the Order of Aaron, are the ones who divide people according to the concept of those who can more, those who know more, and those who have more in comparison to those seen as weaker, less wise in human eyes, or those who have less, thinking that the fulfillment of their actions done from "carnal commandments clothed with a spiritual appearance" is what accredit them more before the Lord than others who are not "as fortunate" as they are in wealth, skills, and religious devotion.

The Order of Aaron is the order of the assumption that if a person is truly dedicated, diligently engaged, and disciplined, one will ultimately succeed in fulfilling God's will and pleasing God through one's actions and the goals one reached. Forgetting, however, that if salvation and justification were by human works, no person, naturally speaking, could be saved, not even themselves. Ignoring that it is in this same thought of justification through works and natural conditions that each of the Order of Aaron, or similar to it, condemns oneself, for no person can achieve the success of justification through works or self-righteousness.

Luke 18: 10 ***Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.***

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

12 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'

13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

No matter how much a person under the Order of Aaron, or similar to it, fulfills more laws than others and carries out in the natural more than others, to the point of even elevating oneself above their peers, trying to classify people into strong and weak, if one fails to comply with a single item of the law, one is equally subject to the condemnation of sin and the law.

The Order of Aaron, or similar, because they are based on external works or conditions, end up trying to differentiate individuals from the same people or even the same family, but always end up making everyone equal before the condemnation of their law. In these priestly orders, those who do not make a point of getting it right so much and those who really want to follow the law, but do not succeed in all aspects, in the end, unite in a single group where no one can actually get everything fulfilled for justification and acceptance before God.

- 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.***
*8 **But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine.***

And yet, if we considered that people could be saved by works, would not it be the work of giving birth to a child and bringing it to light one of the greatest works on the natural level that a person could do?

Nevertheless, even the work of giving birth to a child cannot justify a person. That is why Paul urges women who gave birth to a child not to depart from what can indeed cause them to receive eternal salvation, which is remaining in faith in the Lord, in His righteousness, and His love.

- 1 Timothy 2: 15 **Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.***

Entirely different from the Order of Aaron, the basis of righteousness in Christ is always the same and unique Christ for all and the work that He has done for all, who offers His righteousness equally to all, without any distinction made according to standards of the natural man, and which is shared with all who believe in Christ as the Way of God to save them and grant eternal life.

Therefore, **by studying this whole theme of the glory of the Lord Jesus and His priesthood, we have the strong impression that among the worst of the worst evils that may affect people's relationship with God is the idea that natural characteristics or the structure of functions of the people in the world define a greater or lesser possibility of each being able to draw close to God or that an individual depends on other people to draw near to Christ and God to have fellowship with the Lord.**

On the other hand, **the most varied attempts to hide the glory that exists in the freedom and acceptance of people in the Order of Melchizedek concerning their personal relationship with God cannot prevail when a person believes in Christ and opens one's heart to fellowship with Him.**

- 2 Corinthians 3: 16 **Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.***

- 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.***

- 21 **To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.***

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

*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.***

C25. The Glory of the High Priest Who Calls Us to Be in Him or for what is Called *To Be In Christ*

In the previous chapters, we saw that part of the process of the growth of a Christian in the salvation received in Christ resides in coming with confidence to the Lord Jesus also so that the Lord may guide or assist him or her in removing convictions in one's understanding that are not from God, including those that before seemed to be in line with the will of God.

As a Christian grows in the knowledge of the truth in the light of what the Lord teaches him or her, one is invited to what the Scriptures call as laying aside or putting off the old man, his concepts, and his practices, which, in a way, can be compared to a person's action of undressing in confidence before the Lord.

On the other hand, as we undress before God, we also begin to be prepared to be clothed with the new garments that the Lord offers us, which is also part of the ministry of the Eternal High Priest Jesus Christ.

When a person is wearing dirty clothes, it is not usual for him or her to just put on clean clothes over the dirty ones, because firstly one takes off the dirty clothes, washes one's body, and then puts on clean clothes.

In this way, when the Lord Jesus wants to help and purify us, this is what He is proposing to us. He wants us to take off the old clothes because they are dirty, inadequate, or are already obsolete so that, mainly, we may dress in new clothes.

Just as people may cling to old robes materially speaking, so they may stick to old thoughts and concepts with which their consciences were clothed.

Just as a natural garment is a garment for the natural body, so the set of thoughts and concepts of attitudes is also exposed in the Scriptures as a garment for a person's soul, conscience, or understanding. Thus, by adopting and keeping thoughts and concepts, a person keeps oneself clothed with them.

And when we consider that thoughts about how to live life may also be equated with clothes with which a person dresses one's understanding or conscience, this may even imply saying that people may have dressed up with thoughts that were not created by themselves, but which, by becoming clothed with them, became as if they were theirs too.

In previous chapters, we have also seen that the Christian baptism is not the figure of some removal of material things or the external washing of the body, but a renewal of our conscience in the first place towards God.

1 Peter 3: 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,

20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us, — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

22 *who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*

Christian baptism, or considering oneself dead to the flesh through faith in the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary and considering oneself alive through faith in Christ's resurrection, is also expressed as the possibility of immersion in God, through the living life of the risen Christ, which causes the conscience of those who are immersed in Christ to be washed from contents that do not come from God and to receive the principles that are from God.

Fellowship with God generates a renewal of the mind or understanding, exposing what is different from the truth or thought of God so that the Christian may put off the thoughts that are contrary to the Lord, just as fellowship aims to generate an awakening to what is the thought of God so that the same Christian may come to put on the understanding granted by God.

Let us look carefully at the following text:

*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."***

Using the principle of colligated or associated words in the Scriptures (covered in the Series on Suggestions for Reading and Studying the Bible), we may see that the text in Peter's letter that we saw above explains similarly what the prophet Isaiah centuries earlier also instructed to be done.

That is, when we seek the Lord or convert to God, He has compassion on us, is rich in forgiveness, and shows us the thoughts that do not come from Him, but He does not do so without also teaching us His thoughts, for it is in the knowledge of what is according to God that we may truly see what is not from God.

Therefore, in His role as the Eternal High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ shows us what we should undress, but He also shows us with what we should be clothed.

As mentioned above, putting off an evil conscience and putting on God's instruction and newness of life is one of the central facets of a Christian's continued baptism in Christ.

As we leave behind our own path or walking without God's guidance, and as we lean our hearts toward the Lord, He sympathizes with us and guides us to exchange or renew the contents of our conscience.

- 2 Corinthians 3: 15* **But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.**
16 **Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.**
17 **Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**

When a person comes to Christ and becomes established in the fellowship with Him, the Lord makes it evident to him or her that those thoughts that previously served as apparent protection, purpose, and guide of conduct are indeed old, dirty, or inadequate. And this, so that one may choose to leave them behind and clearly see the new garments available to him or her in God.

A very practical example cited in Ephesians 4 regarding what is being mentioned above is the expression ***do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds or putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.***

Before being reconciled to God, an individual may have learned that through lies one could obtain some advantages and that this is part of what is proclaimed as the “law of survival of the strongest”. Now, however, in God, the person without the veil of human concepts, is called to see how God hates lies and that the Lord is Light and loves the truth. And yet, faced with this perception that God is pleased with the truth and rejects lie, an individual may choose to leave behind the mistaken concept that there can be benefits in using the lie and may start to adopt the concept that to lean on the truth is the will to God and protection for one’s life, for Christ is the Way, but also the Truth that guards everyone who *girds one’s waist with the Truth.*

On the other hand, the Scriptures mention *garments* in the plural, and not just a garment, which, for example, may call attention to the fact that a person who has been willing to walk in truth also should bear in mind that one should likewise be clothed with the thought of prudence (seen in the previous chapter) concerning that one should not tell everything to everyone without first praying about it to the Lord.

The fact that an individual understands that it is necessary to depart from the lie and walk in the truth is not an isolated principle of life or a unique garment dissociated from the need to put on prudence. The fact that a person puts on the truth does not necessarily mean that the matters that one is still dealing with God personally must all be revealed to others. Replacing the robe of lies with the robe of truth does not imply going out and telling people everything indiscriminately, but instead always using the truth also with sobriety and prudence.

- 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.**

And if we return to the texts of Peter and Isaiah set out above, we may see that what Isaiah explains as a result of seeking the Lord is described by Peter as to how this search may be done.

Peter writes that the process of renewing the understanding by laying off the old to put on the new takes place by what is figured as the baptism that a person can achieve through the risen and alive Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter informs us that Noah's ark was the means by which God saved the people who were in it, but that the fact that the ark was thrown into the voluminous waters also figured the stripping of a whole set of thoughts and behaviors that were contrary to God or opposed the Lord's will. Those who were in the ark were saved not to be consumed by the waters, but their experience also symbolizes the end of a set of thoughts and behaviors that people had generally adopted until the days when the flood occurred.

Now the ark is also a figure of Christ. And whoever is baptized in Christ, who is hidden or immersed in Christ, despite having also been part of the world, is protected from being consumed by the power that is in the whole word of God, reaping also, together with immersion in fellowship with Christ, the stripping of the old conscience to receive a renewed understanding from Christ according to God's instruction.

Or, still, when a person converts to the Lord Jesus Christ and remains converted to Him, immerses in Him continually, the Lord inserts him or her in Him so that one may be exposed to the will of God in such a way that one may see, without being destroyed, what is not good for one's life so that one may get rid of what was shown to him or her as inappropriate, so that one may also see the thoughts that are according to the truth of God, and so that one may dress up with these as one lays off the old and leaves them behind.

Through the words he wrote to Christians or the saints who were in different places, Paul also repeatedly attests to the considerations to which Peter referred, as exemplified below:

Ephesians 4: 1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,
2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,
3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.
8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."
9 (Now this, "He ascended", what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?
10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

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.***

- 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.***

Symbolized also by the ark, Christ is the one through whom we receive a noble call to leave behind a life dissociated from the eternal purpose of walking worthily before the Lord. Christ was the one who took captivity captive to offer us and grant us a novelty of life despite previously having lived subject to sin and condemning laws such as the Order of Aaron.

Christ is the one in whom a person is freed from a condition in which one is considered to be dead in trespasses and sins that are based on human thoughts instigated by the prince of the world who is under darkness, but Christ likewise is the one in whom a person is seated by faith with God, in the heavenly places, to have a renewed mind and quickened by the word and the living will of God.

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

Christ is the One in whom an individual, figured by the people in the ark, dies for a whole past dissociated from the direction of God to pass to a new time to be lived according to the guidance of God and in God through Christ. And this, so that when Christ is manifested to the world, this individual may also manifest oneself together with Christ.

When we attend to God's invitation to fellowship with Christ, the Lord forgives us and helps us to take off the old robes as we personally agree with Him that they indeed are not appropriate for our lives and to the extent that we want to get rid of them. Likewise, when we accept the invitation to fellowship with Christ, the Lord helps us to be clothed with the new as we agree with Him about something that is appropriate to our lives.

Knowing how the Lord renews our understanding is vital, for He does not impose His will on us, but He teaches us about it so that we may choose it freely. The Lord offers us the newness of life in Him through the Gospel, which is expressed as an offer. And as such, it is presented to everyone, but it only becomes personal for those who receive it as an offer.

The Scriptures call the form of interaction with God described above also as the Law of Understanding, whose theme is also addressed in a subject with the same title in the series on The Life of the Christian in the World and exemplified in the text below:

*Romans 7: 25 **I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind (or by understanding) I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.***

In all this process of being transformed by the renewal of understanding, it is crucial to note that the Lord does not intend to do this only through the action of people putting off their old garments. For the Lord, putting on the new should occur almost concurrently with the first act of undressing the old.

The Lord does not want a Christian to be a person who undresses oneself of the old thinking and is left without new thinking or becomes an individual without inner convictions.

The Christian process of putting off the old or inappropriate garments, in a way, is only considered accomplished when the person also puts on the new.

If the putting off the old is symbolized by the figure of immersing in the waters so that the old is buried, the dressing of the new is the figure of the resurrection for the newness of life in the Lord.

If the people in Noah's ark had been freed from the flood that destroyed the previous world in which they lived, but the waters of the flood had not subsided so they could return to live on Earth, the people in the ark would also have perished by the same flood not resulting effectively in some new condition of life.

Thus, the Christian who thinks that just putting off the old man would be enough for a new life might become exposed to shame, because then one will only have arguments against the old man, but one will have nothing new to offer for one's life and for whom asks him or her about one's new condition.

*Revelation 3: 18 **I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.***

What, for instance, completes a one-day activity cycle of a child who played in the sand or on the ground, and who has become soiled, is when, after a bath, he or she may wear clean and fragrant clothes that someone prepared for this kid.

Therefore, **putting on the new or the clean is like the coronation of the process of undressing and washing.**

When the last text above says that Christ calls people to come and buy white garments from Him, He is obviously not saying to buy them for money or sacrifice, but simply through faith in Him, remembering that the prophet Isaiah and the book of

Revelations declare that we can buy from the Lord what we need not for price or money, but simply by maintaining fellowship with the Lord.

Moreover, after seeing in previous chapters that inappropriate thoughts also include those related to the Order of Aaron and similar to it, we may see that we live in an environment with many distorted concepts, evils, and perversity on the most diverse fronts of life that there are in the present world. That is why, in everything, we need the Lord's mercy and Light both to be able to dispose of inappropriate concepts and to receive principles according to the heavenly kingdom.

Often, the spots most impregnated in an individual's thoughts are those that arise from things that have the appearance of godliness or devotion to God, but that, in reality, are acts performed according to the Order of Aaron or in line with the *parable for the present time*.

Many concepts or works that try to obscure the light of God's will in a person's life do not seem evil to natural eyes, they look like a good work towards God, and they even are presented under intense dedication and zeal. However, if they are used as a means to try to justify a person before the Lord, they are undoubtedly evil or wicked works because they despise the suffering of Christ on the cross of Calvary and the grace that the Lord Jesus grants us after His death and resurrection from the dead.

But thank God that through the High Priest Jesus helps us to be free both from the garments of the inappropriate things of the world in general and from the things of priestly orders similar to those of the Order of Aaron.

Hebrews 9: 14 ... how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Mentioning this, then, once again, **in the exposition of the Scriptures, the putting off something is also to die or consider oneself dead toward that. When we lay off some thought or refute it, we die for the conservation and practice of that thought.**

The figure of baptism to which Peter refers when he mentions Noah and the Ark that he built is a symbol of the real baptism in Christ by faith and fellowship with Him, in which, when we are inserted more and more into God by the guidance of our High Priest Jesus, we die for the inappropriate concepts of the world, but also for the concepts of the Order of Aaron or similar to it.

When in the book of Hebrews, it is described that the change of Priesthood implies a change of law, it is also implied that this means that we died for those concepts and practices of previous priesthoods to resurrect together with Christ to a new set of principles found in the law of Christ, in the truth, in His righteousness, or the law of freedom in the Spirit of God.

*Romans 7: 6 **But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.***

...
*4 **Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.***

Other texts that also expose what was mentioned above, for example, are:

*James 1: 21 **Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.***

*Colossians 3: 5 **Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.***
*6 **Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,***
*7 **in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.***
*8 **But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.***
*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.***

Let us note how broad the set of aspects that we may extract from the texts presented above is, among which we reinforce, then, that to put off a thought or line of conduct is to die for this aspect, that is, not to keep anymore a concept is also, consequently, leave it behind and not practice it anymore.

Looking still at the last text above in reference, we may see evidenced one of the reasons why the Lord teaches us through the figure of the ark and baptism as to undress ourselves of the old man or to die for the things of the old man, for when we find in the same text the expression “***in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them,***” we can see that the old man's things are also considered as a way of living life.

Therefore, being guided by a set of concepts and behaviors is similar to saying that a person can “live in them” or “be in them.”

On the other hand, to stop “being in them,” it is necessary to abandon them or be dead to them, not to dress more of them, not to put them on anymore, which involves a practical attitude of separating from them or indeed leaving them behind.

One of the aspects of “being in Christ,” then, is not being living in the old man's things, in his concepts, and neither in line with his attitudes. And, on the other hand, it is to be clothed with concepts and attitudes consistent with the newness of life that is offered to us through the Gospel of God.

*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.***

In this last text, we can repeatedly see that people practice many evils precisely because of what they think, that is, because of *the futility of their mind* or because *having their understanding darkened*.

So, when the Lord Jesus offers us His ministry or service as the Eternal High Priest, He is offering us an understanding of good and evil as to their respective roots so that we may abandon the practice of evil and incline ourselves to the truth, to heavenly righteousness, and the practice of good.

The Lord Jesus offers us a more profound or consistent insight or understanding of good and evil so that we do not let the root of evil continue to strengthen us for evil and so that we may begin to live and walk according to the root of truth, the righteousness of God, and the gifts the Lord wants to give to those who place their trust in Him.

Nevertheless, once we have reprised this matter of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in His role as High Priest who teaches us to put off the thoughts and deeds of the old man to put on the new man who is according to the truth and righteousness of God, we would like to highlight even more explicitly a remarkably excellent aspect of the priesthood of the Order of Melchizedek that is offered to us in Christ in His position as the Eternal High Priest and that the Order of Aaron or the like cannot or never will be able to offer.

After making a more extended introduction of this chapter to highlight or repeat the help that Christ offers us to have a renewed mind according to the truth and righteousness of God, help that is also typified by the ark built by Noah and by baptism, we would like, then, to advance to emphasize the theme presented in the title of this chapter, namely: *The Glory of the High Priest Who Calls Us to Be in Him or for what is Called To Be In Christ.*

We believe that it is very significant and even crucial to address this aspect in the light of what was exposed previously in this chapter so that it is emphasized here that

the renewal of understanding and discernment that a Christian needs for one's life is offered to him or her in the Priesthood of Christ in a way very distinct from how the world in general or the priesthods similar to the Order of Aaron propose the renewal of understanding, conscience, or discernment.

While a vast part of the world and the priestly orders similar to the Order of Aaron think that the transformation of understanding, conscience, or discernment is based on accumulated knowledge or rules that meet their yearnings for managing acquired knowledge and life, in the Order of Melchizedek, wisdom, understanding, discernment, and all life are grounded on the Eternal High Priest and the relationship with this High Priest.

Thus, when we allow the Lord Jesus, as the Eternal High Priest, to instruct and guide us according to the truth, He first calls us to be in close fellowship with Him to by this fellowship instruct and strengthen us in the truth or what we need to know in the light of God's thoughts.

In this way, a primary discernment or one of the primary aspects of the renewal of understanding to which Christ wants to lead us refers to the point that in the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek, this action is not carried out by a mere transfer of knowledge and where people are left with the whole responsibility of living and seeking growth according to the knowledge that has been transmitted to them, but it is accomplished primarily by the abiding of a person in Christ or the Eternal High Priest who attends and assists those who remain in Him.

In the Order of Melchizedek, the renewal of understanding, the granting of discernment, and growth is an ongoing work done according to the heavenly love and mercy that is available in the Lord to all who believe in Him.

- 1 Corinthians 8: 1(b) Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.*
2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.
3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

1 Corinthians 3: 7 ... but God who gives the increase.

Also through the facet of God's love, we are called to realize that the knowledge of the truth and the wisdom of the Lord are available to us in Him and our relationship with the Lord.

- 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."

Therefore, if we return to Noah's ark as a figure of baptism, we can see that what saved Noah and his family was not the mere knowledge that there would be a flood, but the fact that they were inside the ark or "inserted" in it.

Similarly, if we return to the figure of baptism associated with the call to put off the old man because of Christ's death on the cross of Calvary and to put on the new man created according to God's truth and righteousness, we can still observe in other Bible texts that baptism in Christ is also a continuous act of insertion, as follows:

*Romans 6: 3 **Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?***

*Galatians 3: 26 **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**
27 **For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***

*28 **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

While the priests in the Order of Aaron or any order that uses mediators limited in their very weaknesses seek God to obtain information to pass on to the people they represent so that people then may try to live and walk based on their own strengths and the information given to them, in the Order of Melchizedek the High Priest invites us to be continuously associated with Him, inserted in Him, or clothed in Him.

More than being able to have the privilege of having information, obtaining knowledge, or discerning the truth, the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek calls us to remain continually in the source of truth, wisdom, and newness of life so that this source may also be with us continuously or in everything we do.

Recalling what has also been mentioned previously, through the ministry of the Eternal High Priest, the Lord Jesus can work in us also purifying our consciences so that our hearts remain in Him and so that being in Him, we may sit together with Him in the heavenly places and for Him to be with us at all times of our lives.

Yet in other words, in the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek, we can have continuous access to the mind of Christ or the Eternal High Priest in whom are hidden all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom concerning what leads to growth towards eternal life, also what is not beneficial, and what never grows old or becomes obsolete in the face of so many new challenges that a person may face in life.

*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.***

*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.***

Because a Christian can have continuous access to the mind of Christ “in Christ,” one does not need to live and walk limited to the rudiments, cultures, or traditions of the world or to the information that is stored in puddles or cisterns of the natural man, for “in Christ,” one is offered rivers of living water that flow from the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who believe in the Lord and remain in fellowship with Him.

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

Therefore, in one of its aspects, the so-called being *in Christ* is expressed by being or remaining in fellowship with the Lord Jesus in such a way that at every moment of life, a Christian can be exposed to the truth, the instruction of the Lord, to the light of Christ, or the perception of what is good or evil according to what the Lord sees.

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

If someone is in Christ, one is directly connected to the Head of the Body of Christ, which is Christ Himself, and in whom a person no longer needs to be wise in one's own eyes, one no longer needs to lean on what is fragile and limited, because one has access to the mind of the One in whom one is inserted and who knows everything and everyone perfectly.

We are insisting on mentioning the point above because life in the Lord is not merely based on transferred knowledge and because the failure to understand that Christ's work as High Priest is manifested to an individual by remaining in fellowship with Him has led many people to stay apart from the newness of life that is already available to them in the Lord.

Thus, it is worth highlighting specifically here concerning the access to the “mind of Christ,” that if someone ceases to “be in Christ,” one obviously also no longer has access to the “mind of Christ,” for the “mind of Christ” is of “Christ,” and not of the person who associated with Him at some point in one's life and who supposedly would have received a “download” of “the mind of Christ” in “one's personal mind.”

The Lord Jesus Christ promised the Holy Spirit to be in the hearts of those who believe in the Gospel to guide them in the truth and in what He (Christ) and the Heavenly Father want to announce to a person. However, if a person remains apart from fellowship with the Lord and the Holy Spirit, one is no longer supported to discern the truth and to walk in the will of God even if one has done it in earlier times.

In His position as the Eternal High Priest, Christ can and wants to give us the privilege of being able to be in Him also because, without Him, we do not have the sufficiency to live and walk according to God's will in the world.

*John 15: 4(a) **Abide in Me, and I in you. ...**
5(b) ...**for without Me you can do nothing.***

The renewal of understanding that a Christian needs so much is not to start to memorize every text of the Bible in his or her mind, similarly to what was practiced regarding the law of Moses in the Old Covenant, but it is to understand that the whole provision of understanding, discernment of good and evil, and of strengthening to live and walk according to the will of God is not separated from the Lord or can only be found in the person of Christ and the fellowship with Him.

*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.***

In His position as the Eternal High Priest who assists us and intercedes for us before our Heavenly Father, Christ calls every Christian to continually present to Him every thought, discernment, or understanding, for it is also in Christ that every Christian has at one's disposal the mighty spiritual weapons for the destruction of strongholds that are based on thoughts, arguments, high things, or arrogance that arise against the knowledge of God or that are contrary to the Lord's will.

*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.***

Why, then, do so many people make mistakes so frequently or so repeatedly in what they think and, consequently, in what they do?

Many people in the world are subject to such an accentuated continuity of errors because they do not know or despise the Scriptures that say that Christ is the Only Mediator for them to understand the will of God according to the New Covenant and because, not knowing or not believing in the Lord, they do not come to Christ to have the light of God's instruction that leads to life and not to the way of death.

In the first place, God did not grant us the Scriptures for us to try to live by the writings themselves or through the knowledge acquired. God has given us the Scriptures so that, through them, we know that life is in Christ and that we know that in Christ we have access to God for the New

Covenant and the help of a High Priest who always can instruct and assist us.

*John 5: 38 **But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.***

*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.***

To be inclined to try to live and walk by the knowledge acquired or that is in the Scriptures, and not through continuous fellowship with the Lord Jesus, is an inclination towards the denial of the place where the Lord's newness of life is found, as described in the very words of Christ. It is turning back to the attempts at "living by the letter that has no life in itself," similarly to how it was under the Order of Aaron.

God does not call people to do what they themselves think is good and right to do "for God," just as God does not want people to do what they themselves feel good to do out of gratitude to God.

What God wants people to do is for them to remain continually in Christ so that they may continuously live and walk together with the Lord.

Therefore, **returning to the aspect of putting on Christ, we may also understand from this aspect that the Lord's call for every Christian is that each one "enters into Christ" or "puts on Christ" to know how Christ thinks, how He instructs us to act, as well as to be supported in everything by the grace, righteousness, and strength that the Lord wants to grant us.**

*1 Peter 1: 13 **Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

*Romans 13: 13 **Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.***

*14 **But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.***

Unfortunately, many Christians have the idea that prayer is coming before God and pouring out a set of requests before Him, then turning away and waiting for God to fulfill all requests. And they do this because they think that as "good Christians," they must "fulfill this obligation." However, this type of prayer disregards that when Christ calls tired and overloaded people to come to Him to be relieved of their burdens, He also calls them to be in fellowship with Him so that they may be taught in Him so that they may find rest for their souls.

Although the liberation from the weights and burdens of life is an essential part of the salvation to which Christ calls us, it is the abiding of Christ's presence with a person and one's remaining in Christ that grants what a person continually needs so much in one's heart.

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.**

A person just pouring out before God what he or she wants is not the practice of what is called in Scripture *to be in Christ* or what is *prayer*.

When the Heavenly Father offers us Christ as our Eternal High Priest in whom we can be continually, He offers us the privilege of being in Christ to continually know more about the glory of Christ and the Heavenly Father Himself to be transformed in the Lord from glory to glory.

2 Corinthians 3: 18 **But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

Therefore, **also because of all that the Lord offers to those who remain in Him or who accept the call to be in Christ, the idea of mediators other than the Lord Jesus for people's relationship with God is so inappropriate, meaningless, and despicable in the eyes of the Lord, and which should also be seen in the same way by everyone who longs for eternal life in the Lord.**

John 17: 3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

Finally, in this chapter, we would like to emphasize that due to the greatness and the essentiality of the theme of being able to be in Christ, we know that there are still many other wonderful parts to be added to it. However, so that we may continue to focus more specifically on the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ and for us to first come to know more about the Lord who is offered us to be our Eternal High Priest, we will be dealing more particularly with the topic of *being in Christ* in the subject entitled The Core Principle of Life for a Christian of the series The Life of the Christian in the World, as well as in the various subjects of the series New Creation in Christ and Walking in Newness of Life.

1 Corinthians 1: 2(b) ... **to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:**

- 3 *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 4 *I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by (or in) Christ Jesus,*
- 5 *that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge,*
- 6 *even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,*
- 7 *so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
- 8 *who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

C26. The Glory of the High Priest who is a Friendly Advocate before the Heavenly Father

Over the last chapters, we have tried to describe some of the wonderful things a person can experience when one understands and also comes to accept Christ's work on one's behalf as the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek.

Knowing this position and ministry (function or service) of Christ is particularly and wonderfully challenging, for, in the position of the Eternal High Priest, the Lord carries out functions before God and His heavenly throne, as well as before people working on their behalf in their hearts.

The concept of the ministry of a High Priest is the representation of people before whom they expect to be represented, which may require a practical flow in which the High Priest sometimes needs to interact individually with the people to be represented, at others before of whom they expect to be represented, and yet, in the case of the Order of Melchizedek, before both parties when they are facing each other.

And, in turn, the condition that a person represented by a High Priest may also be together with the High Priest before whom the person wants to be represented is not something accepted or even possible to be done in all types of priesthoods. Under the Order of Aaron, for example, the high priest of the people entered the place called the Most Holy alone, and only once a year.

In the Order of Aaron, when people adhered to this order, they associated with a priesthood where the High Priest of that order had a power of attorney to represent everyone once a year, but where those associated with it could never follow the High Priest elected to represent them.

The priestly service of the Order of Aaron was earthly, external, and confined to be exercised in a consecrated and limited place, and only in that place could the High Priest present his own causes and those of the entire people. After that, the High Priest came to pass on to the people his brief experience with God and related it according to his understanding and with the emphasis of his emotions on what he had seen and heard. However, the people represented could never participate directly in the manifestation of God to the High Priest.

These initial points that we are considering in this chapter show us once again how different the Order of Melchizedek is from the Order of Aaron and why Aaron's Order is so weak and unable to “perfect those who worship or serve under it” periodically, thus wasting sacrifices and gifts without attaining a genuinely lasting and transforming benefit.

It should only be remembered here that the people themselves asked for this model of priesthood in opposition to what God had offered them, where the Lord wanted to present the people with a plan where He would come to establish a relationship with each person, a point previously exposed and to which we would not like to return in detail here.

In the Order of Aaron or other orders that propose to establish mediating priests, workers, or ministers between God and the people, and which end up electing among the priests one who receives a title superior to others, such as, for example, *senior leader, chief of the ministry, father of other ministers*, and many other variations, the

risks of people hearing distorted what these mediators say they have heard from God are enormous and potentially doomed to distortions of all kinds.

If, for example, a human priest has to present the questions of dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of people, how will one know, in the first place, what each person needs if this priest does not have the time and the capacity to listen to them even in more general matters and much less on the most particular questions?

Never can a human priestly order offer the minimum conditions to represent a person before God since neither a wife knows everything that goes on in the husband's heart nor the husband what happens in the wife's heart. As much as a couple enjoys a healthy marriage and as much as both the husband and wife try to live in a transparent, respectful, and sincere way towards each other, each one still has personal points that only they themselves can present to God.

A heart can only be searched in its depths by the One for whom there is nothing that cannot be searched and for whom there is no darkness that cannot be exposed to light.

Only the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek can truly represent a person before God and present to him or her what God also speaks to that person, for only the entirely true One can act in full truth.

So, when the Lord Jesus Christ promised that He would send us the Holy Spirit to guide us in all truth or to the truth, He was announcing that the Holy Spirit would be guiding us to walk in Him or in God, for only in the Lord there is fullness of truth.

On the other hand, despite being guided by the truth or to the truth being immeasurably excellent, precious, and associated with the path of eternal life, this process requires people's willingness to expose themselves to the light of the Lord and special attention as to how this process may be carried out for their edification.

At first, we may think that everyone who does not see well would like to see clearly and that everyone who lacks light would like to have sufficient light to see everything clearly. However, from the Scriptures and examples from practical life, it becomes evident that the desire to see and have light is not always what people indeed want, or it is not something concerning which they always feel comfortable or safe.

Therefore, despite the point to be addressed below, in a sense, recalls some aspects that have already been seen in the last chapters, **we believe that the approach of people's reaction to the heavenly light that can expose the most in-depth issues of their hearts is a topic that still deserves more close or special attention, for it is a crucial issue that can be decisive for an individual for both present and eternal life.**

Those who read the previous chapters of this material, where the texts of the facts that gave rise to the Order of Aaron were displayed, will surely remember the mentions that point to the fact that the people asked for the priesthood according to Moses precisely so that they would not need to have their personal lives exposed in a personal relationship with God.

Moreover, in the book of Hebrews, we find that the rejection of what God offered in the wilderness to people freed from the dominion of Egypt was carried out from their heart, something that was also recorded by God's prophets and in other parts of the Scriptures, as follows:

Hebrews 3: 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.'

Exodus 32: 9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!"

Matthew 13: 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.

Understanding the origin of the Order of Aaron and why so many people are so attracted to it or similar to it is something that should in no way be disregarded, for the Order of Aaron was born out of people's desire to stay away from the light of God in their hearts, but also, at the same time, to try to remedy this desire to abstain from the light with external acts of works and sacrifices that should be presented to the Lord through human mediators.

The origin of the Order of Aaron also shows us how much people would like to count on God's blessings, but again, at the same time, how challenging it is for them to have exposed the personal intentions of their hearts before God.

In their antagonistic purpose of obtaining God's favor, but without having to have their hearts enlightened by the Lord, people allow themselves to be led to concepts through which they think they can propose alternative ways to the Lord that make use of a variety of supposed mediators and more diverse religious systems to please God without the need for what is in their hearts to be treated in the light, truth, or will of the Lord.

Where, then, was the most central problem of the people liberated from Egypt, and where is a central source of the most profound problem of people in the world?

Could it be the passions of the flesh? Could it be external pressures? Could it be the scarcity of resources? Could it be the principalities of the world? Could it be the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places?

The people who inclined to the desire for a priesthood with human mediators had recently been freed from Egypt, and God was gradually giving them the provision they needed to live as a liberated people. But still, the vast majority of people did not want God too close.

Because it did not aim to deal with the real problem of people before God, the Order of Aaron remained just as a facade of ostensible godliness, either because people do not want a real solution from God for their lives, because they are afraid of God's solution for them, or because they do not even know that there is a solution to such a profound problem.

Therefore, **one of the most central aspects of each human being's problem, if not the most prominent, is the very heart of each individual, plus not knowing how to solve what needs to be solved, being afraid to solve what needs to be solved, or not wanting to solve what needs to be solved.**

Let us see below some more examples of conditions contrary to God that an individual's heart may incur and the position of people concerning the presence of the Lord's light individually on their lives:

James 1: 13 **Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.**

14 **But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.**

15 **Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.**

16 **Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.**

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.**

James 4: 1 **Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?**
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.**

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.**

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.**

John 3: 19 **And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

20 **For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**

21 **But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.**

In the face of the challenges of a person's life, the condition of one's heart is a central point that no one should despise or even put in second place.

When the Order of Aaron is exposed in the face of the fact that people do not want the light of God in their hearts because they know or fear that their works are contrary to the Lord, the distorted motivation of this priestly order becomes even more evident by proposing palliatives, external acts, or even sacrifices in the attempt to soften their relationship with God without, however, wanting to make it too profound.

In many ways, the proposition of the Order of Aaron or similar to it has an even more distorted stance against God than some people who do not even want to seek God, for, in this type of priesthood, people are trying to buy the favor of God with material goods and works to, ultimately, trying to corrupt God in His holiness because if the Lord would accept to be bribed, He would also no longer have the authority to be a right judge to judge those who remain in darkness because they loved darkness more than light.

The human being who does not love the light of God more than one's own heart might be prone to try to move the most diverse things in the world and offer the most impressive services, sacrifices, and offerings only so that the real condition of one's heart is not exposed before of God, as if the Lord did not already know it.

The human being who does not love the light of God more than one's attraction to the created things, including one's own life, does the most amazing things to try to hide from the Lord what is already fully exposed before the Eternal God.

Apart from the Lord's light, the human being comes to think that one may continue to sin indefinitely if one only pleases God with sacrifices that he, the human being, wants to give to God to try to appease the Lord's wrath. In one's heart, one may even come to think that God is subject to being corrupted or that God is complicit with injustice as the human being subject to sin is.

The human being who does not love the light of God above one's love for the created things, including one's own life, loves unrighteousness more than righteousness, thus keeping oneself apart from the knowledge of the Gospel of God's Righteousness.

Psalms 10: 1 **Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide in times of trouble?**

2 **The wicked in his pride persecutes the poor; Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.**

3 **For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire; He blesses the greedy and renounces the LORD.**

4 **The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.**

- 5 *His ways are always prospering; Your judgments are far above, out of his sight; As for all his enemies, he sneers at them.*
- 6 *He has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity."*
- 7 *His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity.*
- 8 *He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the secret places he murders the innocent; His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless.*
- 9 *He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den; He lies in wait to catch the poor; He catches the poor when he draws him into his net.*
- 10 *So he crouches, he lies low, That the helpless may fall by his strength.*
- 11 *He has said in his heart, "God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see."*
-

The wicked might be precisely the one who gives great gifts to the so-called "houses of God," thinking that with this, one can free the most profound parts of one's heart from confronting the truth and righteousness of God. The wicked might be those who think that God is "buyable" with tithes and that these mediate them so that the blessing of God may be granted to them even if they do not remain in fellowship with the Lord and the light of the Lord in the daily actions of their lives. The wicked may be the one who thinks that a weekly service, some offerings, or some other meeting may placate or soften one's rejection of the call to be continuously in God where one's life should be kept.

Since no person is justified by works, the wicked might be the one who insists on doing some works to be accepted before God and who might even try to demand that others also do so to become like him or her. The wicked might also express oneself as one who insists on one's self-righteousness instead of presenting oneself personally with humbleness before God to let Christ enlighten one's heart, help him or her to mortify the evil works one appreciates in the heart, and for Christ to raise him or her up as a new person with a conscience in line with the will of God.

*Galatians 5: 3 **And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.***

- Galatians 6: 12 **As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.***
- 13 *For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.*
- 14 *But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*
- 15 *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.*
-

Whether they are connected to some religious institution or participate in none, those who are dissociated from Christ are also dissociated from the light of the Lord and life according to God's will.

The last text above describes that many who rely on the religious model of works do so because they want to present an external appearance of holiness as if by this they could be saved before the God who sees the heart and not just superficially.

Others, still, try to impose on their fellow men the obligation to participate in their "religious associations," many of them even carrying the name of being Christians, perhaps, in the idea that by forming a great assembly, including with many material resources, God will not pay attention to what is done in this assembly or for what, mainly, is done by the members of the assembly when they are acting in opposition to God in their daily activities.

Did not the Order of Aaron consist, precisely, of a proposition in which the High Priest of this order should present sacrifices to God for the atonement of the sin that the people committed being with the heart away from God, becoming this in a repetitive and degenerative cycle where people were never perfected?

Therefore, **seeing one's own heart may become one of the biggest challenges or fears that a person comes to face in one's entire life**, because:

*Jeremiah 17: 9 **The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?***

In this way, here we understand that it is essential to reflect a little more deeply on the theme exposed above, but also in a more obvious and sober manner, because why should a person be afraid to have one's heart exposed to God if the Lord already knows one's heart entirely?

Is not the attitude of fearing to expose the heart to God, then, an inconsistent thing?

Unless an individual does not know that God is Omniscient and that He knows what is going on in one's heart, a person should never be afraid to expose one's heart to the Lord since the Lord already knows him or her and knows everything in advance what is even in the most intimate part of one's heart, remembering still that fear generates torment and may subjugate a person to unnecessary slavery.

*1 John 4: 18(b) ... **because fear involves torment.** ...*

*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."***

As we have seen above, some people hold on to evil and do not want the light of God, but many of those who desire light in their lives are, at the same time, afraid to expose themselves to the Lord most likely because of the following three reasons:

- ⇒ 1) They fear knowing their very hearts; they fear that God will show them who they really are, without a mask, without circumvention, without excuses;
- ⇒ 2) They fear not knowing what to do with the knowledge of who they are and the motivation with which they did and still do many things;
- ⇒ 3) They fear becoming aware of what they are before the truth that is in the glory of God because of the fear of being, for this reason, condemned by God and others, and by this, they may even think that the intentional option for ignorance may be better for their lives than knowing more the truth.

The fears that were described in the previous paragraph express fears that the prophet Isaiah also had when God revealed a considerable part of His glory that was not yet known to Isaiah, as follows:

Isaiah 6: 1 ***In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.***
2 ***Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.***
3 ***And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"***
4 ***And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.***
5 ***So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."***

In the light of the revelation of the glory of God, Isaiah immediately saw his precarious condition as a sinful human being and went on to conclude that there was no hope for Him in the face of so much revelation from the Lord to which he was exposed.

Nevertheless, despite the fear in his heart, Isaiah did not die. Isaiah was not condemned by the Lord because he adopted the attitude of opening his heart to God and confessing his sin to Him. Isaiah did not die before the glory of God revealed to him because he accepted what the light of God revealed to him and because he opened his heart before God, thus seeing another facet of the glory of the Lord's mercy that triumphs over judgment, and which was later also described in this way by James, as follows respectively:

Isaiah 6: 5 ***So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."***
6 ***Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar.***
7 ***And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."***

James 2: 13 **For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.**

God's glory in the eyes of the Order of Aaron, unlike Isaiah's experience, was terrible, and people under it saw God's glory as coming for destruction. And if the people approached it under the old covenant they made, they would indeed be condemned and killed. And for this reason, the Lord instructed them to stay away from this glory. However, the Lord spoke to those people in this way because they did not want to entrust their hearts to God's care.

Hebrews 12: 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.")**

And here, again, we see evidence of the incomparable glory of the Order of Melchizedek in contrast to the Order of Aaron.

While the Order of Aaron fought for the mediation chosen by the people to be able to place a veil or a covering between the light of God and the people, the other, the Order of Melchizedek, casts out the veil and exposes the person who approaches it before ample light so that one may see one's own imperfection. But this, so that one also becomes aware of the glory of the mercy of the God of Eternal Mercies and who forgives the iniquities of those who receive His Eternal Gospel.

While the Order of Aaron wants to cover what should be exposed to postpone the inevitable encounter with the condemnation that will come later, causing the need of people to hide from God every time the Lord manifests Himself, the Order of Melchizedek proposes that each individual, personally, comes directly to God to see and also be individually set free in the heart. And this, with the purpose of being able to always and in everything enjoy the presence and the light of God in the heart.

1 John 4: 18 **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.**

If we return to the case of Isaiah, we may see that the Lord did not expose him to other people and to be ashamed before all the people. God personally showed Isaiah His glory, and it was also in intimacy before the Lord that Isaiah was delivered and healed from his evil.

What the hard-hearted or stiff-necked people did not achieve, and could not achieve through the Order of Aaron, was privately given to Isaiah because God knew that Isaiah was willing to confess what was due to confess to the Lord, thus allowing that the Lord would heal him.

The Order of Aaron has never been able and will never be able to perfect a person who is associated with it because it works under fear. And acting subject to fear, it does not operate in perfect love.

In the Order of Aaron, the priests teach that the people's sins prevent them from praying. However, how then may people be forgiven and healed if they cannot pray to God?

Now, in the Order of Melchizedek, the Lord invites people to come to Him to know the truth and personally confess their sins before the Lord. And this, so that they are cleansed from unrighteousness, just as Isaiah was.

*1 John 1: 9 **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

It was not God who wanted the Order of Aaron; it was the people. God only consented to this type of priesthood for a particular time so that people would see that the solution to the true novelty of life is never to hide from the Lord, but to expose oneself to the God of all mercy. Therefore, it is striking to see how the Order of Aaron's mentality and similar ones seek to confuse people and torment them by presenting God to them in such a distorted way.

And is not mercy the first aspect offered to those who reach the throne of grace through the High Priest Christ, who is His in this position according to the Order of Melchizedek, as pointed out in the text we repeat below?

*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.***

When Isaiah saw the glory of God, he saw it without a veil or the conditions of the Law of Moses. Seeing a first part of God's glory, Isaiah was amazed at the Lord and His throne, then he was afraid but even though dared to confess his sin. And for this reason, Isaiah finally saw yet another part that he did not know of the surprising glory of the Eternal Lord.

Now, the Order of Aaron had never taught Isaiah that the God of all glory surprises us with His superabundant grace and mercy that is in His glory, even to the point of forgiving us and purifying our conscience of unrighteousness and the dead works of the first covenant. Therefore, after the Order of Aaron fulfilled its role of extolling the condemnation associated with the offense and serving as a testimony to its weakness and uselessness, it is no longer needed or has become obsolete before God.

Romans 5: 20 **Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,**
21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Corinthians 3: 13 ... **unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.**

14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

In Christ or the new covenant according to the Order of Melchizedek, we are free to know what most people are afraid to be aware of, which is to know their own heart, because, before the Spirit of the Lord, who searches everything, there also is a full provision of mercy for confession, forgiveness, healing, and restoration of life.

2 Corinthians 1: 3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.**

Thus, in Christ, a person can live in peace and live with joy in the heart that the Lord is with him or her and that if one comes to stumble, not because one wants to give oneself up again to life subject to sin, the Lord is also ready to help him or her, revealing to us concerning this particular point yet another great facet of the eternal glory of Christ Jesus in our favor, as described below:

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.

We are mentioning this last point prominently here because we understand that also regarding it, it is necessary to separately observe what Christ has done for us from what Christ continues to do for us or continues to offer to do for us.

As we have mentioned since the beginning of the subject on The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, what the Lord offers us in His Gospel is immeasurably precious because of all the provision of salvation already made by the Heavenly Father in Christ Jesus, but also because all the provision made finds an unshakable foundation for fulfilling the newness of life for which salvation is offered to us in the Lord.

Because they focus on what Christ has done for them in the past but do not know or pay no attention to the current position and the ministries of the Lord Jesus Christ, many people restrict themselves from being assisted more broadly by the Lord and from accessing many benefits that are already available to them in God.

Therefore, we highlight here that in the text of the first epistle of John quoted above, the wonderful propitiation that Christ provided for us to be freed from subjection to sin is evidenced once again, but the same text also describes that Christ remains active in our favor and further advances in mentioning how Christ still is working for our benefit.

Along with the declaration that Christ is the eternal provision for the forgiveness of our sins based on what He did for us on the cross of Calvary, we can see in the text in reference, yet another aspect associated with the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf, which, in turn, we would like to divide into two points, namely:

- ⇒ 1) Christ is our ***“Advocate;”***
- ⇒ 2) Christ is our ***Advocate “with the Father,” “before the Father,” or “in the presence of the Father.”***

And why are we approaching the position of Christ Jesus as the propitiation for our sins and as our High Priest, also expressed by the role of our ***Advocate***, together with the call of God to expose our hearts before Him without fear or trusting in the mercy that the Heavenly Father offers us in Christ?

In this chapter, **we are highlighting still another facet of the glory of Christ or His present ministry to show through yet another way how much the Lord loves us and wants to assist us so that we indeed make use of the reconciliation and fellowship for which Christ offered Himself as the Perfect Lamb on the cross of Calvary on our behalf.**

In addition to providing in Christ everything necessary for us to be reconciled to Him, the Heavenly Father so much wants fellowship with people who receive His Gospel that He still offers them everything they need so that they may be helped or assisted in Christ so that they may truly enjoy fellowship with Him and the newness of life that is in Him.

Romans 8: 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

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?

33 Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

So, the word used to introduce us to Christ as our ***Advocate with the Father***, among other aspects, is presented to us by some dictionaries and lexicons as follows:

Commentaries associated with Strong's Lexicon in the Online Bible:

- 1) *Comforter;*
- 2) *Summoned, called to one's side, specifically called to one's aid;*
- 3) *One who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant, an advocate;*
- 4) *One who pleads another's cause with one, an intercessor;*
- 5) *In the widest sense, a helper, succourer, aider, assistant*

Cambridge Online Dictionary:

- 1) *To publicly support or suggest an idea, development, or way of doing something.*

Thus, if we return to the example of Isaiah, who before the throne of God found the revelation, forgiveness, and healing from the sin that afflicted him, and look at this example in the light of the text that declares that Christ is our ***Advocate with the Father***, we can also come to know that, through Christ, a person can be supported to overcome both fear and other obstacles that somehow try to interfere in one's fellowship with the Heavenly Father.

And if we first approach the aspect ***with the Father, before the Father or in the presence of the Father*** mentioned in the text of 1John, we can see that the place in which our Advocate is positioned is not mentioned by chance and only for the sake of information.

Because they do not discern some fundamental aspects concerning the mentioned place before God's heavenly throne and do not discern Christ's position as our ***Advocate with the Heavenly Father***, many people have been deprived of knowing more of God's grace and mercy.

Recalling this point again, in the Scriptures, we undoubtedly find that Christ is given to us to dwell in our hearts and strengthen us from within, but we also see in the book of Hebrews that Christ is the High Priest who ministers on our behalf in the heavenly places or in the highest place where the Heavenly Father is seated Sovereign on His heavenly throne, as follows:

- Hebrews 8: 1* **Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,**
- 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.**
- 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer.**
- 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;**
- 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."**
- 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.**

As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one of the attributes of a High Priest is interacting with those he will represent, but the other factor is to present himself at the place established by the one before whom the High Priest represents those who chose him as High Priest to represent them.

In the Order of Melchizedek, God established that the place of the High Priest to appear before Him is in heaven and before the eternal throne of the Heavenly Father, the throne of which God allowed Isaiah to see several aspects.

Thus, as we have already mentioned, Christ has a role in the heart of the one who receives Him and in whom He is through the Holy Spirit with whom the Lord is one. However, Christ also has a role before the Heavenly Father's throne or together with the Father, a position in which He needs to remain faithfully for the sake of each person who believes in Him on Earth.

Never could an earthly and human high priest even consider doing what Christ does as a High Priest by being fully represented in the two indispensable places that a High Priest should be.

Nevertheless, before we speak of the condition of Christ as our *Advocate with the Heavenly Father*, the issue to be highlighted here is that we previously mentioned that Christ is not a High Priest under the Order of Aaron who lets those whom he represents without possibilities for personal access to the Heavenly Father. On the contrary, the Lord Jesus said that through Him, a person could also come to the Heavenly Father Himself before whom Christ is.

When a person prays to God, the assessment or judgment of whether one's prayer will be answered or not is done primarily on the heavenly throne and not on Earth.

Therefore, this whole context, now makes us reach a very impressive and challenging point of being understood by the natural mind devoid of the spiritual knowledge that the Lord gives us through the Holy Spirit, and that is the aspect that a Christian who lives on Earth can also stand spiritually before God's heavenly throne.

*Revelation 5: 9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the Earth."*

Now, as a king, or kingdom of priests as some translations say, a person can reign over what God entrusts to his or her hands to take care of. However, as a priest, there is a special place for priestly service to be done that can be accessed by faith anywhere that a Christian is, which is the high and sublime place of God since Christ purchased us with His blood to be priests to our God and the Lord Jesus being our Eternal High Priest.

And since God wants us to come before His throne to carry out priestly service there, this also needs to be aligned with the point of only Christ being Mediator between God and people. (The subject of the Christian receiving the status of a king to our God will be seen later, after we see that Christ is also the King of Glory over everyone).

The Scriptures teach us that Christ opened for us a “new and living way” for the Most Holy Place. And since the Most Holy Place of Moses' priesthood was already announced as obsolete and the veil of the Order of Aaron was already torn for this ancient priesthood to be removed, the Holiest Place authorized by God to be accessed by a person after the resurrection of Christ is the Most Holy in heaven or where the eternal throne of God is.

When the Heavenly Father invites Christians to come to the Eternal and True Most Holy Place, He calls people to come before His throne through the faith that, through Christ, they are presenting themselves before the sovereign place of His presence.

But why does God want people to come to Him precisely in such a sublime and elevated place?

The Lord invites people to come before His eternal throne because it is from this throne that the Lord reigns over everyone and everything.

It is from one's throne that a king reigns. It is from one's throne that a regent confers sentences or verdicts. And it is from one's throne that a conductor designates one's will and how people are called to act so that this will is followed.

The relevance of a Christian to understand that one is accountable, in the first place, to a heavenly throne, and not an earthly one, is of such greatness that *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard*, but which was revealed to us by the Holy Spirit of God in due time and the time of the revelation of the eternal glory of the risen Christ, exalted and seated at the right of the Heavenly Father's throne.

When a person receives Christ in one's heart, one also receives citizenship in heaven, which causes him or her to have a new homeland and a new Lord and King. And as such, the Christian also has new instructions and directions designed from this new throne on how to live life from this new homeland.

A Christian is Christ's ambassador on Earth. And therefore, one has also been sent according to the kingdom that sent him or her, and to which one should continue to report at all times of one's life.

The point exposed in the last paragraph may seem very intriguing, but when we see that Christ is, at the same time, before the throne of God as our High Priest and is also in us as the Lord, by the Spirit of the Lord, to instruct, to conform, and guide us in everything we do, we too may begin to understand that, similar to Christ, we also can be on Earth and before the Lord's throne.

If Christ is at the Heavenly Father's side and through the Spirit of the Lord in us, we too may be in the world and before God through the Spirit of the Lord.

Or perhaps more broadly said: If Christ is before the Heavenly Father and by the Holy Spirit in us, and if we are in Christ, it is also through the Spirit of the Lord who dwells in us that we too can be where Christ is, thus being also before God in Christ and seeing fulfilled in this way what the text that we expose below once again declares:

Ephesians 2: 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.

Or yet in other words, not to misrepresent the above principle: **When someone is in Christ, one is also before the Unique One beside whom Christ is seated.**

John 14: 9 Jesus said to him, ... He who has seen Me has seen the Father; ...

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.

The attitude for a Christian to be in Christ is a position of faith and not of a physical location. Being in Christ is an attitude of inclination and attention of an individual's spirit to express oneself to God, but also to perceive God answering and instructing him or her through the Holy Spirit in one's heart.

We will see later that this principle of being seated in the heavenly places in Christ is also called *living in Christ* or *living in the Spirit*, where a person understands that one may always be before the Lord and that one may always live ready to be enlightened, taught, oriented, and even corrected in love by the Lord. And yet, when the Lord calls him or her to a more intense period of attention to what the Lord wants to teach, one knows how to be quiet before the Lord and listen to Him as Mary did while Marta was busy doing works without first being instructed by the Lord.

As children of the natural man or Adam, we are flesh and blood. However, as children of God through faith in the Gospel of the Lord, we are a spirit made alive by Christ. And, in turn, as a quickened spirit, the Lord can interact with us beyond the restrictions of the natural limits and even teach us while we are sleeping in our natural body, as we already saw in Psalm 16.

On the other hand, when Christians do not understand that they were born as children of the natural man but also became children of God through faith in Christ, and that, for this reason, they have the Spirit of the Lord to guide them, remind them that they are children of God, and to put a yearning in them to cry out or address themselves always to the Heavenly Father, they also tend to lean again only to the natural things that belong to the Earth, and not those that are above.

Colossians 2: 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations ...

- 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.

By calling Christians to be attentive to those things that are above, the Lord teaches us that various things that are above are only granted if one seeks them in Christ and remains in Him, which is also to remain before God.

Thus, when we come to the Lord Jesus, considering that He is already in heaven, we also come to the Heavenly Father, to God who is seated on the high and sublime throne.

When we incline our spirit to Christ with the attention to interact with the Lord, wherever we are, we are worshiping the Lord "in Spirit" on Earth and in Heaven.

Highlighting this principle once again, when a person receives Christ, one receives from Christ a made alive spirit through which one may interact "in Spirit" with God, as we have already commented above.

1 Corinthians 15: 45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

1 Corinthians 6: 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Adam also means *initiator of race*.

Thus, **through the 1st Adam**, we received a body of flesh and blood and a **living soul**.

Through the last Adam, who is Jesus, the risen Christ, our Lord, we receive a made alive spirit.

Christians on Earth have not yet received a new body from Christ, and for this reason, they cannot be bodily with Christ in heaven. However, they can be with Christ through the Spirit of the Lord just as He is with them through the same Holy Spirit.

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."

2 Corinthians 1: 22 ... who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Galatians 4: 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

To all those who believe in Christ and receive Him as Lord and Savior, God grants an eternal and immeasurably valuable gift, which is a spiritual life that is also called *the newness of life in Christ, a new man according to the truth and the righteousness of God, new inner man, or the new creature in Christ Jesus*, exemplified by another text below:

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.

We also recall here that the word man mentioned above does not have in this text the connotation of male to distinguish from female or woman, because in the spiritual condition in Christ or the heavenly places before the Heavenly Father, "*there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither man nor woman.*"

In German, for example, Martin Luther translated the word man into *Mensch*, which means a being according to one's origin, according to one's ancestry.

In the comments associated with Strong's lexicon in the Online Bible, we find the word *man* also expressed as *Anthropos, that is, a human being, whether male or female.*

The inner man, the inner being, the spirit made alive in us by Christ, is different from the natural being. He is an eternal spirit, and as such, has similarities with the angels.

***Matthew 22: 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.
30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven."***

The natural condition of man or woman is a temporal condition that God designated for each one according to His good will and for each person, through one's body, to perform on Earth a series of actions that the Lord allows or instructs an individual to perform. However, when a man and a woman pray to God or worship (serve) God "in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" and do it "in Spirit and in Truth," as described in John 4, both this man and this woman do it "in spirit," that is, as *an inner new man*, a

situation in which both have an equivalent status of children of God before Christ and the Heavenly Father.

As we have already explained in the previous chapters, regardless of several natural conditions of a person, before Christ and, consequently before God, in a quickened spirit, all are beloved children of God, all are free before the Lord to come in prayer to Him, everyone is free to worship the Eternal Father and the perfect Lamb. It is singular and righteous freedom where all who are in Christ are, in the eyes of God, precious children not only of men, but also born of the Lord through the new birth in Christ Jesus.

*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.***

Thus, because we have been quickened in spirit by Christ, we may approach God in prayer. And when we do it through faith, we talk to the Lord Jesus Christ on the condition that we stand before God in heaven where Christ is also seated to assist us.

Even if a Christian does not see God or one does not see with natural eyes the greatness of the glory that Isaiah saw, the Christian who draws close to God in Spirit and in Truth, that is, draws close to God in Christ, who is the Truth and the Life-giving Spirit, also comes to the same throne before which Isaiah saw himself and about which John seeks to describe a series of aspects in the book of Revelation.

The Heavenly Father is not only willing to receive those who come to Him before His throne, but He “seeks” those who worship Him in Spirit and Truth in His presence.

But how many have believed that they can come to God like this? And how many have practiced prayer to God in their intimacy as if standing before the Lord's throne?

*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.***

Here, however, we once again return to the point we want to get from the pause we made above, which is the matter that Christ is also presented to us as our ***Advocate with the Heavenly Father.***

Returning, then, to our point that every Christian is called by God to come to Him, we would like to move on more specifically about some practical aspects of how a Christian may come in Spirit and Truth before the heavenly throne of grace or even

how may one come to God to be accepted there when the focus is still on confessing one's sins since God is holy and has no complicity with sin.

Therefore, similarly to Isaiah's situation, the first point that we will need to approach the Heavenly Father in faith and also be received by God without being afraid to dare to advance to a more intense relationship with God is His mercy, which is also the first aspect that is offered to us from the throne of grace.

*Psalms 40: 11 **Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.***

*Psalms 69: 16 **Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.***

*Psalms 119: 41 **Let Your mercies come also to me, O LORD, Your salvation according to Your word.***

*Lamentations 3: 22 **Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not.**
23 **They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.***

And it is also precisely at this point of the need for mercy that God offers us Christ as the High Priest who also is our *Advocate*.

When God calls us to address Him in prayer before His throne or to have fellowship with Him, it is to a relationship with the Father of Love that we are called. However, or at the same time, the Father of Love is also the Sovereign Righteous Judge who discerns all the hearts' intentions, who establishes sentences, and who decides actions according to His eternal and perfect righteousness.

Thus, when we lean towards our relationship with the Heavenly Father, there are several matters in our lives that need to be dealt with first with the Lord Jesus Christ or be assisted by Him so that our relationship with the Heavenly Father may also be appropriate.

Now, we know that before a court's throne, both the person seeking to be attended by the judge and the defendant cannot manifest themselves in every way they would like before the judge or the court as a whole.

Nevertheless, the lawyer assisting a plaintiff or defendant can ask for permission to speak at any time he or she wants. Sometimes the one who represents others is allowed to continue, sometimes not, but he or she is always free to ask for permission to speak.

Other persons who are not accompanied by a lawyer in a particular case may only speak when authorized by the judge. A plaintiff or defendant may only speak freely with their respective lawyers, who, before making anything public, will discuss with their clients whether it is according to the law and whether it is pertinent to be pronounced or not before that court.

And although the court of God has numerous differences regarding human courts, various aspects of conduct before the heavenly throne that the Lord wants to teach us should never be despised, which is why Christ is offered to us by God as the Eternal High Priest who can also function perfectly in the role of our *Advocate* who can assist us in everything before the Heavenly Father.

Because of His ministry also as our *Advocate with the Father*, we may address all our matters to Christ, such as what would be interesting to say to the Heavenly Father, how we should speak to the Father of Lights, or when we should silently wait for the Eternal Father's pronouncement.

As mentioned above, the Heavenly Father is seeking those who worship Him (come to Him and serve Him) in Spirit and Truth. And since Christ is the one who quickens our spirit and is the Truth, He is the perfect *Advocate* who can teach and assist us so that our relationship with the Heavenly Father reaches the condition of truly being based on the Spirit of the Lord and the Truth.

We also emphasize here that the fact that Christ is offered to us as our *Advocate with the Father* makes it evident that He is offered to us as a defense *Advocate* or someone who assists us before the Father, and not as a prosecuting lawyer.

The Lord Jesus offers to teach us, to show us what we need to review in our understanding or actions, what we need to confess to God as sin, what is necessary for us, what we may ask the Father to cooperate with the fulfillment of His will in the world, and so on. That is, as the Eternal High Priest and *Advocate*, Christ is our advisor, helper, mediator, and companion *with the Heavenly Father* to assist us precisely and righteously in our relationship with the Everlasting Father.

1 John 2: 1(b) ... we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Only through Christ or His endorsement before the Heavenly Father does the Father receive us, which is another aspect that emphasizes that Christ is the only Mediator between God and all human beings.

So, as our *Advocate with the Father*, the Lord Jesus has a fundamental role in guiding us in everything about how we can behave appropriately before the Heavenly Father. That is, in his role as our *Advocate*, Christ assists or prepares us so that our relationship with the Heavenly Father is for our edification and not for rejection.

For example, in His ministry of our *Advocate with the Father*, the Lord Jesus can assist us as to what we should “wear” and what we should not “wear” for the relationship with God, remembering that these acts refer to the spiritual garments that were mentioned in the previous chapter.

As the High Priest and our *Advocate*, Christ shows us what before the Heavenly Father is considered “filthy rags” and what, therefore, we should undress. Or yet, He shows us what needs to go through the heavenly laundry before being used before the Father on His eternal throne.

If someone, for instance, presents oneself with arrogance before the Heavenly Father, one will get nothing from Him. On the contrary, one will have the resistance of the Father towards him or her.

On the other hand, if someone is in Christ and is seeking fellowship with Him, Christ as an **Advocate** can instruct this Christian to learn from Him how to be humble before God, for He, Christ, **is gentle and lowly in heart**. The Lord Jesus is our example to be followed in all our attitudes and behaviors.

*James 4: 6(b) **Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."***

*Philippians 2: 5 **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.***

*1 John 2: 6 **He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.***

Moreover, if we return to the condition of Christ as the one who made the perfect provision for our redemption from subjection to sin and as the High Priest who presented the perfect sacrifice before the Heavenly Father for our reconciliation with Him, we can know that as our **Advocate**, Christ has in His hands everything necessary to prove that all our eternal debt towards sin, the condemning law, and death has already been paid in full.

In this way, our High Priest and **Advocate** is in this position to assist us before, during, and after our audience with the Heavenly Father. He understands us, knows our weaknesses, knows our anger, frustrations, or disappointments, and fully knows what we might want to hide from the Father of Lights. For this reason, He is our **Advocate** in whom we can have full confidence and to whom we may tell all the things that go on in our hearts.

If we confess our sins to our **Advocate**, and the Father asks Him about a specific transgression of ours, our **Advocate** can say that "His client" has told Him this part and that it already has been appropriately left behind.

Of course, the Lord Jesus does not need us to tell Him all the details of our sins, for He already knows them. However, when Christ asks us to confess our sins, it is not because of Him that He wants us to confess them, but it is because of ourselves, it is for our good, as it also is mentioned in the following text:

*Proverbs 28: 13 **He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.***

The eternal debt of all our sins has already been paid in full on the cross of Calvary. However, if we confess our sins to Christ, the Lord makes us aware that He has already paid the debt concerning each one of them so that we do not carry the burden of the guilt of these sins, so that our conscience is cleansed from them and the

unrighteousness that it is associated with them, and so that we may advance in life according to the Lord's mercy and eternal grace.

When we confess our sins, Christ reinforces how forgiving God's righteousness is so that we may move forward to fellowship with the Heavenly Father without being under accusation, since this too is highly significant for a Christian's prayer life before God.

And also, when we insist on repeatedly confessing the same sins that we have already confessed to God, Christ, as our Advocate, may manifest Himself to interrupt us and instruct us that those sins confessed and forgiven are not even ours anymore so that we have to continue to confess them indefinitely as was the case in the Order of Aaron, which, in turn, did not remove sin, but only covered it in an attempt to postpone the execution of the condemning sentence on the lives of sinners.

When our hearts want to resume some guilt that has already been paid and closed, Christ, as our **Advocate**, reassures us that the heavenly throne has already deliberated upon us eternal forgiveness concerning our sins or the subjection to sin and the condemning law of Moses or similar to it.

When someone also wants to confess something that one thinks he or she did wrong, but, indeed, did not, or when someone wants to assume some guilt that is not really his or her, or yet, that others try to attribute to him or her, the Lord Jesus, as our Advocate, allows us to discern that it was other people who were wrong and who are trying to transfer their guilt to us, but which we do not need and should not actually assume.

Many people in the world carry an enormous amount of guilt that others have placed on their shoulders, or rather, in their hearts, but which are not their fault indeed.

Thus, in His role as our **Advocate** at the eternal throne and grounded in the righteousness of God, the Lord Jesus offers to help us filter what was our fault and what was not our sin. And still, He offers to help us to confess what our condition really was so that we become cleansed from the unrighteousness that sin tries to impose on the one who subjected to it, as well as so that we may depart from the baseless accusations against us.

*Romans 8: 33 **Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.***

*34 **Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.***

Still, as for carrying the guilt of others, in the book of Ezekiel, chapter 18, the Scriptures are very explicit in stating that each person is accountable for oneself before the Lord. In this text, God teaches us that the thought that a son is co-responsible for each of the sins that his father practiced is not seen in this way in the eyes of the Lord, and, therefore, it should not be passed on in this way by those who believe in the redemptive righteousness of the heavenly kingdom.

On the other hand, our **Advocate with the Father** also knows very well when we accuse others of the sins that we actually have committed.

When the Lord Jesus shows that a person needs to take off one's clothes, thoughts, or feelings against God, He is with the Heavenly Father, but He is also with the person to help him or her before God's throne of grace and mercy. Thus, in a way, the Heavenly

Father trusts the **Advocate** and does not charge an individual with accusations until one's **Advocate** has spoken.

In other words, **the Heavenly Father sees the person redeemed through His Gospel through the person's Advocate at His throne, and, consequently, according to the law of the new covenant in which this Advocate is grounded.**

Let us note then, in the next paragraphs, once again, the enormous difference that exists in the Order of Melchizedek regarding the Order of Aaron.

In the Order of Aaron, the man who stood before God to represent other people full of flaws, sins, and guilt was also a man subject to weaknesses, transgressions, and guilt.

If a priest of the Order of Aaron did his work correctly according to the law of Moses, the best he could get was a postponement of the people's cause, but never the full elimination of guilt and the writing of debt.

The Order of Aaron is of the kind that has advocates (priests) who want to buy time, thinking that they and their "clients" might manage to postpone their causes forever. They become specialists in the postponement or procrastination of causes, but never of a definitive or eternal solution.

In the Order of Aaron, which works on Earth in its human temples or sanctuaries, the people's representatives claim to God to postpone the causes of themselves and those they represent. However, when they, their "clients," or the people the "represented" die, who will represent them in the eternal court?

When the "individuals represented" by the workers of priestly orders similar to Aaron's will find themselves before the throne of eternal judgment, how will they act without the help of their temporal advocates and who can no longer appeal for a postponement of the causes in the name of the people they represent and who are no longer on Earth?

To insist on seeking to postpone what a person could and should solve through Christ before God represents a way of escape from something that sooner or later can no longer be avoided, which is why John the Baptist urges people not to trust their own excuses, as follows:

*Matthew 3: 5 **Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him***

6 and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

9 and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

10 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

Concerning still the words of John the Baptist above, we may observe that regarding verse 7, another translation says: ***“who taught you to flee from the future wrath?”***

Let us note, then, that part of the audience to which John the Baptist was preaching was composed of people who were taught about, who learned, and who came to like the idea of postponing the reflection of the heavenly light on their thoughts and actions in the expectation of not being clarified of the need to depart from them already in their lifetime in the present world.

At another time, the Lord Jesus Himself also warned that people who sought their self means of justification were following an alternative very contrary to the Way of the newness of life that Christ came to reveal to the world.

Luke 16: 15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

Let us carefully observe below yet the following text:

Galatians 3: 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."

12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."

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.

Many workers in the Order of Aaron, or similar, announced that people would be fine if they kept the Sabbath, were circumcised, brought their sacrifices, offerings, tithes, and practiced several other outward rules. However, they propagated an enormous untruth (or lie) and the postponement of the real healing of their followers' hearts, for they would never be able to be justified by their law. And they also did this because they did not want to stop receiving the resources that the people brought to them for their religious service. Resources that were used to keep them in the position of representatives of others with the appearance of effectiveness, but which, in reality, has always been a weak and useless system.

Therefore, it should be noted here, once again, that riches, friends of unrighteousness, and works of self-righteousness will be completely useless when people stand before judgment before the eternal heavenly throne and when they can no longer postpone the so-called *wrath to come*.

Hebrews 9: 27 **And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.**

And adding yet another point to the aspects mentioned above, we would like to remember that **the Gospel is offered to us freely, which also implies that the Lord Jesus Christ, as our *Advocate with the Father*, offers help or assistance to those who believe in Him through the same and abundant grace of God.**

The Lord Jesus does not charge fees either before or after for the benefits that a person obtains by willingly receiving His assistance as an *Advocate with the Father*. Christ only wants the person assisted by Him to recognize and confess the truth that it was He who helped him or her so that the glory of the facts is also according to the truth and thus be attributed to the God who is worthy of all glory.

Thank God for our *Heavenly Advocate with the Eternal Father*, namely: The Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek!

Therefore, this is another facet of the sublime, exalted, and incomparably superior glory of Christ revealed to us by the Gospel of the Glory of God.

As the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek and our *Advocate with the Father*, the Lord Jesus has compassion on us so that all things related to our eternal life can be remedied in due time and without the need for us to postpone fundamental matters, for beforehand He has already paid off the eternal debt of sin on the cross of Calvary.

And even if an individual's redemption is a matter of last minute and there is only time for a few words, the *Advocate with the Heavenly Father* knows how to deal with all the situations in which people seek Him, as exemplified in the narrative repeated below:

Luke 23: 39 **Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."**
40 **But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"**
41 **"And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."**
42 **Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."**
43 **And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."**

Thank God that the Lord Jesus is the *Advocate with the Father* even at the last minute and that He is continually on call if someone seeks Him under this condition. Because Christ is a humble *Advocate* and acts according to the heavenly kingdom, some despise Him to the end. But even though, He does not reject and saves those who invoke Him as Lord, even if it is in the last moments when this still can be done.

On the other hand, we emphasize again that it is not only the cases of imminent emergencies that receive the attention of the Lord Jesus. The Lord also knows how to address all the matters that prepare people to be fruitful in their lifetime on Earth, for

this is the Lord's desire for those who believe in His name still in time to live and walk in the Lord in the present world:

John 20: 30 ***And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;***
31 ***but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.***

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

From the eternal or life after death point of view, both the thief on the cross and John who wrote the so-called Gospel of John inherited eternal life. However, John had the privilege of living in Christ even when he was in the fleshly body and thus glorifying God in the world through His life, still experiencing on Earth what the Lord declares in the following texts:

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 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.***

Many are saved in extreme conditions or just before the end of their life on Earth, just like the criminal crucified next to the Lord Jesus. However, those who receive Christ in time to still be able to be "in Christ" also in the present world may have the privilege of being witnesses of the power of God in their lives despite their weaknesses and their fragile condition in their temporal bodies.

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.***

Therefore, no person should ever despise the day of the Lord's visitation in one's life, for, without the kindness of God granted to a person, no one can even repent and return to the Lord.

Romans 2: 4 ***Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?***

2 Corinthians 6: 1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Our *Advocate with the Father*, although He did not commit sin, was made a man like us to assure us that He understands us, that He can represent us perfectly towards the Father, and that He is mighty to remove any impediment that tries to interfere in our relationship with the Heavenly Father and with what we need to be perfected in the Lord from the moment we come to believe in His Gospel.

Hebrews 2: 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

3: 1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,

2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.

3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.

4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.

5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,

6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our *righteous Advocate* because He likewise is always righteous towards the Judge who is seated on the throne of eternal righteousness, towards God's will, and towards us.

In Christ, the Heavenly Father offers us redemptive and reconciling righteousness. However, in presenting Christ to us as our *Advocate at His throne*, God also offers us the perfect assistance to know how to access and relate to heavenly righteousness.

Hebrews 10: 19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,

21 and having a High Priest over the house of God,

22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Why, then, do many Christians' attempts to access the Heavenly Father fail so much as to establish their fellowship with the Eternal Father?

Firstly, many Christians deprive themselves of a more intense fellowship with the Lord because they do not dare in humility actually to come before God, and perhaps many still have not even realized that they can do so.

Some have received Jesus as their Savior, talk about having fellowship with Christ, but rarely seek Him for fellowship on a personal and individual level. They rarely quiet the heart and incline their attention to really talk to the Lord and be attentive to the Lord's response.

Others, however, seek access to the Lord by the methods of the Order of Aaron, which is not an order that acts for the benefit of fellowship; on the contrary, it works so that it does not occur. They believe that Christ died for them and that He forgave the sins they committed before they were Christians. However, they think that after being converted to Christ, they need to do works to be accepted by the Lord, forgetting that no one is justified or remains justified before the Lord through human works or of the law. (An aspect widely addressed in the subject on The Gospel of God's Righteousness.)

Others, yet, come to God no longer by their own works and correctly indicate the work of Christ, forgiveness through the blood of the Perfect Lamb, and recognize that the Lord Jesus died on the cross in their behalf so that the way to come near to God was opened. However, they try to approach the Heavenly Father without first having the Lord Jesus as their High Priest, personal **Advocate**, and Mediator before God.

This last group is composed of people who already believe that they are forgiven by the blood of Christ and that this is an irrevocable fact, but who have not yet been taught by the **Advocate with the Father** that they also need to put aside the clothes, thoughts, and attitudes that the Lord Jesus wants to guide them to put off so they may understand the will of God. They are people who do not reach the renewal of understanding because they do not come to God through Jesus as the one who **has a high priesthood over the house of God** on behalf of their lives.

When someone inclines one's heart to God, it is Jesus Christ, who has a great priesthood over the house of God, who wants to help him or her with all the positioning one should have in the Most Holy place. And as God established Christ as such, the Heavenly Father also respects the position for which He Himself appointed the Lord Jesus.

Since God established Christ as the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek and as **the Advocate at the heavenly throne** of those who believe in Him, the matter of acceptably reaching God is not only associated with the previous forgiveness of sin because Christ has already died for all sinners once and for all, but it is also about recognizing who God has established for people to come to Him in fellowship.

After a person believes that one is already justified by faith in Christ, the matter is not only that one wants to reach God because a new and living

way has been opened, but is to reach God through the very New and Living Way that God offers us, and which is called The Lord Jesus Christ.

As we have already commented, the provision of forgiveness for the sins of humanity does not mean that people can approach God by any means only because they proclaim the provision that Christ made on their behalf, for Christ made the atonement for all, but He is also the very propitiation in favor of all.

Apart from Christ, there is no propitiation for sins. And in the absence of propitiation, God does not listen to those who come to Him under the pretext of wanting fellowship dissociated from the living and eternal provision that is Christ Himself.

If a person dissociates oneself from the *Advocate Jesus* and wants to claim one's case directly before God, one will never be able to find absolution and, even less, fellowship with the Lord.

Nevertheless, what is mentioned in the previous paragraph is what many have tried to do, thinking that Christ has given them a right, a term, or a ticket by which they can present themselves to God without passing through Christ Himself. They want the Christian life and its benefits without wanting the Christian life itself, which is Christ. They want the newness of life, but, at the same time, they despise the essence of the newness of life. And for this reason, they do not obtain from God what they need so much.

Despite the work of Christ on the cross at Calvary, how may a person understand God's will for one's life if everything one thinks is still contaminated to oppose what God wants to grant him or her?

Thus, it is also due to the point mentioned in these last paragraphs that Christ wants to interact with us to show us what needs to be abandoned so that several aspects of the newness of life in Him are added to us by God.

In Christ, God has already made provision for the forgiveness of sin for all people. However, when a person comes to God through Christ, the High Priest, and the *Heavenly Advocate*, the Lord causes what He provided on the cross of Calvary to become applied to one's life so that one personally experiences the freedom that was made available for him or her on the cross of Calvary.

Returning to the point mentioned at the beginning of the present chapter that Christ is the Truth, a person may have already understood that Christ's work on the cross of Calvary was to pay off the debt that was on him or her, but, still, one cannot come to God in "Spirit and Truth" if one wants to come to God dissociated from Christ who is the Truth and the *Advocate* of Truth.

The eternal debt of the human being's subjection to sin has been paid off at the cross of Christ, but the mentality that leads people to continue to choose subjection to sin is like a garment that needs to be taken away. And no one is accepted to come to advocate the truth before God with one's own human arguments and dissociated from the truth that is Christ.

When a person wants to come to the Heavenly Father forgiven of sins but does not want to come to Him through Christ, one wants to present oneself before God based on the work of Christ, but without the garments of the truth, because for a person who is willing to be in Christ, Christ is the very truth that a person needs to put on in order to present oneself to the Eternal Father.

Romans 13: 14 **But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**

Ephesians 4: 24 ... **and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.**

When a person wants to present oneself to God without being clothed with Christ or without being “in Christ,” one wants to enter the Most Holy in heaven through one's natural or carnal condition, which cannot enter or inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Therefore, **a person who longs for fellowship with the Heavenly Father should understand that the way to establish it in peace and according to the Heavenly Father's will is to be practicing a continuous and intense fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.**

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

The way for someone to come to God is inseparable from Christ. That is why no individual should despise this Way of God's love, letting Christ lead him or her on one's next steps to grow appropriately in the fellowship with the Heavenly Father as well.

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."**

Finally, we would like to highlight in this chapter the aspect that **it is also in the fellowship with Christ that we are prepared to be taught to pray in the name of Jesus before the Heavenly Father and to pray according to the will of the Heavenly Father Himself.**

In due time, the Lord Jesus announces to us in advance what the Heavenly Father wants us to ask Him and what the Father wants us to be willing to do, so that, together with Christ, we are prepared for the moment when the Father asks us what do we want to ask or for the moment when the Father asks us what He asked Isaiah: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?”

In His position also as an *Advocate with the Father*, Christ offers us His help, and even His friendship, to assist us so that as His friends and His brothers, we may know how to behave before God also as a friend of Christ and a brother of Christ should behave before the Heavenly Father.

The one whom Christ introduces to the Heavenly Father to be attended by the Eternal Father to ask for what the Lord has instructed him or her, the Heavenly Father also hears him or her as to what one asks Him in the name of His Beloved Son Jesus Christ.

After some disciples who walked closer to the Lord were also, therefore, taught by Christ about the truth and various fundamental aspects of God's will, He showed them how much He considered them and what their condition would be before the Heavenly Father if they also remained in fellowship with Him, as follows:

- John 15: 9 As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.*
- 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*
- 11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*
- 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*
- 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*
- 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*
- 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*
- 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*
- John 16: 23 And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.*
- 24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*
- 25 These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.*
- 26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;*
- 27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.*
-

“*In that day,*” mentioned in the text above, is the day when we present ourselves to the Heavenly Father prepared by the Lord Jesus Christ to present ourselves before the Father as Christ taught us to do.

And here again, we ask why, then, have people not gotten so many and so many things that they ask God?

Many have not attained the Heavenly Father's favor in asking Him because, first, they have not developed a friendship with the Son of God who died for them on the cross, but who also rose from the dead to relate personally to each individual.

Many have not gotten answers to the questions they present to the Heavenly Father because they have not seen Christ as the High Priest of love that the Father has given in perfect love to them to help and perfect

them to come to the Father, and also because many have not willingly and respectfully accepted the One who is given them as an *Advocate* to assist them before God in all truth.

Many people have sought God even with zeal and perseverance, but they have not intended to do so in truth, which, in turn, is found only in Christ Jesus. And for this, they pray and use vain repetitions, but since they do not have the support of the *Advocate with the Father*, they also do not have heavenly support concerning what they ask.

The Lord Jesus wants us to present ourselves with a renewed mind and attitudes before God, and that precisely also is why God established Him as Mediator, High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, and the *Advocate* of the new covenant.

Christ wants to teach us to pray to the Heavenly Father because, very often, people pray to God only for the sake of their pleasures and delights, doing so under the attitude of arrogance.

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.

Christ teaches us to ask according to the will of God, for our *Advocate* offers us a spirit with understanding and humility.

On the other hand, if a person is not previously taught by Christ about the will of Christ, one often makes requests to the Heavenly Father that are in no way for the benefit of one's life or one's fellow men.

Therefore, merely adding the "name of Christ" to prayer or at the end of a request does not actually make this prayer to be "in the name of Christ" if it is contrary to the real will of the Lord Jesus and the Heavenly Father.

If a person has one's life aligned with Christ, Christ's understanding and feeling about what is appropriate or what is not appropriate accompanies that person who is in Him.

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.

We would like to mention here again that those who believe in Christ and ask Christ for help, as High Priest and *Advocate with the Heavenly Father*, are taught by the Lord to be sincere and trust Him to open their hearts to Him in confidence.

Christ teaches those who believe in Him to always be sincere in heart, even when they make mistakes, for, in this way, they may have their conscience purified from the

sins and the dead works of the first covenant. They may have their bodies washed by the word and see the stains from thoughts and practices of unrighteousness removed. And yet, Christ offers to teach them to learn from Him to wear the garments of the kingdom of God like the ones He does.

Thus, **seeking to speak very briefly what we sought to expose in this chapter, continuous fellowship with Christ also as our High Priest and *Advocate* is the perfect way to be prepared to speak continually and appropriately also with the Heavenly Father.**

In Christ, before we come to the Heavenly Father with hasty words, we can humbly ask the Lord Jesus to help us, purify us, and teach us how to ask God in humility so that we may speak to the Father also with love, reverence, and respect, just as Christ always does and how He exemplified to us even at the time of His most profound agony on Earth.

Mark 14: 36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

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.

Christ is the *Advocate* appointed by God to prepare us to come to the Heavenly Father and care for us before Him.

Therefore, our prayer at this point to God is that the Holy Spirit may help us never to forget this sublime aspect of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the goodness of the Heavenly Father who appointed us the Son of His Love for this outstanding and overflowing assistance of love.

1 John 2: 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

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.

C27. The Glory of the High Priest who is the Author and Finisher of Faith

A. The Essential Condition of Faith in the Life of Every Human Being and Every Christian

Despite all that the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us, does in us, and does for us even before the Heavenly Father, as we saw in the previous chapter, the assistance that He offers us and with which He assists us as our Advocate, who also is our Friend, is part of an even broader work that He wants to carry out in us.

Together with His help for us to trust Him and the Heavenly Father also so that our hearts are enlightened to be healed, the Lord Jesus Himself continues His work towards us and is ready to build in us all that we need for a life according to God's will.

And, as we saw earlier in this material and the subject on The Gospel of the Promise, a life built on God is also built through an essential element called faith. Faith that works through love, through which the just lives in God, and without which no one can please God.

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

The subject of faith is a topic widely addressed in the Bible. And the objective here is in no way aimed at extending this subject so crucial to the most varied specific matters of faith in the Christian life, for the primary goal of this subject is to focus on the Gospel of the Glory of Him who is “all and in all,” namely: The Lord Jesus.

Nevertheless, **when it comes to the book of Hebrews and the role of Christ as the Eternal High Priest, we understand that the subject of faith needed to be mentioned prominently at this point because it has an indispensable and very particular role concerning everything that involves the action of Christ in the life of a Christian.**

It is also worth remembering that faith is not an act performed once when a person receives salvation. Faith, by which a person receives salvation offered to him or her by the Lord and experiences the new birth through the Spirit of God, is a gift that a person needs throughout one's life and at every moment, like how a person, for example, needs to feed daily in one's natural condition.

Faith is given so that a person may choose to receive Christ in one's heart, but faith is also granted so that a person may continue to choose to live the Christian life every new day. Faith is an essential aspect for a “non-Christian” to be able to receive the condition of “Christian,” but it is also a vital means for the one who has become “Christian” to live in the new condition of life granted to him or her.

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."

No person can live on Earth without having gone through conception and birth, but no one continues to live and feed on the act itself that generated one's birth. The facts of the birth enabled the emergence of life, but life starts to be supported by the specific facts and conditions that also support it later, and there is also the need for appropriate actions and food for the various stages of this life.

Due to the prominent role of faith in God in the Christian's life, it is not very easy to draw a parallel with it in a person's natural life. However, if we tried to do so, we could perhaps say that faith is a spiritual virtue of life that God gives a person to act on behalf of oneself and even others in the world, and by which the Lord quickens several parts of the newness of life that one may have in God. Just as a person's ability to decide to breathe, eat, drink, act, work, clean oneself up, and so on keeps him or her active in the natural world, so faith cooperates with one's spiritual life in the Lord.

The gift of faith, given by the Lord, is what allows a person to make decisions in the spiritual sphere that move living aspects in one's favor in all areas of one's life, just as decisions in the natural life move living factors regarding the body of a person, and, therefore, faith is so valuable and indispensable.

Just as a person who has one's natural ability to make decisions affected may not be able to supply even the most essential aspects of one's natural life, so a person weakened in one's faith may no longer be able to attain the necessary conditions of one's spiritual life which, in turn, also end up affecting several central aspects of one's natural life.

Considering that the Gospel of God is entirely constituted under the characteristic of being an offer to whom it is offered, the faith in God that a person may have is the aspect that allows him or her to willingly decide whether one wants to receive something from God that is already offered and available to him or her.

Figuratively and in one of its aspects, faith in God is like having access to the One who has the set of keys that God Himself gives to a person and allows an individual to open each of the gifts that the Lord has previously offered to this person through the Gospel. Faith in God is like having access to the One who is willing to grant the combinations of the safes that contain the most diverse gifts that a person needs or will need to have access to during his or her life.

Continuing with the example in the previous paragraph, if a person has faith in God, one can access the One who holds the keys to all the aspects one needs, or even some things one simply wants to have and that one may ask the One who bestows all good gifts of life. If a person does not have faith in God, one does not even have access to make the request for the keys, much less has access to the gifts one needs or desires.

When the Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples that He would grant them the keys of the kingdom of heaven, He was also referring to giving them the faith that would allow them to have eternal access to Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures and mysteries of knowledge and wisdom.

*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.
4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

Now, **faith is the certainty and the firm foundation of hope. And the assurance and the firm foundation of hope can only be the One who can guarantee that hope can be fulfilled satisfactorily and entirely as it was proposed**, which has been more widely exposed in the subject on The Gospel of the Promise.

For this reason, a person is saved when, by faith, one calls on the name of Christ as the Lord, for only Christ is able to save him or her indeed.

As we have repeatedly mentioned in all the subjects of this series, Christ is the central point for us to know the kingdom of God. Christ is the salvation offered by God. Christ is righteousness, peace, power, grace, the fulfillment of God's promises, and the substance of the hope of the promises of the Lord whose fulfillment is yet to be revealed. And it was because of this conviction that Paul, like the author of the book of Jude, had such a great struggle for the faith of those who had already known Christ.

Faith in God is a condition where a person has a clear option and at least enough sobriety to be able to choose to trust the true God, the One who can effectively save and continue helping him or her after granting him or her salvation and newness of heavenly life.

Faith in God, seen concisely, is the condition given by God to a person so that one can believe that God exists, that the Lord is the firm foundation of life, and that God is also the certainty of all hope, to the point of trusting Him and His words or instructions.

If a person says he or she is confident in God, it is also to be expected that one will trust the words and directions that the Lord gives him or her, because if a person has confidence in God, one will also trust that all that the Lord instructs him or her to do is according to the heavenly righteousness for a true and eternal benefit for one's life.

Faith in God is an invitation or ticket that the Lord grants to a person and by which the Lord gives him or her the ability and option to be able to trust the Lord Himself, and that, if used to trust the Lord, also ensures that the Lord puts Himself in favor of the person who believes in Him to provide for the fulfillment of what that person believed for salvation and to live life as saved in the Lord.

One of the aspects concerning being firm in the faith is, then, "knowing whom one has believed," just as it happened in Sarah's life.

Faith in God is what Sarah used when God spoke to her and Abraham, as described below:

*Hebrews 11: 11 **By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.***

Thus, when it comes to people's decisions about their spiritual life and eternal life, faith in God, initially, is what they have most precious on Earth.

In general, God undoubtedly is the most precious aspect of life. However, looking at the most significant decisions that a person may face, faith is, initially, what they have as most precious.

That is, **faith is the first virtue or heavenly gift that an individual may receive personally to choose to connect oneself to an appropriate relationship with God, who sustains one's whole life.**

Without faith in God, an individual is not supported to establish an adequate connection between him or her and all that God is and wants to grant through the Gospel. A person without faith is like a person without God in the world as to eternal salvation and as to the Gospel that the Lord wants to grant to this individual, although God, through His Spirit, is everywhere and sustains everything and everyone.

We mentioned that faith in God, initially, is the most crucial aspect that a person needs in one's relationship with God because it is also through the cooperation of the working of faith in the Lord, that there is in an individual's life, that God strengthens each person also to achieve hope and love. The Bible declares that love is the greatest among these three aspects, but to understand love, a person also goes through hope and faith in God.

In terms of establishing the human being's fellowship with God, faith in God is absolutely vital, for it is only by grace that can be received through faith that a person is associated with the newness of heavenly life that exists exclusively in God.

If seen in the opposite direction, the expression “*the just shall live by faith*” also means that “there is no true spiritual life” or “there is no life of a righteous person” if a person dissociates oneself from the faith, thus also showing us the indispensability of faith for the eternal life of each human being and also for each individual who is already a Christian.

B. The Author and Finisher of the Gift so-called Faith

Although it was mentioned in the previous topic that faith is “a virtue or a gift that God grants to people,” we believe it is highly necessary to reaffirm this in a particular topic to highlight this characteristic of faith.

Due to the essential relevance of faith and what is proclaimed that might be achieved through faith, many people may be awakened, and have been, to want to obtain this faith at any cost or in any way because of the benefits they come to think that may get through faith.

Nevertheless, the fact that a person wants to “have faith” does not mean that one knows indeed what faith is, where faith is located, and how it can be obtained.

Knowing that something extremely vital exists and knowing the need for it does not automatically mean knowing exactly where to find what one wants, nor does it mean knowing how to get what one is looking for even if, eventually, one already knows the place to find it.

When people hear about something that is very significant and what they need, many become eager to get it, but they don't hear the part about “how” what they need can be achieved. Often when people hear about something that could be favorable to them, they, by themselves, begin to think and plan how they will do to get what they have been told they need, as if everything they need depends on their efforts and actions to be achieved.

Under this impulse to think that they can and must achieve by their efforts what they are taught to be necessary, crucial, or vital, people may even come to understand in a distorted way the main work that Christ admonishes every human being to do and that is described in the text below:

*John 6: 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."***

Therefore, to go further on the aspect of “how” a person may have faith in God or exercise faith in the Lord, we would like to address below the point that faith in God is divided at least into two main items, namely:

- ⇒ 1) **Faith in Christ Jesus as the Heavenly Father's Envoy to the world to provide salvation to everyone who believes in Him in this condition;**
- ⇒ 2) **The faith in God that Christ grants as a gift or virtue to anyone who has already believed that He is the One sent by God as the salvation for eternal life or who has already received Christ as the Lord of one's life.**

Starting, then, with the first aspect of faith described in the previous paragraph, we can see in the Scriptures that it is offered through the proclamation of the Gospel to all the people of the world.

As for the second aspect of faith highlighted in the paragraph above, we can see that it is granted only to those who receive the first aspect offered to everyone.

The first central aspect of faith in God is offered to people to be obtained when they incline their ears to hear what God's proclaimed word has to say to them about Christ the Redeemer and the salvation that is available to them in Him. It is also the result of the Holy Spirit's work and the goodness of God so that a person may find repentance for one's sin of turning away from God and so that one may freely choose to receive Christ as Lord in the heart.

Romans 10: 16 ***But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"***
17 ***So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***

John 16: 8 ***And when He (the Holy Spirit) 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.***

Romans 2: 4 ***Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?***

2 Corinthians 6: 2 ***For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.***

The matter concerning the faith that God allows a person to reach for salvation is remarkably simple to practice.

The matter of the first central aspect of faith is available to everyone as a person hears about the Gospel that offers him or her newness of eternal life in Christ, and one may have two options regarding this Gospel: Accept Christ as Lord of one's life or reject it either passively or actively.

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.***

Romans 10: 4 ***For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***

*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."***

The first aspect of faith mentioned above is simple, as explained in the texts above, where one of the main factors that may interfere for a person not to choose it is if one has not yet had the opportunity to hear about the good news of God, also called the Gospel of God, Christ, the Kingdom of God, Salvation, and many other aspects.

And considering that this first central aspect of faith has already been more widely dealt with in the subjects such as The Gospel of Salvation, The Gospel of the Grace of God, and The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, we do not want to advance towards it in the present material and also because the verses just quoted above, in fact, already contain the description of "how" this aspect of faith may be obtained, namely, once again: To Believe in Christ and call on Him as Lord to be saved by Him.

What Christ did to extend salvation to us is immeasurable in terms of the richness and depth of details as in quantity of actions. However, everything necessary was done so that salvation could be offered to us in a very simple way or according to the simplicity that there is only in Christ Jesus so that everyone who wants to receive Him may also be saved.

Now, as for the second primary aspect of faith, the faith in God after receiving Christ as Lord and being included in God's salvation, we may observe that this aspect of faith now requires a broader teaching on how it is granted to us and how it may be used at all times and in all activities of a Christian's life.

Once again, it should be stressed here that this second aspect of faith is exclusive to those who have received Christ in their lives. Thus, it does not make sense to require a non-Christian to understand what one has not yet received, just as it does not make sense to want a non-Christian to act according to this second aspect of faith or that he or she should strive to have this type of faith, since it can only be obtained by those who exercise concerning Christ, firstly, the first central aspect of faith.

In its second central aspect, faith in God is exclusive to those who have received a new heart. It is only for those "born again through Christ," the Life-giving Spirit. It is exclusive for those who have opened their hearts to receive the Kingdom of God in their lives willingly.

Trying to require someone to live by faith in God, without first receiving Christ, is to demand from an individual that one's heart should be established on a new foundation without offering, beforehand, that one may put oneself on the new ground. It is demanding that a person should have new attitudes from the inside of one's heart without, however, having received the newness in one's heart so that this new might be extracted from it.

Trying to demand someone to live through faith in God without first having received Christ is to try to impose a very heavy burden on another person. It is trying to establish a standard of conduct for a person without giving the conditions for him or her to achieve what is required.

As already mentioned in the subject on The Gospel of the Promise, faith in God is not a personal conviction or opinion by which an individual believes that one's own beliefs or certainties can make the world or parts of it move. This belief is in line with the idea of "wishful or positive thinking." It is to think that faith is to believe that personal belief has power, in itself, to make what is expected or desired come through. It is to think that the work of human believing, in itself, is capable of producing the works that move the universe.

The universe moves whether a person believes or does not believe that God sustains it, for it is Christ who supports everything through the power of His own word, as we have seen several times in the present subject.

Faith in God, regarding the second central aspect of faith addressed in this topic, is not something that a person can exercise, practice, or grow in it before receiving it, because how may anyone grow in what has not yet been granted him or her?

Faith in God, both in its first and second central aspect, is a gift offered by God to human beings, for if God had not sent Christ to the world, no one could believe in Him. However, similarly, it should be noted that faith in God, in its second principal aspect, is also only possible to be accessed if it has been previously received as a heavenly gift.

Considering that faith in God is a benefit or a good and perfect gift, it could have no other source but as a gift from above for those who receive it:

*James 1: 16 **Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.**
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.***

Thus, why is it impossible for someone to please God if it is not through faith? Why, then, is it not possible for a righteous person to live without it being through faith?

The impossibility of pleasing God, except by faith, lies in the fact that the person despises what God Himself has given him or her to be able to live life according to the will of God and not according to the flesh, the world, and the darkness.

Whoever despises faith in God, also despises a gift that God gives to people so that they may establish a life of trust in Him and of love for Him.

God requires people to live by faith in Him to relate to Him, for, in the first place, He has already given us the gift of faith precisely so that we may trust Him.

God does not require people to use what was not first provided for them from heaven.

Moreover, faith in God goes far beyond a person's knowledge about a fact or even about one's belief about a fact. A person may believe that something actually is as it is said to be and yet have no faith in what one believes to be true.

Merely believing that someone or something exists, or simply believing that someone or something may eventually accomplish something, is not what is called faith in God. And to insist on this, is an attempt at introducing a dissimulation of what faith in God indeed is or even what faith mentioned in the Scriptures is.

*James 2: 19 **You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe, and tremble!***

In terms of merely believing that something exists or may exist, many people are even inferior to demons, for they do not even believe in what demons already believe, and that is the existence of one and Eternal God.

Despite the prince of the world of darkness himself and his hosts work to try to induce people not to believe in the Unique God to keep them from the Eternal Creator, the empire of darkness knows that the evidence of all creation proclaims the glory of God and cooperates so that people believe that God exists and is present in sustaining the entire universe.

Nevertheless, **what God offers people in Christ is more than general knowledge that God exists and the mere belief in this existence.**

What God offers people through Christ or in Christ is so that they may move from the general belief in the existence of God to "faith in God" according to what is described about this faith in the Scriptures.

Unlike believing in the sense of knowing that something exists and is real, "faith in God," as already mentioned, is a gift in which a person reaches a condition, at least minimal, of sobriety to choose to also trust one's life to God, in addition to believing that God exists.

In the face of the above, an unbelieving person, then, is an individual who still does not believe in Christ as the Lord of one's life or an individual who does not exercise the faith that was given him or her by God if one has already received Christ in the heart. Therefore, the one who believes that God exists, but does not trust Him or does not entrust one's life to the care of God as the Lord directs him or her to do, is also a person without faith, a person who does not exercise the faith given him or her by God, or an individual who does not live by faith in the Lord.

In some texts exposed in the previous chapters, we have just seen that those who want to use their works to justify themselves to relate to the Eternal Creator are also people who do not act through faith or are devoid of faith even though they believe in the same God that a Christian believes and although they believe that God might reward them if they only do the works stipulated in the law with which they are associated.

People subject to the Order of Aaron or similar, for example, may believe that God exists and that He is the Only God from whom they might and should obtain blessings, but still lack "faith in God" or "faith given by God." And this, because they do not believe in Christ as God instructs them to believe.

1 John 5: 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.

10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

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.

John 20: 30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

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

In the light of the Scriptures, not believing in Christ as the Son of God in whom all life and all provision for eternal life is found is to be an unbeliever. It is not to live according to faith in God or the faith of God, even if an individual claims to be convinced that God exists as the only Creator of the Universe.

Not to believe in God or to believe in God according to what people think they should believe in God is equally to lack faith in God. It is not to use faith in line with the terms that God established for a person to live by faith, which, in other words, is not truly believing in God as He presents Himself to us in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, when we face this fact that faith is not a person's strong convictions, but that faith is a gift given by God so that an individual, in humility and even weakness, may trust in God who is strong and almighty to support and guide him or her throughout one's life, we also come across the fact that we need to be taught about how this faith is granted to us, what this faith is, and how we may live with heavenly understanding according to this faith.

Since faith, in its second central aspect, is a gift from God for those who have accepted Christ, faith and the way of living through this faith are not known broadly already in the first moment when a person receives the gift of faith in God by heavenly grace.

While the world proclaims life by effort and self-righteousness, by the strength of the flesh, by personal convictions or by the affirmation of its rudiments, the Scriptures, regarding faith, teach us to learn to come to God even with our weaknesses with the confidence and expectation that He will help us despite them and will instruct us even in what we have no knowledge or any certainty about.

Thus, in one of its first characteristics, the resting place for the human soul is to use the faith that God grants to an individual to trust in God Himself and to receive from God the assurance that He will always be with him or her.

*2 Corinthians 12: 9 **And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities (or weakness), that the power of Christ may rest upon me.***

*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.***

*2 Timothy 1: 12(b) **...for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.***

In this way, we may see that the theme of faith in God, associated with the context of the glory of Christ in which the Lord is the Eternal High Priest, Advocate, and Friend of Christians, is particularly useful and enlightening as to how the so essential and valuable faith is and how it can be established in every human heart.

Seeing faith in God in the context of the Gospel of Christ's Glory is particularly significant and valuable because it shows that faith in God is a gift to be used by people towards the Lord Himself and that this faith cannot be achieved and established by the people themselves even if they try to attain it through many actions, efforts, or intense search for merits or self-righteousness.

In its second central aspect that we mentioned in this topic, faith in God is a heavenly gift given to us through the eternal grace of our Lord and Savior, as are salvation, righteousness, peace, and the power of God.

Faith is given to us to be received and used through grace just as we may, by the same grace, access the other attributes of the Lord.

Just as the other gifts of God are found in Christ Jesus, since He is the Mediator of the new covenant and the living manifestation of the attributes of God, so also the gift of faith in God is found only in Christ Jesus.

Given the essential condition that faith in God represents for the life of every Christian, God would never let us helpless when it comes to having access to the faith that He gives us to trust Him, just as He would never let us helpless and neglected in the knowledge of how we may live and walk in the faith that He graciously grants us.

Therefore, **when a person comes to understand that faith in God is a gift that accompanies salvation and the new covenant, and when one comes to realize that, in addition to faith, the Lord offers him or her full assistance to learn to live according to faith in God, a whole horizon or a new**

perspective about life with God begins to be exposed and made clear to the person who has reached these understandings.

Knowing that faith is given to us together with Christ and knowing that Christ is given to us as the One who assists us in learning to walk, grow, and be established in this faith in God uncover a whole new way of living and discloses to us one of the primary aspects about how God wants that we may live to achieve His good, perfect, and pleasant heavenly will.

“In Christ” is our source of faith so that this gift may be used widely. And it is also “in Christ” that there is the full provision for this faith to be established for the purpose it has been assigned to us.

The same Eternal High Priest who assists us in everything before God is the one who supports us to have our trust in Him and God always before the eyes of our understanding well-established and firm, if we only remain in Him and with our eyes placed on Him.

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.

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?

Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Eternal High Priest, is also our *Author and Finisher of Faith in God*, through which we may live pleasingly to God and as a person justified in Christ is called to live and walk.

When God calls a Christian to live by faith, He is only asking that Christian to use what the Lord has already deposited in him or her when He gave the Lord Jesus Christ to his or her heart and as an instructor who is willing to personally teach him or her how to live and be consolidated in the faith in God.

1 Peter 1: 20 He (Christ) 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.

2 Peter 1: 1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

If we still return to the example of the previous chapters, where Isaiah found himself in the presence of God or before the majestic throne of God, we see that Isaiah would never have the faith to offer himself to God to do a prophet's work towards his people, for he saw himself as a man with unclean lips. However, after Isaiah was healed in the presence of the Lord through what God did in him and for him, and when, then, God asked who would go for Him to speak to a people to whom God wanted to send a message, Isaiah volunteered in faith or confidence before God to offer himself to do what the Lord asked to be done, as shown in the text we repeat below:

Isaiah 6: 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar.

7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

What happened to Isaiah before the heavenly throne is what the Heavenly Father likewise wants to do to us and for us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ first gives us faith so that we may use it to believe in Him and trust Him. After we trust Him and allow Him to guide us, the Lord Jesus Christ begins to work for us as the Eternal High Priest and assists us to come to know ourselves as we are before the light of God, but also as an Advocate to obtain a verdict of forgiveness and mercy, plus the faith to believe in this forgiveness.

Nevertheless, there are still other steps or in conjunction with the previous ones in which the Lord Jesus goes further and edifies in us a certainty that we are accepted before God to hear the will of God and ask according to this will in confidence that the Heavenly Father will also listen to us.

1 John 5: 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.

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Without a relationship with Christ, a person will not be able to come to know more fully the will of God for one's life, for Christ is the Mediator of all that refers to the new covenant. However, the Lord also shows us that He is the Mediator of faith and that He is even called in the Scriptures as **the Author and Finisher of our faith**, as we have already mentioned above.

And again, at this point, we may see that faith, in the first place, does not depend on the human being. If an individual rejects Christ and the grace that God offers him or her through the Lord Jesus, one is also deprived of the possibility of having the faith bestowed by God on one's life, for if one rejects the **Author and Finisher of the faith**, one implicitly also rejects the faith that this **Author and Finisher** could grant him or her.

Romans 9: 16 **So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.**

2 Thessalonians 3: 1 **Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.**

Still concerning the aspect of Christ being the **Author and Finisher of faith in God**, we would like to highlight that in the book of Hebrews, we see an extensive list of people who have received the grace to have faith in God. However, we understand that it is not appropriate to call them “great men or women of the faith” or “generals of the faith,” for they were not great in themselves; only God who gave them the faith was.

The people described in chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews were ordinary people who believed in God when God gave them the opportunity, through the Lord, to have the faith from God to believe what the Lord called them to believe.

Therefore, when the Scriptures teach us to consider those people described in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, as a model of a life by faith in God, they are pointing to the aspect that faith in God is also available to us if we seek it in the **Author and the Finisher of our faith** or, to be more specific, if we keep our eyes focused on the **Author and Finisher of our faith**.

The people narrated in chapter 11 of the book Hebrews are already gone from the Earth and are no longer active in the present world. However, the same God continues to operate with the same power. And trying to claim that God no longer works with the same power is to deny the Sovereign God's eternal power who works throughout all generations.

Furthermore, the same text in chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews states that God not only extends to us the same possibility of faith that was granted to past generations, but also declares that the Lord has separated something superior for us.

And what could be this superior aspect that God prepared for those who live in the world after the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, His resurrection from the dead, and the disclosure of His ministry as the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek?

Hebrews 11: 39 **And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.**

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, 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.**

The ***better*** point that the Heavenly Father has prepared for us or the most outstanding regarding all others always is **the Lord Jesus Christ that God graciously grants us for Him *to be all in all.***

In this way, God crowns the call to walk through faith in Him by providing us with a perfect and eternal High Priest to help all who want the life of God through this faith in the Lord to achieve this extraordinary and sublime purpose, as well as to be established in it.

A Christian “does not have to have faith by oneself.” Instead, one may accept God's invitation and use “the measure of faith that God gave him or her to look unto Jesus,” ***the Author and Finisher of the faith***, and no longer take away one's eyes of Him to grow and be more firmly established in this precious and indispensable gift that exists exclusively in the Lord.

The faith that God initially gives Christians through Christ is primarily the faith to look unto the Lord Jesus, our perfect High Priest who helps us in all other steps of faith and from which no one should ever depart.

*Jude 1: 3 **Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.***

Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest and our Advocate with the Heavenly Father, is also ***the Author and Finisher of our faith*** both before God and when we are faced with the most diverse challenges in the present world.

If a Christian thinks one still does not have faith for something specific that God directs him or her to do, but one believes in Jesus as one's High Priest and Advocate, and opens the eyes and looks unto Him, or puts one's heart's attention on Jesus, this Christian opens oneself up so that the Lord Himself may produce and complete in this Christian the faith one needs to believe in the other directions given to him or her by God.

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

That is, after a person receives Christ into the heart, what is the first work that one should continue to do in one's whole life?

The answer to the previous question always remains the same that allowed him or her to become a Christian. Let us look at this work once again:

*John 6: 29 **Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."***

If faith were developed and established through human strength and not by looking at Christ, ***the Author and Finisher of faith***, it would be conceived by the works of the flesh, and not by grace, falling again into works of unrighteousness and not of heavenly righteousness.

So, **concerning faith, God first asks His children to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is also the *Author and Finisher of their faith*. And if they do so and abide in Christ, the other fruits of faith will spring forth by the grace coming through this relationship.**

In some respects, the Lord Jesus Christ grants faith to act almost instantly. Concerning others, perhaps, it might be that the preparation of the faith for them takes place over some years. However, the crucial aspect in everything, at all times, or for each stage of the process, is always to keep the eyes focused on the Lord Jesus.

In Christ Jesus, who is the ***Author and Finisher of our faith***, but also the One who, despite being Lord, is gentle and lowly of heart, the Christian has the One who takes away the burdens of beliefs and performance that the Lord did not impose on him or her. And yet, one has in the Lord the One who grants him or her strength to endure all the challenges of faith that the Heavenly Father proposes to him or her during one's life's journey in the present world.

Thus, **no one needs to feel oneself too small before God, for in the work of faith in the Lord, it is not the people who are great, but the Sovereign God of the people who believe in Him.**

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."

1 Corinthians 12: 4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

Philippians 2: 13 For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Without Christ, no one can come to the Heavenly Father, for He alone is the one who grants the faith and assists people to reach the throne of God's grace.

Nevertheless, "in Christ" we may perform a priesthood before God supported and together with our Eternal High Priest, according to the Order of Melchizedek, so that we may know our Eternal Heavenly Father and be trained in the faith so that we may believe in the Lord and experience what, according to the precious and the perfect will of God, has already been made available to us in the Gospel of God.

Therefore:

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."***

2 Peter 1: 1 ***Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:***

2 ***Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.***

C. Faith in God: A Gift Strongly Resisted or Opposed

As we begin to advance further in understanding faith in God and as we come to see that faith in the Lord is the means by which a person may decide to receive the Lord's grace to leave behind a life dissociated from an appropriate relationship with one's Creator, there is no longer any reason for a person to think that the decision to associate with a life of faith in God will also be a decision that will please all those who want to remain in a life dissociated from faith in God.

Teaching about the faith has suffered harsh opposition during human existence due to the essential condition that it presents for a person to reach the life that is offered by the kingdom of God through the Gospel of the Lord's Righteousness and Grace, and therefore, the theme of faith needs to be remembered and highlighted frequently.

In order to combat faith in God in the hearts of people, the concept of faith has been exposed to severe opposition and even many attempts at distortions that try to cover it with all sorts of ideas and thoughts from the world and the powers of darkness.

Since powers of darkness cannot fight against God and prevail directly against Him, it is people's faith in the Lord that they try to fight so that the yokes they try to impose on humanity do not break and human beings do not reach the true priesthood of the heavenly and eternal life in Christ.

If we look at the Epistle of Jude, we can already see in its beginning how much the theme of faith and the emphasis of opposition to it need to be given prominence at certain times, to the point that Jude needed to postpone the approach of several other topics found in the salvation that God offers us in Christ.

Due to the emerging need for Christians to understand the fundamental condition of faith for their salvation and their lives, Jude was redirected by God to write to them to fight or to contend for the faith that was once for all given to them, showing us the essential condition that faith has concerning the salvation received by a person, as well as for the growth in this salvation, as follows:

*Jude 1: 1 **Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:***

*2 **Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.***

*3 **Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.***

*4 **For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.***

As we mentioned in the previous topic, on the part of the human being, faith is the most crucial initial aspect to be used so that a person may effectively return to the proper relationship with the Lord and to start living according to the newness of life that God offers him or her from the heavenly kingdom.

Because of the relevance that faith has for the Christian throughout one's Christian life, it is crucial that not only the basic concept of faith becomes known, but also how one can grow in the faith and be established in it, as well as what are the actions that oppose faith in the life of a Christian to try that it does not become established in one's heart.

When we see the Scriptures recommending that we should follow the example of people in the past who have obtained a good testimony before the Lord, we see that the most significant emphasis given regarding them is that we imitate or follow their example of faith in God, as well as in negative references to other people we are instructed not to follow their unbelief or non-use of faith in God that they could have used.

Let us look here at some more examples to be followed, as well as to be avoided:

*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.***

*1 Timothy 4: 12 **Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.***

*Romans 4: 18 **Abraham, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."***

*19 **And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.***

*20 **He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,**
21 **and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.***

*Hebrews 3: 19 **So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.***

Paul, like Jude, also stresses the importance of a person understanding that faith receives opposition and that it should not only be received with joy as a heavenly gift but that it should also be kept with love and diligence until the end, until the day of the eternal encounter with God in the eternal glory of Christ, as exemplified below:

*Philippians 1: 27 **Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.***

2 Timothy 4:6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.
7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Similarly, Peter also emphasizes the indispensable condition of faith in a person's life, showing that it is through this gift that God allows that a Christian not only may achieve an appropriate relationship with God during one's life on Earth, but that faith is also the means by which God allows a person to reach the greater purpose of faith having been bestowed on him or her, which is the eternal salvation of one's soul.

1 Peter 1: 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,
5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
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.

Faith and what it provides to achieve are too precious aspects for someone to take them lightly, for someone not to become a person who knows the faith more profoundly, or for an individual to merely not try to know what strives so much against this so essential gift granted from the heavenly kingdom and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Protecting or keeping the faith in God, offered and granted to a person through the Lord Jesus Christ, may prove to be more vital than life on Earth, as faith is vital to a Christian's life in the present world, but even much more for eternal life.

Nevertheless, when we look more closely at the text of Jude, exposed above, we can see that the resistance against the faith is not always a direct confrontation of it, as Saul of Tarsus tried to do against the spreading of the faith in Christ.

In his letter, Jude teaches us that the fight against faith may also come with intensity or an even greater intensity through subtle means that gradually try to remove people from their firm position of faith in God.

Jude was willing to write to his fellow believers in the faith in God about several highly significant aspects that are an integral part of salvation in Christ Jesus, but he

had to interrupt this purpose because of a strong feeling of need to, primarily, alert the brothers of faith to preserve what could keep them associated with this salvation.

What Jude started to write took priority over other points, for it would be useless for Jude to write about various aspects that there are in the salvation of God if those to whom he was writing were dissociated from faith in God and since, without this faith, they would also be dissociating themselves from the very salvation offered by the Lord.

In his epistle, Jude informs us that there are people who try to introduce themselves among Christians by deception, dissimulation, or, as it says in other versions, in secret and veiled ways to fight their faith also by seeking to attack grace with dissolution. That is, by seeking to propose a dissolute grace, distorted, and dissociated from the truth, and not as it indeed is.

Yet in other words, Jude informs us that there are people who outwardly or publicly try to show themselves not opposed to the faith and even show themselves to be sympathetic to it, but who, by shady and sneaky interests, seek to fight the faith by trying to subtly and gradually undermine people's understanding of the foundations that support faith in God and the heavenly grace that is inseparable from faith in the Lord.

*Jude 1: 12 **These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving (feeding or shepherding) only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;***

*13 **raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.***

...

*16 **These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.***

OR

*Jude 1: 12 **These men are like submerged rocks in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;***

*13 **raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own dirt; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.***

...

*16 **These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and their mouth is always spreading great arrogance; they are flatterers of others, for reasons of self-interest.***

(Translated from Portuguese, Spanish, and German translations.)

Jude warns us that some of the most intense struggles for the faith may come precisely through those people who approach Christians to flatter them or to show the pretentious and false admiration they have for those who live in faith in God. Who, however, do this to introduce their own human and self-focused concepts of what they think faith in God and the Lord's grace could or should eventually be.

What some try to introduce into Christian faith and grace to try to corrupt them is not necessarily an action aimed at teaching people to stop looking for God and to stop trying to live for God. What they propose to try to erode people's faith is very subtle and dangerous because they continue to propose people to seek God and serve God, but not through the means and conditions that God teaches for a person to live towards Him.

Now, were it not precisely these same attitudes that led people who left Egypt's domain to propose the priesthood under the law of Moses or the priesthood under the Order of Aaron?

Was it not precisely the search for God through the means proposed by people in opposition to the Lord's proposition that caused them to suggest and continue to insist on suggesting ways of relationship with God that were based on the works of the flesh and self-righteousness dissociated from a daily life of faith in the Lord?

*Hebrews 3: 7 **Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice,***
8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,
9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years.
10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.'
11 So I swore in My wrath, "They shall not enter My rest."
12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;
13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

The deceitfulness of sin does not seek to act only in the aspect of a person thinking that one does not need God, but also in the sense of trying to make a person believe intensely that one needs God, but that one can seek Him and reach His favor through methods suggested by men and women, and not according to the grace and faith of God according to what the Lord establishes to be grace and faith.

Jude was not warning his fellow believers of the faith in Christ against those who did not want to have fellowship with them or directly rejected their faith in God. Jude was warning his brethren of faith to be careful and to be aware of discerning and avoiding those who wanted to be part of their fellowship for shady self-interests and with the purpose of subtly imposing on them the human view and concepts of faith and God's grace.

Jude was proclaiming a warning so that people should not incur being moved away from the faith of God that has been given them once and for all and so that they do not run into beliefs that other people propose to them and that propagate that faith in God and grace are adjustable to the will or most varied desires of human beings.

Faith in God, which is given by God through Christ Jesus, is as it is, and it cannot be changed. If one tries to do so, what one will reap will not be

true faith, but some distorted belief not consistent with what is indeed called faith before God.

At this point, we return to the aspect of the enormous relevance of knowing and understanding the principle of Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth and of comprehending some fundamental aspects also about the old covenant and why it has already been revoked, made obsolete, and only remains *as symbolic for the present time* for our alert and teaching about the dangers that are associated with it and that are so attractive to so many people.

Something that very much attracts people to concepts of the ancient Order of Aaron, or similar, is that they may come to involve large economic sums, in the form of offerings and tithes, as well as because they are usually associated with a series of titles, status, and positions distributed in its pyramid of command, leading people to a life in which they aspire to climb, at least, some positions considered honorable in this “priestly pyramid.”

When men and women say that some are more special and have “special” calls from God to the detriment of others who are supposed to be subject to their ordinances, they are subtly and perversely seeking to lift the hearts of those who will be placed as “leaders” over “their so-called brothers of faith,” for they do this to catch them in their pride and so that these “leaders” help them to subdue the people they try to dominate and from whom they want to extract the most varied advantages for themselves.

The people with whom Jude says that a Christian should be particularly cautious are those who propose to be brothers of faith, who flatter and compliment them with “warm praises,” who are very charismatic and seem to show special attention to them, but who, in the sequence, if they are allowed to do this or if it is not radically interrupted, rise above those who they flattered before and, with an almost indescribable coldness, take their lives and everything they have as spoils.

Elihu, who truly spoke God's words to Job, already warned us in ancient times about the risk of seeking titles to create division between people that God did not desire to be made, as follows:

*Job 32: 21 **Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; Nor let me flatter any man.***
*22 **For I do not know how to flatter, Else my Maker would soon take me away.***

David also declares the contrary position that God has towards those who use flattering lips or tongues that speak haughty things to attribute titles to others to gain their attention and then make insensitive and exploratory use of others:

*Psalms 12: 3 **May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, And the tongue that speaks proud things,***
*4 **Who have said, "With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; Who is lord over us?"***
*5 **"For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, Now I will arise," says the LORD; "I will set him in the safety for which he yearns."***

- 6 The words of the LORD are pure words, Like silver tried in a furnace of earth, Purified seven times.**
- 7 You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.**
- 8 The wicked prowls on every side, When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.**

The aspects exposed above, similarly, are also exposed to us in the book of Proverbs and by Paul, respectively:

Proverbs 26: 28 **A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, And a flattering mouth works ruin.**

1 Thessalonians 2: 5 **For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness; God is witness.**

And still, and the most prominent reference, is when we look at what the Lord Jesus taught us about not treating the fellow believers of the faith in God with distinctions similar to those of the Order of Aaron, an aspect widely exposed in the book of Matthew, chapter 23, and of which we quote the verses that tell us the reason why we should not follow the suggestion of flattering some fellow believers to the detriment of others:

- Matthew 23: 8* **But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.**
- 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.**
- 10 And do not be called teachers (guides or leaders); for One is your Teacher, the Christ.**
-

Why does the Lord Jesus Christ instruct people who have received the faith of God in their hearts not to “call” themselves or one another beyond brethren of faith, saved by the same grace, and redeemed by the same Lord?

If we look at the context of the above verses, we see that one of the main reasons why brothers of faith should not give outstanding titles to each other is because, in addition to going against the truth of who Christ is and who God the Father is, this attitude feeds people with the leaven of the old covenant class divisions of people, the covenant according to Moses and followed by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes.

The old covenant is a priestly order based on a **fleshly commandment**. And life according to the flesh works to “divide a family of brothers.” It is an order full of disputes and strife which produce all sorts of confusion, competitions, and walls of separation instead of life.

Any priestly order that tries to divide the family of God into different categories of people is an order that has some equivalence with the Order of Aaron or that, at the very least, is already giving shelter to the leaven of

this order, for it is similar in the same carnal foundation or in the evil lusts that gave rise to this order.

And God does not grant His grace and the gift of faith for people to return to live and build their lives on the weak and fleeting foundation of the flesh.

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?**

...

10 **According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.**

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

James 3: 16 **For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.**

At yet another time, Christ firmly warned His disciples about the type of leaven from the old covenant and its leaders, showing that, although He came so that the first priesthood was removed so that the second priesthood could be established, the leaven from the old priesthood is still powerful to leaven even those who have already received the newness of life from the Lord, if someone allows it.

Let us see below some more texts that explicitly highlight this last consideration:

Matthew 16: 6 **Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."**

Matthew 16: 11 **How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? — but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."**

12 **Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.**

Mark 8: 15 **Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."**

Luke 12: 1 **In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began**

to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

In several situations of the texts just mentioned, we also may see a gathering of people, for often faith in action attracts people. The power of God that works through faith often draws people's attention. And it is in these circumstances that the Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples to "beware" or to take precautionary attitudes so that hypocrisy, dissimulation, or dissolution do not find shelter in their lives and may destroy the grace and the faith once forever deposited in their hearts.

What the Lord warned us about in the above texts is what Paul also warns us about in another text concerning the old covenant, the first priesthood, or the Order of Aaron, namely:

Galatians 5: 9 ***A little leaven leavens the whole lump.***

So, specifically also regarding faith, it is crucial that a clear distinction be made between the priesthood under the Order of Aaron and the priesthood under the Order of Melchizedek, for the Order of Aaron does not work by faith while the Order of Melchizedek, on the other hand, is broadly associated with faith, as we recall below:

Romans 4: 14 ***For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect.***

Galatians 3: 5 ***Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?***

Galatians 3: 12 ***Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."***

Galatians 3: 11 ***But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."***

Seeing faith in God in the context of the Gospel of Christ's Glory, the two priestly orders referenced above, and Christ's position in the Order of Melchizedek is particularly significant and valuable because:

- ⇒ 1) Faith is a gift given by God to people through Christ Jesus;
- ⇒ 2) Faith is not and cannot be generated, granted, and established by the human being oneself, nor by actions, efforts, sacrifices, and the search for merits that one will try to accomplish to justify oneself.

Thus, the knowledge of what faith in God is and what faith in God is not, inevitably, leads us again to the need to face the glory of Christ and the two priesthoods that most express the only two priestly options that people, in the end, have to choose in life, namely:

- ⇒ 1) **To live according to how God guides people to live, including how to live in what God gives them by grace;**
- ⇒ 2) **To live according to what some part of the creation guides them to live**, always remembering that this second option may come disguised in the most diverse ways, varying from the declaration of the creation that God does not exist until the statements of the creation that the novelty of life in God might be reached through human works and efforts.

Why, then, does the theme of faith in God lead us once again to the glory of Christ and the subject of the old and the new priesthoods?

An appropriate approach to the subject of faith in God inevitably leads us to the need to look at the glory of Christ, since considering that the faith of God is a gift from the Lord, a virtue of the kingdom of God, and a specific feature of the new covenant, it can only be granted to human beings through the One Mediator between God and humanity.

Since the old covenant was based on human works to try to justify people before God and that this is entirely incompatible with the Order of Melchizedek as to the justification and improvement of people regarding the renewal and restoration of conscience, and that faith is the means by which a justified person is called to live and walk, we can see that the Order of Aaron is also utterly incompatible in terms of faith regarding the priesthood of Christ, recalling yet, that in the first covenant it is not possible to exist what the Scriptures call as faith.

Once the above has been mentioned, we may see that one priestly order, that of Aaron, militates against or opposes faith, while the other order, that of Melchizedek, not only grants faith, but also operates or works in favor of this faith and through this faith.

Considering that the Order of Aaron and the Order of Melchizedek are on entirely different grounds as to what defines faith according to what God establishes what indeed faith is, the two orders, respectively, are also facing different paths as to living by faith and which are contrary, opposite, and conflicting with each other.

To be even more specific, since the Order of Aaron, or any order similar to it, lacks what faith truly is, also whoever lives subject to it cannot live by faith if one continues to be associated with its precepts. In other words, to leave the condition of an unbeliever to become a person who lives through faith in God, it is necessary to move from one priesthood to another, implying, consequently, to abandon the old priesthood's law and following the new priesthood's guidelines.

Hebrews 7: 12 **For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.**

Since the essence of the Order of Aaron is not to live by faith, but by the attempts at self-righteousness that supposedly come from human works, the search for faith through this ancient order can become a very frustrating and exhausting process.

On the other hand, **the Order of Melchizedek is an order where people, from the first act of association with this new order, are taught to do so through faith in Christ.**

While Aaron's priesthood induces and teaches the denial of life through faith in suggesting a life subject to a law with a list of precepts, the priesthood according to Christ does not even accept a person's association with it if it does not occur through the path of faith in God.

Thus, a beneficial principle that can be extracted from the Order of Aaron regarding life through faith is the fact that this order is an example of how faith is not attained, allowing people to be more aware that faith in God can only be found in Christ and His heavenly priesthood.

*Galatians 3: 23 **But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.***
*24 **Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***
*25 **But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.***

Christ is the manifestation of the path of faith or the means to make it available. The gift of having access to Christ, then, is the expression of having access to what faith is before God.

Therefore, **the expression *after faith has come*, in the book of Galatians, chapter 3, is equivalent to Christ being revealed to us by God so that we may live and walk in Christ.**

In Christ is faith as well as in Christ is justification, love, peace, light, and all the other virtues of God that are openly offered through the Gospel of the Lord and that can be received by everyone who believes that Christ is the newness of life offered by the Heavenly Father.

Before Christ came in the flesh into the world, “faith” had not yet come into the world in the sense of being made widely available and to all human beings.

Christ came in the flesh into the world to show and teach us, through His own example, how a person may live according to faith in God, even when under severe or terrible afflictions.

Nevertheless, **Christ also came to make faith available to anyone who wants to receive it to live through it and no longer need to live limited to the conditions of the natural men and their rudiments, including the rudiments that are part of the Order of Aaron or similar to it.**

*Galatians 3: 26 **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.***
*27 **For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
4: 1 Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,
2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.
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!"
7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

God does not seek to find in people or require from them what He did not give them first.

So, or also for this reason, **God offers us the Son of His Love so that when we receive Him, we may also receive with Him the gift to live the life that is lived by faith and not by sight.**

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

Romans 11: 34 For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?
35 Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?
36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

While people in the Order of Aaron are charged and instigated to obtain justification through the works of the law, but what they will never be able to do through the order that has a foundation devoid of faith, in the Order of Melchizedek faith is given and has an Author designated by God to distribute it and to consolidate it so that it is eternally established in the life of the one to whom it is granted, if only the person who wants to run the career that God proposes does not forget or take one's eyes off of Him that gives faith and establishes it in the hearts of those who remain in Him.

The teaching of the Order of Aaron that proposes the interposition of human mediators between God and people is so weak and unsuccessful because it proposes that people look at their fellow men, thus turning away from the One Author and Finisher of faith.

And when people look to human mediators or other aspects of the creation, as the failures of the attitudes of the creation begin to emerge, they become confused in their beliefs and start to think that they are losing faith in God that in reality was not even directed at God, but to their fellow humans or aspects of the creation similarly flawed.

The Order of Aaron is the order that teaches to seek God by the human model, by the model of effort, by human discipline and determination, acting in the opposite direction and turning its back on what is offered freely and graciously by God.

Like Jude, Peter, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Paul also warned us that some people will appreciate having followers of themselves and that they will even emerge among their own supposed brothers and sisters of faith, as follows:

*Acts 20: 30 **Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.***

In Christ, God offers the virtue of faith in Him. However, if a person rejects Christ, one also despises the faith, no matter whom one follows, even if one could follow Paul, Cephas, Apollo, John, or anyone else.

When people seek to find in their fellow beings or created things the faith that they can only find directly in Christ, they reject both faith in God and the virtues of the Lord that are offered through His Gospel, for they so discard the Author and Finisher of faith through which they could have access to the other aspects of the Gospel of the Lord's Grace.

Thus, in the world, there are many doctrines or propositions that try to teach that people “must have faith” and “must grow in faith” that they have not even received or from which they are dissociated because they are not in fellowship with the source of the faith, thereby despising also once again the Author and Finisher of the faith.

Many doctrines and propositions in the world try to impose on people a set of tasks that are not associated with the source of life they despise. They are priestly propositions that try to impose ordinances on people to reach the targets they aim for, but at the same time, these same ordinances bind people so that they cannot reach indeed the targets they try to achieve.

Therefore, repeatedly seeing the insistent attempts of human beings to establish before God what the Lord already wants to make available to them through love and grace, and not by works, it is no wonder why the Heavenly Father established Christ as our Advocate next to His heavenly throne.

Day and night we need the Lord's intercession on our behalf so that we do not become ensnared, again, by the life governed by works or commandments to be fulfilled that men so much suggest to one another and which they try to impose on them to drive them away of the faith in God.

*Galatians 2: 19 **For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.***

*20 **I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

*1 Corinthians 2: 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with
persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the
Spirit and of power,
5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power
of God.*

D. Highlighting Dissimulation or Hypocrisy as a Weapon That Fights Against Faith in God

Luke 12: 1 ***In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."***

2 Peter 2: 1 ***But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.***

Jude 1: 3 ***Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.***

4 ***For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.***

1 Timothy 1: 5 ***Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith (or faith without dissimulation or hypocrisy).***

In the previous topic, we addressed the imminent need that Jude presented to write to his fellow believers about how crucial it was for them to fight for the faith that had already been given to them by God. And this, because of people who were trying to enter among them with the intention of corrupting or even destroying in them the gift that had been granted to them from the heavenly kingdom.

Nevertheless, if we look at the text of Jude more closely, we may see that the word used by Jude *to creep in* is the same word that Peter uses for those who *secretly bring in* destructive heresies, which also causes some translations to refer to these opponents of the faith as those who seek to introduce themselves by using *dissimulation*.

Now, the word *dissimulation* is one of the synonyms of the word *hypocrisy*, which, in turn, is associated with the leaven that the Lord warned us to watch out for because of its very harmful effects.

Starting with the text of Jude, we may see that the main target of those who use *hypocrisies* or *disguises to hide false intents* to introduce themselves among the Christians is, in fact, to oppose Christ, trying to deny Him His unique position as Lord over everything and everyone that was conferred upon Him by the Heavenly Father.

The opposition to the gift of faith that Christ grants to a person, in reality, is an opposition against the sovereign position of Christ so that a person does not relate freely with Christ, with the Heavenly Father, and with the Holy Spirit, for the freedom to have personal access to the wisdom of Christ and the direction of Christ prevents false brethren from ascendancy or primacy over the hearts of those who have and live according to the faith in God that Christ grants them through grace.

The opposition that emerges from lewdness, bold malice, or perversity, arises against the grace of God seeking, in one of its main actions, to redefine grace according to human concepts and trying to define that a person does not have such direct access to God as the Scriptures say they have. They seek to corrupt grace at the most relevant point that grace offers, which is the person's return to a personal relationship or fellowship with the Unique One on whom all one's present and eternal life depend.

The attempts at the corruption of grace, of course, are not so explicit, which is why they are compared to *dissolution* or the attempts to connect *hypocrisy* with faith.

Now, what are some *disguises, dissimulations, or hypocrisies* that are more opposed to faith than those that want to present themselves as “alternative faiths” that try to imitate partially the faith granted by God?

Matthew 23: 27 **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.**

28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Dissociated from Christ and from the direct connection with the Head of the Body of Christ, who is Christ, a person has neither access to the grace of God nor to the faith of God to believe in Him, for it is from the Head of the Body of Christ that comes all and any supply of all parts of this spiritual body.

Since Christ is the newness of life from God, the most obvious way for a person to try to destroy life lived through faith in God is to try to dissociate a person from Christ. And if this goal is reached, the person will be subject to being asphyxiated by the lack of newness of life because of one's shipwreck concerning the faith and grace of the Lord.

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.

Colossians 2: 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

Dissociating someone from Christ, faith in God, real grace, or the newness of life in the Lord are all expressions that also refer to dissociating a person from the same and only source. These expressions are inseparable from each other. And the aim of dissociation is also always the same, which is to try to put the person back under the yoke of slavery and death, whether by sin in general or the sin of the proposition to walk according to an already revoked and obsolete priestly order.

Faith in God or faith granted by God is unique, incomparable, and can never really be equated or copied by the propositions of human beings because it is given by God, and for this reason, it also has the seal of God.

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

What, then, is the seal of the unique and true faith in God?

The seal of faith in God can only be one, like all the gifts of God, namely: “*IN CHRIST.*”

Therefore, **if any faith proposition is presented dissociated from a person “being in Christ,” it is not true, and it has not God's love as its foundation. Instead, it is a proposition of an attempt to *dissimulate* the faith or add *hypocrisy* to the faith.**

There is only one genuine or authentic faith, which, in reality, is a redundancy, for if any proposition of faith is not the original, that proposition is not faith indeed according to the concept of faith described in Hebrews 11, verse 1. (Concept addressed more widely in the subject on The Gospel of the Promise).

Thus, **faith, faith in God, or authentic and true faith exists only in Christ, making faith in God available only to those who first believe in Christ to also “be in Christ.”**

John 6: 29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

Whoever believes in Christ believes in Him in whom are all the other provisions and instructions to also live by faith in God, even the very provision of faith in God.

And because faith is so crucial to accessing all that God offers through His Gospel, it is also the target of so many attacks or oppositions, as we mentioned earlier.

Nevertheless, **bearing in mind that faith is something so precious, it is no wonder that people no longer want to give it up even if they wish to depart from Christ. And that is why many of the most expressive attacks on faith are dressed in hypocrisy, deception, or dissimulation.**

We understand that it is worth noting and emphasizing here that the opposition to faith, described in the Scriptures, is not limited only to *simulations* but also advances to the spheres of *dissimulations*.

Although we have already mentioned the *dissimulation* several times in the present subject, we understand that we have not yet had an appropriate opportunity to try to explain it in a more specific way. However, given the opposing role it plays towards Christ and the faith He bestows, it seems to us to be highly relevant to do so at this point before we move on to more aspects that are part of the salvation in Christ Jesus.

Simulation, not *dissimulation*, is a proposition, exhibition, or presentation of something that is not real, is not yet real, or is still in the experimentation phase.

A person, for instance, may *simulate* to be someone that one is not or is not yet.

Simulation, in turn, or in itself, is not necessarily bad when it is not done with the intention of lying, with the purpose of hiding what should be exposed, or with the intent of deceit, but even so, in proper time, it should be allowed to be known as a *simulation*.

Children, for example, when they play, like to *simulate* that they are adults, which, depending on each case, may even be healthy because, in a way, it may be a type of "training."

Industries *simulate* accidents with their products to assess their reliability, as well as emergency teams *simulate* risky situations to prepare for real events, and so on.

When in this whole subject we sometimes use hypothetical examples, or when the Scriptures mention parables, *simulations* may also have been used.

There are, however, *simulations* that might be very perverse and that aim to induce people to error or that are associated with attempts to obtain advantages for the one who proposes the *simulations* to the detriment of those who are their target, which, in these cases, will inevitably lead to *dissimulations*.

Thus, *dissimulation* is the next step to a *simulation* that was not revealed as such at an appropriate time.

Dissimulation is the set of actions done to hide or disguise the *simulation*, reaching the most degrading situations of character that the human being might imagine, as also exemplified below:

Proverbs 26: 18 **Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death,**
19 Is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, "I was only joking!"

In another example, *dissimulation* would be like a company doing a *simulated* test of a car, discovering a severe defect, but for shady interests, trying to make a make-up of the imperfection, hoping it will never be discovered. Instead of bearing the cost of fixing the defect found in the *simulated* test, the company *dissimulates* or feigns that

everything is correct and hides the defect by saying that everything is fine, doing everything to sustain the concealment even in the face of facts that have already evidenced the error.

When the first signs behind some *dissimulation* begin to appear, often an even greater festival of *dissimulations* begins to be used to try to hide what has not been revealed in due time as it should.

Eventually, the disguise to try to hide the problem may still be part of a *simulation*, but the repetitive or continued disguise of the problem already advances intensely to the sphere of *dissimulation*.

The attempt to maintain the simulation unduly, the effort to conceal something inappropriate in the simulation, or the attempt to disguise some evil interest associated with the simulation, even when the disguise is already losing its effectiveness, is one of the main aspects of what is called dissimulation.

Every person with a minimum of knowledge of the subject knows that the objective of a “magician” is twofold: first to make a good *simulation*, and second, to do it in such a way that no one discovers the *simulation*. The “skilled magician” needs to be skilled at both.

Therefore, when we return to the text exposed by Jude, we see that he informs and warns us that there are real-life magicians who seek to infiltrate among people of faith with *simulations*, but also with *dissimulations* to corrupt their understanding of God's grace to affect, ultimately, people's faith in God.

And here again, also to conclude the chapter on The High Priest who is the ***Author and Finisher of Our Faith***, we understand that we could not fail to mention that some of the most vigorous attempts at *dissimulations* also end up referring to the Order of Aaron, which has always been a strong opponent of life through faith in God.

Thus, trying to rise the Order of Aaron or similar to it among Christians, after Christ has risen from the dead, is an attempt to hide, through the so-called *Jewish fables* or *fables of ancient times*, the revocation of what has already been declared obsolete by God.

The mentioned fables are terrible for those who welcome them or put their understanding on them, for they create illusions of solutions and supplies from sources that will never be able to provide what is promised to be granted by them, making people waste gifts, resources, and time of life with that which only has the appearance of godliness, but not a true newness of life.

The Order of Aaron was not and will never be an order that teaches people to go personally to the source of faith, which is Christ, also to come to live from this source.

The Order of Aaron charged and demanded sacrifices and offerings repeatedly, and even when people became materially enriched, as we have also seen, they had no rest in their hearts. People under the Order of Aaron were always agitated, thinking that something outside was missing, not being taught, under that order, that what they lacked was someone who would grant them faith in God and establish it in the heart of each individual.

So, one of the central problems of the Order of Aaron pyramidal system is that it takes people away from the search for the true source of faith by suggesting that they should place their expectations in propositions where

their fellow men will take action and do for them the actions that people themselves should do personally.

When priestly orders with characteristics of the Order of Aaron think that the grace of God allows them to introduce their varied fleshly commandments and propose illusions to people with *dissimulations* saying that other specially trained individuals or ministers can be the “solvers” of their spiritual things, people increasingly abstain from seeking personal faith in God and become “dependent” on those above them in the chain of the pyramid with which they got associated.

People subject to propositions similar to the Order of Aaron, after all, are taught to think that they do not need faith directly in God because there are others who claim to take care of their spiritual life. However, on the other hand, they are treated with severity according to the precepts similar to the Law of Moses to obey its rules.

People subject to priestly orders similar to Aaron's become fearful and obedient to their fellow men, while, at the same time, they run into displeasing and not fearing God as the Lord would like them to do.

Stressing again: A central point when people become involved in the alleged claims that they can serve God through human leaders and priests is that they do not approach the source of faith in God personally and neither develop a real relationship of faith in the Lord. And this, for not often seeing the glory of the Lord guiding them directly or individually and for not personally using the faith that God wants to give them.

If a person is reluctant to live by faith thinking that one can live through the beliefs and propositions of others, one will also not learn indeed and personally to live through faith in God, because faith in God is to be directed to God and not to any other part of the creation.

Hebrews 11: 6 ***But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***

Galatians 3: 11 ***But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."***

Let us look again at the following text:

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."**

Faith is given by the Lord for each person to approach God, and not to be directed to others or outsourced to others.

Romans 14: 22(a) **Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God.**

Priesthoods that use precepts according to the Order of Aaron sometimes go so far as to openly declare that a regular member who is associated with them may not even need to "live and walk in faith," but only trust the leaders of one's respective order and be faithful in the offerings towards it. And these priesthoods use these *dissimulations* because in the Order of Aaron, in fact, there is not even faith, as we have already seen.

However, in saying that people do not need faith and do not need to approach God directly, how do these types of priesthoods respond to the following text's statement that we have also mentioned several times?

Hebrews 11: 6 **But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

Even if material damage does not come to an individual who is associated with orders similar to Aaron's, for this is also not the main point, the damage to their relationship with faith in God, or to prevent them from having faith, are devastating if a person does not regret this association with this type of priestly orders already obsolete before the Lord.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law and priest of Midian, proposed a project to his son-in-law that, added to people's proposition that God should speak to them through Moses, practically annihilated the personal faith in God of each person of almost an entire generation.

When they were to spend 2 years in the desert, people freed from the domain of Egypt stayed there for 40 years. They stayed 38 years longer than was necessary because when God told them to go to Canaan, and that He would be with them, those people did not have faith or could not believe in the promise of God, for they were taught by human priesthoods. And after 40 years, only 2 men of an entire generation above 20 years old when they left Egypt advanced to the land of Canaan.

One advice of a Midian priest associated with hearts that were inclined not to walk by faith, but by sight, was the cause of leading almost an entire generation to unbelief.

Thus, the system proposed by Jethro to Moses succumbed in the desert, but also in the wilderness, the system of Aaron and the Law of Moses proved to be wrapped in *dissimulations* that never managed to establish people in a real inner rest.

The *simulation* of godliness of the Order of Aaron, accompanied by many, many *dissimulations*, came to be interrupted only in Christ.

2 Corinthians 3: 15 **But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.**

16 **Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.**

When Christ fulfilled what needed to be fulfilled also to end what needed to be revoked, all *dissimulation* of the Old Priestly Order likewise was exposed by the Light of God before the whole world.

So, again:

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.**

5 **For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them."**

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.**

In the righteousness of God and life through faith in the Lord, there is no need for temples, the law of Moses or the like, human high priests, but only a heart willing to believe that **Christ is all in all**, as well as ready to confess Christ as Lord of one's personal life, even if the collective does not do it.

For this reason, trying to claim that the Eternal High Priest Jesus Christ cannot attend to everyone personally is an affirmation that has the same distorted characteristics of the old covenant, for it similarly seeks to establish limits for the work of the Lord who **is all in all**.

In the book of Acts, when Christians were dispersed from Jerusalem and challenged to walk even more under a personal dependence on God, we see that each Christian's testimony of Christ was not weakened. On the contrary, it was strengthened, and where they went, they spoke of Christ and the Gospel of His love.

Anyone with a good sense of family knows that no eldest son is put to mediate the father's access to the newborn, and that no son is the father of his brother. As much as they can help the father in caring for one another, siblings are only sons and daughters, and the father remains the father.

How much more will the Heavenly Father not attend to the little children of faith who come to Him “in Christ?”

*Galatians 3: 25 **But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.***

*26 **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.***

*27 **For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***

*28 **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

*29 **And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.***

*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."***

*16 **The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.***

Jude said that he was willing to write about the wonders of salvation common to him and other Christians, but he felt intensely redirected by God, through the Holy Spirit, to write about a more necessary topic at that time, for his Christian fellows were under imminent danger of having their faith attacked by *dissimulators, deceivers, magicians of pretended gospels, priests opposed to Christ, or people turned only to themselves* to try to establish the concept that “human beings can shepherd themselves.”

And if after the resurrection of Christ and the announcement that the old covenant had already become obsolete, God moved Jude to warn his fellows of faith in God, it is because opponents similar to those of ancient times would also be rising even after the time of the coming of faith to the world in Christ, and also to warn that similar ones will try to emerge in all generations.

Intense opposition to the faith was not something that occurred only in the old days. It always existed, exists, and will exist until the Lord returns in heaven to Earth to take with Him forever those who believe in Him.

Many distorted things have been said about faith that need to be rejected.

In many cases, it seems that many people have come to trust their convictions instead of trusting God. They have thought that they have faith by believing in their beliefs and not by “faith in God” itself. These attitudes again are the very concept behind the reason for the emergence of the Order of Aaron, but in other words or with *dissimulated words* adjusted for the present day.

Many people have said that something “will happen because they believe it will happen” or “will happen because they said it will happen.” However, is not this a “belief

in one's belief?" An aspect that, in turn, has no connection with faith in God or the faith that is granted by God.

When a person says something will happen "because one believes it is going to happen," one is *simulating* something that one will not always be able to support by oneself. And then, when that what one said cannot be sustained, one begins to *dissimulate* and attach a vast number of things and justifications to conceal the fact that one trusted one's own word or someone else's word, without indeed having walked in the faith in God.

Faith is not something that a person decides to have and at another time decides not to have.

Nevertheless, because they believe that faith is something they can or should produce, many people attend the so-called faith-stimulating meetings. As it is popularly said in some places, "they will try to boost their faith." These are meetings in which some say to others expressions such as "you have to have faith" or "have faith that you get where you want to go," as if having faith or not having faith could be depended exclusively on people and not on their personal fellowship with the source of the gift of faith that comes from the heavenly kingdom.

And when someone fails in this aspect of "you have to have faith" or "getting where one said one could go," the same ones who said to a person that one "should have faith" are also those who impute to others accusations such as "did I not say that you had to have faith," that is:

- ⇒ 1) First, the person is taken to the false *simulation* that one can have faith whenever one wants to, that one can produce by oneself the "you must have faith;"
- ⇒ 2) When, however, the "you have to have faith" does not work, it is never the fault of the one who said that the other had to have faith. When the supposed faith does not work, the instructor who says that another "should have faith" *dissimulates* it by accusing others that they did not have enough faith to achieve what they wanted to achieve.

The promoters who try to impose on others that "they must have faith" first induce people to believe that they can have faith anytime they want, but when this proposition does not work as stated, they make the one who failed in the supposed faith to believe that if something went wrong, it was "because one didn't believe enough." First, they propose a *simulation* of something unreal, but when it fails, they render to the use of *dissimulations* in the attempt at hiding the first lie.

People often speak of faith as if it depended only on human beings or that they could control faith like a TV remote control that turns on, turns off, changes channels, increases the volume, and lowers the volume.

Faith, however, is not something that one person designates another to "have to have," but it is something that a person obtains from God and is accountable to God on how one should use this faith according to the Lord's will.

God has no obligation and commitment to attend to what people believe by themselves or what others have said they should believe. God is committed to attending to what Christ led them to believe according to

what God revealed to them to believe or according to what He wants to do in them and throughout their lives.

And why today, when an ecclesiastical structure is shaken or loses a leader, its members are so desperate and distressed in their souls? Why do they grieve so much for the tangible things? Would it not be enough to trust in God to move on?

Does the fact that an ecclesiastical structure or institution is destabilized, by any chance, shake God and Christ on the heavenly throne or in a person's heart?

If the shaking of the Order of Aaron, to the point of declaring it as obsolete and revoked, could not shake God's plan concerning granting the faith in Christ, it is also not the shaking of a religious institution that might shake the sovereignty of God in the present days.

Therefore, the deception of *dissimulation or hypocrisy* seeks to work through the ignorance that people have concerning the Glory of Christ, by the denial of the Sovereignty of Christ, and by the denial that Christ is the Eternal High Priest and Advocate that people need, inclusive, to be forgiven of their attempts at denying that Christ is the Author and Finisher of the faith.

Nevertheless, once the veil that prevented us from seeing that Jesus is the Author and the Finisher of the faith has been removed, the heavy burdens arising from “having to have faith” can be taken away by Him, so that in Christ we may be built on “the faith that is given to us by the only true and incorruptible grace,” like all other aspects of the Gospel.

Therefore, even in the face of the objective of moving forward to see more aspects of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, we understand that it was necessary to address the considerations of this topic. In the world, many people have stood up and continue to emerge countless times with the goal of shaking the personal faith in God of the justified in Christ. In each new generation, there are those who continue to create many *dissimulations* and things that derive from them.

If Paul, who knew God so much from his personal relationship with Christ, had to diligently “keep” what is so valuable and was given him as a gift for his salvation and newness of life in the Lord, how much more should not all other Christians also be attentive to keeping the faith that has already been given them in Christ?

And how will people believe what Christ wants them to believe if they do not relate to Him according to the grace and the way God has established to do so?

Faith in God is given to us to believe in Christ and God, and to live and walk by faith according to the Lord's instruction for the other aspects of life.

And that which comes to oppose faith in Christ, and through Christ, is a strong candidate for the sphere of *dissimulations and appearances of faith and godliness*, and should, therefore, be firmly rejected.

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.**

John 6: 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."

2 Timothy 4: 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Many people look for formulas, a list of steps, or methods to reach the faith or living and walking by faith. However, they often overlook the fact that the formula of faith, truth, and God's way is a Divine Being and the relationship with the One who is the *Author and Finisher of the faith*, namely: The Eternal Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith is a gift, a means, and a virtue, that God gives us first to be channeled towards Christ, for it is only in the priesthood of Christ that we have a High Priest and Advocate who continues to strengthen this faith in us so that we may be more and more established in the reason of faith, which is to firmly and eternally be established as children of our Heavenly Father.

Galatians 2: 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Galatians 3: 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

The life of faith is a life to be lived in humbleness before Christ, before Him who is the Author and Finisher of faith in our hearts. And if anything comes to be accomplished by faith, it is because He gave us promises and helped us to believe for the Heavenly Father's glory, not ours.

2 Corinthians 4: 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

May the Lord extend His mercy also on our generation and on us to strengthen us in the faith that is also given to us according to His eternal grace. Yes, God, we ask You to show Your mercy in these days on us as You, the Lord, has also done towards other generations until the present day!

C28. Living in Christ and Walking in Christ

Ephesians 3: 8 **To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the Gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ.**

In the previous chapters, we have already seen that one of the central aspects of the Gospel of Christ's unsearchable riches, which is offered to us by God, is the fact that, through this Gospel, we are allowed to receive Christ into our hearts, which is the reason for the hope of knowing the manifestation of the glory of the Lord also to be transformed from glory to glory as if by the Spirit of the Lord.

Christ in us is the perfect way and place that the Heavenly Father has established so that the glory of His Beloved Son and His own glory may come to be known to an extent entirely satisfactory and possible to be assimilated by the individuals who still inhabit the world without being consumed and destroyed by this endless glory.

Christ in us is the perfect option for the manifestation of God's glory of what we need to know about our God.

What the Heavenly Father longs for us to know about Christ is what we need Christ to be in us and for us, remembering once again that Christ is the express image of God's glory.

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.

When the Heavenly Father grants us His Son Jesus Christ to be in us and to know the part of His glory that we already need to know while on Earth, the Father is also giving us all aspects of the newness of life of the heavenly kingdom that a person needs both for the time one still has on Earth and for all eternity.

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.**

1 Corinthians 15: 22 ***For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.***

Receiving Christ in the heart or having *Christ in us* is the beginning of the greatest change that a person can experience in one's entire existence. From the spiritual and eternal point of view, receiving Christ in the heart is where, in fact, begins, for an individual, the life that God longs for every human being to know and experience from now on and forever. Receiving Christ in the heart is the act that makes a person also to become born spiritually of God, not only born of blood and flesh.

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.***

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."***

...
***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."***

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.***

John 17: 3 ***And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.***

Nevertheless, when God grants us that His Beloved Son comes to dwell in us so that we may know His glory in order that we may have the novelty of life in the Lord, it is also to be expected that the person who received Christ begins to take steps towards to the newness of life received to enjoy what the Lord has given him or her.

After the Lord grants us newness of life in Christ, it is also expected, of course, that we will begin to lean towards the novelty of life that has been given to us and that we will begin to incline our hearts to be instructed about this new condition of life.

After the Lord gives us newness of life through the indwelling of Christ in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, it is also expected, of course, that we begin to access the life that has been given to us from the kingdom of God and that has come to dwell in us.

After a person individually received Christ as the Lord, the condition of Christ in us now needs to pass to the stage of us in Christ, which is the expression that the Scriptures use to refer to someone being in Christ, a theme that we have also presented as the title of one of the previous chapters.

*Colossians 1: 28 **Him (Christ) we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.***

If, on the one hand, all the glory of God and the newness of life that the Lord wants to manifest to us is found in the gift of being able to have *Christ in us*, it is in the condition of *us in Christ* that we may know all the glory and the novelty of life of God that we need.

When the Lord offers and allows Christ to live in a person's heart, because the person has received Christ voluntarily in one's life, Christ, by coming to dwell in that person's heart, continues to offer and not to impose the newness of life that is in Him for the person who received it. He invites the person to enter the novelty of life that has now become so close and so available to be accessed by him or her.

When an individual receives Christ as Lord in one's heart, Christ places Himself in that person, through the Holy Spirit, fully available to be accessed, however, leaving it up to the person to decide to access Him indeed.

The Lord, in an individual's heart, continually reminds that person that He is in him or her. He reminds him or her that he or she is a new creature. He reminds the person that one needs the Heavenly Father and puts a yearning and a cry for God in him or her. Christ continually warns him or her of the dangers and sins that try to entangle him or her again. However, even so, Christ lets each person decide whether or not one wants to listen to His voice and whether or not one wants to deepen the relationship with the One who has been granted by the Heavenly Father to be in one's heart.

Christ is given to our hearts by the Heavenly Father so that He will always be with us and that absolutely nothing external to us may stand in the way when we want to relate to the Lord. But still, God lets the final decision of a closer relationship with Christ be made by the person who has received the Lord Jesus in one's heart.

While the prince of darkness and the dominators of the present world try to impose themselves and establish domination over all those who are subject to them, Christ, even voluntarily elected as Lord by one person, continues to offer Himself to guide the person's life in such a way that one always may choose to follow or not follow the instructions that He gives him or her.

Christ is offered to us from heaven as the gift in Whom all the other heavenly gifts offered to us through the Gospel are, which, in turn, has the essential characteristic of being an offer. And this, so that what we need from the Lord for life according to the will of God may be accessed voluntarily from a decision made in the heart.

And yet another way of expressing the difference between having *Christ in us* and *us being in Christ* is what the Lord Jesus Himself declared to us in the following text:

*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.**
- 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.**
- 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**

In the context of *Christ being in us* and *us being in Christ*, we suggest looking again with particular attention to the last text above to understand what is described below, that is:

- ⇒ 1) When a person receives Christ in the heart, that person comes to have Christ in one's life to *be in Christ*. However, if a person does not accept Christ in one's heart, one cannot even connect to a series of attributes of Christ. One does not get the possibility of *being in Christ* and *remaining in Him*.
- ⇒ 2) When, however, someone receives Christ, that person has two options. That is, one may *remain in the One who is in one's heart* or choose *not to abide in the One who is in him or her*.
- ⇒ 3) When someone chooses *to remain in Christ who is in him or her, Christ, who is in him or her, also remains in that person*. However, if someone receives Christ into the heart and continuously or repeatedly despises the Lord's presence in one's heart and *does not remain in Him*, even though Christ is so close, the Lord Jesus may also choose *not to abide anymore in that person*.

Or, still, if a person receives Christ through the grace of God, connects to the grace of God and Christ, or vice versa, one receives Christ and grace in the heart to enjoy this presence in one's life. However, if an individual, as seen several times in the previous chapters, decides, for example, to rejoin a priesthood similar to the Order of Aaron, one may come to disconnect from both grace and Christ, since the grace of God and Christ are inseparable aspects.

Christ is granted by God to those who receive Him to dwell forever in their hearts, but He is also bestowed so that the person may live in Him, be taught according to His will, and walk in Him, a situation in which, contempt for the newness of life that the Lord Jesus comes to offer also represents, before God, contempt for Christ Himself.

If a person, for example, is perishing because one does not have access to water, one will also perish if one gains access to water but refuses to take it no matter how widely it is available to him or her.

And a narrative in the Scriptures that figuratively exemplifies what happens to some people who receive Christ, but do not access Him as they could and how they should do it, is presented in the following text:

Luke 10: 38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Figuratively speaking, receiving Christ in the heart is like receiving an exceedingly distinguished guest in one's individual and particular life where a person may have, among others, two completely different attitudes. One may receive Christ and have Him in one's life to first want to serve Him and do many things before the Lord, but what may represent "not to remain in Him," or one may sit first quietly before the Lord to enjoy the presence of this guest and, before everything, be taught by the most illustrious person that an individual may receive in one's entire existence.

Christ in us is nothing less than God in us. He is God with us. He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth making individual and personal habitation in our lives for us to relate to Him as children of God and brothers in Christ, and for this to be established for all eternity.

Christ is a guest who has everything, is everything, and does not need us to serve Him before we receive what He has to offer us, for, from ourselves, the only gift that we initially have a broader autonomy to offer to Him is our heart, for all the other gifts we need to serve God come first from God to us to be used according to the Lord's instruction.

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

In the text of the book of Luke, chapter 10, seen above, Martha resembles a figure of the first priesthood, the Order of Aaron, who "does not become still" in her works and thus avoids having her heart enlightened by the Eternal and Heavenly Light. Martha may represent the figure of those who hide behind works and more works, but they do not choose the "one thing that is needed," which, in turn, is to sit at the feet of the Lord to be instructed by Him before performing works.

In the text of the book of Luke in reference, we may see that Martha welcomes Christ into her home, does not entirely reject Him, or does not want to stay away from God. However, at the same time, she also does not want much closeness to God. She consents to having Christ around and even invites Him for that, but she does not stop to do many things to be or remain in fellowship with Him in due time.

In the circumstances that occurred, there is no mention that Martha was doing any work that was inappropriate in itself. Christ did not urge her attention to any specific activity with which she was involved, but He mentioned that she had not made an appropriate choice in the broader sense. And this, of course, the Lord did so that she could come to repent and change her attitude.

On the other hand, while still observing the same text, Mary may resemble a figure of the new priesthood, of the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek, where a person is first built up by *abiding in Christ* who is staying in one's home to be instructed by Him to also, at due time, walk according to the paths and the living instructions of the Lord.

Proverbs 3: 5 **Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding.**

Psalms 86: 11 **Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.**

When, in addition to receiving Christ into the heart, a person is also willing to *remain in Him* and under the living instruction of the Lord, for the Lord is also the Living Word of God towards us, that person has the promise of the Lord to be fruitful according to the perspective of God, because one chooses no longer to act according to one's own understanding, but according to the will of the Lord or the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord.

Yet another text that seeks to expose us to the difference between *having Christ in the heart* or *being in Christ* is the text narrated in the book of Romans written through Paul and which follows below:

Romans 8: 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.**

An individual can only live the Christian life if one first receives Christ in the heart, which is the means also to have the Spirit of God indwelling him or her.

Nevertheless, a person is also called to understand that the Spirit of God is given to us so that we may be helped to have the same mind that there was in Christ Jesus to surrender to God's direction and always and in all actions *remain in the Lord*. And if someone does not intend to *abide in Christ*, even though Christ has come into one's heart, one is not indeed seeing Christ as the Lord and may still be resisting to be His, to be of Christ.

No other work, no set of works, no set of efforts, whether in the natural or spiritual level, no set of offerings, tithes, sacrifices of goods, or even time of life, can compensate for not abiding personally and individually in Christ, for the works supposedly done for God, by themselves, do not get people to attain God's favor.

The works done *in God* are not performed to obtain justification for blessings. They are the result of the greater blessing that comes from *abiding in Christ*, being enlightened by the Lord, and being instructed by Him.

Romans 4: 5 **But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.**

John 3: 21 **But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.**

The works *done in God* are the result of the discernment of what is good and what is evil that only Christ can truly bestow on a person. (As expounded more widely in the subject on The Gospel of God's Righteousness).

The attempt to do works for God without them being instructed by Christ, as in the case of Martha and the first or old covenant, obscures and blinds people to what Christ wants to speak to them even though He is very close to a person or even if He is in one's home or heart.

And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Nothing and no one can replace the *abiding in Christ* when Christ is already in someone so that one can *remain in Him*.

A person may suffer expressive external and internal resistances so that one does not come to receive Christ in one's heart, but one may also face significant resistances that try to work against *remaining in Christ* who is already in him or her, and this because the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.

Galatians 5: 17 **For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**

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

The resistance that the flesh makes to the Spirit, however, does not need to frighten a Christian, for it is also for us to prevail over the flesh that Christ was granted to dwell in us.

Christ in us, and us in Christ, is not a promise from God for all struggles to cease, but it is the promise and the guarantee that through faith and abiding in Him, we have the victory that makes us more than conquerors concerning the agitation and opposition of the flesh and the world subject to darkness.

1 John 4: 4 **You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**

- 1 John 5: 3* **For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.**
- 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?**

- 1 John 2: 15* **Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**
- 16* **For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.**
- 17* **And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.**

Romans 8: 37 **Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**

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.**

A person's peace and victory over the world and sin are *in Christ*. That is, they are available *in Christ in us*, but they are accessed when someone also *remains in Him* who is granted to one's heart by the Heavenly Father.

For this reason, considering yet the example of Martha, when a person reads texts about keeping the commandments of God, one needs to be very attentive not to read these texts from the perspective of the Order of Aaron or to use precepts similar to the Law of Moses, for *in Christ*, in the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek, the commandment is:

1 John 5: 5 **Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**

John 6: 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."**

John 15: 4 **Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**

From the trust in Christ, who is given to the heart, and from the trust to the point of *abiding in Him*, to be instructed and strengthened by Him, is that several other aspects of the newness of life in the Lord are built up in the Christian.

Receiving Christ into the heart is the most significant and essential spiritual event that a person may experience in one's entire existence as a human being. However, it is through *abiding in Christ* that this initial event is developed and established in the one who voluntarily received the Lord.

Just as it is possible for a child, in the natural aspect, to be born perfectly healthy, but eventually die later due to deficiency in nourishment, so a person may initially receive the newness of spiritual life and more ahead to die concerning this novelty of life due to spiritual starvation for not enjoying the newness of life that was made available in him or her.

After someone receives Christ in the heart, *to remain in Christ*, to be nourished, instructed, purified, and strengthened through Him to enjoy the newness of life given by the Lord, is also called *to be in Christ*, as we have already seen.

Therefore, **after receiving Christ in the heart, *being in Christ* is also part of the essence for a person to enjoy the newness of life given to him or her when Christ was given as the primary gift of eternal life.**

John 6: 57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.

Although we have already exposed this several times during the present subject, we understand that the reality of *being in Christ* needs to be continually presented or repeated so that we never depart from this essential principle that actually connects us to the novelty of life that God has available to everyone who wants to receive it as a result of exposure to the heavenly grace.

Paul's central goal in his ministry as an apostle, teacher, and preacher of the Gospel was to instruct people to understand that they needed *to be in Christ*, for once they *are in Christ*, it is clear that Christ can perfectly save those who, through Him, come to God and can instruct them to advance in the Christian life in the different areas of their lives, as it is respectively also exposed in the book of Hebrews. Recalling, still, that the word "man," mentioned in the text below, refers to the term "Mensch" used by Martin Luther in the sense of applying to the human being in general, both man and woman.

Colossians 1: 28 Him (Christ) 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.*

Hebrews 7: 22 By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.

- 23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.***
- 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.***
- 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.***
-

In the text of Colossians presented above, under no circumstances is Paul saying that he, as an apostle, was a mediator towards God and that people were dependent on him to access Christ, but that he worked hard and taught with dedication so that each one could understand and seek *to be in Christ*, to be in personal, direct, and continuous fellowship with the Lord Jesus, the source of all life and the express image of the glory of God.

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.

Paul never had a goal to have his disciples, but to cooperate so that each person could understand and experience that one can be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. And from the moment that an individual learns this principle of following Christ *to also be in Christ*, the Lord instructs and guides the person in one's steps so that one may be conformed to the Lord's will in the various aspects of one's journey.

Like all human beings, Paul had a temporary passage in earthly life and could not even be with the Christians the entire time of his ministry, and he never even attempted to do so. Paul introduced himself to people as someone by whom they heard the preaching or the Gospel that they could receive Christ and then be in personal and direct relationship with Christ in their hearts. Paul presented himself to human beings as a servant of Christ who came to announce to them that someone greater than himself was the only foundation of salvation, but that Christ was also the only one on whom people should build their lives.

The process of salvation in Christ has never been dissociated from the foundation and instruction of a person to build or be built on the same Christ who is the foundation of this salvation, as well as the foundation of the saved person's life.

Thus, ***being in Christ is also being with the bases or pillars of personal life grounded on the only eternal foundation that is Christ.***

When a person receives Christ, one receives the foundation of salvation and life. However, when a person *abides in Christ*, one becomes grounded in the foundation that has been given to him or her. One chooses to remain attached to the foundation of eternal life that can never be shaken also to become established in it.

- 1 Corinthians 3: 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?***
- 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.***

- 7 ***So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.***
- 8 ***Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.***
- 9 ***For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.***
- 10 ***According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.***
- 11 ***For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.***
-

If a person builds one's life on a fragile foundation or that is unrelated to Christ, the whole edification will be lost more ahead.

Each person is called to build one's life directly *in Christ*, where, first, he or she is the very building to be edified. Christ is the only foundation that is eternally unshakable, and no one can lay any other foundation that is enduring and reliable, as the Bible declares, the written word of God or truth.

If someone proposes that a Christian shall build one's life of faith on someone other than Christ, some leader, any other aspect of the creation, or any other type of priesthood, that person is trying to steal the edification of this Christian *in Christ*, trying to make him or her move from the unique foundation of eternal life.

If one wishes and has the resources, a person may buy an apartment, materially speaking, where others have built it for him or her and where others lay the foundation and everything else. However, when it comes to eternal life or life by faith, no one is allowed to be a foundation for another person. This is going against the expressed will of God.

Many people have suffered enormous losses in their life of faith because they have built on the beliefs of men and women, and even many who claim to be Christians. However, everything that is not built directly *on Christ* will collapse sooner or later.

As we have already seen, several people have said that Christians should build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, pointing to themselves as this foundation and basing their allegation inappropriately on the following text:

Ephesians 2: 20 ... having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ...

Now, as we have already asked on another occasion: What has always been the foundation of the apostles?

As we have just read above, the only foundation of Christ's apostles has always been Christ Himself, as Paul wrote: ***For NO OTHER foundation CAN ANYONE lay than that which is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST.***

And what was the hope and foundation to which God's prophets have always pointed?

Peter teaches us that the true prophets of God had their eyes turned to Christ and were all witnessing about Christ, who was to come in due time or in the so-called fullness of time.

***1 Peter 1: 10** Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,
11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.
12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven; things which angels desire to look into.
13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

The apostles of Christ and the prophets of God all pointed to only one Lord and Foundation of all those who believe in Him: The Lord Jesus Christ.

No man who already lived on Earth or who lives on Earth, except the Son of God who became man and was exalted by God as the Christ, fits to be the foundation of another person's faith and eternal life.

And if mere human beings cannot and are not accepted by the Lord even to be mediators between God and people, much less can they be foundations for one another.

Can a mere human being be the foundation of another at the moment of death and in one's transition to the afterlife? If not, what is the use of being the foundation of another in the earthly time of life if in the hour of greatest need one can do nothing?

Therefore, **Christians should never depart from sobriety concerning *being in Christ and continually abiding in Him!***

In the book of Romans, chapter 1, we see described that men wanted to reduce the glory of God to the level of corruptible man, but when a human being wants to be the foundation of the eternal life of others, is this not “the human being trying to raise one’s glory to the unique condition of Christ?”

On the other hand, the same book of Romans also states that the creation awaits the revelation of the children of God and the glorious freedom that they have to abide always on a solid and unique foundation that is never shaken.

For this reason, the creation gets confused when Christians themselves run from one place to another, from one foundation to another, if indeed they are Christians. And Paul warns that whoever goes after other human beings again is subject to return to the law of a fleshly priesthood or like the Order of Aaron and Moses, and, finally, one may become subject to become estranged from Christ.

Running after the creation in an attempt to obtain security in faith is not compatible with *being established in Christ*. Running after the creation is an infant posture where one is subject to being “carried away by the wind of doctrines by which cunning men want to mislead people” (according to Ephesians 4).

The Lord Jesus would never put a person's soul at risk by supporting him or her on another stone between Him and that person. For this reason, each one sees that one edifies directly in Christ, in the only Mediator between God and each human being, in the only equal foundation for all who build on Him, and who does not need other mediation support stones between Him and the one who is grounded in Him.

Even Job in his affliction, and still not understanding the evils that had come upon him, prophesied by saying these splendid or beautiful words:

*Job 19: 23 Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were
inscribed in a book!
24 That they were engraved on a rock With an iron pen and lead,
forever!
25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on
the earth;
26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I
shall see God,
27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not
another. How my heart yearns within me!*

A heart can only have its most profound need genuinely answered by the One who is able to do it, by the One who can quench the deepest thirst, by the One who is able to heal the most profound anguish in granting the novelty of life not only temporal but eternal.

When, later, Job saw God, had a personal encounter with Him, and not like under the Order of Aaron that proposes weak mediators for people's relationship with God, Job's longing was broadly met, as described below:

*Job 42: 1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:
2 "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours
can be withheld from You.
3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too
wonderful for me, which I did not know.
4 Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and
you shall answer Me.'
5 I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees
You.
6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."*

Who is the human being to think that one can supply in the life of one's neighbor what only the Almighty God can provide through Christ?

Who is the husband or wife who might want to dominate the other's life and not let him or her pray and consult God about one's life, as if a couple could be complete without the Lord's direction in the individual life of each spouse?

The creation awaits the revelation of the children of God or Christians with this firm foundation in Christ Himself. And the Lord Jesus is waiting for Christians to come to Him so that He may firm them on this eternal foundation.

As a Christian *abides in Christ*, the Lord wants to respond to the yearning of the creation and to manifest Himself to others through the children of God so that they may announce to their fellow men that life is *in Christ*.

The creation or people who have not yet received Christ into their hearts do not wait to see God's children themselves. What they want to know is about the glorious freedom that the children of God have, and which is the Lord Jesus Christ, who has freed them from their burdens and can sustain them firmly in the freedom that is in Him.

The creation does not want to know more about religion, much less a "Christian religion" created by human beings with their laws and dogmas that try to mix the old covenant with the new covenant, creating all sorts of confusion, extortion of resources, and, above all, extortion of people's relationship time with their Savior and Eternal Lord.

The lack of a clear and personal definition of who is or who is not the foundation of a person's life has led millions of individuals to argue over who or which religious institution they should or should not be based on, thus diverting them from building, once and for all, on the Unique One that the Heavenly Father has already established as the foundation of the entire universe and each individual.

When people do not define that only Christ is their foundation, they allow the time of their lives to be consumed with dead or useless works, and that will not be able to establish them firmly in the Christian life or the newness of life in God.

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.**

The foundation of salvation is Christ, but also the foundation to know the will of God and grow in it is, likewise, Christ, according to the text below that we have already seen several times in this subject:

Ephesians 5: 15 **See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,**
16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
17 Therefore (concerning redeeming the time) do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

...

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."

Why, then, do many who have received Christ not experience and manifest the life of Christ in their daily lives?

Many Christians do not experience the novelty of life in the Lord simply because they do not remain in Christ who is in them or do not abide in Christ who is so close to them, not inclining their hearts to solid food, to the food of God's word of righteousness, to the food which teaches them in Whom we are called *to be* or *to abide*, as already explained at the beginning of this subject, in the material on The Gospel of God's Righteousness, in the theme on The Gospel of Salvation, and also remembered in the following text:

Hebrews 5: 10 (Jesus) called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek,"
11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.
12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

When a person dissociates oneself from the priestly order that neglects the attitude of coming personally to God, the Order of Aaron, and comes to the Order of Melchizedek, the order in which the Christian may not only receive Christ in one's heart but also *be in Him*, a new time of life begins for the one who does it before the Eternal Lord.

When a person is inclined also *to be and abide in Christ*, Christ, once again and in a living way, reveals Himself to that person as the Unique One who:

- ⇒ 1) Manifests the Heavenly Light of God's glory before one's eyes;
- ⇒ 2) Expresses the sublime and sovereign mediation function that is in Him to present God to a person and a person to God;
- ⇒ 3) Expresses the powerful function of removing all remnants works of ancient priestly orders to establish the person in His priestly order where He is the Eternal High Priest and where each person, together with Him, can be a priest before Christ and the Heavenly Father;
- ⇒ 4) Expresses the extraordinary function of Him being the Friendly Advocate of those who come through Him before the Heavenly Father even when there are sins to be confessed, and this, to be cleansed from unrighteousness and to be strengthened even in their weaknesses;
- ⇒ 5) Expresses His exclusive role as the Author and Finisher of the faith in God or the faith of God in the heart of the one who yearns to live life through faith, which is the unique possible way to please God and walk in the ways of the Lord;
- ⇒ 6) Offers much more that has yet to be described in this chapter and the following ones, but mainly to be experienced by those who come to Christ who is in their hearts and *abide in Christ to live and walk in Him*.

As the Eternal High Priest, the Lord Jesus calls us with love *to be in Him*, for Christ gives us life when *we are in Him*. If *we are in Christ*, we sit with Him in the heavenly places, for it is from this heavenly position that God makes us see life from His perspective.

Once a Christian *remains in Christ Jesus* and learns to know Him as one's Eternal High Priest, Advocate, and the Author and Finisher of one's faith, despite the smallness and fragility of the vessel in which a human being lives on Earth, the Lord produces faith goals and works of faith generated by God only when someone *is in God being in Christ*.

If we were to think of process flow, it is as if what the Lord Jesus wants most to happen in an individual's life, from salvation, is that one learns to approach Him and presents oneself willingly to Him to allow the Lord to work in one's life so that, as the High Priest, Christ may assist this Christian in the whole process of leaving behind inappropriate things of the past, assist him or her so that one may be before the Heavenly Father, but also to help him or her so that, by faith, one understands the instruction that the Heavenly Father grants to each child according to His heavenly will.

As we have already said, the Lord Jesus receives each Christian on the condition that He offers Himself as Eternal High Priest, Advocate, and Author and Finisher of the faith. However, it is also the intention of the Lord Jesus that this Christian enjoys the newness of life by being fruitful in God. And for this, He helps the Christian to understand the things that are from above or from the heavenly kingdom.

The Lord Jesus helps us to put aside the old man and to put on the new so that we indeed may experience a new condition of life in the Lord.

After the Lord recognizes that the confession of sin that He instructed us to confess has been accomplished and renewal has taken place in us, He also stands ready to quicken, encourage, and strengthen us so that we present ourselves to God as instruments of heavenly righteousness.

Romans 6: 12 ***Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.***
13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

At this point, however, we would not only like to repeat, with other words, what has already been said, but we would also like to move forward and expose a little more about how this *being in Christ* and *abiding in Him* is manifested in a practical way to the point of being able to reach the various areas of an individual's life.

Once we understand that *being in Christ* or *remaining in Christ* is essential for the heavenly life to manifest and develop in us according to the purpose for which it is given to us, we can also see that this *being in Christ* advances towards two distinct aspects, but which complement each other perfectly and which are called, respectively:

- ⇒ 1) ***To Live in Christ;***
- ⇒ 2) ***To Walk in Christ.***

The lack of knowledge of this vital or indispensable principle that ***being in Christ or abiding in Christ*** becomes manifested through two distinct ways, called, respectively, as ***living in Christ*** and ***walking in Christ***, is one of the main reasons that has led many people to have so great difficulty to understand what it is ***to be in Christ***, or even the very aspect of ***Christ in you, the hope of glory***.

Therefore, **a singular moment of a remarkable change in a person's life can occur when one is faced with an understanding of what *Christ in us, the hope of glory, being in Christ, and abiding in Christ* represent, plus the comprehension that being in Christ is manifested by the ways of *living in Christ and walking in Christ*.**

It is highly significant to know the principle of *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ*, for fellowship with Christ is not offered to us to be instructed in a new set of codes and rules to try to live the Christian life through our very efforts, for if it were so, it would be similar to the Order of Aaron, where people were responsible, according to the strength of the flesh, to obey the law of the priesthood to which they were bound.

In Christ, the principle of life is utterly different from that which existed in the Order of Aaron, not only in terms of principles to be followed, but also in how the Christian can follow what from heaven is instructed to one's heart.

In the old covenant, people received instructions and sought to carry out and apply them through their human or mere natural capacities and efforts. However, in Christ, everything that God calls us to do is to be accomplished in Christ and through Christ. Through Christ in us and through us in Christ. For this reason, being in Christ is also expressed as living in Christ and walking in Christ.

We saw some paragraphs above, that the creation awaits the revelation of the glorious freedom of the children of God. And what, then, is the freedom that the children of God have and that those who still are not children of God do not have?

Among several other aspects, the freedom that the children of God have in the Lord, and that others do not have until they come to Christ, is that:

- ⇒ 1) *In Christ*, a Christian does not need mediators to relate to God;
- ⇒ 2) *In Christ*, a Christian has Christ right in one's heart and Christ with him or her wherever one goes, regardless of how the external situation might be;
- ⇒ 3) *In Christ*, the Christian can *always live in Christ*, and not only when one is at home or in a special separated or remote place, and one does not even need the so-called "houses of worship" to have an "encounter with God;"
- ⇒ 4) *In Christ*, the Christian can *always walk in Christ*, and one does not need to go to places that are called sacred by men. *In Christ*, the high place, the low place, the valley, and the mountain, are all made straight because, for Christ, there are no high and low places that might prevent Him from guiding the life of the one who trusts in Him.

*Luke 3: 5 **Every valley shall be filled And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth;***
*6 **And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.***

What, then, is the freedom that a Christian has in Christ?

In Christ, a Christian has the freedom to be instructed about the truth. However, **in Christ**, the Christian also has the liberty to redeem (or rescue) the time of one's life, to be guided on how one may accomplish the Heavenly Father's will, and indeed to carry out the will of the Father of Lights, for, **in Christ**, the Christian is also enabled to do what needs to be done according to the will of God.

*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.***

*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.***

*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.***

*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.***

*Philippians 2: 13 **For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.***

When a person *abides in Christ*, the purpose of granting Christ to one's heart is manifested, which is to revive everyone who *remains in Him* so that one *may live in the Lord and walk in the Lord*.

So, **in summary**, **being in Christ** is divided, then, into:

- ⇒ 1) **Living in Christ**, through which we know the “will” of God and are strengthened in the faith to believe in this will;

- ⇒ 2) ***Walking in Christ***, through which we are strengthened "to do" or "to accomplish" the will when actions related to what the Lord has led us to believe are necessary to be performed and manifested.

Living in Christ encompasses the set of actions we take to *remain in Christ*, in the sense of hiding in Him for Him to instruct, purify, comfort, and correct us, to strengthen the soul, to change the garments of ashes for garments of praise, to make us see the greatness of God's righteousness, to share with us His peace, and to fill us with the Holy Spirit, granting us a renewed and strengthened spirit.

Psalms 51: 12 ***Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.***

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

Walking in Christ, in turn, is the set of actions we take as a result of *living in Christ*.

Walking in Christ is the set of actions where, continuing to *remain in Christ*, we do what the Lord instructs us to do towards tangible things in the natural world and in the functions that the Lord has entrusted us to walk in while we are still on Earth.

Considering that *walking* refers to when we touch the Earth, when we are faced with everyday practical tasks, and where contact with the flesh and the world is intense and constant, and considering that *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ* are synonymous, respectively, with *living in the Spirit* and *walking in the Spirit*, it is also regarding the flesh that the Scriptures tell us that:

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

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

...

24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

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

Although for the sake of explanation, we have said that *being in Christ* is divided into two distinct aspects, we may see that *walking in Christ*, in many ways, indeed is a direct result or dependent on *living in Christ*. That is, being prepared *to walk in Christ* is also a consequence of *living in Christ*, and in this sense, the two are indivisible and inseparable.

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

So, even though God called them to do so, why many Christians do not *walk in the Spirit*?

In the first place, many Christians do not *walk in the Spirit* because they do not even practice *living in Christ or in the Spirit* in the sense of exposing themselves to their Eternal High Priest. However, many even seek the Lord's presence personally but do not discern the complementary aspect that exists between *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ*.

Because they do not practice *living in Christ* to also *walk in Christ*, because they have too little fellowship with the Lord in the sense that this relationship also aims to prepare them for their daily actions in the world, or even because they think that the relationship with God is something that applies only in the spiritual sphere and that it does not extend to the various natural aspects of life, many Christians do not advance to *a daily or continuous walking in Christ*.

Many Christians refrain from advancing to *walk in the Spirit* because they do not take due time to look for “the things that are above” also to be prepared by the Lord to deal with the things of the world.

Why, then, does God want so much to reveal His glory to us so that we come to know that we can *live in Christ*, but also with the focus of knowing that we can *walk in Christ*?

Why does God reveal His glory to us *in Christ* so that we may know the Lord Jesus as our Savior, Righteousness, Peace, Grace, Love, Hope, the Promise of Eternal Life, Emmanuel, the Light of Life, the Light of the Gospel, the Mediator of the new covenant and not the old, the High Priest who helps, forgives, purifies, and strengthens us, the friendly lawyer who assists us with the Heavenly Father, the Author and Finisher of the faith, and so much more?

God offers us to reveal His glory *in Christ* to attract us in love to Christ so that we too may come to *trust in Him* and *live in Him* so that in everything we may have the desire to seek Him and to know His will declared from His sovereignty heavenly position, but also for the Lord to be with us, through our *walking in Him*, in all our doings in the present world.

God wants us to know Him through Christ to show us how He is, how He works, and how much He loves us, and this, so that we may also choose *to act in everything together with Him* and according to the love and righteousness that is in Him.

By *living in Christ*, God wants us to know Christ's mercy and love for us in personal or intimate matters of the heart, to reveal His will to us, and to strengthen us in hope and faith before each new challenge that *living in Christ* may reveal to us. However, all

this also aims to know that *in the Lord*, we have all the sufficiency for each new moment of our life in the world.

It is from glory to glory, revealed to us through *living in Christ*, that the Lord guides us and transforms us so that the desire for His will is built up in us, but also so that He works in us the way of doing His will.

Understanding the distinct functioning of *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ* is essential to understand better how to take actions to practice both. However, understanding the joint and cooperative functioning of these two aspects of the Christian life can also contribute to having a broader picture of God's action in us *to receive His will in the heart and to be part of the fulfillment of this will.*

When a person does not know the principles that are associated with *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ*, and how one cooperates with the other, one may come to think that one can walk in the will of God according to what one by oneself understands to be the will of God and without having been beforehand instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Or, on the contrary way, one may have received God's instruction for one's life but remain only in a contemplative position of this will without advancing to its accomplishment in practice.

Therefore, the strengthening of faith for something specific or exposing oneself to Christ for Him to be the Author and Finisher of faith is more related to *living in Christ*, while doing the work associated with that specific faith is more related to *walking in Christ*.

Faith is granted to be followed by an action that is pertinent to it at the appropriate time. If Christ, for example, tells a person to wait on Him and that He will act on his or her behalf, the act of faith or the work of faith is to wait until Christ acts. If, however, at another time, Christ tells a person to act in a specific situation and that He will be with him or her, the act of faith, the work of faith, or walking by faith is to act as instructed by Christ, acting in the confidence that the Lord will provide the strength and resources so that the action can be completed according to the Lord's will and instruction.

In Paul's case, shortly after his conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord separated him to be more intensely dedicated to *living in Christ* until Paul could understand the difference between the law of Moses that he previously served and the newness of life and priesthood *in Christ*. However, after this, the Lord began to intercalate more often the call for Paul to continue *to live in Christ*, but also *to walk in Christ*.

As Christ, as our Eternal High Priest, introduces us more and more into the knowledge of His glory and the glory of God, He manifests Himself to us as the One who not only receives us before the Father, but also as the One who is with us and strengthens us to *walk* according to what He has manifested to us and instructs us to do.

As Christ introduces us more and more into the knowledge of His glory and the glory of God, and despite that He is always the same person and the Lord who loves us, it is as if Christ begins to show other functions that are also in Him to give us support and assistance *to walk* according to what we learn from *living in Him*.

It is highly significant for a Christian to be aware of the distinctions of Christ's positions or roles according to the different moments of one's life.

And aspects like those mentioned in the last paragraphs happen to many people also in many situations in their natural life. For example, a parent, at some given time, might be in a teaching relationship with a child to expose the concept of something to him or her, and at a later moment, call that child to help him or her to perform a task by applying what was taught in the previous moment or previous times.

Understanding more about *being in Christ* from the perspective of *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ*, or in the *Spirit of God*, allows us to see better what is expected of us at different times, but it also allows us to realize the position and function of Christ to give us support and help in each of these moments.

When we start to move from *living in Christ* to *walking in Christ*, we can also see why we need an Eternal High Priest who is also "Eternal King," as we are told about the High Priest Jesus established according to the Order of Melchizedek:

- Hebrews 7: 1* ***For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,***
2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"
3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

As the Eternal High Priest, at the Heavenly Father's right hand, Christ assists us to stand before our Eternal Father and to strengthen us in the heart. However, countless circumstances in our lives require that we also have Christ as our representative with authority over the world in which we find ourselves, as the regent who can move circumstances so that we may accomplish the will we learn from Christ and the Heavenly Father through *living in Christ*.

As the Eternal High Priest, Christ helps us to ask the Heavenly Father according to the Lord's will. However, as the High Priest who is also King, Christ is seated at the right of the Heavenly Father's throne as our ruler through whom God deliberates what we should do through *walking in Christ* or what in the world should be done from God's will and what was asked the Eternal God to do in the world according to this same will.

When we pray before the Lord for aspects mentioned in the prayer so-called by many "The Lord's or Our Heavenly Father's Prayer," we are called to do it through *living in Christ*. However, if we observe the beginning of this prayer, we can see that many actions need to be deliberated so that the Name of the Father is sanctified in the world, so that the kingdom of God will come to Earth, and for the will of the Father to be done on Earth as it is also done in Heaven.

The actions that result from *living in Christ*, and the position of Christ as the High Priest who intercedes before the Heavenly Father on behalf of people on Earth, are all deliberate and carried out through the Lord Jesus. Since Christ is the High Priest who is the King of Righteousness and Peace, He is also responsible before God for everything in the Universe to be done in line with the foundation of this righteousness and peace.

Living in Christ can only be satisfactorily complemented by *walking in Christ* because, *in Christ*, we have, in harmony, both the function of the perfect Priesthood and the perfect Ruler over the world, as announced figuratively or beforehand by Zechariah's prophecy:

Zechariah 6: 13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

When Christians learn that Christ is given them *to be in Him to live in the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit*, and to practice this calling, something new that the creation awaits will be revealed to them, and that is the glory of Him who receives Christians as the Eternal High Priest, but also as the Eternal and Perfect King who sustains them through the Spirit of the Lord while they still are in a fleshly body and the present world.

*Romans 8: 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.
20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;
21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

What, then, once again, is the glorious freedom that is available to the children of God?

In the first place, each child of God can have access to the Heavenly Father at any time directly through the Lord Jesus Christ or without other mediators, but also so that each one may *walk in newness of life* free from the bondage of sin, the body of sin, the oppressive law of the first covenant, and the condemnation of the law of the old covenant.

When a Christian comes to live in Christ indeed, wonderful things may also happen through one's walking in Christ, for it is through walking in the Lord that the King of Glory is with this Christian so that one may manifest oneself in the world through this King.

As the Eternal High Priest, Christ has compassion on us, welcomes us, advocates our causes before the Heavenly Father, helps us to be established in the faith in God. However, as King of Glory, He is the answer that an individual needs to act in righteousness and according to the love and peace of God.

We were resurrected *in Christ* to *live in Him* and to *be kept in Him* until the King of Glory manifests Himself so that we are manifested together with Him, for whether we are *living in Him* or whether we are *walking in Him*, the purpose of God is that in everything we are *in Him* to also in everything *acting together with Him*.

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 (or manifests Himself), then you also will appear (or be manifested) with Him in glory.

We may see that verses 1 to 3, from the last text presented above, are more focused on what we addressed so far in the previous chapters, in the sense of seeing Christ as the High Priest, Advocate with the Heavenly Father, and the Author and Finisher of the faith, where the Christian is called to come to Christ to hear His instruction, to be helped in changing clothes, that is, in the renewal of thoughts according to the heavenly kingdom. In fellowship with Christ, the Lord grants thoughts higher than our thoughts, and the Christian can make use of the benefit of the access one has *to live in one's Lord and High Priest*.

On the other hand, if this same Christian is yet on Earth, one is also faced with one's daily duties, such as being a father, mother, son, brother, professional, or student, and in which one is involved in the tasks one understands that God has called him or her to participate, and in which one also waits, together with the continued *living in Christ*, that the Lord may manifest Himself to show him or her through which paths one should *walk* and what are the actions to be taken or avoided in each of these ways.

When a Christian *remains living in Christ*, even when, at a due and necessary time, one needs *to walk in the practical things of the world*, the Lord Jesus strengthens and instructs him or her, through the Holy Spirit, how to manifest oneself in the most varied circumstances of one's life.

The Christian who practices living in Christ is in a position to receive God's perception and principles from above on the most varied areas of one's life, but one is also in a position to receive the strength and wisdom from above to apply the principles of God in one's functions and actions related to one's condition in the present world, because, as we have already seen, Paul declares:

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.

In the fellowship of *living in Christ*, the Christian exposes oneself to Christ so that the Lord may instruct him or her in the adjustments one needs to make in who one is as a Christian and to obtain the Lord's understanding of the principles of life.

Now, in the fellowship of *walking in Christ*, the Christian continues with the channel open to listening to the Lord, but often more directed to how to behave on Earth before God, one's fellow men, and in all activities in the world. The more a Christian knows the voice of the Lord through living in Him, the more in faith and peace one may also *walk in Christ* in one's daily life.

In the coexistence or working together of *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ*, the Lord Jesus carries out what needs to be treated in the heart of those who come to His throne, but He also goes ahead of the one who comes to Him to show His guidance and support so that what this individual needs to do before the world may also be done according to the Heavenly Father's will.

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.

27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

By *living in Christ*, a Christian is called to remain seated with Christ in the heavenly places to be instructed according to God's kingdom continually. But through *walking in Christ*, a Christian is supported by the Lord to *walk* in God's will in the present world and carry out this will together with Christ, for God does not call Christians to do things for Him, but together with Him.

The Lord calls everyone to have an intense interaction with Him, which, in turn, is personal and that each one needs to discover with the Lord how it is done personally. No brother can *live in Christ* in the other's place, and, therefore, neither can one indeed teach another individual how to do it.

And similarly, since the preparation for *walking in Christ* comes from *living in Christ*, teaching and strengthening each Christian to relate to one's fellow men and the situations one is entrusted to do on Earth is also associated with one's *continuous abiding in Christ*.

Through fellowship with Christ, every Christian is offered to discover how the Lord communicates with him or her personally while this Christian is at home, while doing an activity at work, traveling, or in any of one's actions, as shown in Hebrews 8 concerning the new covenant and the Lord's relationship with His children, described more widely also in the material on Knowing about God or Knowing God.

Thus, in one moment the Lord may instruct a Christian about aspects of one's family, in another the personal care of oneself and in one's professional conduct, in another moment the Lord may lead a Christian to learn to relate to other Christians,

and in yet another, the Christian may be downhearted and tired, needing only the Lord to strengthen him or her, and so on.

Through *living in Christ*, the Christian is built up inside, but this is also so that, in due or appropriate time for each area of the Christian's life, the Lord may work together with this Christian in actions to “accomplish” the will of God, completing what is necessary so that the *walk of the Christian* in the present world may also be done *in Christ and through Christ*.

Through the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus wants to lead us in the two aspects included in *being in Christ* so that each Christian may be guided when one *lives in the Spirit* and *when one walks in the Spirit*. Help that Christ offers concerning all the activities of those who believe in the Lord.

Galatians 5: 25 ***If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.***

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

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.

If the Scriptures teach us to be attentive to the two aspects in reference, *to live in Christ* and *to walk in Christ*, it is because this is possible to be achieved. The Lord Jesus Himself, and other parts of the Scriptures, exemplify how this is possible, showing that *living in the Spirit* and *walking in the Spirit* should, both, always be sought in the Lord without one of them being neglected.

Below we present, then, one more text that shows us the need for a Christian to realize how much listening to the Lord or *living in Christ* should also have a practical impact on acts related to what was learned or generated through *living in the Lord*.

Matthew 7: 24 ***Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:***
25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.
26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:
27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.

The theme of *living in Christ*, as we have already commented, in reality, has already been addressed in all the present material on The Gospel of the Glory of Christ, calling

people to be in fellowship with the Lord in His position of Light, Mediator, High Priest, Advocate, and the Author and Finisher of the faith, which, in turn, needs to be practiced for someone to *live in Christ* indeed.

Nevertheless, the theme of *walking in Christ* begins to be exposed more broadly from now on, when we will try to advance more intensely to the glory of Christ as the High Priest who is also King.

Due to the greatness of what awaits a Christian through *being in Christ*, both through *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ*, we understand that once the old man's or old covenant's garments are left behind, there is much to be discovered in what is to *walk in Christ* in the world or to walk as a *New Creature in Christ Jesus*.

Precious and immeasurably valuable is what a person may experience as one advances more and more in *being in Christ* in the two directions pertinent to it.

And given the greatness of what is in this reality of *being in Christ*, through *living in Him* and *walking in Him*, we will seek to advance on these aspects still in the following parts of this subject on **the glory of the Lord**, but also giving continuity to this same theme by some series specifically focused on it, namely: The Life of the Christian in the World, New Creation in Christ, and Walking in Newness of Life.

Being in Christ is not a single act. It is a process that extends throughout life. And for this reason, it is so rich, full of diversity, and so broad, showing once again the greatness of our Eternal Lord, the One who loved us to the point of giving His life for us so that we may always have Him in us, but also so that we, in freedom, may choose to be always in Him, in the Holy Spirit, and the Heavenly Father.

As we have mentioned in the introduction of all the subjects of the Systemic Teaching about Christian Life, the purpose of these materials is to cooperate so that people are awakened to not only be listeners of the Gospel of God or that merely have information about it, but who instead, now, and forever, practice the living relationship with the One and Eternal Sovereign Lord, the One who can be ***all in all*** both in the sense of *living in Him* and *walking in Him*.

John 12: 36(a) **While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.**

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Ephesians 5: 8 **For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.**

C29. The Glory of the High Priest who is also King and the Foundation of Walking in Christ

Although our goal in the previous chapter was to address the matter of *being in Christ* from the perspective of both aspects of *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ*, we also started a brief approach that Christ has, on God's part, the position of High Priest who is also a King in addition to being the Eternal High Priest, Advocate, and the Author and Finisher of the faith.

Hebrews 7: 1 ***For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,***
2 ***to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"***
3 ***without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.***

The reason why we presented the theme of *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ* together with the observation of Christ being a High Priest who also is King, was because the condition of *walking in Christ* can only be attained due to the fact that Christ also has this position of King to ground everything necessary to offer us the possibility of *walking in Him*.

If Christ were not also the King who grounds our *walking in Him* and accompanies us in the whole process of "walking in the ways" that He teaches us as the High Priest, and for which He still grants us the faith, we would again run into one of the worst or most notable flaws that are part of the Order of Aaron or the order of the first or old covenant.

Knowing that in Christ we have both the foundation of *living in Him* and of *walking in Him* is highly relevant, because also in this point, the priesthood according to Christ, the priesthood of the new covenant, is hugely different from the old and obsolete priesthood, leading us once again to emphasize the following text:

Hebrews 7: 12 ***For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.***

In the Order of Aaron, we can see that the function of its High Priests, or even of the other priests, did not extend to the position of accompanying each individual in their day-to-day tasks or their "daily walk," for these priests could not perform a dual function also simply because they could not be where the people were without leaving their position to receive the people as priests in the places appointed for their priestly services.

In addition to not being perfect and useful as to the purpose of an appropriate priesthood, the glory of the priests of the Order of Aaron was also mainly unable to accompany the individuals of the people when they were challenged to walk in the ways that the priests indicated to them, showing once again, that in this priestly order, the

individuals of the people, in addition to not having direct fellowship with God because it was delegated to priests, also did not have the company of priests when they needed to practice daily the laws that were required of them.

In the priesthood of the Order of Aaron, the individuals of the people came to the priests, but the priests did not go to the people, for they were limited and were not even able to satisfactorily receive the demands of the people, let alone accompany each family in their work outside the places separated for the priests' services.

So that each person could be accompanied by the mediating priests in everything also in the execution of each of their activities, it would be necessary that there was a priest or even a high priest for each person and even that this priest could never come to sleep so that he would not incur failing to take care at all times of the one to whom he would be assigned to accompany.

Without wanting to return to everything that has already been mentioned earlier about the weakness of the Order of Aaron, we emphasize here only that this order was simply unable to meet the most diverse challenges that the dynamics of life presented continuously to people.

Therefore, **the fact that God established Christ as the High Priest who is also King represents the only condition that allows there to be no gap or divergence between what is instructed to a person when one seeks God and what is instructed to a person when one is facing the accomplishment of what one was taught as being the Lord's will for his or her life, for the condition for a person to be able to do God's will goes far beyond a person's willingness to do so.**

If, in a sense, a person's salvation depends only on believing in Christ and his or her attitude of “calling on the Lord to be saved,” the effective accomplishment of the salvation on the part of the Lord concerning “everyone who believes and calls on His Name” may involve an enormity of factors to be completed.

If, in a sense, a person can come to Christ from one's heart *to live in Christ*, even though the external environment is opposing this, being supported *to walk in Christ* already involves many external factors so that the person indeed may *walk* in what God directs him or her to follow.

In several situations, when Christ calls an individual *to walk in Him*, there are many external factors that also need to cooperate with that person so that one may have the path made straight before him or her *to walk in this way*, as exemplified in the following texts:

*Psalms 5: 8 **Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face.***

*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.***

Thus, if in the condition of Eternal High Priest, the glory of the Lord Jesus is already immeasurable in the aspect of Him being able to receive and lead each person perfectly to be before the Heavenly Father, how exceedingly excellent is not likewise His glory when we come to see that Christ is also Eternal King and that He has the power and all dominion over everything in the world to deliberate and make all things cooperate with all those who walk in the will that He reveals to those who hear and follow His voice?

Christ is the firm foundation of those who choose to live in Him because He has done the perfect work to grant forgiveness and reconciliation with God to all who believe in Him. However, Christ is also the unshakable foundation of those who walk in Him because God has established that, in Christ, the whole universe is sustained by the power of His word. A point expressed in the text at the beginning of the book of Hebrews that we already mentioned several times in this subject and which we repeat once again below:

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,

4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

When a person allows Christ to show Himself as the Eternal High Priest, the Advocate with the Heavenly Father, and the Author and Finisher of the faith, the Lord Jesus Christ welcomes this person, leads him or her to the purification of conscience or understanding, gives him or her food that proceeds from the heavenly kingdom, and strengthens one's faith in God.

Nevertheless, if this person *remains in living in Christ*, the Lord will also show Himself as the Almighty Lord, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, the God of all glory, the God against whom no one can rise successfully, and the God in Whom the life of those who believe in Him are guarded or protected, and mainly for eternity.

Ephesians 1: 15 ***Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,***

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.

22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

When people turn away from looking unto Christ, the Eternal High Priest of their lives, or when people fail to seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the Heavenly Father's right hand, they become subject to the risk of departing from the appropriate perspective for their lives also concerning *walking* in the will of God in the period that they still inhabit the world, for they no longer see the One who receives them before the Father, but also who is assigned to be their firm foundation everywhere they *walk*.

And once people lose the perspective of Who is the King of the whole Earth, they begin to act based on their own thoughts and understandings of what comes to be to live or survive in the world, incurring more and more in the ways that take them away from life in the Lord and from what is good for them and their fellow men.

When the Lord calls His disciples to follow Him as the way of the newness of life in the Lord or when Christ calls them *to walk in Him*, He does it for their benefit and because, in fact, only in Him is there safe support and refuge so that they may *walk* appropriately in the present world.

Living in Christ is only an option with a firm foundation because the One who receives us as High Priest is also the One who is faithful and fully capable to accomplish what He promises and to sustain us in everything when we walk in Him.

Every priestly order that does not have a king who equally supports what is promised in that order is a priesthood bound to fail concerning accomplishing of what is promised by it, as was, for example, the priesthood of the Order of Aaron. If there is no king fully capable of leading people to carry out what a priesthood proclaims, this priesthood is nothing more than a vain, empty, unsubstantiated, or unsupported proposition concerning the fulfillment of what is uttered through it.

Therefore, ***as the Eternal King, Christ is the perfect complement to the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek so that we become supported for that the purpose of being called to be in Him, in the Holy Spirit, and the Heavenly Father becomes accomplished also while we are in the present world.***

If even not a hair falls from our head without God allowing it, if not even a sparrow falls to the earth without the Lord's consent to it in His sovereign and righteous wisdom, would the Lord not take care also of the other things or actions that involve the lives of those who are willing to *walk in Him*?

Through the position of the Eternal High Priest, the Lord Jesus teaches us to become quiet in Him, instructs us not to take overweight that goes beyond what suits us. However, being also in the position of the Almighty and the altogether Righteous King, the Lord Jesus gives us a perspective that may quiet our hearts because we can come to know that everything is in His hands and that, in everything, He is mighty for, in due

time and through His love, to do what needs to be done for those who trust and love Him.

Romans 5: 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. ...**

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 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.**

27 **Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**

28 **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**

...
31 **What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?**

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?**

What was announced in the Psalms about the Lord's condition to reign over everything and everyone is revealed to us by God as something that the Heavenly Father has assigned to the Lord Jesus Christ so that we too can *walk in Him* in addition to *living in Him*, confident that He will always be with us in the ways He leads us and instruct us to *walk*.

Psalms 47: 8 **God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.**

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.**

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."**

*Psalms 97: 1 **The LORD reigns; Let the earth rejoice; Let the multitude of isles be glad!***

*Psalms 99: 1 **The LORD reigns; Let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; Let the earth be moved!***

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

*Ephesians 1: 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.***

*Revelation 1: 5(a) **and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.***

To conclude this chapter, with the purpose of addressing the present theme more widely in those that still follow, let us see then, below, some more examples of texts that show us the position of Christ as King or with full authority to reign over everything and all nations:

*Matthew 11: 27 **All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.***

*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.***

*30 **For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.***

*Luke 10: 22 **All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.***

*23 **Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see;***

*24 **for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it."***

John 17: 1 **Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,**
2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.
3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

Matthew 28: 18 **And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**

...
20 and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Revelation 17: 14 **These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.**

Revelation 19: 16 **And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:
KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

Therefore:

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!"**

C30. The Glory of the Eternal King according to the Order of Melchizedek

A. The Eternal King Who Remains a Priest Forever

Hebrews 7: 1 ***For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, ...***

2(b) translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"

3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

Throughout the various chapters of the current material, we have sought to expose how singular or distinct the glory of the Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek is, which offers us a High Priest who works not in temples made by human hands, who represents us directly and forever before God, and who is not weak, debilitated, and subject to substitutions as were the High Priests of the revoked Order of Aaron or any order that adopts principles similar to this.

Nevertheless, when we begin to see that a person, in addition to being assisted by a Perfect High Priest before God, also needs to be assisted to *walk* supported and strengthened in all activities in general in life, we begin to notice that the same person likewise needs to have someone equally perfect to assist and sustain him or her in all one's functions and actions also before the world.

And as we began to see more specifically in the last two chapters, assistance and perfect support to walk appropriately before the world could only be performed by someone who has a condition of authority, regency, or government over all things so that a person can be guided in such a way as to achieve this purpose.

One aspect, however, that we would like to emphasize here again about *living in Christ* and *walking in Christ*, or being assisted by a perfect High Priest and a perfect King, respectively, is that living and walking often also overlap each other or need to be carried out simultaneously.

Although the actions for fellowship with the High Priest may be different from the acts for a relationship with the King who guides a person in one's *walking* in the present world, in the practice of life dynamics, the distinction between these two relationship paths may often not be possible to be divided so explicitly, didactically, or seen under such different times as we may present in a conceptual study on them.

In some situations, for instance, a person may be *walking according to God's instruction*, but stumbles over some detail and need to approach the Lord, right there, as the High Priest of one's life to confess that error and receive help to continue, already in the next step, in one's process of *walking in the Lord*.

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.**

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

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

For some people, it may seem that the simultaneous condition of relationship with the Lord both *to live in Him* and *to walk in Him* anywhere and at any time sounds a little strange or complicated. However, the reality that this can indeed be done demonstrates yet another remarkable facet of the glory of the Order of Melchizedek and how distinct it is from the Order of Aaron or any order similar to the latter.

In the Order of Aaron, for example, the high priests, priests, and Levites could not be with the people all the time, as we have already mentioned, but neither could the people be with the priests all the time, because if they did, they would be neglecting several activities they needed to perform in their daily tasks. If everyone always stayed with the priests and Levites, who would plant, who would feed the cattle, who would harvest, who would milk, who would prepare the food, and who would do the countless services on which depends the natural life of people and their societies?

The mentality of separating the priesthood and the regency or government of an individual's life in general, and in its most diverse details, may even have an attractive appeal in the sense of proposing that people would be more focused on each of these activities at different times, but, in reality, or in practice, this proposition is not viable or is insufficient, for it is contrary to the dynamics and needs of life itself.

If a professional, for example, is faced with an urgent condition in one's work, how can he or she wait until the next "service" to "seek the Lord" and know what He has to say about that specific issue or what needs to be done to find the necessary solution?

In the text that follows, the Scriptures teach us that a Christian should not let the sun go down over one's wrath and give way to the devil. But how, then, could one do this in the Order of Aaron if one could only go to the priests on the following Saturday or as some others who could only go to Jerusalem once a year?

Ephesians 4: 26 **"Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,
27 nor give place to the devil.**

In Christ, and even if a person *walks* on the path that the Lord has pointed out, one may face opposition situations that instigate him or her to be angry. However, since in Christ one also has the support of the Eternal High Priest in the heart, one can, anywhere or at any time, present to the Lord the temptation of becoming angry and ask

the Eternal High Priest for help to find peace in the heart and to continue to be instructed for one's journey.

When, in the New Covenant, God grants us access to the Order of Melchizedek, the Lord gives it to us in an entirely satisfactory way, something that no human priestly order could accomplish precisely because these types of priestly orders are limited by the aspects of the very human limitations of its priests already in their priesthood and even more in matters related to govern life.

The mentality of dissociation or separation of the priesthood from the ruling position in personal life that has always existed and continues to exist under human priestly orders needs to be abandoned by the one who wants to be in line with the will of God, for it is in no way compatible with the proposition and the functioning of the Order of Melchizedek.

Therefore, ***in Christ, or the Order of Melchizedek, the High Priest remains Priest forever, even when He assumes or performs the function of King. And, on the other hand, in the Order of Melchizedek, the Everlasting King equally remains King forever, even when He is in the position of the High Priest.***

The Order of Melchizedek is the only perfect priestly order, in the first place, because of the perfect priesthood it offers. However, it is also perfect because only in it the regency, reign, or government over everything is perfectly united to the priesthood, and vice versa.

Considering that Christ is also called as the One who would become our Branch that would rise from the dead to be ***all in all***, we may see again, also through Zechariah's prophecy, that what we needed in a King and a Priesthood could only be done in union, peace, or harmony if it were unified into one, if it were unified by the One who builds in us the sanctuary of God, that is, a new heart, who makes us sit together with Him in the heavenly places before the throne of the Heavenly Father, and strengthens us to *walk* in the Lord's way.

Zechariah 6: 12 Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD;

13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

Those who want to build and keep sanctuaries or temples made by human hands to be priests in them or to place others as their priests, are not only those who try to establish mediators who are not authorized by God, but are also those who try to impose on the people who follow them a mentality of division of time and place between the priesthood and the rulership of personal life, as if some things were more holy or non-secular than others in the life of an individual or as if what a person does in a given place could become more holy merely for this reason than what the person does elsewhere.

Righteousness and unrighteousness do not depend only on the place where they are practiced, for their origin is in the heart regardless of whether a person is out in the world or whether one is confined in a religious fold, shelter, or institution according to the constructions and definitions of human beings.

Matthew 15: 16 **So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding?"**

- 17 Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated?**
- 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.**
- 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.**
- 20 These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."**

The separation of the priesthood from the regency or government of personal life, as practiced by people due to human imperfections and limitations, finds its end and an appropriate and perfect solution only *in Christ Jesus*, for He is the One who could and can keep both offices unified and in harmony forever.

Christ is the perfect High Priest because He has all the authority and dominion to accomplish what the salvation of His priesthood offers us. However, Christ is also our perfect King because He is a King who has the mercy of the Eternal High Priest who can show compassion towards us and support us forever.

So, to say that Christ is the perfect and Eternal High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek is also to say that He is the High Priest who is also the perfect King according to this same Order.

And to say that Christ is the perfect King, according to the Order of Melchizedek, is also to say that He is the perfect High Priest according to this Order, for both as the Eternal High Priest and as the King, Christ is the same and Only Son of God and perfect Son of Man forever.

In Christ, we have everything we need in a High Priest to come close to God. However, *in Christ*, likewise, we have everything we need in a Sovereign King who, despite our weaknesses, can assist us perfectly to *walk* in God's will in all areas of life to which the Lord leads us.

B. The Eternal King Who Already Is King and not Who Will Become King

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.

Through His Eternal Priesthood, Christ already welcomes us before the Heavenly Father so that we may come to the throne of grace to obtain His mercy and grace. However, when we move to the point of *walking in Christ*, we begin to see that, in addition to granting us reconciliation with God, the same grace of Christ is also the grace already made available *in Christ* to start *walking in everything according to this same grace*.

The grace bestowed on us through the High Priest Christ is the grace that also has a purpose to strengthen and guide us in all aspects of our life before the world.

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.

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.**

Nevertheless, one of the aspects that seek to interpose so that people do not realize that they can already *walk according to the will of God*, or *reign in life*, is the fact that they do not know or do not believe that Christ, being of the Order of Melchizedek, is placed in the position of King of Righteousness and King of Peace over the whole world and the entire Earth already in the present time.

Instead of believing what God announces through the Scriptures, many let themselves be led by the belief that directly or subtly claims that Christ will only be established as the King over everything and everyone in the future or the ages yet to come.

The Scriptures that we have already seen in the previous chapters do not teach that God will seat Christ in a coming day above all principality and power and in a position in which Christ will sustain the entire universe with the word of His power. On the contrary, the Scriptures reiterate to us again and again that God has already seated Christ over everything and everyone, except regarding the Heavenly Father Himself, who has bestowed everything on Christ.

Acts 2: 36 **Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.**

Ephesians 1: 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.

1 Corinthians 15: 27 **For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.**

From the moment of Christ's resurrection from the dead, the place of the Lord Jesus as the Eternal King according to the Order of Melchizedek, now also as the Son of Man who rose from the dead, already in that present century and for all the following, has already been revealed and established for all eternity.

The fact that Christ is governing the world and manifesting different situations from His government throughout the centuries does not taint in anything His authority and does not affect His present condition as Eternal and established King.

The fact that we still see aspects of injustice at work in the world has nothing to do with Christ already being in a full position as King over the entire universe, but it is related to the events that the Lord allows to occur to testify to the nations that the choices contrary to God's will lead to destruction and death. And this too, and mainly, so that people may become informed that although they yet continue to subject themselves so intensely to sin or keep themselves apart from fellowship with God, there is still the possibility of them accessing the Lord's mercy before the great and terrible day narrated by Peter and in which God, before His eternal throne, will hold accountable everyone who did not receive Christ as He is offered by the Gospel.

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.*
 8 *But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*
 9 *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*
 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?*

2 Corinthians 6: 1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

If Christ were not already established as King under the Order of Melchizedek at present, the possibility of fulfilling the very salvation of people and all that the Lord teaches an individual through *living in Christ* or through His priesthood would have no ground to be sustained in the lives of the people who receive Christ in their hearts, which, in turn, would equate His priesthood with a weak and useless priesthood as has always been that of the Order of Aaron or similar to it.

The people who try to propagate that Christ will only be King who will reign in a time that is yet to come are the same people who seek to destroy the faith of Christians in the One Sovereign Lord of their lives, applying the same opposing principles to the faith in God that we already saw in the chapter on The Glory of the High Priest who is the Author and Finisher of the Faith.

Seeking to deny Christ as the King of the Order of Melchizedek, already established as such at present and forever, is as serious as trying to pervert the grace of God and deny Christ as the only Mediator between God and all human beings.

Those who resist the position of Christ as the One who is the Eternal King already in the present time are those from whom the Scriptures tell us to withdraw, for because of their personal interests and passions, they are traitors and headstrong against God Himself.

Those who oppose the position of Christ as King already in the present time by trying to separate people from the reality that Christ is the King who is with us, the King Immanuel, and who is fully capable of teaching and supporting everyone who believes in Him to lead their lives in line to the will of God in the most diverse areas, are also those who try to intervene so that people do not come to the knowledge of the truth, for the truth can only be found *in Christ, in living in Christ and walking in Christ also in His condition of the Eternal King.*

*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!***
*6 **For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,***
*7 **always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.***

If in the present time Christ were not already in a perfect position in the aspect of reigning over everything, He could never instruct and guide us in all areas of life to also *walk in the Spirit*, in addition to *living in the Spirit*.

Because Christ is King and is established over everything and everyone except the Heavenly Father, it is that He also has all the power and authority to instruct us by the Holy Spirit in all the ways the Lord calls us to walk, because beforehand, as King, He already prepares and makes straight the paths and gives us, with full authority, everything that needs to be granted even at present.

Christ was raised to heaven to be at the right hand of the Heavenly Father precisely to be able to send us from the heavenly throne the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Truth, to, through the Spirit of the Lord, manifest towards us also His perfect condition of King over everything and everyone.

*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.*
-

Now, if everything that belongs to the Heavenly Father is also Christ's, including the authority over all the creation and the possibility of assigning all heavenly instructions to people on Earth through the Holy Spirit, what more would the Lord Jesus need to have the full condition of King already in the present time?

Therefore:

- 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;*
- 10** *and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.*

Revelation 1: 5 ... **and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,**

- ...
- 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."*

C. The Position of the Throne of the Eternal King

There are many people who envision in their minds or long for the day when Christ will be placed as King over the whole Earth and wait for Christ to sit on an earthly throne to reign from it. However, they do not realize or resist acknowledging that Christ is already placed as the King over the whole Earth and that He is already placed on a throne far superior to any throne on Earth.

Christ does not need to come to settle on any throne inferior to the eternal throne of God and which is surrounded by the Lord's glory and power as described, in part, in the first chapter of Revelation, as follows:

*Revelation 1: 4 **John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,***
*5 **and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,***
*6 **and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.***
*7 **Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.***
*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."***
*9 **I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.***
*10 **I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,***
*11 **saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."***
*12 **Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,***
*13 **and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.***
*14 **His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;***
*15 **His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;***
*16 **He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.***
*17 **And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.***
*18 **I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.***

And from what earthly position could Christ have the condition that He has at the right hand of the throne of the Heavenly Father and from what earthly position could Christ hold the keys of death and Hades in His hands, considering yet that life and death regarding their eternal aspect are not determined from earthly thrones?

What earthly throne could support the glory of Christ as revealed to John in the first words to be written by him in the book of Revelation?

Just as Christ did not come to dwell in earthly temples made by human hands, but He came to show that the dwelling of God is in a high and sublime throne in heaven and in the hearts of people, so also Christ did not come to build and assume an earthly throne in earthly palaces.

Christ came to announce that the heavenly throne is above everything, everyone and that He also came as King on Earth to inhabit the hearts of people and to manifest the Heavenly Kingdom in the first place in their hearts.

*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."***

It is impressive how people insist on wanting to affirm that God needs temples and also thrones made by human hands to have authority over the whole Earth, but they forget what the Lord Jesus Christ said to Pilate in declaring that all authority or power that Pilate had was only granted to him because it came from a higher throne.

Therefore, the throne of Christ's kingdom is a throne that can grant or take away authority from any earthly throne and ruler.

When Pilate was about to decide whether or not to crucify Christ, the Lord Jesus Himself spoke to him about the authority that Pilate had as a Roman governor regarding the authority of Christ, which even Pilate himself did not know, as follows:

*John 19: 8 **Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid,***
*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 (or authority) at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."***

A little before, the Lord Jesus answered Pilate as follows:

*John 18: 35 **Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"***

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."

And in yet another passage, the Lord Jesus declares:

John 10: 17 Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.

When we begin to observe the emergence of the question concerning whether or not there was a need for an earthly king over the people freed from Egypt and called to follow God, we may see that the Lord, already in ancient times, did not intend for the people to choose human kings like the Gentiles or other peoples did, for this would lead to oppression and terrible costs to which the people would not need to become subject if the choice of following the Lord's will would be made (according to 1Samuel 8).

Nevertheless, just as the people did not want the priesthood offered by God without first experiencing the priesthood according to a fleshly commandment and conducted from the very creation, so also people did not want a direct regency or government of God over their lives without first going through the experience of the types of government proposed by peoples dissociated from fellowship with their Creator.

And just as no human priesthood can serve people adequately in all areas of their lives and cannot attend every one, so no human government can meet the most profound demands of those people who are subject to it.

God established that the priesthood under the Order of Melchizedek should be set in heaven so that Christ can serve equally everyone on Earth through faith and without restrictions on physical location and access to His presence.

And regarding the matter of the royal throne, the same principle also needed to be established by God. If Christ did not have His throne with God, what good would the priestly access from anywhere at any time be worth if the answer could also not be ordained and sent from heaven to any place and at the necessary or appropriate time to an individual?

Therefore, just as the priesthood of Christ is superior and perfect because it is done first in heaven, so Christ's position as King in the Order of Melchizedek is only perfect because it is also in the highest place at the right hand of the Heavenly Father.

God established the throne of Christ in heaven because it is the best and the only perfect place for Christ to act fully in His condition as King over everything, over all nations, and all people.

And from the heavenly throne, Christ does not compete with other earthly kingdoms and kings, for all are subject to Him in position and authority.

*Psalms 47: 8 **God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.***

*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.***

*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."***

*Psalms 99: 1 **The LORD reigns; Let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; Let the earth be moved!***

What earthly throne could Christ want and whose majesty could come close to the majesty that He has with the Heavenly Father?

Which throne in the natural world could secure the world and its foundations?

On what earthly throne could Christ attend to all who cry out for His help and give orders to His angels to attend to those who make the Lord the refuge of their lives?

*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.***

When Christ came in the flesh into the world, He did not come to establish the long-awaited earthly kingdom that people wanted. However, also for this reason, the devil was unable to defeat Christ in the temptation when he offered Jesus the glory of the earthly kingdoms.

Christ came into the world to reveal to people that it is not from the world that the eternal provision of priesthood and government for their lives comes, but that everything they need comes, first of all, from the Father of Lights who is above any throne and expectation that the creation may think or propose.

Christ did not come into the world to show people how they could become eternal in the present world, trying to make God come to be “eternalized” with them on Earth. Christ came to show people that their

Creator is greater than the natural world they know and that in the Heavenly Father is eternal life even though the present world, in the current conception, ceases to exist.

Christ came into the world to show that earthly kingdoms and nations are temporary and transient, but that the Lord's upper throne is a throne of eternal royalty and whose glory is incomparably greater than anything that exists in any kingdom on Earth.

Nations come and go, as do their kings and their thrones, but Christ and the throne from which He reigns are eternal and eternally unshakable.

Job 12: 23 ***He makes nations great, and destroys them; He enlarges nations, and guides them.***

Psalms 9: 15 ***The nations have sunk down in the pit which they made; In the net which they hid, their own foot is caught.***

Psalms 9: 20 ***Put them in fear, O LORD, That the nations may know themselves to be but men.***

Psalms 10: 16 ***The LORD is King forever and ever; The nations have perished out of His land.***

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

Psalms 46: 10 ***Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!***

Psalms 113: 4 ***The LORD is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens.***

And to conclude this topic, we would like to remember the fact that if Christ were to come to take an earthly throne, this would imply that He would leave vague His position as the Eternal High Priest who must always be with the Heavenly Father to serve all those who come to God to be saved through Him, which would be utterly incompatible with the condition of God's will that no one who comes to Christ shall perish.

Moreover, another reason why the priesthood of the Order of Aaron and similar to it are so contrary to the will of God, weak, and useless is because, in them, there is and always will be a fight for power between priests and rulers over the people, where a

group seeks to have greater dominion over the people than the other. And God, according to the Order of Melchizedek, would never allow His throne to be divided because of this dispute between the priesthood and the position of government. Establishing, thus, that both are in the same person and the same point of reference, namely, again: The Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest and Eternal King at the right of the Heavenly Father's eternal throne.

No matter how much a priestly order conducted by people on Earth comes to propose to accompany people in their various tasks, even if they try to do it through the multiplication of leaders, groups, and subgroups, the priestly orders according to the perspective of human beings will always be at fault with many of those whom they propose to serve, which similarly occurs in any proposition of human government over their fellow men.

Therefore, **just as Christ alone is God's perfect answer to all the essential points that a person needs for an appropriate priesthood, so too, only Christ is God's perfect answer to the most needed aspects concerning the government over one's life. And this, because Christ alone is the Mediator who acts simultaneously and continuously as the High Priest and Eternal King in the presence of God on His high and sublime heavenly throne.**

*Hebrews 7: 1(a) **For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, ...***

*2(b) ...**first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"***

*3 **without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.***

*Hebrews 8: 1 **Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,***

*2 **a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.***

In the Order of Melchizedek, the function of High Priest and King are found in the same person, the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the sanctuary and the eternal throne of government are also found in the same eternal and eternally unshakable place of the Unique, Almighty, and Eternal God. And no one should try to divide or separate what the Heavenly Father Himself has revealed unified in His Beloved Son.

*Colossians 1: 13 **He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.***

D. The Comprehensiveness of the King's Reign according to the Order of Melchizedek

Although in the previous topics of this chapter we have already addressed, in one way or another, a part about the scope of the King's reign according to the Order of Melchizedek, that is, the reign of Christ, we understand that this is a point that needs to be detailed more broadly and, at the same time, more deeply because this point is associated with many practical aspects in the lives of all the people who still inhabit the Earth.

The comprehensiveness of Christ's reign from the heavenly throne is by no means restricted to what happens in the heavens, but it is also related to everything that is involved with life on Earth.

When the Lord Jesus Christ taught us a parable about the call to pray continually, He taught us that God is always ready to hear us when we cry out to Him for His righteous intervention. However, at the end of this particular teaching, the Lord also launched a question to His listeners about whether He would find faith on Earth in the sense of people believing in the Lord's intervention in the present world and their personal circumstances in it, as we can see below:

*Luke 18: 7 **And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?**
8 **I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?***

When the Lord Jesus Christ shows us the question about *really finding faith on Earth* to be used in prayers to ask God to manifest His intervention of justice, He is showing us that the extent of the throne of righteousness also encompasses the entire sphere of events that occur in the present or natural world.

In the previous topics, we have also seen that the abundance of God's grace and the gift of righteousness are given to us to reign in life, just as we likewise could notice that the Lord Jesus is the sovereign Lord over all the kings of the Earth.

In another part of the Scriptures in which the Lord Jesus also teaches us about prayer, He instructs us to pray for the kingdom of God to come to us and for the Lord's will to be done on Earth as it is in Heaven, showing us once more that it is from the heavenly throne that all the orders of the Lord come or that it is from this throne that all the actions that make the heavenly kingdom and the will of God become more manifested among human beings begin.

Similarly, when Christ was just a few days or moments away from His crucifixion, He declared very explicitly and precisely about the condition that the Father had given Him also over all flesh and everything else.

*John 17: 1 **Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,**
2 **as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."***

*John 13: 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,
4 rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.*

Therefore, the reach of Christ's reign extends from one end of the universe to another, whether in Heaven or on Earth, except, as we already mentioned, over the very Heavenly Father from whom Christ was given authority over everything.

1 Corinthians 15: 27 For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.

Furthermore, when we see the comprehensiveness of Christ's reign and how Christ offers Himself to be with each person who receives Him as Lord, we may notice that Christ's general reign over the world is not just a government in the global aspects of the universe and the Earth, distant from individuals, or impersonal.

For this reason, yet another way of referencing Christ's reign over people is linked to the expression of Christ being the Head over what He reigns, which aims to show us that Christ has a personal connection with many parts that are subject to Him and over which He also reigns from His throne in personified ways.

Thus, for a Christian, the central point about the extent of Christ's reign should never be focused on whether or not the Lord Jesus is the Eternal King appointed by God over all and everything, for this aspect is explicitly and widely declared in the Scriptures.

For a Christian, the matter of what Christ's reign encompasses should be focused on understanding how the Lord reigns over everything from the heavenly throne and how a Christian is called to behave in cooperation with the Lord's reign.

For instance, when we see that Christ is the Head of each member of His spiritual body, called the Church and composed of those who have Christ as Lord in their hearts, we may notice that each Christian is directly touched by the Lord's reign. And for this, each of them should also seek in the Lord the instruction concerning how one can be more and more exposed to this heavenly kingdom.

So, the comprehensiveness of the Lord's regency, when seen from the perspective of a reign that personally attends each person, comes to represent a highly significant theme. And for this reason, it is only possible to be known in the light of the revelation of the glory of Him who is also God and Almighty to attend the whole or the global, but also each of the parts of this whole.

On the other hand, in order not to extend the global vision of this topic too much and to be able to deal more specifically with the extent of the Lord's reign over some of the main parts that directly involve human beings, and among them also about the lives of Christians, we will continue the breakdown of some more particular characteristics of this theme in some chapters that follow later.

And to conclude this topic, we remember here that the Scriptures also teach us to see separately, in various aspects, what the kingdom of God is and what the kingdoms of men are. However, when we see the matter of Christ as King and the extent of His reign, we understand that it is worth repeatedly mentioning that although Christ is King in the kingdom of God, this position as King and ruler also gives Him all authority over all kingdoms of men, for all these are also subject to the kingdom of heaven. (As also seen in the subject on The Gospel of the Kingdom of God.)

*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."***

*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.'***

*Matthew 28: 18 **And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."***

Considering that God established Christ to have primacy in everything, it is also concerned His position as Eternal King that His preeminence is due to Him and worthy of all honor.

*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.***

E. Eternal King, Born King, and Made King

The aspect of Christ's kingship is particularly appealing to observe when we also see it from the perspective of the condition of Christ as Son of God and Christ as Son of Man.

Christ, as Son of God, and who in the fullness of time came into the world in the flesh and also became the Son of Man, is not only already King in the present time, but He has always been King. And even before the world was created, He already had His position of glory before the Heavenly Father.

In the previous topics, we saw some texts that announce the condition of Christ's glory before His coming in the flesh into the world and how God created all things through the Son of His Love, as exemplified once again below:

*John 1: 3 **All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.***

Nevertheless, as the Eternal King, the Only Begotten Son of God did not hold on to His position of glory with the Heavenly Father and came into the world also as a man. And as such, He came as a servant to die on the cross to provide the path of redemption and salvation for all people.

*John 1: 14 **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.***

*Hebrews 2: 9 **But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.***

Thus, when Christ was born as the Son of Man, He was already born King even though the vast majority of people did not recognize Him, even though He came into the world to act as a servant, or even though He came as the one who came to serve people according to God's will.

When some wise men from the East came to see the newborn baby Jesus, following the star that guided them to the city where the Lord was born, they did not ask for the birth of just a common boy, but asked for the One who was already born King of the Jews:

*Matthew 2: 1 **Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,***
*2 **saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."***

And when faced with the statement of the wise men about the status of Christ's royalty, one might ask how the Lord Jesus could already have been born King if people have not yet recognized Him as such?

At this point, it should be noted that we are no longer referring to Christ being the Sovereign Son of God and King in the kingdom of God, but we are referring to Christ being King as a man among men.

Although Christ, as the Son of God, has every right to reign over all, because through Him all were created, God respects some government delegation decisions that human beings make among them to establish rulers over themselves, as we will see further up.

Thus, to affirm that Christ had already been born as King of the Jews also in the condition of man, for it was concerning this condition that the wise men were referring to Christ, would it not have been necessary that among the human beings some attribution had already been made of this condition to Christ?

For Christ to be called King of the Jews also in the condition of Son of Man, already from His birth, there was a need for Him to have already received this attribute over a specific nation at His birth or even long before His birth.

And to shorten the narrative of the story, we may see that the fact that Christ was born as King of the Jews is based on the fact that He had already been recognized as King also by the father of the entire Hebrew nation, and this even before the first descendant of this people was born.

When Abraham, even before he saw Isaac's birth, welcomed Melchizedek and recognized Him as the King of Salem, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also "king of peace," Abraham received this Melchizedek as the Priest of God Most High, but he also welcomed Him as the Priest of God Most High who, at the same time, likewise was King.

In the chapter of this subject entitled "Who was Melchizedek," we already explained who this Melchizedek who appeared to Abraham was and who came to meet him for fellowship and to manifest the glory of God Most High, announcing to Abraham that it was God who gave him the victory in battle from which he had just returned successfully.

Now, if the Melchizedek who presented Himself to Abraham, is the One who is *without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life*, and who is the expression of Christ who was revealed to be the Eternal High Priest of all who believe in Him for salvation, this same Melchizedek is also the One who has been King with the Heavenly Father from eternity.

Thus, when Abraham recognized the eternal Melchizedek to be the High Priest of all his descendants who would also follow in the footsteps of faith in God and justification through faith in Christ, Abraham likewise recognized, in advance, the same Melchizedek as the Eternal King over his descendants who would come to believe in Christ.

Christ was born among men already as the King of the Jews also because Abraham had already sealed this principle with the Lord even before Christ came to be a descendant of Abraham.

When Abraham received the bread and the wine that Melchizedek offered him, he recognized and accepted the fellowship of someone who was greater than him, Abraham, both in the priesthood and in the position of royalty.

When Abraham accepted the fellowship with Melchizedek, he accepted Melchizedek entirely. And that is why, in receiving Him for fellowship, both the recognition of the position of Christ as the Eternal High Priest and as Eternal King of Righteousness and Peace already came to be agreed between God and Abraham for the future of his descendants.

When Abraham chose the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek before God, he also accepted the principles of the respective Order of Melchizedek, which from the beginning establish that the same High Priest before God is also the One who is King of Righteousness and Peace.

The text of the book of Hebrews that we have used as the primary reference in this chapter reiterates that the matter of the priesthood of the Order of Melchizedek and the status of the royalty of the High Priest of this Order are associated with the same person and are inseparable, as we can see again below:

*Hebrews 7: 1 **For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,***
*2 **to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"***
*3 **without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.***

The explicit greatness of Melchizedek was welcomed by Abraham when he received this Melchizedek, but it was also witnessed by Abraham before other people when he gave a specific and unique tithe to this same Melchizedek in his name and the name of all his descendants.

Not wanting to return to the aspects about the tithes given by Abraham that were already covered in the chapter just referenced above, we would only like to reinforce once again that Abraham did not give tithes to win the war, for he had already won it. Abraham also did not give the tithes of his goods to Melchizedek as if He had come to charge Abraham for the blessings bestowed on him throughout Abraham's life.

Abraham voluntarily gave the tithe of the spoil of the specific war that he had won and from which he retained nothing for himself, returning the spoil to the kings and people from whom they had been stolen by other kings.

The Scriptures do not say this expressly, but as Abraham gave the tithe of the goods of others that he had recovered for them, this indicates that Abraham did so to testify to the people who still did not believe in God that it is the Eternal Lord whom they should serve and in whom they should seek security for their lives, and not in the mere alliances between kings that these peoples used to do to in the attempt at protecting themselves.

- Psalms 146: 3* **Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.**
- 4 His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish.**
- 5 Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the LORD his God,**
- 6 Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps truth forever.**
-

In ancient times, it was quite likely that some peoples looted (stolen) by other peoples had the habit of offering recognition or payment to those who recovered their assets. And so, Abraham was showing that if anyone was worthy to receive any recognition of glory for the victory he achieved, this someone was the King who had blessed him to help others, the King of Righteousness and Peace, also called King according to the Order of Melchizedek.

Abraham's act before Melchizedek was a singular and public testimony or before other peoples so that people should not even trust him, Abraham, as a king over them, because, in reality, Abraham had only been victorious because of God's action towards him when he went up to the battlefield.

When Abraham separated the tithe from the spoils that came to be in his hands to pass it on to Melchizedek, he testified of the greatness of this Sovereign Priest-King before his home, but also to the neighboring peoples or around him.

Hebrews 7: 4 **Now consider how great this Melchizedek was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.**

When Abraham honored Melchizedek by voluntarily giving Him the tithe of the spoils of war, he did not pay a tax to Melchizedek for the bread and wine He had brought, for God never offered salvation, fellowship, and security for a price, but always through His grace and love.

Abraham gave a tithe recognizing the greatness of Melchizedek as Priest of God Most High, King of Salem, Heavenly King, King who came from God, for testimony so that other peoples would know that only in the Eternal God and in His King Melchizedek would there be the possibility of a reign grounded in true righteousness and peace.

Melchizedek had already brought bread and wine and offered His fellowship to Abraham regardless of any tithe in return. Melchizedek had also previously blessed Abraham to be victorious.

Abraham, however, realized that something else could be involved in that visit of Melchizedek.

Abraham was not a king. Abraham was a pilgrim in a foreign land. Abraham had a word that God would lead him to a land that He would give him, but the land could only be given to him by someone who had a proper right concerning the "lands in the world."

Now, a priest does not have the function of giving land, for this function is assigned to kings.

So, in this whole context, Abraham held on to one highly significant detail. He knew that the Priest who had visited him was unusual, for that Priest of God Most High was also King of Righteousness and King of Peace, that is, King of Salem.

Abraham had just come from a war against four powerful kings who took the spoils of five other kings. Abraham had overcome the more powerful kings, and now he had the spoils that those kings had taken inappropriately from his neighboring peoples. In other words, Abraham was not a king, but yet ended up in a more prominent and mighty position than all the kings in that region. And to this, the blessings he received from the Priest Melchizedek were still added.

What else would a man need?

Abraham had a loyal and robust army. He had defeated the kings of the region in which he was. He had an abundance of resources in his home and had attained an extra volume of the war spoils. And he had the blessings of the Priest of God Most High.

Would he, then, need to ally with losing kings? Would he need to ask favors from the kings of that land? Since he had saved their lives, would he need to respect those who were in those lands before him?

Nevertheless, what is beautiful about this story is that Abraham had come to this land by God's guidance. And even when he apparently had all the power and strength at his side to take it for himself, Abraham did not walk according to his own understanding.

Faced with the victory and the power he had just experienced, Abraham did not take the government of his life into his own hands, nor did he take control over other lives only because he was considered "a blessed man" and who acted to free them.

Abraham remained in his position and did not call himself the king of his own life, much less over others' lives. Abraham was never elevated to the status of a king by the One who guided him to the land he had promised, and it was also not Abraham who was going to do it by himself.

Throughout the story of Abraham, we may see that it made no sense to him to have been guided by God to the land that God would show him, to have been blessed by the Lord, and then he, by himself, guiding his life.

Abraham not only wanted fellowship with God to obtain just a few blessings, but he saw that Melchizedek was also the Eternal King of Righteousness and Peace. Abraham was not the type of man who wanted to have fellowship with God only to obtain from the Lord some favors, resources, or lands in the present world, but Abraham wanted God so that GOD would forever be his GUIDE and KING!

Hebrews 11: 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Without having someone to actually guide him in righteousness and peace to enjoy these aspects eternally, what real benefit could status, goods, wealth, land, and power bring indeed to Abraham?

By acknowledging the Sovereignty of God in Melchizedek, Abraham demonstrated that he had not heeded God's call to leave his homeland primarily because he wanted more land, but because he placed his trust in the God who had spoken to him. Abraham left because he had heard the voice of someone superior who would guide and reveal through him a blessing to all nations.

And for him to become indeed a channel that would cooperate with the Lord's blessing to all peoples, Abraham would also need to be grounded on the foundation of God's righteousness and peace that can only be achieved by an individual if the Lord is one's foundation and eternally Righteous King.

In acknowledging Melchizedek's unique position, Abraham demonstrated that he did not aspire to be king, but he wanted God to continue to guide him even after God blessed him. Abraham had no ambition to be king either over himself or over other kings and peoples, nor did he have a desire in his heart to subdue God to himself. What Abraham wanted was for a King, superior to him and righteous in everything, to be the King of his life to guide him forever in righteousness and peace.

Abraham longed for a covenant with Melchizedek that would extend beyond blessings in the natural world. He longed for Melchizedek to become his personal King, of his household, and his descendants of faith forever.

With a single act of tithing the spoils of a specific battle, an attitude never repeated in the sequence, Abraham testified to the surrounding people that Melchizedek was greater than himself or that he recognized Him as his King before other peoples also as a testimony to those peoples.

When Abraham gave the tithe of the war spoils, he demonstrated to the other kings and peoples that he had accepted the testimony of Melchizedek who declared that it was not he, Abraham, who had delivered them, but that it was the hand of God Most High who had granted that victory. Abraham was showing them that he was neither the savior nor the king on whom they should place their trust. He showed them that it was God Almighty who they should give glory and honor, for it was the One Eternal God, and not he, who allowed them to be freed indeed.

With the act of tithing, done only once in his life, Abraham testified that he had chosen the singular Eternal King forever to guide him, as well as that his descendants and other peoples should also choose to give all praise and all glory to the One who is worthy of receiving it, to the eternal God Most High.

Through the war in which he was victorious, Abraham had won some rights over some people of other peoples and their goods. The king of Sodom himself recognized that Abraham had authority over the war spoils, for this was how many kings on Earth conquered things and structured their kingdoms.

Abraham had freed those people from dominating kings. However, when he recognized Melchizedek as his eternal King and protection, Abraham also declared those people free from any human rights that he could have over them, leaving open

the possibility that they too would voluntarily choose to subject themselves to the Eternal King of Righteousness and Peace.

By the right recognized among the people and their kings in those days, part of their peoples and goods came to be subject to Abraham. However, Abraham signaled to them that it was actually towards Melchizedek, who presented Himself as the representative of the Lord who granted him the victory, that they too should incline their hearts.

Through a single voluntary attitude of Abraham, he, as a man of faith, testified to other human beings, and in advance to his descendants, that the true freedom that all people need is in the fellowship and the recognition of the Priest of God Most High and who, at the same time, is the Eternal King of Righteousness and Peace.

Because Abraham did not want to be the king of himself, nor did he want to be dominant over his fellow men, nor did he want to subjugate the Lord to himself, God made a promise to Abraham that through his offspring would come the One who would free human beings from the eternal slavery to the yoke of sin and darkness.

When Abraham accepted Melchizedek's testimony that it was God who had granted him the victory and when Abraham testified before men about his choice of this Melchizedek as his Priest and King, in the way that they probably had the habit of doing in his days, Abraham refused to incline to the desire to subject his fellow men to himself, thus qualifying for the promise that the Son of God would also come into the world as the Son of Man who would be considered as the descendant of Abraham.

And again, why, then, did Abraham recognize Melchizedek and testify to others about the greatness of this King?

Abraham did so because he recognized that Melchizedek was much more prominent than him and that he himself needed someone to help him walk in righteousness and peace.

Before his household and other kings, Abraham testified that the righteousness and peace of God Most High could only be granted to him through someone coming directly from God, and this was the King of Salem or Melchizedek Himself.

In his own way, according to the time in which he lived, Abraham did what the Lord Jesus Christ later instructed us about confessing Him as the Lord also before the world.

*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.*

*Luke 12: 8 Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God.
9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.*

Melchizedek presented Himself as a Priest of God Most High, and therefore the mediator between God and the human beings. And as Abraham received Him for fellowship around the bread and wine, symbols of the broken body of Christ and His blood shed on the cross of Calvary for our salvation, but also confessed Him to other peoples and other kings, Melchizedek also confessed Abraham before God as a man worthy of having Christ regarded as his descendant as Son of Man and as the Eternal King to bless all the peoples of the Earth.

If Abraham had not received Melchizedek also as the Eternal King, God would not have given him the privilege of having Christ as the Son of Man being considered as his descendant, for the announcement of Christ's coming into the world as Son of Man also as King always pointed to the deliverance of people and not for them to be imprisoned again by their fellow men.

The Melchizedek whom Abraham welcomed for fellowship, previously accepted Him as his Eternal King, and about whom Abraham had no doubt of giving public testimony to the peoples and kings of his generation, is the same Melchizedek who came in the future to be considered as the eternal descendant of Abraham and through whom the perfect salvation and newness of eternal life is manifested, which is why "He already was born King among human beings."

Galatians 3: 16 **Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.**

Since ancient times, Abraham witnessed and cooperated in preparing the way for the coming of the High Priest and the King of Salem, according to the Order of Melchizedek.

These narratives from antiquity are of exceptional relevance, for they show us the authority of God over kings, nations, alliances, and people around the world in all ages and all generations.

The Lord Jesus was already King of Abraham's descendants even before they began to exist as a people. And even though He was crucified, He remained King, and the testimony that He was King continued to be publicly exposed.

As King over the descendants of Abraham and all creation, Christ was faithful until death, and death on the cross, for He always had in mind to provide and offer the liberation of all human beings from the vile yoke of sin and the prince of this world who wanted to take dominion over them for himself.

John 8: 58 **Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."**

Hebrews 2: 14 **Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**

16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.

Once Abraham believed that Melchizedek was the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace, the Lord Jesus, on the cross at Calvary, came to accomplish what Abraham previously accepted through faith.

Through the cross of Calvary, the Lord revealed the complete or perfect provision for the deliverance of Abraham's descendants from the eternal unrighteousness because of which they were condemned and from the eternal enmity towards God to which they were subject, which the devil wanted to impose on them forever.

And through the work on the cross of Calvary, Christ also opened the way of salvation and newness of life that God beforehand promised Abraham when He said that all families on Earth would be blessed through his descendant.

Therefore, Christ was born King because the Lord Jesus, even before Abraham existed, was already the High Priest between God and men, as well as He was already eternal King over all things, whether in Heaven or Earth. And it is also about these two eternal positions of Christ that Abraham acknowledged Him, welcomed Him, and gave testimony about Him.

As we have already commented in the previous chapter on “Who was Melchizedek,” Abraham's tithing was a unique act that reflected on all Abraham's descendants who walk through faith, for through this singular act, Abraham did it once and for all, remaining to his descendants to believe in this same Melchizedek and to confess with their mouths this Melchizedek as their Lord and King to be partaker forever in the same salvation that Abraham received by faith.

Galatians 3: 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

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.

The tithe of the spoils of war that Abraham gave to Melchizedek also occurred in an isolated and unique act in history because Melchizedek presented Himself visibly in that way only once to the world.

Nevertheless, considering that today Christ is on a heavenly throne and in a sanctuary before God that is not made by human hands, however much a person would want to give tithes to Christ today, one would have no one on Earth to deliver them, because Christ left no earthly mediators between God and the people, neither in the matter of priesthood nor the matter of His position as the Eternal King.

Returning here, then, once again, to the aspect of Christ “having been born King of the Jews,” Christ was already born King by the recognition and testimony of Abraham as the predecessor of the entire nation that descended from God's promise to him.

So, when Pilate gave the order to be written on the cross of Christ that the Lord Jesus, even hanging on the cross of Calvary, was the King of the Jews, he was not doing anything contrary about who Christ already was even before the Hebrew nation had its first descendant. Pilate was just another instrument to declare and reaffirm a testimony that thousands of years ago had already been made by Abraham before Melchizedek.

John 19: 19 Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

21 Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews.'"

22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

The whole matter of Christ being king over Jews was legal according to the centuries of history of that people. However, people did not want a king who was not according to their fleshly desires. They did not want a king to rule from the transformation of their hearts, but a king to rule for their interest, like the reason why they chose the priestly Order of Aaron.

And, also nowadays, many people want the power of a king's glory on their behalf, but they do not want this king to rule in their hearts.

Many people want the power of the glory of a righteous or just king on their behalf, but they do not want to be instructed and prepared about the purpose of the power and the glory of a just or upright king.

Finally, in this topic, we understand that we still need to address the condition that Christ also was “made King as Son of Man” over all human beings, all principalities, and all power.

Through Abraham, we saw that Melchizedek was received and announced as the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace. However, so that these characteristics of Melchizedek's royalty were attested and witnessed to the entire generation of Hebrews and all peoples, it was also necessary that these characteristics became demonstrated as indeed being part of the “already born King” according to the Order of Melchizedek.

Therefore, **in Christ, when He came in the flesh into the world, the claims that the Melchizedek was King of Righteousness and King of Peace were put to the extreme test of what could be done, but it was also through these severe tests that the condition of Melchizedek's royalty triumphed and was shown to be what it was indeed.**

In Christ, who came into the world “already born King,” it was demonstrated and proven that He was, in fact, the King of Righteousness and King of Peace in the face of the extreme condition of unrighteousness that was cast upon Him and in the face of the extreme situation of offenses that against Him were launched, as previously announced also by the prophet Isaiah, as follows:

- Isaiah 53: 1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*
- 2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.*
- 3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*
- 4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.*
- 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.*
- 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*
- 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.*
- 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.*
- 9 And they made His grave with the wicked, But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.*
- 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.*
- 11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.*
- 12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.*
-

On the cross of Calvary, Christ endured the injustices and sins of all humankind, declared forgiveness to human beings, and even demonstrated, until the last moment and under great distress, that He was the way of salvation for everyone who comes to God through Him, as was the case with the thief who was crucified at the Lord's side and who cried out for salvation in the final moments of his life.

As the Eternal Son of God, Christ was already the Eternal King over everything and everyone by right of His position as Eternal Creator.

Considered also as a descendant of Abraham, Christ was already King by right of the option that Abraham had made for his descendants, for it was also because of this option of Abraham that his descendants had promises of the Lord addressed to them.

And, finally, Christ came to be “made King” over everything and everyone also as the Son of Man because of the proof of demonstration of

righteousness and the right of acquisition, with His blood, of all who were enslaved eternally to the sin and the law according to the Order of Aaron.

*Acts 2: 36 **Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.***

Here, still, as an additional observation in the sense of seeing more aspects of the legality of Christ “made Lord” above all because of His work of righteousness on the cross of Calvary, we suggest also to see the subject on The Gospel of God's Righteousness.

Therefore, **in Christ, we have the Eternal King as Son of God, but in Christ, we also have the Eternal King made Eternal King by the right of descent among human beings and, likewise, through the right that Christ, as Son of Man, obtained by making the perfect provision of liberation for all people and the creation of slavery to sin, the condemning law, and the kingdom of darkness.**

And now, in the Eternal King, according to the Order of Melchizedek, we have unified the Perfect High Priest, the Eternal Son of God as the Eternal and perfect King, and the perfect Son of Man also as the Eternal and perfect King seated at the right of the Heavenly Father above everything and everyone.

*Hebrews 7: 26 **For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;***

*27 **who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.***

*28 **For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.***

*Hebrews 8: 1 **Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,***

*2 **a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.***

*Revelation 1: 5 ... **and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,**
6 **and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

C31. The Glory of the King of Righteousness and King of Peace

A. Aspects of the Character and Postures of the Eternal King that Are Utterly Distinct from the Kings on Earth

Once we have seen some aspects of the establishment of Christ as King at the right of the Heavenly Father's throne as well as the risen Son of Man and once we have seen some points about the extent of His reign, we understand that a next step that can be very precious and useful for the life of a Christian is to get to know some of the main characteristics that this Eternal King has and some aspects of actions that this same King takes in His reign.

Considering that it is from the Eternal King that all instructions and manners of conduct to be practiced in His reign come out or that are allowed in the kingdoms that are subordinate to Him, it is also in the knowledge of the attributes of the King Himself that the characteristics of His government may be more widely known.

Moreover, knowing specifically some of the main aspects of the character and postures of the Eternal King Jesus Christ is also essential because His characteristics are not based on those that human beings try to define about this King, but on what the heavenly kingdom defines about who is the King of this kingdom and, consequently, over all the kingdoms of the Earth.

Just as the definitions of the kingdom, righteousness, salvation, grace, power, and peace of God, for example, are not according to the definitions of the human beings on these aspects, so also the characteristics and attributes of the Eternal King are not based on what human beings say about this King and His reign.

Many people have tried to extract from the human models of kings and governments what the Eternal King is, should be, or how His kingdom should be. However, they forget or despise the fact that human models do not serve as a standard for the Eternal King, and that, on the contrary, it is the standard of the Eternal King that people should understand first also to know how to act in their own lives and towards their fellow men.

The Lord Jesus Christ has clearly warned us that the rulers of the world are not the standard to be followed by those who want to have Christ as Lord in their lives.

*Matthew 20: 25 **But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.***

*26 **Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.***

*27 **And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave,**
28 **just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."***

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.

27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

When we saw in the previous chapter that *in Christ* we are called to reign in life through Him, this in no way means that Christ called Christians to exercise dominion over their fellow believers or to rule over them according to the characteristics and attributes that many kingdoms in the world establish as their government standards.

When people expect to find in Christ the kind of reign according to the standards of the mighty on Earth, they may come to be frustrated with Christ and who He is, for the Lord Jesus never equated and will allow Himself to be equated with that which people define by themselves about what a ruler should be and how this ruler should act.

Similarly, when people expect to be invested with power by the King Jesus according to the standards of the mighty ones on Earth, they too may become frustrated with Christ, for He will not grant them this kind of power or authority.

As the Eternal King, according to the Order of Melchizedek, Christ is the King who is seated above all the heavens at the right of the Heavenly Father or with the highest and most powerful position that can exist in the entire universe, being subject only to the Father of Lights.

Nevertheless, at the same time, **the Scriptures inform us that Christ is also the perfect King in humility, meekness, righteousness, and peace, distinguishing Christ from other kings and rulers already or primarily from the attributes or virtues of His very person.**

Thus, one of the aspects that most confused many people in the past and still confuses many as to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Eternal King, over all and everything except the Heavenly Father, concerns the unique attributes of His person and the postures distinct of all the other kings that He adopts.

For example, even with a high degree of power, what other kings in the entire universe can properly declare the following words that Christ said?

Matthew 11: 27 "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

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.

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

What king on Earth, even if he had a very high degree of power, could say with propriety that "all" who are heavily laden or oppressed could come to him, personally or individually, that he would attend to everyone, that he would relieve each of their eternal burdens and that He would teach each person in such a way that one indeed would find the much-needed rest, not only physical and material, but also for one's soul?

Who is the king on Earth, with a high degree of power, that really could say that everyone could learn from him because he is "***gentle and lowly in heart?***"

Now, if a kingdom ends up reflecting in many ways the expression of who its king is, no human kingdom can be compared with the kingdom of God and the reign of Christ by the simple fact that no human king can be what only the Lord Jesus Christ was, is, and will be forever, namely: Perfectly ***gentle and humble of heart***, even though ***all things have been delivered to Me by My Father***.

What confused many people in the past, and still puzzles many today, refers to their perplexity as to how the Eternal King, who has authority over everything and everyone, was presented by God before people when He came in the flesh into the world, for instance, as described in the following texts:

Matthew 21: 5 Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'

Isaiah 42: 1 Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

2 He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

3 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.

4 He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law.

5 Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it:

6 "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles,

7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.

8 I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.

9 Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them."

What confused many people in the past, and still intrigues many, refers to their questioning or disregard regarding the fact that the Eternal King, who has authority over all, adopted attitudes that are considered as attitudes of servants and that He even

taught that those who voluntarily want to follow Him also are called to adopt postures of humbleness such as He did, as also exemplified below:

Philippians 2: 5 **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,**
6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be
equal with God,
7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a
bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.
8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and
became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Romans 12: 16 **Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your**
mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise
in your own opinion.
17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight
of all men.

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."

Who is the king on the Earth that people knew who was humble and would be willing to die humiliated, despised, wounded, and entirely exposed on a shameful cross, ashamed before His own people and by His own people, being He completely innocent?

Which king in the present world would start a project knowing for sure already beforehand that he would be exposed to complete shame or ignominy as Christ did?

Hebrews 12: 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.

Therefore, what kind of kingdom is it that introduces its King through a simple manger?

And what, then, did the already born King come to offer indeed?

Or, primarily, what kind of King is offered to us in Christ?

These seem to be inquiries to which many people tend to want to deduce the answers by themselves or according to their own liking rather than asking and being interested in the answers that the heavenly kingdom offered to them presents.

The Lord Jesus teaches us that the Kingdom of God does not come into the world with a visible appearance or through many aspects that are so significant in people's natural eyes, as seen in the subject on The Gospel of the Kingdom of God. And neither the King Jesus is a king with characteristics according to the kingdoms of the Earth. And He will never be, for He is King According to the order of Melchizedek, that is, He is King of Eternal Righteousness and King of Everlasting Peace.

When Christ is presented and offered to us as the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, He is presented to us as the High Priest with characteristics entirely different from the High Priests of the Order of Aaron precisely because He is of a wholly different priestly order and associated with a law utterly distinct from or similar to the law of the Order of Aaron.

Similarly, **the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal King according to the Order of Melchizedek, also called King of Righteousness and King of Peace, likewise shows us that the fundamental aspects of His condition as regent are supported by the principles of His respective Order of Government.**

Righteousness, peace, and meekness, for example, have never combined and will never fit with pride or arrogance.

For this reason, God granted us a King to also teach us to “walk in the paths of righteousness,” for it is because of the righteousness of God that, ultimately, we have access to God's grace, peace, and eternal love also concerning government over our lives.

Romans 5: 21 ... so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Psalms 23: 1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

...
3(b) ... He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

If through Christ's eternal priesthood we are called to see God's mercy and love based on His righteousness to allow each individual to “live in Him,” on the side of Christ's position as the Eternal King of Righteousness and Peace, we see the commitment that God's love has concerning the truth and His righteousness in not being part of any unrighteousness.

1 Corinthians 13: 6 (Love) does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.

Just as the Lord Jesus is the High Priest altogether distinguished and incomparable to any human priesthood because of His character of truth and righteousness, so He is also King incomparable with any king or ruler that may exist among human beings, whether they have little power or have a lot of power in the eyes of the people in the world.

Therefore, in His eternal glory, the Lord Jesus Christ was always King, was born King, and was made King according to the characteristics of the kingdom of God and not according to the inappropriate thought or the desire of many people or other kings.

The Lord Jesus Christ was already an Eternal King and was also established as King as Son of Man, but all this to be the King according to what people need Him to be in them and for them.

The fact that we need a perfect High Priest who can save and reconcile us with God, on the other hand, also implies that we need a King who is powerful to do it in such a way that everything is done according to the truth and the righteousness of the Lord, showing us that the righteousness of Christ's priesthood and Christ's kingship complement each other perfectly and are absolutely inseparable aspects because both equally act in everything based on the same and eternal throne of God.

*Psalms 89: 14 **Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.***

Despite being the Eternal King, Christ remains the Eternal High Priest because it is in this position of the priesthood that we find all the provision of true righteousness so that we can have our fellowship with God restored. However, besides being the Eternal High Priest, Christ is also Eternal King, according to the Order of Melchizedek, so that everything performed by the Eternal King in the life of a saved individual is also done according to the truth and righteousness of God.

*Ephesians 4: 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.***

As we saw in the book of Hebrews, we need a perfect High Priest who can sympathize with us in our weaknesses. However, we also see in the same book of Hebrews that we also need a Sovereign King according to righteousness and peace for that the salvation that has been provided for us may also be sustained in everything eternally according to the righteousness and peace of God.

*Hebrews 7: 1 ... **this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, ...**
2 **first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace."***

The manifestations of the riches of Christ's glory are added up and working in cooperation so that we know that everything in Him, everything He does, and also everything He instructs us to do is always aligned with righteousness and His perfect attributes.

The Eternal King, according to the Order of Melchizedek, does not call saved people through the heavenly righteousness from the subjection to unrighteousness to propose to them the kingdom of God for them to return to act contrary to the righteousness on which the heavenly throne is grounded.

Revelation 15: 3 **They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!"**

And similarly to the heavenly righteousness, it also occurs concerning the aspect of peace.

In Christ, once justified in Him to live and walk in righteousness, people are also called to a peace different from what the world can offer them, starting with reconciliation or peace with God and the peace that the Lord Jesus gives them in their hearts, as addressed more widely in the material on The Gospel of Peace and of which we recall the following texts:

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.**

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.**

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

Although some king or government in the world can cooperate so that the people who are part of the extension of their domain come to have a high degree of social peace in their territory, the peace that extends to the heart of each individual and beyond life in the natural level can never be provided by a human ruler, for the granting of this peace comes exclusively from the God of all peace, from the kingdom that is peace, and from the King of Salem or Eternal Prince of Peace.

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.

Acts 10: 36 The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all).

2 Peter 1: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Concluding this topic, we emphasize yet that **just as we are called to walk in righteousness because Christ is our righteousness, so we are also called to cooperate with the peace that comes to us through the government of the Eternal King of Peace.**

Romans 6: 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 12: 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Matthew 5: 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

B. The Aspect of Righteousness and Peace in the Individual and the Collective Level

Considering that the basis or foundation of the themes of the righteousness and the peace of God in Christ have already been extensively covered by the subjects on The Gospel of God's Righteousness and the Gospel of Peace, we would not like to deal with them in detail at this point, where our purpose is more focused on showing more emphatically what the glory of Christ, according to the Order of Melchizedek, offers us not only as our perfect and Eternal High Priest, but also as a King who is entirely grounded in the righteousness and peace of God.

Nevertheless, in the subjects referenced in the previous paragraph, there are some emphases on the righteousness and peace of God that were not addressed in them since, in a sense, they also needed to be preceded by a broader understanding of the condition discussed now as Christ being the Eternal King and responsible before God so that all things are functioning according to the righteousness of the Lord's throne.

If, on the one hand, Christ came in the flesh into the world to walk in full righteousness to make a perfect and just provision for the salvation of all those enslaved to sin and the law of the priesthood of the Order of Aaron, on the other hand, after resurrected, the Heavenly Father also manifested Christ as the Eternal King of Righteousness and Peace, at the right of His heavenly throne. And this, so that the fulfillment and the maintenance of the salvation of each individual may also be done in full righteousness before God as well as before the whole world so that no one can ever question the righteousness of God's salvation and what the Lord still does and will do for those who are saved.

The fact that Christ is not intervening in the world as many people would like in their limited perceptions does not mean that He is not fully exercising His position as King of Righteousness and King of Peace.

Without the government of God and if it were not for the presence of Christ reigning over everything, the world would have already collapsed, even though, sometimes, it may seem to human beings that Christ is late in intervening.

During the various chapters that have composed this subject up to the present point, we have tried to address the aspect of Christ being the gift of God for the salvation, life, and instruction of each individual who believes in Him and who invokes Him as Lord.

God's salvation is offered to all people, without distinction. However, at the same time, it can be accepted individually in the heart by a person even though no one around receives it together with him or her, showing that Christ has a full commitment to save anyone and everyone who cries to Him as Lord also to receive this salvation.

Since the Lord Jesus Christ made a perfect eternal sacrifice for the redemption of all, He can also perfectly save all those who come to God through Him, even though others around those who receive salvation do not want Christ as Lord in their lives or have not yet inclined their hearts to this choice.

*Hebrews 7: 25 **Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.***

Nevertheless, as the salvation of a person is experienced and expressed in the most diverse areas of one's life, we understand that it is necessary to know that the salvation that the Lord extends to a person will also end up having repercussions in the collective life in which that person is inserted.

So, in turn, **the aspect of a person living in a collective environment implies that the Lord Jesus also needs to be, at the same time, an Eternal and Mighty High Priest to receive and listen to each individual in one's most diverse personal claims, as well as a Lord who knows how to ponder the care or responses concerning each person with what is according to God's righteousness towards other people and towards the other aspects that sustain the universe.**

When we think about practical life on Earth, we know that, in many ways, life also inevitably has a “collective” side. And everything that is collective among human beings presents the risk of unrighteousness, strife, disagreements, divergent opinions, and many things that people know very well that happen.

In the collectivity, not everyone has the Lord Jesus as one's Eternal High Priest. Similarly, those who have Christ as Lord are also not always in fellowship with Him and, therefore, do not always act according to the will of God.

Without the Lord's direction, people do works according to the will of the flesh, which, in turn, have consequences that are not harmonized with God or with others.

Paul informs us that these works of the flesh are not an unknown secret that cannot be understood. On the contrary, the works of the flesh are very explicit, and through them, much unrighteousness and strife are introduced. Through the works of the flesh, many of the so-called “conflicts of interest” arise.

Galatians 5: 19 ***Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.***

Thus, in the theme on The Gospel of Peace, it was pointed out that aspects of the conflicts of the works of the flesh may vary from small disagreements to broad world events. Disputes may grow and even become large-scale wars. The fact is that both small and large conflicts may generate discomfort, pain, and unrighteousness.

And whenever there is unrighteousness, peace is also confronted.

Now, if we look at the context described above from the perspective in which a king needs to administer or rule over everything that is just and over everything unjust that is subject to his government, how great is not the mission or the task of this king?

Thus, **if the greatness of Christ as the Eternal High Priest, Advocate, and the Author and Finisher of the Faith in God is already of unsearchable richness and comprehensiveness to the point that He can receive each person individually and continually before the Heavenly Father, how sublime and endless equally is not Christ's position as the Eternal King**

over everything and everyone, even over the righteous and the unrighteous?

In the position of King, and King of Righteousness and King of Peace, according to the Order of Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus is also responsible for the administration of everything that exists and for the joint functioning of all things without Him being an accomplice of any unrighteousness.

Just as we need to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened regarding the greatness of our Eternal High Priest to see Him properly through faith and according to the order in which He acts, so we also need to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened to see the King Jesus Christ according to the Order of Melchizedek and King of Salem, which encompasses the meaning of King of Righteousness and King of Peace.

If the challenges of Christ to be a perfect Eternal High Priest to mediate God towards all people and to mediate all people before God already go beyond any human possibility of understanding, even more magnified becomes revealed the glory of the Lord already immeasurable when we come to see added to it that Christ is also the King over each individual and, at the same time, over all the collective groups that exist in the universe.

Nevertheless, a minimally satisfactory perspective on the condition of Christ as the Eternal King over everything and everyone, in the individual and the collective, is not only relevant, but it is also crucial so that a person does not create a mistaken idea of who comes to be the Lord Himself as High Priest and Eternal King.

To the extent that people lose perspective on the condition that Christ is the Eternal King entirely correct or just to everyone and that He does everything based on heavenly righteousness, people tend to create “fantasies” of what Christ might do through them or even what they think Christ should do for them.

When people lose the perspective, minimally satisfying, of Christ as King of Righteousness and King of Peace over the entire universe, they tend to be inclined to the thought that Christ, and also the Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit, are at their disposal to serve them in their most diverse interests, forgetting, however, that the Lord only serves people and only cooperates with people according to His righteousness and truth.

When people lose the perspective of Christ's condition as King according to the Order of Melchizedek, they also begin to lose the notion that to seek Christ with the intent that God should supply their carnal desires even characterizes an enmity towards the Lord.

James 3: 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

- 4: 1 *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*
- 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"?*
- 6 *But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*
- 7 *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*
- 8 *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*
- 9 *Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.*
- 10 *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*
-

If Christ, as the Eternal High Priest, is merciful and knows the afflictions we suffer in the world, on the other hand, as King, Christ is committed, above all, to truth and righteousness towards the Heavenly Father and all people.

When we come to see Christ as the King of Righteousness and King of Peace, we need to understand that for Him to be just and upright, it is necessary for Him to guide each person who turns to Him in a way that each instruction given to this individual is cooperative with the whole or general rulership of righteousness that is under the government of the Lord, and not contrary to it.

Therefore, how elevated, then, or extraordinary, is not the regency of the set of options that the most diverse beings in the universe want to adopt simultaneously?

This is why the Heavenly Father established Christ exclusively as the Faithful King over all and everything to do so always according to heavenly righteousness.

Christ is the One who restores the presence of God in the hearts of those who believe in the Lord and His Gospel, and still calls them to be in Him. However, He also does so that those who have had their fellowship restored to God may cease to serve sin and be restored to the condition of righteousness and instruments of the Lord's righteousness.

- 2 *Corinthians 5: 18* ***Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,***
- 19 ***that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.***
- 20 ***Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.***
- 21 ***For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***

Romans 6: 12 **Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.**
13 **And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**

Christ was given to us so that we could be freed from the “reign of sin and the passions of the flesh,” but He did this so that we also could be placed under a “reign of truth and righteousness.”

In this way, **if, on the one hand, Christ gave Himself for the salvation of all and is long-suffering with sinners, on the other hand, Christ has an agenda of righteousness to be established and which may imply that He will not wait indefinitely until a person repents of one's subjection to sin so that He will only then establish the justice of God.**

The Lord Jesus is not the kind of king who gives “circus and bread to the people.” He is not the king who prevents all people, regardless of what they do, from ever suffering the consequences of acts contrary to God that they practice. Christ is not the king who has to sponsor broad and prolonged endeavors of people's evil lusts and still protect them from all harm, and so on.

Therefore, the matter of Christ's position as the King of Righteousness and Peace should never be seen lightly.

God's desire is for us to live on Earth in quietness and peace. However, or at the same time, the Lord wants us to have this meekness and peace to be used for goals that are noble, just, and which promote righteousness and peace, as Paul writes to Timothy:

1 Timothy 1: 19 ... **having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,**
20 **of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.**
2: 1 **Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,**
2 **for kings and all who are in authority (or eminence), that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.**
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.**

In the text of the book of Timothy exposed above, we can see that the will of God expressed towards all human beings is aimed at the good of all, but we can also see that

some ***“having rejected the good conscience, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck.”***

And in turn, we can see that those who suffered shipwreck concerning faith were taking a position of blaspheming against God, which, in itself, does not affect God or makes the Lord stop being who He is. However, because the personal attitude of the blasphemers could have very adverse effects on other people, the Lord intervened severely against them even though they had previously believed in Christ Jesus.

Why, then, were Hymenaeus and Alexander delivered to Satan? Because they blasphemed Christ's righteousness that produces faith and a good conscience. They rejected Christ as the Eternal High Priest in the purification of conscience, but they also rejected Christ as the King of Righteousness who gives all instructions according to a good conscience in line with God's righteousness.

Those who rejected a conscience and righteousness according to the Lord Jesus Christ suffered shipwreck concerning faith, even going so far as to blaspheme against the King of Righteousness.

Thus, **despite His immeasurable mercy and compassion for the sinner, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the King of Righteousness, also acts to deal with the root of unrighteousness and strife, and not only to appease external or superficial manifestations as was done under the Order of Aaron.**

The Lord Jesus Christ will never give up His commitment to the truth and righteousness on which His throne is grounded. The Lord Jesus, though immeasurably merciful and patient with all sinners, has a non-negotiable commitment to remain in the heavenly righteousness and will not be removed from it even if it means that a person who has rejected Him places oneself on the condition of perishing.

In this way, **when a person chooses Christ as Savior, one is also called to know and recognize that this same Christ is the King of Righteousness who will never depart from the righteousness that is an integral part of the heavenly kingdom.**

Psalms 98: 2 ***The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.***

Malachi 4: 2(a) ***But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings.***

Romans 10: 10 ***For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.***

As we have already commented, the reign of God's grace is sustained by the righteousness of God, and it will never depart from the righteousness of the Lord.

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 5: 18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

Romans 5: 20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Galatians 2: 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.

Christ has the superabundant provision of grace for the salvation of everyone who believes in Him.

Christ also has the superabundant provision of grace so that a saved person can come to experience, while still living on Earth, the newness of life according to this grace even though one is surrounded by injustices in the world.

Nevertheless, Christ's grace never manifests itself apart from the condition of Christ being the King of Righteousness, just as there can never be grace and peace dissociated from this position of Christ's kingship over everything and everyone to always reign according to the righteousness of the Heavenly Father.

2 Peter 1: 1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:
2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord

Whether in the smallest detail of each person's life or in the events related to large crowds and the universe, Christ will never reign contrary to His status as King of Righteousness and King of Peace according to the Order of Melchizedek and for which the Heavenly Father has established Him forever.

Proverbs 16: 12 It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, For a throne is established by righteousness.

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

*Jeremiah 23: 5 **"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth."***

*Psalms 99: 1 **The LORD reigns; Let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; Let the earth be moved!***
*2 **The LORD is great in Zion, And He is high above all the peoples.***
*3 **Let them praise Your great and awesome name, He is holy.***
*4 **The King's strength also loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.***
*5 **Exalt the LORD our God, And worship at His footstool, He is holy.***

C. The King Who Serves According to God's Will and Not According to the Creature's Will

Seeing the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ from the perspective of Him being our King of Righteousness and King of Peace is not only exciting, but also vital for us to see the glory of the heavenly righteousness and peace as inseparable from any action of the Lord.

Nevertheless, the understanding that Christ has the status of King of Righteousness and King of Peace in His glory can also be highly significant for the adjustment of another perception of how our Lord Jesus Christ is in His relationship with us, namely: The condition that Christ is also the King who serves.

Much literature has been produced in the world on the humble condition of Christ as a servant. However, it often seems that there is more literature on the state of Christ being a servant than the condition of Christ being the King over everything and everyone. And yet, it seems that many of the literary materials about Christ as a servant simply do not even address the matter of Christ being the King of Righteousness and Peace, the King elevated by the Heavenly Father above all creation.

As a servant, Christ never ceased to be under the full direction of the Heavenly Father through the Holy Spirit, and He never stopped to be in a position of rulership over the facts that were around Him while serving others.

Therefore, just as the position of King according to the Order of Melchizedek cannot be defined from the understanding that the creation has about what comes to be heavenly kingship, so also the understanding of what comes to be a servant or of Christ as a servant cannot be defined based on the concepts of servants and slavery that the world adopts.

When the Scriptures call us to seek things that are above, and not the earthly ones, and when they instruct us to be transformed by the renewal of our understanding, they include all matters of life, but also those that are pertinent to the Giver and King over all life.

And because of that, **the Lord Jesus Christ was not revealed as King above all things to fulfill the desire of all people, but to carry out, above all, the will of the Heavenly Father who established Him in the role of Eternal King or Lord over all.**

The Lord Jesus Christ does good to people because the Heavenly Father loves them, and the Lord Jesus Christ is, ultimately, accountable only to the Heavenly Father. The Lord Jesus Christ, ultimately, serves the Heavenly Father and only serves people if the Eternal Father wants Him to serve people.

*John 8: 28 **Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.***

If, on one side, in the Eternal Priesthood of Christ, we have someone who sympathizes with us, helps us in our weaknesses, purifies us, gives us garments of the new creature in God, on the other side, in Christ as King, we have someone who knows

very well what needs to be done throughout the world and who has a very specific agenda with the Heavenly Father to fulfill.

The Lord Jesus Christ is not the servant who became king. The Lord Jesus is the Eternal King who serves or assumes the position of a servant, but without ever departing from His call to be King and Sovereign over everything and everyone.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was in the flesh on Earth, He gave Himself for people until death, but not any death. Christ gave His life for all people through the death that He needed to die. The death about which had been prophesied for centuries and about which the Heavenly Father had specifically instructed Him.

*John 10: 17 **Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.***

*18 **No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.***

*Luke 22: 42 ... **saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."***

*John 18: 11 **So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"***

Similarly, in the episode in which the Lord Jesus washed His disciples' feet to teach them about serving one another, Christ, at no time, gave control of the meeting to His disciples.

Even though serving His disciples and teaching them to serve one another, the Lord Jesus knew what He was doing and where He was heading to, for He never stopped being King despite serving.

As we saw in the previous chapter, let us remember that Christ as a newborn was already born King.

Let us note, then, a few more verses that show the humility of the Lord Jesus and, at the same time, His humbleness in His greatness.

*John 13: 3 **Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,***

*4 **rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.***

*5 **After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.***

*6 **Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"***

*7 **Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."***

- 8 *Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."*
- 9 *Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"*
- 10 *Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."*
- 11 *For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."*
- 12 *So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"*
- 13 *You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.*
- 14 *If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.*
- 15 *For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*
- 16 *Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.*
- 17 *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*
-

In the world, many people think that the Christian life is a life of surrender and helping others until the strength of Christians is exhausted, regardless of whether what people ask of them is according to God's will or not. And they think that "this is the love that every believer should have."

Even because of the desire to follow Christ's example, several Christians may inappropriately come to think that serving is doing the whims of others. This way of thinking, however, is nonsense or absurd!

If someone looks at the narrative above presented by John, one may realize that the Lord Jesus never lost control of any situation when serving people.

So, when Peter said that he would not let the Lord wash his feet, the Lord did not give him any space because Peter was trying to take control of the actions of the meeting and, consequently, of the steps that he thought Christ should take.

Even though Christ came into the world to serve people, He would never give others the direction of what He had to lead.

Christ presented Himself as a servant, but, at the same time, He made it explicitly clear that He was the Lord and the Master greater than any of His followers and disciples.

The greatness of Christ washing the disciples' feet, as an example of serving, was not in the fact that a slave of the disciples did it, but in the fact that the "King of the Universe" and the "Lord of their lives" did what He did.

The Lord's steadfast and unshakable position in His humility is something that confuses many people. And Christ's humility and service should never lead a person to deduce or think that Christ can be subject to him or her, for as Abraham already discovered when he met Melchizedek, the lesser is blessed by the higher or more excellent.

*Hebrews 7: 7 **Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.***

The fact that Christ was serving His disciples was not made in disagreement with the principle of the better blessing the lesser. However, even though serving and coming in the flesh into the world to serve, Christ made it noticeably clear that the order of His position and that of His disciples could never be reversed.

*John 13: 16 **Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.***

*Revelation 19: 16 **And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.***

People dissociated from a good conscience concerning the glory of Christ as the King of Righteousness and King of Peace are often also those who try to confuse others to lead them to believe that they can have God for their servant and have Christ as the One who fulfills the most diverse statements they make in their arrogant behaviors and positions.

When Peter replied to Christ's invitation when the Lord Jesus said that He would wash his feet, Christ did not obligate Peter to let his feet be washed. The Lord did not say to Peter: "sit there because I am in charge, and I will wash your feet."

Nevertheless, Christ also did not allow Peter to take over the events during the supper He was going to have with His disciples. And He firmly gave Peter an alternative so that he could choose what he wanted to do, saying to him: ***If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me!***

Peter could have chosen to leave, but the Lord did not give up the service He was going to do and the way He was going to do it towards Peter, for Christ did not come to Earth to do what "Peters" wanted to be done, but He came to do the Heavenly Father's will and say what the Heavenly Father wanted Him to say. And it is also because of this that the Heavenly Father entrusted the authority over everything exclusively to Christ.

Then again, why did the Lord take that attitude towards Peter?

Through the example of Peter, among other aspects, the Lord Jesus taught us that He only serves us for what is good for us. And it would never be good for Peter and us if the Lord would let the creature take dominion over our Creator.

In that episode, Christ made it clear that it was He who was indeed the Lord and the Master, and that He would serve His disciples in that situation, but as long as they respected Him as the Lord and Teacher who serves. And Christ served His disciples even though He knew that a few hours after that meeting, He would be nailed to a cross in a place called Calvary.

The Savior Jesus, the Lamb of God, the Eternal High Priest who sympathizes with us, is the Christ, the King over everything and everyone, but always subordinate and faithful to the Heavenly Father and the will of

God Most High, a condition that He will not give up for any person and desire of the creation.

If at a particular moment in history Christ allowed darkness to triumph over Him, it was also because in this concession of the triumph of darkness was the demonstration of the victory of God through Christ over the darkness itself, as well as there was the condemnation of darkness in what they thought could be their biggest triumph.

1 Corinthians 1: 25 ***Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.***

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."***

Revelation 17: 14 ***These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.***

If, on the one hand, Christ has all the time it takes to serve us, on the other, He is subject to a command line before the Heavenly Father in which He is called to act in everything with righteousness and as the Father instructs Him to do.

Because of the general condition of Christ as the King of Righteousness and King of Peace, as well as subject to carry out all the will of God, no one should despise the day of grace and the day of salvation in any area of life, for, in the global aspect, Christ is also the Lord who will give the due sequence of what the Heavenly Father instructs Him to do.

2 Corinthians 6: 1 ***We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.***

2 ***For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.***

Thus, when we come to our perfect and eternal High Priest and let Him lead us to the Heavenly Father, the Eternal Father, in turn, exalts the Lord Jesus before our eyes and makes us see Him also as His Eternal Son, the Christ, the King over all Kings, and Lord of all Lords to whom, in everything, we are called to listen and obey. And no person will ever be able to reverse any plan that the Heavenly Father has for the Son

and King Jesus Christ or any commitment that Christ has towards the Eternal Father, for it was the Father who exalted Him to these positions.

Matthew 17: 1 **Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;**
2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.
3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.
4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"
6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.
7 But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid."

Hebrews 4: 6 **Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,**
7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

Despite being Sovereign and Eternal King, Christ is always ready to serve everyone. However, if a person does not want the Lord Jesus to serve him or her according to God's will, Christ allows a person to neglect His assistance to him or her, but He will never accept being dominated by whoever the person is or by any position that person has in the world and before other human beings.

As we saw in Peter's case, the Lord serves for the good of people, but if an individual does not want the way the Lord offers to assist him or her, the Lord clearly says: **You have no part with Me.**

The Lord Jesus is never deceived by proposals of pretended humility as was Peter's suggestion that he would wash the feet of the Lord Jesus, but who, in reality, was questioning what the Lord had said He would do as if Peter knew better than Christ what was most appropriate to accomplish at that time.

From the Lord comes every good gift and every good counsel. For this reason, Christ does not need to take advice from pretended humility of people.

Proverbs 8: 14 **Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength.**

Isaiah 40: 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.

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.

When the Lord Jesus proposed to wash His disciples' feet, He was not taken by surprise by Peter's reaction because He knew him very well. Nor did He do this to expose Peter to shame in front of others, but so that Peter could face his very desire to do things always in his own way. Peter needed to understand many things there. Peter needed to see the distorted desire that he had to control the situations in his life, as well as of others and even of Christ.

Several times, Peter showed himself as the sheep that wanted to lead the Shepherd, instead of having "the Lord" as the "Shepherd of the Sheep."

Several times in his life, Peter showed himself impetuous to try to lead even the Lord Jesus in his ways, and for this reason, he was also humiliated several times despite wanting to follow the Lord.

Therefore, **the revelation that in Christ there is a King-Servant and not a servant-king is something that every Christian should be aware of, for lack of understanding of the greatness of Christ's glory as King of Righteousness and Peace may serve to corrupt the conscience of Christians, leading them to think that they may rule over Him who can never be governed by any creature, for no creature can ever be placed in the same position of God.**

Isaiah 45: 22 Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

When people want to establish Christ as their servant and when they want to establish human beings themselves as those who determine the destinies of nations, the Earth trembles and cannot stand it, for which human being could even come close to what Christ is in His Eternal glory as King of Righteousness and King of Peace?

When the Lord Jesus walked on the Earth, He was the King-Servant coming from God and following the Heavenly Father's guidance in everything to serve only those He was appointed to serve and how from above He was assigned to serve them. As a Son of

Man, Christ learned to believe that both what should be done and the time and the way something should be done should always be according to the Heavenly Father's will because His will is good, perfect, and pleasant in all its aspects. And this example of Christ is also what we are called to follow.

Christ had to go through death and death on the cross to reveal the provision of our salvation. He could even talk to the Father in distress about this, He could ask the Father to deliver Him from death on the cross, but He did so only on the condition that it did not alter the Father's will. Christ believed in the fact that the Eternal Father knew what was just or right. He had the Heavenly Father as the firm foundation of His faith, and he had the Father's promises as the basis of all His hope.

And because Christ surrendered Himself entirely to the Heavenly Father, the Eternal Father made Him the Author of Salvation and also as the Son of Man established Him over all creation to be obeyed according to the obedience that comes by faith and only through which Christ is willing to serve us eternally as the Eternal High Priest and as the Almighty King.

Hebrews 5: 7 (Jesus), who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,

8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

10 called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek."

Romans 16: 25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith,

27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

There is salvation, love, peace, and true righteousness only in the will of God. And it is because of this that Christ serves us in superabundant ways only according to this sovereign and heavenly will, and in which He Himself always walked in the world without ever deviating a single step from it.

D. The King Who Reigns with Concessions of Choices

When we begin to see the matter of Christ being also the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace, we can see that certainly one of the points that let many people intrigued is related to the aspect of the human being having the option to make some fundamental choices in one's life, even when these may not be favorable to him or her and even if they are options for paths of unrighteousness.

Returning to the example of Peter addressed in the previous topic of this chapter, we may see that Christ granted Peter the choice of letting the Lord wash his feet or not, but, on the other hand, the Lord did not do this without alerting Peter of the consequence that he would incur for the option he would make.

As the Eternal King, Christ, for example, does not oblige anyone to accept His Gospel, His righteousness, peace, light, salvation, grace, His priesthood, His reign, and so on, but, as a result, people are also subject to reap from their rejection of these offers of the Lord.

As we mentioned in the first subject of this series, the Gospel of God has in its essence the characteristic of being an offer. And so, if it were imposed on people's hearts, it would no longer be truly an offer. On the other hand, the rejection of Christ's gracious offer does not mean that the Lord, as King, can let the contempt towards the good not reflect consequences for a person's life, because in the latter case, the Lord also cannot act on behalf of this person as He would be allowed to do if one accepted what has been offered from heaven.

On one side, the choice of the human being is really extensive, for one can decide to follow God's instruction or not choose in favor of the guidance that God offers him or her. On the other side, the scope of one's choice is not as comprehensive as some claim to be, because if a person rejects the light of the Gospel of God, who is Christ Himself, one also chooses, for instance, to be restricted as to know closer the glory of God and Christ that is revealed in this Gospel.

In another example mentioned earlier, we also saw that if a person chooses to submit to the covenant according to Moses, one chooses for the alternative where a veil is placed on him or her and which prevents an individual even from seeing that only in Christ can the veil be removed.

Although the human being has great power of choice, the choices for paths contrary to God strongly limit the freedom that a person has to decide for the right options.

Although some people proclaim a full "free will" of the human being, we may observe in the Scriptures that this applies effectively in some decision points, but it does not apply to all decisions that a person adopts or intends to adopt.

If people would always be able to choose whatever they wanted, there would be no need for a King of Righteousness and King of Peace, for if people had no restrictions and limitations concerning their choices, this King of Righteousness and Peace would also have no authority and power to intervene and restrict the consequences of people's decisions.

At this point, once again, it is worth highlighting the relevance of God revealing to us His glory and the glory of Christ, for only through the glory of the Lord can we know that everything in Christ's reign is done according to God's eternal righteousness.

Only through the revelation of the glory that Christ is the Eternal, Righteous, Holy, and Almighty King can we understand and believe that Christ, as the Eternal High Priest, is also available to serve all who seek God to be reconciled to the Lord, this being impossible to be understood according to the conditions of the human being's capacity.

Only through the revelation of the glory that Christ is the Eternal King can we understand that Christ reigns justly and simultaneously over everyone individually and collectively.

If, however, the points mentioned in the last two paragraphs are already elevated above any similarity that may exist in the creation, the position of Christ is shown to be even much higher when we also see that it still is increased by the possibility of free choices to be made by people, but which, at the same time, are also surrounded by restrictions and limitations so that throughout Christ's reign there will never be actions that compromise the heavenly righteousness.

For there to be a reign in righteousness regarding all circumstances, a mixed decision system is necessary for the human being who lives in the world, where, in some respects, people have full personal decision-making power, but where, in other aspects, they are faced with restrictions, limitations, and boundaries established by the King of Righteousness and King of Peace or even by other human beings and inclusive by agents of the kingdom of darkness.

The so-called “system of full independence of choices” that many like to trumpet that the human being has does not match the Scriptures. And we well know that it also does not match the very civil and social life in which human beings find themselves.

Starting with the basics of the basics, a person, in reality, only has the option of making free choices indeed for the good or the evil if Christ grants him or her situations where one can do it soberly and if Christ grants him or her circumstances where a person may repent of the paths contrary to God that one chose to follow.

If Christ does not grant a person access to the goodness of God, one can never find the place of the true option for righteousness and the good that comes from the Lord.

*Romans 2: 4 **Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?***

The fact that people are not entirely consumed or destroyed in their bad options depends, first of all, on the choice of the King of Righteousness showing mercy towards them, as it is exposed in many texts of the Scriptures and exemplified by some more below:

*Psalms 25: 6 **Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they are from of old.***

*Psalms 40: 11 **Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.***

*Psalms 69: 16 **Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.***

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

*Lamentations 3: 22 **Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not.**
23 **They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.***

Why, then, is the Lord Jesus Christ the King perfect in righteousness?

Christ is the King full of righteousness also because in what a person needs to have all the autonomy of decision, the Lord does not interfere in one's choice, but in what the Lord is the general ruler of righteousness, He establishes limits and actions so that the foundation of the righteousness of the throne of God will never be shaken, among which is also the offering of mercy that allows people to repent of their evil ways and return to fellowship with the Eternal Creator.

Even though no one is worthy of them and despite not all welcoming them, Christ offers God's mercies to all, and regarding this, no one can stand against the will of the King of Righteousness.

There is no lack of mercy in God to save everyone, but there are people who decide to reject God's mercy and, consequently, also reject the salvation that the Lord offers them in Christ Jesus.

No one is condemned by God for having been part of injustices, but those who are subject to eternal condemnation, are so because of their rejection of God's provision for not needing to remain condemned. And in this aspect, a person has the autonomy to choose how one wants to position oneself, even if one's choice is contrary to the Lord's will and detrimental to one's own life.

*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.***

*17 **For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.***

*18 **He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.***

Christ is the King of perfect heavenly righteousness because in Him is perfect salvation. And if a person incurs condemnation before God concerning eternal life, it is because one has chosen to reject the provision that would free him or her from all eternal condemnation of sin and the law of priesthoods that can never perfect those who submit to them.

Recalling here the Gospel of the Righteousness of God, we understand that repeatedly it is worth remembering that God's righteousness towards human beings is not expressed essentially as condemnation, but it is offered to all people as God's provision for the eternal salvation of everyone who receives it through the grace of God and by faith in the Lord.

Nevertheless, **the rejection of the righteousness of the Lord is a path of condemnation. It is condemnation because of the refusal of forgiveness and reconciliation that God offers to all through heavenly righteousness.**

Thus, **a crucial decision to be made by each person, and which is directly associated with freedom for other choices in life, is to voluntarily receive Christ as the King of Righteousness because *Christ is the end of the "law of condemnation" for the righteousness of everyone who believes in Him* and so that, based on this justification, this person becomes free from the yoke of unrighteousness that works to stand in the path for people not knowing the truth and inclining the heart towards the Lord and His ways.**

If a person, however, rejects the essence of all righteousness or rejects the King of Righteousness who can lead him or her through grace according to God's will, how might one make the other choices of one's life in line with eternal righteousness?

How can a person lacking the righteousness of God, because one rejects it, be able to choose with sobriety the ways of this righteousness, even if one tries to manifest a degree of zeal for God in other aspects?

- 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.***

The Spirit of the Lord is continually at work in the world so that people are warned not to incur more and more sin and go deeper and deeper into submission to it. However, to live a life in true sobriety to discern both good and evil is something that cannot be achieved in a way dissociated from the heavenly righteousness that is in Christ Jesus.

- 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.***

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."**

When people think that they are free to choose the good for their lives and reject the evil without, however, discerning the essence of heavenly righteousness and walking according to this righteousness, they still do not really realize that true freedom cannot be known and experienced if they remain dissociated from the only path on which the Lord's goodness or newness of life is found.

Proverbs 12: 28 **In the way of righteousness is life, And in its pathway there is no death.**

John 8: 31 **Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.
32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."**

Christ is the means for a person to walk in straight paths. Christ is the King who, according to heavenly righteousness, makes straight the ways of those who believe in Him. And it is only through faith in Christ that one receives the gift of righteousness to be guided in true righteousness.

Isaiah 26: 7 **The way of the just is uprightness; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just.
8 Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O LORD, we have waited for You; The desire of our soul is for Your name And for the remembrance of You.**

Psalms 5: 8 **Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face.**

Psalms 86: 11 **Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.**

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.**

If a person thinks one is free because one can do some works that seem good in one's eyes, but one is not free to change from the paths of unrighteousness to the way of righteousness, his or her apparent freedom of choice does not refer to the true freedom that Christ wants to provide to him or her and one even is not discerning indeed both good and evil concerning the most relevant matters of life and, above all, for eternal life.

Isaiah 59: 8 The way of peace they have not known, And there is no justice in their ways; They have made themselves crooked paths; Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.

Romans 3: 9 ... For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

***...
23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.***

Galatians 2: 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

If it were not for God Himself to give a person a choice between the way of righteousness and the path of unrighteousness, a person subject to sin would never even be willing to seek God, since subject to sin, an individual also has the eyes of one's understanding or conscience concerning God obscured.

Romans 5: 12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.

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.

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.

Thus, choosing to do some works so-called “good works” does not justify a person who owes a debt of death to sin or the law according to the Order of Aaron.

The debt concerning the death sentence could only be paid through an innocent life that voluntarily gave oneself on behalf of sinners. And this, no human being with the inherited nature of Adam had or has the option or prerequisites to do so, for no one was and no one is indeed free, per se, to choose for the eternal good after the human being has subjected oneself to the dominion of sin and after sin has entered the world.

True freedom of choice only is achieved when God grants it to an individual, and which is given, above all, so that a person may choose freely for Christ and, in turn, being in Christ, continue to choose to live and walk in Him.

The righteousness of God, and consequently the freedom to discern both good and evil and to choose the good primarily also from an eternal perspective, cannot be found under any government other than the government of the Eternal King of Righteousness and Peace.

John 8: 36 **Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**

If a person could choose to practice the good or to do what is right exclusively based on one's own decision, no one would need Christ, no one would need a Sovereign King of Righteousness, for walking or not walking in righteousness would depend on each human being, who even would be able to do it without God if one only had information about what would be fair and what would not be appropriate. And was not this precisely the purpose of the reign under the Order of Aaron, under the rule of the law that lasted from Moses until the coming of Christ's revelation to the world?

Galatians 2: 21 **I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.**

After a person chooses not to follow Christ, however much one thinks he or she is free to choose the good at any time one wants, he or she is a person called by Paul as a “wretched man” and, in another text, as a son of disobedience subject to the course of the world and the prince of darkness, and not according to God's instruction.

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.**

19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

...
23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

*Ephesians 2: 1(b) **And you ... 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.*

*Ephesians 5: 8 **For you were once darkness, ...***

Many people have rejected the guidance of the King of Righteousness, the King Jesus Christ, because they have been placed under a torpor of deceit under the thought that because they can choose not to seek the righteousness that is in Christ, they would be in a position of free choice or in the condition of exercising a “full free will,” not realizing that dissociated from Christ, the works of the flesh and the higher forces of evil have significant power of influence in their decisions.

Dissociated from Christ, the claim that a person has “full free will” is a disguised or dissimulated way of hiding the fact that the person is in a torpor of deception by rejecting “the freedom of choice in favor of the love of the truth of God.”

*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.
11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they
should believe the lie,
12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but
had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

When a person thinks that one is indeed free to decide, at any time one wants, between doing good and evil, and according to one's own disposition, one actually has not yet understood how vital the position and work of Christ is as the King of Righteousness.

Nevertheless, when we see the way in which the Lord acts towards those who reject the love of the truth, we see that even when people choose to refuse the righteousness that He offers them, the Lord reigns over them inclusive regarding the aspect that they become subject to run into the errors arising from the choice of rejecting the love of the truth.

Even in the face of people's choices for the ways of unrighteousness or rejection of the love of the truth, the King of Righteousness is fair to people when He allows them to reap the results of their bad choices.

If a person chose unrighteousness and was not liable to reap results from that choice, how could he or she and how could other people come to realize how destructive and perverse are the choices related to the rejection of the love of the truth?

*Galatians 6: 7 **Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.***

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.

First, the King of Righteousness acts by offering mercy, the truth, and the love of the truth. Then He still works by offering restrictions and limitations to the practice of evil through rulers on Earth, such as parents, school conductors, and other regents of a city or nation. However, if a person continues to choose to reject the alternatives that are offered for one's protection, the Lord also allows people to reap from the unrighteousness they adopt so that they come to know the "truth" about the harsh consequences that the choice for injustice may bring on the life of the person who becomes subject to it.

The King of Righteousness does not let the proud or the arrogant entirely free in one's ways, but rather resists him or her in many ways, in addition to the fact that a person dissociated from the grace and truth of God is still subject to also being deceived by the fact that one is dissociated from the light that could truly illuminate one's heart and the way of the newness of life in the Lord.

Repeatedly and in various ways, the Lord warns people of the bad decisions towards which they incline their hearts and warns them to repent. If, however, they insist on persevering in evil, the Lord also allows them to reap from the deceptions to which they render themselves and may even accentuate their subjection to their mistakes so that they and the world may see how evil the option for deceit is to the detriment of the choice of the way of truth.

*2 Timothy 3: 13 **But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.***

*Proverbs 22: 5 **Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards his soul will be far from them.***

And considering that the fascination of riches is compared in the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ with thorns, and yet, that the love of money is a root of all evils, a person who gets rich without one's wealth having come with the Lord's approval, is a person who may be increasingly surrounded by thorns as one gets richer. Several human prosperities regarded as noble among them are often, in reality, the prosperity of thorns and snares. (A point addressed more widely in the subject on The Christian and Wealth or The Christian and the Riches in the series The Life of the Christian in the World.)

*John 3: 27 **John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven."***

Why, then, does the King of Righteousness allow thorns and snares to multiply in the path of the wicked?

Among other aspects, so that both the wicked and those around them may witness how harmful it is to incline the heart to the ways of unrighteousness, iniquity, wickedness, and deceit.

God never omitted Himself to allow people to come to know about the existence of evil and how harmful it is to choose to live and walk in the ways of wickedness, which is also part of the revelation of God's righteousness and the unrighteousness that opposes the Lord.

If the subject of righteousness and unrighteousness were seen only from the perspective of justice on Earth and did not encompass the eternal and heavenly righteousness, the righteousness of the King of Righteousness could never be understood and believed through faith in the Lord, since many effects of the righteousness of the Lord will only have full fulfillment in a person's life after one's time on Earth.

For the natural human mind, or the mind dissociated from faith in the Lord and the instruction of Christ, understanding righteousness where children die, or where children are even killed, goes beyond the human capacity of understanding. However, knowing that the kingdom of heaven belongs to children is an instruction that allows us to raise our eyes to the perception that in the eternal righteousness, this type of injustice does not prevail forever and that in due time everything will be properly clarified to those who trust in the righteousness of the Eternal King.

On the other hand, **the King of Righteousness also does not allow people to commit sins and crimes indefinitely, entirely without limits, and without being severely punished, showing us that the Lord, in His eternal wisdom and the full knowledge of everything and everyone, also sets time limits for the actions of evil by providing strong interventions against evil.**

2 Peter 2: 1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

In the present and the previous subjects, on several occasions, we have already seen that the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world took place in the fullness of time, in the perfect time so that both good and evil, or the essence of righteousness and unrighteousness, would become fully exposed before Christ and before the cross of Calvary, showing us the absolute dominion that God has over all things and the time of each one of them to be exposed to the light also to be judged before this light.

1 Corinthians 4: 5 **Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.**

We have also shown several times that God's will is for everyone to come to know the truth, the truth that Christ is the Only Mediator between God and people in the world, and for this reason, God has been long-suffering in retaining the complete ending of the world in the conception that we know it today.

Therefore, with a natural mind or restricted to things under the sun, it is difficult to understand the attitude of the King of Righteousness of being generous, kind, merciful to all even though they are vile sinners. But if that were not the case, who of those who have already received the Lord's salvation could have been saved, since all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God?

Seeing the repeated emphasis that God places on His mercy through the Scriptures, it seems appropriate to us to extract from them the thought that the Lord does not give up on a person until the person has firmly settled in one's heart to reject God's goodness and mercy towards him or her.

In the eternal sense of life, the fact that the evildoer on the cross was beside Christ at the time of the crucifixion was crucial for him, for he was able to face the possibility of the love of the Lord Jesus right in the face of his own imminent condemnation not only in the natural level but also eternal. Had this thief been out on the streets, would he have paid attention to Christ, would he have opened his heart to the salvation that God offers us in the Lord Jesus?

In no way we are defending here the death penalty or this type of practice, but saying that the Lord, in forgiving that criminal on the verge of his death, exemplified once again that salvation is not by works, but by the mercy and grace of God. And even though, according to the judicial system of his time, that criminal was considered as worthy of the penalty imposed on him by human rulers, as he himself confessed, Christ forgave him because he took the opportunity to come face to face with the salvation that God was revealing and offering to everyone in the world.

On the other hand, God also showed us that even in a position of imminent death, others might resist until the end in the face of the opportunity and the grace that is offered to them and not receiving it in their hearts. The second criminal crucified next to Christ, as well as a large part of the crowd that watched the crucifixion, continued to blaspheme Christ until the end, even "demanding" Christ to get off the cross and also deliver him, the evildoer, from his cross.

Luke 23: 39 **Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."**

Although the narrative of the context of the crucifixion of Christ is summarized or short, we can see through it how immeasurably challenging it is to exercise with righteousness the regency of all aspects involved there, where were placed side by side (1) the condemnation of the Son of Man entirely innocent and who chose to allow

people to place Him there to provide salvation for sinners, (2) the conviction through human rulers and permitted by God of a malefactor who, although condemned before men, chose to repent before the Lord, and (3) the condemnation of a criminal who chose not to repent before God's saving provision that was right before his eyes.

*Luke 23: 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?
41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."
42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."
43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."
44 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.
45 Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two.
46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.*

Even in the hour of His most intense pain, suffering, and confronted intensely by unrighteousness, the Lord Jesus continued to reign through righteousness and the offer of reconciliation and peace, not freeing, in the natural level, one of the criminals as one demanded of Him, but freeing the other eternally, although He also allowed him to die there on the cross according to the judgment of men.

And if on the cross of Calvary, the moment of the worst anguish of the Lord Jesus, He remained faithful to the reign of righteousness and peace because He longed for the eternal life of sinners more than just offering them a natural deliverance, He will also be forever faithful, just, and upright in His actions towards all now that He is with the Heavenly Father in the highest place and above all thrones.

Nevertheless, if a person continues to reject the righteousness of God that the Lord offers him or her, despite all the long-suffering, mercy, and proof of the love of God that is in Christ, that same righteousness will also act in conjunction with the right judgment against the person who rejected it.

If we return to the example of the criminals crucified next to Christ, we see that Christ, in the eternal aspect, did not condemn either of the two malefactors, but it was the resistance to Christ as the provision of eternal salvation that interposed so that one of them would not hear the promise that he would be with the Lord forever.

Romans 5: 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 2: 3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?

- 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**
- 5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,**
- 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds":**
- 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;**
- 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,**
- 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek;**
- 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**
- 11 For there is no partiality with God.**

John 6: 29 **Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."**

The mission that the Heavenly Father has entrusted to the King Jesus Christ is not, first, to eradicate the wicked, but rather to offer them abundantly the path of redemption so that they may reach sobriety to choose, by faith, the eternal good, the eternal salvation, even if the Lord not always frees them from human restrictions or condemnations.

1 Peter 4: 6 **For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**

As King of Righteousness, Christ knows the "evil, the tricks, and the strategies" of the human heart and needs to know how to act in such a way that He does not reprimand them to the point of destroying them. On the other hand, He also cannot let them live in sin without firmly warning them not to incur worse evils, nor can He withhold the judgment of evildoers indefinitely.

Therefore, **administering righteousness in the face of the choices made by each person and given the collective reality in which they are inserted in both the temporal and the eternal aspect is something that only the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace, above all in Heaven and on Earth, can do.**

Christ descended before the vilest evil produced to manifest God's sovereign righteousness over everything and everyone. And also for this reason, the Heavenly Father placed Him in the most exalted place, namely: At His right hand.

Ephesians 4: 7 **But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.**

- 8 **Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."**
 9 **(Now this, "He ascended," what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?**
 10 **He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)**

God's salvation takes place in a person's heart when one receives Christ and through which eternal life is already in him or her, for everyone who has the Son of God has life. However, some parts of God's action in the world will be revealed only at the end of the so-called present age. And until this final time of the current world, although everything is always under the government of the One who is fully powerful to keep us to the end through faith in God, the people who live in it remain in an environment where God's righteousness is present simultaneously with unrighteousness.

- 1 Timothy 5: 24 **Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.**
 25 **Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.**

Thus, God's condition of long-suffering may imply some injustices on the part of the world also towards the very children of God, because, for the Lord, it is more important that some of His children, firm in the faith, suffer some unrighteousness that does not compromise their eternal life than to protect His children from all evils and thus not be given an opportunity for sinners to know the truth and have the chance to repent.

- 1 Peter 1: 3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**
 4 **to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**
 5 **who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**
 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.**

There are afflictions in the world that also come to Christians so that people may come to know the glory of Christ's presence in the hearts of Christians and the victory that the Lord grants to the children of God even in the face of unrighteousness.

- 1 Peter 3: 14 **But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."**

- 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;**
16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.
17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

- 1 Peter 4: 12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;**
13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.
14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.
15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

In His reign of righteousness and peace, Christ even allows those who serve Him and who have already known Him as the King of Righteousness to go through tribulations that cooperate with the very spreading of the glory of the Lord as King of Righteousness and Peace, which Paul even regarded as a privilege if it happens.

- Philippians 1: 29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,**
30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

- 2 Timothy 3: 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**
13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Here, however, we would also like to emphasize, in a marked way, that not all suffering that comes to a Christian contributes to the glory of God. Not every suffering of a Christian cooperates to the glory of Christ and not every extension of suffering in the life of a Christian should be extended beyond what contributes for the Lord's testimony or edification.

And as for the sufferings that do not cooperate so that the glory of Christ is known in the life of a Christian or announced to the world that resists God, the Lord allows us to turn to His throne of righteousness where there is a set of actions that Christ takes according to the attitudes, prayers, or supplications of Christians for the manifestation of righteousness and the Lord's intervention in their lives and the world in general.

Although not all suffering can be avoided in the life of a Christian, the Lord repeatedly teaches us not to be complacent about the sufferings and injustices that exist in the world, showing us that our cooperation can have significant participation concerning the intensity or the number of injustices that occur in the world.

1 Peter 4: 15 **But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.**

16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

Romans 6: 12 **Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.**

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

Paul prayed and asked for prayers from his fellow believers in Christ so that he could be kept from evil and wicked men, just as he asked them to pray for the word of God to be spread intensely in the world. And if he prayed and asked for prayer from other Christians, it is because their prayers have participation in the reign of the King of Righteousness and Peace.

2 Thessalonians 3: 1 **Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,**

2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

Philippians 4: 6 **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;**

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

When a Christian prays to the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace for the Lord to grant more of His righteousness and peace on Earth, the Lord also intensifies the manifestation of His mercy, righteousness, and peace to those who pray, as well as to those for whom a Christian prays.

The work of evil finds limits before Christ, but, on the other hand, there are personal decisions of an individual that Christ will never violate. And also because of this reason, part of God's intervention in favor of people depends on the exposure of their matters before the Lord and on being accompanied by requests for Christ's intervention on their behalf.

God sent His Son into the world to die for everyone to free them from the yoke of sin and the eternal condemnation that comes from it. However, if someone wants to be bonded to the yoke of sin and the condemnation that comes from it and does not seek the Lord in prayer, even though one knows that one does not need to do it or that Christ has already made the provision of redemption and forgiveness, God allows people to make this choice.

Although Christ has the government over the establishment of the limits of the action of unrighteousness, a significant part of this establishment depends on people when they ask Christ to intervene on their behalf or when they do not ask Christ to intervene on their behalf.

Since the Lord reigns using principles that give people alternatives of choices, the Lord also grants them some permissions and a measure of time for each generation and individual to walk according to their decisions and to discover the effects that may come from them. In these periods, the results of good and evil things become more evident, also leading to times of the Lord's inevitable intervention, but which, on several occasions, might be anticipated and shortened if Christians pray to the Lord for Him to manifest His righteousness on Earth.

If present generations consulted the Scriptures more about Christ's position as the King of Righteousness and realized what the Scriptures testify about this condition of the Lord, and also prayed for the manifestation of Christ even more in righteousness on behalf of them, they would not need to experience many bad things that other generations have chosen to undergo or that they have gone through by neglecting the Lord. And with each new generation, the evidence of righteousness and unrighteousness is more notorious, which also makes the responsibility of the current generations towards righteousness more imminent, as exemplified in the texts below:

1 Corinthians 10: 11 **Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.**

Hebrews 12: 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."

2 Peter 3: 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?

For our good and the even more abundant manifestation of His righteousness, Christ longs for people to exercise their freedom of choice to ask the Lord for what is good or right, praying for all people across the Earth and also crying out to the Lord for all who are in a position of eminence so that their actions cooperate for a quiet and peaceable life with a view to godliness, reverence, and honesty.

*1 Timothy 2: 1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,
2 for kings and all who are in authority (or position of eminence), that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.
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.*

The Lord Jesus said that His followers are the salt of the Earth and the light of the world. And this begins, "first of all," with prayer before the throne of God, where the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace is seated.

Praying to the Lord for all people in the world and those in a position of eminence is a work (or ministry) that every Christian is called to do!

In the system where people have alternatives of choices in various aspects of their lives, the Lord longs for individuals who love Him and who, by free will, desire the good for the people of the world to the point of praying for them to the Lord. And in this way, the collective alternative of evil also finds resistance from people who live in the world because since Christians are praying for the righteousness of God, Christ intensifies the manifestation of His light, mercy, righteousness, grace, and peace over the most diverse areas of life on Earth in the generation of those who pray to Him.

Thus, **beginning with prayer, every Christian has a cooperative role with the Lord Jesus Christ in the multiplication of the heavenly kingdom and God's righteousness among people.**

The thought that "if I fear God, He must bless me as I want or only me" does not contribute to Christ's reign. On the contrary, it is one more way that is inclined to enter the flow of self-centered life and unrighteousness on Earth.

The Lord Jesus Christ says:

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.

Although unrighteousness cannot prevail against Christ and the Lord fully reigns over everything with righteousness, the Lord invites people to love His kingdom and His righteousness. And as they do so, they put themselves in a position to be witnesses and agents so that this righteousness becomes extended even more to be known and also offered to those around them.

If, however, a Christian does not know the fundamental aspects of the righteousness of God, as we have already seen, this Christian puts oneself in a position of being so-called “carnal” for not discerning good and evil. And so, a Christian may end up being another promoter of the works of the flesh, of unrighteousness, and strife as so many non-Christians are, and sometimes even worse than these because he or she still might try to do it using the “name of God” to want to give a basis or appearance of righteousness to one's evil lusts.

Therefore, **a significant part of the injustices on Earth occurs also because Christians do not practice the alternative given to them to seek the kingdom and the righteousness of God in the first place.**

A Christian who does not seek the righteousness of God in the first place, or sometimes does not seek it in any way, lacks the understanding that the manifestation of heavenly righteousness is also granted so that the King of Righteousness may be exalted among the nations and so that the nations benefit from knowing the salvation through this righteousness instead of only knowing unrighteousness.

When the Lord referred to the participation of Christians as co-participants in the heavenly righteousness, He referred to it twice in the list of those who are called blessed before God and did so likewise by using a parable to show how attentive is the Lord for the prayer of Christians for His intervention also in the things on the Earth, as follows respectively:

*Matthew 5: 6 **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.***

...

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*Luke 18: 1 **Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,***

2 saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.

3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'

4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man,

5 'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"

- 6 Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.
7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?
8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"**

In several parts of the Scriptures, the Lord shows us that the participation of the kingdom of heaven on Earth is, in many ways, the result of Christians' cooperation with Christ and that it is associated with the practice of faith in Christ Jesus and the Heavenly Father by those who are living on Earth.

Thus, we understand about the last text above, that the Lord Jesus clearly showed us that His work of righteousness on Earth in parts is also associated with people's responsibility to want and ask for it to God by faith.

In the parable mentioned above, Christ begins by teaching us about how persevering we should be in continually praying to God once we already have come to know that we have a Lord who is ready to answer us as far as it is possible that His intervention can be manifested in full righteousness.

Unlike the judge quoted in the parable, who was reluctant to attend to the widow's cause who troubled him, God welcomes and looks forward to His children crying out for His intervention. So, what should not be the Christians' perseverance in praying for righteousness wherever they are during their life on Earth?

The Lord's question in the text above goes back to the theme of Jesus Christ as the Author and Finisher of the faith that we saw in previous chapters, for the inquiry of the text exposed culminates in the following question: Will there be "FAITH ON EARTH" as to Christians believe that Christ already is the King of Righteousness and King of Peace and that He can intervene now in the world and not only in the distant future?

Will there be "FAITH ON EARTH" as to believe that everything Christ suggests as King of Righteousness and King of Peace is the way of righteousness and peace indeed even to life in the present world?

Will there be "FAITH ON EARTH" for Christians to let Christ be their King and let Christ guide them along the paths of His righteousness?

It is not faith in heaven to which Christ is referring, but it is faith on Earth, for, without faith, it is impossible to please God and even become a partaker of God's righteousness.

Will there be, then, Christians with faith "on Earth" who, while presenting their weaknesses to the Heavenly High Priest, also pray to Him as the King of Righteousness in heaven and who believe that He can and acts on Earth with all the effectiveness of His power?

Will Christians on Earth believe that the Lord is the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace to actually intervene in the present life to execute or manifest righteousness and peace for people in all nations and peoples?

When the Lord, with His compassionate gaze, looks at the Earth, will He find on it some who are praying with faith and compassion for one's fellow men asking the Lord to intervene for people throughout the present world?

Can a “Heavenly” King indeed have such a meaningful and practical action on “Earth” as to change the facts so that God's righteousness is known more widely among all peoples?

Was not the Gospel pre-announced to Abraham thousands of years before the broader revelation of the King of Righteousness to the world beforehand announced precisely to proclaim that the blessing in Christ would come over all peoples and all families on Earth?

Galatians 3: 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

Genesis 12: 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Will Christians of the present generation choose to give preference to prayer, or will they continue to focus their hope first on human systems that operate under many limitations and distortions of justice?

Psalms 118: 9 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in princes.

In other words, will there be Christians in the present day who will pray to the King Jesus Christ, believing that, from on high, He will be able to rule the Earth, bringing righteousness and peace of the Kingdom of God to the Earth among all those whom He loves, thus fulfilling Christians one of their primary roles as the salt of the Earth and the light of the world?

When the Scriptures widely mention the theme of God's righteousness and the theme of the Order of Melchizedek, they do not do so as a mere commentary, but they do so by referring to these themes as solid food and that truly strengthens Christians to realize who is the King of Righteousness and King of Peace to whom they are called to listen, follow, and serve.

What is the limit point at which there is a broad manifestation of unrighteousness before Christ intervenes, and what is the exact point at which Christ intervenes when a Christian prays for righteousness perhaps are aspects that no Christian can accurately discern, for there are aspects of the kingdom of Christ which belong to Him alone. However, faith in Christ as the King according to the Order of Melchizedek and praying to Him to soon manifest Himself on Earth have the Lord's promise that they are not aspects that work in vain.

Considering that Christ instructed us to seek God's righteousness first and instructed us to pray always that the goodness of God will be manifested on Earth and over all human beings under all kingdoms, this is undoubtedly just to be practiced, for in whatever He directs us to do, righteousness is always supporting His throne and His reign.

Only God knows the extremes and limits of many facts in life, but by trusting the Lord, we can in faith come to practice what He asks us to do, and, undoubtedly, when we follow His instructions, benefits will come from them more widely than we can even ask or think.

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, ...**

It is not always easy for a God-fearing person to understand what the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace is allowing in His sovereign wisdom, but if one is “in Christ,” one can know that the Lord is faithful and mighty to guard him or her until the last time when His righteousness will be manifested like “the shining of the sun at noon.”

Young Daniel, who later also became the Lord's prophet, was taken captive to Babylon because of the sins of his people and not because of his own sins. However, because of his personal fidelity to God, Daniel became an instrument of blessing for many peoples, and at the end of his life, he still served as an instrument for the return of his people to the land from which he had been taken away.

Despite the injustices that Daniel saw and many to which he was subjected, Daniel did not stop believing in the Just and Righteous God forever.

Yes, the theme of Christ's sovereign condition as the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace in the face of so many injustices and so many wars has been one of the main aspects by which people became scandalized and still get scandalized concerning the Lord. But if it were not precisely the way the Lord deals with everything in righteousness, no one could have found salvation, and no one would be able to continue to find it.

Already since the ancient days of Job, the theme of righteousness and the position of God as the Righteous Judge and who acts righteously was the central theme among people and from people towards God. But even then, the Lord, through Elihu, taught us that the answer to the understanding of the only true righteousness was the surrender of the heart in trust to the Lord Himself and not the way of confronting this holy and just righteousness.

Job 34: 31 **For has anyone said to God, ‘I have borne chastening; I will offend no more;**

32 Teach me what I do not see; If I have done iniquity, I will do no more?’

33 Should He repay it according to your terms, Just because you disavow it? You must choose, and not I; Therefore speak what you know.

34 Men of understanding say to me, Wise men who listen to me:

35 ‘Job speaks without knowledge, His words are without wisdom.’

36 Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost, Because his answers are like those of wicked men!

37 For he adds rebellion to his sin; He claps his hands among us, And multiplies his words against God.

35: 1 Moreover Elihu answered and said:

- 2 "Do you think this is right? Do you say, 'My righteousness is more than God's'?"
- 3 For you say, 'What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?'
- 4 I will answer you, And your companions with you.
- 5 Look to the heavens and see; And behold the clouds, They are higher than you.
- 6 If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him? Or, if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him?
- 7 If you are righteous, what do you give Him? Or what does He receive from your hand?
- 8 Your wickedness affects a man such as you, And your righteousness a son of man.
- 9 Because of the multitude of oppressions they cry out; They cry out for help because of the arm of the mighty.
- 10 But no one says, 'Where is God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night,
- 11 Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, And makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?'
- 12 There they cry out, but He does not answer, Because of the pride of evil men.
- 13 Surely God will not listen to empty talk, Nor will the Almighty regard it.
- 14 Although you say you do not see Him, Yet justice is before Him, and you must wait for Him.
- 15 And now, because He has not punished in His anger, Nor taken much notice of folly,
- 16 Therefore Job opens his mouth in vain; He multiplies words without knowledge."

36: 1 Elihu also proceeded and said:

- 2 "Bear with me a little, and I will show you That there are yet words to speak on God's behalf.
- 3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar; I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
- 4 For truly my words are not false; One who is perfect in knowledge is with you.
- 5 Behold, God is mighty, but despises no one; He is mighty in strength of understanding.
- 6 He does not preserve the life of the wicked, But gives justice to the oppressed.
- 7 He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; But they are on the throne with kings, For He has seated them forever, And they are exalted.
- 8 And if they are bound in fetters, Held in the cords of affliction,
- 9 Then He tells them their work and their transgressions, That they have acted defiantly.
- 10 He also opens their ear to instruction, And commands that they turn from iniquity.
- 11 If they obey and serve Him, They shall spend their days in prosperity, And their years in pleasures.

- 12 But if they do not obey, They shall perish by the sword, And they shall die without knowledge.
- 13 But the hypocrites in heart store up wrath; They do not cry for help when He binds them.
- 14 They die in youth, And their life ends among the perverted persons.
- 15 He delivers the poor in their affliction, And opens their ears in oppression.
- 16 Indeed He would have brought you out of dire distress, Into a broad place where there is no restraint; And what is set on your table would be full of richness.
- 17 But you are filled with the judgment due the wicked; Judgment and justice take hold of you.
- 18 Because there is wrath, beware lest He take you away with one blow; For a large ransom would not help you avoid it.
- 19 Will your riches, Or all the mighty forces, Keep you from distress?
- 20 Do not desire the night, When people are cut off in their place.
- 21 Take heed, do not turn to iniquity, For you have chosen this rather than affliction.
- 22 Behold, God is exalted by His power; Who teaches like Him?
- 23 Who has assigned Him His way, Or who has said, 'You have done wrong'?
- 24 Remember to magnify His work, Of which men have sung.
- 25 Everyone has seen it; Man looks on it from afar.
- 26 Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him; Nor can the number of His years be discovered."

Considering that the meaning of Elihu's name is "He is my God," this character who visited Job in his afflictions to open his eyes to true heavenly righteousness, beforehand figured, for Job, the One who would be manifest as the Eternal and Sovereign King of Righteousness and Peace, according to the Order of Melchizedek.

While Job's other friends tried to mediate God for Job without being defined mediators for this role by God, Elihu prefigured the perfect mediator in the matter of righteousness, the God-appointed King of Righteousness. And for this reason, He was able to lead Job to genuine repentance.

Job 36: 1 Elihu also proceeded and said:

- 2 "Bear with me a little, and I will show you That there are yet words to speak on God's behalf.
- 3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar; I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
- 4 For truly my words are not false; One who is perfect in knowledge is with you.
- 5 Behold, God is mighty, but despises no one; He is mighty in strength of understanding.
- 6 He does not preserve the life of the wicked, But gives justice to the oppressed.

If every action of unrighteousness were to be immediately subjected to extreme condemnation, no one would be saved, as we have already mentioned, but also no one could walk by faith in the righteousness of God, for if everything were resolved immediately, people would only walk by sight of what would be visible and not by faith in the righteous Christ who also is long-suffering with sinners so that they may repent.

Given the condition of Christ as the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace, there is not, in a way, much left for us to say than what Job declared when he was exposed to the revelation of the greatness of God and the righteousness of God over everything and everyone, as well as what Paul spoke about the times of tribulation to which Christians in the world are exposed, as follows respectively below:

Job 42: 1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

- 2 "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.*
- 3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.*
- 4 Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'*
- 5 I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.*
- 6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."*

2 Corinthians 4: 13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak,

- 14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.*
- 15 For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.*
- 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.*

C32. The Central Opposition to the Eternal King according to the Order of Melchizedek

When in the title of this chapter we mention the opposition to the Eternal King according to the Order of Melchizedek, we try to expose in it that there is an opposition directed explicitly to the condition of Christ as the King, for we do not intend to reiterate here the oppositions that have already been described on this subject regarding the matter of Christ being the Only Eternal Mediator and High Priest, and since we also do not intend to reiterate the oppositions to heavenly righteousness that have already been mentioned in the material on The Gospel of God's Righteousness.

The particular position of Christ being the King of Righteousness and King of Peace is a condition that also presents specific oppositions in the sense of trying to prevent people from seeing in this position of Christ what only He can provide for their lives.

Many Christians have failed to reach many aspects of the Christian life by refusing or neglecting to eat the solid food called the word of righteousness and called the Order of Melchizedek. And this, because of the specific fact of resisting Christ's condition as the Eternal King over their lives.

When we begin to see people's resistance to the righteousness of God from the perspective of Christ's position as King, we may also notice that, in many cases, it results from the matter of a more fundamental choice about the type of reign to which people want to be or do not wish to be subject.

If in the matter of Christ being the Eternal High Priest, the point in evidence is related to a person exposing oneself to the light of the Lord to start to relate to God to by Him have the conscience purified or healed, in the aspect of Christ being the King of Righteousness and King of Peace, the point in evidence is in a person allowing Christ to instruct him or her *to walk in the ways of the Lord* and no longer according to the person's own understanding or any other aspect of the creation. And it is this last aspect that many do not want to give up.

In several situations related to life on Earth, many individuals would even like to have Christ as Eternal High Priest and Friend to turn to Him when they are in distress. However, when the possibility of Christ also guiding their actions in the most diverse daily tasks is considered, many oppose seeking Christ, preferring to choose human paths instead of those instructed from the heavenly kingdom.

Many people resist the offer of salvation precisely because of what salvation proposes to produce at its most advanced stage, at the stage where it grants the real possibility for a person to change one's behavior in the most diverse areas of life, allowing an individual to pass to “walk in the righteousness of God” and no longer “walk in the unrighteousness that resists God.”

John 1: 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

John 3: 19 **And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

20 **For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**

21 **But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.**

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.**

Although *walking in Christ* is the result of *living in Christ*, making that *living* should precede *walking*, many people do not choose to *live in Christ* precisely because they do not want to have changes in the aspect concerning their *walking in life*, as exemplified in the text below and which we saw several times throughout this material:

Jeremiah 7: 23 **But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’**

24 **Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.**

Many people even try to read the Scriptures, practice some parts of what they teach, and quote a series of their texts during their various tasks, but all of this can still be dissociated from the central point in question, which is surrendering to the Lordship of the King of Righteousness and Peace, accompanied yet by the recognition that a person without Christ cannot appropriately discern God's will for one's life.

Other people even try to be assiduous in trying to maintain a priestly relationship with Christ, but they do not consider the possibility of being guided in everything by the Spirit of the Lord, thinking that surrendering to the Lord's guidance would be somehow to diminish their self-esteem or a form of restriction concerning their independence to make decisions as they wish to make them.

Now, **if we are called to *live in Christ* and also to *walk in Christ* for our good and eternal salvation, it is because we too were created to *live and walk in God*, and not to live or walk dissociated from being in God.**

Being in Christ, both to *live and walk in Him*, is not a demerit position before God, for He Himself has called us to this and longs for us to accept the invitation *to be in Him and be guided by Him*. God's guidance is one of the essential characteristics of God's children and not a position of shame before the Lord.

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

Being guided by God or Christ is called in the Scriptures as the *right way, the perfect way, the Holy Way, or just The Way.*

If God created us for Him and *to live and walk in Him*, why would it be, as many think, a shame *to live and walk according to the purpose for which we were created?*

Since Christ gave Himself entirely and out of love for us to save us and grant us newness of life *in God*, why would it be shameful and derogatory for the human being, created by God, to surrender one's life in confidence to the God who created him or her, who offers him or her the whole provision of salvation, and who offers him or her an abundance of life in Him?

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."***

Romans 11: 36 ***For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.***

The matter of choosing Christ as King, for many, comes up against one of the most vital aspects that He offers in His Lordship, and which is a kingdom fully established and carried out according to eternal and heavenly righteousness.

Although, before God, *walking* according to the instruction of Christ or *walking* depending on the King of Righteousness is indescribably noble, valuable, and worthy of honor, for many people this is shameful because many, like Balaam, have become lovers of unrighteousness or the wages of injustice and are ashamed to renounce before the others the perverse ways to which they have given themselves so much.

2 Peter 2: 15 ***They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.***

Keeping oneself subject to the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace is not always the way of abundant human profits or agile and apparently easier results to be achieved, an aspect that may even lead a person to be dishonored by some for remaining faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. A reason also why many people do not want to have Christ personally as the King in their lives.

The personal stance in favor of fidelity concerning trust in God and love for the heavenly righteousness plays a decisive role in the aspect of wanting or not wanting to have Christ as the King of Righteousness, as also exemplified in the following texts:

1 Corinthians 4: 1 ***Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.***
2 ***Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.***

*Luke 16: 10 **He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.***

...
*13 **No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.***

The instruction of the King of Righteousness aims to lead us to fidelity to God and His will in much more details of life than is proposed by the systems of rules of a life subject to a pre-established law, as was, for example, subjection to the law of Moses. And this option of *being guided by the King of Righteousness in everything* is a challenge that many do not want to follow.

*Galatians 5: 18 **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.***

...
*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.***

As we have already mentioned several times in this material and the previous ones about the Gospel of God, the action of Christ as King or as Lord in a person's life begins with inner changes, changes in the heart of an individual and not only in external acts, laws, and obligations by which a person cannot find the way to righteousness through faith in Christ.

Therefore, one of the main factors of opposition to the King of Righteousness is, first of all, an inner resistance so that His righteousness does not reign in fact in the place that most needs His reign, namely: The heart of each individual.

*Matthew 15: 19 **For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.***

*James 4: 1 **Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?***

Why, then, do many people avoid a more intense encounter with the King of Righteousness and the Prince of Peace?

In addition to many not knowing about the present condition of Christ in the universe already as the King of Righteousness, many do not want this King because they do not want the life of this King acting in them or because they fear the action of Christ in their hearts, as we have also seen concerning Christ being the Advocate on our behalf with the Heavenly Father.

Many people would like to have Christ as the King of Righteousness to act on their behalf regarding others and on the external conditions that would favor their lives, but

they would also like Christ to do so without directly involving them in what they ask for the action of Christ as the King of Righteousness over others.

Many people want to see the King of Righteousness at work, but as long as this does not start in themselves as the first to be urged to abandon the unrighteousness of the heart and its practices.

Many want to see the actions of the King of Righteousness, but they do not wish the target of the work of this King to be first themselves to change their hearts, for they know that the voluntary subjection to the King of Righteousness will imply freedom to abandon injustices to which they have become attached and of which they do not want to give up.

Some people prefer not to “give credit” or “space” in their lives to the condition of Christ as the King of Righteousness so as not to suffer any unpleasantness, oppositions, or persecutions that may arise against them if they abandon the path of unrighteousness.

Galatians 6: 12 ***As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.***

13 ***For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.***

14 ***But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.***

Many individuals would even like to enjoy the righteousness of the King Jesus Christ, but as long as the Lord was not so determined to teach, guide, and assist those who follow Him to abandon unrighteousness in order to follow heavenly righteousness.

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.***

44 ***Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.***

45 ***And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.***

46 ***I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness."***

It is through God's righteousness that we have peace with the Lord, and it is through the peace received through this righteousness that we can begin to bear fruit from this righteousness. However, this very practical and powerful aspect of righteousness often makes many people stand back concerning surrendering themselves in confidence to the King of Righteousness.

In the subject on The Gospel of God's Grace, we saw that a person does not need to know by oneself how to *walk* in the grace and righteousness that comes through faith,

for grace itself is what teaches people to *walk in righteousness*. However, when it comes to the point that Christ is the King of Righteousness, it also reaches the fact that not everyone wants indeed to be taught by the grace of the Lord.

Christ makes the invitation and says that whoever comes to Him will be taught and will find rest in one's soul, but, as we have already mentioned, many do not want to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus due to the fact that He will guide them to the truth and the paths of righteousness also for the sake of His name.

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.**

James 3: 18 **Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.**

Romans 10: 4 **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.**

...
10 **For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

...
16 **But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"**

The escalation of opposition and resistance to the King of Righteousness, the King according to the Order of Melchizedek, may even reach gigantic proportions, such as those mentioned in Psalm 2, which was also referred to by Peter centuries later according to the narrative of the book of Acts chapter 4.

Nevertheless, it is still in the heart that a person *believes in God's righteousness* or *resists the reign of the heavenly righteousness*.

It is in the heart that the center of acceptance or opposition to the King Jesus is, for, concerning the oppositions of the rulers of the Earth who seek to group together against the Lord, the Lord laughs at these in the fragility or weakness of their plans against Christ.

Psalms 2: 1 **Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."
4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.
5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:
6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."**

- 7 ***"I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.***
 8 ***Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.***
 9 ***You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."***
 10 ***Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.***
 11 ***Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.***
 12 ***Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.***

There are many terrible and incalculable injustices in the world which add up in each generation, but even so, the most prominent opposition to the Lord to which a person may become a participant occurs when one does not accept in the heart the King of Righteousness who is worthy and able to lead him or her personally to true righteousness, the righteousness according to the kingdom of God.

Many people want God to exercise judgment on others or concerning others, and they even demand this from the Lord with prayers and cries before the heavens, but they themselves oppose heavenly righteousness by not following what Christ said to them to do in the first place in their lives, namely: *Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.*

Why should God respond to the cry or supplication of those who do not want God to begin to manifest righteousness first in them and who personally oppose God by resisting Christ in their hearts, not accepting the King of Righteousness to work also in them before everything else?

Why should God respond to the plea for righteousness from those who reject the greatest gift of divine righteousness that is already available to them to be received in their hearts, which is Christ as the King of Righteousness in their personal life?

Why should God answer the prayer for righteousness from those who personally reject the very throne established to do all the regency of God's righteousness over the world?

As we saw in the previous chapter, many people who present themselves as defenders of justice for humanity and cry out for it, even demanding it from God, are also often those who do not have the boldness or humility, or the sum of the two, to surrender their hearts to Christ so that He may enlighten them with the light of eternal truth and righteousness.

When a person does not accept Christ Jesus as the King of Righteousness in one's own life, one is the first to make the "obstruction to true righteousness," however much one proclaims or yells to be a promoter and defender of justice.

No one is just before God. For this reason, it is before God, through Christ, that a person needs first to find the way of righteousness and one's justification.

True righteousness is established by the Lord in the life of an individual based on one's condition of faith before God, and this path cannot be replaced by an external act or by the sum of tens, hundreds, or even thousands of external works.

- Luke 18: 7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?*
- 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*
- 9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:*
- 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.*
- 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.*
- 12 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'*
- 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'*
- 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*
-

Thus, the pride or arrogance of the human heart, to the point of thinking that it does not need the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace to lead a person to true salvation and redemption through heavenly righteousness, ends up being one of the most intense and continuous oppositions to the King according to the Order of Melchizedek.

The essence of opposition to the King of Righteousness, then, encompasses someone not wanting to be of Christ in order not to be subject to Him to be personally guided on the path of eternal righteousness.

Wanting to blame others for being in a condition of unrighteousness, already having the possibility to personally choose the righteousness that is in Christ, and not doing so, is also a vile way of still clinging to unrighteousness instead of surrendering to the righteousness that the Lord already offers us.

When reviled, Christ did what God also left us as an example to be followed.

When wronged, Christ surrendered to Him who was His source of righteousness and judgment to be instructed by God also to live and walk in righteousness.

- 1 Peter 2: 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*
- 22 Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth;*
- 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed.

It is in the heart that one believes for righteousness.

It is in the heart that one believes that Christ is righteousness and the King of righteousness for *the righteousness of everyone who believes in Him.*

Therefore, believing in the heart in Christ as Our Righteousness has always been the main turning point in accepting Christ as the King of the Order of Melchizedek or in rejecting Christ in His position of King.

Not wanting the King of Righteousness or not wanting Christ are synonymous, for Christ and righteousness, like Christ and grace, are in everything and always inseparable.

*Romans 3: 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.*

2 Timothy 2: 19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Romans 6: 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Hosea 10: 12 Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.

C33. The Glory of Christ as the High Priest and Eternal King Who Is also "the Head"

To know our Creator more widely, even though we cannot witness all the greatness of the Lord, God allows us to know several fundamental aspects of His glory that reveal His attributes to us in an entirely satisfactory way so that we may believe and trust our lives to the care of the Lord.

In turn, the most expressive way defined by God to manifest His glory to us is found in the Lord Jesus Christ, *who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.*

So that we may know what the fundamental attributes of God are and so that we know how much the Lord loves us and extends His goodness and mercy so that we may always have a living and intense relationship with Him, God presents us, in Christ Jesus, the revelation of the attributes of His divine nature. In Christ Jesus, the Lord shows us His attributes through the position of Christ as His Eternal Son, as well as in the condition of the Son of Man who came into the world in the flesh, died on the cross of Calvary on behalf of all sinners, rose from the dead, and was seated with the Heavenly Father in the highest heavenly place.

When, through the Gospel of the Glory of God, the Scriptures teach us that Christ is the Light of the world and the Light of the Gospel itself, they are announcing to us that God is the Light of the world and the Light of the Gospel.

When the Scriptures teach us that Christ is seated in Majesty at the right hand of the Heavenly Father above any other throne in the universe, they are announcing to us that there is no other God and there is no other being above the position in which the Heavenly Father and Christ are seated to reign, and so on.

Each attribute that God reveals to us in Christ, through His holy Gospel, is an attribute displayed to us so that we may know who our Eternal God is, but it is also revealed to us because this revelation is useful and necessary for our living and walking in God.

Thus, when God shows us, for instance, that Christ is our Eternal High Priest and Eternal King, according to the Order of Melchizedek, He does not only do so to give us mere information, but He does it so that we may know more precisely what are the attributes of His divinity that are offered to us in Christ Jesus and through which the Lord offers to work in us and on our behalf, for it is *God who works all in all* who believe in Him.

When God specifies in more detail the attributes that are in Christ Jesus, He also does so because, several times, the revelation of the most elementary characteristics of who Christ is may not be enough for some people to understand what represents Christ being the Lord over all created life.

To say that Christ is Lord over everything and everyone, except for the Heavenly Father Himself who bestowed Him this lordship, already encompasses the fullness of Christ's sovereignty over everything and everyone, but in human understanding, this breadth and clarity may not be so evident and comprehensive, which is why God also exposes this sovereignty through references to the condition of Christ in yet other terms.

For some, to say that Christ is the Sovereign Lord may not sound clear that Christ is the Lord who perfectly welcomes them in their weaknesses and who introduces them to the Heavenly Father. Christ as the Lord is the One who also exercises the lordship of people's access to God, but for some, the lordship of Christ may have a mistaken connotation that Christ only wants to give orders to them.

To say that Christ is the Sovereign Lord, for some, it may not sound clear that Christ is the King of all creation and that He can also cause creation to cooperate in favor of those who surrender to the lordship of Christ, thinking, again and mistakenly, that the lordship of Jesus only represents the establishment of orders for those who are subject to it.

In the opposite direction, some may think that the fact that Christ is presented to them as the Lord who serves would imply that He should attend and serve them in everything, even if this were against God's righteousness.

Therefore, adding the clarification that Christ, in addition to Savior and Lord, is the High Priest and King according to the Order of Melchizedek can cooperate so that people's understanding of who Christ is becomes more accurate, for the fact of Christ being the Sovereign Lord according to the Priestly and Royal Order of righteousness and peace represents that He is the High Priest full of mercy and grace, but who, at the same time, never despises righteousness and the faithfulness to the Heavenly Father that underlie His lordship.

In many ways or through diverse aspects, the Heavenly Father wants to show us who He is in Christ and who Christ is towards us, for the concept of a correct and just lordship has been so distorted and corrupted among human beings, as well as to let us know that the Lordship of Christ is unique and without equal parallels among human beings.

The lordship of Christ is so vast but also so specific that its exhibition ends up requiring the addition of several other specifications so that its amplitude and uniqueness are exposed in a more comprehensive and precise way.

Christ's lordship over the world, over people in general, and over the people who believe in Him is different from any other lordship, whether in comprehensiveness or its most diverse characteristics.

A "master" over a specific project and people regarding their association with this project, for example, does not need to be the "master" of the private lives of those who work on this project, which is already entirely different from the Lord of life and who is the source of all life.

A "king or an earthly ruler," also as an example, is not responsible for providing eternal salvation to those under one's government, for this assignment is not within one's competence since one is not even able to make this type of provision. However, the Lord of eternal life has attributions both concerning the present natural life and the spiritual life that goes on throughout eternity.

When God offers us to know His glory in Christ Jesus, He uses terms that are known in the natural world to communicate with us in a language that is familiar to us. However, when He does so, He also associates what kind of condition Christ has concerning each one of the terms referenced to Him and that other people who use these terms do not have.

Much of what God wants us to know about Christ is not only in the titles of the attributes that Christ has, but also in the unique specification that each of these titles receives in the Scriptures when used in relation to the Lord Jesus.

When the Scriptures, for instance, teach us that Christ is a Lord who is the Eternal High Priest, King of Righteousness, and King of Peace, they already distinguish Christ from any other concept and scope of lordship that exists in the world, showing the glory of Christ as Eternal Lord, but also exposing His glory by presenting what kind of Eternal Lord He is in His lordship.

To understand the glory of Christ not from the perspective of what the world conceptualizes about the characteristics of the titles of people's attributes, we need to know what the Scriptures say directly about each title and also through what the Scriptures teach us by associating the characteristics of Christ with more than one title or a plurality of titles, positions, and functions.

And it is in this last perspective, mentioned in the previous paragraph, that we can see that the Scriptures teach us that the glory of Christ as Lord, who is the High Priest and Eternal King, is also expressed as Christ being presented to the world as the "**Head**" over everything, as exemplified below:

*Ephesians 1: 22(a) **And He put all things under His feet, and gave Christ to be head over all things ...***

In other texts, which we will see more specifically in the following chapters, it can be observed, then, that Christ is also mentioned as the *Head* who is:

- ⇒ 1) Over each member of His body;
- ⇒ 2) Over each marriage established according to the Heavenly Father's will;
- ⇒ 3) Over the Lord's Church as a whole;
- ⇒ 4) Over every principality and power (or authority) in the universe.

To come to see the lordship, the priesthood, the position of king, and the light that is in Christ, also as the *Head*, advances to expose or reveal a whole new or particular way about all these other attributes of the Lord.

A person having the status of king, lord, or priesthood over other people is a situation that does not necessarily establish closeness and personal relationship between the regent and those over whom one governs, and also not between those governed and their regent. When, however, we say that the King, Lord, and High Priest Jesus is also the *Head*, a supposed distance between Christ and the person over whom He is established is placed in a very peculiar perspective.

The condition that Christ is also the *Head* over what the Heavenly Father established Him reaffirms, once again, what was already bestowed to Him when He was appointed as Lord, Mediator, High Priest, and King. However, it also adds the clarification of a unique or very specific condition of closeness that may occur between Christ and those over whom the Heavenly Father established Him.

The revelation that Christ is the Lord who is also the *Head* establishes even more precisely and objectively what the Lord Jesus said in declaring: ***for without Me you can do nothing.***

The revelation that Christ is the High Priest and the King who is also the *Head*, also reminds us of the text in which Paul states:

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.***

Or yet, when we see the revelation that Christ is the Lord who is also the *Head*, we may see even more affirmatively this other text also presented by Paul:

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.

When a person understands that Christ is the Lord who is also the *Head* of one's life, one begins to understand that the closeness to Christ is so expressive that even the thoughts in one's heart can and should be subject to Christ. And only in Christ, as being He the *Head*, is that a person truly has a sober and spiritual discernment about all the things that one needs to discern.

A Christian can “*have the mind of Christ*” not because Christ transfers a “package of wisdom” to a person, but because Christ is the *Head* of one's life and to which one can have and should have continuous access by faith and fellowship.

The fact that Christ is presented as the Lord who is also the *Head* further reinforces the condition that only Christ is the One Mediator between God and human beings, since a person and a body are not made to be administered and guided by more than one *head*.

A person or a body subject to more than one *head* will inevitably become a *divided house*, which cannot stand because of the division that occurs in it where there should be no division.

Matthew 12: 25 ***But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand."***

The division of the command of life under more than one *head* has always been one of the main controversial and flawed aspects of the weak and the useless Order of Aaron when it comes to perfecting the people who were associated with it.

The Order of Aaron, or according to Moses, always struggled between the discrepancy of command and interests that existed between the priestly aspect and the civil aspect that was under the rule of a king, although the king, in theory, should also be subject to the Order of Aaron, as the latter was the legislator for the priests and Levites, as well as for the people and the kings also, as exemplified below:

Deuteronomy 17: 14 When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,'

15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.

16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.'

17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

18 Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.

19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,

20 that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

The words of this last text above may sound beautiful and inspiring, but in practice, and since the *head* of government was divided between priests and kings, kings did not remain faithful to the writings of the law of Moses, for these kings too lacked the most direct, complete, and personal instruction and fellowship with the Lord since part of these fell to the priests to do so in the name of kings.

As widely elaborated as the law, the priesthood system, and the reigning system according to the Order of Aaron or Moses were, their models never stand appropriately also because they acted with the *head* divided over the same house called Israel and over each one of the people under this condition. And also because of the aspect of the division of power, the need was demonstrated for this order to be revoked, declared obsolete, and to be transformed only into ***symbolic for the present time*** so that no one else needs to incur the mistake of following these inappropriate models for their personal lives.

When, for example, a person from the people received an instruction from the priests to do something that also depended on the king's consensus or favor to be able to do so, and the king chose not to release it or be in favor of this individual, even if one had received a good word from the priests, this person was tied between what one had been instructed to do and what one was indeed authorized and favored to do.

On the other hand, if a king wanted to benefit the people subject to him, but the priests did not attend him in truly seeking God's counsel, the king and the people, despite having the resources to do something, would have their hands tied without knowing for sure whether what they intended to accomplish was or was not God's will.

Now, let us think about this process between kings and priests established to serve thousands and hundreds of thousands of people. What was not the weakness or inefficiency of the proposition of the Order of Aaron?

Thus, ***in Christ, as the Head, we have the same point that personally and intimately receives what we present to Him, as well as what He personally instructs us to do, allowing peace to be established between will and accomplishment for each individual who relates to the Lord.***

When the Scriptures show us that Christ is the Lord who is also the Head, we can know that in Him a person has unified the condition that Christ is the Perfect High Priest and the Perfect King of one's life so that one also obtains the unified instructions without contradictions between aspects of *living in God and walking in God.*

In the face of the exposition of the glory of Christ as the Lord who is also the *Head*, any thought that the priesthood and governance of Christ are carried out only in a generic and impersonal way is exposed as deceit and lie, showing us God, that in Christ everything is supported by the power of His word, but also that each aspect of this whole is supported individually by the Lord, who is also the *Head*.

When the psalmists in the book of Psalms declare that “The Lord is MY Shepherd,” “The Lord is MY Refuge,” “The Lord is MY Rock,” and so on, and when they asked the Lord to “***see if there is any wicked way IN Me, and lead ME in the way everlasting,***” they were not talking about distant and impersonal aspects of the Lord's glory, but extolling the greatness of the Lord in being able to be in each one what each one needs God to be for him or her and in him or her.

If everything was created by Christ with individuality, could He not also take care of every aspect created with individuality?

Since only God is powerful to meet all of a person's matters, the human being dissociated from fellowship with the Lord and also the power of darkness, due to their limited conditions, are those who try to impose on people the thought of treating individuals only by collective systems and without due individuality.

The revelation of the glory of Christ, also as *Head*, is opposed to any attempt to mischaracterize the individual condition that Christ has for each person and every aspect of His creation, reaffirming once again that Christ is sovereign over all, but that He is also sovereign over every life and detail of the universe.

- 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.

2 Timothy 2: 19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

1 Corinthians 8: 2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

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

9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.

10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.

11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

C34. The Glory of Christ as the Head of Each Person Who Believes in Him

Once we come to see the glory of Christ as the One who is the Head, showing us that everything that God decided to offer and accomplish in Christ is also unified and without divisions in Christ, we may advance to see closer some particular aspects of the condition of Christ also being called the Head.

Since one of the central aspects aimed by the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world was the reconciliation of the people who believe in Him with God, we would also like to begin the more detailed considerations of Christ as Head concerning the aspect of Him being the Head of each individual who believes in Him.

To exemplify the position of Christ as the Head of each person who believes in Him, God, in His Scriptures, presents us with a picture of the position of Christ as the Head of a body, the Head of the so-called *body of Christ*.

Christ's position as the Head of what is called His body, in turn, is divided into two aspects that complement each other. Christ's position as the Head of His body encompasses Christ being:

- ⇒ 1) The Head of each part of His body;
- ⇒ 2) The Head of the body as a whole, the Head that is also placed on the collective and global functioning of His body.

Let us see below some texts that reiterate the position of Christ as the Head of His body:

Ephesians 1: 22 **And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,**
23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 4: 15 **But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ,**
16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Colossians 1: 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.

*Colossians 2: 18 **Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,**
19 **and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.***

And to be able to observe more appropriately the two aspects mentioned in the paragraph just above, we understand that it is better to separate them, for presentation purposes, in two different chapters, where in this chapter we will try to begin to see the first of the two aspects mentioned and which is Christ being the Head of each of the members of His body.

When we deal with words such as the expression *all*, we understand that it is significant to note that the term *all* is also synonymous with *all parts of the whole or the set*, as well as synonymous with the expression related to *each of the elements of the whole or the set*.

Although the expression *all*, on the one hand, has the aim of referring to the complete inclusion of all parts, without any being left out, on the other hand, the expression *all* also has the character that seeks to expose the *individual* importance of each of the parties, to the point that *no part* should be left out or treated in an inferior or differentiated way.

Thus, when the Scriptures tell us that Christ is the Head who provides and sustains each part and all parts of His body, they are also teaching us that in the body of Christ, all parts, without exception, are linked to the Head and have equal right and possibility of access to this Head.

*1 Corinthians 12: 12 **For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.***

...

*20 **But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.***

*Ephesians 5: 29 **For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.***

*30 **For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.***

*Romans 12: 5 **... so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.***

*1 Corinthians 12: 27 **Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.***

In the body of Christ, each member is individually connected to the Head and is provided and nourished by the Head.

Therefore, a very relevant aspect to be observed when we see the comparison of Christians being part of a body that has many members and that has only one Head, just as the human body has many members and one head, is that the comparison of the body of Christ with the human body is figurative and not the attempt to establish equality between the two types of bodies.

The so-called *body of Christ* is a spiritual body and not a physical body, and the glory of each of them is entirely different even though some figurative comparisons can be made between the two.

1 Corinthians 15: 40 **There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.**

When we begin to see the Scriptures, we need to be careful not to confuse the symbolic comparison with what is the true, genuine, or the basis of what is being compared. And we should be careful not to want to define the true one from a detail that not even the Scriptures make of the figures of comparison.

If we do not understand that the figures of comparison only point to the true one and that they are not the genuine indeed, we may again incur the systematic of trying to live through the shadows of the true, as was the case with the Order of Aaron or also known as the Levitical or Moses Order.

Paul strongly urges us that we should seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated, and not those on Earth. Therefore, after we know the brief analogy that exists in the comparison of the earthly body with the body of Christ, we should seek to understand what the body of Christ indeed looks like according to what the Lord informs us about it.

The Scriptures tell us that just as the human body has several members, so the spiritual body also has several members. However, at the same time, the Scriptures do not state that the members of the body of Christ and their functions are the same as the natural body. On the contrary, **the Scriptures show us that the roles of the members of the spiritual body of Christ are entirely different from the functions of the members of the natural body**, as exemplified in the text below:

Romans 12: 4 **For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,**

...

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;

8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

While the roles of the members of the physical body cooperate for a natural body, the functions of the members of the spiritual body also cooperate for a spiritual body. And the functions of the spiritual body are shown to us in the Scriptures, for instance, by the gifts and actions that members of the body should have towards Christ and concerning other members, which are, for example, love for God, for the fellow believers, the help, the teaching, the mercy, the gifts of administration, and so on.

If people do not understand that the figurative comparison is not exact and that the functions of the members of a natural body are not entirely equivalent to the members of the spiritual body, they may begin to want to define among their brothers who, for example, would be the stomach, who is the intestine, who is the ring finger, who is the index finger, and so on, which would be absurd or real nonsense since the spiritual body does not even have these same divisions and characteristics of the natural body.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, when in the flesh in the world, said that symbolic language needs to be followed by a non-figurative speech for a person to understand the Heavenly Father's will and to come to believe in what is heavenly and superior to the earthly things, as shown below:

John 15: 15 ***No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.***

John 16: 25 ***These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.***

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.***

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.'"***

Christ showed us that teaching only at the level of parables does not lead people to understand the more profound facts exposed to them, even causing that persistence in the figurative language may lead people to blindness and deafness, which, in turn, result in the misleading and distorted understanding of what is true or according to the kingdom of God.

If, for instance, in the human body there is a hierarchy of members that provide support for other members to be linked to the head, in the body of Christ it is not so, because everyone has access to the Head and each one is personally responsible for staying “United to the Head.”

If an arm is amputated in the human body, this also implies that the hand is detached from the body and the body's head. However, the detachment of a member of the body of Christ, if it occurs, is individual, personalized, and happens for the reason that a person comes to depart from the grace of God and faith in Christ, as we have seen several times and exemplify again in the text below:

*Galatians 5: 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.***

*7 **You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?***

If in the natural body a member may become separated from the body because another member that stood between it and the head has been amputated, in the body of Christ, a person is only separated from it if one personally or individually adopts the actions that lead him or her to dissociate from this body.

*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.***

Although the Scriptures teach us that also in the spiritual body of Christ a member suffers if the other members suffer, the way this happens and the consequences that result from this suffering are hugely different from the natural body.

If an individual lived in a city where most people were Christian, and each Christian would be living and walking according to the will of Christ, that individual would certainly have many collective benefits from the fact that other members of the body of Christ are also in conformity with the grace and righteousness of God. However, or even so, the suffering that may befall a member of the body of Christ when another member suffers or even becomes separated from the body is not equated to the detachment of a member from the physical body, for they are different types of bodies.

Paul clearly warns all Christians that no one should let others stand against them to the point of allowing their union with Christ to be interrupted, as we have seen above and whose text we repeat below:

*Colossians 2: 18 **Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,***
*19 **and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.***

In the natural body, the provision, for example, does not come from the body itself, nor does it come from the head of this body. It comes from outside the body, being processed by the body to be distributed to the other organs of this body. The natural body seeks oxygen externally, seeks vitamin D by exposure to the sun, seeks the most diverse foods outwardly, and after receiving them or ingesting them, processes them through the lungs, stomach, liver, intestine, and other organs, and so on.

In the spiritual body, as for the provision, for instance, everything is vastly different from the natural body. The Scriptures tell us that in the spiritual body, the whole body, that is, each of its parts, each of its members, is directly nourished by the Head, which is why the continuous and direct permanence in the dependence on the provision coming from this Head is also vital.

Christ explicitly said: *for without Me you can do nothing*. An essential point that Paul also reiterates still in another text:

*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.***

Yet through another figure, Paul also teaches us that each individual is a building to be built directly on Christ and not on top of others, as well as that each one should watch over where one is being built and what is being edified in one's life.

*1 Corinthians 3: 9 **For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.***
*10 **According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.***
*11 **For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.***

Paul announced the possibility that each person could receive Christ in one's heart and how this offer of Christ to be the foundation could be received in each individual's life. However, from the laying of the foundation in the heart, Christ the Lord, each one must see how one relates to the foundation in order that it may also be built according to the will of this foundation.

In the teachings of God that he transmits to us in his letters, Paul clearly calls Christians to no longer walk according to the shadow of the authentic as was done in the old covenant. Instead, he calls Christians to raise their

eyes to see how much more superior and distinct is the condition of the genuine or true compared to the symbolic or figurative.

2 Corinthians 3: 8 ... how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

9 For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

10 For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels.

In the body of Christ, each individual is invited to grow in love “directly” in Him who is the One Head of His entire body.

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

16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

When a member grows directly and personally in Christ, one follows the truth in love, for Christ is the truth. And one is also doing one's fair cooperation to build one's life in love, for it is in the Son of God's Love that the Lord edifies us in love.

As we have seen in the texts above, **the body of Christ is aided by joints and ligaments, but again, the joints and ligaments in the body of Christ are not hierarchical structures between the spiritual members as they exist in a hierarchical structure in the members of the physical body.**

The ligaments of the spiritual body are, for example, the “bond of peace,” the “bond of love,” and “faith in the Lord.” Already the fair cooperation or the effective working by which every part does its share of this body concerns, in the first place, the functions of Christ as our Only Mediator with God, the Eternal High Priest, the Advocate, the Author and Finisher of the Faith, and the King of Righteousness and King of Peace, through whom we are called to “walk united with the Lord” and according to the Heavenly Father's will, followed after by the cooperation of each member.

Ephesians 4: 3 ... endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Colossians 3: 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Romans 5: 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

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2 Corinthians 5: 20(b) ... we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Hebrews 4: 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.

The spiritual body of Christ is a body where each member is a child of the Heavenly Father and, therefore, with the possibility of individual and direct access also to one's Eternal Father through Christ.

The spiritual body of Christ is a body that has a unique firstborn brother who gave His life so that other brothers could be adopted into the family of God. And also for this reason, only this firstborn brother is the firstfruits of the other brothers and has equal preeminence over all those who come through Him to God, clearly vetoing that among the other brothers any concept of hierarchy and leadership is established regarding this spiritual body.

Matthew 23: 8 But you, do not be called 'Rabbi' (or masters); for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.

9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

10 And do not be called teachers (or guides or leaders); for One is your Teacher (or Guide), the Christ.

In his condition as an apostle of the Lord Jesus, Paul declared the following words and never rose above the brothers of faith to subdue them:

1 Corinthians 4: 1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

1 Corinthians 3: 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?

Colossians 1: 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Wanting to conceptualize the body of Christ according to the earthly figure or natural body is of interest only to those who think of worldly things more than of things

above, where Christ is seated. And many want to do so because they want to disconnect others from Christ in an attempt to subdue them.

On the other hand, we may see the weakness of those who want to place themselves between Christ and the members of the body of Christ on the grounds that this is due to the fact that the natural body has a hierarchy of members, for even though they use the natural body as an example, also in the natural body itself, there is only one head in charge of the entire body.

In one way or another, those who refuse to accept the preeminence and the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus over the body of Christ will always fall into considerable and severe contradictions that, inevitably, lead them to create the most impressive hypocrisies or dissimulations regarding their intentions of domination of those they want to have as their followers, as we have seen in previous chapters.

Even in the natural body, although in this case a member may invalidate the performance of another member, no member has the vocation to be head over another member.

In the spiritual body, when a member obtains success in a specific task, one should never, because of this, want to start managing the other members based on one's success, for this only happened because one followed the instruction and provision coming from the One Head of the spiritual body.

In the spiritual body, when a member is able to complete a work, one should always signal to the other members to also seek instruction and provision in the One Head of this body, thus teaching one's brothers to depend on the same unique source that is Christ and that is equally available to all members of the body.

When a member of Christ's spiritual body begins to forget that he or she is only a member like one's other brothers, one starts to be subject to the thought that one can also mediate other members in those needs that can only be met by the Head of the body, often incurring the following aspects:

- ⇒ 1) To want to stop being a simple member of the body like the others, becoming oneself subject to being disconnected from the Head of the spiritual body;
- ⇒ 2) To think that he or she has a call to be the leader of others and, therefore, also to start to presume that he or she has some of the attributes that are exclusive to the Head of the body of Christ;
- ⇒ 3) To speak of the members of the body of Christ in the third person and without seeing oneself included in them, creating a separation between clergy and laity, between leaders and people, considering the latter, the people, always as more ignorant and less favored;
- ⇒ 4) To stop doing what one should do as a member because one starts to have many tasks in one's supposed and forged call of mediator and leader.

When a member comes to think that one is called to be a type of head or "sub-head" of other members, neither one oneself becomes what one should be for the body nor the body is for him or her what it should be, because the members that one tries to command, begin to do what a member of the body wants and not what the Head wants to be done, bringing damage or even destruction to everyone involved in this opposition to the true One Head.

When people are dissociated from the direct connection to the true and Unique Head, they also do not discern the body, creating all sorts of injustices among those who walk in opposition to what the Lord has instructed them to do.

When people try to place “heads” or even “sub-heads” on the body of Christ, an act that was never authorized by Christ to be established in His body, they begin to incur in what the Scriptures call not to discern the body of Christ as they should discern it. And for this reason, also, it is useless to make supposed communion suppers because they are in disunity with the main part of the body, which is the One Head over all.

*1 Corinthians 11: 28 **But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.***

*29 **For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.***

Celebrate a supper and call it a Christian communion between brothers, but where some stand between the members and the Head of the body, and where some rise above others as supposed “heads” or “sub-heads” without ever being nominated by God for this, is to celebrate a supper lacking the discernment of the body of Christ and even more of the Head of this body.

When some people want to step in as leaders, priests, spiritual fathers, pastors, or any other term by which they try to rise above Christians, they are trying to reduce the spiritual body of Christ to a carnal, earthly, and corruptible body in order to try to manipulate and dominate this body according to their fleshly interests.

*1 Corinthians 3: 4 **For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?***

*1 Corinthians 1: 12 **Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."***

*13 **Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?***

As the Eternal High Priest, Christ perceives all the feeling that each member of His body feels, He knows everything that happens to each member, but if a person disconnects from Christ and connects with other people, even though Christ knows everything and everyone, one becomes dependent on these people to feel their pain to be helped by them when they need it.

And when a member has a need in which several members of the body need to be mobilized to help him or her, who will command this group of aid at the most critical times if one does not have Christ as the Head?

If a member, exemplified in the previous paragraph, is linked to Christ, the Head, the Lord has all the power to command all the other members who are needed to help those in need or to turn to those who need help.

Christ alone is *the Head* of everyone who believes in Him, never giving this position to any other member, even if one had been an apostle.

Paul explicitly said that just as all Christians equally have a single foundation and can be built directly on the same foundation that he and the other apostles and prophets were built on, so also everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus has just one and the same Head to whom one should individually report.

Therefore, **Christ is everything in each of its members, from the foundation that sustains life to the Head that instructs and guides the person grounded in Him.**

Christ is the Head of each member of His spiritual body, remembering that in Him, in His spiritual body, there is no slave or free, male or female, Jew or Greek, and so on, as we have already commented in previous chapters.

From the revelation and exaltation of the Lord Jesus as the High Priest and Eternal King, there is no possibility in the will of God for a human being to be the mediator before God of another human being, which of course applies even more when we see Christ's position as the Head of each member of His body.

Many of those who say that a person needs mediators between an individual and God may even say that this is temporary and that one day that person oneself may have direct access to God. In practice, however, they never really let people grow to this point, for if they did, they would lose their reason for existing as supposed mediators. They work to keep people immature because they want the preeminence for themselves, as exemplified in John's third epistle.

There are mediators who teach that those they mediate one day will be able to approach God directly as they do, but they never define the steps and the time for this to occur. They say that this "is a mystery that only time will show." But actually, it is a scam or a deception.

And asking an obvious question here: If people need mediators between themselves and God, is it not evident that even mediators would also need mediators? And who would mediate the top chain of mediators?

What makes pretended mediators think that they are so distinct from others to the point that they do not need mediators themselves? Are they a unique class of elected individuals and more privileged than the rest of the human beings?

And when asked why they do not have mediators for themselves, these same supposed mediators always give answers that are evasive, dissimulated, or that try to distort the truth.

Why, then, are their answers not true?

The answer of the pretended mediators is not true for a basic reason: Because the Scriptures explicitly say that the Only Mediator between God and human beings is Christ, the Only Head of His body.

Under the Scriptures' perspective, people who advocate that they are mediators between God and other people are not indeed what they claim to be. If they were, the Scriptures would be lying. It is not the Lord Jesus Christ that those who claim to mediate Christ serve indeed, but they resist the sovereignty and position of Christ as the One Head.

Every Christian is the temple of the living God and can relate to the Lord Jesus Christ in one's heart to receive there the kingdom and the righteousness of God and to relate to Christ as one's High Priest, one's Light, one's King of Righteousness and Peace, having all the ministries of Christ unified in His position of Head over His body.

Nevertheless, those who do not believe that Christ can do all that is required of Him as the Head and that He has all this power, and who still try to establish others to do what is only pertinent to Christ, end up indulging in idolatrous speeches and propositions, for the meaning of the word idolatry is related to ***“what is the replica or an image of something + a service paid for wages.”*** (According to comments associated with Strong's Greek Lexicon in the Online Bible).

Because there are people who are willing to pay for others to try to perform their relationship with God, even if partial, there are also those who offer “replicas or counterfeits of heads” that offer a supposed “spiritual covering” over others, as if a mere member of the body could have the vocation of being head of another member, as we have already commented above.

The ambition for profit that the so-called “spiritual covering” has generated throughout history attracts many also to want to establish themselves as another replica of the Head Christ to obtain the supposed wages they think are due to this type of service.

***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.***

Since idolatry is *the use of a replica or image of something that is served to obtain wages in return*, the one who offers oneself as a replica of spiritual coverage, and receives payment for offering this service or ministry, is characterized as the “idolized idol.” And concerning these, the Lord instructs us in the following text:

***2 Corinthians 6: 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."
17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."
18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."***

Those who present themselves as replicas of the Head Christ, and as such receive wages in return for trying to be replicas of Christ, place themselves as idols who try to raise over people so that they do not access the relationship with the Heavenly Father as the Father intends to have with each one of His children.

Christ firmly warned us that many would come who would try to establish themselves as a replica of Christ, but He also warned what to do about these alleged or false “heads.”

Mark 13: 21 **Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, He is there!’ do not believe it.**
22 **For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.**
23 **But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.**

In another text, Paul still tells us:

1 Corinthians 10: 14 **Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.**

Christ, the Mediator established by God with exclusivity, did not transfer and will never delegate this function to others, for it is for us to be able to approach Him and the Heavenly Father that He came in the flesh into the world and came to make this clear before all. When we come directly to the Lord Jesus, He leads us to be more and more directly in Him, in Christ, and through Him, in the Heavenly Father and the Father among us.

The Lord has the right to be the exclusive Head of each person. Christ has this right because of being the Creator of all and because He bought them freedom on the cross of Calvary with His perfect blood poured out as the *Perfect Lamb*, something that no one did for one's fellow men.

Regardless of the natural condition that a Christian is in, one is free to access God in one's heart without any yoke of mediation from others, for Christ bought him or her this freedom. And this is the freedom that should never be neglected.

1 Corinthians 7: 23 **You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.**

1 Corinthians 6: 20 **For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.**

Revelation 1: 5 ... **and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ...**

Those who want to place themselves, unduly, as the head of others, either as their priests or as the leaders or rulers of their lives, are like thieves of other people's lives. They try to steal control of the lives of others for themselves. They try to kill what God has for people. And thus, they try to destroy all the possibilities of fruit production that they could generate according to God's will.

Ecclesiastes 8: 9 All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: There is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.

John 10: 10(a) The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.

A terrible thing is when a person tries to mediate others as their head, for by this, one tries to dominate them under a priesthood in which people do not learn or unlearn to listen directly to God, but also because one tries to dominate others under a regency that intervenes so that people do not hear the instruction of the King Jesus on how they should walk in their lives.

Let us note here the following once again: If someone does not access God to relate to the Lord, one too will not have the opposite way of receiving God's guidance. And so, one runs into the path of being guided under the direction of other sources also regarding one's walking in life.

We are not here saying that a person cannot hear suggestions from people in areas that others are more specialized than him or her. However, this is different from someone wanting to determine what one's fellow men should do or not do. It is different from a person allowing one's fellow men to be one's head.

A Christian, for instance, may speak to one's brothers of faith about the virtues of God and that God wants a personal relationship with each one of them. However, a believer is not called to play the role of mediating God to one's fellow believers or the fellow believers to God, for this is entirely opposed to the new covenant in Christ. (Aspect exposed more widely in the subject Knowing about God or Knowing God).

Another sad matter related to the supposed human mediators is that when the problems of the mediated people start to emerge, the mediators let the blame and the bill of the problems on the back of those who they guided and do not take the cost of their mediation and the advice they gave, saying that the mediated individuals were free to choose and adopt or not their guidance. Thus, even at the time of failure, the forgers or false heads try to hide their systems' shame.

The so-called human mediators repeatedly try to put heavy burdens on the backs of the people they claim to guide. As we have seen before, they do it:

- ⇒ 1) In the guidance they give, for they were not appointed by God to do so and thus do not instruct others in the truth or the will of God;
- ⇒ 2) In what they demand;
- ⇒ 3) In what they threaten people if the mediated ones do not follow their instructions;
- ⇒ 4) In the accusations and condemnations they cast on those who followed their instructions when failures come and when they start to see that things are falling apart in their lives;
- ⇒ 5) When they blaspheme and try to curse those who can no longer bear their burdens and withdraw from their heavy and cruel systems.

People gather from the supposed human mediators what the human being in one's limitations and failures offers them.

Galatians 6: 7 **Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**

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.

If, for example, someone trusted the alleged or pretended mediation of a human being, one will not be able to count on it for matters that go beyond the mediator's limits.

Thus, **if at the time of accountability to the Lord, each person will do it personally and directly to Him, why then be guided by others and not directly by the source, that is, by the Eternal Father through Jesus Christ?**

Romans 14: 11 **For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."**
12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

Colossians 3: 23 **And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,**
24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.
25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

Glory to God that through a direct relationship with Christ, as the Head of His body, life is not like the systems in which people offer replicas or images of mediation, for Christ is the One who already gave proof of His love for each one of the members of His body when He died on the cross of Calvary on their behalf.

And still, **if Christ is given to the Christian to dwell in one's heart so that there is no external interference between Christ and the new inner man whose condition is granted to everyone who receives Christ, why would this new inner man need an outer head and an external spiritual covering to guide one's life?**

Christ dwells in every member of His body through the Spirit of the Lord. And the Holy Spirit is given to us to dwell in us so that we no longer need the outer spiritual covering as there was in the Order according to Moses.

Just for the sake of clarity, by no means in this chapter are we saying that a Christian should not respect the civil rulers of one's country. A student should show respect to a teacher, a son to the father, a citizen to the nation's leaders, and so on. Respecting authorities is an aspect taught by the Lord and will be dealt with in a later chapter.

Nevertheless, if a ruler or governor acts against life itself and tries to prevent someone from seeking Christ as the Head of one's life, that ruling person is not acting according to the higher authority over him or her, and therefore Christ's position should always prevail in the heart of the one who serves the Lord, as was also witnessed by the apostles according to the following text:

*Acts 5: 29 **But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."***

Christ can guide a son of God to follow the instruction of a governor or a department chief in a company, but a Christian ultimately follows the instruction of a human ruler when Christ guides him or her to follow it.

The Christian submits to rulers because of the guidance of Christ Himself and according to the direction that the Lord gives them. The Christian is called to subject oneself first to Christ as one's Head and has direct access to Him to check the directions or instructions one receives from human rulers.

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Is it not this what the Scriptures say?

When it comes to spiritual mediators, no human mediator has the legal or recognized authority from God to play this role, for these mediation systems have already been exposed as obsolete along with the revocation of the Order of Aaron.

And finally, in this chapter, and given these affirmations of Christ being the Head and the foundation of each of the members of His spiritual body, we may observe that many people find it difficult to see that this applies, in fact, for the whole body, claiming the need that at least spiritual newborns are dependent on human mediators over their lives.

Now, if we look at the parents of a newborn child, naturally speaking, it is not the more experienced siblings who have priority access to the new family member, but always the parents. Even though older siblings may help parents take care of younger ones, they are not the parents.

And how much more priority of access to His children will not have the Eternal Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ through whom they can have access to the Father of Lights?

Let us look below some examples of what Christ said about God's relationship with the little ones:

*Matthew 18: 10 **Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.***

...
*14 **Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.***

*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.***

*Matthew 21: 15 But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant
16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?'"*

At another moment, the Lord said:

Matthew 19: 14 But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Wanting to claim that spiritually newborn people need mediators towards God and that God cannot take care of them is an insult to the Heavenly Father from whom these spiritual children were born and is an offense to the power of the Head who brought these "little ones" to life through His own Spirit.

Even though the Lord is pleased that the more experienced Christians help the younger ones, and calls them to do so in love and without the domination of one another, saying that God cannot take care of His children, or that the younger ones need mediators between them and the Lord, remains a veiled attempt to create or maintain human heads over the body of Christ.

If God could not take care of the children He generates spiritually, how could Philip peacefully dismiss the Ethiopian who was on the way down to Gaza after he received Christ and was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ? (According to Acts 8)

If God could not care for the children He gives spiritual life, how could He have separated the recently converted Paul to be instructed by Christ during the first three years of his Christian life?

A person who is newly born spiritually is the one who most needs to be taught that the source of one's life comes from God directly through Christ Jesus, whom one can access everywhere and at any time through faith in the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ said that *no one should forbid the little ones by preventing them from going to Him*. And how severe is not the hindrance that a person may cause in saying that a newborn child of God cannot go straight to God?

To say that a person needs others to draw near to God is one of the worse and most damaging obstructions that anyone may create in the lives of the newborns in Christ since they need so much to be provided, precisely, from the One Head who grants all the provision of the newness of spiritual life given by the heavenly kingdom.

Christ may call on several members of His body to help new members to develop, and He often does. However, from the moment of the birth of a spiritual child of God to full glory with Christ, the Lord Jesus is the One Head of all, and He raises from these new ones not only praise, but "the perfected praise."

Christ is “the Head of every individual of His spiritual body,” whether a person has been part of this body for a long time or has recently been associated with it.

Christ knows how to touch, feel, and guide each member of His body, regardless of the spiritual maturity of each member and regardless of the time this person is part of His body.

*Ephesians 4: 15 **But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ,***
*16 **from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.***

The text that calls each Christian to remain attached to the Head and the text that describes from whom the whole body receives provision and life do not say that only “adult” spiritual Christians should do so.

The relationship of a newly born spiritual child with God, in the first place, does not depend on the ability of this newborn to know how to do it properly, but it does depend on God knowing how to receive each one or all who come to Him through Christ.

*Hebrews 7: 25 **Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.***

It is impressive to observe the insistence of the human being in the sense of how much he tries to denigrate the fact that God can attend to everyone who seeks Him and how many think that they might do things that they think God would be limited to do.

It is striking to note how many people want to be a complement to the Way to God, resisting the truth that Christ alone is the Mediator and the New and Living Way to the Heavenly Father and the newness of heavenly life.

Likewise, it is also impressive to see how many people think or want to believe that they may have before God and men the vocation of being the head of others or being some “subheads” of Christ.

Only God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are God, and the human being can never indeed be “god” for oneself, much less for others.

The explicit instruction of the Scriptures is that there is only one God. And for this reason, they warn so vehemently that each one should remain “connected directly to the Single or One Head” and that each one takes care not to accompany those members who move away from “the Head” and want to be the “head” of others.

The members guided by the Head Christ are called to be cooperative with other members or to help each other, according to the guidance that each one receives from the “One Head.” They are called to help each other as brothers likewise a family does,

but never to try to intervene so that other members are deprived of enjoying the free access available to them in Christ Jesus.

Now, many of those who are not guided “by the Unique Head,” are also those who seek to divide the body into groupings of members where they themselves think and claim that they may be the head or “subhead” of others, directly opposing the One Head, that is Christ. These, not being a head indeed, try to create “bodies of members guided by members,” becoming blind leading other blind people. They are brainless bodies, without heads in fact. They are men and women of corrupted understanding and dissociated from the truth and the newness of life that is Christ, trying to guide others who also are deprived of an appropriate relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Those who want to command the other members of the body think less of God and Christ than they should and think of themselves more than is convenient.

Romans 12: 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

The belief in which someone thinks one can be the head, leader, or mediator of others in spiritual matters does not refer to the faith that comes from God or, still, it not even is faith, because God never authorized members of the body of Christ to be head and mediators of others.

Where there are assemblies, congregations, large groups, or small groups built in such a way that they consider other members as their foundation, who walk under the direction of members as heads, and who therefore have moved away from the One Head in an attempt to be guided by their fellow men, the building they make is a weird or strange body, not the body of Christ which is united to only one Head of the whole body.

Members who have disconnected from the head and connected to another network can repent and return to the One Head, as He is powerful to "reconnect" them in the true and only source of life, Christ, the One Head of His own body. However, if they remain disconnected from the One Head, how terrible is the end of those who have cut themselves off from the grace of God?

Peter, a disciple of Jesus, sometimes had an impulse to want to be head of other members and sometimes even of the Lord Jesus. The Lord, however, warned and taught him several times that only He, the Christ, is the Head and that solely or exclusively to the Lord belong the sheep who are connected to Him in one body.

Unfortunately, in the world, there are many people inclined to some impulses like those that Peter adopted at certain times. Instead of looking steadily at the Lord Jesus, the Author and Finisher of the faith, they want to know too much about others' lives and think that they can take the direction of the lives of others in their hands. The Lord Jesus, however, clearly told Peter who is the Unique One that has the right to assign the direction of life for the members of the body of Christ and whom Peter should follow.

John 21: 20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"
21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?"
22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."

Under the revelation that the Lord Jesus is the Christ, the One Head, the Lord told Peter that He, the Christ, would build HIS Church and not Peter's church.

The Body of Christ will never have a head divided into two or more heads. To think this is a complete aberration. When some member tries to put oneself as the head of another member, even after being warned to repent, this member puts oneself in a position of becoming disconnected from the body which in Christ is indivisible and remains united to the Eternal and Only Head.

Therefore, **the Church of Christ is the group of members that remain united to the One or Only Head. And whoever does not remain united to the One Head also does not remain united to the body of Christ, the Church.**

When a group of people becomes spiritual dominator of other people, Christ does not remain united to those individuals, has no part in their works, and, yet, with power and authority, calls out and to Himself those who hear His voice.

John 10: 1 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.
2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.
3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
4 And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.
5 Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."
6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.
7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep."

The place of Christ's sheep, or the members of the body of Christ, is not to be trapped in the sheepfolds of pastors, under-pastors, and dominators. The place of Christ's sheep is to be linked to the Head. And to be connected to the Head, they need to be where Christ is and not where the dominators want them to be.

The sheepfolds cannot go to every place where the sheep go. For this reason, the idea of a physical, material, or institutional sheepfolds or refuge for spiritual sheep does not work, for the sheepfolds cannot be a priesthood, protection, and guide everywhere that sheep need to go.

Nevertheless, **when Christ is the Head, the sheep are where Christ is, and Christ is where He leads the sheep to be.**

Only the “One Shepherd” who can be with His sheep at all times and in all places is the one who can effectively shepherd them, for He is not limited as are the religious sheepfolds and their leaders in their most diverse limitations.

Young David, early in life, discovered who and how the personal Pastor of his life was like and what it represented for him, declaring:

*Psalms 23: 1(a) **The LORD is my shepherd.***

Hundreds of years after David, and after being repeatedly taught by the Lord, Peter declares that the true refuge of the sheep is in the same Lord that David reported being the Shepherd of his life, as shown below:

*1 Peter 2: 25 **For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.***

And yet, also the Lord Jesus Himself, the Heavenly Father's beloved, to whom the Father declared His love in a loud voice from heaven, saying that “***This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,***” He Himself explicitly revealed to us who He was:

*John 10: 14 **I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.***

*15 **As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.***

*16 **And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.***

When comparing the last texts above, we may observe that there is no reference concerning dividing the use of the shepherd's staff by more than one head and that this task is exclusive of Christ, the Only Shepherd.

Christians are called to be witnesses of the righteousness of their Head and the Love of their Shepherd, they are called to be blessings in the lives of others, and they are called to cooperate with the shepherding of Christ in their lives. However, they are not called to be “Head and Pastor” of others, even if they say that they do it “in the name of the One Pastor.”

One of the worst injustices that someone may try to impose on others is to try to prevent Christ from being for others what Christ was designed by the Heavenly Father to be in their lives as the One Shepherd and One Head.

The creation groans for the revelation of the freedom of the glory of the children of God. And the liberty of the glory of the children of God, in turn, is to have access to the heavenly Light even in the world in darkness, because if they have Christ as their Head,

these children of God have in Him all the Light they need, as we have already seen in previous chapters.

Nevertheless, if Christians refrain from standing before Christ to be enlightened by the One Head that God has appointed for them, it is not under an inferior spiritual covering that they will find what they really need.

When the Lord rose from the dead, the first person who saw Him resurrected was Mary Magdalene (according to John 20). And she, too, was the first to whom the Lord gave guidance to testify to His disciples about the condition that He had risen. Now, Mary Magdalene was not one of the 12 apostles, showing us Christ that the relationship of each member of His body with Him as Head is direct and personal, and that even the 12 apostles were not called to mediate others in this relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Mary Magdalene was at the grave weeping because no one could let her know where her Master's body was. However, the Lord Himself came to meet her, comforted her as the Eternal High Priest, and instructed her as King as to what she should do, showing Himself as the Head and Pastor who is alive and able to serve everyone according to God's righteousness in all aspects of their lives.

Although they declare that they believe that Christ is risen, many people relate to Christ as if He were not indeed alive or as if He were not qualified to be the Head of each member of His body, forgetting, time after time, that it is Christ that God established to sustain each aspect of the universe, how much more those who love Him and recognize Him as the Head of their lives.

If a member of the body of Christ remains attached to the Head, the Head of the body will never forget this member or leave him or her unattended, but He is willing to walk in broad fellowship with each one who remains united with Him.

*Ephesians 5: 29 **For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.***

*30 **For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.***

*1 Corinthians 12: 27 **Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.***

*Psalms 25: 5 **Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.***

C35. The Glory of Christ as the *Head* of the Collective of Two Called Marriage

A. The First Horizontal and Collective Relationship of the Human Being

In the previous chapter, we came to see that Christ, as the Head of His body, presents this condition both over each individual who believes in Him and over the collective aspect of His body, which is also called the Church.

In the previous chapter, we also started to see, in more detail, the condition of Christ as the Head over each individual member of His body, making a mention that the approach of Christ also being the Head of the collectivity of members would be accomplished in a chapter further up.

Nonetheless, before we approach this second part of the position of Christ as the Head of His whole body, collectively speaking, we would like previously to address another aspect where Christ is also the Head, and which is the condition of Christ being the Head of those who established a marriage according to the marital principle established by the Lord.

The fact that we approach Christ's position as the Head in marriages established before God, before we see Christ's role over His whole body, does not make this condition of the Lord concerning the conjugal aspect more important than His state as Head of His body, for these two conditions complement and cooperate with each other.

The approach of the position of Christ as the Head on marriages is being made previously for the reason that this condition pushes us to see the first collective horizontal relationship that the human being had with another human being.

In yet another previous chapter, we have also seen that the fact that Christ is the King of Righteousness and King of Peace, both over individuals as well as over the collectivity, makes the task of Christ's reign significantly amplified, this breadth being already very evident in the collectivity created by the union of 1 + 1 through marriage.

From the moment that Adam joined conjugally with Eve, a whole new and singular form of relationship was introduced in humanity, making that, from that moment, Adam and Eve not only had a life covenant with God but also an alliance in different aspects of life between them.

Before the marriage union, the human being was related to God without any covenant bond with any other person than the Lord. But this situation started to present many significant differences from the moment of Adam and Eve's marital union.

The matrimonial union is a collective of 1 + 1 that may result in children as a result of this union, fruits that can only be achieved by the merger of what the man has to offer and what the woman has to offer, and it also introduced an entirely new concept of cooperation and joint action so that specific purposes may be achieved by this collective action.

And because the marital union is so unique, it also has elevated or special attention on God's part, since it was God who also established this type of union in His plans.

The matrimonial union between man and woman, or also called marriage, is something that has been part of humanity since its beginning, and, of course, without it, the very humanity itself would have ceased to exist.

Since the beginning of humanity, God has the marriage union in high honor and under high value, even saying that everyone should also see it in this way, according to the following text:

*Hebrews 13: 4 **Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.***

B. The Marital Principle that Remains Unchanged from the Beginning

Although our purpose in this chapter is not to conduct a study on marriage itself and what follows it, since our goal is to highlight Christ's position as Head on this matter, we believe it is necessary to return a little to some basic principles on the marital union as it is presented to us by the Lord in the Scriptures precisely to see, more objectively, the position of Christ concerning it.

Another aspect that makes marital union unique, unlike several other factors related to humanity, is that it, before God, was established by some basic principles that the Lord never gave up being taught and to be used as essential principles for any conjugal union recognized by God.

For God, the principles of the first marriage or the first conjugal union are those that we find described as follows in the opening parts of the Book of Genesis:

Genesis 2: 21 **And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.**

22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Approximately four thousand years later, the Lord Jesus Christ, when asked about issues related to marriage, reiterated the same words that God had spoken since the beginning of the establishment of a marriage, since the first time that the man and the woman were introduced to each other, thus reaffirming that, in God's view, this matter has never undergone any change over the centuries, even though human beings have often tried to establish other parameters for the marital point.

Matthew 19: 4 **And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'**

5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Mark 10: 5 **And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.**

6 But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.

7 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,

- 8 and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.**
9 Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."
-

The manner of union between a man and a woman was established since the marriage of the first couple on the face of the Earth and became, before God, the basis for all the descendants of Adam and Eve in all peoples. The proper way of marital union is not something that God left for men and women to define, but He, as the Creator of both, as God over the creation, showed His intent and the way He defined for marriage.

From the beginning, already before the first union of the first man with the first woman, God established how the marital unions of all sons and daughters who descended from them should take place.

And without recognizing what for God is marriage worthy of honor among all, and without acknowledging how marriage is established before the Lord, there is also no way that the theme of Christ being the Head in this matter might be addressed appropriately.

We will see later that in married life, Christ is the Head of the husband and the husband the head of his wife for the proper functioning of the marriage, but this, in turn, applies to marriages that are established according to the principles that God left defined for them to be established.

Over the centuries and by introducing cultural variations, the human being has tried many times to modify the essence of what is a true marriage before God. However, the fact that many cultures define marriage according to their own concepts does not change what marriage is before God or according to His instruction.

The fact that civil societies, through their customs, laws, and magistrates, accept and recognize marriages that are in disagreement with what is acknowledged as marriage before God, does not imply that the Lord acknowledges as marriage what people establish as being a civilly acceptable marital union.

If during the Order of Aaron period, God tolerated some conduct contrary to marriage because of the hardness of the people's heart in rejecting God's direct priesthood towards each person and because of the temporary period of the Order of Aaron, to witness of its weakness and uselessness, as we have already seen, from the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, and from the manifestation of the establishment of the Order of Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus began to reiterate the principle established from the beginning, not accepting anymore the temporality of what was adopted under the revoked Order of Aaron.

Christ, as the Eternal High Priest, the King of Righteousness, and the King of Peace, is also the Head of matrimonial unions, but only of those which are in line with the principles of God about what indeed is a marital union and not over what human beings, in their own conjectures, consider to be a marriage.

Christ's glory as the Head over a married couple refers to those marital unions that God recognizes, regardless of whether a civil society recognizes or does not recognize the principles established by the Lord.

Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?

***So then, they are no longer two but one flesh.
Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.***

C. The Condition of Christ as Head that Applies Specifically to Married People

Yet another point that we consider to be significant to address before we see the condition of Christ as the Head over a marital union is that this principle applies to couples that married according to the marriage principle established by God and not to those individuals who are not united by marriage.

When the Scriptures inform us that Christ is the Head of every man, that man is the head of the woman, and that God is the Head of Christ, as we will see later, its first and second parts are not referring to those who are, for instance, single, widowed, or separated in a manner acceptable before the Lord.

The condition of God saying that a man is the head of a woman is not a general condition in which any man is the head of any woman, but this is a restricted condition for a man specifically concerning his own and only wife.

The marital relationship is one to one, as Christ has already shown us in the texts seen in the previous topic and as Paul also shows us in the following texts:

- 1 Corinthians 7: 1* ***Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.***
2 ***Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.***
3 ***Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.***

Colossians 3: 18 ***Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.***

19 ***Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.***

Besides being one-to-one, the relationship described above is still restricted to those united by marriage and does not apply to those who do not find themselves in this condition.

People may choose to remain in a condition in which they do not join with others for married life and be very blessed by God and live productive and peaceful lives before the Heavenly Lord, as Paul teaches us in the following texts:

- 1 Corinthians 7: 7* ***For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.***
8 ***But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am;***
9 ***but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.***

1 Corinthians 7: 32 But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord.

33 But he who is married cares about the things of the world, how he may please his wife.

34 There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

35 And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

Adult people who believe in Christ and choose not to live a married life respond directly to the Lord in everything, and the Lord is their Head in all aspects of their lives, applying even more exclusively to them what was seen in the previous chapter about the Lord being the Head of every member of His body.

Likewise, it also happens with the widower or the widow, since the marriage relationship was interrupted by the death of the other party, making the one who remains alive on Earth becoming still more exclusively connected to the Lord. On several occasions, the Scriptures reiterate that God, for example, is the Lord who defends widows and is zealous for them to be well cared for. (For example: Romans 7: 1 to 4; 1 Corinthians 7; Psalms 68: 5).

There are still other situations in which the husband's position as head of the woman can be affected and which occur due to some very specific separations, as exposed by Paul in the following text:

1 Corinthians 7: 10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.

11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.

13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.

16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

Thus, the principles about what we intend to address about marriage in the next topics of this chapter do not apply directly to those out of marriage according to the cases mentioned above, unless they intend to change their conditions to a married state.

Neither the one who wants to get married is more important than the one who does not want to get married nor the one who does not want to get married is more important than the others who want to get married, but both the one who chooses not to get married and the one who chooses marriage receive from God the general will of how to live and walk according to each of these options.

If a person chooses not to marry, there is a God-approved will of how one should live life as an unmarried person, as well as a God-approved will of how a person should live if one chooses to marry.

Each one is called to live before God according to the specific situation that one chooses to live.

God is not a God of disorder, but a God of order!

If a person does not want to marry, this may be perfectly acceptable to God, and God can greatly bless that person's life. If, on the other hand, one wants to marry, this too is worthy of honor before God and should be so before other people.

Nevertheless, God does not endorse the mixture of these things, that is, the single, for instance, wanting to live a "half marriage" or the married individual wanting to live a "half single" condition. This is simply not the general will of God, entering the sphere of fornication, lust, prostitution, and adultery (according to 1 Corinthians 7: 7 till 9).

The single person, in a way, can serve the Lord with more exclusivity. And since one is not involved in a marriage, marriage matters simply do not apply to him or her. However, if one starts *to burn with passion*, one puts oneself in situations of high risk even in terms of one's eternal life, as the word of the Lord admonishes us:

1 Corinthians 6: 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6: 13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Likewise, married couples are called to be faithful each to their spouse, bearing in mind that:

Hebrews 13: 4 **Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.**

Ephesians 5: 28 **So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.**

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

In the marital matter, we may see, then, that in the broader will of God for people's lives, there are, in general, two significantly different alternatives to be chosen, and which are: (1) not to marry or (2) to marry according to the principles of God. However, once a person chooses one way or another, each path also has its respective particularities to be followed.

D. The Condition of Christ as Head that Helps to Clarify Conjugal Union according to the Principle of God - Part 1

1 Corinthians 11: 3 ***But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.***

Ephesians 5: 23 ***For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.***

When a person associates with another through a marital union, there are several specific situations concerning which that person becomes under a condition not as individualized or independent of other people as one would be if one were not united by marriage.

The union through marriage, by its very nature, introduces several aspects that are made together with the spouse and concerning which a person also no longer has the individuality that one would have if not united to another person by this type of union.

Nevertheless, without understanding the position of Christ regarding each individual, as well as concerning the husband and the wife who joined in marriage, it is tough to understand their very matrimonial union.

Besides offering Himself to guide the individual lives that He created, God also wants to be part of the covenant decisions that Christians make with other people and wants to guide them in these covenants that they make with each other through marriage.

After the marital union, several aspects of the couple's life no longer have an individual connotation and come to be seen in a grouped way. The marriage union, in some parts, makes God see two as one and united in one same point, according to the text already seen above and which we repeat below:

Matthew 19: 4 ***And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'***
5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?'
6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

On the other hand, we should also not consider the marriage union excessively and beyond what is said about it in the Scriptures, going so far as to want to consider unified what does not belong to the marriage union to become unified.

When we read the words declared by God in the Book of Genesis and later reiterated by Christ, we may see that what the matrimonial union unifies between the man and the woman, who come together in this way, is that both become like "one flesh," but the Lord's Scriptures do not say, for instance, that they become one soul.

The union in “one flesh” is something very comprehensive and with extensive derivations, but it does not come to nullify individuals who were conceived, individually, as distinct people. The soul that a person receives together with the natural conception and the made alive spirit that a person comes to have when receiving Christ as the Lord of one's life, remain with individual characteristics even after the marital union.

Already at the beginning of Genesis, the Scriptures explicitly instruct us that in the creation of the human race, both man and woman were formed by God and were even created through different manners.

Adam was created first. And from a part of Adam, God formed Eve, but it was still God who created each one individually.

Adam, therefore, is not the father of Eve. God is the Father of Adam as much as He is the Father of Eve.

Millennia later, the Lord Jesus Christ reaffirms what was already stated at the beginning, saying that it was God who created them both, ***made them male and female, made them man and woman.***

Thus, to understand marriage union, it is crucial to understand the individual condition, concerning the soul and spirit, that a person has in life and before the Heavenly Father and Christ.

Christ is “the Head” of every member of His body, He is the Shepherd of every sheep, He is the Master of every disciple, and He is the Guide of every follower, and yet, the Heavenly Father is the Father of every member of His family.

And this possibility of God's relationship with each person is a part of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the High Priest and King according to the Order of Melchizedek, which is not altered or prevented by the marriage union.

As the Eternal High Priest, Christ speaks directly to “every individual” who believes in Him and receives Him for personal fellowship. As King, Christ guides “each individual,” guides and teaches a person to see the general will of God so that each one can walk in this will, just as He reveals to each one His specific will. And marriage, according to the principle of God, does not come with the purpose of removing this possibility of an individual relationship of a saved person with the Lord who saved him or her.

If, for example, marital union were to cut off the possibility of a woman's direct fellowship with God or the children's fellowship with God, God would be placing “mediating husbands” between God and human beings. And so, God would be contradicting His statement that we have seen so many times in the present subject, the affirmation that Christ is the Only Mediator between God and the people who inhabit the world.

The fact that the Scriptures say that Christ is the Head of the husband and that the husband is the head of the wife refers to the aspects of the marriage union but does not refer to the condition of Christ being the Head who is “***all in all.***”

We will see later that the husband's position as head of the woman is related to a matter of the couple's joint posture as such for the execution and accomplishment of

the various aspects that need to be performed by the couple and to be able to walk in unity in what derives from the union, but this does not place the husband as a “mediating priest” over his wife and family.

If a woman or child were deprived of coming directly to Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Heavenly Father, and were deprived of exercising the individual role of priests with the Eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, they would neither be able to pray to God nor be instructed directly by the Lord in their hearts, which contradicts everything the Scriptures teach us about the love of God in Christ Jesus for each person.

“*In Christ*,” in the fellowship with the Lord, in remaining in the fellowship with Christ, and in walking in Christ, the Scriptures declare and teach that:

*Galatians 3: 26 **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.***

*27 **For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***

*28 **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female (or neither man nor woman); for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

What unites a man and a woman in the flesh is the matrimonial act, but what unites them spiritually, what unites them in the Spirit of God, is the faith of each one in Christ.

And as for this union “*in Christ*,” there cannot be or there is no distinction between man and woman, male and female, just as “*in Christ*” there can be no distinction of people because of the nations, peoples, races, or languages from which they descend.

*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.***

*12 **Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.***

The “inner being” or the “new man” who is created according to the truth and righteousness of God when someone receives the Lord in the heart is spiritual, and, therefore, has free access to Christ according to the characteristics of being spiritual and not of being carnal.

If a Christian man or Christian woman has a non-Christian spouse, they may be united by marriage, be one flesh, but they are not unified in the Spirit, for one of them has not yet put on Christ and is not “*in Christ*.”

And in the case of the non-Christian being the husband, would the woman be prevented from praying to the Lord because her husband is her head in the matrimonial aspect? Certainly not!

If a married woman came to lose her condition of listening directly to the Lord Jesus Christ who saved her and dwells in her heart, she also would be prevented from being instructed directly by God to adopt a position of submission to her husband voluntarily.

Let us note here that when the Scriptures tell a woman to submit to her husband, as to the Lord, they add that her submission to her husband should be equated with the submission she already practices regarding the Lord, showing us that to submit to the Lord is a priority and a precondition to submission to the husband.

*Ephesians 5: 22 **Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.***

If the woman, when getting married, loses her condition of submission in the first place to the Lord, the Lord would tell husbands to tell women to be submissive to them. However, the Scriptures do not address husbands when they speak of the submission of women. They address each woman to make the voluntary option to submit to her husband, as she should have previously done to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the marriage union, Christ is the Head of the husband, for the husband to be the head of the woman in married life. However, as a child of God and as a “being in Christ,” each woman also has Christ as the Head personally and directly, as does each member of the Lord's Body.

“In Christ” or the individual relationship with Christ, the woman has the same position as the husband. And in this position, neither male nor female can be separated. “In Christ,” all men or women who have the Lord in their hearts are also children of the Heavenly Father and members of the Body of the Lord Jesus.

A wife can “live and walk in the Lord,” or she can live and walk personally in the fear of the Lord, even if her husband does not, and she can even be a witness of God to her husband if she appropriately acts so that he may see, in her, life according to the will of God.

*1 Peter 3: 1 **Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,***
*2 **when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.***

On the other hand, if the husband wants to prevent his wife from being able to relate personally to Christ or from “being in Christ,” we find in the Scriptures the instruction that if this lasts, the woman can choose Christ instead of subjecting to her husband, showing us the sovereign condition that Christ has even over this woman's marital union, applying this similarly to the opposite case, where the husband wants to be subject to Christ and the woman does not want to consent to it.

*1 Corinthians 7: 12 **But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.***

- 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.**
- 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.**
- 15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.**
- 16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?**

Hebrews 12: 9 **Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?**

The wife is called to submit to her husband as is fitting in the Lord, but for her to know how to submit to her husband “being in the Lord,” she needs to personally be in fellowship with Christ and listen to the Lord's instructions on how to submit in wisdom also to the husband.

Colossians 3: 18 **Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**

If a wife is not “in Christ,” if she is not “abiding in Christ,” if she is not “in the Lord,” she will also not know how to submit to her husband as to the Lord or as it is fitting in the Lord.

According to the Book of the Songs of Solomon, a wife is for the husband, in addition to his beloved, also his sister in God, his friend, and his companion, because “in Christ,” she has the same condition of access to the Lord as her husband has to be instructed and built individually by the Lord and also for the good of the couple.

Song of Solomon 4: 9 **You have ravished my heart, My sister, my spouse; You have ravished my heart With one look of your eyes, With one link of your necklace.**

10 How fair is your love, My sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love, And the scent of your perfumes Than all spices!

On the other hand, if the husband does not recognize Christ as the Head of his life or does not present himself to be in fellowship with the Lord to “be and remain in Christ,” he also cannot offer his wife a direction according to God's will. And for this reason, too, it is crucial that the wife is in fellowship with the Lord to know, inclusive, when it is not healthy to submit to her husband in what he asks in opposition to what the Lord has instructed her to follow.

Several times, it was pointed out above that **marriage does not cancel the condition that Christ is “the Head” of each person of the couple**

individually, because the marital union does not nullify what each of the two had already achieved “in Christ” when they became part of the body of Christ.

Thus, the position of Christ, as Head, who receives the man or woman indistinctly and personally for fellowship and to instruct them in the will of God, should never be neglected by any part of the married couple.

For a couple to walk in unity in the will of God, each spouse needs to expose oneself before the Lord for the knowledge of the will of God, which, first of all, is built up by Christ personally in the heart of each person who believes in Him, because it is He who is the Author and Finisher of the faith of each or all of those who believe in Him.

The unity of Christians that is in line with God's will is established first when they are individually “*in Christ and the Heavenly Father.*” And this principle applies equally to a Christian couple.

1 John 1: 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.**

Thus, **one thing is a couple to be in unity about something, and quite another, for the couple to be in unity in the will of God.**

This point is highly significant and necessary to be known. For this reason, it will be exemplified a little ahead also with a negative example.

Something that should be noted here, then, is that not every agreement is profitable and healthy, for couples may come together for good purposes, but also for inappropriate conveniences, collusion, and complicity.

Unfortunately, we can say that there might be actions of unity between a couple that do not always occur only “*in Christ.*” An agreement may be made between husband and wife according to their very wishes or even around the will of others.

Therefore, we reiterate the relevance of each spouse, personally, always seeking to be in fellowship with Christ also to avoid the adoption of paths and actions contrary to God that, eventually, one of the spouses suggests to the other and so that they do not come together for purposes that might be damaging for them.

Several narratives in the Scriptures exemplify the unity of couples around inappropriate purposes. And when this happens, the couple might run into an intense way of multiplying error and evil.

Let us seek to observe in the following example what we commented above:

Acts 5: 1 ***But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.***
2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.
3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?"

- 4 *While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.*
- 5 *Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.*
- 6 *And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.*
- 7 *Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.*
- 8 *And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much."*
- 9 *Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."*
- 10 *Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband.*
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In the last text exposed above, we have the example of a couple who agreed to "lie." The text does not say for sure, but it seems that husband and wife wanted to "seem what they were not" before other Christians. They may have looked for recognition before their brothers for something they did not do entirely or wanted something else that is not narrated. The text does not focus on their purpose associated with their behavior but focuses on the actions they practice.

Ananias and Sapphira had not stolen anyone, but they agreed to lie for some reason. We do not know what they were aiming for, but the focus we want to see here is the unity they established towards the error and the damage it caused them.

In Peter's question, in the text above, we can observe that the wife could have chosen not to come to an agreement with her husband, for the husband's attitude was not consistent with the truth. When Peter asked, "*how is it that you have agreed together,*" he is pointing out that she had a choice not to have done so.

Sapphira could have sought God directly and sought wisdom for what to do in the situation mentioned above. However, she entered into a direct agreement with her husband. The text does not say why she came to an agreement but says that she actually came to an agreement. However, this agreement with her husband proved to be an act of submission to her husband that Sapphira should not have done, that is, in which she should have resisted her husband to remain in submission "*to the Lord.*"

Ananias' mistake, explained above, was, of course, as serious as Sapphira's mistake or even worse because he was the head of the wife in married life. However, it is due to the context we want to show about what type of submission God asks wives, and that they do not lose the possibility of relating directly to God because of marriage, that we are also first evidencing the position of the wife "*in Christ*" and "*of Christ*" towards her.

Upon entering into an agreement with his wife, Ananias also did not listen to the Head to whom he should be subject, preferring to listen to the devil. For this reason, if she were "*in Christ,*" Sapphira could have resisted the one who was working evil in her husband's heart.

Therefore, we understand that it is worth highlighting some considerations here, as follows:

- ⇒ 1) People very close, from the same house and the same bed, might make proposals of the flesh or even from the evil one to each other as Ananias and Sapphira did;
- ⇒ 2) It is not the simple unity of the couple that brings victory, nor the unity between them and around their own ideas should be the target of unity of a couple;
- ⇒ 3) It is not in the collective environment or various people agreeing about some thought that there is the guarantee that their ideas are always right;
- ⇒ 4) It is not the complicity of one spouse with the other that protects them from destruction;
- ⇒ 5) The fact that a spouse decides for something wrong does not imply that the other spouse has to follow this spouse and do the same or be conniving with the other.

If the husband is not in an appropriate personal relationship with Christ, he will also have difficulty having Christ as the Head of his marriage, thus affecting his conduct as the head of his wife in this marriage.

On the other hand, **if the wife is not in an appropriate personal relationship with Christ, she too will have difficulty discerning how to cooperate and submit correctly to her husband, being vulnerable to incurring in opposition to what comes from God or perhaps consenting to what does not come from God.**

Thus, or because of what has been exposed in these last paragraphs, there is also so much insistence throughout this whole material about the subject of the personal and individual fellowship of man and woman with Christ or the direct relationship of each Christian with the Lord and Savior of one's life.

After getting married, a woman may come to think that the responsibility for seeking God's will rests entirely with her husband, or the husband may come to believe that the woman has every obligation to seek God's will for them. However, this type of thinking does not match the will of God. The Lord loves the husband and the wife equally, and He wants them both to continue "*in Christ*." He wants them both to continue to personally seek the Lord Jesus and the Heavenly Father even after they got married.

Before talking about how a couple relates to each other and how they relate as a couple to God, it is necessary to emphasize that each one should know one's personal relationship with God and the Lord of one's life, with the Lord who is the Eternal High Priest and King of each one of them individually, and then, also of them as a couple united before God.

When couples begin wanting to understand marriage as a primarily horizontal relationship, devoid of the personal condition of each one of them before the Lord, they come to see everything from an earthly perspective. And also because of this, they start to see marriage concepts and actions in a distorted way.

Therefore, **the first big marital challenge is not marriage itself, but rather that both husband and wife remain, first and personally, “in Christ.” Each spouse is called to abide continually in the Lord of each one individually so that, in addition to this, He too may be the Lord in the collective condition of the couple.**

The first big challenge of marriage is that each spouse remains personally “in Christ” even after being married.

Through marriage, a new challenge is established, which is two converging to the same purposes so that the effects on one flesh are beneficial and do not contribute to evil. On the other hand, it is also vital that some personal, individual, and essential attitudes are maintained in each person's relationship with the Lord, which God never intended or intends to take out of the lives of those who, first of all, are His children.

The first place in which Christ wants to grant righteousness and peace is in each individual's heart, and this does not change with marriage. There is no authority on earth or in heaven designed by God to interpose in the personal covenant that God has made with each person, and this also does not apply to the husband concerning the wife or the wife regarding the husband.

Personal fellowship with God, of both husband and wife, is the path to unity around the will of God. It is the path to unity around what will build the house and not divide the home and the lives that make part of it.

In the New Covenant in Christ, each of the Lord's sons or daughters is instructed or taught to seek their own relationship with God, even after being united by marriage.

Hebrews 8: 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.**

The union in one flesh occurs from the moment when the husband and wife are united by the marital union, but it is by each spouse also remaining individually “in Christ” that the appropriate unity of purpose can be found, and it is where the victory in God is established for this couple. And even if one spouse does not want to and does not practice “*being in Christ*,” the other party can remain faithful to the Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son and can continue to achieve the gift of the newness of life in the Lord, for it is primarily Christ who sustains each one who is member individually of His spiritual Body.

1 Corinthians 12: 27 **Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.**

Ephesians 5: 29 **For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.**
30 **For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.**

E. The Condition of Christ as *Head* that Helps to Clarify Conjugal Union according to the Principle of God - Part 2

Mark 10: 6 ***But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’***

7 ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,

8 and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.

1 Corinthians 11: 1 ***Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.***

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

A second important aspect that Christ's position as the Head teaches and clarifies concerning marriage is related to the condition in which “***a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.***”

And why should those who join in marriage leave father and mother to achieve conjugal union effectively?

One of the main reasons related to this last question is clarified by the position narrated by Paul in the text of the Book of Corinthians exposed above.

A man and a woman who want to be united by marriage are called to leave their father and mother so that, in their married life, Christ has the preeminence of being the only Head of their lives and their marriage union.

Leaving father and mother is an integral and indispensable part for a marriage to be established according to the principle declared by God, for the spouses start a new family before God, and only Christ is authorized and appointed by the Heavenly Father to be the Head of each new family.

From the beginning, God entrusted parents with the teaching and care of a significant part of the lives of the children that He grants to a couple. However, the privilege of tutoring children is temporary, for God, as children grow up, intends to relate more and more directly to the sons and daughters of the parents by whom they were raised.

God gives parents the enormous and even indescribable privilege of being the means to conceive children, but these children, first and foremost, belong to God. Children are the property of God that the Lord allows earthly parents to nurture, teach, and care for a period of time, but always with the understanding that they are the inheritance of the Eternal Lord and heirs of God.

Psalms 127: 3 **Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.**

Romans 8: 17 **And if we are children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.**

Ephesians 1: 11 **In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,**
12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

God does not have grandchildren, and the Lord does not address generations descending from others as grandchildren, great-grandchildren, or any of these types of genealogical line, but God calls each generation as children, even if they are children of children of children.

When God told Adam and Eve to bear fruit and multiply, and then also Noah concerning his children and daughters-in-law, the Lord never intended to establish a patriarchal or a matriarchal hierarchy or pyramid that would subject children, grandchildren, and their successions to their parents.

As we have seen earlier, God, already from the beginning, told Adam and Eve that they should leave father and mother concerning getting united in marriage, noting yet that when God spoke this, neither Adam nor Eve had parents to leave.

When God said that marital union should be preceded by leaving father and mother, He said it to Adam and Eve in the sense that, when they would become parents, they would teach their children this principle, as well as allow their children to cease to be under their tutelage to start a new time before the Lord.

When children leave father and mother to be united by marriage according to God's principle, they start to have a unique position before God to take care of their own families, just as their parents previously also had the condition to take care of their respective family.

The Scriptures teach us that children should continually consider their parents in great honor and, if necessary, even cooperate in their care, which is highly honorable before the Lord.

Nevertheless, **from the moment a marriage is established before God and according to the Lord's principle, the sovereignty of the direction of the lives of the new couple constituted by this marriage union belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Children, of course, should try to maintain fellowship with their parents, they can try to listen to what they have to say to them, and they should observe the experiences of faith in God that their parents let them as an example. However, the decisions that a couple married according to

God's principle should start to make, should always be in line with what Christ directs this couple to do.

The fact that God instructs children to leave their parents when they come together for marriage aims to establish explicitly that over each couple and family should only be one “head” over them, for this position should be exclusive of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Considering that all human beings are descended from Adam and Eve, and since God teaches us that only Christ is the Head of every man, leaving father and mother to unite in marriage, besides meaning to leave direct parents, also means leaving the whole set of progenitors since Adam and Eve, making sure that each couple can be under the direct instruction of Christ as it was always intended by God since the beginning of the creation.

Marriage is one of the means by which God manifests Himself to each new generation in a renewed way as the Lord or as the Head over everything and everyone, reminding us of what is declared to us in various texts of the Scriptures, namely:

Psalms 89: 4 **Your seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.**

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

Psalms 100: 5 **For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.**

Luke 1: 50 **And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation.**

Psalms 102: 12 **But You, O LORD, shall endure forever, And the remembrance of Your name to all generations.**

Psalms 119: 90 **Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.**

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.**

Lamentations 5: 19 **You, O LORD, remain forever; Your throne from generation to generation.**

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

F. The Condition of Christ as *Head* that Helps to Clarify Conjugal Union according to the Principle of God - Part 3

- 1 Corinthians 11: 1* ***Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.***
2 ***Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.***
3 ***But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.***

In the previous topic, we saw that one of the reasons why children leave their parents to establish marriage is related to the fact that Christ was established by the Heavenly Father, who is the Head of Christ, as the Head over each constituted couple and in which the man is also considered to be the head of his wife.

Nevertheless, when we look at the text in which Paul declares that Christ is the Head of the husband, it can be observed that Paul is not making this reference only in the context of the husband leaving father and mother so that the couple may have Christ as the Head of their marriage.

When Paul presents the condition that Christ is the Head, he does so in reference to himself, that is, he is referring to himself to exemplify a broader principle.

When Paul says, “***but I want you to know***,” he is continuing with the aspect where he told people to be imitators of him in terms of being also, personally and individually, imitators of Christ and in what concerns these people to have been faithful in having retained the principles of Christ that he, Paul, shared with them.

“***But I want you to know***” means that Paul was making it clear that he was not a “head” for any Christian, despite being an example of how someone should imitate Christ and despite having been used by God to speak and write to Christians many of the central principles about the Christian life.

Through the statements referenced above, Paul comes to clarify that, in addition to leaving father and mother to have Christ as Head of life and marriage, no couple should adopt any other “covering” over their lives, as this is an exclusive position of Christ Jesus on every husband and marital union.

Now, if Paul, being who he was before God, being an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, said that no one should have any other Head than Christ, let alone others might be heads of husbands and other couples.

The exclusivity that Paul, at the beginning of the first letter to the Corinthians, declared about the fact that Christ is the only foundation on which a person should build one's life, now, in a more advanced part of this same letter, is also declared by Paul concerning Christ being the exclusive Head of a marriage.

We should also note that Paul does not say that the husband is the wife's foundation, for this is only Christ, but Paul declares that Christ, concerning the husband and wife, is the exclusive Head of the husband, as the husband is of his own wife.

In the verses following those quoted in the introduction to this topic, Paul further clarifies the exclusivity of Christ as the Head as described below:

*1 Corinthians 11: 4 **Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.***

*1 Corinthians 11: 7 **For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.***

Now, if we put together verse 3 of chapter 11, which declares that **Christ is the head of every man**, with what is said in verse 4, which states that **every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head**, we can see that the married man, the man united in marriage to his wife, who covers his head with other instructors, guides, human philosophies, and rudiments, or even with the covering of his parents, is a man who dishonors Christ.

Not only this, together with dishonoring Christ, the adult man who is subject to a guardianship or spiritual covering over his life, that is not exclusively the Lord Jesus, prevents the glory over his life, which is solely due to God, to be attributed to the Lord, remembering that God never authorizes His glory to be given to others.

*Isaiah 42: 8 **I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.***

*Isaiah 48: 11 **For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another.***

*Psalms 115: 1 **Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.***

An adult man or married according to the principle of God who accepts tutelary or spiritual covering over his life other than the exclusive covering of Christ as his Head, dishonors Christ and enters the sphere of profaning the name of God, trying to go against God by seeking to attribute the glory of God to another.

Just as any mediation that is not done through Christ is not accepted between God and people in general, so no mediation that is not done through Christ is accepted between God and couples established by a marriage union according to the Lord's principle.

Not even for a marriage to have its beginning recognized before God is it necessary for there to be mediators to make this matrimony happen, for the Scriptures tell us that **a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.**

According to what was established by God from the beginning, the ones who make or materialize a marriage of a man and a woman are the man and the woman when they unite with each other after leaving father and mother.

In Isaac's life, we see that Abraham, his father, helped him in choosing his wife and acted to present her as an option to Isaac, and not without Rebekah's agreement. However, she only became Isaac's wife when he also took her as his wife, as narrated below:

Genesis 24: 62 **Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South.**
63 **And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming.**
64 **Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel;**
65 **for she had said to the servant, "Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself.**
66 **And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.**
67 **Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.**

In the days of Isaac, it was not necessary to say that a couple did not need a priest to become united before God, for neither Abraham nor Isaac were subject to human priests. The only priest to whom Abraham submitted was Melchizedek, who was also the Eternal King of Righteousness and Peace as we already have sought to explain earlier.

From the beginning, the one who establishes marriage before God is the groom and the bride, and the matters of the demand for "spiritual" priests to hold this celebration have only arisen over the years. And this happens because of the traditions and philosophies of human beings themselves and to try to give credit to priestly functions that are not even recognized before the Lord.

Several times in the Scriptures, the Lord teaches us to be careful not to be caught up in traditions and philosophies according to men, and yet repeats the warning to remain firm in Christ Jesus, as exemplified below:

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.**

Furthermore, not even in the revoked and obsolete Order of Aaron, the priestly order under the law of Moses, was there any indication of the participation of priests or Levites in the celebration of weddings or marriages.

Nowadays, there are people who claim to be ministers of the Gospel of Christ and that, because of this, they have "the authority to declare a couple as husband and wife

before God.” However, nowhere in the Gospel of Christ has such a prerogative been established. On the contrary, it is from the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world and the preaching of the Gospel of God that the simplicity of establishing a marriage is emphasized. It is from the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, and His resurrection from the dead, that the matter of Christ being the only Head over the couple is declared even more clearly, emphatically, or evident.

No one in human history has respected women as much as Christ did. And no one receives both the man and the woman, without distinction of one to the detriment of the other, to “*be in Him*” as Christ did.

The priests who claim to be authorized by God to perform marriages are not only not authorized by the Lord to do so, for the preaching of the Gospel of God does not confer this authorization on anyone, but they are also not authorized even to be spiritual priests in the lives of others because Christ is the only Eternal High Priest who mediates people, in everything, with the Eternal God.

If the very priestly position of a person who calls oneself “minister of the Gospel” regarding the mediation of others is no longer valid before God, for this is a veiled way of trying to re-establish some principles of the Order of Aaron, and if not even in the order of Aaron the priests were established to perform marriages, much less valid then, before God, is the performance of a wedding or matrimony by those who are not even accepted by the Lord for this function.

The ones who “*make or perform the marriage*” of a couple, according to the principle of God, are the groom and the bride after leaving father and mother to be united with each other.

If it is possible and in the interest of the bride and the groom to have a wedding celebration, this is something that can be done and which is even exemplified on several occasions in the Scriptures. However, even so, the ones who “make or perform the wedding or matrimony” are the groom with the bride, leaving father and mother and uniting in one flesh to the spouse, knowing that they both do it before God.

A groom and a bride who understood the principle of God for marriage, when asked about “*who made their matrimony*,” should be ready to answer, with conviction, that they, themselves, married or joined in matrimony, that they are who “*made their marriage*” and that God was the main witness of their union with each other.

The question “*who made or performed the wedding*,” biblically speaking, is even bizarre, for since it is the groom who marries the bride, how could someone except them do what only the bride and groom can do?

Some people may find the wedding in a temple so-called spiritual to be “pretty or fancy,” or to think it is very spiritual before God to have a priest who celebrates the covenant of the bride and groom, but all of this just does not match the Scriptures in any of its aspects.

If, for example, a priest “*officiates the wedding*,” the groom or bride may come to think that it was the priest who brought them together and may not understand that the entire responsibility for their union is at the option of the bride and groom before God, for they, themselves, came together in the marital act.

If a priest “*officiates the marriage*,” the couple may come to think inappropriately:

⇒ 1) That it is the priest’s supposed blessing that will make them prosper;

- ⇒ 2) That after being married, they need to continue “running after the alleged blessings” of priests for the successful continuation of their married life;
- ⇒ 3) That when transferring the establishment of marriage to priests, they should also continue to seek guidance for their lives with them instead of seeking it directly from God;
- ⇒ 4) That they owe allegiance to the order of priests who “*made their marriage.*”

That is, when a marriage begins under the idea of needing “mediators” for it to be established, the couple will also tend to think that they will need the mediating priests for the life that follows after their marital union.

When spouses think that their marriage is established through human priesthoods, they will also tend to believe that they will need similar priests when they have challenges to face. They will tend to think that they need to turn first to people outside of marriage, and not directly to Christ, to find solutions to their challenges and problems.

Nevertheless, **once a man joined his own wife, the covenant occurred from one to one before God, and the two are, primarily, and through God's grace and help, responsible before the Lord for their married life.**

God has never called and does not want “*spiritual officiators*” of marriages, for the actual accomplishment of a marriage is between the groom and the bride before the Lord who sees them wherever they are.

The fulfillment of matrimony according to the principle announced from the beginning is as simple as this:

- ⇒ 1st) The aspirant to a marriage shall leave father and mother;
- ⇒ 2nd) The man will join his wife;
- ⇒ 3rd) The man and the woman will become one flesh between themselves and before God;
- ⇒ 4th) Christ is the Head of each of the spouses as members of the body of Christ, and Christ, at the same time, is the Head of the husband, and the husband of the wife in the matter of the married life of those who were united by the matrimony.

And once the effective fulfillment of the matrimony is performed between the two who have joined, they are also the ones who will answer for this marriage before God, themselves, and before society.

Besides, as was seen in the previous chapter, if each person will give an account of oneself to God, and that human guides can do nothing for another person in the accountability of each one of the spouses before the Lord, why would a couple want to have other guides than, firstly, the Lord Jesus Christ?

People may help couples in their married life, they may offer themselves as brothers of faith and prayer, or as friends. However, no one has a God-given authorization for the position of wanting to lead, guide, be the chief, or be a priest of a couple established by marriage according to the Lord's principle.

Considering that Christ is the individual mediator of the man and the woman who get married, Christ is also the mediator of the couple towards God, making no sense for each of the spouses to be guided individually by Christ, to be blessed by Him, and when they get married, to need someone external to mediate them before God.

The marriage union that is according to the principle of God does not consider in the conjugal covenant also an association with the religious structure a, b, or c, and neither the spouses become part of any association of the married people. None of this! They are simply a man and a woman who came together to live as husband and wife also, first, before the Lord of their lives.

Some people insist that in marriage, the bride and groom must also make a covenant with God. However, if the two had already "an individual covenant with God" through the new covenant and God recognizes the union of a man who leaves father and mother and joins his wife, why would they still have to make yet another type of covenant with God?

In the beginning, it was simple and not complicated as people started to do it.

Through marriage, no one makes a covenant with God. The only possible covenant with God is the "*new covenant*" mediated individually by the only Mediator who is Christ.

And as for the covenant with Christ, each one does it personally by faith in the Lord!

Marriage is the groom's union with the bride. It is the 1 + 1 union, witnessed by God.

At this point, it seems to us that there is still one more caveat about the celebration of the wedding, for the fact that a marriage union is being made between the groom and his bride does not imply in saying that the bride and groom cannot celebrate or have a feast of their union as testimony before others.

A wedding party can be a moment of great joy. It can be a testimony of the bride and groom's desire to join each other under marriage. However, if they establish marriage under the regime of a priesthood other than directly the Lord Jesus Christ, that marriage begins to be subject to being in dishonor towards Christ and to God, to whom the glory should be attributed exclusively, regardless of the size of the wedding celebration.

In the celebration of marriage, parents may, of course, pray and ask the Lord to bless their sons and daughters in the new step of life they are taking, to rejoice with them, to speak a few words of affection to them, as well as children may honor their parents who have cared for them until this moment. However, even so, the essence of the wedding's establishment is that ***a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.***

A groom and a bride may wish to celebrate with their parents, relatives, and friends the union they will establish. Or parents may want to throw a party for the bride, the groom, and guests to celebrate the start of a new marital union that will begin. However, who is performing the union indeed, are the groom, the man, and his bride, the woman. And here again, according to God's principle for marriage, there is no need for any "spiritual officiator" of this conjugal union.

On the other hand, if a man really left his father and mother, and unites in marriage to his own and only wife, this, before God, is done, whether there is a party or a simple single moment between the bride and groom.

When we look at the example of Isaac and Rebeka mentioned above, we see that there was no party, and neither Rebeka's parents were present when her union with Isaac was established.

The first couple who joined in marriage after one was introduced to the other was Adam and Eve, and only God was there to witness and recognize this union.

Therefore, when the Lord Jesus reaffirms the principle said from the beginning, He is by no means returning to the law of Moses and its rules, for this only came into existence after more than 400 years of God's covenant with Abraham. The Lord Jesus was reaffirming the simple but very assertive way established by God from the beginning and which has never changed before God until today.

So, here, by no means, are we encouraging that couples unite without speaking to their parents or that they disregard their consent, for part of leaving parents to unite in marriage may also involve consulting and evaluating with parents about the decision to leave them. However, or on the other hand, we are also trying to highlight the simplicity that exists regarding the establishment of a marriage between a man and a woman before God.

Moreover, it is after leaving his father and mother that the man will join his wife, not before. The whole covenant process might be straightforward or simple, but this does not mean that there is not an appropriate path to follow.

If a man joins a woman, but it is not in line with God's principle, he is neither in God's general will for the single nor in the general will of the Lord for the married. Therefore, he is not in God's general will for marriage and will face obstacles to achieve God's specific will for his life.

A person may not agree with the manner of a marital union that God has defined and even practicing it differently. And in fact, many times, God allows this to happen even if He does not consent to the action taken, for Christ also reigns allowing people to make choices and seek their own ways, as we saw in the chapter on Christ reigning over everything despite people making choices contrary to God's will.

The question at issue here, however, is not whether a person can or cannot do something, whether one is able or is not able to do something, but the question is whether a man and a woman love God's will above the human precepts or love more the way they themselves want to use to lead their lives and achieve their aimed pleasures.

In many situations, an individual can choose his own will, but by this, one also rejects God's will, loving one's own will more than the Lord's will. And according to one's choice, one also puts oneself in a position to harvest according to the ways in which one chose to live and walk.

The fact that people do not follow God's instruction for marriage does not automatically mean that God will punish them, for example, with infertility, that they will not be able to obtain material wealth, or that they will not be prosperous professionally in the eyes of the world. God does not work so, for, several times, the Lord continues to give good things even to people who misbehave to show His mercy and love for them. But as long as people persist in resisting the general will of God, which is "good, perfect and pleasant" in everything, they will not experience the best of

the Lord's life for them, and some may even be subject to having an abundant life on earth, but without, however, receiving eternal salvation.

The Bible states that God's will is "good, perfect and pleasant," but many prefer their own wills or those suggested by society, the world, and the devil. And if a person chooses wills that are not God's, and does not repent concerning them in time, these choices will also lead him or her to the paths of the respective destructive harvests, even if these sometimes seem that they will never come through.

Finally, in this topic, we understand that another relevant aspect about marriage today is the matter of following civil laws to carry it out, considering yet that these laws may even be for the protection of the spouses and the children they may eventually have. However, even so, it is the bridegroom and the bride who have the responsibility before God to have accomplished the marital union between them.

Therefore, if there are people trying, through laws, to prohibit what God has established for conjugal union or if there are people in society consenting to what God did not approve, ***we ought to obey God rather than men.***

- 1 Timothy 4: 1 **Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,***
- 2 **speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,***
- 3 **forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.***
- 4 **For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving;***
- 5 **for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.***
-

God created food, and He also created marriage. And *everything that God created is good*, even if people want to deny it or despise it.

Even if some want to prohibit marriage or distort the heavenly instructions, if a couple establishes a marriage according to God's principle, what has been established according to God and before God is what prevails before the Lord.

Although civil marriage may prove to be very useful for many couples and civil testimony may add to the benefit of matrimonies in various nations, the great or the main witness of all marriages according to what was established from the beginning still has always been and always will be the Eternal Lord Himself.

*Malachi 2: 14 **Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.***

*15 **But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.***

Even if it follows civil law procedures, marriage is primarily a union of the groom with the bride before God and for which they answer to God even if the laws of the country change and come to make the establishment or disruption of marriages flexible in disagreement with God's will. A union accepted in the civil sphere is not necessarily accepted before God, and a civilly permitted separation is not necessarily accepted by God. Thus, the matter of a couple's faithfulness to God is, above all, according to the principles that the Lord has established.

When a man leaves father and mother and joins his own unique wife, they become united before God by the acts that they themselves chose to do and which have been witnessed by the Lord.

In conclusion, we would like to consider yet that many people, when they see or review the principles established by God for the marital matter, perhaps are seeing them after they have already established conjugal union and which might not yet be aligned with the will of God. In these cases, it is up to them to present themselves in humbleness and repentance before God to also seek instruction from the Lord to know what to do so that the wrong actions they have taken can be forgiven, but also dealt with under the personal direction of Christ.

- Psalms 25: 1 (A Psalm of David.)* **To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.**
2 O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me.
3 Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.
4 Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths.
5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.
6 Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they are from of old.
7 Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O LORD.
8 Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.
9 The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.
10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.
11 For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.
12 Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.

G. The Two Shall Become One Flesh

- Mark 10: 6* ***But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’***
7 ***‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,***
8 ***and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.***
9 ***Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.***
-

After leaving their parents to join in marriage, we can see that the aspect of the husband with his wife becoming one flesh is the point that is most evident in the text exposed above.

However, understanding the full breadth and, at the same time, the limits of this union that makes two one flesh seems to be particularly challenging, for the Scriptures do not mention a long list of details of what this aspect of the union that makes them one represents in its most diverse points.

On the other hand, the texts that mention union in marriage show us how meaningful this bond is and how much the Lord longs for it to be respected by both husband and wife.

In the book of Ephesians, for instance, we see that the marital union that is according to God's principles causes that, for the Lord, the woman becomes like part of the man's body and that if a man does not take good care of his wife, it is like if he is negligent with himself.

- Ephesians 5: 28* ***So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.***
29 ***For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.***

Already in another text in the Book of 1Corinthians, we see that the union in marriage is a rendering of the body of one spouse in favor of the other and is the establishment of several rights that one passes to have regarding the other, of course not through domination, but always subject to the principle of love for each other.

- 1 Corinthians 7: 3* ***Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.***
4 ***The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.***
5 ***Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.***
6 ***But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.***

Here, however, again from another angle, we see that the union of the groom and the bride to the point of becoming one flesh does not present a literal condition of one being the flesh of the other, so much so that one may get sick and the other not, one may die and the other not. And it is even established that marriage is a union for a particular time, for before God, it is established at most until the death of one of the spouses.

The Lord Jesus clearly explained that in the resurrection of the dead, people do not marry and will not be married, and that the maximum duration of a marriage is until the death of one of the spouses. Where physical death occurs, the entire pact of the marriage covenant to which the respective spouses were associated becomes undone or closed. (According to Mark 12: 25).

And why does the death of one of the spouses cause the marriage pact to cease?

A particular marriage ends with death because the union that made spouses one was concerning the flesh, temporary for life on Earth, and one of the spouses might even inherit eternal life with God and the other not, thus becoming separated eternally from each other despite having lived as married on Earth.

Nothing that people on Earth define as marriage, and that is different from what God has determined, can change what God recognizes as marriage. Already from the first marital union on Earth, God established how all other matrimonial covenants should be in all generations.

According to God's principle, marriage has a definite beginning, but it likewise has a definite end. It has defined impact or scope limits, and it has defined time limits. And what goes beyond this also does not come from God.

The dimension of a man and a woman “becoming one flesh through marriage is incalculable or immeasurable,” but even so, this union needs to be viewed with sobriety and wisdom, aiming not to fall short of what is included in it, but also not advance beyond what is due to this union.

The marriage covenant is extraordinary and singular due to the aspects associated with the union of two becoming one flesh and which are so challenging to be known and experienced, where a man and a woman choose to live together, leaving much of their independence behind. However, at the same time, each spouse also has a crucial individual role and relevance so that both the personal life of each spouse with God remains firm and that life together is well established.

And once some more aspects have been mentioned concerning what is not encompassed by the matter of two becoming one through marriage, we would like to return to some points that may or even should be observed in the unity of two in one flesh that happens to be in progress when a man joins his wife through marriage and vice versa.

Thus, the marital union is the beginning of a time of life where a man and woman choose to give up part of the individual freedom they have to start sharing part of their lives with a loved one, also called spouse.

Both the man and the woman “*in Christ*” are free to choose not to marry. However, if they do, they also choose another person's company and the condition that may enable them to achieve purposes that they could not individually achieve.

As we have already mentioned in previous topics, a married person or an unmarried person does not become superior or more important because of the marital status they choose, but the fact is that each of these options has its own characteristics and challenges.

Under the Christian concept, it is evident that when the option for “individual life” instead of married life is mentioned above, this consideration is not referring to an individual life separated from Christ, but to an individual life not associated with another person through a marriage covenant.

The union through marriage occurs from one to one, from one to the other. The association by marriage is expressed by two people's actions, a man, and a woman, who become “one and an entirely new set of two individuals,” which, in the present material, we have also called “a collective of two.”

After a person's covenant with Christ in the new covenant, the oldest and closest covenant according to God's will that may exist on Earth is the covenant made between a man and a woman, including the closeness of the physical relationship they establish with each other.

And the marriage covenant is also so intense and broad because, from the marital union, what one does affects the other in many aspects of life, for through marriage, the spouses come to be associated, before God and the world, with a covenant where they, in many natural things, come to be seen as a single unit, as one set or as “one flesh.”

When a man and a woman choose to unite in marriage, they also decide to join with another person in order to decide together on many relevant aspects of their lives.

If a single man or a single woman, for example, could be willing to accept a job in several or distant places, after being united by marriage, this decision is no longer up to one because, by right of marriage, none of them should deprive the companion to be with him or her without mutual agreement.

After the union in marriage is established, a spouse is placed in a position to take care of aspects of the other spouse's life and also to please him or her, according to the text below:

*1 Corinthians 7: 32 **But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord.***

*33 **But he who is married cares about the things of the world, how he may please his wife.***

*34 **There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.***

Although a union in marriage can be wonderful, defined by God as worthy of honor among all, and as an appropriate means for many of the Lord's purposes to be achieved, it is inserted in the option for it, a need for special attention to the spouse with whom a person has been united and whose position should be considered with respect and in great esteem.

The marital union is a one-to-one covenant as a pact of exclusive fidelity and respect concerning many aspects, and under which, the first people who need to respect each other in marriage and regarding the participation of each one in their conjugal life are the husband and the wife.

Before the Lord, and to live a life that serves God, a person does not have to choose marriage. However, once one does, it is crucial that each spouse knows that they are joining another person of equal value before the Lord and that the Lord will not attend only one if this is not in line with His righteousness.

*1 Peter 3: 1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,
2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.*

+

1 Peter 3: 7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Joining together in marriage implies living together with the spouse, but also doing so with understanding and cooperatively for the good of each spouse, as well as for the sake of what they start to build together.

So, the renewal of sober understanding in the light of the Scriptures of the central aspects involved in marriage seems to be highly necessary and urgent also in our day as in reality it has always been in all other generations.

Marriage is a union also to build aspects of life together and where, after God, the spouse is the first to have the right to express an opinion, participate and enjoy the benefits, and where no one else should have this level of priority because only the spouse is one flesh with the other spouse.

Matrimony establishes a union where all other people, even parents, brothers, and friends, come to have a secondary position, for none of the others is one flesh or one set with the man or woman united in one flesh by marriage.

The marital union is not intended to establish an impediment for a person to be able to have brotherhood, friendship, and professional relationships with other people. However, it does establish limits in these relationships, since “the spouse has become the closest neighbor that a person has besides the Lord Himself,” who is always the closest to all because the Lord lives in the heart of the one who received Him in one's life.

The marriage covenant, authorized and witnessed by God, can never be superior to the covenant made by one person with the Lord. However, concerning covenants with other people, no other covenant in the world should surpass the covenant that a man has made with his woman for matrimonial union and vice versa.

If a person does not respect the covenant one oneself has made to the point that one's spouse becomes one's own flesh, to the point that taking care of one's spouse is like taking care of one's own body, how will that same person be respectful and trustworthy in eventual other pacts one makes in life?

The marriage bond goes far beyond an agreement where two individuals start to share the same house and the same bed, for, by the marriage covenant, they become an intense part of each other's life.

When we return to the initial texts of Genesis, we see that God did not assign to Adam the mission to bear fruit, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it, but he assigned it to both Adam and Eve. God assigned the mission to Adam and Eva together, although each had different roles in this same mission.

In the Book of Genesis, we can see that in Eden, God did not see Eve dissociated from Adam for what He had as a purpose for the man and woman He had created, as we may observe in the text below:

*Genesis 1: 27 **So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.***

*28 **Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."***

*29 **And God said, "See, I have given you (both) every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you (both) it shall be for food."***

According to the text above, the only plural "you" that could be composed at the moment when God spoke to human beings in Eden was Adam and Eve. There were no other people on Earth to whom "you," "in the collective sense," could be applied.

In the reference of verse 27 above, we see again exposed what we previously have explained that there is the concept "man" that applies to any human being, in the sense of the human race, and that there is the concept "man" in the sense of man male, distinct from "woman" or female.

The union that makes a man and a woman to be considered by God as one flesh does not cancel the personal condition of the soul and the spirit of each one, as we have commented previously. However, in the sense of what a man and a woman do on Earth, in natural things, for God, after marriage, there are no more individuals entirely separated and independent of each other, for what they do affects the life of the couple. And in this regard, God sees them as one.

When a marriage union is made according to the Lord's principles, what one spouse does is associated with reflections on the other, and their actions are no longer entirely independent aspects.

*1 Corinthians 11: 11 **Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.***

If, for example, one spouse has a prosperous job and one can do it satisfactorily because the other spouse supports him or her by taking more care of the everyday things in their home, it is not only that spouse who, before God, is prosperous in one's work, but it is the "one flesh," it is the couple, who is advancing well in the joint venture.

In the same way, if in the life of another couple, both spouses work externally in addition to the activities of the home, and both prosper in righteous ways by the support that one gives to the other, before God, "one flesh" is achieving favor and prosperity according to the will of the Lord.

On the other hand, if a man is foolish or if a woman is foolish, the individual folly of each may come to produce the ruin of the joint home that they try to build, for what one does affects the life of the other in the joint aspect and in which they came together.

Proverbs 21: 20 ***There is desirable treasure, And oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man squanders it.***

Proverbs 14: 1 ***The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish pulls it down with her hands.***

In the previous topics, we have already seen that a person does not need to distance oneself from God because one's spouse does. And an individual does not need to deprive oneself of eternal salvation in God because the other spouse despises this salvation. However, or even so, concerning the marriage and family project, many aspects that each spouse does affect the two spouses because, in this regard, they are one flesh.

Since, by joining together, a couple constitutes a new "set" before God, made up of two individuals, everything that the couple does or happens to the spouses may have an impact on this set.

If a man, unfortunately, suffers, for example, a severe accident that causes a disability, even if temporary, his life will no longer be the same as it would be without that accident. But, on the other hand, his wife's life will also no longer be the same either, since changing the husband's routine also affects the wife's life, considering yet that the example could also be the other way around.

Moreover, what a couple has built with joint effort is no longer possible to be attributed individually to each one, but the sum of actions and the participation of both and God in both.

If a couple has a son or a daughter, there is no way to define precisely in the children what came from the father or mother, nor to dissociate each part of the children that supposedly would be pertinent to each of the parents. Children are something totally new and with a new soul granted by God, but they are also the result of parts that came from each parent.

If a couple united by marriage understands that everything that each one does will automatically affect the "new singular set that they decided to create," they would see that the competition between the spouses of the same marriage is bizarre and contrary

to what they themselves are building up. Why, then, would spouses compete with each other and not help each other if they are building the same set?

Although a man and a woman united by marriage keep their soul and spirit with individual characteristics, what they build is the result of the combined actions of both. After marriage, life is no longer entirely dissociated from the spouse with whom a person has joined.

A couple, for instance, might even define a car for the husband and another for the wife according to the preference of each one, having the sink in the bathroom separate for each one, but this has just functional purpose because, before God, all these things are of both. In material terms, God sees them as a set, although He also continues to consider each spouse's individual actions.

A man, for instance, may fear the Lord, be godly and live in fellowship with God, but his wife does not, or the other way around. However, the fact one spouse abstains oneself from an appropriate relationship with God will affect the home they have together, that is, that what they build together and the life they started living together.

When a man and a woman come together in marriage, as we have already said, some things become “one,” such as:

- ⇒ 1) They become “one couple;”
- ⇒ 2) They become “one home” or also called “house;”
- ⇒ 3) They start to constitute “a unique family on Earth;”
- ⇒ 4) They begin to carry out purposes resulting from the sum of their participation and actions.

Thus, if a part omits oneself from the relationship with God, the “couple” will not be able to achieve everything that God could grant to the two as one flesh, for a part of that which is one flesh abstained from living in fellowship with the Lord of their lives.

On the other hand, **once the two spouses become aware that everything they do will affect in some way the other, even though each one has an individual spirit and soul with personal decision choices, the two spouses may edify much more appropriately the things that God has prepared for them in their married life.**

H. Christ as the Head of One Flesh Already Established - Part 1

Mark 10: 6 ***But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’***

7 ***‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,***

8 ***and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.***

9 ***Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.***

1 Corinthians 11: 3 ***But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.***

The theme of unity between human beings attracts the attention of many people and often is accompanied by a lot of romanticism and speculations that are difficult to be effectively practiced in joint life, even if it involves only two people.

From the moment that a couple joined together in marriage and formed a set of two also considered as “one flesh,” that is, $1 + 1 = 1$, everything they do, starts to reflect somehow on the two even if they do not always realize it. However, as already mentioned, marriage does not make the two souls into one. Consequently, it also does not eliminate the possibility of each one making decisions every new day and at different times of the same day.

If, on the one hand, the groom and the bride have become one flesh, it may be that in their wills, they remain opposed to each other and may, of course, bring harm to what is already one among them.

The marriage union is a great challenge to be observed and also to be experienced, for it establishes a union of what is more tangible but leaves as an option the daily achievement of the union of what is not so material and tangible.

As much as the bride and groom want to prepare in advance for married life, which can be beneficial, in daily life, there will still be a vast number of differences of opinions and points of view that life after the beginning of the marriage will encompass.

A couple concerning which both spouses love each other and have joined in marriage for the good of both spouses surely also wants the good of each of them and of what they are going to build.

Nevertheless, **a practical issue that arises in marriages is that the concepts of what is good for the couple and what is according to the truth may vary considerably from one spouse to the other if the basis of parameters is the spouses themselves.**

Spouses who love and respect each other may have different opinions of what they consider good for themselves and for the spouse with whom they have united. And many of these different opinions have not been unified in the union that has made them one flesh.

As much as both spouses want to cooperate in what they have become one, it is impressive to see how life's complexities increase when only two different people place themselves to live together, even if both are looking for the same purpose.

Here, then, there is something quite significant to be noticed by both men and women united by marriage, namely: How will each spouse know what is indeed good for oneself, for the other spouse, and for the set of "two in one flesh" that they constituted by the marital union?

A highly relevant aspect in married life is finding consensus on most matters that involve the couple's life. But what is the point of convergence that they should adopt to reach consensus?

Therefore, given the many demands for consensus and in the face of the many small or large differences that arise in married life, it is evident the need for each spouse to have as a reference point someone greater than both, who has wisdom higher than that of the couple, and around whom the spouses can find unity and consensus.

Thus, so that, in addition to the union in one flesh, a couple may also live and walk in unity of purpose, paths, and actions, the spouses need to remain under the condition of Christ as the Lord of their personal lives, but also have Christ as the Lord over their marriage.

It is in "living and walking in Christ" that the spouses of the marital union also find the path of unity of purpose, actions, and the way of peace between them and concerning what they are one.

The married life is not only established by the aspect of the spouses giving themselves to the interest of the other spouse, but it is also or mainly strengthened through the action of each one of them to follow the purpose and the direction that their Creator teaches them personally and also concerning their marriage in its various aspects.

The coordination of the collective set of two, but of individuals so different even after being united by marriage, is a great challenge. However, also for this, Christ offers to help each one personally and to help the two together or as a couple, offering Himself to them as King of Righteousness and King of Peace also concerning the matters of life as a couple or presenting Himself to be the Head of the new set of two that the couple constituted by uniting in marriage.

When the spouses seek Christ individually and also as a couple, it is the Lord who instructs them how they may act together and how each one may cooperate so that the set they have constituted is aligned with God's will and thus also becomes fruitful and profitable for both.

Adam and Eve were two separate souls, but as a couple, they made up one flesh. And as such, they also had parts of a joint mission given by God to them.

Adam could not fulfill the mission that he had received from God without the effective participation of Eve. Nothing in the primary mission assigned to the "couple Adam and Eve" could be accomplished if one of the two did not collaborate with the proposed purpose.

Individually, Adam and Eve could do many things. They could grow plants in Eden, walk in the garden, eat, interact with animals, etc. However, if the two did not come

together to bear fruit according to their kind, the central purpose given to them by the Lord would never happen. There was a purpose of God to be done together by the two.

Abraham and Sarah had a promise of receiving an heir even though Sarah was barren. And in her infertile condition, Sarah considered solving the problem through a concubine by which she thought she could provide Abraham with a son.

However, God did not recognize the concubine's son as the promised heir because when God made the promise to Abraham, Abraham was already one flesh with Sarah.

Therefore, for God, there was no chance that the promised heir would come from only half of those who were one flesh. It was evident to God that Sarah was directly involved in the Lord's promise, for to God, Sarah was the woman of Abraham's marriage covenant.

God recognized Abraham's son with the concubine as Abraham's son, a situation that was an undeniable fact. However, the Lord did not acknowledge this son as the son of His purpose for Abraham, the son of God's call for Abraham and Sarah.

God did not leave Abraham's son with the concubine without protection or provision. God protected him and made him prosper, for the actions his parents chose to do were not the son's choices, and because the Lord also answers everyone's cry for mercy. However, even so, this boy was not the son of the promise given to Abraham because he was also not the son of "one flesh of Abraham and Sara," he was not Sara's son.

Ishmael, the son of the concubine, was not the fruit of God's direction in Abraham and Sarah's life. Ishmael came to be born as the fruit of Sarah's and Abraham's attitude of leaning on their very understanding, which, in turn, came from the action of not remaining in unity in the Lord's principles and promises.

When, later, God confirmed the promise of the son of the promise, God promised it to Abraham, but He also did it in Sarah's presence. The Lord did so by speaking with Sarah herself, for she was the woman of Abraham's marriage before God and "one flesh with Abraham" when God had called them to follow the ways that He, the Lord, would show them.

God has some purposes for a man and a woman who are united by marriage, and which are only possible to come through if the two work together in cooperation. They will be accomplishments, if they come to be fulfilled, in which it will not be possible to accurately separate where the participation of each spouse is because they are projects that have several interactions and collaborations by both husband and wife.

Children, for example, are an entirely joint project. And the education of these children is an undertaking that also should have the cooperation of both spouses.

Mutual professional support for what each one has been called to do, building a home, choosing friends, choosing to meet with other Christians, and so many other things, are aspects that always have or should have a joint side to build and establish the conjugal union increasingly.

In the most diverse aspects of a marriage, it is essential that the couple walks in discernment that goes beyond mere natural discernment, which can only be conferred on them by the Lord.

The same prudence regarding seeking the Lord for personal matters also applies to the questions of married life, which, as evident as it may seem, needs to be particularly

emphasized because it may often occur for a spouse to think that the suggestion of the other spouse is always in agreement with God without actually being.

If the husband and wife were always "*living and walking in Christ*" personally, and each listened perfectly to what Christ instructs him or her, the two would continuously be operating in harmony. In practice, however, the man and the woman, also as distinct individuals despite the marital union, may "not be" "*living and walking in Christ*" and, thus, introducing intentions to their marriage that are human, fleshly, and not according to God's will.

And so, when there are conflicts of interest, there may also be impasses, divergences of opinions, and distinct desires that try to gain their space in the life "of one flesh," and where some of them may seek to introduce what the Scriptures call "a divided house."

When the Scriptures mention unity between a couple, we understand that they do not necessarily consider that the spouses must agree on everything and enjoy the same things in everything. For example, the fact that one likes chocolate and the other does not like it does not need to be a reason for disagreement concerning the couple's collective goals.

Spouse A, for instance, may like chocolate and B may not, and both can respect each other in these disagreements, for also in mutual respect for each other's personal characteristics is unity in some matters. Accepting and respecting the difference from the other may also be a position of unity. However, if, for example, the issue of chocolate begins to represent a loss of health for one of the spouses or begins to lead to a financial loss in the face of other more imminent needs, the couple composed of two individuals subject to the Spirit of God and not to the flesh should reach an agreement on consumption measures they practice, for in everything they are called to glorify God, either individually or jointly.

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

In this way, **just as "*living and walking in Christ*" is the way for a person to walk in the will of God and to act according to the heavenly will, so it also is in married life. For this reason, too, Christ is established by the Heavenly Father as the Head of a couple united in marriage.**

If we still add the inclusion of children to our "collective of two who become one" equation, how much more diversity and variables are not added to the relationship between husband and wife?

Considering that children are individuals who also have an intense will of their own, it is impressive the number of variables and hypotheses that multiply to be managed by both the husband and the wife with the arrival of each of the children they may have.

In several cases, a married couple even may walk in good harmony when there are only two individuals. However, when the children arrive, this might become complicated for them, for many times one spouse wants to educate the children along the lines that he or she was educated as a child, not realizing that the child is not of only one part of the couple, but of both.

In a single “family group,” there might be many differences on many subjects, but the Lord does not want this to remain continually. The Lord wants there to be peace in the home, and for that, it is necessary for everyone to unite in the Lord, unite around His Lordship or the Head position that the Heavenly Father attributes to Christ.

It is in the Lord that the renewal of understanding occurs so that the spouses may attain heavenly wisdom also for married life and their position as father and mother. And it may be that both spouses need to renew the understanding of their attitudes towards what the Lord instructs them, as both may also have inherited fruitless cultures or traditions and may have not renewed minds concerning the concepts the world tries to impose on them.

*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.*

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

The answers about how personally “living and walking in Christ” or according to God's will are in the Lord, but likewise those concerning married life and how to take care of the children that God entrusted to the care of a couple. One more reason why God established Christ as the Head of each marriage united according to God's principle.

*1 Peter 4: 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.
3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.*

It is in the Lord that the answers for a godly personal life are, but it is also in the Lord that the answers for a godly conjugal, fatherly, and maternal life are, which make us remind once again of what the Lord Jesus Christ said to us:

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.

Thus, considering that Christ is the point of unity for thousands and thousands of men, women, and children who believe in Him, how much more can He also not be the point of unity of a couple united by marriage and of a family, and since it is concerning Christ that God declared to Abraham that all families on Earth would be blessed?

I. Christ as the Head of One Flesh Already Established – Part 2

Mark 10: 6 ***But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’***

7 ***‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,***

8 ***and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.***

9 ***Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.***

1 Corinthians 11: 3 ***But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.***

In the previous topic, we mentioned that since Christ works peace in the heart of each spouse, it is also Christ who is appointed by the Heavenly Father to be the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace in the context of the married life and the context of a family.

First, Christ wants to grant peace in each heart. Then the Lord Jesus wants to grant righteousness and peace of God's kingdom in the relationship between the couple and the family that the spouses constitute.

Therefore, **first of all, the best good that a spouse can wish for the other is that each one, individually, is at peace with the Lord and is enjoying widely the kingdom of God that is in the heart of everyone who has Christ as Lord.**

When people surrender to life instruction according to God's Kingdom, it is interesting to observe how the Lord's direction reshapes a person's interior and how much it also begins to bring beneficial manifestations on married life, home, and the life of those who give their hearts to Christ and follow Him as Lord.

Nevertheless, or even so, in the marriage union, there are two who unite themselves. And if they come to have or adopt children, there will be yet more people participating in the same family, establishing a collective set that also needs an order of operation since God is not a God of confusion but a God of order.

And many collective actions between people, in one way or another, end up needing instruction on what activities will be assigned to each of the parties, which also applies to marriage.

Thus, **although “in Christ,” there is no distinction between man and woman to relate personally to the Lord, in married life, there are distinct functions that God has assigned and attributes differently to men and women.**

Starting with basic biological functions, man and woman, respectively, have different parts of the essential elements needed to generate a new life.

In the personal and spiritual relationship “in Christ,” both men and women are seen equally as children of God born according to the Spirit of

the Lord. However, concerning married life, the Lord, from the beginning of the creation, has assigned some different functions to the man and the woman.

The man is not more important or more valuable to God than the woman, nor vice versa. However, this does not imply that God did not grant them distinct functions in marriage, for saying so would contradict the very way in which the Lord established His creation.

Although the condition of man and woman is temporary and does not have the same effects on the heavenly life that follows after life on Earth, as stated by the Lord in the text below, on Earth and in the marriage union, the Lord has established some distinct functions to them so that the cooperation of the husband and the wife may work for the good of this union and for there to be harmony in their journey.

- Luke 20: 27* ***Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him,***
28 saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.
29 Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children.
30 And the second took her as wife, and he died childless.
31 Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died.
32 Last of all the woman died also.
33 Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife."
34 And Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.
35 But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;
36 nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.
37 But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'
38 For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him."

In yet another account of the same event set out above and recorded by another writer, the Lord said:

- Matthew 22: 29* ***Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.***

Thus, the matter of marriage and whether someone is a man or woman does not qualify one person more than the other to *live in God*, for in the resurrection to eternal life, these are also details that are left behind.

The position that God establishes for a man and a woman in marriage is also not for one to have dominion over the other, for if there was any space for this in the curse after sin, in Christ Jesus all the curses that were pronounced on the human being because the practice of sin had their debts paid off.

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 functional position in a marriage in which Christ is the head of the man, and the man the head of the woman, is in no way associated with any type of punishment for the woman but refers to a functional condition defined by God already in the creation, as we mentioned earlier, and does not make men more valuable than women, nor does it make men independent of women.

The functional position in a marriage in which Christ is the head of man, and man the head of the woman, refers to an operational matter for God's purposes through the conjugal union for those who choose it.

1 Corinthians 11: 7 **For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.**
8 **For man is not from woman, but woman from man.**
9 **Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.**
 ...
11 **Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.**
12 **For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.**

In the matters involving the establishment of a union that makes $1 + 1 =$ "one flesh," there are needs for decisions and conduct that need to converge towards purposes and actions in common, and which should aim at the common good of all participants in the respective group.

As we have already mentioned, the union of different people, and often added with the addition of sons and daughters, becomes a distinct universe of diversity and yearnings to be met, but which, at the same time, need to be considered under the focus of the common good for all individuals of the respective group.

A married couple and the family that the spouses constitute, in addition to their own diversities, are bombarded daily with information on how they should live life, creating a need for someone within this marriage to be chosen to be at the forefront of some central or final decisions of what should be accepted and what should not be accepted in this particular family.

From marketing in general, with its advertisements that imply or suppose knowing what will make people and families happy, to fathers, mothers, in-laws, siblings, friends, neighbors, and even strangers, everyone thinks they have some right or even the obligation to know how to resolve the issues of the married life of others. And all these aspects require to be individually filtered by the family members, but they also demand a filter from the collective perspective for the general good of all.

To meet the need for a home to be managed harmoniously regarding the matters of the couple and the family, the Lord defined a functional order, not to generate oppression and injustice, but precisely so that Christ may grant His righteousness and peace also to the couple and the home.

Among so many suggestions, items, and decisions that involve a union of two, a home, and the family that comes from this union, the Lord Jesus established a path of instruction that may unify everyone in what is necessary for this unity.

Personally, each one can pray and be in fellowship with Christ. However, it is enough for an individual in the group not to be aligned with Christ for a period so that things may become messed up. And if there are no interventions in due time, the members of this group may be heading towards evil paths and even for the destruction of the marriage and, consequently, also several aspects they are building together.

In a way, someone in the family needs to be the one through whom God instructs the general group when not everyone is following Christ's personal guidance or even when there is a need for prior definitions of the participation of each individual who is under this same matrimonial union or what is built from it.

For example, a son may be asking God for something in his prayers, just as his brothers or sisters may also each be making their requests. But let us say that it is not viable for everyone to be attended at that moment due to the family budget. So, God uses someone with authority over all children to organize these community issues and to define a final word on the matter, if necessary.

To manage all things from a global perspective so that everyone may receive appropriate attention according to God's will, and for peace, the Lord has defined Christ as the Head of the family. However, the Lord Jesus also works in this position through an order of functions in a family.

And if God established distinct functions in this small collective complex of two that became one flesh, being able to build a family of two or even more people with the arrival of sons and daughters, it is because this is indeed necessary and also because this is beneficial to the life of the whole family.

God chose to give this assignment as the general coordinator of married life and the family to whom He also grants the grace to align the global set of things. God chose the husband for this assignment, and it is primarily for him that the Lord also designates grace and the ability to do so according to God's will.

Once again, as we have already mentioned several times, the fact that the husband is considered by God as the head of the wife in married life does not mean that God will

not speak directly to the woman or that the wife cannot speak personally or directly with the Lord.

The husband being the wife's head does not mean that the wife or children are deprived of personal access to God. This point also does not mean that the woman and the children will not be able to participate and make suggestions in the shared life. However, it means to say that God elected, among all the family members, one to whom He grants the function of globally ordering the collective. And the one to whom God bestows an assignment, to this the Lord also gives the grace and authority to do so.

When God grants this attribution and grace to the husband to be the wife's head in married life, this is not defined for this man to impose his desires and wills and make the family members his servants.

Quite the contrary, the responsibility that God gives to the man who has joined a woman is for him to be a co-worker with God so that the conditions for each member of the family to be able to do God's will are also passed on to each one appropriately.

The husband receives from God the position of being head of his wife so that each family member gets help to do what God wants to accomplish in each one and through each of the home members.

God can speak directly to each member of the family. God can grant that each one reaches gifts not only through the husband, but so that the sum of all these gifts is used for the mutual edification of everyone in the family, the Lord chose to establish that the husband has Christ as his Head and that the husband is also the head of his wife.

In a family, Christ wants the good of the wife, sons, and daughters as much as he wants the good of the husband. However, so that the good directed to each family member and their collective condition is extended to all of them, God has designated the husband as head or supervisor of the Lord's will in the marriage union.

Here, however, we understand that there is a very significant and even essential aspect to be understood and highlighted, and which, it seems, that so many husbands have forgotten or avoided remembering, which is to know that *Christ is the Head of every man*.

What every husband should know is that before he is called to be the head of his wife in married life, he is called to understand that *Christ is the Head of every man* and that only when the husband is, first, subject to Christ is that he may also be a good head for his wife.

Every husband should know that before serving his wife as the head of his wife, he is called to be instructed by Christ as the Head of his own condition as a husband.

In the first place, the husband is called to be subject to Christ before serving his wife and children so that he may then instruct his wife, sons, and daughters according to the Lord's will and not according to his own will.

In being subject to Christ and in serving the Lord first, the husband might even be instructed by the Lord to resist the will of his wife or children in some intentions they want to carry out and which are not in line with the will of God.

When, for instance, a son or daughter asks God for something that will not be good for him or her, God may resist the will of that son or daughter through the father of the children.

On the other hand, God may also show the husband the importance of the son or daughter being prepared for something that the children do not yet understand as significant for them, but which will be relevant for them in the future.

While sons and daughters still do not know how to listen to God with proper discernment, the husband is also an instrument to help them stay in what God wants for them and teach them to seek the Lord's instruction more and more.

Every husband is called to be in Christ and to serve the Lord. And in his condition of fidelity to Christ, God grants this husband to the family to be like a steward who serves the family in various aspects of God's will, even though this family does not always see this immediately.

And to those who are called to be stewards of God, we see the following instruction:

*1 Corinthians 4: 1 **Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.***

*2 **Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.***

And, on the other hand, the wife, sons, and daughters (as they grow in fellowship with God) may always access Christ to check or see if the things that the husband presents confer or collide with God's will for them.

The fact that the husband is the head of his wife, as we have already explained, does not imply mandatory or compulsory submission, but voluntary and cooperative before the Lord of those who are subject to this husband in a family.

If Sapphira, from the example of Acts 5, and exposed previously, had denied coming to terms with her husband's evil and lying plan, and had personally attached herself to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Lord of her life, she would have avoided harming herself. And who knows, maybe she had collaborated in some way to even save his very husband from the madness he was doing?

The same Scriptures that say that the husband is the head of the woman and instruct the wife to be voluntarily subject to the husband are also those that teach the woman to be subject to her husband "**in the Lord**," as we have mentioned previously.

Thus, the wife is called, above all, to be "in Christ" and to be hearing from the Lord the will of the Heavenly Father, even though she respects that God gives several things to her and the family through her husband, for if the husband is not subject to Christ as the head of his marriage, he is the first to break the flow of God's instruction on their married life.

There is much to learn in this process in practical life, but we have the comfort that the Lord Jesus Christ proposes to teach us and guide us in all its details. However, without a personal alignment with the Lord in the roles pertinent to each one in this matter of the "collective of two," also the other things concerning married life are subject to becoming out of order.

Therefore, **after each spouse individually abides in Christ, the first great challenge of marriage is not in “the woman to subject to her husband,” but it is in “the husband submitting to Christ.”**

And is the failure to practice this essential aspect mentioned in the previous paragraph by many husbands also not one of the leading causes and roots for there being so many problems in so many marriages in the world?

We have already mentioned several aspects about collectivity being a considerable challenge, as there is a high potential for disagreement. However, in this too, Christ's glory stands out once more, for the Lord is able both to attend all people individually and to respond to all men and women who have joined in marriage. But just as many do not seek the Lord Jesus personally, so many likewise do not seek Him as the Head of their married life.

If it is not under due care or dissociated from the instruction of Christ as the Head, married life may quickly become a heavy burden. But with Christ as the Head, the fulfillment of the man and woman's functions of mutual life may also become a light and easy yoke and can be of great value and joy to the couple and the family, as well as to the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

If a marital union is in crisis and if the spouses are mutually wounded or even divided, the first thing to adjust, then, is each person's individual return to Christ. However, particularly to the husband, it would be due to seeking Christ specifically to receive the wisdom from God to know how to administer the Lord's answers about married life as a whole and appropriately to all those involved in the respective family.

Trying to fix things within the conjugal union if the marriage is not in order before God and according to the functions that God presents to be adopted in it, this task may become highly exhausting and run into very inappropriate results for those involved in it.

After each spouse seeks Christ personally and each has the Lord Jesus as “one's Head,” individually speaking, the first thing to be put in order in their life as married is the husband having Christ as the Head of his marriage for that the wife may also feel safe to follow the instructions that the Lord confirms to her through her husband.

Once again, we emphasize that the functioning order in marriage is due to the fact that it is the initial order of the creation or the order in which man and woman were created, in which the man was created first, and the woman was created out of Adam. And this does not mean that Adam is superior or more important than Eve, but that they only had different functions for missions in common.

In several languages, the word submission can also be seen as “sub mission.” In other words, a part of the mission is divided into a “sub mission” or a separate part, in which the woman has essential participation, but where Christ attributes to the husband the supervision for the whole. In addition to receiving specific parts for him to perform, the husband is still called by God to supervise the general mission in his own marriage.

In married life, the husband is the one who should be the facilitator of the whole process for everyone. But he will know how to do this only if he receives instruction from Christ. So, this is not primarily related to his

administrative capacity, but it is in learning how to listen and follow the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ in his life also as a husband.

When God designated the husband as the head of his wife to serve her and the family, the Lord did it for the good of everyone in this family. And one of the conditions that the Lord requires of the husband is that he does not hand over this position to others in the family, just as Christ did not hand over control or command when He went to wash the disciples' feet despite serving them. The husband should remain faithful to the head position or supervision of the marriage not because he wants to have power over his wife and family, but because he wants to be faithful to the Lord who entrusted him with such a sublime task, and to whom, he should never stop being subject.

And when this position of “*Christ being the head of every man*” is overlooked or put aside?

When the position of “*Christ being the head of every man*” is despised, Christ is dishonored, for the couple who does so no longer lives directly under the direction of Christ and remains in a position to be deprived of producing God's will as it could, which glorifies neither Christ, nor the Spirit of the Lord, nor the Heavenly Father, nor even the married couple.

The man who is not subject to Christ begins to shame the one who is his Head and no longer brings the good that God wanted for his very life, for his wife, and for those who are under his marriage covenant with his wife.

Considering that the greatest treasure that a person can have is the eternal life given by grace and through faith and the fellowship with God, the point that the devil most aims to attack in a person's life is the direct relationship of an individual with Christ.

Nevertheless, similarly, the most attacked point in the husband's married life is his direct fellowship with Christ so that he does not have Christ as the Head of his marriage and thus cannot be an appropriate head for his wife.

When the husband and wife, individually, are in Christ, and the husband is also in Christ in favor of their married life, he can truly exercise the head position of his wife, but it is also where the wife is the couple's support pillar, for the marriage is the union of two that become one flesh so that both cooperate on behalf of their life and the “set” that they started to constitute and build.

J. What God Has Joined Together, Let Not Man Separate

- Mark 10: 6* ***But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’***
7 ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,
8 ‘and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.
9 Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.

The union in one flesh that “God joins” is not just any union. Nor is it any union in one flesh that can be considered a union that “God has joined together.”

The union that is considered the “union that God joined together” is the union in which a man leaves father and mother and joins his own and only woman, who, of course, is also called to leave father and mother because she also passes to be under a new head in her married life, and where the man with his wife become one flesh. And it concerns this union that Christ said: ***what God has joined together, let no man separate.***

We presented the above mention here again, for there are other actions that many people take in their lives that also might make them “one flesh” with others, but which the person who comes to Christ, evidently, should not perform or if one did so, one should repent and separate oneself from this union in order not to continue to be enslaved to the works of the flesh and sin, as exemplified below:

- 1 Corinthians 6: 15* ***Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!***
16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.”
17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.
18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.
19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

The marital union that the Lord considered worthy of honor among all is not any union established by sexual intercourse, although these make practitioners participants of each other. Thus, every Christian is called to flee from all these undue relationships to not run into immorality and to care for holiness, to which one is also called in Christ Jesus.

- 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.**
 5 **Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.**
 6 **Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,**
 7 **in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.**
 8 **But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.**

- 1 Thessalonians 4: 3 **For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;**
 4 **that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,**
 5 **not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;**
 6 **that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.**
 7 **For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.**

As we have seen above, a marriage carried out according to God's instruction is worthy of honor among all, but so too is the bed undefiled.

Hebrews 13: 4 ***Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.***

On the other hand, when it is stated in the Scriptures that ***what God has joined together, let no man separate***, they are not referring only to intervention in marriage through infidelity related to extramarital affairs issues.

Under God's purpose, no properly established marriage should undergo separation, except because of one of the spouses' death.

Although divorce is inevitable in some situations because one of the parties practices marital infidelity or because one party refuses to want to live in fellowship with God and still wants to deny this right to one's spouse, God never appreciated nor appreciates the divorce of a marriage witnessed by Him and concerning which the Lord considered that two were joined together into one flesh according to the principle that He announced from the beginning.

Malachi 2: 14 ***Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.***

15 But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.

16 "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously."

Although there are many divorces in the world, God is not pleased with this practice, for it often derives first or mainly from the hardness of people's hearts due to their withdrawal from fellowship with the Lord.

Nevertheless, the warning ***“what God has joined together, let no human being separate”*** is not only applicable to the final act where one spouse leaves the other ultimately, but it should also be observed throughout the married life and should be even observed in small daily actions.

A significant portion of the divorces that occur in the world is not the result just of the acts near the end of the separation process, but because of the accumulation of small acts of detachment and separation that couples follow and allow to happen throughout their married lives.

Since, through the marriage union, the spouses made a union covenant to be one flesh, other human beings should not try to interpose themselves continually in this pact or alliance, even if only in some details of a marital union.

Just as human beings are not invited or authorized by God to be mediators of a person's relationship with the Lord, so human beings do not receive a vocation from God to try to interpose themselves in the married life of others.

Christ is the Head of every Christian, for “in Christ,” everyone is a member of the Lord's Body. However, Christ is also the Head of every man who is the head of his wife, with no mention in the Scriptures for others to regularly stand between Christ and the married man or between the married man and his wife.

We have already seen in previous texts that the husband is instructed to submit to Christ voluntarily and that the woman is instructed to voluntarily submit to her very husband, and not to other men and women so that the union “Christ and the husband” and “husband and the wife” do not suffer division or separation.

It does not matter if a person presents oneself as a priest, pastor, spiritual father or mother, religious of any sort, social leader, father, mother, father-in-law and mother-in-law, son or daughter, no one is called, according to the Scriptures of God, to put oneself as a mediator of the relationship between a husband and Christ and between the husband and his wife and whose married life is in line with the Lord's will.

There are extreme situations in which, due to disrespect for civil laws and human disrespect for the spouse, the governors need to intervene in some marriages that are no longer in line with God's will. However, this does not mean that these same rulers may regularly determine what couples who are walking according to God's will should practice or stop practicing in their married lives in particular.

Just as in the “*simplicity that is in Christ*,” everyone can approach God personally and freely in their hearts, so also, in the “*simplicity that is in Christ*,” the channel for the husband and wife to approach Christ is always open.

Nevertheless, when the principle of freedom of access to the Lord that exists in the “*simplicity that there is in Christ*” is already corrupted in the minds of individuals through the idea of mediators between God and these people, even if they call themselves partial mediators, this distorted mentality will also tend to lead spouses to accept mediators concerning the matters of their married life.

On the other hand, as long as the spouses remain in the “*simplicity that is in Christ*,” they will know that there is no reason, before the Lord, for them to invite others to interfere in the married relationship between themselves and theirs with the Lord.

As we saw earlier in the example of Abraham and Sarah, when God gave Abraham the promise that he would receive an heir, it was always implied to God that the fulfillment of this promise would take place in Abraham with his own wife Sarah and that she was the wife of his covenant before the Lord. Abraham and Sarah were one flesh before God, and God would not separate what He considered one. But when Sarah and Abraham consented to a third party to interfere in their marriage, a distinct and complicated chapter also came into play in their lives.

When, however, we talk about people of antiquity, it is always worth remembering the text below:

1 Corinthians 10: 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Therefore, **in the whole process of establishing marriage or married life, the first to respect the union done by a man and a woman according to the Lord's principle is indeed God Himself.**

God watches over what He has established as an unchangeable principle. And what God has established as an immutable principle is perfectly good.

No person of antiquity had the Scriptures that we have, the history of reported human experiences that we have, and neither did they have the revelation of Christ as the Head of every life and marriage made according to God as we have, but even so, and despite running into some mistakes, several married couples, by faith, ended up following what God showed or instructed them.

Secondly, the ones who evidently should respect the union that each spouse has made according to God's principle are the very man and the very woman who became united by marriage.

When the Lord Jesus said that ***what God has joined together, let no man separate***, this instruction does not refer to *man* alone, but to every person because, in this case, the word *man* used is the word *human being* and not the word *man* in the sense of the *male being*, of the *masculine being*.

Here, then, we resort again to the translation made by Martin Luther in German. When the situation applies to a human being in general, Luther translates the term *man* into the word “*Mensch*,” expressing the meaning of the word *person*. Thus, using

this concept in the subject in reference, we present below an adapted edition of the text that narrates the speech of the Lord Jesus, as follows:

Matthew 19: 4 **And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'**
5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not "a human being" or "any person" separate. (NKJV+LUT)

Thus, when speaking of the marriage matter in reference, the Lord Jesus uses different words, distinguishing when dealing with one situation and the other.

When the Lord says, "*let no man separate,*" in reality, He is saying, "*let no person separate.*" That is, the Lord is saying that no *man or woman* should separate what God has joined together, beginning, first, with the spouses themselves who established their marital union according to the principle of God.

Repeating once again, the first people who should watch over the maintenance of the marriage covenant that they have made before God are, of course, the husband and the wife themselves.

The husband and the wife are the first called to watch personally and jointly so that others do not begin to divide them and that others do not start to interfere in their marriage, for when a man has joined his wife, and this is confirmed before God, this union, although recognized by God, is not exempt from being exposed to several attempts of interference in the unity of the spouses with God and between them.

God grants grace for spouses to honor their significant and sublime commitment that they have done through the marital union, but despite warning them to watch in prayer and love for each other and for the covenant they have made with one another, God does not compel or force them to stay together.

The Lord Jesus strongly urges no one to promote the separation between a man and a woman that God has joined together, but also in warning about it, Christ is showing the reality that people will try to do so.

As we have already seen, before the Lord, no Christian needs to leave one's status as a single in order to be blessed by God and serve the Lord. However, if a person comes to marry, one should also do so in fear and reverence before the Lord, for He highly respects matrimonial union and warns that no person should be the agent of its separation, especially those who have made this covenant with each other.

When the Lord Jesus reminded people about the subject of God's instruction on marriage, He mentioned that the variations that people created regarding what God established from the beginning were made because of the hardness of their hearts. And when the hardness of heart is involved, it becomes complicated to deal soberly with a subject as noble as conjugal union and fidelity between spouses.

Moreover, married life is also fought by the enemy of our souls, who tries to mischaracterize and distort it in the most diverse ways, for marriage is a project

established by God since the beginning of the creation of the human being and because, through it, the Lord accomplishes wonderful purposes, such as bringing new people to life and teaching them from an early age to love God.

As we saw in the Book of Malachi's text above, the Lord has established that two become one flesh because He longs for godly descent. The Lord has established marriage for spouses to exercise faithfulness to one another and to learn to be even more faithful to God in every act of their lives. And that is why the devil and the people who resist God also resist the principle of marriage so much in the way that God established it.

The devil is so vehemently opposed to marriage according to God's instruction also because:

*Luke 16: 10 **He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.***

If a man and a woman learn to respect their spouse continually, the person who is so close to them that they share the same bed, the person with whom they share victories and troubles, they will also learn to be faithful in other principles. And this is what the enemy of souls and unfaithful people do not want a person to achieve, for the individual faithful in the conduct of day-to-day life is also strengthened to remain faithful to God.

Just as Christ loves His bride called His Church, and is faithful to her, so, for instance, the husband is called to be faithful and to love his wife and Christ, so that the set in which he lives with his wife may also remain united in the Lord and according to the will of God.

When Paul exhorts us by saying that Christ is the Head of every man, that the man is the head of his wife, and that the Heavenly Father is the Head of Christ, he is declaring and teaching us a principle of unity, faithfulness, and victory, and not a principle of subjugation and oppression. It is the devil and the unfaithful who try to pass on the idea that God's instruction for marriage is unfair or shameful to be followed, for they do not want people to be guided by the Lord also in their married lives.

*Ephesians 5: 22 **Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.***
*23 **For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.***
*24 **Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.***
*25 **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,***
*26 **that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,***
*27 **that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.***
*28 **So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.***
*29 **For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.***
*30 **For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.***

*31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."
32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

What God has established and instructs a husband and a wife to follow in their married life is similar to what He has established concerning Christ and the Church. What God has established to be followed in marriage is for the benefit, the unity of purpose, protection, and care of the couple, as is Christ's relationship with His Church.

Just as Christ and the Church are the reference model for several aspects of marriage, so also the unity and fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman exemplify or symbolize, in part, what is the relationship of the members of the body of Christ with the Lord Jesus.

Through the example of the fidelity of “dad and mom living under the instruction of Christ and in mutual respect,” the children of this couple may already observe, in part, how their relationship with the Lord may be as they grow up in the understanding of the personal relationship with Christ.

If the husband voluntarily subjects himself to Christ as his only Head and the woman willingly subjects herself “in the Lord” to the husband as well, the woman honors the attitude of the husband who has subjected himself to Christ, and thus, Christ receives the honor for the couple who subject willingly to Him.

Nevertheless, when there is a break in this operational order or this functional order of marriage is disrespected, there is also a resistance to the glory of the Eternal Lord, the glory for which there is so much dispute among human beings when they try to oppose the testimony that there is only One God, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, who is over all and that all people are creatures before the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11: 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.

When a husband submits to Christ as his Head, he does not put himself in a derogatory position. On the contrary, he exalts the eternal God, just as a woman who voluntarily submits herself *in the Lord* to her husband does not depreciate herself but exalts the Lord for the way that God has established to guide her marriage and family life.

The last text above of the Book of 1Corinthians shows us that **a person attributes glory to the one of whom one takes covering** and not necessarily to whom one says to attribute glory.

And the Lord does not want anyone, besides Him, to receive the glory pertinent to Him. Therefore, God established a way so that the glory of a marriage union and married life may also be attributed to Him, for it was the Lord who created the man and the woman also for a conjugal covenant.

If it is not Christ who gives direct covering to a man and a woman, others or things receive the glory or claim the glory that belongs to God alone, producing, sooner or

later, a growing rupture in the process of the relationship of the husband and the wife with Christ, but also in the husband's relationship with his wife.

If a man who claims to be a Christian, but ends up adopting a human mentor, is asked from whom he received the teaching of what he knows, what will he answer?

The man who submits to the covering of another person, group, or some institution will end up replying, in most cases, that he received instruction from his mentors. And by not exposing himself directly to Christ as his Head, he will be dishonoring Christ and giving the glory of God to others, generating disconnection between him and God, but also developing separation between him and his wife, for he will not be building, *in the Lord*, the operational way of his unity with his own wife.

If a married man or woman needs a mentor to guide one's marriage, why, then, would the Bible tell them to leave father and mother? Could not parents then be their mentors? And if God does not even authorize the father and the mother to be the mentors of the newly married man and woman, why would God choose an external person or other things to do it?

If a couple seeks other mediators in their relationship with God concerning their married life, they begin to return to subjection to priestly orders similar to the Order of Aaron, and regarding which we again remember: “*a little leaven leavens the whole lump.*”

A married couple might be tempted to seek “covering over their heads” when they start thinking about the future, their children's education, the house to be built, and so many other challenges that may cause them insecurity and fear, but Christ tells them that He is individually Head of each person and of the couple through the husband, encompassing in this the most diverse subjects that couples face in life.

Similarly, if the wife seeks marriage mentors instead of seeking Christ first and placing herself, *in the Lord*, in a position of cooperation with the husband, is she not opening the door of the division of her home?

If the husband or the wife is not educated enough for a specific matter, Christ knows how to guide them to seek these instructions elsewhere and even in other people. However, “seeking information” on a subject is very different from “letting others guide married and family life” and is very different from transferring the responsibility that a husband and a wife have before God and towards each other concerning their married life decisions.

Before the Lord, there is no what some call “spirituality” in seeking the blessing of children through the priesthood of other men, women, or institutions, for Christ is the only mediator between God and human beings and since any other mediation has already been declared revoked and obsolete together with the revocation of the Order of Aaron, of the order according to the law of Moses.

Prayer to God on behalf of the spouse and children, the education and care of the children, and the mutual care of one spouse concerning the other, before anyone else, is the responsibility of each spouse towards the other and their family according to the instruction they receive from Christ.

Abraham was an ordinary man of society and who had a barren woman. When Abraham and Sarah presented their cause to God, the Lord directed them what they could do to achieve what they needed. God visited them, instructed them, and allowed

Sarah to become pregnant with the child they called Isaac. And Abraham and Sarah, as God guided them, brought up their own son.

When Rebekah, the wife of Isaac, son of Abraham and Sarah, also showed barrenness, Isaac did not ask Abraham to pray for his wife, but he himself prayed to God for his wife, and the Lord heard him and granted that Isaac and Rebekah also had children.

And since we can become children of God through faith, similar to Abraham and Isaac's faith, we have a similar possibility of relating to the Lord or even broader after Christ is given to us to dwell in our hearts.

That ancient direct and straightforward way of God guiding people, also in their married lives, has by no means aged over the centuries.

What showed itself outdated or obsolete was the temporary proposition of human mediators of the Order of Aaron, but never God's direct direction for a couple united in marriage according to God's principle.

Once again, we are not saying here that spouses should not improve themselves professionally in their area of work and seek information about the context in which they live, that sons and daughters should not go to school, learn to read and write, learn math, science, and so many other things. However, the education of faith, of central values about life, and what is most relevant to eternal life and the relationship with Christ should be something practiced by each spouse *in the Lord*, among them, and passed on, first, by the parents to their sons and daughters.

And even when the wisdom of parents on how to teach sons and daughters to relate to Christ and their context of life is not enough, the Lord manifests Himself to these sons and daughters according to the love He has for them, also speaking personally to their hearts.

There are many ways that the devil, the world, religions, and people in general try to use to divide the life of a married couple united according to God's principle. However, if a couple remains in Christ and faithfulness to each other, the Head of the marriage union, Christ, will also guide and sustain them until the end.

We yet highlight here that with the technological age of our day, many external agents try to enter homes also through different media, but also in the face of these, a couple should be attentive so that each spouse does not have his or her heart divided towards God and the companion of the covenant made between them and witnessed by the Lord.

When the Lord said ***what God has joined together, let no man (or anyone) separate***, He did not specify the means by which people try to separate the spouses, but it is evident that by no means should the division towards God and in marriage be accepted by a married couple.

The means offered by technology may become significant professional and educational benefits and even as entertainment tools, but the same principles of holiness that apply to life before God and with the spouse also apply to the proper handling of what is offered through technology. Remembering that this world's technology passes, but the love, the truth, the hope, the faith, and the relationship of fidelity between the spouses produces eternal fruits.

1 John 2: 17 **And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.**

Even without modern human technologies, God was already talking to Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah. For centuries, God has spoken to couples who have served the Lord regardless of the currently available technologies.

At Pentecost, without modern human technology, God made thousands of people hear and understand one another even though they spoke different languages. So, cannot this same God instruct a couple to help the spouses to walk in unity of faith and purpose after they are united in one flesh before God?

Paul praises the Christians of Corinth for having received the teachings of the Lord that he had passed on to them, but still, he emphasized the following words:

1 Corinthians 11: 3 **But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.**

Many problems may begin to worsen in the married life when the husband starts to listen to the opinions of others without checking them with the One who is his “Head” and also with the one who is his covenant mate, just as it likewise may happen when the wife moves away from being *in the Lord* and from seeing her husband in the position that the Lord has established him.

Thus, if other people are the so-called “spiritual covering” of a couple, it is these people who will try to guide them, trying to take the place that should only belong to the Lord, separating or distancing people from the only One who can indeed keep them together in God's purpose.

If a man has a “spiritual covering” from another man, or even from a group of people or institutions, he is not in Christ and raises obstacles concerning Christ being his head. And so, both he and his wife are exposed to becoming submissive to other men and women. And is not this the cause of the discomfort or restlessness that some women feel when they think of accepting their husbands as the head of their married life?

A woman's resistance to her own husband may often occur precisely because there are a concern and perception in her that something is out of alignment in her husband's relationship with Christ, even though she sometimes does not know exactly how to explain it.

The wife who submits to her husband, who, in turn, subjects himself to another man or woman or group of individuals as his mediators, and not exclusively to Christ, evidently is not subject to Christ or the functional line that God has defined. Thus, this wife may suffer anguish for not understanding why she does not feel peace in subjecting to her own husband, for if the wife submits to her own husband in this case, she is indirectly submitting to other people and not to the Heavenly Lord.

Peter instructs the wives to submit voluntarily, each one, to her *OWN HUSBAND, IN THE LORD*. However, when the husband subjects himself spiritually to another person, the wife is subject to the condition in which she may become indirectly subject likewise to another person. And in this, the Spirit of the Lord, who dwells in the heart of God's children, will not agree with the husband and will not grant peace to the wife's heart, for the process in question is contrary to the will of God.

And if a wife wants to see the situation described in the last paragraphs changed and wants to be subject to Christ also in the marriage matters, she will need to use her path of direct access to Christ as a child of God. And in her fellowship with the Lord, she can ask in prayer to God to align her condition, that of her husband, and her entire household to be freed from undue covering to return to what was established by the Lord for all Christians.

Similarly, a husband who realizes that he is no longer directly subject to Christ can return to Christ and ask for forgiveness so that the Lord is his Head and so that he, the husband, and no more others, comes to be the head of his own wife in what is pertinent to him, thus preventing others from separating what God has joined together in one flesh to be under the kind Lordship of Christ.

As we saw in the text of Hebrews 5 at the beginning of this subject, if we do not go beyond spiritual milk and hear about the Order of Melchizedek and the greatness of the Lordship of Christ towards each person, there will be a lack of discernment of good and evil through the light of the Lord, which also applies to matters that keep a couple together before the Lord.

By his own example as an apostle, Paul shows us that not even the Church of the Lord, which is the body of Christ, is, through its members, authorized by the Lord to stand between Christ, the husband, and the wife. The Church of Christ was not born with the vocation of being the head of individuals, marriages, or families because this God established exclusively in Christ Jesus.

It is essential to see the matters of married life soberly and in continuous prayer before the Lord Jesus, for only Christ can explain how He sees the position of each spouse, each couple, and what needs to be adjusted so that the husband and the wife do not come to be divided between each other or come to run into a position of disagreement with the Lord.

Therefore, we emphasize again that **it is up to the couple to listen to God more than other people. The covenant between husband and wife is made between them mainly before God, and God is a witness to this covenant and wants to guide them in everything through Christ.**

God told Adam and Eve what He wanted from them. God told Noah and his wife what He wanted from them. The Lord told Abraham and Sarah what He wanted from them. God told Joseph and Mary what He wanted from them in the care of the Lord Jesus Christ when He came in the flesh into the world. However, they all knew well what God wanted from them because they were instructed directly from the source.

The central instructions of married life for a couple are in the Lord, and He, as the Lord, instructs spouses *to live and walk in Him* and with each other faithfully. However, if God is not the direct covering of the spouses, the couple also places itself on vulnerable paths before the world.

In conclusion, then, **if a man and a woman united in marriage accept and let God Himself, through Christ, be for them the spiritual covering, the foundation, the High Priest, the King, the Lord, or, finally, the Head, God is committed to guide, protect, and instruct them also in the most varied aspects of the union they have made and which has been witnessed and considered united by the Lord.**

K. The Conjugal Bond and the House

Continuing yet on the matter of marriage unity and that no one should try to separate the union made by a man and a woman who God united, we may observe that when a man joins his wife, a new figure appears in the history of this couple and that is called the *house* or also the *home* or the *household* of this couple.

When a man and a woman unite according to God's instruction, they begin to build the *house* or *home* that also results from this union and which should belong, under the direction of the Lord, exclusively to the members of this *house* or *home*.

As for the aspects of life as a married couple, we saw that Christ is the Head of the husband and the husband of the wife, but as for the *house* or *home*, we see that the couple aligned with Christ and with each other works together in its administration.

Psalms 128: 1 Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways.

2 When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.

3 Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table.

4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the LORD.

Proverbs 14: 1 The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish pulls it down with her hands.

The more aligned the two spouses of a marital bond are with Christ and with each other, the more *righteousness* and *peace* they will also have in the *house* or *home* they come to build.

The *house* mentioned in this topic, of course, is not referring to the physical or material house, the apartment, the place of residence, but to the concept of an environment or set of mutual life or relationship of those who belong to this *house*.

The *house*, in a conceptual sense, and over time, creates somehow an identity, habits, cultures, and traditions, to the point that people start to use the term *house* or *home* as something alive or even as if it had a personality of its own.

Concerning their *homes*, people, for example, say: "In this *house*, no one does this, or in this *house*, all always do it like this." "In this *house*, we do not eat this or eat that." "This *house* does not support laziness, or this *house* is a haven of rest," and so on. Each *house*, as a unit, advances towards its way of being.

And what is the advantage of people recognizing that they have a "*house*" or a "*home*?"

One of the aspects of recognizing a *home* is that the so-called *house* may create an identity of a place for its members to feel sheltered by it, find support, rest, renewal of strength, etc.

On the other hand, if not done wisely and with an appropriate measure, a *house* or a *home's* personalization may also represent a risk for a couple or family associated with that *house*.

When a *house* begins excessively to be treated as if it has its own identity, there is a real risk for people starting to use it to try to govern the lives associated with this *house* through the very “*house concept*” they have created.

In its set of concepts and attitudes that have been grouped by the people who compose it and because it is not really a person, a *house* may become exposed to an excessive view of the collective and neglect the individualities of each person in that *house*. A *home* might even become a potent way to turn people's relationships in the *house* into indifferent and insensitive relationships concerning individual matters and even become very cruel to its members.

If, for example, in a *house, home* or *family*, the parents are musicians and the first two children also have a strong inclination towards music, soon the members of this *house* may want to define that in that *house* everyone needs to be a musician and that that *home* is a *house* of musicians. However, when a third child arrives, who has no vocation and inclination towards music, how will this child be treated in a *home* where “everyone has to be a musician?”

A *house* may want to impose the majority's condition and say: “In this *house*, everyone has to be a musician.” And so, this *house*, which is not physically tangible, but which wants to take the form of a being, may become largely unfair and cruel to those who do not have the least aptitude to be a musician or who do not want to be a musician.

Thus, occurring something like our example above also in any other area of the family, it is up to the spouses of the *house* to be attentive to the perception of Christ about the particularities present in their *home* to act graciously with their family and to avoid inappropriate approaches that may occur concerning any of its members because of “*some collective house rules*” that before God are not indeed so significant.

In its set of concepts agreed upon or accepted over time, a *home* may try to insist on certain rules. However, a *home* should always be subject to someone or people who are real, alive, and have the autonomy to remove those statements and practices that are not in line with God's righteousness and will towards the *house* members.

When, for instance, a husband listens to Christ and follows what Christ instructs him to do, despite something that might have been considered as a convention in the *house*, the husband remains as an instrument of cooperation for the righteousness and peace of Christ for each of the individuals who are part of to that *home*.

Therefore, how can a husband and father be an instrument of righteousness in Christ's hand?

A husband can be an instrument of Christ in his home also “by not letting the house rule,” “not letting the house be the head of the family,” “not letting that the house takes the place that it is not for it to take.”

On the other hand, if the husband wants to impose changes in the *house* without the wife's cooperation, the house will remain divided and will be more likely to not subsist.

The process of division around what is accepted or not accepted in a *house* may even go so far that some of its members may come to be exposed to intense unjust oppression that the *house* tries to impose on them.

We understand, then, that here too it is worth remembering the importance of the husband and wife to relate in mutual love and together or without division to change “*the rules of their house*” whenever these, according to the instruction of the Lord, need to be changed.

Still, in the example of the musicians' *home*, what could be an injustice in the *house*?

The unfairness in the *house* may turn out to be “not allowing each child to be who God wants him or her to be.”

In this example, there may yet be a situation in which the husband does not perceive the *house's* injustice with a child, but the wife does.

Thus, when a wife discerns something that is not building her *house*, she may respectfully speak to her husband, and if he becomes aware of this, they may simply change the “*concept of the house*.” However, if he does not listen or does not want to change his inappropriate position, the wife perhaps may not immediately have to start a confrontation with the one who is her head in the marriage because she always has, before any other option, the resource to appeal straight to the Head of her husband, who is the Lord Jesus and who is also the Head of the woman in the sense that she is a child of God and that *in Christ* there is no male or female.

In prayer, the wife can always turn to Christ and may ask the Lord to work with her husband on a subject where he resists changing, or she may ask Christ to help her to expose to her husband the need both for some change or the maintenance of a principle that is beneficial to the whole *house*.

Christ may instruct the wife by answering a few things directly to her, or He Himself may interact with the head of the wife, with the husband. Since Christ is the Head of the husband, He may tell the wife to be at peace and wait for a while because He will work towards her husband, or the Lord may tell her a strategy for her, in wisdom, to speak to her husband, since he may not be attentive to Christ Himself. Or again, Christ may show her another suitable suggestion as to how she may proceed on a particular issue.

Let us note well that the Lord's objective concerning the *house* is the unity of the couple regarding their *home* so that God's righteousness and peace may reign in that small kingdom called the *house* and so that the respective division is removed.

A man or a woman may build their *home* wisely or act in a way that will destroy it. The wisdom for both comes from the Heavenly Father through Christ and may be applied through the cooperation of each party according to the operational way that God has established.

Wisdom in marriage encompasses understanding God's will and knowing how to act so that unity occurs for the edification of everyone associated with the *house*.

When a woman has some disagreement with her husband, this may be because of her limited view of the whole or her inclination towards unrighteousness, but there are also disagreements of the woman that can be a flag and warning that what the man wants for the *home* is not appropriate and does not come from God.

Therefore, it is always wise for a husband and wife to personally consult Christ before exposing all their proposals to each other and the whole *house*.

The husband is positioned by Christ to govern the *house* in general, but the wife, on the other hand, may also be the balance of righteousness or sobriety so that the man, when he is not in good connection to Christ as his Head, does not come to lead the

home under blindness or so that the *house* itself does not come to guide everyone instead of the husband and wife together running their *home*.

Peter also instructs us on this process of spouses' shared cooperation *in the Lord*:

- 1 Peter 3: 5* **For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,**
6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.
7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

In a *house*, first and individually, everyone belongs to Christ. For this reason, everyone should be treated according to this individuality that they receive from the Lord, but, at the same time, also according to the role that God assigns to each one who is in the same *house*.

Regarding the *house*, we also remember once again that the husband is not the priest of the *home*, for this would be transforming the *house* into a “*mini parish*” or a “*small temple*” according to the Order of Aaron. Even though it is God's will that the husband is subject to Christ and that he is the head of his wife concerning married life, the husband is not a mediator between God and the people in his *household* because only Christ died on the cross of Calvary and resurrected from the dead on behalf of every individual.

In a sense, the husband is like a steward appointed by Christ to the *house* that God has allowed him to establish with his wife. The husband is like a faithful servant to the Lord appointed by God to help those in the *household* and himself to achieve God's will.

As a *house* steward, the husband needs to care about what happens in that *house*. However, similar to a *house* steward, he is also first Christ's servant, then of his own wife and family.

The husband may sometimes have some ideas that seem very spectacular, but before wanting to establish them in the *house*, he should talk about each of them to his Head Christ. First of all, the husband is called to *live and walk in fellowship with Christ* and to be sensitive to God's instruction on what is and what is not appropriate in the *house* over which he is placed to cooperate in its building.

- 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.

Jesse was a God-fearing man and had several children. One day, the prophet Samuel came to his *house* and said that he had come to anoint one of his sons as king of Israel because God had told him to do so. These days took place “before Christ,” and it was more usual for God to speak to the people through prophets and judges.

Jesse, in turn, introduced the sons in sequential order, thinking that the eldest would be the one elected to be king. But when he supposedly introduced all his sons, one after the other, the prophet Samuel (God's representative before Jesse at that time of the Order of Aaron) asked if Jesse did not have one more son, for no one of those he had presented was the one elected to be king. And only then did Jesse remember his youngest son David, who shepherded his father's sheep in the field and composed and sang songs of praise to God while shepherding the flock.

So, if the decision to choose the new king of the nation of Israel had been Jesse's and not God's, Jesse would have selected the son who should not be the king, showing us that the fact that God sees the husband as the wife's head in marriage does not put the husband in the position of having the final say on everything.

But the exciting thing about this story of Jesse and David is that David, already as a boy, had direct access to God in everything he did. He did not depend only on his father to seek God, and God proved to be loving and powerful towards David there in the sheep field where David was long before the prophet Samuel came to his house. Despite having a father over his life, called Jesse, David's personal access to God, having the Lord as his Priest and King, was done directly.

Nevertheless, when the subject was an instruction from God that needed to pass through the *house* of Jesse for the blessing of God to reach David or where there was a need for a particular operational flow, God did it through his father Jesse, even though Jesse was more focused on managing his family by the “*traditional concept of the house*” instead of seeing each child individually and hearing from God what the Lord had for each of his children.

Here, we might even think that Jesse was unfair to put David alone in the field, but, in reality, God made David's condition result in benefit for his life because it was also in the field that God trained David to trust personally and directly in the Lord to the point of David, still young, declare: “***The Lord is my Shepherd.***”

As already mentioned, the husband does not have the mission to insert his own will in his family, but to help everyone achieve the will of God.

Therefore, **God does not want marriage to be a place of disputes of wills between husband and wife. God's will is that the two join forces to help each other or support each other to overcome the oppositions of the world and the flesh so that God's will may prevail in their house.**

Ecclesiastes 4: 9 ***Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor.***

10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.

Cooperation around God's will is always the best choice.

On the other hand, not even a large and well-structured *house* should want to place itself above the husband and wife who built it, and neither should it establish itself as an agent who works for the separation of a couple united according to the Lord's principle, for it is the husband and the wife whom the Lord has primarily appointed for the administration of the *home*.

It is highly significant to understand some central aspects of the *home* function and the submission that the *house* should have to the husband and the wife. The *house* should be subject to the husband and the wife because it results from their union and should always have the purpose of helping them, but not to govern those who constituted it.

The *house* has a role to contribute to the family, but the husband and wife have the task of being faithful to Christ and being above the *house* to supervise the actions that happen in it so that God's will is fulfilled and not the undue demands of the *house*.

If we return to the example of Abraham's life, we may see that God instructed him to teach both his children and his *home*, showing us that the *house* should not be above the people who make it up, although the *house* may be a great tool to help all its members.

*Genesis 18: 17 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing,
18 since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?
19 For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."*

The primary teaching that parents should pass on to their sons and daughters is that each one should live and walk in the way of the Lord, which is Christ, under the heavenly righteousness which is Christ, and in line with God's judgment which is all done in righteousness through Christ Jesus as the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace so that they too may learn that the Lord grants many things to cooperate with their journey on Earth, such as the *house* or the *home*. However, also to let them know that none of these things is superior or greater than God Himself and the direction of life that the Lord Jesus Christ gives. No *house* is granted by God to be built to overcome the exclusive condition of the Lord in the lives of the individuals who are part of it.

A spouse is not "the way of the other spouse," parents are not "the way of sons and daughters," and neither the house they constitute has the last word on what life is like because this position belongs exclusively to the Lord, the One who is *The Way* in which a person should begin to learn to live and walk from childhood.

Proverbs 22: 6 Train up a child in "the way" he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

And, in turn, **“The Way” for everyone is not just a series of biblical stories, some knowledge about God. “The Way” is a person and has a name, namely: The Lord Jesus Christ.**

John 14: 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life.

As much as a marriage and a *house* may cooperate significantly with those who are part of them, there are many aspects that only God can supply in the life of an individual.

If the husband wants to provide the individuals in his *household* what it is up to the Lord to do, he will become overburdened and be subject to the risk of trying to dissimulate when he is unfit to perform what is God's exclusive work.

Every spouse should understand that the other spouse is not his or her “god,” that they both have weaknesses and defects, and that they will never be able to fulfill all the desires of each other and their sons and daughters, just as sons and daughters are not the gods whom parents must serve according to the parents will or the will of their sons and daughters, for the chief inner provision of the novelty of life and peace also for sons and daughters comes from the Eternal Lord.

A husband and a wife are not called to bless their *home* in their own name, but in *the name of Christ* who is for them covering and protection so that they and others may know that all the good and all the perfect gift they attain or receive come from the Father of Lights through the Lord Jesus Christ and so that those who are from the same *home* may know that even when they are not together due to some external task, the Lord is always with them to guide and protect them.

Colossians 3: 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

It is in Christ that God's promise to Abraham that all the nations and families of the Earth would be blessed becomes fulfilled. And this also applies to marital bonds made according to God's principle and to the *houses* that are built according to the Lord's instruction.

Galatians 3: 16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

Therefore, **to Christ be given the glory for being the Head of each member of His Body, but also for being the Head of the marriage covenant of the children of God and of the *houses* or *homes* that the children of the Heavenly Father constitute.**

And yet, to conclude this topic, without wanting to go into more details of the marital union, for our aim in this chapter is to exalt the position of Christ as Head, we understand that it is significant to emphasize that even if a person is not in a situation

that expresses a *house* subject to the main aspects involved in a marriage covenant according to God's principle, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior who offers Himself, without distinction, to all who want His instruction and help. And He will know how to guide each person on The Way of the newness of life and in conformity with the individual need of each one who comes through Him to God.

Hebrews 7: 24 ***But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.***

25 ***Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.***

26 ***For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;***

27 ***who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.***

C36. The Glory of the Lord Jesus as *King and Head of the Body of Christ or the Church of Christ*

A. The Body of Which Christ is the *Head*

1 Corinthians 12: 12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

...
20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.

...
27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

In the last two chapters, we mentioned that after having seen the position of Christ as the direct Head of each person who believes in Him and as the Head of each couple united in marriage according to the principle of God, it would also be significant and even necessary to see the position of Christ as the Head of His body as a whole.

Nevertheless, for us to see Christ's position as the Head of His body, we should know first what body the Scriptures refer to when they say that Christ is the Head of His body.

As we have already pointed out earlier, although God, through the Scriptures, uses comparative figures between the human body and the body of Christ, the references in the Bible to the “*body of Christ that has many members*” do not refer to the individual and personal body that Christ had while he was in the flesh in the world, just as they do not refer to the individual or personal body with which the Lord manifested Himself to His disciples after His resurrection.

Due to the need that each person has to care for and deal with one's own body daily and because we see each individual's body as a singular and distinct unit from other individuals, people may come to forget that the term *body* may also be applied and used for a plural set of individuals who are united in the same society, family, social or ethical body, or other forms of grouping.

A group of collaborators of a team or a company, for example, and who have individual functions, but, at the same time, seek to work towards goals in common, may also be correctly called *the body of collaborators of a company or team*.

Thus, the fact that we know that in Christ there is only one body composed of many members, who are individually associated with this body, shows us that the people who receive Christ also become part of a specific global set of which Christ has the general command and through which Christ can establish and accomplish purposes that are achieved through actions carried out by more than one member of this global group.

The fact that the Scriptures show us that Christ is the Head also of His body of multiple members shows us a body with members that have individual or particular functions, but also that there is a body that expresses a collective and global functioning coordinated and guided by Christ.

When an individual receives Christ into his or her heart and becomes a Christian through the new birth by the Spirit of God, one receives Christ into the heart to be personally guided by the Lord Jesus. However, because this individual also comes to be considered as a member of one body of Christ, it is also highly significant that one comes to know that the direction that Christ wants to grant him or her will also be a direction that aims to cooperate and walk in concordance with the other instructions that Christ is giving to His whole body.

*Ephesians 4: 1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,
2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,
3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

As the Head of every person who believes in Him, Christ is perfectly qualified and mighty to guide everyone who receives Him in the heart, but, at the same time, Christ is also perfectly able and mighty to lead every person who believes in Him in conformity with the purposes that He globally establishes and presents to His body.

Just as there can be someone who distributes roles to each collaborator of a group, team, or body of participants, but in line with the purposes they have in common and for which the whole team works, so Christ is the distributor of individual roles who also, at the same time, cooperate for the purposes that the Lord has established to be achieved through the actions of many members of His body.

We recall here, once again, that in some parts of the Scriptures, the body of Christ is figuratively compared to the human body to show us the idea of a set functioning as a whole and that is subject to a single head, but the type of Christ's body is not like a human body, nor its Head and its members are according to the kind of members of a natural body.

The body of Christ is a body distinct from any “individual body” in the world, but it is also a body different from any “collective body” in the world.

Without knowing some essential aspects of the individuality and, at the same time, the plurality of the members of the body of Christ, without understanding what types of members make up the body of Christ, and without understanding how the members of this body are grouped and coordinated, also a minimally appropriate understanding of the body of Christ itself might be significantly impaired, for the body of Christ, essentially, is the sum of the members that make up this body and the position that this body has regarding its Head that gives all life to it.

The first and principal aspects that define the composition of the body of Christ, which is a unique body of many members, are found in the type of the Head of this body, the type of members of the body of Christ, and in the way each member is connected to the Head of this body.

Starting with the way in which a member of the body of Christ is connected to this body, we may observe that the most diverse individual or collective bodies, similar in this aspect to the human body, have as their basic characteristic being the sum of all the members that are connected to this body. And if a member is disconnected from this body, it also no longer belongs to this body.

Looking at what was said in the previous paragraph from another angle, we may also say that any other member that is not connected to a body, whether individual or collective, is also not part indeed of the body itself.

Thus, in a sense, the principle of the last two paragraphs also applies to the body of Christ. However, concerning Christ and His body, this principle is always added to the indispensable condition of each member of this body also to be directly connected to the Head of this body.

If in the body of collaborators of a team, some people may not have the possibility of direct and personal access to the leaders of this body of collaborators, this is not accepted when it comes to the body of Christ.

Still following the concept that is being exposed in the last paragraphs, we emphasize that **the essential point that makes a person a member of the body of Christ and, therefore, a part of the body of Christ, is whether a person is individually or directly linked to the Head of this body and whether one remains connected in this way to the Head.**

And looking at this last consideration from another angle, we can say that nothing that is not connected to the body of Christ, and respectively to the Head of this body, is part of this body or part that make up this body.

Yet, in other words, **the Body of Christ is the sum of all members who are personally and directly connected to the Head of the body, and the validation of the inclusion or maintenance of a member in this body that does not follow this essential principle is thoroughly rejected.**

Each type of body has its own characteristics and a definition as to the species of its members and how they connect or disconnect from the body. And in the case of the body of Christ, the definition of belonging or not belonging to this body is never made in a way dissociated from the connection of a person directly and personally to Christ.

*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.***

Looking, then, in a simple way, the Body of Christ is the sum of all persons who personally and individually have Christ as their Head.

That is, saying briefly, the body of Christ is the very group of those who have and maintain Christ individually as Lord in their hearts, as already described in the chapter on The Glory of Christ as the Head of Each Person Who Believes in Him.

When we look at the theme of the body of Christ more closely, we can see that there is no difference between the group of people who have Christ as the Lord of their lives and the people who make up the body of Christ, for the body of Christ is a way of referring jointly to people who have Christ in their hearts and who remain in Christ and Christ in them.

The type of the members of the body of Christ or the members according to the kind of the body of Christ that make up this body are characterized as the individuals who came to be conceived as human beings and who received Christ into the heart as the Lord. And concerning them, the name *body of Christ* is how to refer to the whole set of these individuals.

Finally, in this topic, knowing that Christ is the Head of a body composed exclusively of members who have received Him as the Lord in their lives and who remain in Christ shows us clearly that the set of members of the body of Christ is constituted exclusively by people.

The body of which Christ is the Head does not exist, nor is it something that can be constituted dissociated from the people who compose it.

Thus, once again, to say that Christ is the Head of His body is synonymous with Christ being the Head of the group of people who individually believe in Him and who have received Him in their hearts, for the definition of the body of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head cannot be defined dissociated from the members that make up this body and since the constitution of the body of Christ is established in the gathering in Him of the many members who make up this body.

The expression *body of Christ* is a way of referring to, assigning a name, and pointing out characteristics of the group of people who have Christ in their hearts, but it is also a way of clarifying who or what is not part of the body of Christ.

Absolutely nothing that is not a person can be part of the body of Christ, and also no person who is not personally connected to Christ, in the sense of the Lord being one's Head, can be part of the body of Christ.

The body of which Christ is the Head, is the body composed of all those in whom Christ dwells in the heart and who continue to have Christ as the Lord in their hearts.

B. Christ as the Head of His Body Explains What the Church of Christ Is

When we come to see in a more objective and detailed way what the body of Christ to which the Scriptures so often refer is, and concerning which we see that Christ is placed as the Head, we will soon be able to see that this body of Christ is also called the *Church of Christ*.

The expression *Church of Christ* is another way of referring to the body of Christ and of whom Christ is also the Head, showing us that the references to the body of Christ and the *Church of Christ* are indeed distinct references to one and the same group of people who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and who have Christ as Lord in their hearts.

In the text of the Book of Colossians set out below, it can be seen clearly that the body of Christ is the Lord's Church and that the Church, being the body of Christ, also has only one Head established by God over it.

- 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.
24 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,
25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,
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.

In yet another text that is described in the book of Ephesians, we see the same exposition of the book of Colossians that shows the body of Christ as being the Church and that, therefore, shows Christ being the Head of his body or His Church.

Since the set body of Christ and the set called the *Church of Christ* are entirely equivalent and express the same and unique group of people, it is also evident that Christ being the Head of the body is identical to Christ being the Head of His Church.

Ephesians 5: 23 **For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.**

...

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

Thus, to say that Christ is the Savior of His body or to say that Christ is the Savior of His Church are entirely equivalent expressions, showing that what is exposed as the definition of what the body of Christ is, is equal to what the Church is or that what is exposed as the definition of the Church is fully equivalent to what is the body of Christ.

Consequently, being a member of the body of Christ, which has only one Head over the entire body, and who is the Head of each member of this body individually and collectively, is entirely equivalent to saying that a person is also a member of the Church of Christ, which, equally, also has only one Head over it.

When the Scriptures inform us that Christ cares for and nourishes each member of His body, this is equivalent to saying that Christ cares for and nurtures each member of His Church.

Considering that the body of Christ is composed only of people and of people linked to the Head of the body, also the Church of Christ is the exclusive expression of people connected to the Unique Head of the body of Christ.

If anyone belongs to the body of Christ, one belongs to the Church of Christ. And if someone does not belong to the body of Christ, one also does not belong to the Church of Christ because nothing that is not considered the body of Christ can be regarded as the Church of the Lord.

So, considering that a body without the head has no life, the body of Christ or the Church of Christ is the group of people who have the newness of life in the Lord because they are directly linked to the Head of the body or of the Church, which is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

C. What Is Not the Church of Christ in view of the Fact that the Church of Christ Is the Body of Christ

After considering, in the previous topic, that the Church of Christ is the body of Christ and that both the body and the Church refer to the same group of people who individually believed in Christ as the Savior and received Him in their hearts as Lord and Head of their lives, and who thus remain in Christ, the perception of what is not the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is also made highly facilitated.

If someone is not connected to Christ, in the sense of Christ being one's Head, or if someone is not like a branch in the true vine, that person is also not part of the body of Christ and, therefore, also not part of the Church of God, even if one attends religious meetings that in some way are called as Christian services.

The Church of Christ is a living body of living members and who are directly connected to the Living Head of the whole body. However, this also explicitly defines what or who is not part of the Church of Christ.

The Church of Christ is broad, composed of thousands and thousands of people from the most diverse centuries of human history, but no person who does not meet the necessary prerogatives to be part of the Church of Christ could or can be part of the body of the Lord Jesus.

No person who does not come to be personally and directly linked to the Head of the Church of Christ, nor any person who does not remain directly connected to this Head, is or will be able to be part of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ or His spiritual body.

If a person does not come to be associated personally with Christ and does not remain connected to Christ after one has already joined Christ as one's personal Lord, no matter how often one attends meetings and religious groups, one has no part in the body of Christ and, therefore, is not part of the Church of Christ.

Once we see that the Church and the body of Christ are entirely equivalent and that they are made up of the people who have Christ as the Lord in their hearts, we may see that:

- ⇒ 1) **The Church of Christ is not a building, a temple, or a sanctuary where people meet;**
- ⇒ 2) **The Church of Christ is not a home where people meet to seek God and Christ;**
- ⇒ 3) **The Church of Christ is not the Christian meeting in itself;**
- ⇒ 4) **The Church of Christ is not a human institution, whether informal or legally constituted;**
- ⇒ 5) **The Church of Christ is not a statute that constitutes an assembly, an association, or any other term that one wants to use, nor is it an assembly, community, or association that the civil statutes constitute.**

Since the body of Christ only accepts to receive members who are people, and people who are directly and personally connected to Christ, nothing that is not a person can be the Church of Christ.

The Church of Christ is the people encompassed by individuals who, personally, believe in Christ and remain directly united with Him. And anything or person that or who might be called Church and is in a condition that is not consistent with this definition is not an expression of what the Church of Christ really is.

Once more: What determines what the body of Christ is, whose One Head is the One from whom the body receives its name, also defines what the Church of Christ is.

Therefore, **the definition of the Church of Christ is not what the dictionaries of men say about the word *church*, nor is it what several dictionaries say about the Greek word that gave rise to the current word we use as *church*, which is the word “*ekklesia*.”**

Just as human definitions do not comprehend the definition of what is the righteousness of God, the grace of God, and so many other aspects that come from the kingdom of God, and whose characteristics the kingdom itself makes us understand by the Spirit of the Lord and what is exposed to us about it in the Scriptures, the definition of what is the “*Ekklesia of Christ or God*” is what these same Scriptures tell us to be the Church of Christ and not the mere linguistic definition of a term that can be used generically for many aspects of human life.

The word “*ekklesia*” or church, in general, refers to “*an assembly or gathering of citizens or people called out of their homes for a meeting in a common or public place to deliberate on some matters.*” However, the Church or “*Ekklesia*” of Christ is much more than a meeting of people, it is much more than an assembly in the sense of gathering people to deliberate something.

The Church or “*Ekklesia*” of Christ is the living set of the people who are connected to the Head of the body, whether they are gathered with others in one place or are not gathered, because, repeating once more, what makes a person be part of Christ's “*Ekklesia*” is that one is a member attached to Christ or the Head of the Lord's body.

The union or restoration of a person's union with Christ is what makes a person a member and part of the body of Christ, and not attending a service or meeting of an assembly as is more generically defined by the term *church* or “*ekklesia*” when viewed according to some dictionaries.

In the general sense of the word “*ekklesia*,” calling a meeting of people or a deliberative assembly as a *church* is not wrong, for this is the definition of the word itself. However, this is far from defining what the body of Christ is, which is not limited to earthly meetings or gatherings because, despite manifesting the manifold wisdom of God also on Earth, the body of Christ is not earthly, temporal, or natural.

Calling a church as *an institution that brings together a group of people to meet and deliberate together* is not wrong as to the term “*ekklesia*.” However, it is crucial that a person keeps in mind that this does not express what the “*body of Christ*” or the “*Church of Christ*” is.

Many groups of people who come together under the title of “*their churches*” are indeed carrying out an “*ekklesia*” in the literal sense of the word. However, if the meeting or natural association of people characterizes them as a “*church*,” this “*church*” is a human and earthly

association as are the assemblies of clubs, companies, political parties, assistance associations, and so many others that exist in the world, but it is by no means “The” Church and “The” Body of Christ.

Centuries before the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, God already warned the prophet Isaiah to admonish the people that not everything that people call *conspiracy* or *confederation* should be called a *conspiracy*, for God Himself is the sanctuary of the people of His people.

And a *conspiracy* is an associative pact that people make. It is an alliance in which people associate themselves with something that they want to have in common, or, in other words, it is a set that they call an association between them. However, not everything people call a *conspiracy*, *alliance*, or *association* is equivalent to what the Lord considers *covenant* or *gathering* according to His will.

Isaiah 8: 11 For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying:

12 "Do not say, ‘A conspiracy,’ Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.

13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread.

14 He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

If any association of people **is not** the direct expression of people connected directly to the Head of the body of Christ, which has many members, but only one Head, this association might even be a “church that makes indirect or even direct reference to the name of Christ,” but it is not the Church of Christ itself and has no part in the Church of Christ or the body of Christ.

D. The Church of Christ Is One Body of Christ in Multiple Places

Several times in the previous topics, we mentioned that the Church of Christ is one set or represents a single body of Christ that contains associated with it all the people saved in Christ and who remain linked to Christ as their personal Head.

Nevertheless, in the face of this fact, someone might think of texts that mention the Church of Christ being in some cities, or even in homes, and being called, for this reason, *Churches* in the plural, as it is also mentioned concerning the letters of the beginning of Revelation, referring to the seven *Churches* to which these letters were addressed, as exemplified below:

1 Corinthians 1: 1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,
2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

Revelation 1: 11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

Romans 16: 3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,
4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.
5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ.

Therefore, the fact that the Scriptures mention the Church of Christ referring to it associated with some places or locations needs to be seen more accurately, but in no way should it be seen as a division of the body of Christ into several parts and instead as the expression of the same and the only body of Christ or the same Church of Christ in several places.

In the text of 1Corinthians, seen lastly above, we can see that the Church of God or Christ are the ones sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be saints together with all who everywhere call on the name of Christ as their Lord, even though we can also see that Paul addresses the letter to a group of this Unique Church that is in a specific city.

Similarly, we may see when referring to Priscilla and Aquila that the greeting addressed to them is not to a church that was theirs but to the part of the Church of the Lord who was with them or met in their house.

The Church of Christ of a city, then, are all the people *who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*, even if they gather or

meet in different houses or locations, or even if some of these people do not even meet with the others.

The Church of Christ is not like the Order of Aaron, which excluded from fellowship with God those who could not go to the temple or had restrictions that prevented them from entering the temple.

In Christ Jesus, if a person, for example, is sick in one's home and cannot meet with other people, one is the Church of Christ whether or not one is meeting with other Christians as long as one remains connected by faith to the Head of the body of Christ, namely the Lord Jesus.

In the texts showed above as an example, we see again that the Church of Christ are the individuals themselves who are part of it, and that the places are where a portion of the people who are the Church of Christ are located or where they come together.

The texts exposed above show that the Church of the Lord is not the place where Christians meet, it does not belong to those who receive the people of the Church of Christ to be together, and it is not even the very meeting of the people.

If the members of the Church of Christ in the places mentioned would choose to meet elsewhere, the Church would automatically be assembled in another location. And even if they were not gathered together, they were still "the people who believe in Jesus" or the Church of the Lord in every place that each of these individuals would come to be.

Considering that the people who are in Christ are the body of Christ or the Church of Christ, they are and continue to be the Church of Christ everywhere and regardless of whether they gather in a physical place.

Physical or natural places to which people attribute the name *church* are houses or temples made by human hands or are humanly separated places for this purpose. However, it is not in these places and in these so-called *churches* that God dwells, as we have already shown several times in the present subject and as the texts repeated below show to us:

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 stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do 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 who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones."**

At another time, Christ also said:

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.

To insist on the allegations or attempts that the Church of Christ can be constituted of places, houses, meetings, temples, associations, and institutions is to adopt the attitude of those who are stiff-necked, uncircumcised in heart and ears, and who resist the Holy Spirit, hoping that God will someday recognize these places, which the Lord certainly will not do.

The fact that God consented to the building of the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon should no longer be confused with the Church of Christ since the old covenant and the Order of Aaron have already been revoked and declared entirely obsolete, for the Lord allowed the building of these physical temples for people to understand and recognize that this form of worship is unjust, imperfect, and useless to perfect those who, in terms of their consciences before God, attend the worship or services in these places.

The fact that the Scriptures sometimes refer to the Church of Christ in the plural as *churches* never is related to the concept of the old covenant with its temples, houses of worship, or synagogues, but they are references used in the sense that the body of Christ is represented in all the places where there are genuinely Christian people.

To say that Christ has *churches* in several cities or places in no way divides the One Body of Christ, does not make these *churches* belong to the places where they are located, and nor that they should be subject to the people who want to place themselves as leaders of these groups of members of the body of Christ.

People united to the Lord are the Church of Christ, and the place is where they are. And in this last sense, some groupings of members of the unique body of Christ are called the Church of Christ which is in a location x, y, or z, or even referred to a few times as the Church of that location.

The sum of all true Christians in a city, whether they come together or not, is the Church of the Lord in that city, but also these Christians are part of the one Church and body of Christ together with all other Christians. They are the flock of Christ in a specific place, but without ceasing to be "the one flock of the Lord."

The Church is made up of people linked to the One Head Christ. And concerning where Christians are located, gathered or not, the Church, in this sense only, can be referred to as the "*Churches of Christ.*"

E. To Be a Member and To Be Part of the List of Members of Christ's Church

A fact that frequently occurs when people confuse the Church of Christ with assemblies, groups, or religious institutions constituted by human beings, is the emergence of some inquiries that revolve, in one way or another, around questions such as:

- ⇒ What church are you a part of?
- ⇒ What church do you attend?
- ⇒ Where are you a member of the Church of Jesus?
- ⇒ Whose church are you from?

Now, **having been born again, through the Spirit of God by having received Christ into the heart, or being a Christian is inseparable from the condition that a person becomes a member of the body of Christ.**

Thus, if the Church of Christ is the One Body of many members of Christ, does it make any sense to ask a Christian what church he or she belongs to or whose church does he or she attend?

Moreover, **the body of Christ, which is the Church of Christ and God, is also what the Scriptures call the *family of God*, which is unique and constituted of those who were born as children of God through receiving Christ in their hearts. And God only has one heavenly *family* of which His children can be a part.**

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.

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.

Therefore, **just as the body of Christ is equivalent to what the Church of Christ is, so also the Church of Christ is equivalent to what the family of God is**, as can be seen below in the text presented by Paul in the Book of Ephesians:

Ephesians 3: 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;

10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,
11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,
12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.
13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.
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.

Along with the announcement that God intends to make known His manifold wisdom to principalities and powers in the heavenly places through His Church, the body of Christ composed of the people who are linked to Christ as their Head, Paul prays that those who are of the family of God as children of the Heavenly Father be strengthened so that the purpose the Lord intends to do through His Church becomes fulfilled, showing us that the same individuals who make up the Church of Christ are also those who are called to take the name of the Heavenly Father upon themselves.

Understanding the fact that the Church of Christ, the body of Christ, and the family of God are equivalent is also highly significant for knowing how a person becomes a member of the Church, the body of Christ, or the family of God, since the same process that makes a person a member of one of the aspects in reference also makes him or her a member of the other aspects.

Becoming a member of the body of Christ, becoming a member of the Church of God, or becoming a member of the family of God, occurs by one and the same process, and there is no way for a person to become part of one of these aspects without also become part of the others.

And when does an individual who believes and receives Christ becomes a child of God?

An individual becomes a child of God when one receives Christ into one's heart, an act in which one also simultaneously becomes a member of the family of God, a member of the body of Christ, and, equally, a member of the Church of Christ which is the very body of Christ.

When people do not understand that the union with the Church of Christ, which is the body of Christ, occurs through the personal union with the family of God through the new birth in the Lord, they begin to say that a Christian should not be “separated from or outside the body of Christ,” thinking that this may happen when a person is not associated with an “*earthly ekklesia*” and constituted by human beings, and not by God.

Let us imagine that the association with an “earthly or naturally tangible church” would be the way for a person to associate with Christ. This point, then, would also mean that when a person would change one’s address and had to change from one “church” to another, one would become disconnected from the body of Christ, one would cease to be of the family of God, and would have to be reinserted in the family of God again when arriving another earthly “*ekklesia*” or “church,” something that is entirely absurd in terms of whether or not a person is part of the family of God.

In other words, the idea of the need of becoming a member of “earthly associations” or “*earthly ekklesias*” would lead people, at each change of location or extinction of a place, to have to disconnect from the body of Christ, to cease to be children of God and part of the family of God, and, then, to reconnect by another earthly place to the body of Christ to return to be children of God and part of the family of the Lord.

And if, during the route and the transition period, the person died, would he or she be deprived of salvation since one would not be a child of God in the transitional period? Or could an institution's transfer letter guarantee that one would be a child of God for eternal salvation if something tragic happened to him or her?

Therefore, to think of a list of members or an earthly list regarding the members of the body of Christ is something utterly different from what the Scriptures present to us about being a member of the family of God, the Church of the Lord, and the body of Christ.

The association by external acts and by circumcision (an exterior seal of the association with a group or priesthood) was performed by the Order of Aaron. However, before God, this order has already been declared as obsolete, is nothing more than *symbolic for the present time*, and can never perfect before the Lord those who associate with it.

If becoming a member of an earthly membership list would be a condition for a person to become a true Christian and a child of God, the criminal on the cross of Calvary could not have been saved, the Ethiopian eunuch would have been deprived of salvation, just like thousands upon thousands of people who have accepted Christ over the centuries and did not become members of a human institution or have not even become aware of this human and not divine rule.

The very propagators of the supposed need for “membership” in earthly institutions are the same ones that contradict themselves when they tell a person on one's deathbed that one can receive Christ right there and be saved just by receiving Christ in the heart.

Now, if some do not need a “membership” in an earthly religious organization, in a naturally tangible church, or some socially or civilly recognized institution, and can be saved in Christ and added to the family of God, why would others need to do so except for the corrupt interests of those who want to entice people into their folds or religious systems of domination and control of other's lives?

True Christian circumcision, that is, the seal of adherence to Christ, is spiritual and not carnal or external. It occurs in the heart and not in the associations that people do with things of the natural world, just as also is the list of members of the spiritual body of Christ, as we can see explicitly exemplified in the texts below:

Romans 2: 28 **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;**
29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from 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,
24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Becoming a member of the body of Christ, “having come to” the Church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, and “having come to” the Heavenly Jerusalem occurs equally and together with “having come to” Christ Jesus by faith as the Lord and Mediator of the new covenant, to God, and His heavenly family.

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."

Becoming a member of the Church and the body of Christ or being made by God a member of the body and the Church of Christ is as simple as salvation, for God's salvation is to become part of the family of the Heavenly Father, the Church of Christ and God, or the body of Christ.

Whoever believes and receives Christ as Lord and is saved by the Lord, automatically and simultaneously, is also listed among those saved by Christ and who individually make up the Lord's eternal body.

The membership list of the Church of Christ is in heaven, and it is spiritual, as is associating with Christ and as is the seal of God's salvation offered to us in the new covenant.

The list of members of the Church of Christ is not found on Earth, has no replication on Earth, and could never be truly administered by people or institutions on Earth, for only the Lord knows what is going on in the hearts of all individuals.

Who controlled the association with the priesthood according to the law of Moses by an external act was, as we have already mentioned, the Order of Aaron, its priests, and the Levites of this order because they also controlled the earthly tabernacles and the people's contributions to this order, which, however, has already become obsolete because of the superior work of Christ.

For those who want to be part of an earthly list of members and an earthly religious institution, and who trust in the association with an earthly religious institution to try to feel secure about their salvation or because they think that they need to do so to be blessed by God, the Scriptures warn that:

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.**

In Christ, there is no benefit for a person to see one's name on the human list of members of an assembly or congregation, for what saves a person eternally is not that one is on an earthly list of members or connected to some church in one's city, but the fact that one has the faith of God and through it believes in Christ and is saved by the grace of the Lord.

No one on earth is able to see the exact list of members of the body of Christ, for the list of members of the Lord's Church is in heaven, and it is only up to Christ and the Heavenly Father to administer this list. And still, *in Christ*, each person can be sure in one's heart, through faith, that one has received Christ and that one is on the eternal list of members of the body of Christ, without needing to be on any earthly list of any priesthood at all.

Galatians 3: 26 **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**

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."
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.**

The “spirit” that works through those who say that a Christian needs to have one's name registered in a list of members of a religious institution, or even in informal groups in the present world, is a “*spirit of deceit and bondage*” that wants to produce torments and fear, but that mainly wants to make people return to slavery to the laws of the institutions by which this "spirit" works to imprison people under these laws and to try to disconnect people from Christ and make them fall from the grace of the Eternal Lord.

If someone is not of Christ, through the faith that Christ is the only Mediator of God towards human beings, a person can be a member of one or more earthly institutions for many years and still not be part of the Church and the body of Christ indeed.

Romans 8: 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.

The person who becomes a member of a membership list in the present world, thinking that in this attitude one will find salvation or the favor of God, is a person who is choosing to walk by sight and not by faith, for one relies on the status of being a member in something tangible one sees and may control. However, the position of faith in Christ and being a member of the heavenly list does not depend on a fleshly and tangible condition but a personal relationship from the heart with Christ Jesus through faith in the Lord.

When the man who was blind from birth, mentioned in John 9, was expelled from the “membership list” of the Jerusalem temple because Christ healed him and because he testified that Christ healed him, it occurred that his spiritual eyes were opened to see the Christ who had healed him and who now presented Himself to the healed man also to be his Head and Eternal Lord. When the one who had been healed was expelled from the “list of members controlled by human leaders” and believed Christ, the Lord Jesus received him to be part of the “eternal list of members” that stands before the Eternal God.

Thank God that becoming a member of the body of Christ and the Church of God is not established by the standards of human institutions. And thank God that “membership” in the body of Christ is according to faith in the Lord, according to His mercy and grace that do not judge people as the institutions run by human beings do.

In Christ, everyone is considered a firstborn of the Church of God's children registered in heaven and where no one can interfere and manipulate who can and who cannot be on this list.

Human lists or of the present world that are called Christian, but manipulated by human beings throughout history, are lists that act on behalf of unrighteousness and concerning which a true Christian should stay away from because earthly lists cannot perform the righteousness of God, yet another reason why the Order of Aaron has also been revoked.

The solid foundation in God is to be known by God, and it is this being known before God that determines to which body and membership a person belongs.

2 Timothy 2: 19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Just as the Eternal High Priest, who is also King of Righteousness and Peace, intercedes in heaven with the Heavenly Father for each member of His body and from where He also speaks and teaches them, so likewise Christ, the Eternal High Priest of the eternal and free Church, enrolls or registers in heaven the members who are truly part of His everlasting body.

Hebrews 12: 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."

It is before the Heavenly Father and Christ in the eternal heavenly places that it is essential to be enrolled in the heavenly membership list of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 10: 19 "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

22 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

F. The Church is the Body of Christ and Never the Head of the Body

One way to clarify a series of characteristics of what the Church of Christ is, in essence, is to see the equivalence that it has with its exposure also as the body of Christ made up of people who believe in Christ Jesus and who have Him as the Lord of their lives.

When, however, someone also intends to move further towards the objective of seeing the main characteristics of the functioning of the Church of Christ, it is essential that the position of Christ, as the Head of His body or His Church, also is understood clearly or soberly.

The aspect that Christ is the Head of His body, or of His Church, needs to be repeatedly mentioned, for although many people pronounce it with their mouths, many of them, in the daily practice of life, do not indeed believe in this position of Christ.

Many people who claim to be Christians are not even aware that Christ is the Head of their personal lives, and even less are they aware that Christ is the One Head of His whole body and His entire Church.

Other people, on the other hand, even claim to understand some aspects of the individual and personal direction that Christ offers towards each person and for every marriage established according to the principle of God, but they are still persistent in wanting to argue that they need other Christians who are like leaders over their lives and who lead the meetings or the collective coexistence of Christians.

In other words, several times, the same individuals who say that Christ is enough to direct the life of each person are the same ones who say that the members of the body or Church of Christ also need “mediators” or at least they need “mediators” for the “collective” aspects. They try to sell the idea that Christians need “mediators” who speak on behalf of a group of Christians when it comes to their “collective” expression or the “mutual relationship” of the members of the body or Church of Christ.

Nevertheless, the Scriptures do not inform us that Christ is only the Head of the members of His body and that He is not the Head of their collectivity. On the contrary, the Scriptures teach us that the Lord Jesus Christ is “the Head” of His body in the total or collective sense and that He is the Head of each of the members of His body, being, therefore, also the Head of His entire Church.

*Colossians 1: 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.***

Considering that the Church of Christ is the set of the members of His Church and that Christ is the Head of each member, this shows us that the matter of Christ being Head also of His body from the collective perspective is inseparable from the point of Him being Head concerning each member.

When people think of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ as an institution or as a group of people on Earth that they need to join as members while living in the present world, it is also when they run into the risk of thinking institutionally according to the human institutions that need or demand leaders, statutes, or earthly norms to operate.

The Church of Christ, however, exists independently of the human concept of institution, leadership, statutes, and the definitions and constitutions of its assemblies.

If, for example, there is only one Christian in a city, the Church of the Lord is already present in that city, and Christ can perfectly guide this Christian without having to establish another head over him. Similarly, if there are two Christians in this place who know each other and communicate as brothers in Christ, the Church is not only already in that city, but it also already gathers there through the fellowship that one brother has with the other, and this without needing leadership among them, for Christ said:

Matthew 18: 20 ***For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.***

In saying that He is in the midst of those who gather in His name, Christ shows us why He is and can be Lord of His own body or His Church also in the collective aspect.

Regarding the last verse quoted above, we remember that the text needs to be adequately seen so that a person does not come to think that the Church is the very meeting of two, three, or more. The Church are the individuals who come together, each having Christ individually as the Lord of one's life, which is why Christ manifests Himself in their midst.

When two or three Christians are gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus, they are holding a meeting of those who are already Church. And this refers only to a meeting of the Church of Christ, highlighting, once again, that the meeting, in itself, is not the Church itself.

We also remember again that the Church of Christ in a place or a city are the individuals who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and who have Christ in their hearts as the Lord and Head of their lives. And this is what characterizes a person to be the Church of Christ, a member of the body of Christ, or part of the family of God.

Now, whether in a city or place there is only one member of the body of Christ, whether it has two members, whether it has thousands of members, or whether the members of this place meet all and know each other, or, yet, whether they are in different places and many do not even know who the other Christians in the same region in which they live are, the Church continues to have the characteristic of being made up of all Christians who are directly linked to the Head, just as it continues to have the feature of having one and only Head, namely: The Lord Jesus Christ.

Whether the Church is small or large, in terms of the number of members in any specific place, it remains the body of Christ. And Christ remains the Head of this body whether the members are separated in their most diverse activities or when the members are in some joint activity.

Even if the Church of Christ would come to constitute most of the inhabitants of a place or a city, it would still be only the “body” of Christ, not the head of the body, because Christ is the only Head of His Church.

A small or a large collectivity can never make the Church of Christ reach the status of being a little or a lot the head of the body or the Church of Christ.

The Church of Christ simply did not receive the vocation to be the head of itself neither in small nor in large parts or in matters related to the members of which it is composed.

When we see God's promise that Christians who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will also reign in life, we should never forget that a Christian only reigns when one is *in Christ and through Christ*, which also applies to the whole Church of Christ who is essentially the individuals that are *in Christ*.

A Christian only becomes able to reign according to God's will over situations in one's life through the Head of the whole Church.

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.**

The matter of the Church of Christ not being called to be head of itself, nor of small parts of itself, should be very well established in the understanding of a Christian, for many people, in many ways, do not want to conform to this reality and seek to corrupt in various ways the vocation of the Church of Christ to be a body and not a head.

And a practical matter of what is being said in these last paragraphs, for example, is that since the Church of Christ is the body and not the head of the body, the Church is also not entitled to speak “in the name of the Church” to its members or to those who are outside, to the world, for this position is not conferred on it by Christ and because the only name by which the Church can speak in truth is the name of its Only Head, namely: The Lord Jesus Christ.

Trying to do something “in the name of the Church” is a very critical attempt to distort the command of the body, for those who try to say that they speak “in the name of the Church” are trying to affirm that the Church has independent authority over its members. And with this, they try to assert that the Church became the head instead of Christ.

Thus, they try to affirm that the “body” can take the place of Christ when part of this body sees fit for it to do so, without, however, being authorized for this by Christ or by God.

When, in the previous topic, we addressed the aspect of marriage and family, we mentioned that “the house” never received from God the vocation to designate what each member of the “house” should be and do in life, for the definitions of the functioning of the “house” are given to the family by the Head of the family and individually of each of its members, namely again: The Lord Jesus Christ.

“The house” has a vocation to help and to serve those who build it, but it does not have a God-given call to be the head of its members, which also applies to the Church of Christ since it is also called “the house of God.”

When people, “*in the name of the Church,*” begin to tell members what they should do or why “that house or Church” works in one way or another, it is because those people withdrawal from Christ has already become very pronounced.

Besides, **the Church has no authorization from God to have “its own doctrine,” for the “doctrine of the Church” should always be to follow the “doctrine of Christ,” its Unique Head.**

When a group of people begins to compile “their own doctrine,” it is the doctrine of men and women that this group is leaning towards and not Christ, even if the “doctrine” that the group says it follows has large parts of the Scriptures.

In the previous chapter, when discussed the matter of a couple constituting a “house,” we saw that the “house” might want to become a concept by which people begin to try to govern and command the “house” itself. But just as the “house or home” should be subject to the government of the couple, so the “house called the Church,” which is the group of people who individually have Christ in their hearts, should also always be subject to Christ as the One Head of this “house.”

Even often, groups of people may come to think that the Church, the house of God, in its collective aspect has a collective vocation to govern itself and its members, but this is simply not found in the new covenant because the new covenant Church is “body” and “not head,” having only Christ as the Head over it.

Considering that the Church is a female figure regarding Christ and that it is also equated with the bride of Christ, when a part of the Church of Christ begins to want to command other parts of this Church, that is, other people of the Church, this part of the Church seeks to do what we are warned by the prophet Isaiah, namely:

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.

Repeating, then, once again:

The House, the Church, the Body, the Collective of members, never received from Christ the vocation to be “head.”

And when a group insists on wanting to be “head,” it destroys the way or the paths of those who allow themselves to be guided by the “house” or the supposed “church,” which in this way, if it remains on this path, also ceases to be, in essence, a Church of Christ and becomes an odd body of people guided by people, blind people driving other blind individuals, people without a head leading other people without a head, being a “church” yes, but not the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

G. The Body of Christ Is Not Authorized to Have Sub-Flags or Sub-Covenants

When we start to see that in the world, there are many possibilities for people to become associated with earthly membership lists related to spiritual and religious matters, and even many of them called Christians, we may observe that this is only because people also create groups or institutions for this purpose.

Nevertheless, concerning the body of Christ or the Church of Christ, we should notice that nowhere in the Scriptures did the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus authorize Christians to create their own groups, with their own names or with their own *sub-flags*, even if under the higher title of the name of Christ or Christian.

The only name and the only flag that a Christian is authorized to use to present oneself “as a Christian” and to refer to the Lord's Church is the name of Christ or as a Christian.

*Colossians 3: 17 **And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.***

The above text could not be more direct, straightforward, comprehensive, or objective than it already is.

Nowhere did God authorize people to “slice up” His Church by themes, by people who lead a particular group, or by objectives, visions, and missions that certain groups or individuals want to establish or aspire to achieve.

*1 Corinthians 1: 11 **For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.***

*12 **Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."***

*13 **Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?***

*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 Christian is called to bear a single name or a single flag of faith because he or she is connected to a single Head and who has the Name that is above every name.

*1 Peter 4: 14 **If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.***

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

When a Christian needs to keep explaining to which “group of Christians” one belongs, and if this group is of Evangelicals, Protestants, Catholics, Anglicans, Orthodox, or any other variation that men or women have created, and if only the name of Christ or Christian is no longer sufficient, this Christian begins to move away from the simplicity that is in Christ and starts to run the risk of wanting to see Christ divided into *sub-flags* or *banners* to which the Lord did not call the Christians to take part.

When people confuse the Church of Christ with the merely linguistic concept of the Greek word “*ekklesia*,” where the meeting and a local assembly may define what a particular church is, these people also begin to use the name of their *sub-flags* because they do not understand that the Church of Christ is not an earthly association, but it is the group of living members or individuals of the eternal body of Christ.

When people confuse the Church of Christ with the concept of the group they form or belong to, they start to call their institutions and their groups “church,” and they also begin to forget that the true Church of Christ is constituted of all genuine Christians, no matter where they gather together or are located as long as they remain united to the Head of the whole Body, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The “*first love of a Christian*” is Christ. And from Him, a person saved by God should never depart and whose name one should never fail to exalt because of one's involvement with the promotion of supposed “*under-names*” of the body of Christ that someone suggests using or to which other people want him or her to become associate.

Now, “*the first love of a Christian*” can only be “*Christ*,” because Christ is the only one who died on his or her behalf and is the only one who was given to us by God to mediate people with Him, to dwell in our hearts, and to be our Head now and forever.

No other being or group of people, except Christ, died on behalf of the salvation of sinners to the extent that they can be redeemed from the guilt of sin, the condemnation of death, and to make them, through the grace of God, worthy individuals to bear the name of the Lord and the banner of Him who for them is the righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of the heavenly kingdom.

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.”

Not even if we add up all the members of the body of Christ or not even the sum of the lives of all the members of the Church of Christ could come to be presented as the provision for the propitiation of the sins of one of its members or a single lost person. Only Christ, the Head of His body, made the provision in favor of each individual of His

Church, having, for this reason, the “*only Name*” worthy of being collectively over His whole body, but also over each of the members of His body.

Not the whole Church of Christ, let alone a portion of it, can save even one person. CHRIST ONLY IS THE SAVIOR OF HIS CHURCH, thus having the exclusive status of Head and Name over every Christian.

The Church does not save anyone. People are only saved in Christ. For this reason, the preeminence of the name and the flag that a Christian carries and that covers him or her is pertinent “exclusively” to Christ.

It is the *flag of Christ* that the world awaits to be seen over Christians, over the children of God, and not the *sub-flags* of men, women, and their institutions, for these have no power for the eternal salvation of lost souls, as well as they have no power to grant newness of eternal life from the kingdom of God.

Psalms 20: 5 **We will rejoice in your salvation, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners! May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.**

6 Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand.

7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

Acts 4: 8 **Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel:**

9 If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well,

10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.

11 This Jesus is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'

12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Furthermore, no Christian is the letter in the name of Paul to the world, the letter of Peter to the world, the letter of Apollo to the world, the letter of the association or group a, b, or c to the world, the letter of the assembly x, y, or z to the world.

A Christian is not called to carry *sub-flags* of men and women or their creations, ideas, groups, or institutions because the Christian is the Letter of Christ to the world, the letter that is written by the Spirit of God so that Christ may be exalted, for, after all, it is only *in Christ* that people can find the salvation and the novelty of God's eternal life.

When Paul mentioned that Christians are like a letter to be presented, be known, and be read by all, he knew very well who was the One in whose name these letters were written.

- 2 Corinthians 3: 1* ***Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?***
- 2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;***
- 3 clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.***
- 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. ----***

And yet, to conclude this topic, besides not being called to use *sub-flags* that are presented as supposed options of *sub-Christian names*, we may see that a Christian, *in Christ*, is also not called to associate with *sub-alliances* or *sub-covenants* concerning the Christian life as if someone needs them.

In the previous topic, we mentioned that if a person, to achieve salvation, to become part of Christ, or to remain considered saved would need to join an earthly group called in some way, directly or indirectly, as a “Christian group,” this person would be exposed to an evil concept that through a covenant with this group one would be associating with Christ.

When a group propagates that a person needs to establish a covenant with it to be part of the body of Christ, that group is announcing that through the alliance with the specific group, an individual can become part of the larger group, which is the Church of Christ. And this would characterize the offer of a smaller covenant to be part of a larger covenant and what we call here as a sub-covenant to be part of the covenant with Christ. However, this course of action has no support from the Lord, at all, to be proposed and adopted.

Sub-covenants propositions are attempts to falsely spread the concept that Christ would have distributed earthly agencies or notaries so that people could link to Him indirectly via these agencies, using these agencies to bring, raise, or add members to the Church of Christ.

Now, if a group or agency calls itself a place where people can join with on Earth to join Christ, is this agency not presenting itself as a “mediator” between God and human beings?

Thus, when God stated that Christ is the Only Mediator between God and human beings, the Heavenly Father was not only referring to other people trying to perform a mediator service, but He was also referring to the institutions and groups that people love to create and keep with the purpose of trying to represent God on Earth, even though none of them are recognized as valid before the Eternal Lord.

Therefore, **the Church of Christ is not an agency or a series of bureaus where people can connect with Christ. The Church of Christ are the members of the body of Christ who are directly and individually in the Lord and who are called to testify to others that they too can connect directly or personally with the Lord Jesus.**

*Philippians 2: 9 **Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,**
 10 **that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,**
 11 **and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

A person's bond with Christ is established directly with Christ and not between a person through another person, but neither is it through a group or institution that an individual can establish a covenant with the Lord Jesus or become a member of the body of Christ.

Regardless of the name given to the manner or the way that is offered for a person to join an earthly group so that one can also obtain one's association with the body of Christ, the act required for the person to join a group is always a form or a type that resembles human or carnal circumcision and is always a human proposition of mediation between God and human beings that the Lord will never accept and will always repudiate.

There is no horizontal path or human way by which a person can connect with the body or Church of Christ, whether through association with other people or through association with groups and institutions that people constitute.

If an individual does not connect first, directly, and personally to Christ, one cannot join the body or Church of Christ. In other words, there are no alternative paths on Earth and in human propositions for someone to become part of the Lord's Church.

*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."***

No matter how large or ostensible a group of people or an institution that human beings create is, or however small and simple that their grouping might be, if there is any additional requirement besides the simplicity that there is in the faith in Christ to become part of the body of Christ, as well as to remain connected to Christ, this group of people is a type of attempt of "mediation" between God and human beings, and therefore, equivalent to a covenant of the Order of Aaron, which no longer has validity and recognition before God.

People who demand association, covenant, or affiliation with them or their groups, communities, and institutions, under the banner that this is the way for individuals to connect to the Church of Christ, are individuals who call people to the door of the kingdom of God, which door is Christ for everyone who believes in Him, but who then, there, before the door, do not let those who come to them enter the kingdom of the Lord indeed because they demand that they join them or their groups. An attitude that has prevented many from coming to the kingdom of God through the freedom by which they could approach it.

*Matthew 23: 13 **But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.***

Promoters of *sub-flags* and *sub-covenants* like to count how many individuals enter or join their associations simultaneously. However, in Christ, it is not so. In Christ, each person is a special individual and not a number. Each person is so unique that Christ Himself is in charge of establishing the new covenant with each one.

Christ alone is the narrow door through which a person can only pass individually to enter the kingdom of God. But also for this reason, this door leads those who pass through it to a direct relationship with the only true source of the newness of heavenly life, as well as to a life guided by the One Head that can guide everyone individually and, at the same time, collectively.

*Matthew 7: 13 **Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.***

*14 **Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.***

*John 20: 30 **And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;***

*31 **but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.***

*1 John 5: 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.***

*Psalms 148: 13 **Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven.***

H. The Government of the Church of Christ Is According to the Kingdom of God and Not According to the Kingdoms of the World

As we have already mentioned in several subjects of this series on The Gospel, The Good News of God, everything that refers to what God reveals to us through His Gospel has the characteristic of being different from what is in the world, since the Gospel of God is also the Gospel that proceeds from the kingdom of God and not from the kingdoms of the world.

And considering that it is also through the Gospel of the Lord that we become aware of the glory of Christ as the King and Head of His body or His Church, we can observe, in this same Gospel, that the rulership or government of Christ as the Head likewise is according to the kingdom of God and not according to the kingdoms of human beings.

Christ's position and performance as the Head of His Church follow neither the principles of government that exist among peoples nor the structural ways in which earthly governments seek to exercise their functions, but the specific or unique criteria of God's eternal kingdom.

The way in which Christ is positioned and exercises His status as Head of His body or His Church has no complete parallel in the world and any of the most varied human models of conduct. The knowledge of how Christ rules over His body is granted to us by the very characteristics of the eternal kingdom that God reveals to us from heaven.

Trying to understand and establish the standards of regency, government, or administration of the body or the Church of Christ based on human or earthly concepts will undoubtedly lead to paths and actions through which attempts will be made to distort the true way in which the Church of the Lord works and the true way in which the Lord has established to lead His body.

When a person receives Christ into one's heart, one is automatically inserted into an entirely new spiritual condition of government compared to what one probably has seen as a definition of what regency and a ruler's position are towards other people's lives. However, because the models of rulership of the world are more familiar to him or her, this person may often also end up seeking or becoming involved with types of government for one's Christian life according to the models of the world and not according to the novelty of life that is available *in Christ*.

After a person receives Christ in one's heart, one has available *in Christ* everything one needs to live and walk according to the Christian life. However, this person also needs to expose oneself to a renewal of understanding to understand better this change in one's life, a change that also applies, or should primarily apply, to the matter of how Christ, the Head of the Church, established the rulership over each of the members, the collectivity of members, and over the relationship between the members of the Lord's Church.

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.

The way God has established the government of Christ over His Church is very different from any regency in the world indeed, for it not only defines Christ's rulership over His whole body, but it also establishes government principles regarding how the members of His body or His Church are called to relate to one another.

Christ came to offer the people of the world a way of salvation to eternal life accompanied by the newness of heavenly life already immediately for those who receive this salvation. However, Christ also came to offer a whole new way for people to relate to Him, the Heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit so that, from this new relationship with the Lord, they may also relate differently to other people who also make up the body or the Church of Christ.

Highlighting once again what was said in these last paragraphs, **when the Gospel of the Lord teaches us about the glory of Christ, showing Him also as the Head of His body or His Church, it teaches us that Christ's rulership over His Church encompasses at least the following three aspects:**

- ⇒ 1st) **The position of Christ towards each member of His Church and the position of each member towards Christ as the personal Head of this member;**
- ⇒ 2nd) **The position of Christ regarding the collectivity of members of His Church and the position of this collectivity of members towards Christ as the Head of His entire body or Church;**
- ⇒ 3rd) **The position of each member towards other members of the Church of Christ.**

Without a minimum and joint understanding of the three aspects mentioned in the previous paragraph, a person may also have great difficulty in understanding a minimally appropriate position of Christ's government over His Church because if one of these aspects is understood and practiced inappropriately, the others, too, tend to be misunderstood.

Only if each Christian would be an individual entirely isolated from other people that we would be able to speak only of the first aspect referred to above. However, once there is more than one Christian involved in the relationship with Christ, the other matters will also be present.

Because many Christians do not see the three aspects in reference together, many of them end up being involved in governing propositions related to their Christian life that do not indeed come from God and that end up trying to establish a big confusion that mixes the concepts of government or rulership of the world with the government that is pertinent to the body or the Church of Christ.

One of the main points that should be evident regarding Christ's lordship over His Church is that its various aspects are intertwined and that the abandonment or distortion of only one criterion may automatically also affect the others.

Considering that Christ is the direct Head of each member of His Church, if, for instance, a member intends to be the head of another member, this attitude also contradicts the government of Christ over each member of His Church, over His whole body, and the relationship between the members of the body of Christ.

Regarding the government over an individual's personal life, there is no way to inverse, for example, the position of one member of the Church of Christ concerning another without this also reflecting on other aspects of government that there are in the body of Christ.

The body or the Church of Christ does not resemble human institutions or governments where it is possible to make repeated changes in the hierarchical orders and government systems to which they are subject. The body or the Church of Christ only accepts one hierarchical form and government path that can never be changed.

People who persist in trying to change the hierarchy that exists in the Church of Christ may even become subject to being disconnected from the body of Christ, and this, if they indeed belonged to the body of Christ. No person can prevail in one's intention to distort the order of the government of the Church that belongs exclusively to the Lord Jesus, the One who guards and protects the Church that belongs to Him so that it is not taken by the distorted human propositions.

Those who insist on wanting to establish in the Church of Christ their own goals, visions, missions, plans, or any other name they wish to give to their intentions, or who insist on ruling or governing the lives of the other members of the body of Christ, want to dominate others to disconnect them from Christ just as they did not remain united to the Head because of their carnal mentalities and understandings.

*Colossians 2: 18 **Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,**
19 **and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.***

The growth in the newness of the Lord's life and the reward that comes from it is *in Christ*. However, this newness of life can only be achieved by those members of the body or the Church of Christ that are connected directly to the Head of the body, which is Christ. For this reason, it is this direct connection of each member with the Head of the Church that many do not want to accept, for it contradicts the ways of conduct that exist in the world and that many try to introduce and impose on the Church of the Lord.

In yet another version of the Scriptures, we find the text exposed above as follows:

*Colossians 2: 18 **Let no one dominate you according to how it pleases them and deprive you from salvation, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,**
19 **and not connected to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.** (NKJV+Portuguese and Spanish Versions)*

Thus, from the perspective of seeing the government of the Head Christ over His body from the criteria of the kingdom of God, we may observe that **one of the points that most intrigues or even confronts many people's understanding of the**

Church of Christ refers to the freedom that each of the members of the Lord's Church finds under the government exercised by Christ to be able to *live and walk directly in Christ* despite having brothers and sisters in Christ with whom they may have fellowship.

When the Scriptures announce that all members of the body of Christ can have personal, individual, and direct access to the Head of the Church, many people, and even many Christians among them, do not see or do not realize that this direct and personal access to Christ also defines that in the Church of Christ:

- ⇒ 1) There are no human hierarchies for a Christian to access the Head of the Church personally;
- ⇒ 2) There are no human hierarchies for a Christian to be personally guided by Christ;
- ⇒ 3) There are no human hierarchies for a Christian to be able to relate to other Christians, or there are no human hierarchies foreseen for the mutual relationship of Christians concerning their relationships as members of the body or the Church of Christ.

In the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the hierarchy is very simplified, for it is composed of Christ, the only Head of all, and each member linked to the Head subjecting oneself to the Head, with all members being in an equal position towards Christ and regarding others.

In Christ, in the body of Christ, in the Church of Christ, or the family of God, each member is designated to be grounded directly in Christ just as one is called to be governed and guided by Christ, allowing each member to be *in Christ* “*from the platform of the feet to the head.*”

In Christ, each member of His Church, body, or family is called to *live and walk in the Lord* without any mediators, neither in terms of being grounded in Christ nor in terms of Christ's government over each member of His body.

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;

10 and you are complete in Him, ...

There are no members in the body of Christ who do not primarily and wholly belong to Christ Jesus. And there are no members in the Church of Christ who have more rights than others to be in Christ and relate directly to the Lord.

And the attempts to revoke or change this simple hierarchy that exists in the life of a member of the Church of Christ towards the Head of this Church and the other members are never accepted by God, not even concerning the collective expression of the Church of Christ.

*1 Corinthians 3: 21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours:
22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours.
23 And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*

If the members of the body of Christ do not respect the simple hierarchy in which each one can access Christ directly and in which all members are in the same position towards each other, the coexistence or mutual fellowship of the members of the Church of Christ will also be impaired.

In other words, if some Christians who intend to meet and have fellowship with other Christians do not understand and do not respect that their brothers and sisters of faith or the Church of Christ have only one Lord and that no member of the Church of Christ is called or has a vocation to be the head of another member, these Christians are not yet prepared to have fellowship with others and urgently need to review if what they want to achieve in their relationship with others is not according to the precepts of the world's governments instead of the principles of the kingdom of God.

In terms of hierarchy according to the government of Christ, the Church of Christ that is subject to the Heavenly Father has only two hierarchical levels, namely:

- ⇒ 1st) **Christ as the One Head of His whole body or His whole Church;**
- ⇒ 2nd) **The members of the body or the Church of Christ without distinction of superiority or inferiority from one to another.**

When the Scriptures state that Christ is the One Foundation of life according to the kingdom of God and also the One Head from whom all life is provided and organized for growth in God, they teach us that all those who receive the kingdom are:

- ⇒ 1) **Personally built directly on this foundation, one besides the other and not some on others;**
- ⇒ 2) **Personally placed side by side with other Christian under the Lordship of One Lord and Shepherd, and not one under the others or behind the others.**

Respecting various peculiarities of each person and the gifts that Christ grants to each member of His body or of His Church, as to being grounded on the eternal foundation of life and as to being under the Head of the body of Christ, all Christians have the same position before Christ and are equal in hierarchical position to all their fellow men who are *in Christ*.

Christ and several other parts of the Scriptures have clearly stated that:

- ⇒ 1) There is only one Savior for all sinners and the lost people;
- ⇒ 2) There is only one Name that is above every name by which people must be saved;
- ⇒ 3) There is only one Master for all the brothers and sisters of the family of God;
- ⇒ 4) There is only one Guide for all followers and disciples of Christ;
- ⇒ 5) There is only one Mediator between God and all human beings;
- ⇒ 6) There is only one Heavenly Father for all His eternal children born in Christ, and there is only one Eternal Father worthy of being called “*our Father*;”
- ⇒ 7) There is only one Shepherd for all the sheep of the one flock of the Lord;
- ⇒ 8) There is only one King of kings, and there is only one Lord of lords;
- ⇒ 9) There is only one Foundation on which all Christians can be built;
- ⇒ 10) There is one Head over all the members of the body or the Church of Christ.

Below, we list, then, some texts to remember the principles just mentioned above:

1 Timothy 2: 5 ***For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.***

Matthew 23: 1 ***Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,***
 8 ***"But you, do not be called 'Rabbi' (Master); for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.***
 9 ***Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.***
 10 ***And do not be called teachers (guides or leaders); for One is your Teacher, the Christ.***
 11 ***But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.***
 12 ***And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."***

John 10: 14 ***I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.***
 15 ***As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.***
 16 ***And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.***

As the One Head of His Church, Christ never appointed a single person to make disciples of oneself or of the visions, institutions, and organizations that a person creates or with which one chooses to become associated in the present world.

The Lord Jesus called people to be His disciples and make disciples and followers of Christ in such a way that He is the Only Guide and Head of these disciples or followers.

*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.***

The mentality or the proposition of definitions of government through a plural mediation was allowed by God during the period authorized for the Order of Aaron. However, given the weakness and uselessness of that form of regency over people's lives, God, already since ancient times and also through the prophet Ezekiel, prophesied the end of the spiritual plural regency over His people, also announcing the unique condition of Christ that we have just mentioned above and as we exemplify again below:

*Ezekiel 34 :1 **And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,***

*2 **"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"***

*3 **You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock.***

*4 **The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.***

*5 **So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.***

*6 **My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them."***

*7 **Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD:***

*8 **"as I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock," —***

*9 **therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD!***

*10 **Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them."***

*11 **For thus says the Lord GOD: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.***

12 *"As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day.*

13 *And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country.*

14 *I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.*

15 *I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord GOD.*

16 *"I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment."*

17 *And as for you, O My flock, thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats.*

18 *Is it too little for you to have eaten up the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture—and to have drunk of the clear waters, that you must foul the residue with your feet?*

19 *And as for My flock, they eat what you have trampled with your feet, and they drink what you have fouled with your feet."*

20 *Therefore thus says the Lord GOD to them: "Behold, I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep.*

21 *"Because you have pushed with side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and scattered them abroad,*

22 *therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.*

23 *I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.*

24 *And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.*

25 *I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.*

26 *I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing.*

27 *Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them.*

28 *And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid.*

29 *I will raise up for them a garden of renown, and they shall no longer be consumed with hunger in the land, nor bear the shame of the Gentiles anymore.*

30 *Thus they shall know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are My people," says the Lord GOD.*

31 *"You are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God," says the Lord GOD.*

Why did God interrupt the continuity of the plural governing system of pastors over those who believe in Him and who constitute His people, including in the term *pastors* also *priests, scribes, princes, kings, and prophets*?

As has already been widely explained in previous chapters, God allowed human beings to try to live by a covenant according to human beings' fleshly intents so that they could come to know the weakness and uselessness of the propositions suggested by them. However, when the "*fullness of the time*" had come, in which the weakness of the mentioned proposals was already amply demonstrated, God, through Christ Jesus, interrupted that old covenant and declared it obsolete and revoked since God did not create human beings to be like children who did not have direct and personal access to their Eternal Father.

The exclusive and direct rulership of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head over His whole Church or the entire family of God is a clear manifestation of the purpose that has always been in the heart of God for all people so that each person can know and have personal fellowship with one's Eternal Creator.

Romans 5: 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.

2 Corinthians 5: 18 ***Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,***

19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Now, considering that the system of priestly or pastoral mediation of the Order of Aaron did not work and proved to be weak and useless, in addition to being destructive to the lives of those who follow it, God would not want to free people from the former slavery of the domination of other people and to reconcile them with Himself *in Christ* to return later to enslave them to what has already been proven not to work.

In the new covenant offered by God *in Christ Jesus*, as explained through the subject on Knowing About God or Knowing God, we are invited to personally know God so that we too may be instructed, first, by the Lord through His precious and immeasurable Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 8: 8 ***Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,***

9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of

Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.

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."

13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

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.

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

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.

In fulfilling the mission that he had received from the Lord, Paul, as an apostle of Christ, for example, never presented himself to be the "head" of other Christians, making it explicit, on several occasions, who he was and who Christ was towards the other members of the body or Church of Christ.

Paul said that it matters, and a lot, how people regard each other, including those who preach and teach more intensely about the Gospel of God so that nobody comes to exalt Christ's servants too much and in contradiction of Christ's exclusive status over His Church, as exemplified again below:

1 Corinthians 4: 1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

1 Corinthians 3: 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?

6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

Paul writes to us that in the relationship between the members of the body of Christ, it is crucial that some do not consider others beyond what they are, or, in other words, do not consider them more than each one is before God and the body of Christ.

When Paul says that people should regard him as “a minister or servant of Christ” or “a steward of the mysteries of God,” he did not have the distorted mentality of our day when people see the expression “*minister of God*” as a title, a rank, and an elevated position above the other brothers, but he considered himself and lived according to what the word *minister* or *servant* meant in his days.

The word *minister* or *servant* to which Paul refers, for example, according to the notes associated in the Online Bible with Strong's Lexicon, means:

Servant;
An underrower, subordinate rower;
Any one who serves with hands: a servant;
In the NT of the officers and attendants of magistrates, as of the officer who executes penalties;
Of the attendants of a king, servants, retinue, the soldiers of a king, of the attendant of a synagogue;
Of any one ministering or rendering service;
Any one who aids another in any work;
An assistant.

A “*minister or servant of Christ*,” as described by the meaning of the word exposed above, is not called to reign over or dominate one's fellow Christians, but is called to serve in the name of the One King whom all are called to have as the Head of their lives.

Already as “*stewards of the mysteries of God*,” we see that Paul presents himself as a steward or distributor of the mysteries of God.

But what were the mysteries of God that Paul was called to present to people?

The mysteries of God that Paul and other servants of the Lord announced after the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world were the good news of eternal salvation and the Gospel that revealed to people the fact that only Christ is the Savior, Lord, Eternal High Priest, King of Righteousness and King of Peace, or even, that only Christ is the Head of His body or His Church.

And the true “minister of Christ” is humble, is a servant of Christ, and does not accept to be seen by others above what suits him or her as a member of the body of Christ, and is also the one who always points to Christ as the One and Sovereign Head of His entire Church, never accepting to be put in a position equivalent to that of Christ, not even to a small extent.

The true “minister of Christ,” the one who serves the Lord, even though also being a child of God, does not compete with the One he or she serves, does not compete to have the position of the whom he or she is a servant or a minister, and does not enter into a dispute with the One who called him or her in the sense of trying to take the glory of the Lord for oneself before those one was sent to serve.

Any individual who claims to be a “minister or servant of Christ,” but also wants to be a head of other Christians, or partially intends to be a head, is an individual acting in falsehood and contrary to the position of Christ as the One Head and, therefore, should not be accepted as “minister of Christ,” because despite using the term *minister*, it is not Christ that this person is serving indeed.

*Luke 11: 23 **He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.***

Both through teachings and his personal example, Paul repeatedly instructs us that a member of the body is not the head and mediator of another member of the body, but as a member, one should always remain in the condition of a member.

Even if a member, at certain times, could or might be useful and of great help to other members, this does not transform him or her in a head and does not give him or her the right to be the leader of another member of the body or the Church of Christ.

Very precious is the concept of a healthy family in its relationship when its members get together. However, how sad and unhealthy it is when a brother or sister wants to impose oneself on the other brother or sister because, for example, one has a more valued position and profession in society or because one thinks he or she has served others more than others have served him or her.

Christ presents us with a new covenant and a new priesthood. And we have already seen that the change of priesthood implies a change in the law. And, in turn, letting behind the old law also means letting behind the system associated with that law, including the system of plural government over the people that was part of the old covenant.

The law of the new covenant is the law of Christ and the law of freedom in the Lord. And under this law, everyone is free to come to Christ and, through Him, to the Heavenly Father also to be instructed and guided by the One whom God has established as the Head of His entire Church, in which all are brothers and sisters, through faith in God, of the same family of the children of the Heavenly Father, and in which all are called to regard one another with respect and love.

*1 John 4: 21 **And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.***

*1 Corinthians 7: 23 **You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.***

*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.***

I. A Highly Negative Aspect of Resistance to Christ as the Head of His Church

As we begin to see the glory of Christ established by God as the Head, we start to see that Christ is the Head (1) of each person who believes in Him and receives Him as the Lord, (2) of each marriage established according to the principle of God, and (3) of the whole set of genuine Christians also called the body of Christ, the Church of Christ, or the Church God.

And one of the essential aspects of Christ's position as the Head of all individuals who believe in Him and of His whole Church is related to the establishment of the reconciliation of each person with God to the point that each one can be guided directly by the Lord, but also so that each individual may cooperate with the actions of God carried out by many Christians, as exemplified respectively below:

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

*Ephesians 3: 8 **To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,***
*9 **and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;***
*10 **to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,***
*11 **according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,***
*12 **in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.***

*2 Corinthians 1: 11 ... **you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.***

When, however, we start to approach the theme of the Church of Christ, there are some very relevant aspects that need to be observed due to a series of misconceptions about the Church of the Lord that has been spreading throughout the world over the centuries.

As we have already commented on in the previous topics, the government of Christ, as the Head of His Church, is not according to the kingdoms of the Earth, and neither the Church has been called to be the head of itself or of parts of itself. Thus, these aspects make the regency over the Church of Christ unique and distinct, but which also arouses opposition precisely because it is so different from the rules or ways of governing according to the human beings and the kingdoms of the present world.

Considering that many people in the world do not want Christ to guide their own lives, it is also evident that they will not want Christ to lead the collective aspects in which they live.

Nevertheless, the aspect that leads many people to resist the exclusive position of Christ as the Head of His Church is particularly intriguing since joining the Church of Christ is entirely voluntary and optional, which is not always the case concerning other aspects of society in which a person lives.

What is intriguing about the matter of opposition to Christ's exclusive lordship over the Church that belongs to Him is the fact that people want to be part of the Church of Christ but do not want to accept the operational characteristics of this same Church.

Since, on the part of God, no person is obliged to participate in the Church of Christ, for the possibility of becoming part of it is an offer of God through the Gospel and which can only be accepted by the willingness of faith in Christ, why, then, do people want to be part of the Church of the Lord so much and change the governance characteristics of this Church if they can choose not to be part of it at all?

Faced with this last question, we begin to see once again the importance of God allowing, for historical testimony, that a group of people could try to live according to the Order of Aaron or according to the order subject to the law of Moses, because **the same carnal aspects that led people to choose the first and flawed Levitical priesthood, are also the same aspects that make people want to be part of the Church of Christ, but, at the same time, do not want Christ's direct government over their personal lives.**

People who want to be part of the Church of God, but do not want Christ to reign over their personal lives, adopt, with other names, the same attitudes that the individuals of the people freed from the domination of Egypt adopted in the desert when they wanted salvation, protection, and care of the only true God, but who did not want this God to relate personally to each individual so that their hearts would not be enlightened with the instruction and the ways of the Lord.

There are many people in the world who want to be part of the Church of Christ because of the salvation and blessings they think they may obtain by being associated with it, for they recognize that the Church of Christ is an essential path through which God works, but, at the same time, they do not want Christ to govern their lives, thus placing themselves among those who “falter between two opinions” that cannot be reconciled.

Many people who resist the position of Christ as the Head of His Church are those who want to be part of the Church of the Lord for the benefits they think they can get from membership in the Church of the Lord, but who do not indeed want the government or lordship of Christ Himself in their lives.

And when we see the resistance that people make to the position of Christ as the Head of His Church, but, at the same time, wanting to be part of the Church of Christ because of the benefits they think they can achieve from this association, we may observe once again how the human being, confident in oneself, can be proud and presumptuous, believing that God must bless him or her for the fact of doing some external works even if one does not come to have a humble or contrite heart before the Lord.

The same thought of carrying out works and external associations that existed in the people of antiquity concerning the Order of Aaron is also a thought that many have as being something possible to be done regarding the Church of Christ, not realizing, however, that ***the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law***, and yet, that *in Christ*, no one is justified by external associations, circumcision, or practice of works even if people claim that their works are being done in association with the Church of Christ.

When we see the resistance that people make to the position of Christ as the Head of His Church, but at the same time wanting to be part of the Church of Christ because of the benefits that they intend to achieve from the association with it, we may observe once again how the human being, confident in oneself or other human beings, resists giving the primacy of one's life and the due glory to the God by whom one was created.

And, in turn, when we start to go back to the question of who will have the primacy in the life of each person, we return, again, to the same point of the sin of Adam and Eve, as well as the sin of resistance to the primacy of God that was behind the Order of Aaron.

Hebrews 3: 10 ***Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.'***

11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Although people who do not want Christ in their hearts and do not want to be part of the Church of Christ also do not experience the salvation of God and the benefits that accompany this salvation, in some ways, their attitude is at least more explicit than those who say they want to be part of the Church but do not indeed want the primacy in their lives to belong to the One Head of the Church of God.

The intermediate condition between wanting the Church but not wanting the conditions that accompany the association with this Church to be indeed part of it, which are to be connected and stay connected to the Head of the body, places a person who adopts it in a very precarious position and in which, before Christ, one will not be allowed to remain this way, even if one tries to show an apparent devotion to God or tries to hide behind a seeming faithfulness to the Lord and His Church.

Revelation 3: 15 ***"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.***

16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing', and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked."

Therefore, **no person can be faithful to the Church of Christ if one is not primarily faithful to Christ, the One established by God as the Head of every individual who believes and remains in Him.**

No horizontal action towards the Church of Christ can compensate for the absence of abiding in Christ and submitting to Christ as Him being the Lord or Head of the individual life of the one who believes in Him.

Fellowship and love between those who belong to the Lord's Church are only possible to be practiced by those Christians who, first of all, have fellowship with the Lord Jesus and who choose to be subject to Him.

- 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.**

- 1 John 5: 2* **By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.**
-

The non-acceptance of the primacy, sovereignty, and government of Christ as the Head in personal life, but still wanting the benefits of God, as happened in the desert with the people liberated from Egypt, is one of the most prominent reasons that makes so many attempts rising to establish different concepts of churches, but which, at the same time, also contradict what is indeed the true Church of the Lord.

It is *in Christ* that a person is invited to be enabled to be instructed and prepared to also govern one's life of fellowship with others without wanting to dominate one's fellow men. And if a person has departed from this simplicity that exists in the relationship between Christ and the members of His Church, it is up to him or her to present genuine repentance before the Lord, to whom the condition of Head of His own Church belongs exclusively.

- Revelation 3: 19* **"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.**
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.**
21 **To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."**

*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.***

*James 4: 7 **Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.***

J. The Heavenly Church and the Wicked Attempts to Make It Earthly

As a result of the yearning to be part of the Church of Christ to obtain benefits from it, but at the same time, as a result of not wanting the government of Christ as the Head or not knowing about this Lord's regency, many oppositions to Christ's sovereignty and exclusivity over His body have been adopted over the centuries after the Lord revealed the existence of His Church to human beings.

These oppositions, motivated by aspects already exposed in the previous topic, vary from personal and small resistances to oppositions organized and institutionalized in very extensive or considerable ways.

And again, to understand some of the main oppositions to the position of Christ as the One Head of His Church, it is essential to know that the Church of Christ cannot be dissociated from the people who have Christ as the Lord.

Something highly significant to keep in mind when reading the Scriptures about the Church of Christ is the aspect that in the days when the Scriptures were produced, there was not yet such expressive culture of legal entities and institutions that there is in recent days, allowing references to the Church without the weight and emphasis that constituted institutions have today.

When, for example, the Scriptures mention functions such as deacons or elders, they are not referring to the titles of positions that people occupy in legal institutions such as, for example, in companies, clubs, or religious institutions as in the recent days.

The industrial growth and the urbanization of people in the last and recent centuries have greatly accentuated the issues of legal or formally instituted organizations, and which were created so that the population could have a more defined reference of its diverse gatherings that they started to do around areas in common for work or meetings.

Until a few centuries ago, it was much more common to refer to people themselves according to their professions than to a company in which someone worked. In the past, people referred much more to the hairdresser, the baker, the carpenter, the blacksmith, the farmer than to the barber shop, bakery, work office, farm, or agricultural company as is done today.

With the advent of institutional growth and the establishment of corporate and tax accounting, in a way, there was a movement of depersonalization of people in many areas, leading to the fact that today, people often talk more about their relationships with legal entities than about their relationships with the people who work in them.

Nevertheless, **concerning the Church of Christ, this institutional conception is entirely inappropriate, for the Church of Christ is not and will never become a human organizational organ and that can be conceived and registered as such on Earth, just as the kingdom of God on Earth does not come with an apparent and visible shape.**

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."

Many registered institutions may be called “*church*,” but considering that the “*Church of Christ*,” basically or essentially, consists of people, and people saved in Christ Jesus, absolutely no institutional human record that calls itself “*church*” is in fact “*the Church of Christ*.”

The attempts to institutionalize the Church of Christ under earthly and human parameters are fleshly and distorted attempts to register on Earth what cannot be registered in the natural world.

The Order of Aaron had temples and earthly records. Christ's Church, however, has a sanctuary in heaven and each heart, and never has or can have a sanctuary made by human hands, so much so that the permission, on the part of God, for the building of human temples has also ceased along with the revocation of the old covenant and the declaration of obsolescence of the Order of Aaron, Moses, or the Levites.

Hebrews 8: 1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

Except for the heart, the attempt to transform a building, a house, a tent, or any other human aspect into a Christian temple or to call it the Church of Christ is to resist the Holy Spirit and to resist what Christ came to provide from His death on the cross of Calvary, His resurrection, and His heavenly position in which He was seated by the Eternal Father.

Acts 7: 47 But Solomon built Him a house.
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.

Meetings where Christians gather together in person, of course, need a physical location or place to do this, and this might be a house or their houses, a park, a plaza, a room that someone makes available, and other areas. However, under no circumstances, any of these places can become the Church of Christ, for the Church of the Lord are people and not places, buildings, institutions, or other earthly things.

Therefore, insisting on trying to transform the “*Church of Christ*” into “*churches*” linked to something tangible physically or legally is, in essence, an expression of opposition to what the true “*Church of Christ*” is. It is an opposition that seeks to

withdraw people from the understanding that the “Church of Christ” is a set of people and not the conditions and places they come together.

The insistence on attempts to associate the “Church of Christ” with “churches associated with earthly things” is one of the most eminent oppositions and resistances to the “Church of God” over the centuries, and also one of the means that most sponsors the emergence of successive distortions of what the “Church of Christ” is and of how the “Church of the Lord” is governed by the Lord Jesus.

It is through attempts to turn the “Church of Christ” into “earthly churches” that the most diverse distortions arise concerning the understanding of the functions of the members of the body of Christ, as well as the mistaken conceptions of titles and positions to which human beings so much cling.

The Lord Jesus Christ said that “where two or three” would gather together in His name, “there He would be,” and this, also in the sense of saying that there would be a meeting of His body or His Church, showing us that it is the individuals who determine when the Church is meeting or not, and not the supposed places or institutions that they could come to create or define for these meetings.

When people start saying that they “go to church,” “attend church a, b, or c,” or that they “will build the church” thinking about physical places, they have already deviated from the essence of what the body of Christ is and have run into concepts and terms that use the name “church,” but which are not, in fact, the “Church of Christ.”

When we see Paul, when he was still better known by the name Saul, entering the houses and persecuting the Christians, we can see narrated that he persecuted the Church of Christ by persecuting the individuals of the Lord's Church, and not precisely their homes. However, his persecutions were ineffective because the living Church of Christ, made up of its living members and not places or buildings, walked everywhere in the new locations they were dispersed preaching and testifying about Christ Jesus.

*Acts 8: 3 **As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.***
*4 **Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.***

The attempt to institutionalize the Church of Christ is much sought after by the enemies of the Church of the Lord because it is much easier to pursue formally established and arranged institutions and groupings, but it is also much more tangible to dominate the institutions than free people and who are not grouped formally by human standards.

The physical temple of Jerusalem built under Herod's reign, for example, was overthrown by the Romans a few years after Christ came in the flesh into the world and has not been rebuilt to the present day. However, not the entire powerful Roman Empire was able to extinguish the growing flame of the Christian faith in the hearts of thousands and thousands of men, women, children, free individuals, and slaves who came to believe in Christ Jesus.

As we have already mentioned in the previous topics, the Church of Christ has no institutional or hierarchical structure on Earth. And this is also what makes it so unique and, at the same time, so resisted by those who want some sort of domination and control over the members of the body of Christ.

The attempt to institutionalize the Church of Christ is highly desired because it is in the institutions or the structured human groups that people are able to “slice” the whole set into parts and in such a way that these parts might be granted or allotted to those who seek to obtain some space of domination over others.

While people in the Church of Christ are given gifts and functions to serve others, and each member is called to consider one's fellows as superior to oneself, in formal institutions or groupings, the demand is for leaders, sub-leaders, auxiliary leaders, and auxiliaries of auxiliary leaders.

The propositions that want to institutionalize the Church of Christ are attempts to transform the Church of God into models of government for human beings, and this is not different from what the people territorially freed from the dominion of Egypt asked God when requesting priests and, later, mediating kings and their structures between the individuals of the people and God.

We have already seen in the previous topics that the Lord Jesus Christ explicitly warned His disciples not to call themselves teachers, guides, or leaders to one another, because they were called to be a family and because they were called to be brothers and sisters of the family of God and not members of an institution or organization in which some need to rise above others to govern the institutions.

Seeking to establish the Church of Christ as a human organization is already a severe distortion of the purpose for which the Church of Christ is called, but this claim also aims to oppose the very definition of what is essentially the *family of God*.

In another situation, the Lord Jesus Christ also clearly admonished His followers not to think of the Lord's Church as the rulers of the world think, and admonished them to act according to the principles of Christ for His body, as shown below:

Matthew 20: 25 ***But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.***

26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.

27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave, 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

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.

27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves."

There is much material to be explored in these last two texts exposed above when we see them from the perspective of the Church of Christ. However, these texts can only be seen properly if a person looks to them apart from the goals or attempts to institutionalize the Church of Christ.

Understanding what we are looking to expose might be crucial, for there are several people around the world who say that Christ spoke very little about His Church while He was in the flesh in the world, and that, for this reason, we lack more knowledge from Christ about the Church and which was only supplied to us more extensively later by Paul.

Nevertheless, the thought of the previous paragraph is not valid or correct if we understand that Christ's Church is not an institution or an earthly figure that has life on its own or dissociated from the members of the body of Christ, as many like to refer to what they suppose to be the Lord's Church.

The thought that Christ effectively taught little about His Church only gains shelter and grows if people despise the fact that the Lord's Church are the individuals who believe in Christ and receive Him as Lord in their hearts.

So, for example, when the Lord Jesus declares that "blessed" are those who believe in Him and follow Him, He is speaking directly of the Church because He is speaking of those who make up this Church.

Each teaching of the Lord Jesus on how a person becomes attached to Him, how a person remains in Him, and how a person can live and walk in Him is a teaching about the Church because He is referring to the essential part of what makes up His Church, an aspect that many do not see because they let themselves be distracted by fascinating and false explanations about what comes to be the body or the Church of Christ.

When people accept the idea that the Church of Christ needs leaders who are in charge of the Church, many of them accept this type of instruction because they think of a church in the third-person independent of its members and think of a church as something earthly, tangible in the eyes, and as something that can be built on human bases.

A "flock" of sheep, for instance, is just a concept. And, in turn, the definition "flock of sheep," in itself, can do nothing because it is inert and lifeless if devoid of sheep.

In this way, when someone says that the "flock" has done something or has stopped doing something, this, in reality, can only make sense if the reference is directed to what the "several sheep of one same group" did or did not do.

Even the institutions do not work if there are no people who give them strength and life to act, and this shows that behind the actions of the so-called institutions, in reality, there are actions of people who use these institutions to carry out their intents, acts, or works.

As we have also seen previously, the Church of Christ does not exist dissociated from people, which leads us to see that the *church* merely in its “collective term” in reality cannot accomplish anything at all, for what a *church* does only expresses what people in this *church* did and still do.

So, when Christ teaches members of His Church about how they should relate to other members of that same Church, He is essentially presenting teachings about the Church of Christ itself.

Any instruction from the Lord on the conduct of people who are followers of Christ, whether towards Him, to the world, and the members of this body of Christ, are also definitions pertinent to Christ's Church.

When the Lord Jesus Christ says, “*it shall not be so among you*” and “*but not so among you,*” He, in defining how the members of this Church are or should live and walk, is presenting characteristics of what His Church is or how the Church should behave.

In defining the relationship of members of the Church of Christ and God with the One to whom the Church belongs, and in determining what the relationship between members of the body of Christ should be, the Lord Jesus Himself displayed fundamental characteristics of His Church.

Personally, the Lord Jesus Christ did not indeed often use the word *church* while He was in the flesh in the world. However, He continually taught what the members that effectively make up His own Church are, what He expects of them, and how they should behave, showing us, through His example of teaching towards His followers, that it is in the definition of the members of His Church that also the definition of His Church is found, being, therefore, one aspect inseparable from the other.

Any definition of the Church of Christ that is not consistent with Christ's absolute sovereignty over His Church, with what the Lord taught about the characteristics of the members of His body or His followers, and with His instructions regarding the proper functioning of His Church is contrary to Christ and does not define the true body of Christ, reminding us once again of the text that follows:

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.

Christ declared to His followers that they should be different from the rulers of the peoples, because in essence, as followers of Christ and members of the body of Christ, they are no longer of the world and are not called to act according to the world.

John 15: 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

17 These things I command you, that you love one another.

18 If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

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.

16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Those in the Church of Christ have substantial differences from people who are not of the body of Christ. And they are called to different criteria in the world for their relationship with other members of the body of Christ, teaching us the Lord, that there are attitudes that may apply to peoples in general, but that do not necessarily apply to the Church of the Lord or that should not even be part of this Church.

In the few words of the last texts exposed in this topic, we may see that in His teaching according to His Gospel, the Lord Jesus made it very clear that there is a concept of the use of authority in society in general that is very different from how the Church, which is made up of the followers of Christ and who have Christ as the Head of their lives, is or should function.

When the Lord Jesus shows us a parallel between two widely different realities and says that His disciples had the knowledge of how the peoples and their rulers work, He also showed us that we should not be ignorant and alienated concerning the functioning of the peoples in general, but, at the same time, He also showed that the members of the body of Christ are called to act and to be different from what they saw and see in the world in which they still live.

Christians are called the salt of the Earth and the light of the world, and it is not earthly life that should be the standard of conduct for Christians and between Christians. And this, too, is direct teaching about what the Church of Christ is, for the Church of Christ are the Christians themselves and not temples, associations, gatherings, and all other variations of what people call “church.”

When Christians begin to adopt postures or attitudes suggested by non-Christian leaders for their relationships between brothers or sisters of faith, they become subject to the risk of receiving instructions from people like “Jethro” (Moses' father-in-law), but who was also a priest of Midian, as we saw in previous chapters.

Of course, this does not mean that a Christian cannot or should not use scientific, mathematical, and technological discoveries that people in general discover and develop, for God gives some natural gifts and good things to those who believe in Christ

as well as those who do not. However, this is not what the Lord Jesus is talking about. The subject approached by the Lord Jesus in the texts that we saw above is very specific and directed to the relationship between Christians, that is, the relationship between the members of His Church or the members of His body.

What the Lord highlighted in the texts in reference is that when the followers of Christ relate to other followers of Christ, the rules of the dominating authorities among the peoples do not apply, under any circumstances, to the fellowship of Christians, brothers and sisters of His Church, because “*it shall not be so among you*” and “*but not so among you.*”

The Lord Jesus plainly established that no Christian has a vocation on the part of God to rule or dominate any other Christian because Christians are the Church or the body of Christ. In other words, as the Church, the bride, or the body of Christ, no member of this Church has a vocation to be head over others, a position in which God established Christ with “exclusivity.”

Why, then, did the Lord Jesus define this so clearly?

The Church of Christ is differentiated from everything on Earth precisely because it has no heads, earthly guides, leaders, pastors, or fathers designed to be over the lives of the members of the body of Christ. And this is also what bothers those who want to dominate others, as well as those who want to be under people who dominate them, even calling them benefactors despite their cruel and unjust domination.

Without God's guidance in the heart, the human being tends to want to dominate one's neighbors, which is why Christ also defined that the concept of hierarchies and structures of people who dominate others is a model according to the peoples of the Earth or who have not yet received Him in their hearts as Lord and Savior.

If the Lord allowed that among Christians there would be an assortment of hierarchies as there are in human institutions, the Lord would be adopting or authorizing that also in His new covenant the concepts of the Gentile peoples could come to be used in the Church and would be allowing the advice of Jethro to Moses and the suggestion of mediating priests of the people entering the relationship of brothers and sisters of faith in Christ.

Therefore, the New Covenant Church, the Jerusalem above, the Free One, is made up of men and women freed and saved by Christ to access the Head of the whole body freely. And no human influence or action can alter what the Church of Christ is indeed eternally before the Eternal God.

*Galatians 4: 26(a) **But the Jerusalem above is free.***

K. The Pretended Ministers and Doctrines Behind Earthly Churches

If some people come to think that the Church of Christ is something materialized as a building, a social assembly, a civil association, or an earthly institution, and not essentially the body composed of the people who have Christ in their hearts as their Lord, these people also begin to be inclined to letting themselves be deceived by the idea that the God's Church needs earthly and human administration, which, however, is not true.

The natural consequence of surrendering to the mistaken thought that the Church of Christ is natural or earthly also, of course, leads people to advance to natural or worldly thoughts concerning how its regency might be carried out.

If the Church of Christ were a figure of something natural, an earthly body, or a corporation, it would also need earthly administration or methods. And that is why many try to pass this concept on to the Church of Christ, for they intend that they themselves will be the ones who will fill these gaps in ruling positions that an earthly “church” or “churches” would need.

Thus, when in previous topics, we mentioned that one part of the Church might want to put itself at the head of other parts of the Church, even if not authorized by Christ for this, we see that, in reality, there are people, members of the Church or even external members to the Church, who may try to elevate themselves over other members to try to be “head” or “rulers” over the members of this Church.

We can realize then that the “part of the church” that tries to put itself on the forehead instead of letting Christ be the Head is not indeed an abstract subset of the Church, but always “are people” who are behind the actions that seek to dominate parts of the body of Christ.

2 Peter 2: 17 **These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.**
18 **For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.**
19 **While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.**

Matthew 15: 14 **Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.**

As we have already mentioned, a church without people has no life in itself and does not even exist indeed, for its means of action are the members that constitute a church.

Thus, **knowing that behind every action of a church, whether Christ's or other earthly churches, there are always individuals who carry out these actions, leads us to see in a more specific way that behind the attempts to**

institutionalize or make the Church of Christ earthly, there are, in fact, people who render themselves to introduce and lead these attempts.

And when we get to the point that there are always people involved behind the attempts to structure the Church of Christ into institutions, hierarchies, and organizations like those of humans, it becomes easier to see what those who oppose the way of government of God's Church intend to achieve and who want models that follow human standards of regency.

What we are trying to highlight at this point, contrary to what many want to imply, is that human organizations do not have an autonomous life and are not independent of those who create or support these organizations.

When people say that a particular church does something or fails to do something, they often speak of the church as if it had the power to act in its institutional aspect, which is not possible without there being individuals who effectively confer this power on what they call a *church*.

If, on the one hand, people use the organizations they create and maintain, on the other hand, these organizations can only work indeed if there are people who build and sustain them.

When it comes to people and the organizations or institutions that they create and sustain, whether informal or formal, neither organizations are independent of people nor people are entirely independent of the organizations they maintain, but there is a mixed performance carried out by people through their organizations or institutions.

Even though organizations, in various segments, are supportive of the population, such as, for instance, several companies, various government agencies, hospitals, and others, and although organizations may pool resources and be a means for people to carry out different aspects that, without them, perhaps would not be possible to accomplish, it is the people who, ultimately, give movement to the organizations.

On the other hand, when in the present chapter we address the aspect that the Church of Christ actually cannot be institutionalized or organized according to the standards of a human organization or according to the hierarchies of human organizations, we are not saying that no human institution should be created for other several activities on Earth and that these human organizations should not have hierarchies.

The theme that is being addressed in this chapter is the body or the Church of Christ, and this, precisely as such, does not exist to be subject to human organizations that want to rule the Church of the Lord.

It is concerning the Church of Christ that we are dealing with the fact that there is no need for human institutions for its functioning, just as brothers and sisters from the same family do not need institutions to meet as family.

Nevertheless, this also does not mean that members of the Church of Christ will find themselves in a disorderly manner and without respect for each other. Love and appropriate respect should be part of every Christian's conduct, which, therefore, does not require the establishment of formal institutions to be practiced among the members of the body of Christ.

So, returning to the aspect of the attempts to frame the Church of Christ in human institutions, it is highly significant to know that people try to do

it because of what they think about the Church and what they wish to be able to extract from the agglutination of Christians under a human organizational form.

It is known, by many, that the grouping of people for purposes in common for them may increase strength, resources, skills, and many other aspects, but this is also why many people aim to dominate these groupings when it comes to the Church of the Lord.

There are people who want to institutionalize the Church of Christ with the aim of transforming it into their agencies through which they intend to fulfill their wishes and so that they may grow in power to fulfill these wishes and not the will of the Head Christ.

There are people who want to institutionalize the Church of Christ or to maintain the institutions that already exist for this purpose because they see in these options a way of creating their own “kingdoms.”

Many people intend to subdue the Church of Christ to human institutions because they think of these structures as a tool to grow in power and resources to make use of the members and resources that should be pertinent exclusively to Christ and never to them.

As we saw in the previous topic, there are people who literally think that their dedication to a religious life gives them the right to make this devotion a source of profit and through which they try to obtain their profits from those they claim to serve, but what, then, also leads them to think that they can dominate their peers through their institutions. Those who have no shame about exploiting those they call their church brothers or sisters are also those who try to insert fleshly concepts into their organizations as if life according to human standards and life in Christ were the same.

Christians do not need Christian organizational agencies to present themselves to the world, for each Christian is called to be the salt of the Earth and the light of the world in everything one does, from one's conduct at home towards those with whom one lives so closely, as well as in all his or her actions that one does before other Christians and also non-Christians.

The idea that the Christian has to be a Christian through human institutions or organizations may cause disastrous and terrible effects on the lives of Christians who are inattentive to the truth taught by the Lord, for if they assimilate this type of thinking, they may be deprived of the essence of the Christian life, which is the presence of Christ in them and with them to *live and walk in Christ*.

Since a genuine Christian, one who is born of the Spirit of God, is called to freedom of faith in the Lord to be free to follow what the Lord directs him or her to do, the Lord does not call a Christian to join to horizontal covenants of human organizations that tell him or her what to do in one's personal life and which oppose his or her freedom to be guided *in Christ*.

John 3: 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."

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

Galatians 5: 18 **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

Paul, the apostle of Christ who most widely instructed people about the Christian life after the Lord Jesus Himself, did not associate with institutions to preach the Gospel or to teach Christ's disciples, for he knew in Whom he believed and knew the exclusive position of the Lord as the Head of His Church, as well as he knew Who provides growth to the members of the body of Christ indeed.

Paul did not subject to himself the Christians whom he had preached and taught about Christ Jesus. On the contrary, he wept with profound sadness in the face of the knowledge that among the Christians themselves would arise those who would eventually yield and surrender to the attempt to dominate their fellow men through their seeming or false propositions of serving Christ and His Church.

Acts 20: 29 **For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.**

30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

32 So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

When he was going to be away from the brothers with whom he had been for three years, Paul did not claim their allegiance to him. Even on his departure, he called those Christians to be under the direct care of the One who is the Head of the whole Church, letting no human institution or organization behind with which people should associate or through which they should report to him as an apostle of Christ, for even as an apostle, Paul had received no vocation from God to dominate, subdue, or control the people who through his preaching of the Gospel and the working of the Holy Spirit came to know Christ.

Paul even taught that a Christian joining other Christian people and naming oneself a follower of them, which today we would also say concerning their institutions, constitute attempts to divide Christ, and, therefore, are expressions of fleshly attitudes and human attempts to establish what cannot be established in the Church of Christ under any circumstances.

1 Corinthians 1: 11 **For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.**

- 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."
13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*

- 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?
5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?
6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.*
-

However widely elaborated a proposition might be to group Christians under a human organization around human leaders, all these attempts are fleshly and opposed to what the Lord, the Head, and the King of His very Church has established for it.

The matter of wanting to subject the Church of Christ to human organizational concepts is not only a matter of not being an appropriate idea, but it is also a direct opposition to the position of Christ in an attempt to divide the body or the Church of Christ so that more people, besides Christ, may have positions of primacy or prominence over other people.

In the text of Acts 20 presented above, we see that Paul did not take the primacy over any life, did not make a covenant of spiritual coverage with part of the members of the body of Christ, did not promise to monitor or accompany them. On the contrary, he said that he had taught them what he should have taught and that he had shown them that they should live and walk by faith in God and be strengthened by the Lord.

Nevertheless, before leaving, with intensity, perseverance, and with tears, Paul admonished the Christians that among them men would rise who would speak perverse things to drag disciples after them, that is, "disciple-makers who want to have their own disciples," people who "make discipleship," "mentoring," and so on, to have followers of their visions. In the world, there are men and women who present themselves as Christians but who, at the same time, also present themselves with false and alluring conversations to have "their own followers faithful to them," even if it costs them their fidelity to the One Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is entirely different for a person to speak to others about Jesus Christ, to teach and motivate them to seek a direct relationship with the Lord, and to teach them about the call to be disciples of the Lord, where only Christ is the Head of all, than to try to attract others after oneself by saying that one is acting in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Given this, we will repeat once more below a text already mentioned above to highlight that the central focus of strife and jealousy among the Christians in Corinth, the Church in Corinth, was the attempt to divide the Church of Christ that some were trying to make when trying to follow men and not Christ Himself exclusively.

*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?***

Attempts to make distorted persuasions prevail through positions and titles that people might try to raise from time to time among “Christians” is not something that should be viewed lightly, for this type of temptation may become highly attractive, a very expressive enemy, and directly opposed to what is right before the Lord and much simpler to be followed.

*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.***

*4 **For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it!***

And here, again, we return to what has already been said in the previous topics, where we saw how much the creature resists accepting voluntarily that the Eternal Lord may have the rulership or lordship over his or her life.

Without their Creator's regency over their lives, human beings become so blinded that they prefer other people or institutions they create to ascend over their personal lives, resisting so repeatedly that the Creator who made them and who gave His life on the cross on their behalf comes to be acknowledged as the Lord in their hearts or as the Head of their lives.

The fact that Christ, at present, is not personally in a physical body on Earth also makes many come to think that they need leaders over their personal lives and who supposedly would represent Christ's lordship on Earth. However, why would Christ place representatives of Him over others in spiritual matters if Christ Himself dwells in the heart of the Christian who remains in Him? Would the Lord, being in someone's heart, need to elect others to guide Himself in the lives of those who believe in Him?

Besides, a sheep will always be a sheep. And however much a sheep becomes experienced and might be considered as an example of how to follow the One Shepherd and cooperate with Him in the care of other sheep, the most experienced sheep never cease to be sheep and are never called to try to rule the sheep that belong only to the One Shepherd over all of them.

The human being contends with God and disputes with God the position that is and can only be of God. And because of this, humans create so many subterfuges to try to match or even rise above God, but whose intents are in vain and can never be successful.

Now, if through Christ, the Heavenly Father can reconcile all things to Him, whether on Earth or in Heaven, why then, through Christ, could the Father of Lights not reign over all reconciled people and things?

Considering that every genuine Christian is a Son of God, each one has direct access to Christ and, through Him, to the Heavenly Father. And only to Christ belongs the primacy in everything and over all because He is the Only Begotten Son of God who came from heaven to present God to the world and to redeem, through His blood that was shed on the cross of Calvary, all those who accept His invitation of reconciliation.

Having primacy means “having preeminence,” “being the first,” and also means “maintaining the first place” forever.

Nevertheless, throughout Christian history, and also in our days, there are always those who like to dispute the preeminence and have their own followers.

3 John 1: 9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.

10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.

11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

Before the Lord, anyone who wants to have primacy over brothers and sisters in faith in God is regarded as evil or a doer of evil. Who, therefore, should not be imitated at all.

And it is also because of this posture of longing for higher places that so many people yearn and work to create their organizations, for, through them, they seek to rise above those they supposedly call brothers and sisters.

Many who resist the primacy of Christ in their personal lives also end up leaning towards the attempts and actions of creating human organizations where they may have a prominent position concerning others or because they think that, in this way, they can have different treatment before God.

Some people may not even want to compete with Christ. However, when they see that *in Christ*, they will need to see themselves at the same hierarchical level as all other Christians and that *in Christ* there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, neither slave nor free, but that everyone is accepted before God without respect for people, they end up trying to rise above others in order not to see themselves in a position similar to those they consider simpler in the Lord's Church or their supposed churches.

Multitudes of individuals who claim to be leaders of the Church of Christ, if investigated accurately, are people who use their structural and leadership propositions to escape the possibility of being seen under conditions similar to others before others, the world, and God.

Many of those who propose to be leaders in the churches want to preserve the distinctions they have towards others in society in general or because they are just not willing to humble themselves before others, confusing the Church of Christ, which is a body apart *in Christ*, with any other social or civil body in society.

Nevertheless, the Church of Christ is not the place where proud things can be established. On the contrary, the Church of God is where people are called to associate with humble things.

*Romans 12: 16 **Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.***

The attitude of heart that Christ expects from the members of His body or His Church is the same as that of the Head of the whole Church, namely:

*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.***

Many individuals who call themselves leaders of the Church of Christ do so because they love leadership positions more than Christ Himself, and, therefore, they are not actually leaders of the Church of Christ, for Christ has strongly admonished everyone that the desire to want to be a leader of others is not accepted in His Church or that He does not call and elect people for this.

Thus, the comment from the previous paragraph once again shows us one of the main reasons why people create “their own churches.”

In addition to ignorance, one of the main motivations for many to create their own strongholds and organizations they call *churches* is their intense appreciation or passion for positions, titles, power, human acknowledgments, or for their institutions instead of love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

*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.***

Many people say that they love to be leaders of others in their Christian lives and that they are happy to do so to help others. However, since Christ said not to do so, it is themselves and the glory of men that they love more than they love Christ.

Many who say they love to lead “brothers and sisters of faith” in order to help them, do so by looking at themselves and the gains that they themselves aspire to achieve.

*Jude 1: 12 **These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving (or feeding) only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots.***

And once people, including Christians or those who claim to be Christians, deviate from what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself told them, several other deviations and distortions also may begin to enter their lives, as well as in what they propagate to lead, conduct, or rule.

Just being a matter of time, many leaders who say they want to serve Christians through the earthly organizations they create, soon along the way, begin to say that “their sheep are in rebellion” when they do not obey them at some point and that they need to be severely warned by them from time to time. An attitude through which they attest how much their posture is not as soft as they said and how much they begin to see themselves as “owners of the sheep,” even though they do not say it with literal or explicit words.

The one who says that “his or her sheep are in rebellion” is the one who also first denounces oneself as someone who is in rebellion against Christ Himself, for it is from Christ that one is trying to steal the sheep and against the teaching of the exclusive sovereignty of Christ that one is rising.

As we have seen above, among the flock of sheep, there can be those who have already learned that the best they can do is to promptly follow their One Shepherd Jesus and, in this way, they may serve as an example to other sheep of how good it is to follow the instructions the Lord Himself or may serve as an encouragement to less experienced sheep. However, the fact that one sheep has served as an example to others in the aspect of following Christ should not be a reason to stop being a humble sheep before the Lord and the other sheep.

Just as a sheep will always remain a sheep, however cooperative it might be with the Shepherd and the other sheep, so also a member of the body of Christ is called to remain always a member of the body regardless of how helpful one might be to the Head and the other members of the body.

*Ezekiel 34: 31 **"You are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God," says the Lord GOD.***

When some groups of people lose those they regard as their “human shepherds” or their supposed mediators, and say that they are “like sheep that have no shepherd,” they are saying, in their own words and statements, that they belong to the herds of human leaders, for the Shepherd of the Heavenly Flock is Christ, who never leaves His sheep and is the One who lives forever.

Part of the opposition to the exclusive position of Christ, where alleged brothers or sisters promote themselves as teachers, pastors, heads, tutors, or mentors of their fellow men, emerges in some way as a result of the concepts of the Order of Aaron. However, a large part also comes from the presumptions that exist in these individuals and which are similar to the same presumptions that were in the people who chose to

try to reach the way of the novelty of life through the priesthood according to the law of Moses.

In the eagerness of trying to endure the old priestly system, the devil tries to act with “all unrighteous deception” to preserve the concepts of the order of the old covenant already revoked but with new terms supposedly related to the Christian life. The devil seeks to introduce lies and deceptions that aim to obscure people's vision so that the “light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ” does not illuminate the eyes of their understanding. And this, with the aim that they do not see the righteousness and peace that could come to them through Christ's government over their lives.

We have already mentioned several times that the first covenant and the second covenant cannot be merged into each other and that “***a little leaven leavens the whole lump.***”

Repeating once more, whoever wants to lead the Church of Christ, wants to be a sheep who wants to stop being a sheep and, in one way or another, wants to be the head of the other sheep or Christ's “sub-heads” over others. There are many who use persuasive words about the benefits of being leaders over others and do so in order not to speak so objectively about their perverted attempts to dominate their fellow men.

For many people, the idea of being able to be the head of others or “sub-heads” with Christ over others literally “went up to their heads,” but this is certainly not good for them or for those who will submit themselves to them.

Ecclesiastes 8: 9 All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: There is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.

It is striking to see how arrogance, presumption, pride, greed, ambition, and envy may blind the understanding of a person to the point that one does not see the proper purposes of God, as well as does not see how harmful the inappropriate goals and which oppose the Lord are.

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.

...

9 The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

Considering that, in the present subject, the point that God does not accept mediators other than Christ concerning human beings has already been addressed several times, we would like to emphasize here again that this principle also applies in the fellowship of any member of the Church of God with Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ does not need to go through “other heads” or “under-heads” to relate to the members of His own body and will not accept this being instituted in His Church, to the point that the Scriptures explicitly state that those who insist on doing so are inflated (puffed up) in

their fleshly minds and who no longer remain united to the Head of the whole Church.

Thus, a person who does not remain submissive to the One Head of the Church of Christ is not a faithful servant of God and does not act for the good of one's fellow men, even if one presents oneself as a character who says wanting to serve Christ and His Church.

When people distort the understanding of what it is to be a “faithful minister and steward of Christ,” and do not understand that the servant is not sent to compete with the One for whom one was sent nor to take His place, they also distort roles and titles trying to transform functions into titles or positions over others, thus trying to change service positions, such as deacons, elders, bishops, and others, into positions of domination of their supposed brothers and sisters.

Many of those who are not happy with the aspect of only Christ being the Head of His Church, but want to use the idea of a Christian church for their own interests, are also those who are inclined to the desire to create “collective bodies” subject to them and which supposedly would be “Churches of the Lord.”

In other words, those who do not want Christ as the exclusive Head of their personal lives, but want to be involved with “churches” according to their own interests or their own visions, create or sustain “churches” in which they can be the heads that govern these “churches” or where they can determine how these “churches” should function according to what seems convenient to them.

Trying to structure “churches” in human organizations and institutions can be very convenient for those who want to lead and exalt themselves over other people, for through these organizations, they try to rule and dominate people without passing on the idea that they are the leaders who want to dominate them.

Speaking in “the name of the churches,” which Christ never authorized His true Church that speaks “in the name of its One Head,” might be very convenient for those leaders who do not dare to directly say the intentions that are in their hearts, doing so in a veiled way and presented “in the name” of a collective figure.

Yet in other words, and as we mentioned earlier, there are many who call themselves leaders who appreciate institutions so much because they hide behind their institutions or organizations by trying to intimidate their subordinates through the collectivity they create and the concepts they associate with it.

And when people who call themselves leaders use the figure of their organizations, an institutional figure behind which they hide, we see repeatedly occurring what is described in the text that we have already seen and that we present again below:

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.**

Christ as the Head of His Church does not need to hide behind His Church and even dwells in the hearts of each member to guide each life through His Spirit, but those who use their organizations to command others show how much they are not mature and

true leaders, for when something in their guidelines goes wrong, they blame the members of the “collective bodies” they have created.

And when we get to the point where an institution or an organization is used to try to subject those who are associated with it, we return to the aspect we saw in the previous chapter, where we mentioned that “the house” is not called to govern its occupants, instead “the home” is a tool of help and support to those who rule over it and those who live in it.

In this way, when a group of people allows leaders of a human institution called a *church* to begin to raise the organization over its members, a series of new distortions start to be created and established against the members of this institution, even if it is said that it is for the benefit of each individual and the whole group.

From arrogance, pride, greed, or an inflated mind with human and carnal ideas, the most diverse and creative attitudes, visions, and missions arise for people to leave the humble position of voluntarily submitting to Christ as the One Head over all members of His Church, leading these people also to the most varied ideas, philosophies, and attempts to establish "churches" in organizations and institutions according to the standards of the fleshly or human mind.

After a human organization that is called a *church* is seen as a means of government over the people who are linked to it, the leaders of these organizations soon also try to create their rules for this organization, giving these rules the name of “*doctrine of the house a, b, or c.*”

When people create “fictitious church figures,” they also soon begin to demand that their doctrines and parameters of unity are followed in the “house” they start building to achieve their own purposes.

Nevertheless, Christ never authorized anyone to create “a specific doctrine for a subgroup of the Church,” because Christ also never authorized anyone to create a particular subgroup of His body or His Church.

Doctrines of specific groups or sub-doctrines of the doctrine of Christ are only created because people, in the first place, do not remain united to the One Head of the Lord's Church and His instructions, for the Head of the Church will never divide His own body and His teaching.

The Church of Christ belongs exclusively to Christ. The Church of Christ is the Only Bride of Christ, and concerning which, Christ is the Only Bridegroom and Head.

*Romans 7: 4 **Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.***

*5 **For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.***

*6 **But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.***

*2 Corinthians 5: 14 **For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;***
*15 **and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.***

*John 3: 29(a) **He who has the bride is the bridegroom.***

Those who voluntarily choose to belong to Christ do not need to dominate those who together with them also belong to Christ, for they know and indeed believe that only Christ is the Lord who died and rose for each person.

Nevertheless, those who resist so that they themselves do not belong to Christ and are not subject to the Head of the body are also those who want to dominate others so that they are theirs and not of Christ. However, in order not to say it so directly or explicitly, they present subtle and perverse teachings before people in the attempt at hiding their goals of dominating their fellow men.

Those who want to dominate others through a church structured according to human precepts also work through their teachings of domination to keep the dominated individuals like children or immature in the faith and work in the opposite direction of what is presented in the following verses:

*Ephesians 4: 14 ... **that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,***
*15 **but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ,***
*16 **from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.***

Those who want to dominate others use their “vain doctrines” to turn away from Christ those who they want to dominate because they know that if they teach people to seek Christ, these will no longer need to be subject to their domination.

Unlike Paul, those who call themselves “*church leaders*” do not have indeed the courage to do as Paul did towards the individuals of Ephesians when he told them that he had taught them everything they needed to *live and walk in Christ* and that he asked God so that the Lord Himself could build them up.

The pretended or alleged ministers of Christ and who call themselves leaders, despite Christ telling them not to act in this way, are also those who create doctrines that vary according to their intentions to try to sustain their positions, but invariably incurring actions which somehow or at some point try to invalidate the true teaching of Christ.

Mark 7: 9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."

A group of Christians can and should always recognize that their unity is in Christ being the Head of their lives and equally of the lives of their brothers and sisters of faith in the Lord. However, they should also unanimously recognize that Christ did not authorize the unity of His Church around some people, their organizations, and their doctrines as if leaders or grouped people could become “lords” of the body of Christ or part of this body.

When, through the people who compose it, an institution or organization seeks to be at the head of the government of the body of Christ, this represents an enormous attempt to oppose the whole project of Christ for His body or His Church.

When people directly or through their organizations and doctrines want to be the head of the members of the Church of Christ, they are trying to take Christ from the throne and government of the Church that belongs to Christ Himself, thereby trying to deny the power of God through a false or seeming godliness.

2 Timothy 3: 1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

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!

Paul's letters to Christians in Corinth and Galatians are letters filled with warnings of the risk of people accepting alleged ministers of Christ who present themselves as specially called workers to lead other members of the Church of Christ, but in showing the intentions of the false workers, Paul also shows us the way *in Christ* to remain faithful to the One Lord and to reject these evil, wicked, and pretended workers.

2 Corinthians 11: 12 But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast.

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

*Galatians 2: 4 And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),
5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.*

2 Timothy 1: 12(b) ...for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

In his letters, Paul reaffirms what Christ had already announced that would happen in the world regarding Christ having warned us that many “christs” and many people would come in “His name” without actually being designated by Him to what these people advocate having been called.

Remembering that the word *Christ* also means *anointed*, it should be noted that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said that many would come who would present themselves as *christs* or *specially anointed* by the Lord to build “houses or organizations made by human hands” to make supposed disciples and lead people in these organizations, but without actually being called and anointed by the One Christ for such a mission, for the missions of these individuals are contrary to Christ Himself and resist Him as the One Head of His Church.

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.

Luke 21: 8 And He said: “Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’

Therefore do not go after them.”

Because they do not know the glory of Christ as the One Head of His body or His Church, many people have allowed themselves to become slaves to those who call themselves *anointed ones* but who were not indeed called and anointed by Christ to do what they claim to have been called to do.

1 Corinthians 7: 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

*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.***

Just as Christ did not designate people to be “spiritual officiators of weddings” and to be ministers who interfere in the lives of married couples, Christ also did not designate people to be “officiators of services” or to guide the lives of other brothers or sisters, neither in particular nor in the collectivity.

What a Christian *in Christ* is called to do towards another Christian is to encourage him or her to also seek Christ personally and to remain *in Christ* as he or she should already be doing.

The “professional worship workers” and the functions of mediators and leaders of the people were practices carried out under the law of Moses or the Order of Aaron, which God has already declared obsolete for those who are *in Christ Jesus*.

Alerting people about inappropriate actions of electing men or women as referential points instead of seeking personal fellowship with Christ was one area that Paul needed to be intense and insistently teach to the saints everywhere. Paul declares that he wept many times with profound sadness because several people so often and so quickly accepted the emergence of these distortions among those who have already known the glory of Christ as the Lord of His Church.

Thus, we highlight here that the fact that a person is used through the gift of teaching that has been granted him or her from above to teach about God and the Way to God, who is Christ, does not constitute an individual as the teacher and guide of the personal decisions that each one will adopt or that a married couple will adopt in their personal lives. The Lord Jesus said, Christ Himself said: “call no one a teacher or a guide because you only have one Guide and Teacher, and you are all brothers.”

The fact that someone points out the way by which people can relate appropriately to the Lord does not make him or her the very path on which people depend to walk in the indicated way. Christ clearly said that He is the Way and also that He is the truth of how to walk in this Way.

*John 10: 27 **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.***

Just as family members may be subject to walking in ways dissociated from the will of God when they do not turn directly to Christ to be guided by the Lord, so also the saints of the Church of God may come to be exposed to many unnecessary setbacks when they make the decisions about their actions in communities or their meetings and without letting Christ be the Head of each of the members of His own Church or His own Body.

When someone advocates oneself as a guide for the Christians and not a guide that points to the True Guide, one claims to be the head of these members of the body of Christ, claiming for oneself the primacy over a particular group of saints who in reality should belong only to Christ. And concerning these who present themselves as leaders

of others, the Lord declares that they are not worthy of credit or worthy of being followed, and of whom the Lord warns us to “flee or turn away from them.”

And finally, on this topic, **if, on the one hand, there are men and women eager for primacy, preeminence, and leadership over those they call brothers and sisters, on the other hand, there are also people who are negligent or lazy in the matter of seeking their supply and support from the source that is Christ, the Head of each individual of the people of God.**

If in the world, there are many people who want to lead those they call brothers or sisters because they do not want to submit to Christ and because they do not want to be seen in the same position as other Christians, there are also many who do not seek Christ as the Head of their lives because they think that it is easier to be instructed by members of the body of Christ or because they want it to be so.

Nevertheless, as we have seen above, the so-called Christian meetings where people run after human leaders to guide them, in the sequence, result in strife and confusion that, ultimately, like the Order of Aaron, can never perfect those who engage in these practices.

The spiritual supply of a Christian, in the first place, is always in Christ. However, willingness to be continually before the Lord is an aspect that requires dedication. And for this reason, the lazy, disinterested, or even uninformed person prefers a leader, an “officiator of religious acts,” someone who commands one's life, even though God does not recognize those to whom a person “outsources the service” of supposedly feeding in the Lord.

God does not accept “spiritual outsourcing” for someone else to be fed in the place of one's neighbor since this is not functional, just as a person cannot eat natural food expecting another to be fed or satiated.

Let us remember here again what the Lord teaches us through the Scriptures:

Ephesians 5: 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.
17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

The purpose of the present subject is to exalt the glory of Christ as the Head and not to go into details of the Church. But even so, we understand that it is highly significant to point out here that the terms used in the New Testament for bishops, elders, and deacons never refer to these taking the head position on individual lives or families, nor being the “professional worship workers,” or even receiving titles and positions in organizations that Christ did not even authorize to be created in His name.

The gifts and functions that God grants to the members of the Church of Christ are to be used as the Lord Jesus showed His disciples, they are for Christians to serve and exhort one another in love to **“stand firm and faithful to the One who is worthy to be the Foundation and the Head of the life of every Christian.”**

The gifts and roles to be performed by the members of the body or Church of Christ should be used according to the purposes of the Church's One Head and not according to the distorted leadership concepts that men and women try to infiltrate among Christians or according to priestly orders already declared obsolete or outdated.

Having one's source of faith and life directly in Christ might be an enormous challenge in the eyes of a Christian. However, for Christ, this is not a challenge that a person cannot achieve, for He is mighty to care for all and have fellowship with each one of the members of His Church.

The Lord Jesus is fully powerful to guide all who trust Him in all areas of their lives, including the aspects of the fellowship of a Christian with other members of the Lord's Church.

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

*1 Thessalonians 5: 24 **He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.***

No matter how much people try to compromise the position of Christ as the Head of His Church and no matter how much they try to divide the body of Christ by offering supposed alternative options of leadership and doctrines, the Church of Christ will never be compromised because the Head of the Church of God is also the One who continually intervenes to guard, love, and save the Church whenever necessary.

*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.***

*Ephesians 5: 23(b) **Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.***

In the Church of Christ, when a person wants to exalt oneself over others, one should be exhorted to return to humility to remain in the place that one belongs and to let him or her know that the Church of Christ is not governed according to the “patterns of the world,” according to the parameters that the princes of the world use to rule people, and so that one may know that it is not for him or her to try to take over what belongs exclusively to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In principle, no one should want to be first in the Church of Christ since this position belongs only to the Eternal Lord. However, if someone still insists on wanting to rise above others, one should be considered as a

servant or slave of all so that one does not prosper in one's attempt to want to have preeminence over others and does not move away from the humility that is due to each Christian.

The Gospel of Christ's Glory shows and teaches us about Christ as the Head of the group of members linked to Him and Who knows how to move His body individually and collectively according to His good will. And no person or doctrine that opposes this sovereignty of the Lord Jesus should be given space to act in the body or the Church of Christ.

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.

44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all."

L. Christ said: “I Will Build My Church” and Not What Human Beings Call as The Church of Christ or God

In the various previous topics regarding the present chapter on the glory of Christ as the Head of His body, we saw that all the edification that the Lord accomplishes in the life of a person who is linked to Him through faith in God also means, automatically, building His Church.

Since the Church of the Lord is made up of the members of the body of Christ, and the members of the body of Christ are the people who have Christ as the Lord and Head of their lives, every growth that God carries out in these lives is also a work of building the Church of Christ.

Nevertheless, the text that most likely contains direct words from the Lord Jesus Christ in a specific way about the term *church* applied to the *Lord's Church* is the text presented below:

Matthew 16: 13 ***When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"***

14 ***So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."***

15 ***He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"***

16 ***Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."***

17 ***Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.***

18 ***And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."***

The text above is of great and essential richness because, in it, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself enlightens us, in a few words, several crucial aspects about building up the Church of God.

In the text above, **first**, we find the Lord Jesus defining the foundation on which He builds and will build His Church.

Secondly, we find the Lord Jesus Christ defining to whom His Church belongs.

And **thirdly**, we can also know concerning which “church” or “churches” the Lord Jesus Christ **did not** commit Himself to build.

If a person looked at the text above only from verse 20 or with no due attention, one could even come to think that Christ was referring to Peter as the foundation of the Church. However, when we see the whole context related to the question initiated about “***who says the people that the Son of Man is,***” we see that **the high or central point of the context is the revelation that the Lord Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, showing us that the great foundation on which Christ will build His Church is what is contained in the revelation about Christ Himself, and never on Peter.**

If we still look at the above text from the translation into other languages and also see the meaning of the words *Peter* and *rock* used in it, we can see that the meaning of the name *Peter* is a “*little stone*” and that the word *rock* refers to “*a big or huge rock*,” a rock that can be used as the foundation of an enormous building.

Therefore, **after the Lord Jesus Christ told Peter that God had granted him a revelation from heaven and not reached by “flesh and blood,” the Lord Jesus also reaffirmed that “*Peter was a small stone*,” but that the Church of the Lord would be built on “*the great revelation or rock that the Lord Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*.”**

When God revealed to Peter that the Lord Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God upon whom the Church of the Lord would be built, God was revealing that although Jesus was before His disciples as the Son of Man, Jesus as the Christ, as the Son of God, was not a “*little stone*” like Peter, but he was a “*rock*” capable of supporting the whole Church of God that would come to be built on the Lord Jesus throughout all centuries to come.

Here, however, considering that we have already seen several times the aspect that Christ is the foundation of everyone who believes in Him, we do not intend to expand this aspect on this point except to highlight it once again also concerning the building up of the Church of Christ.

Thus, **as the word *Christ* means *the anointed*, it is on the “*Anointed of God*,” the Only One Worthy of receiving this name, that the Church of the Lord is built.**

Moving now to the second aspect mentioned above, we can see that **the fact that the Church of Christ is built on the “*Rock of our salvation and the Rock of our refuge*” also characterizes the Church of the Lord as being the “*Church of Christ*” and which He calls “*My Church*.”**

The Lord Jesus Christ declared directly and objectively that the building up of the Church that He promised to build is related only to “*His Church*,” which also answers the third aspect mentioned above.

The Church that the Lord Jesus Christ has declared to be committed to edifying is “*His Church*,” which, in turn, is characterized as the one that has Christ, the Son of God, as its foundation and that has the same Christ as its Only Head, but what also shows that Christ did not commit Himself to build those “*churches that are not His*.”

To say that Christ is going to build “*His Church*” on the “*Rock that He is the Christ and the Son of God who sustains the whole Church*” implies, then, that any text that speaks of the Lord's commitment to building His Church is restricted to people, but it is also restricted to people who are grounded in Christ and who individually have the Son of God as the Only Head of their lives.

After we accept to be the body of Christ, individual members of this body, to have Christ as the Head of the body and personal life, to carry only the name of Christ over His Church, and to detach ourselves from the “sub-flags” of “churches of men or women,” Christ edifies us because in this way we are His. And once we are His, we are His Church which He builds because we are grounded in Him and under His guidance.

Once someone is grounded in Christ and not in other human beings or idols, and once someone has Christ as Head and no longer has aspects of the creation as the head of one's life, Christ has committed Himself to edify that individual who is "*His Church*."

If someone is not grounded in the Lord Jesus and if someone is not connected to the Heavenly Head of the unique body of Christ, that individual cannot be built up as the Church of Christ or as the Church that the Lord calls "*my Church*" because this individual is not, in fact, of the Church of Christ also to be built up as being part of it.

When Christ said that He would build *His Church* on the rock that He Himself is the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ defined the exact place where He would build His Church, but He also defined, by exception, all other places where He would not build *His Church*.

Many people claim to be scandalized by the problems they see in the so-called "*churches of Christ*," but they often do not realize that what they call a *Church of Christ* is neither the Church of the Lord indeed nor the Church that Christ calls "*mine*."

There are many "*churches*" that in the sense of the word "*ekklesia*" are really "*churches*," but not the Church of Christ. They are "*churches*" that are not the body of Christ, but they are *bodies or groups* of people in which men and women are at the head of "*their churches*" and who destroy the paths of life of those who follow them. And since they are not on the "*exclusive rock on which Christ builds His Church*," those in the "*churches*" where other people are at the head are also not built as the Church in Christ.

In the world, there are many "*churches*" that have their pastors, prophets, or priests, but that also, at the same time, deceive the people by not being on Christ and subject to Christ, not being, therefore, the Church of Christ.

And if any "*church*" is not the Church of Christ, its "*ministers*," whether they call themselves apostles, teachers, guides, and so on, are also not "*ministers, servants, or stewards*" of Christ or the true Church of Christ.

Romans 16: 17 **Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.**

18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

If the members of a body are under mediators or heads that are not the Lord Jesus Himself, how can Christ be the exclusive Head of their lives and guide them according to the will of God since these members are seeking to hear more than one mediator or head at the same time?

Galatians 1: 10 **For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.**

Romans 8: 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.**

...
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.**

Christ has declared His commitment to edifying those who are His, but for this, those who are His are also called, above all, to have a heart surrendered and faithful to the Lord that they have chosen for their lives.

Colossians 3: 23 **And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,**

24 **knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.**

2 Corinthians 5: 14 **For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;**

15 **and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.**

And after Christians are *in Christ* and follow Christ as the Head of their lives, they are also able to relate appropriately to other Christians. A subject addressed more specifically in the series on The Life of the Christian in the World. However, without the support, instruction, and edification of Christ in their lives, the words “**for without Me you can do nothing**” spoken by the Lord also apply to the fellowship between the members of the body of Christ.

The fundamental place of edification and growth to which and under which a Christian is called to be is always the source of all His Christian life. It is the source that builds and sustains the “Eternal Church” rooted in God's eternal love, namely: in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 3: 12 **And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you.**

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

16 **from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**

C37. The Glory of Christ as King and Head of All Principality and All Power in the Universe

Matthew 28: 18 ***And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."***

John 17: 1 ***Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,
2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."***

Ephesians 1: 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.
22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,
23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.***

1 Corinthians 15: 27 ***For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.***

Colossians 2: 10 ***And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.***

In the chapter on The Glory of the King According to the Order of Melchizedek, we sought to begin an approach to the breadth of what the Scriptures reveal to us about the attribute of rulership or government that God placed on the shoulders of the Lord Jesus in order to show that Christ, being of the Order of Melchizedek already established, is not a King who will reign in the distant future, but who is already fully in charge of the regency of all people and all the details of the universe.

In reporting the glory of Christ, the Scriptures show us that the Lord Jesus Christ's ruling position encompasses individuals and families who long to have the Lord as the Head of their lives, but which, at the same time, also extends over all rulers of the kingdoms in the world.

Just as a king is a ruler over all territories and all the rulers under one's government, even if some do not obey the king, so Christ is over all kingdoms and peoples in the universe even though many rulers and many peoples resist submitting themselves to the Lord.

Nevertheless, **from the Scriptures that show us that Christ is the Head of all principalities and all power, we can see that the position of Christ still goes far beyond the position of a human king because Christ is not only King over all rulers, but He is also the Head over each ruler individually, even if many of them do not want to recognize this fact.**

Despite being king over the rulers in one's kingdom, a king of an earthly kingdom does not always know what is going on in the minds of those over whom one reigns and does not always succeed in getting them to act under a general government that limits them in the intentions they want to accomplish. However, this is very different concerning Christ when we see that besides being King, He is also the Head of every ruler in the universe.

Therefore, **Christ, seated at God's right hand, is King and Lord of Christian rulers and non-Christian rulers, as well as King and Lord over the entire spiritual world.**

The Heavenly Father has established that everything is subject to Christ and that the Lord Jesus is the Head over all ruling positions.

When the Scriptures teach us that Christ is the Head of “all principality” and “all power,” they teach us that Christ is the General Head over all the rulers, but that Christ is also the Head of each of the existing rulers over the most diverse principalities, as well as over each regent that exists in each of the principalities.

And according to the comments associated with Strong's Lexicon in the Online Bible, a *principality* has the following meanings:

*Beginning, origin;
The person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader;
That by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause;
The extremity of a thing;
The extremity of the corners of a sail;
The first place, principality, rule, magistracy.*

Already the word *power* used in the texts mentioned above, according to the comments associated with Strong's Lexicon, has the following meanings:

*Power, authority, right, liberty, jurisdiction, strength;
Power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases;
Leave or permission;
Physical and mental power;
The ability or strength with which one is endowed, which he either possesses or exercises;
The power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege);
The power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed), whether they are universally, specifically as the power of judicial decisions, or of authority to manage domestic affairs;
One who possesses authority;
A ruler, a human magistrate;
The leading and more powerful among created beings superior to man, spiritual potentates;
The sign of regal authority, a crown.*

Thus, if, for instance, we initially would think of a kingdom with a king to understand what comes to be *a principality* and *a power*, we could say that the position of the king is *a principality*, but which is also assisted by many *powers*, which, in turn, refer to every person who is as a sub-ruler of this position of the king in the kingdom. *Powers* may then encompass region governors, as well as all legislators, judiciary people, and executives in each region.

In other government models that, for example, adopt the combination of the regency division between the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary, we could perhaps say that *principalities* are the positions of the chief executive or president, the top legislative officer, and the chief of the judiciary system, where all levels below them are some forms of what is called *power*.

Without wanting to detail the most diverse models of principalities and powers that existed and that exist in the world, what we want to highlight here is that God teaches us that Christ is as Head above every person who is in some position of principality or over every person who has some kind of rulership and authority over others, whether the highest or the lowest, the good or the evil who resist God.

From the *principality*, which is, in principle, the first or highest *power* of a given set of *powers*, to the *powers* that are established only over a few areas or persons, every ruling position is subject to Christ as the Head both over the *principalities* and over the *powers*.

Even when Pilate, a Roman *power*, Caiaphas and Annas, priestly *principalities*, and Herod, royal *principality* over Israel, conspired together against Christ, they were not the ones who had control of history according to their intentions, but they, in their positions, ended up fulfilling what had been announced centuries before by the Lord through the prophets. In this way, they did not take the life of Christ by the power they had, but because Christ rendered His life as a living sacrifice and allowed it to be taken by them.

John 10: 17 Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.

Thus, when God teaches us that Christ “reigns” over everything and everyone, except the Heavenly Father who gave Him this highly exalted position of rulership, we can know that there is nothing in the universe that is not under His government, which also implies that there is no *principality* and *power* that can do everything it intends to do in a dissociated way from the government of Christ over the world or even though many try to act independently of the Lord's sovereignty.

*Psalms 99: 1 The LORD reigns; Let the peoples tremble!
He dwells between the cherubim; Let the earth be moved!*

Therefore, for the Christian, one who believes in Christ as the Lord of His life and who also believes in God's statements about Christ in the Scriptures, the question should no longer be whether or not Christ is Head over all the rulers of the universe, for the Heavenly Father has already established Him as such. The question, then, should be about what this Christian needs to know about this position in which Christ is above everything and everyone and how each Christian is called to behave concerning this truth that has already been announced to us since ancient times.

Understanding that Christ is the Head over all *principalities* and all *power*, and knowing that the children of God are safe in *Christ* despite what happens in the world, should awaken or encourage even more faith in the hearts of Christians, for what the world and its mighty rulers announce that they will do, will only be fulfilled if Christ the Head allows it to come through.

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.***

1 John 5: 5 ***Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?***

There are many people who even believe that a man named Jesus was crucified on the cross of Calvary, but because they do not believe that this Son of Man is also and before all the Only Begotten Son of God, many find it difficult to see, with the eyes of faith in God, the extraordinary high position of Christ's government.

Besides, the King Jesus Christ, as the Son of Man and also as the Son of God, will never be shaken from His eternal position to which He was appointed by the Eternal Father.

Those who serve Christ do not need to wield a specific type of battle so that the Heavenly kingdom will not be shaken, nor do they need to strive to protect it in the sense of avoiding that Christ will come to be shaken in His position as the Eternal King. Christ coming to the point of being shaken is inconceivable, and this is not the fight of a Christian. The Christian does not have the responsibility and the ability to support Christ's position over the universe; it is the Heavenly Father Himself who supports it.

Christ is the unshakable King of an unshakable kingdom, as seen in the material on The Gospel of God's Kingdom.

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.***

29 ***For our God is a consuming fire.***

God laughs at kings and mighty people who think they can shake Christ on His throne:

*Psalms 2: 1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?
 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."
 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.*

Kings imagine and plot vain things, but something even sadder is when Christians allow themselves to be involved in these vain things and start to think that Christ might be shaken in His ruling position over all nations and peoples or when they think that they have to sustain Christ in His position of ruler over others.

Christ's position on the throne of God is firmly established forever or eternally and above all nations and peoples. And absolutely nothing can change that.

Opposition to Christ's position as the Head over *principalities* and *powers* does not weaken Christ.

On the other hand, opposition to the position of Christ as Head may weaken and cause suffering to those who are subject to the beliefs that seek to propagate that Christ is not, at present, King over everyone and everything or that the world is left to the dominion of what is seen in the natural world.

Although no one can shake the present and eternal position of Christ's majesty, many aspects of life in the world could be different if people in general and also in their roles of *principalities* and *powers* were subject and rested in the government of their Christ, the Eternal King, the One to whom God gave the position of preeminence over everything and everyone, for, as we saw in previous chapters, part of Christ's rulership over people also includes the option of people choosing to sow in the flesh or the Spirit and attain results according to what they sow.

Many aspects of life could be significantly different if the *principalities* and *powers* of the world accepted and practiced the warning that the Lord announces to all generations:

*Psalms 2: 10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.
 11 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.
 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.*

Furthermore, as much as the people of the world say that they have the power to establish or remove the rulers of *principalities* and *powers* from their thrones, it is only under the Lord's permission that rulers are placed or taken away.

*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.***

Considering that for the Lord all the hairs on our head are numbered, considering that the Lord knows the galaxies and each star by name, and considering that the Lord does not allow a sparrow to fall to the ground without His permission, how much more will the Lord not care of the most significant aspects that refer to the lives of the people for whom Christ died on the cross of Calvary?

Therefore, repeating once again:

*1 Timothy 2: 1 **Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,***
*2 **for kings and all who are in authority (or in a position of eminence), that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.***
*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.***

Finally, considering that the detailing of the condition of Christ as the ruler over nations and peoples is also described in the previous chapters on Christ as the King of Righteousness and Peace, in the series of subjects on The Life of the Christian in the World, and the subjects on The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, The Gospel of God's Righteousness, and the Gospel of Peace, we would like, then, to close this chapter at this point, only mentioning once again a series of texts that exalt the Lord's government position over all individuals, peoples, and nations.

*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;***
*10 **and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.***

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

*Psalms 113: 4 **The LORD is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens.***

*Psalms 8: 1 **O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!***

*Psalms 9: 8 **He shall judge the world in righteousness, And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.***

*Psalms 24: 1 **The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.***

*Psalms 66: 7 **He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves.***

*Psalms 33: 10 **The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.***

*Psalms 77: 14 **You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples.***

*Psalms 98: 2 **The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.***

*Psalms 46: 10 **Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!***

C38. Lift Your Heads, O You Gates, and Be Lifted You Everlasting Doors that *the King of Glory* Shall Come In

2 Corinthians 4: 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

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.

Throughout the various chapters of the present subject on The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, we have sought to expose some of the main points of what God teaches us about the position of the Lord Jesus Christ in our favor or for our good if we also receive Him through the way He is offered to us by the Heavenly Father.

And of course, there are still many, many other details that could be explored more broadly or profoundly, but considering that the Gospel of God is an offer addressed to us by God through His eternal grace and not just a message and a set of information, as exposed in the first two subjects of the present series on the Gospel, we would like to conclude the current theme once again under the reference that it is in the practice of accepting this Gospel that a person can truly begin to enjoy what is in the glory of Christ revealed to us.

Although the glory of Christ contains unfathomable riches, the way in which the glory of Christ can be accepted or received is simple and can be received by any individual who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and wants to receive Him in one's heart.

The same simplicity with which a person can receive Christ as the Savior of one's life and can receive the presence of Christ in one's heart is the same simplicity with which a person can receive Christ whose glory contains unfathomable riches, for the same humble Christ, who is willing to relate to each one who receives Him, is also the Christ who is the King of Eternal Glory and the strong and almighty Lord, the Lord of Hosts.

When a person receives Christ as the Lord and Savior of one's life, one also receives the same Lord rich in glory and power as revealed to us in the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, for in this matter, one aspect cannot be dissociated from the other.

At the same time that a person receives the gentle and humble Christ in one's heart, that same person also receives the High Priest and Eternal King of the Order of Melchizedek, the King powerful in glory and in strength that sustains the whole universe and concerning whom all are under His reign, including those who oppose Him and how He reigns or governs.

Even if a person does not understand and does not see how Christ reigns over the entire universe, one can receive in the heart the One who reigns over everything and everyone, for individually receiving Christ is a personal position and no ruler of the present world has the authority or right to oppose it, except the very person to whom the Gospel of God has been offered.

Although many people seek positions of great power in the most diverse kingdoms of the world and although many seek to occupy the roles of principalities and powers, it is in the heart of each individual that the greatest decision is made to associate with the true power or the only power that can in love save a person for eternal life.

Thus, in the face of the consideration that it is vital to move from the phase of information about Christ to live indeed in fellowship with Christ, and because the heart is the only door or gate on Earth that also extends to eternal life, we would like to move on to the end of this subject by emphasizing yet the following texts:

Psalms 24: 1 **The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.**

2 For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters.

...

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.

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.

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.**

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.**

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."

In conclusion, then, **we emphasize yet that a subject on the glory of God and the glory of Christ never ends, for it refers to an eternal experience of life with God Himself for everyone who has already received Christ in the heart and who remains in Christ.**

John 17: 3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

2 Corinthians 3: 18 **But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

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

Habakkuk 2: 14 **For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.**

Hebrews 7: 1 till 3

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, ... first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

Hebrews 8: 1, 2, and 6

Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

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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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