

- Systemic Teaching about Christian Life -

The New Creature in Christ Jesus

Series:
New Creation in Christ

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General Considerations about Using This Material:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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C1. The Crucial Need for Emphasis Also on the New

In beginning this series of subjects about the “**New Creation in Christ**,” we would like to recall that the following topics are part of the Systemic Teaching about Christian Life, which, in turn, and among other aspects, aims to address fundamental instructions on reading and studying the Bible, about the Gospel of God in its main groups of characteristics, about the life of Christians in the world, and which, therefore, also contemplates the series below:

- ⇒ 1) **Suggestions for Reading and Studying the Bible;**
- ⇒ 2) **The Gospel: The Good News of God;**
- ⇒ 3) **The Life of the Christian in the World;**
- ⇒ 4) **Walking in Newness of Life.**

We would also like to mention here that several aspects to be addressed in this new series may have already been presented in some way in some previous subjects of the series referenced above. However, even if this happens, we believe that the emphasis in which they will be seen in this new material may complement and support an even greater consolidation of understanding of the foundations of the Christian life, as well as to highlight or exalt the newness of life that God provides in Christ Jesus to all human beings who open their hearts to the grace that is offered to them from heaven.

In this new series of subjects, we aim to present in a more specific, objective, or accentuated way the aspect of the newness of life that is offered by God to those who believe in Him and who receive in the heart Jesus Christ as the Lord.

Looking at themes from different perspectives or angles may often help in the perception of new details, as well as it may complement the understanding of points that can serve as “well-fixed nails” in which it is possible for a person to seek firm support or assistance. (An aspect addressed in more detail in the subject on Colligated or Associated Words and Riddles of Antiquity).

God's instruction to a Christian is not given to him or her just for information, but the purpose is that it may serve as a strong support for the Christian to live and walk according to what one has been instructed and so that one can practice with continuity and firmness the good, acceptable, and perfect will of the Lord.

Thus, **aiming for people to actually advance to the newness of life offered to them in conjunction with the salvation provided by the kingdom of heaven, the Lord, through the Scriptures, repeatedly and very objectively exhorts those who have received the new condition of life in Christ to also live and walk according to it**, as shown in some examples that we initially present below:

*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.***

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.

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.

The great need to accentuate an emphasis on the “new” that is given to people who receive Christ as the Lord in their life is not something that should be despised or seen superficially, for the fact that an individual comes across something really “new” may as well imply, for him or her, a series of life repositioning challenges, as exemplified in a direct or practical way also in the following text:

Ephesians 5: 8 **For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light**

9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

If a so-called novelty of life does not offer and provide the possibility of meaningful and profound changes of life in the one who receives the new, this new is not constituted of a newness of life indeed.

If a so-called novelty of life does not offer and provide a real possibility of change to new aspects, it would just be a variation of an old model of life and a misleading proposition for announcing something as being new, but which in reality is devoid of a possibility to actually offer the announced newness of life.

And if a person claims to be willing to receive something new but does not really want this action to bring changes in his or her life, then one is not indeed wanting something new.

Therefore, even though the purpose of the present series is primarily to focus on the emphasis of the “new” granted to those who come to Christ, it is also necessary, in some situations, to make comparisons and considerations with aspects of the “old” so that the “new” may be highlighted in a more tangible way.

Many individuals appear fearful, insecure, or even reluctant to indeed accept what the Lord offers them precisely because of the “new” that is presented to them by God in Christ Jesus, but also by what this implies in their “old” positionings and practices adopted until meeting the “new.”

Although many individuals claim to be eager for novelties in their lives, when the real newness of the heavenly kingdom is offered to them, it does not always occur, together, that there is an actual disposition toward the new to the extent it has been stated. Since the repositioning of life in relation to the newness of the kingdom of God also implies the actual challenges of life transformation, especially in the inner part, in the understanding, or in the heart of the one who chose to have Christ as the Lord, followed later as well in the external changes of conduct, the practical adherence to the new also requires a more effective disposition than the mere proclamation of wanting the new.

The Scriptures teach us that there are many reasons why many individuals do not want to actually receive the newness of life offered to them by the kingdom of God in Christ Jesus, including the specific or direct rejection of this new life by the fact that it can only be lived under the light of the Lord (according to John 3: 19 to 21).

On the other hand, in this new series of subjects in reference, as well as in the series Walking in Newness of Life, we would like to highlight people's lack of knowledge about the various central characteristics of what comes to be the new creature in Christ, and to walk in the novelty of life according to this new creature, as one of the central reasons why people do not advance more intensely in the “new” that the Lord offers them.

The offer of the newness of life that is in Christ Jesus may arouse high interest, joy, and enthusiasm, but for some, it may also awaken a feeling of insecurity and doubts. That is why we understand that it is appropriate to know specific and fundamental points that clarify the main aspects of what happens when a person advances towards the newness of life offered by God, as well as clarify the basis of its credibility so that a person may also trust in what is offered.

When God, through the Scriptures, encourages, admonishes, or exhorts Christians to live and walk according to the “newness” offered to them in Christ Jesus, He does not do so without also offering the way and instructions on how a person can know the new reality of life that exists for them in the Lord.

As some more examples on how to know the newness of life that exists in Christ for those who receive Him as the Lord in the heart, as well as on the vital importance of advancing to this novelty, we present yet the two texts below:

- 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 will manifest Himself), then you also will appear (or be manifested) with Him in glory.**

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.**

One central characteristic of the newness of life in Christ Jesus or of the new creature in Christ Jesus, and which supports all other aspects of this new condition of life, lies in the fact that “in Christ Jesus” every individual also has available the path of personal access to the Lord, as well as of the direct fellowship with God, allowing this person no longer to live as “*without God in the world*” and as a person separated from the particular instruction of the Spirit of the Lord in his or her life.

In Christ Jesus, the Christian has the instruction of the Holy Spirit available, specifically, also in the matter of his or her new condition of life or the state of a new creature in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 2: 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.**

...

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.**

Christ came in the flesh into the world, suffered oppositions and resistances to the point of being innocently crucified for the sins of humankind to offer them what they did not have. Christ did not come in the flesh into the world for the purpose of offering and granting to human beings a kind of life in the mold of that which they lived before they could receive the Lord in the heart. Christ came to offer a new life that could only be offered to human beings from the kingdom of heaven.

That is why, **after receiving the newness of life in the Lord, it is also necessary to focus objectively on the “new” offered by God in Christ Jesus.**

To advance to the knowledge and the experience of the newness of life or the new creature in Christ Jesus is to give due attention, to value, to honor,

and to exalt the purpose for which the Lord completed the work on the cross of Calvary.

Through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, God made the provision of salvation for all human beings so that every individual may choose to become free from the yoke of sin, the body of sin, and the bondage of law and death. However, God made all this provision also bearing in mind the offer of the newness of life in the Lord or of the new creature in Christ to all who receive the heavenly provision of eternal salvation.

Although main considerations about the novelty of life or the new creature in Christ are already recorded in the Scriptures through prophecies prior to the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, as well as from the early years that followed Christ's coming to die in the cross of Calvary in order to make the necessary provision for the granting of new life in Him, this subject, for various reasons, has so often been relegated to a level of relevance much lower than it should have.

Therefore, considering that various aspects of the provision of Christ have already been addressed in the series preceding this material, we would like to point out once again that the purpose of this new subject and of this new series is to present, from the Scriptures, several considerations addressed more particularly on highlighting aspects of the new creature in Christ and the life according to it.

The purpose of this new subject, this new series, and the next series on Walking in Newness of Life is to seek to cooperate in some way so that the ignorance of what the Scriptures already teach us about the new creature in Christ may be reduced and so that the lack of knowledge about the newness of life in the Lord may be mitigated and may no longer be an impediment or an undue justification for the growth in the “new” that is already available and offered to us with immeasurable love in the Lord.

C2. New Creature = New Creation

In the Scriptures given by the Lord to humankind, there are two verses, according to some translations, that most directly use the expression “new creature,” namely:

2 Corinthians 5: 17 **Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**
(AV)

Galatians 6: 15 **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.** (AV)

At first, it may occur that the expression “new creature” does not arouse in people the attention it should, and this may be due to the simple fact that people do not think more deeply or in detail about the process that occurs for a conception of a new creature.

While most of the beauty of a “new creature” may actually be seen more fully in the practical aspects of the new life that follows, the process by which this new creature is constituted, or the process that makes it come to exist, should in no way be despised or superfluously seen, for it is the origin of something new that defines the starting elements or the basis of the existence of a new creature.

If the origin, seed, or root of something labeled as new is not from a source from which something new may arise, that which will sprout, flourish, or grow will not be something new either.

Following, then, this line of reasoning in which the new can only come from a source that can indeed provide something new, let us look a little more closely at the word “creature” according to some comments associated in the Online Bible with Strong's lexicon considerations, as presented below:

⇒ a) **Creature:**

- 1) *Creature;*
- 2) *Creation;*
- 3) *Building;*
- 4) *The act of founding, establishing, building, etc.*
- 5) *The act of creating, creation, thing created.*

⇒ b) **Creature as derived from to create:**

- 1) *Creator;*
- 2) *To make;*
- 3) *To make habitable, to people, a place, region, island, or to found a city, colony, state;*
- 4) *Create in the sense of God creating the worlds;*
- 5) *Create in the sense of to form, shape, that is, to completely change or transform.*

Thus, **to call someone or something as a “new creature” is the same as saying that someone or it, respectively, is a “new creation”!**

When the Scriptures state that “in Christ we are a new creature,” they are also declaring that “in Christ we are a new creation.”

When a person comes to the point to be “in Christ” by receiving Him as the Lord in the heart, one receives from the Lord something created that is entirely new and that one had not yet known until then.

It is vital to know that the new that is offered to us from God, in Christ Jesus, is not something related, firstly, to a reformation of the old, for if the new were only a reformation, it would be something renewed, but not something effectively new.

Although the salvation offered by God in Christ Jesus is the offer of salvation to the already existing soul of the human being and is also the offer of a restoration or renewal of the understanding of this soul, when the Scriptures declare that in Christ Jesus is the possibility of a person to be a new creature, they do so because also entirely new and unknown conditions until then are added to those who come to the position of being in Christ Jesus.

Considering that the natural man, who basically acts only by body and soul, cannot comprehend and discern the aspects of spiritual life according to the kingdom of God, the mere restoration of the soul would continue to let a person in a devoid condition of the due knowledge or understanding about the glory of God, which is the great need of the human beings that are dissociated from the fellowship with the Eternal Lord because of their sins.

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.***

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

When God announces that in Christ Jesus a person becomes a new creature, He does it so that people may know that, in the Lord, they become new because they are also given the seed that creates a new condition of spiritual life and which is not possible to be reached dissociated from receiving Christ Jesus in the heart as Lord, as exemplified below:

1 John 3: 9 ***Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.***

Without receiving the new or the seed that makes a person into a new creature, an individual cannot become a new creature or cannot indeed become a Christian, no matter how hard one tries to learn the precepts of the Scriptures or tries to practice a series of biblical instructions.

If a person wants to be a new creature without having received previously the condition of being regenerated as “new creation,” one will try to live the new without having the minimum conditions to even realize what the new life in God is, for, as

already mentioned, the natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit of God.

Just as a natural child is not fit to live a life in the present world unless he or she has been born before of natural birth, so also a natural person who has not been made a new creation in Christ is not fit to live the life of the new creature in God.

It is necessary first to be a new creation to be able to live as a new creature!

In addition, as with the birth of a child, naturally speaking, where no one can predict precisely or accurately how this child will be in the most diverse physical and emotional expressions in life, so there is no way for people to foresee precisely how will be a new specific creature in Christ Jesus, for in Him, everything is new for the new being.

Since the “new creation” is not a reformulation or reformation of the old, but it is something “new,” it is regarding the newness of life that there must be growth and comprehension, to then, by the new, starting to work on the restoration and renewal of the understanding of the soul that already existed before.

An individual is constituted as a Christian by the fact that one chooses to follow Christ and to have Christ Jesus as the Lord of one's life, but an individual is also constituted as a Christian by receiving from the Lord a new inner condition of life to live and walk along with Christ Jesus, with the Heavenly Father, and with the Holy Spirit.

*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.***

For those who were separated from the fellowship with the Lord, the possibility of being able to be in Christ is an offer of change to a new condition of life, since, in Christ, there is the way for the reconciliation of a proper relationship with the Lord. However, when an individual comes to the point where one can be in Christ Jesus, the person also receives a new condition of “being” or who he or she is.

And since the condition of reconciliation with God and the condition of being a new creature are granted together, it is also vital that these new conditions equally may be known and experienced together.

*2 Corinthians 5: 15 **And Christ 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.***

*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.

...

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

6:1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

C3. Born Again from God

In the previous chapter, we have seen that the Scriptures affirm that “in Christ” a person is a new creature, and as such, one is a new creation that receives from God not only cooperative gifts for a distinct living but also characteristics of a new existence.

Nevertheless, we have also seen that a new creation needs a fact that introduces it, causes it to spring forth, to appear, or to be manifested.

In natural life, for instance, we know that to come into existence in the present world, a new person goes through a process of conception, gestation, and then reaches what we call birth, the start of life as a physically separated being, or “coming to light or the world.”

Thus, and since “in Christ” the Christian is also regarded as a new creation or new creature, the new life granted by the Lord to an individual also needs to be introduced somehow or by some way of birth to come to be manifested.

And it is precisely as a “new birth” that the Lord Jesus Christ, in His own words spoken directly to human beings, has appointed the action by which occurs the emergence of the “new creature” or the “new creation” of those who believe in Him and receive Him in the heart as the Lord.

Let us see below the specific text on the last aspect in reference:

*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.***
- 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.*
- 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 text referenced above, we can observe the dialogue of a religious leader called Nicodemus with the Lord Jesus Christ, and in which Nicodemus begins by making a particular highlight of the distinct condition that Christ enjoyed on God's part in order to do what He accomplished.

Nevertheless, regarding Nicodemus's statement, the Lord Jesus Christ did not reaffirm what Nicodemus said, adopting, on the contrary, a position of considerable change of approach to the subject initiated by Nicodemus.

Until the days of Nicodemus, people knew facts about various extraordinary deeds that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, judges, prophets, and kings performed because God was with them, but when Nicodemus declared something similar about the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord soon started to show Nicodemus that he was now facing a very distinct circumstance from those that had occurred up to that date or moment.

If several people, before the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, became cooperators of God in the most diverse situations because the Lord also cooperated with them, this was not exactly what Christ came to reveal and to manifest to the world.

The Lord Jesus Christ had come in the flesh into the world as a direct envoy of the kingdom of God or the heavenly kingdom, and that is why He had such high authority in what He accomplished.

The Lord Jesus Christ did not represent only the expression or manifestation of an ordinary man who could count on God's favor toward Him, but Christ, in everything, acted according to the kingdom of God that was in His heart, as well as He had come to preach and announce the offer of God so that people could also come to act from this same heavenly kingdom by being part of it or by being able to see and enter it.

While Nicodemus expounded on the praise or acknowledgment of why Jesus Christ was distinct from regular people in His work in the world, the Lord Jesus Christ suddenly changed the theme for the mission granted to Him by the Heavenly Father of announcing the kingdom of God, showing to Nicodemus that something new or a new

condition of life came to be before humanity and which until that age was unknown to human beings.

Many men and women of antiquity counted on the favor of the Lord over them to act in supernatural or extraordinary ways, this being the model known hitherto by Nicodemus. However, when Christ was approached by Nicodemus under the same perspective, the Lord did not enter the merit of the words of Nicodemus, declaring suddenly: ***Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.***

While Nicodemus was declaring to know and understand why the Lord Jesus Christ acted in the way He acted, the Lord Jesus Christ answered directly to him stating that if a person is not born again, one cannot even see or enter the kingdom of God. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His response to Nicodemus, was showing him that he still did not really know what enabled Christ to act in the way he acted.

As much as Nicodemus could realize that the way that Christ acted was only possible to be accomplished if God were with Him, Nicodemus, without first seeing and entering the kingdom of God, could not indeed perceive more deeply the principles that made possible for Christ to act in the way He acted. Although Nicodemus thought that Christ was performing actions in a manner similar to the deeds of whom he had heard of antiquity, he was, in fact, facing an unusual, definitely new, and distinct situation.

And in addition to the fact that he was facing an entirely unprecedented situation, in which Christ Jesus came to announce and preach the coming of the kingdom of God among human beings as it had not yet occurred, Nicodemus was also exposed by the Lord Jesus to a whole new narrative about how this new condition of the manifestation of the kingdom of God could indeed come to be known, seen, and accessed.

If in ancient times people prayed to God, and He answered prayer by strengthening them and being favorable to them in various circumstances, what God was offering in Christ Jesus was something well differentiated, as well as it was also the access to what Christ came to proclaim and offer from the part of God to human beings.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in response to the initial statement of Nicodemus, clearly announces that for someone to see the kingdom by which He was working, and to also be able to enter it, a “new birth” according to this same kingdom is necessary, not just the birth according to the natural realms.

As much as Nicodemus thought that he could discern the reason why the Lord acted differently, the Lord Jesus Christ replied to Nicodemus saying that no one could indeed see this distinct form of living and walking if one did not go through a new birth.

What Christ Jesus was proclaiming and offering to the world, when referring to the kingdom of God, was so distinct or new that it could only be seen or accessed if a person also experienced a new birth, and what, therefore, would never be possible to be seen only with the eyes of the natural understanding or to be accessed by a merely natural condition of life.

And the exposition of the Lord Jesus Christ to Nicodemus was so clear that Nicodemus in the face of the unusual or what to him was entirely new asked the Lord Jesus objectively the next expected questions, namely: ***How can a man be born***

when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?

Once Nicodemus understood that Christ was speaking to him about something really new and about a whole new way of accessing this new aspect, now showing himself no longer as one who previously thought he knew why the Lord acted differently, the Lord Jesus also answered Nicodemus new inquiries directly or objectively, namely:

- ⇒ 1) ***Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God;***
- ⇒ 2) ***That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;***
- ⇒ 3) ***Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again'.***

After Nicodemus realized that the Lord Jesus had exposed to him an entirely new aspect of life with God and after asking the Lord how an already old person would be able to attain it, the Lord, promptly, informed Nicodemus that **the new birth also refers to a "new type" of birth, and not the return and repetition of the earlier type by which Nicodemus had already been born in the present world.**

The observation that the new birth proclaimed by Christ Jesus is also a new "type of birth," not the repetition of an event of natural birth, is an essential consideration, for the "new birth" mentioned by the Lord Jesus Christ does not refer to pass an eraser in the life that already exists and start all over again in the same natural bases.

Although the so-called "new birth" only applies to those who previously were conceived naturally, it is a "new type of birth," provided by the heavenly kingdom in a new way and with characteristics that are entirely different from the natural conception of life.

If the "new birth" were a "type" of birth in which the person would be born again by natural birth, it would not actually be a "new" birth, but it would be a repetition of a "type" of birth by which a person has passed previously. It would be a return to the same "type" of birth to try to correct the life of an individual by repetitions of new attempts of the same "type" of birth.

If the "new birth" were a "type" of birth in which the person would be born again by natural birth, it would be an opportunity to recommence or restart the same that already existed previously, that is, it would be "more of the same" and not indeed a "new birth" for the one who was already born once in the present world.

Still in another passage of the Scriptures, addressed more widely in the subject on the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, we find that the Lord Jesus declares that the aspects of the kingdom of God are not like the aspects of the natural realm or kingdoms of the Earth that can be seen and perceived with natural eyes. Point this, that also applies to the new birth by which a person can come to see and enter the heavenly kingdom that even can be received in the heart through faith in Christ.

*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."*

The new birth in Christ is not an opportunity to replace the natural birth previously occurred in order to enjoy a second opportunity under the same conditions, for ***which is born of the flesh***, natural birth, ***is flesh***, even if it were to be repeated several times. Remembering, yet, that ***flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God***.

The natural human being, born of blood and flesh, is born only once, has one body of flesh and blood, and has only one soul, not being there any description in the Scriptures of a supposed foresight that a person will receive a second or new natural birth.

Hebrews 9: 27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ...

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

We well know that the natural body is temporal, finite, and that it returns to the dust from which it came, just as the soul of a person is also unique, being this, however, eternal. And it was not regarding these aspects that the Lord was referring to by mentioning the new birth.

When mentioning the new birth, the Lord Jesus Christ was referring to a new condition that is granted to the one who is born directly from the Spirit of God, saying that the fruit of this birth is also "spirit," namely: *that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*.

Ephesians 4: 24 And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

The understanding of the new reality generated by the new birth is of vital importance for the life of the Christian, for the Christian who does not realize this truth, or this new reality, may become oblivious to the understanding of the new that has been added to him or her and may not make use of the specific gift that was given to him or her by the Heavenly Father in receiving Christ as the Lord in the heart.

The new birth is not the restoration of the soul itself, although the new birth is the means for the restoration of the soul. The new birth adds a new element to the life of the Christian and assists him or her in the restoration of his or her soul. The renewal of

the soul and the understanding, in turn, is carried out throughout a process in which one begins to live according to the new spiritual condition received in his or her life.

The new birth is related to something that God creates new in the life of the one who believes in Christ and receives Him as the Lord of his or her life.

John 1: 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

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.

1 John 5: 1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

If an individual has not experienced the new birth, even if one claims to be a Christian or affiliated with a group, denomination, or institution that claims to act in the name of God, one has not yet actually become a Christian and, therefore, one also has no access to see the kingdom of God nor enter the kingdom announced and preached by Christ Jesus to the world.

Without the new birth announced by Christ, we return to the point discussed in the previous chapter, in which we have seen that the natural man cannot comprehend the aspects of the heavenly kingdom because they are discerned by the Spirit of the Lord for those who have also been constituted as spiritual beings “in Christ,” born according to the spiritual birth of the kingdom of God.

And again, at this point, if we look once more to the example of Nicodemus, who at first seemed to be conscious of what enabled Christ to act as He acted, we can see that once Nicodemus was enlightened that he also needed something different to understand what made Christ distinct from others, he soon advanced to the next stage of his questions by asking the Lord: How, then, can anyone come to experience this new birth?

How happens this new birth proclaimed by Christ and what makes a person truly a Christian is what became the inquiry of Nicodemus, and which, equally and promptly, the Lord Jesus answered him.

After hearing that he needed to be born again to see, to enter, and to understand through which kingdom the Lord Jesus acted, and after also hearing that it is necessary to be born directly of the Spirit of God and not only of the flesh, Nicodemus advanced and asked: ***How can these things be?*** How, then, can one be born of the Spirit to see and experience the reality ***that which is born of the Spirit is spirit?***

Nicodemus, even being a teacher in Israel, did not know that someone had to be born again to see the kingdom of God and to enter it, much less, then, did he know how this new birth by the Spirit of the Lord could come to occur.

Nevertheless, once again the Lord Jesus answered Nicodemus promptly, as the account of the book of John, chapter 3, tells us, showing that **Christ did not only come to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom, but He also came to offer it to be seen and entered by those who believe and receive the manner in which He declared that they could see it and enter in it.**

Considering that there is a mandatory need for a new birth so that a person can see and enter the kingdom of God, the announcement of Christ would only be complete if He announced how much people lack the kingdom of God. However, this same announcement would also be complete just if the Lord as well showed the people the manner, the way, or how they could indeed reach the provision for this need, which was the most advanced doubt of Nicodemus, and to whom the Lord readily also answered the matter.

And about the manner by which a person who was previously born after the flesh can also experience the new birth according to the Spirit of the Lord or become “born of God,” Christ replied to Nicodemus the following words:

*John 3: 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.***
*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.***

In responding to Nicodemus' last inquiry, the Lord Jesus Christ told him some of the most objective and sublime words recorded in the Scriptures about God's love for all human beings, stating that it is necessary to believe in Christ as the Only Begotten or Eternal Unique Son of the Heavenly Father and that He was sent by God for the provision of salvation and for the new birth to be manifested in everyone who believes in the Lord.

Yes, the new birth occurs when a person believes that the Lord Jesus is the Christ sent by the Heavenly Father and welcomes Him in the heart declaring Christ as the Lord of his or her life, for it is at this moment that a person comes to receive eternal life according to the Spirit of the Lord, not being longer restricted just to the life received through the conditions of natural birth.

*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.***
-

To believe that the Lord Jesus is the Christ is to believe that He is the Eternal Son of the living God and that He came in the flesh into the world to die to free people from their sins. It is to believe that He was raised on the third day after His death on the cross. And it is also to believe that He was elevated to Heaven and seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Father as the Eternal High Priest, as the Unique Mediator between God and humans, as the King of Righteousness and King of Peace who is already seated above every principality, and that He also reigns already and will reign forever from the highest and the most sublime throne. (A point widely discussed in the subject on The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ).

When someone personally believes in Christ as the Scriptures present the Lord Jesus and as they testify about Him, and receives Him as the Lord, Savior, and Eternal King of his or her life, God makes the new life, according to the new birth, to emerge, to be born, or to come to light in the person who believes in Him, because the salvation granted from heaven to an individual, as well as the fulfillment of the new birth, are inseparable aspects, occurring together and simultaneously.

- 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."***

- 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.***
-

Considering that the “new creature in Christ” is created according to the righteousness of God, it is also when one believes in the heavenly righteousness that the door to the new birth granted by God opens. Righteousness in which one believes with the heart and whose salvation results in being included in the family of God.

Thus, if anyone believes in Jesus as the Christ, as the One who came to manifest the righteousness of God and as the One who is the righteousness of God to everyone who believes in Him, and declares that he or she voluntarily receives Christ as the Lord of his or her life, salvation is performed by bringing the spiritual birth by which a person can see and enter the kingdom of God, and there is no way to dissociate one aspect of the other.

In the materials on The Gospel of Salvation, The Gospel of the Grace of the Lord, and The Gospel of God's Righteousness, it also has been widely addressed the aspect that the salvation of God has not been offered just to take a person out of perdition and to give him or her a new opportunity to try to live in the same way as before. The salvation that comes from God is offered to people so that they can be taken out of a state of perdition to be granted new life, a life that a person never knew and could never come to know if one remained dissociated from abiding in the Lord and from the fellowship with God that is available in Christ Jesus.

Salvation from God is indeed a heavenly provision to bring people out of eternal condemnation. However, salvation is also a provision to grant human beings a "new life" with inner conditions that are entirely new and distinct from what they had before they received by grace, through faith, Christ Jesus as the Lord.

*John 10: 9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.
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."*

Colossians 2: 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

When a person receives Christ, the very living word of truth generates the Christian in Christ as a new person who has a whole new inner condition of life granted to him or her by the Eternal Lord, and this, so that also one's actions or attitudes can be lived from the new creature received from the Lord.

James 1: 18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

*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.
10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

In Christ Jesus, God grants us the announcement of the new life according to the heavenly kingdom and allows us to know that this new life is in conformity with the kingdom of God and with what is born according to the Spirit of the Lord. However, also in Christ Jesus, it is made possible to experience the establishment and support of life granted by the new birth provided by God to all those who believe in their hearts in Christ as their Lord.

*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?"

C4. The New Life Granted in the New Birth Encompasses the Made Alive Spirit

When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the salvation of humankind, He had in mind that He would have to pass through the death of the cross, but He also was sure that this was the necessary way for Him to grant the newness of the heavenly life to all those who would accept the provision that was being made for them for the forgiveness of their sins.

Besides the fact that the son of God came in the flesh into the world as the provision to free people from their sins and their eternal condemnations because of these sins, He also came to provide their freedom to offer them a new condition or a new kind of life.

*Romans 6: 23 **For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

The Lord Jesus Christ came to remove that which was between people and God and that which bound them under the condemnation of death, but this He did so that human beings could freely receive eternal life and the Heavenly Father's Spirit in their hearts.

Everyone who believes in the work of Christ and wants the salvation and reconciliation that He offers receives from the Heavenly Father His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is granted to live in the life of the one who receives the Lord Jesus by grace and through faith.

However, **everyone who receives Christ and the Spirit of God also receives from God, together, the quickening, awakening, or reviving of his or her own spirit, for: *That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.***

The natural man, just in his condition of body and soul, lacks a quickened or revived spirit, which, in turn, is only given to those who receive Christ. The natural man, as we have seen in the previous chapters, does not understand the spiritual things, for they are foolishness to him, needing, therefore, to become also a “spiritual man.”

So, the most necessary or essential message for the merely natural man, first of all, is the communication that Christ died on the cross of Calvary for the remission of all people from their sins, and that this same Christ offers the possibility of a new life in God to each person. A novelty of life that, in turn, is granted along with the new spiritual birth of everyone who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and receives Him in the heart as Lord.

*1 Corinthians 2: 1 **And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.***

*2 **For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.***

*John 10: 10(b) **I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.***

*Ephesians 2: 1 **And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.***

If a person does not receive Christ, one cannot be born again. And if one is not born again, he or she is also deprived of receiving the favor of God that makes alive one's own spirit, thus remaining in the condition that one cannot indeed see the kingdom of God or enter it. Even if an individual receives information or explanations about what the heavenly kingdom is, one cannot indeed understand it unless he or she experiences the quickening or the reviving of one's spirit through the new birth in the Lord.

Humans have been able to get to the point of promoting fertilization techniques that increase the possibility of conception of natural life, as well as they could reach what one never imagined could be done, such as the mapping of an individual's DNA. However, they cannot, through natural aspects, come to a kind of conception that allows them to become part of the kingdom of God, for the new birth does not occur ***nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man.***

As much as science advances, the new being born of God in Christ Jesus can never have the "spiritual DNA" mapped by natural knowledge or techniques, because it is hidden in God and is generated directly from God in the person who receives Christ as the Lord of one's life, not being any natural seed involved in this process.

The exact way in which a person's spirit is made alive is also not given to know to human beings, given them to know only that it occurs when a person believes in the Lord Jesus as the Christ sent by God and receives Him in the heart as Lord, confessing it as well with the mouth.

Given this, **to understand that through the new birth an entirely new spiritual condition occurs in the person who experiences it is of vital importance to a Christian, for this is also a condition for a life of worship to God that is accepted by the Heavenly Father.**

Without the experience of the new birth a person does not have a spirit that is made alive by the Lord and, in turn, without the quickened spirit, a person does not meet the minimum or essential requirements to live a life of proper worship before the Lord. Remembering, still, that worship is also the expression of serving God or of living and walking according to the will of the Heavenly Father. (In the subject named Works, Services, and Labors the meaning of the word worship is more widely discussed).

Without being made, by God, in a new being or without the quickened spirit, the spirit brought to life, there is no way for a person indeed worshipping God in conformity with the kind of worship that the Heavenly Father is seeking.

*Ephesians 4: 24 **And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.***

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.**

Worshipping God in spirit and truth is not the worship of a soul that seeks to adopt the principles, concepts, and behaviors that this soul understands to be spiritual, nor is it the actions of a soul that has disciplined itself to speak about subjects which oneself calls as spiritual.

A person, just in one's natural condition, may even attempt exhaustively to serve God, but without the new birth granted to the one who receives Christ in the heart as the Lord, this person remains dissociated from the “worship in spirit and truth” for which the Heavenly Father is seeking.

The condition that a Christian receives from God to serve Him in spirit and truth is also a condition that Paul testifies about himself and his service (worship) to the Heavenly Father, as exemplified below:

Romans 1: 9 **For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.**

As already mentioned, **the “new being” in God or the new creature in Christ is not firstly a recreated soul, but it is manifested by an indeed new aspect that is added to the life of the one who experiences the new creation and through which the soul can be appropriately assisted and restored.**

When the Scriptures show us that there is a second birth possible for all individuals or an opportunity to be “born again,” they teach us that there are two distinct births possible for the same person to experience and that respectively enable distinct conditions of life, showing us, yet, that these two distinct births are so differentiated because they also come from such different origins, as explained in one more text below:

1 Corinthians 15: 45 *And so it is written:*

“The first man Adam became a living being (or soul).” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 **However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.**

47 **The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.**

48 **As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.**

The first Adam, from whom all human beings descend, naturally speaking, was made by God as a **living soul**, for the name Adam is also a figure of the initiator of a race or of a species that succeeds him.

The natural conception of a person, according to the species of the first Adam, must come first. Without the natural conception of an individual, there is also no existence of the second birth, a reason why the Lord Jesus Christ declared: “**You must be born again.**”

On the other hand, the second birth, the new birth that revives or gives life to the spirit of a person, is according to the last Adam, to the eternal initiator of a race. The new birth is granted according to the Lord Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead. For this reason, the Lord Jesus is also called the second man or the last Adam, for He is the first new man of the new birth species, and which is a unique and eternal race.

Christ came into the world for people to be freed from the prisons to which they were subjected as the descendant race of the first Adam, but Christ came not only to offer freedom to them. Christ came to provide freedom because He is a “life-giving spirit” that, in addition to liberty, is powerful to grant a new beginning in a new lineage that is not according to the first Adam, but, yes, according to the direct lineage of the Eternal Son of the Heavenly Father.

Christ is spiritual life that also gives spiritual life and who constitutes an entirely new lineage of persons created in conformity with the heavenly kingdom, and not according to the natural world.

*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, ...***

*1 Corinthians 15: 22 **For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.***

*John 5: 21 **For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.***

If we observe once again that Christ is a “**life-giving spirit**,” we can see that when the Lord uttered the words below, He also uttered them about Himself:

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

To say that the Spirit of God gives life or to say that Christ gives life has the same effect, for Christ is “life-giving spirit.”

So, the one who believes in Christ and receives the Lord in one's heart also receives the One who has all the power given by the Heavenly Father to generate the life in the spirit that a person needs to live and walk in spirit and truth before the Heavenly Father.

To further highlight the new condition provided in Christ Jesus to those who believe in Him, let us also see a little more about the expressions “to quicken,” “to make alive,” or “life-giving” according to some considerations associated with Strong's lexicon in the Online Bible:

⇒ **To Revitalize, To Make Alive, To Give Life, or to Quicken:**

*Coming from the Greek word: **Zoopoieo**. Meaning, among others:*

- 1) **To give life;***
- 2) **To cause to live;***
- 3) **To restore life (or to revive);***
- 4) **To produce alive, begat or bear living young;***
- 5) **To make alive.***

When the Scriptures teach us that Christ is a life-giving spirit, or that we are made alive in Christ, they also show us that the Lord has all the power to produce life and to bring forth a new life in the spirit of those who formerly lived only as a living soul.

The Lord is the Almighty God and fully able to heal a wounded, sick, or ill physical body, just as the Lord can give strength and encouragement to any dejected soul that He wants to help, and He does so over and over again. However, **the “newness of life,” offered by the Lord through the new birth, is granted, in fact, by making alive the spirit of an individual or by the granting of a quickened spirit to a person.**

When a person accepts the Lord Jesus Christ in the heart, one receives as a gift a living spirit in order to, through this spirit, come to know and experience continuously and increasingly the newness of life in conformity with the heavenly kingdom.

And once a person comes to have the made alive spirit received from the life-giving Christ, a diversity of factors pertinent to the new creation also becomes available to him or her in the Lord.

With the quickened spirit by the Lord, through the new birth, a person becomes able to see and receive the kingdom of God, as well as to be able to see the principles of God with heavenly understanding and oneself in a way that one could not perceive before.

Under this condition of having a made alive spirit, let us see once again a text already mentioned, in part, in the previous chapters:

- 1 Corinthians 2: 6 **However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.***
- 7 **But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,***
- 8 **which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.***

- 9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*
- 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*
- 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*
- 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*
- 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*
- 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
- 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.*
- 16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*
-

The "spiritual man," mentioned in the text above, is the "new man," is the "new creation" that is given to a person in the new birth and that encompasses the "spirit that is made alive" by the Lord in the person who receives Him in the heart, remembering that the word "man" used in some translations of this same text refers to the expression of "being," that is why the referred expression obviously applies to both men and women.

The "spiritual man" is the expression applicable to that person who has had one's spirit made alive by the Lord and who lives and walks according to this new condition, through which a person can now comprehend and grow in the understanding of the kingdom of God.

It is to the spirit that has been made alive, through the new birth, that the Spirit of God testifies about the new condition that a person receives by becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Since the natural man cannot see and understand the aspects of the heavenly kingdom and the Spirit of the Lord, God, through the new birth in Christ Jesus, grants a quickened spirit to every person who believes in the grace of His Gospel.

Through the new birth, God grants a new condition in which natural men and women who receive His Gospel are also constituted as spiritual persons who can discern, spiritually, the things of God offered to them by the heavenly grace.

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.

C5. Old Things Have Passed Away, and All Things Have Become New

*2 Corinthians 5: 17 Therefore **if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.** (AV)*

or

*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.***

For not understanding or accepting the fact that the “new birth” is also a “distinct type of birth,” many people have seen the last text quoted above as a text that seems intriguing or even incoherent. By looking more closely at things that apparently have not changed in their life or the life of others after they have accepted Christ, many people find it difficult to understand the referred text on the part where it is stated that “***old things have passed away.***”

To reflect, therefore, on the content of the above verse, we will make an analogy of something that changes and becomes new, but that preserves previous characteristics.

The analogy is a mere exercise of exemplification of changes that can occur with existing elements and that are transformed into something new by the addition of something new. The example, however, does not serve, in all its details, to exemplify what is, in fact, the new birth and the Christian life.

Therefore, as a simplified example, we will initially choose a glass of natural water (fresh water) and add a portion of salt to it, mixing the salt well with the natural water. This process, in turn, causes all the water in the glass to be transformed into salt water, which, therefore, is also the expression of something new where, in a sense, old things (that is, fresh water) already have passed.

So, when an individual receives Christ as Lord and experiences the new birth, which is also a distinct “type” of birth, something new that affects all other areas of this life is added to that same person, making that what existed before becomes distinct and, therefore, no longer equal to which it was until then.

When a person who has actually been born again says that he or she does not understand the part of the verse above related to the old things have already passed away, one may be saying this because one may not have understood that what has been added to him or her has changed his or her whole life already in the present and also for the future.

Just like the portion of salt brought change in all the fresh water of the exemplified cup, the addition of the made alive spirit to a person brings changes to the whole existence of this individual, even though one initially does not perceive them.

If one looks at the glass of water exemplified without knowing that the salt has been added to the natural water, one will not know, from the simple appearance, that there has been a change in the condition of this water.

Similarly, a soul and body that are under the government of offenses or transgressions, sins, and the mere understanding of life according to natural optics are in an entirely different condition from a soul and body that are under the government of the spirit quickened by God and in conformity with the heavenly grace, an aspect also described in the following text:

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?

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.

At the very moment that a person accepts Christ, there is, in the spiritual world, a change in the conditions of government over the life of the soul and body, for the person who experiences a new birth has, in the spiritual world, the characteristics that the new condition of a child of God grants him or her already from this new birth.

If before the body and soul were under the bondage of the world and the power of darkness, after the new birth, a new paternity and a new condition of being a child of God are established, besides the addition of a made alive spirit by which a person can understand the spiritual things that the Lord Jesus Christ and the Heavenly Father begin to teach him or her through the Holy Spirit.

In Christ, the conditions of life are distinct, the condition of being a child and paternity are according to the heavenly kingdom, just as the inheritance of a person is differentiated.

Without the new birth, a person, in one's soul and body, is as if "*without God in the world*" and, therefore, as under the dominion of darkness. However, after receiving the condition of a new creature, an individual becomes part of God, part of the family of the Heavenly Father, comes to have the Spirit of the Lord in the heart, and receives a spirit made alive through Christ, the One who is Life-giving Spirit and through whom the soul can be restored.

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

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

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.

1 Corinthians 6: 17 **But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.**

In other words, we could also say that when a person is in Christ, one also has a change of “lordship” over his or her life, just as one also has a new condition so that he or she can, through the quickened spirit, instruct his or her soul and body on the way to be followed daily while one still is in the present world.

In many cases, a person who is born again may be instructed by the Lord to continue to live in the same place one lived before and to have material things similar to those he or she had before. However, when a person goes through the new birth, it also is given to him or her a condition in which one no longer needs to be subject to the dominion of the flesh, the world, and the prince of darkness, and he or she comes to have available a condition to be able to serve Christ in everything one does and in every place one lives.

Even though several aspects of the material surroundings of a person do not change instantly with the new birth in Christ, the spiritual condition of all things in his or her life is immediately different, and nothing is the same as it was before.

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.

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.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Let us see, then, below once again the verse quoted at the beginning of this chapter:

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.

The central point of the verse in reference is not only in the old things that have passed away or that have become new, but it is in the aspect that a person who is “in Christ” “is a New Creature” or “is a New Creation.”

By the new birth, something new is added to an individual already since the new birth. Although some people may take time to grow in the understanding of the newness of life that has been added to them by the new birth, the condition of a new creature is not only added to them over time but in conjunction with the new birth itself.

Considering that a person who comes to be born again through the new type of birth also becomes immediately united to the Lord in Spirit, nothing else is the same in his or her life to what it was until then.

People who are in Christ are no longer the same as they were before, no matter if they or others still do not see outwardly the changes of the condition that took place inside their hearts and before the spiritual world.

Even though a person who is in Christ does not know yet that he or she is a New Creature, one is already a New Creature or New Creation.

“If anyone is in Christ = A New Creature”

Together with the new birth, a new possibility of a relationship with the kingdom of God is granted to the heart of the one who received Christ Jesus as the Lord. Although at the beginning there may be no outward appearances of change, if a person was born again, one became an individual with distinct characteristics, part of a new kingdom, and even with different citizenship than one had until then.

There is, however, a significant risk that may come to afflict Christians in the world, which is the non-awareness about this new life that began in them with the new birth or the negligence regarding the knowledge about their new condition in the Lord.

Many Christians even invest much more time in the whining about their old nature than in learning the new life they received from the Lord, thus diverting the focus from what they should be most attentive. This behavior, however, should not be so.

Once a new condition of life or the newness of heavenly life has been received by a new type of birth, it should be yearned, discovered, appreciated, and lived in God with intensity.

*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.***

C6. The New Creature Put in Evidence by the Contrast with the Most Emblematic Figures of the Natural Human Being

A. Distinguishing the New from the Old Cooperates to the Understanding of the New Creature

Although nothing merely natural in the world can accurately reflect the condition of the new creature that is given to a person through the new birth, some characteristics of the new creation may be known according to what the Scriptures teach us about what the new differs strikingly with what was in force until this new possibility of life was introduced.

If there is something new being offered, it is also possible that there is something preceding considered old or outdated in relation to which the new manifests itself.

And so, how can someone compare something new with something old, and assign them a respective value, if he or she does not appropriately know some essential aspects about the old and the new, considering that part of the condition of something new is also evidenced when comparing it with the old?

We recall here, then, that in this chapter, the focus of comparing the new with the things that have already passed away is not to exalt or highlight the old but aims to cooperate for even greater prominence and understanding of the new.

And, in turn, **the act of comparing or contrasting a new condition with conditions considered to be old or outdated can be done both regarding the details of the novelties of the new and regarding the highlights of what the new “is not” in relation to the old.**

In the previous chapters, we saw a higher emphasis on several new attributes of the new creature, but in this particular chapter, we aim to highlight some aspects that the new directly discards regarding the old ways or patterns of life existing in the world, bearing in mind that one of the central verses concerning the new creature in God objectively emphasizes what this new creation in Christ “is not” in comparison to the former, namely:

Galatians 5: 15 ***For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.***

The emphasis of the Scriptures on the new creature does not only inform us that it is more valuable than circumcision and uncircumcision, but it also shows us that circumcision and uncircumcision have lost all value in the face of the newness offered to humankind in Christ Jesus. An aspect that can be seen still in other texts of the Scriptures that affirm this same emphasis in the following way:

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

1 Corinthians 7: 19 **Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.**

“In Christ,” which is one of the central ways to refer to the new condition of life granted by God to the new creature, the old conditions concerning circumcision or uncircumcision have no value, that is, they are obsolete or without the expression of value that people eventually attributed to them before.

And yet in another text, the declaration of the nullity of circumcision or uncircumcision in the face of the new creature in Christ becomes even more affirmative, being expressed in it the non-acceptance, including or in no way, of a series of other specific former conditions adopted by the natural man, as follows:

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.

If in the first verses seen in this topic, there was highlighted that there are certain things that have entirely lost their value in the face of the new creature, in this last verse above, it can be observed that some former aspects, even highly valued by some groups of people, should never be regarded as acceptable to those who are in the condition of a new creation in Christ.

What, then, is so relevant in the emphasis of the specific topics of the last texts seen above? Why are they so objectively and emphatically highlighted in the Scriptures about the new creature or the condition of a person being “in Christ?”

Why is it so important to grow in the understanding of some aspects that have no value to the position of being “in Christ” or which should not be accepted by a person in the condition of a new creature in the Lord?

To understand the aspects that the natural man values so much, but that cannot have any part in the new creation, is crucial, for in the natural level, there are several aspects that objectively oppose the new creature and want to keep people from the newness of life in the Lord, as well as they also aim to directly affect the fellowship of people with the peace and mercy of God, as exemplified below:

Galatians 6: 11 *See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!*
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.***
- 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.***
-

For many people, including many of those who are Christian, the texts quoted above may sound somewhat strange, since there are terms used in them that may be unfamiliar to their ears or even entirely unknown.

Nevertheless, even if terms such as “circumcision,” “uncircumcision,” “Jew,” or “Greek” may sound strange to the reader of the Scriptures, it is necessary to advance in their understanding since these expressions are of vital significance concerning the subject of the new creature. A reason why we would like to encourage continuity in reading this chapter, for in it we will try to cooperate in the elucidation of several meanings associated with these terms in reference.

The emphasis in the New Testament texts on the terms referenced in the preceding paragraph is used repetitively as to the issues associated with the new creature, indicating to us a high degree of importance of their understanding, as well as indicating that they may indeed be understood according to the instructions of the Lord, for if this were not possible, these terms would not be so intensely referenced together with the theme of the newness of life in Christ.

It should still be remembered here that a person's ignorance of a crucial subject does not protect him or her from the harmful consequences that this ignorance may bring to his or her life. However, the growth in the understanding and the wisdom bestowed by God on how to deal with matters that are essential to life can indicate the path of victory in these several key areas.

The fact that a subject is unknown by a person does not exempt this individual from seeking its understanding, for God is willing to grant wisdom to those who seek it in Him, as we can also remember in the words of the book of Proverbs set out below:

- Proverbs 2: 1 My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you,*
- 2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding;*
- 3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding,*
- 4 If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures;*
- 5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God.*
- 6 For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;*
- 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;*
- 8 He guards the paths of justice, And preserves the way of His saints.*
- 9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice, Equity and every good path.*
- 10 When wisdom enters your heart, And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,*

- 11 Discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you,
 12 To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things,
 13 From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness;
 14 Who rejoice in doing evil, And delight in the perversity of the wicked;
 15 Whose ways are crooked, And who are devious in their paths;
 16 To deliver you from the immoral woman, From the seductress who flatters with her words,
 17 Who forsakes the companion of her youth, And forgets the covenant of her God.
 18 For her house leads down to death, And her paths to the dead;
 19 None who go to her return, Nor do they regain the paths of life.
 20 So you may walk in the way of goodness, And keep to the paths of righteousness.
 21 For the upright will dwell in the land, And the blameless will remain in it;
 22 But the wicked will be cut off from the earth, And the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.*
-

Given the broad provision of wisdom and understanding that God offers to the people in the world, there is no reason for a person to refrain from knowing the themes and terms that God has used in the Scriptures, how much more the points that clarify what constitutes and what does not constitute the new creation which a person can obtain in the Lord, and by which one can obtain the eternal life of the heavenly kingdom accompanied by the grace, peace, and mercy of God.

The fact that a person is unfamiliar with some terms and expressions of the Scriptures does not provide him or her with an excuse or justification before the Lord for not seeking to understand them together with the other Scriptures and by the Spirit of God, which are widely offered to all those who open their hearts to receive the offer of the Gospel of the Lord.

Since being “in Christ” or being a “new creature” is fundamental to a new life not only in the present but also for eternity, no one should refrain from knowing what is intrinsic to this “new creature” as well as that which cannot be part of it at all.

B. Exploring the Meaning of Circumcision and Uncircumcision from the Initial Concept to the Broader Concept Mentioned in the New Testament

When the Scriptures, in the face of the new creature, describe that circumcision and uncircumcision have no value or virtue, they do so directly and emphatically also because the positioning of various defenders of circumcision or uncircumcision is so intense.

Whether for culture or tradition reasons, for ignorance, or even for conscious and intentional purposes, there are many actions in the world in favor of circumcision or uncircumcision in order to deprive people of the new birth in Christ Jesus so that they will not come to be constituted as a new creation or, in case of having already reached this new condition, so that they do not come to live and walk according to the newness of life offered to them by the Gospel of the Lord.

In the text of Galatians 6, referenced in the previous topic, and in the words of 1Peter, chapter 4, it may be observed that there are people who even use the conditions related to the issue of circumcision and uncircumcision to try to oppress their fellow men and to try to subject these to them and their conduct so that people do not walk in the freedom that from the Heavens is offered to them in the new creature in Christ Jesus.

And even when people have experienced the new birth and have already received the condition of a new creature in Christ Jesus, the militants of circumcision or the uncircumcision seek to involve them in such a way that they fall back into the corrupt concepts and practices of life that these militants adopt in their condition dissociated from the life according to the will of God.

In the world, there are many people who, in addition to resisting the truth of God and the path according to this truth, try to involve others in their ways of dissolution and dissimulation, as also exemplified by one more text below:

Titus 1: 10 **For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,**
11 **whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.**
12 **One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."**
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.**

Thus, advancing first more specifically to the issue of circumcision, in order to comprehend better why it has no value in the face of the new creature in Christ, we understand that it is very relevant to point out before that the circumcision mentioned in the New Testament texts has a meaning that goes far beyond a mere physical or external mark made on the male sexual or intimate organ by the removal of the foreskin or the part of the skin that covered its frontal area also called prepuce.

When the idea of circumcision is seen more closely and not only in regard to the physical act itself, but also from the symbolic perspective, it is widely noticeable in the Scriptures that circumcision initially referred to a symbol in the physical body that a person decided to accept as a consequence of the previous adoption of a belief and a set of principles to which one was associating from a particular moment in one's life. This act often extended also to the descendants of those who came to associate themselves with the belief and principles that they passed to utter and follow.

The mere act of cutting off the foreskin, that is, *the fold of skin that covers the glans of the penis* (according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary), was not necessarily always an expression of circumcision, since individuals of the most diverse peoples throughout the centuries could also come to practice the removal of the foreskin without becoming Hebrews only by this act.

The emphasis of circumcision, as instructed in the Scriptures in its beginning, was not focused primarily on the physical issue, but on the typology associated with the act, where Hebrews or those who would become followers of the Hebrews' belief would carry with them a mark or sign in the body as a consequence of choosing to be followers of a specific type of belief that they agreed to adopt for themselves and often also on behalf of their descendants.

Over time, however, what was meant to represent just a symbol derived from another action or from a previous or more prominent decision also started to be used in a reverse manner. That is, circumcision came to be considered as a synonym for an almost automatic adherence to the type of belief and codes of conduct that were associated with its symbolic meaning.

Over time, and accentuated by the Law of Moses, the expression, term, or concept of circumcision came to be confused with the very act through which one could become a follower of the Law of Moses.

The ancient circumcision first performed by Abraham, as a consequence and a symbol of the covenant that he had made with God, later also became the very expression of adherence to the Law of Moses or the priesthood of Aaron, which was also called Levitical priesthood with all its detailed rules.

Over time and with the introduction of the Law of Moses, the expression circumcision, which was a mere symbolic mark that followed a choice in favor of a previous covenant, started to grow into a concept that could seem as equal, but which, in reality, was very distinct. Concept this, where circumcision began to be confused or considered as the very act of adherence to the Law of Moses and the very act by which a person placed oneself in the condition of follower and subject to the referred law, as it is also exposed by some comments of notes associated with Strong's lexicon and in which, among others, the following meanings for circumcision are presented:

- 1) *"To cut off one's prepuce" as an act "used of that well-known rite by which not only the male children of the Israelites, on the eighth day after birth, but subsequently also 'proselytes of righteousness were consecrated to Jehovah and introduced into the number of his people';"*
- 2) *"To get one's self circumcised, present one's self to be circumcised, receive circumcision," as if by the rite of circumcision a man was separated from the unclean world and dedicated to God."*

In the early days of circumcision, it was merely used to seal an option that a person first adopted in the heart. A person first heard of a belief that was exposed to him, and if he wanted to live according to it, he “converted his heart” to that creed, sealing, afterward, with circumcision, the process of his choice. Circumcision did not determine a person's belief and conduct, but what one believed in the heart was what did so, having the circumcision as a symbol of the choice adopted. Circumcision was the consequence of joining an option of belief, not the cause.

Nevertheless, as already mentioned above, **the symbolism of circumcision grew to the point where it, in itself, became a very definition of what a person said to believe or not to believe, reaching the point of being used to define what and how a person was or what and how a person was not.**

And this, in turn, shows us that the effects of distorting a symbol, to the extent that it is regarded as a synonym of the reason or cause by which a person comes to use the symbol, is something that can bring severe detrimental consequences to the life of those who welcome it.

Let us compare, for instance, what is being said in the last few paragraphs to a symbol used in many nations by couples in their married life.

In several peoples or regions, there is a habit or tradition where the spouses, from the celebration of their marriage, begin to use a ring to symbolize this marriage and their commitment to the spouse, a ring which, however, expresses a symbol and not the matrimonial or the married life in itself.

As much as the use of the ring, considered as a symbol, may have various benefits, what should really matter, more than the use of the ring, is the covenant or agreement that the spouses made with each other, for the ring is just an exterior and auxiliary reference or a mark of a broader condition. To confuse a metal ring with marriage in itself is a severe misrepresentation of the breadth of factors and aspects embodied in marriage. To confuse a mere symbol with the actual matrimonial life is just absurd.

Spouses are expected to have mutual loyalty to one another because of their agreement to live together as a married couple, regardless of they are or are not using the ring, for their union and their commitment to one another is much higher or much more significant than the value of a mere physical object used in their hands.

The use of the wedding ring may have several benefits, for the individual who uses it, for example, is announcing that one is already committed to another person in marriage, but never the ring has been or will be the marriage itself.

When, however, some people think or confuse that the use of the wedding ring is the very matrimonial life, they may also be more liable to create a mentality that makes them think that when they are wearing the ring they must be faithful to the other spouse, but that, in removing the ring from the finger, their infidelity becomes less unfaithful.

Similarly, what is the point of a person wearing the ring symbolically in some chosen moments, if one, in the heart and the practical life, does not respect the spouse or is unfaithful?

The use of a symbol such as a ring may contribute to the purpose of respecting the spouse, but the marriage life is so much more substantial and broader than a symbolism can express.

When a mere symbol becomes the object of a definition of how a person is or is not, regardless of what one believes or does not believe, practices or does not practice, follows or does not follow, the symbol has mistakenly become as a synonym or a status of the very aspect in relation to which it should only be a symbol.

And when people begin to think that the symbols or objects they carry define them or define what they believe, they are adopting ideas similar to what happened over the centuries regarding the concept of circumcision.

Circumcision over the years, from a simple sign or symbol, has, therefore, come to be considered as:

- ⇒ 1) **The very act necessary to join a belief, a particular group of people, or a set of rules of conduct;**
- ⇒ 2) **A concept that proposes the justification of people for becoming associated with a belief, group, or code of conduct;**
- ⇒ 3) **“A mentality” applicable in many situations where there was no longer the same practice or symbol initially used in antiquity, mentality which, in turn, is based on the idea that a set of external works, symbols, or signals could come to reach the point to determine who the people are before God, how they will be justified, and, therefore, how they will be seen by the Lord.**

And since circumcision, over the centuries, became a synonym for a person joining the type of life according to the Law of Moses, **any practice of joining a lifestyle conforming to or similar to the Law of Moses ends up being an act equivalent to circumcision**, even if a person does not go through the ancient act of circumcising the foreskin.

Having in mind that the choice of submitting oneself to the Law of Moses, or similar to it, renders the person who practices it liable for the fulfillment of all aspects of this same type of law, also any act by which a person chooses to submit to this type of law turns out to be equivalent to the practice or concept of circumcision.

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."

After circumcision reached the status of a way to joining a type of life with similarities to that of the Law of Moses or of the mentality behind the reason why the Law of Moses was presented to humans, only a specific type of symbol or signal is no longer the central issue of circumcision.

After circumcision has come to be regarded as a synonym of choice for a life according to the Law of Moses or similar to it, any type of work or action to joining the mentality and practice of life according to the concepts of this type of law already have the weight or the characteristics equivalent to the principle of circumcision.

For the Hebrews referred to in the ancient Scriptures, circumcision was performed by cutting the foreskins or prepuce of men, but for other groups it may be the keeping of the Sabbath (or Sunday) as a special day, the repeated separation of tithes and offerings, baptism with the purpose to become part of a specific group, the inclusion and the remaining in the list of members of an institution or denomination, the constant frequency in events, services, or meetings, the amount of prayers and fasts they practice before others to try to justify themselves before God, and so on.

Thus, **circumcision, which initially was a specific act performed on men's bodies or had just one definite form, became later to be considered as a reference to any act of submission to codes of conduct, symbols, or external signals through which people try to justify themselves before God.**

Nowadays, when a person, for example, is challenged to practice one or more external acts to become part or a member of an institutional group or to remain a part of it to be considered justified before God, one is being challenged to submit to a kind of carnal circumcision even though there is no the challenge of cutting the foreskin, an requirement which is also **according to the law of a fleshly commandment**, just as the commandments of the Law of Moses were considered in the sight of God.

Nevertheless, this attempt to live or to have a lifestyle according to the precepts of the Law of Moses was only consented by God for a set time. And this, as specific permission for people to try to live by this type of law in order to realize that by this means of life no one can be justified before God or be perfected in accordance with the will of the Lord, as presented in some more texts shown below as an example:

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.**

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.**

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.**

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.*
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From Christ's coming into the world as the Son of Man, circumcision, which "has no value for the one who is in Christ Jesus" or "has no virtue in the condition of the new creature," no longer represents only the physical act of circumcision, but also the adherence to any type or way of life in accordance with the aspects that underlie the Law of Moses or similar to it, remembering that this practice of life can never perfect, before God, the one who chooses to live in conformity with this type of law.

In other words, **when the Scriptures say that in Christ circumcision is of no value, they are informing or teaching us that whatever means by which a person adheres to the concept or mentality associated with the model of life under the circumcision has no value for the new creature, and not only the ancient physical act itself of circumcision.**

In the more advanced stage of circumcision, what has come to be considered equivalent to it is the act of connection or submission to a lifestyle conforming to its concept, regardless of the manner by which this connection or submission is made.

With the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world and through His work on the cross of Calvary, the end of any priesthood validity according to the type or order of Aaron was also settled, establishing as valid before God only the priesthood according to nature or the order of Melchizedek, in which only the Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest and Mediator between God and the people in the world.

The revocation of the first, old, or priesthood according to Aaron, which is based on the Law of Moses, as well as the establishment of the second, new, or priesthood in conformity with Christ or Melchizedek, were broadly exposed in the subject on The Gospel of the Glory God and the Glory of Christ, which is why we will not repeat its many details in the present material.

Therefore, **since we have seen that circumcision has come to symbolize any type of adherence to the Law of Mose, or to the mentality of this law or similar to it, where people by works and outward signs seek to attain righteousness before God and the benevolence of God through these works, we can also understand why nothing of it is accepted in the condition of life in conformity with the new creature.**

But why, then, is the aspect of uncircumcision also not accepted in the condition of life in conformity with the new creature?

If circumcision is not accepted before the Lord when it comes to someone wanting to receive and live according to the new creature, what causes uncircumcision to be equally rejected?

What, then, is the meaning of uncircumcision?

Uncircumcision, in a very brief and direct sense, is the simple non-choice of circumcision, that is, it is the positioning of a person in which, for instance, one just does not adopt or does not practice religious efforts directed at the Unique Creator of the Heavens and Earth and all that is in them.

While circumcision is an expression that encompasses the attempt to live a life of trust in the power of the flesh to try to please the Unique Eternal God, by means of signs and the adoption of precepts that should be obeyed according to the human effort to be justified before the Lord, uncircumcision, on the other hand, despises the need to please the Unique Eternal God or even ignores or despises the very existence of the one Eternal God and Creator of the Heavens and the Earth.

Although circumcision represents the expression of the proposition in which people seek to live a life of piety to God by means not valid before the Lord or not accepted by Him, because they are according to a fleshly commandment, uncircumcision is not inclined towards a life of piety to the One Eternal God. Uncircumcision, in turn, is inclined towards a differentiated opposition to God, and may come to encompass a position that attempts to discredit the existence of God or that proposes the most bizarre conceptions of what is called “God” or “gods.”

While circumcision agrees to try to live godly before a Unique Eternal God according to a set of external rules, the uncircumcision attempts to establish the very concepts of gods, or the non-existence of them, and how these gods or not gods are to be revered and served.

Nevertheless, **although on the natural level circumcision and uncircumcision may seem very different and opposite, before the Lord both circumcision and uncircumcision have no value to a life according to the heavenly will, for both do not follow a living and personal direction of the Lord for each person.**

When the Scriptures declare that circumcision has no value for life in the condition as a new creature in Christ Jesus, it equates it to uncircumcision in that it fails to attain the goal of life in God, for although the concept of circumcision proposes a living for God, it suggests a form that can never be fulfilled, thus not being able to be better or more profitable than uncircumcision.

On the other hand, the uncircumcision is also of no value, since the solution contrary to circumcision is not to despise God and live according to the choices or the pleasures of the creation, as if God did not exist and as if the creature could establish its own life or its own gods to protect or save it.

Therefore, **the person who seeks to live a life that tries to maintain the appearances of godliness before the Eternal Lord through the concept of circumcision, as well as the one who seeks to live under the concept of uncircumcision, and perhaps without even worrying about any godliness before God, are, both, living a life dissociated from the will of God and**

from the life that is available to all “in Christ Jesus” by grace and through faith.

Circumcision is related to the mentality which proclaims that the practice of well-defined religious acts can, by itself, please God and justify people before the Lord, while uncircumcision is the opposite mentality or concept, and which follows more along the line of thought that each person should follow what one thinks is right. However, both concepts start from the idea of what human beings themselves think is right to do in relation to God or life in general, not being both in conformity with the life that the Lord has prepared for people.

Neither the path of circumcision nor the path of uncircumcision is compatible with the life offered by God “in Christ,” for both ways are equally contemptible before God, since both are ultimately composed of lifestyles according to the standards of the world and a fleshly commandment, not having, therefore, proper consideration and fear for the way offered from heaven by the Unique Eternal Lord.

There is no point in an external mark or an outward religious practice if the heart has not been renewed by the new birth and if it does not remain in the condition of the new creature who trusts internally in God, but also the way of despising the Lord is not worthy of any merit, for it also keeps the person dissociated from the new life “in Christ Jesus.”

“Circumcision” and “uncircumcision” are both related to concepts of practices or conduct that rely on the use of the strength of the flesh or human efforts, and not first and primarily on the grace of God, as much as both compete to be better or more appropriate than the other. And because of being opposed to the life according to the grace of God, both must also be rejected in favor of the Lord's will, for whatever is termed as being “world” will pass, as we are taught objectively also in the following text:

- 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.*
-

Whether by attempting to establish godly piety according to human effort or by believing that there is no need for devotion to the Eternal Creator or that contempt for Him will not be taken into account, when people think they can choose types of life in which they themselves want to define what is faith or in what they may believe in order to attain salvation, they are also relying or leaning on their own vain thoughts.

Either by the path of circumcision or uncircumcision, people unduly believe in sets of concepts that are entirely devoid of solid foundation, and which will pass along with their lives in the present world because circumcision and uncircumcision are both grounded in vain thoughts.

Psalms 94: 11 The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are futile.

What matters before the Lord is not whether a person chooses circumcision or does not opt for it, thus opting for uncircumcision, but what matters is a sincere and contrite heart that believes in the offer of the new creature in Christ and who is willing to receive and live a life according to the instruction and strength of life that from God is provided.

In the New Creature, the mere external appearances, symbols, marks, and rites are of no value because they are not the fruit of something that has sprung from the new that is granted by the grace of God to people. These acts that do not spring from the quickened spirit that a person can receive through Christ are equated with hollow actions and which do not corroborate indeed with the life of those who practice them.

Circumcision and uncircumcision are devoid of value since they cannot provide the newness of life granted according to the kingdom of God, for the true life offered by the Lord is firmly grounded in Christ, and not in having or not having a symbol, a mark, or an adherence to a specific earthly or natural mentality.

Jeremiah 9: 23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;

24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD."

25 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised,

26 Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all who are in the farthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart."

Finally, in this topic, we still present the following question: Why, then, do many people insist on wanting to sustain the value of that which has no value, and which is not accepted in the life according to the new creature in Christ?

And in response to this last question, we understand that at this point it should be noted that in addition to ignorance about the new creature, people also cling to the concepts of circumcision or uncircumcision, among others mentioned in the texts exposed in the present subject, because:

- ⇒ 1) They want to keep the appearances that please the other people around them;
- ⇒ 2) They do not want Christ working more intensely in their hearts;
- ⇒ 3) They do not want to follow Christ in what the Lord directs them personally or primarily if His direction causes them any embarrassment before other people or groups;
- ⇒ 4) They do not want any sort of persecution caused because of becoming true Christians and, therefore, becoming associated with Christ and followers of Him;

- ⇒ 5) They prefer the despicable or vain greed, being able to reach even to the point where they try to impose their condition of circumcision on others as an attempt to take away their freedom in the Lord and so that these not become witnesses that demonstrate that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value before God;
- ⇒ 6) They prefer the convenience they see in the life of appearances and without the need for changes in the heart.

Several people, for convenience, think that a life that appears to be of faith is sufficient before God, while others think that if they abstain from seeking God, this, in the end, will not be taken into account.

Little do these people know that they are not just trying to deceive others, but, above all, they are deluding themselves, because merely external things do not define the kingdom of God, nor what and how God sees the life of each person.

*1 Samuel 16: 7 **But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."***

*Galatians 2: 6 **But from those who seemed to be something, whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man, for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.***

It is not in fleshly acts or vain philosophies that one finds the wisdom that is in conformity with the will of the Heavenly Father, but, yes, in His Son Jesus Christ. For this reason, neither circumcision, with its extensive lists of religious affairs or symbolism, nor uncircumcision, which underestimate the search for the Unique Eternal God, has any value to the life according to the new creature, since both despise the offer of grace of God to the world, namely: Jesus Christ as the Lord in the heart of everyone who believes in Him and receives Him in his or her life.

*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.***

*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.***

C. Types of Life or Styles of the Same Type of Life

Galatians 6: 15 **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. (AV)**

or

Galatians 6: 15 **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.**

Observing the verse exposed above, and in view that circumcision is considered equivalent to the uncircumcision in the aspect of both having no virtue or value before the new creature, it may be said, then, that the people in the world are divided essentially only in two major “types” or “categories” of life, namely:

- ⇒ 1st) The kind of life that considers and attributes virtue to circumcision or uncircumcision;
- ⇒ 2nd) The type of life according to the new creature in Christ Jesus.

It is interesting to note that circumcision and uncircumcision, although they have distinct individual characteristics between them, are not indeed different types of life before God, but they are only a variation of what we here call as “styles” of one or the same kind of life.

Once the main characteristics of the new creature's life condition become better known, it is noticeable that the life choices in the present world are actually divided just into two types that are indeed distinct, namely:

- ⇒ 1) A life that is not guided by God or a life guided by the Lord;
- ⇒ 2) A life in dissonance with the will of God or a life according to the will of God;
- ⇒ 3) A life inclined to the direction of the flesh or a life inclined to the direction of the Spirit;
- ⇒ 4) A life grounded in worldly wisdom and the strength of the flesh or a life rooted in wisdom from above, the wisdom that comes from God, and that is grounded in the strength of the Lord.

The first type of life mentioned above, the kind of life guided by the world's references, is divided into two “distinct styles,” circumcision or uncircumcision. However, since both styles are not compatible with the new creature and none of them can lead a person to salvation in God, the two are equated in what, essentially, they “are not” and in what both “cannot” achieve or grant.

In the previous topic, some considerations on these two styles have already been exposed, which, in the end, result in the same kind of life according to the flesh, and not according to the Spirit of God. However, in order to enlarge the subject on them a little more, it may be interesting for the reader to know also two other terms which in the Scriptures are similarly, broadly, or respectively related to the definition of the

characteristics that make up the life under circumcision or under uncircumcision, namely:

- ⇒ 1st) The life associated with the term “Jew;”
- ⇒ 2nd) The life associated with the term “Greek.”

*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.***

*Romans 10: 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 the subjects on Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth and on Colligated or Associated Words and Riddles of Antiquity, it was pointed out that various references in the Scriptures to the historical terms of the names of peoples were used to make mention of the kinds of postures people have adopted in their lives in their specific epochs, and yet, that they do not necessarily mean the nationality from which a person descends.

For instance, when God makes reference in the Scriptures of the New Testament to the term “Jew” and “Greek,” He is not necessarily referring to people born in these nations, but rather to people who have adhered to the behaviors and postures of life similar to what these groups of peoples adopted in antiquity.

The terms “Jew” and “Greek,” mentioned in the New Testament, several times refer to typologies or figures of speech that point to people who adopt lifestyles similar to those historically known or practiced by “the Jews” or by the “non-Jews,” that is, by the “Greeks,” where the latter is used to represent all Gentile peoples or all peoples who did not have in mind to serve the Unique God and Creator of the Heavens and the Earth.

When we also observe the figure of speech called “barbarians,” we may see that it was not even God who first called them barbarians, but it was the other peoples who came to call them so for the fame of violent and savage they had in general before other nations. Among the barbarian peoples, however, not every person living among them was a descendant of them or was necessarily a “barbarian,” in the sense of the behavior associated with the term applied to them.

As a figure of speech, some terms associated with some peoples came to represent the global expression of the behavioral characteristics that these groups of peoples adopted more broadly and that stood out in the eyes of other groups.

Thus, when the Scriptures teach us, regarding being in Christ Jesus, that there is no virtue in “circumcision,” a concept associated with those figuratively referred to by the term “Jew,” and that there equally is no value in “uncircumcision,” a concept associated with those allegorically denominated by the term “Greek,” they are also teaching us that the barriers or conduct that divided peoples also lost value or virtue in relation to the life according to the new creature or according to the heavenly kingdom.

As much as human beings are divided into the various peoples or spread out among the nations, they are primarily people before God. God loves all individuals in the world, no matter what region, race, or nation they belong.

Regarding the novelty of life in Christ, it does not matter what language individuals speak in their most diverse peoples, in what territory they inhabit, of which race they descend, for, since they are people, God loves them and offers to all of them the newness life according to the new creature.

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.**

18 **He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.**

Psalms 9: 20 **Put them in fear, O LORD, That the nations may know themselves to be but men.**

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.**

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

If a person is native to a territory or a person is there as a foreigner, God loves him or her because one is a human being and not because one is native or foreigner.

God also has no preference for the literate to the detriment of the illiterate, for someone who speaks a local dialect or who speaks a language used globally.

God did not create human beings with the division of peoples, conduct, and languages. The division of humans into peoples and languages happened among them because of the evil attempts they had against the Unique God and Creator of the Heavens and the Earth and all that is in them (according to Genesis 11).

The division of languages and peoples was indeed introduced by God in humanity, but it occurred because humans wanted to:

- ⇒ 1) Establish their own way to guide their lives;
- ⇒ 2) Establish a way to protect themselves according to their own security concepts;
- ⇒ 3) Make a name for themselves;
- ⇒ 4) Establish their own method for reaching the heavens.

The division of languages and peoples was introduced by God in humanity because human beings wanted to create their own lifestyles on Earth and toward God, thus generating the “Jewish” and “Greek” styles with their various variations, which, however, ended up exposing the fact that none of the methods proposed by humankind can lead people to the remission of sin and human salvation.

The two “lifestyles” created as a result of human resistance to God, and the various variables embodied in each of them, have to the same extent or degree no value in the face of the new creature, which, in turn, refers to a proposition from heaven, being constituted and characterized exclusively or entirely by God.

On the other hand, because of the centuries that have passed under the regime of the divisions of languages, territories, and conduct of the several distinct groups, human beings began to reason in terms of peoples, races, and languages as if this qualified them as more or less important than people of other groups and with other natural characteristics.

Here, however, it should be emphasized once again that the divisions and enmities of languages and peoples no longer have categorization or classification value for the condition of the new creature in Christ, for although the divisions of languages and peoples have arisen because of pride and human sin, Christ came to manifest the provision for the remission of sinners equally to all humankind and to show and offer all individuals the true path of humility and life in the Lord.

Keeping in mind that the new creature in Christ comes directly from the kingdom of God, from the heavenly kingdom, in which there are no divisions of persons like those divisions that occurred among the people on the Earth, also the concepts of earthly groups, peoples, or nationalities do not define the new creature or any aspect of its value or its virtues.

“In Christ,” there are no preferences for earthly nations, peoples, or languages. The new creature is in no way submitted to the divisions that have been provoked over the centuries or because of the pride, the sins, and the contentions of human beings.

“In Christ,” there is no variation of types of Christians according to the division that the people have made in their natural or fleshly lives.

“In Christ,” there is not and cannot be the Greek Christian, the Jewish Christian, the Barbarian Christian, the Scythian Christian, the African Christian, the American Christian, the Asian Christian, the European Christian, the Oceanian Christian, or the Antarctic Christian.

“In the Lord,” there can be, and certainly there will be, Christians who came from all tribes, peoples, tongues, and nations, but “in Christ” they all likewise have the same heavenly citizenship.

*Philippians 3: 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

*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."*

*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.*

By pride and sin, people have provoked strife and divisions between them. However, “in Christ,” as a new creature, the people who receive it become once again one family, one holy nation, one chosen people, the Lord's eternal generation, one flock with a Unique Shepherd, **for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.**

Ephesians 2: 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- 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.
14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,
15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,*

- 16 *and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.*
- 17 *And He came and preached 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.*
-

The prayer of a person who is a new creation in Christ and who lives in a country with an abundant material condition has no preference, before God, to the prayer of a Christian of a country that is living in poverty, and vice versa, for “in Christ,” the territorial issues or the natural concerning about nationalities do not have the value that people give them in the world.

“In Christ,” both the “Jew” and the “Greek,” or “Gentile,” were made a new man, a new being, a new creature, where the enmity of circumcision with uncircumcision, and vice versa, no more makes sense to exist, for “in Christ” the two lifestyles of the same fleshly man, and equally contrary to God, have no virtue or no value at all.

The prayer of a Christian in a country that is considered more developed in the human eye is not superior and more important than the prayer of a Christian in a country that is regarded as less developed, as well as the prayer of those who descend from the nationality of the Hebrews or of the “Jewish” model of conduct is not superior to those who descend from the Greeks or the “Greek” model of conduct, or vice versa.

“In Christ,” where there is neither Greek nor Jew, there are not the divisions of peoples and races that were created from the tower of Babel and throughout human history for centuries.

The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, of Salvation, of the Grace of God, of Peace, of the Power of the Lord, of the Heavenly Promise, of the Kingdom, of Christ, of the Creator, and of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ is one and the same for all peoples, whether a person descends from the figure of the “Jew” or the circumcision, or from the figure of the “Greek” or the uncircumcision.

“In Christ,” salvation is reached personally by all individuals who choose to receive the gospel offered to them, not being some particular type of offspring greater or lesser than any other in what regards salvation in the Lord. (Aspects covered more broadly also in the subject named To Whom is the Gospel of God Designed or Offered).

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."

Romans 11: 32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

The new creature or new creation is not called to adopt the flag of one's natural nationality in the relationship with God, as well as in one's relationships with other Christians or members of the family of God.

Just as "in Christ," there is no hierarchy of command and domination among Christians of the same family of God, for all are brethren before the same Heavenly Father and Christ alone is Lord of all, so, "in Christ," there are also no divisions of earthly territories and human citizenship, beginning with the prayers that all Christians are called to perform before the Lord, according to the following examples:

- 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 pre-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.**

Ephesians 6: 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.

No matter how many distinct nations may be constituted, their essence always remains associated with the fact that they are made up of persons created by the same and Unique God. The nations and their earthly flags are circumstantial and change over the years and centuries, and this is not a determining factor for the eternity of people's souls.

Many are the peoples and nations who have thought that they would last forever, but that even no longer exist.

Nevertheless, **persons of all peoples, nations, or languages may have something in common besides being people. They may have the same eternal salvation, accomplished by the same provision made on the cross of Calvary and by the blood of the Eternal Lamb.**

The blood of Christ, the redemption provided on the cross of Calvary, as we have already seen in a text above, reaches every tribe, language, people, and nation, because the blood of the Lord was not shed for the very tribes, peoples, and nations, but, instead, for human beings, for persons or individuals that are in any tribe, people, or nation.

As has been mentioned in other subjects of this Systemic Teaching about the Christian Life, **there was no shedding of special drops of the blood of Christ for special kinds of persons or groups of people, for all have likewise sinned and there is not a single righteous in any tribe, people, or nation that does not need the same mercy of God.**

The blood of Christ is equally precious to all individuals, having been poured out evenly to all persons of all ages, regions, and nations.

*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.***

*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.***

With the purpose of announcing that the work of Christ extends to all human beings, it can be observed, therefore, that in several texts of the Scriptures that approach the new creature, in contrast to the worthless condition of circumcision or uncircumcision before God, there also is included the quotation of the two natural groups of human beings according to the model of their conduct, that is, the “Jew” and the “Greek” (or “Gentile”).

However, to make it even more evident that all are recognized without partiality in Christ when they are constituted as a new creature, the Lord still makes a point of highlighting this comprehensiveness of all by citing also barbarians, as well as slaves and free, men and women, so that it can be known that also within each group of individuals no one is disqualified by one's specific natural situation.

And yet among the barbarians, the Scriptures mention the “Scythians,” which, at some point, were considered the most barbarous among the barbarians, showing that God's mercy cannot be limited by whatever natural condition people find themselves in.

If in the ancient circumcision, for example, only free men could be marked with it, in the new creature in Christ any barrier that humans have placed among themselves has

no value, for in Christ, even those who have been condemned by the world can be made alive in the Spirit of the Lord.

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.***

1 Corinthians 15: 22 ***For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.***

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.***

Ephesians 2: 5 ***Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).***

“In Christ,” the past of a person or the nationality, people, or tribe from which one descends does not qualify him or her more or less than other persons. “In Christ,” all are likewise made new creation or new creature, causing old things, considered so important in former times, to have passed, as, for example, the divisions of circumcision or uncircumcision, Jew or Greek, barbarians or Scythians, free or slave, male or female, condemned or not condemned by the world.

In contemporary times we could also insert the consideration that even the inner divisions of a nation do not matter to the newness of life “in Christ.” To be from the South or the North, from the East or the West, from one state or one city considered better than another, and so on, does not define the essential aspects of those who are “in Christ Jesus.”

The necessity of God's grace and mercy are the same for all people of all places and all origins.

Psalms 14: 3 ***They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.***

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."

For God, as to offering and granting the new life in Christ Jesus, there is no distinction between human beings because of the matters of natural variations among them.

D. Neither Jew nor Greek

Remembering once again the aspect mentioned in the previous topic, and in view of the newness of life offered to us by God in Christ Jesus, it can be seen in the Scriptures that both “Jewish” and “Greek” lifestyles refer, likewise, to the same or similar kind of life by human effort, and not according to the grace of the Lord.

Nevertheless, considering that there is a broad contingent of people in the world who insist on trying to maintain the idea that there is value in the two distinct styles of a similar type of life, rather than adopting the life according to the new creature, we will seek to explore further the theme on the historical uses of the terms “Jew” and “Greek” as figurative or allegorical references. And this, with the objective to advance in the emphasis of the statements of the Scriptures that these positions or divisions have no virtue or value for a person's life “in Christ.”

Thus, beginning with the first of the two terms quoted in the previous paragraph, it can be observed in the Scriptures that just as occurred after some time with the word “circumcision,” so also the expression “Jew” came to be used for various applications or different aspects, and not only regarding its original use.

Initially, the term Jew was applied only to those who were born of the descendants of the tribe of Judah, son of Jacob. Later, however, the same word Jew began to migrate to be also used for all the descendants of all the tribes of Israel.

And yet further on, the term Jew also came to be applied to individuals who became proselytes, adepts, or followers of the belief that were adopted by those who chose to follow the Law of Moses, even if the person was not natural descended from any of the tribes of Israel, thus equaling the term Jew, in this latter sense, with one of the broader meaning which also came to prevail for the word circumcision.

The word “Greek” in the Scriptures, in turn, also began to be used for several different aspects.

Firstly, the term Greek referred to the most direct meaning that pointed out to the fact that someone was a legitimate descendant of Greece, one of the Greek people, or one that had reached the condition to become a Greek citizen.

In a second moment, however, the use of the word Greek came to be associated with the people who adopted the lines of thought and conduct of the Greeks or similar to them.

And even further, the Greek term came to be used in the Scriptures to indicate individuals who were not Jewish proselytes, also becoming a term or identification applied to the whole set of individuals, of all peoples, associated with the so-called thoughts, philosophies, or pagan beliefs.

So, ultimately, the term Greek also became synonymous with “gentiles,” that is to say, a reference to all human beings and peoples that were not titled by the term Jew, thus becoming the expressions Greek or Gentile like a synonym of the more extended and advanced concept of uncircumcision.

Therefore, **even though that the human beings in the world are divided into hundreds of nations and into thousands of peoples and tribes, all of them in a more advanced way, according to the perspective of the New Testament Scriptures, came to be regarded on the natural level as**

essentially the expression of only two groups, namely: The group entitled “Jew” or the group entitled “Greek.”

We recall here again that the use of the terms “Jew” and “Greek” in the New Testament texts cited in the present subject refers to groups of people according to their behaviors and beliefs, not by nationality.

In the various natural divisions of human beings, on the one hand, there may be people who by nationality are natural or descendants of Jews or Hebrews, but who in the conduct of life and beliefs adopt positions according to the term “Greek or Gentile.” On the other hand, there also may be people who by nationality are Greek or Gentiles, but who in their conduct of life and creeds are equated with that which is associated with the term entitled “Jew.”

In an expressive part of the New Testament texts, the uses of the terms “Jew” and “Greek” are no longer associated with a person's nationality, birthplace, or lineage, but with the style of beliefs and the line of thoughts and conduct that individuals come to follow.

Therefore, according to the objectives and context described in some parts of the Scriptures, **the terms “Jew” and “Greek” are also two figures of speech or allegoric terms for lines of beliefs and behaviors with which people associate themselves in their life on Earth.**

And here too, returning once again to the perspective that the Scriptures present regarding the new creature in Christ, we recall that **although the terms “Jew” and “Greek” seem to be very distinct in the natural view of people, the two have something very much in common before God, namely: The two have no distinction of value in what refers to the life in the condition of new creation “in Christ.”**

The Scriptures, when referring to the life of an individual “in Christ,” are not presenting the end of the natural boundaries of nations and the end of the civil order of peoples and their natural divisions of citizenship, but they are informing and teaching us that these divisions are not relevant to the essential aspects of the life of faith in Christ and for the life in the family of the Heavenly Father.

The family of God, the Body of Christ, is a unique nation of people saved by Christ, a nation that is not and cannot be counted among natural nations, for it has no citizenship or homeland on Earth.

Christians live in countries and territories divided naturally and which have distinct civil structures that should be respected when they do not conflict with God's will (discussed more widely in the subject on The Christian and the Authority), but these divisions do not apply to life by faith “in Christ,” for Christians, in the Lord, are all part of the same body, only one people, and a unique nation.

*1 Peter 2: 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.***

Even though there are, from the natural perspective, several differences between some details of the conduct of the concept named “Jew” and the concept called “Greek,” the two are on the same level of being worthless when they are seen in the light of the new reality “in Christ.”

“In Christ,” the “Jew” is no more than the “Greek” and nor the “Greek” is more than the “Jew.” In fact, this distinction or comparison is not even more suitable for those who have been born again by the Spirit of the Lord.

In earthly or natural life, the terms “Jew” and “Greek” are opposed to each other, but, at the same time, before God, they are on the same position, for both equally have no value or virtue “in Christ Jesus.”

Following, we will try to express what is being exposed in the last paragraphs still in other words and with the use of another symbolic figure.

Let us say, for example, or hypothetically, that the whole line of natural thoughts and behaviors of human beings associated with the concepts “Jew” and “Greek” could be compared to a long or extensive linear ruler or scale.

On this exemplified ruler or scale, let us further consider that the concept used in the New Testament for the term “Jew” stays at one end of the ruler, while the line of thought or concept of the term “Greek,” also concerning the use of this expression in the New Testament, lies at the other end of the ruler (<_____>).

Thus, if we look at the two concepts of the exemplified ruler under merely natural optics, we may observe that each tends towards an extreme and that both oppose each other. Looking only at the natural point of view, the concept called “Jew” and the concept named as “Greek” are antagonistic and incompatible in their definitions of conduct and beliefs, and therefore irreconcilable, as the Scriptures teach us.

The concepts of the paradigms or models called “Jew” and “Greek” respectively, each at its extreme, are opposed to each other and enemies of each other, for if a person wants to follow one, he or she will have to give up the other. A person cannot aim to serve a Unique God and at the same time aim to serve several gods or despise the Unique God. Similarly, a person does not have the ability to live under the rules similar to the commandments of the Law of Moses and, at the same time, to live without any rule or under the rules that are opposed to the Law of Moses.

If someone wishes or attempts to reconcile the concept associated with the term “Jew” with the idea behind the concept “Greek,” one will just be able to obtain a grouping of the two by making concessions of the extreme concepts of each and if one compromises the essence of each style, generating so something incoherent, confused, and that will contain all sorts of contradictions.

When the concept called Jew moves away from its extreme and goes towards the other side of the exemplified ruler, less faithful it will become regarding its definitions and more influence it will receive from the Greek concept, thereby becoming something that neither in the natural sense can present a reasonably explicable idea.

In the same way it happens to the concept of the Greek term if it begins to leave its extreme and starts to move away from the aspects that define it, because, by doing so, it will begin to assimilate more and more of the style associated to the term Jew, and also thereby becoming a mixed style in which people in one moment try to live according to one way and in the next according to another.

Among people in general, there are still other behaviors where some of them, for instance, move from one extreme to the other extreme of the ruler. There are people who lead a life largely devoid of religiousness, rules, and disciplines but who suddenly become the most fervent devotees of the concepts of the extreme called Jew. Similarly, the opposite may also occur, where a person under the extreme of the concept named Jew is frustrated with one's lifestyle and, for this reason, from one moment to the other, leaves all his or her religiousness and indulges in a liberal life and separated from one's previous beliefs.

Although the extremes of the two concepts in reference are distant from one another when viewed from the standpoint of their differences in some natural aspects, many human beings, even within a few minutes and depending on their decisions and practices, suddenly migrate from the attempt to live and walk in one of these ways to try to live and walk according to the proposition at the opposite extreme.

Nevertheless, **despite the wide variety of thoughts that can be found in the exemplified linear ruler, if someone observes its concepts from a more macro level or comprehensive perspective, one may realize that the extensive variety in reference is, in fact, subordinated to a common condition. One may see that the linear ruler, despite its many parts, is ultimately expressed as just one or the same ruler.**

For those who see the characteristics of the lifestyles called respectively “Jew” and “Greek” only from a natural standpoint or from the direct comparison between the two, they may get a striking impression that each style presents a wide variety of ideas, thoughts, and behaviors in relation to those who are at the opposite extreme. However, for those who look at the two styles in reference from a more macro point of view or a reasonable distance, they may see that both finally end up expressing only a single line of thought and conduct, a single ruler on which people act in the natural sphere.

Among people on Earth, there may be many currents of thought, but for God, Who observes them from heaven, all their earthly thoughts are just thoughts of human beings, however distinct they may wish or try to show them. For God, all the varieties of natural or human thoughts associated with the concepts “Jew” and “Greek” are on the same ruler. Before the Lord, the lines of ideas and behaviors of the natural man have many similarities or equivalences.

*Psalms 94: 11 **The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are futile.***

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

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

In the world, there may be many wise people according to the line of thought called “Jew,” and there may be many wise people along the “Greek” line of thought, but to

God, all of them are thoughts of mere human beings, of mere limited and mortal people.

Ultimately, any thought of the exemplified ruler is a derivation of the extreme named Jew or the extreme called Greek, or even a mixture of both, but which always remain to be according to the mentality grounded in the captivity of human vanity that tries to perform before God what cannot be accomplished if a person does not become a new creature, which, in turn, is not limited to the ruler or styles of natural life.

*1 Corinthians 3: 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."***

*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."***

Who knew the existence before the times of the Earth came into existence? And who knows the life of the human being after one leaves life on Earth? Which is the human being who can advocate oneself wise regarding these elementary, basic, or essential aspects of life and for the eternal existence?

Only the One who already existed before all the creation is also the One who knows the origin and destiny of all things. In the world, however, there is much human or natural speculation, whether in the line of thinking called "Jew" or in the line of concepts denominated "Greek."

The human being can only achieve the knowledge of his origin or what has led to his existence, as well as what he will be in the future, if God informs him the facts and if God gives him the understanding of what He has already told him.

Advancing a little further, we can see that one of the characteristics of the thought of the extreme so-called Jew is that it even acknowledges that there is only one True God whom a person should serve and worship, and in this sense, it is more accurate than the Greek line of thoughts.

On the other hand, one of the characteristics of the extreme Greek line of thoughts is that there is not a single God, even coming to the point of thinking that there is no god at all. According to Greek lifestyle, the human may even be a creation of chance and

who, also by chance, might become entirely extinguished after dying physically. The Greek style may come to the point of advocating all sorts of freedom of ideas, proposing, for instance, that each person should be content with what oneself thinks or how one thinks life should be.

However, if the thought of the model so-called Jew regards the One Creator God of the Heavens and the Earth, being in this more correct than the Greek style, why is it, then, from the new creature standpoint, also considered to be equivalent to the Greek model?

Although it claims to have in consideration just One God and that the human being should serve God with all one's strength, mind, and devotion, the concept associated with the term Jew presents equivalence to Greek thought because the emphasis on it is also associated with the idea that the human being has the capacity to please God if one truly has the will and absolute dedication to the purpose of serving God. However, this concept forgets or disregards the fact that flesh and blood in no way can inherit the kingdom of God and the life according to the new creature in Christ.

The thought associated with the term or model Jew is equated with the Greek when it considers that man can do useful things in life without the direct interference of God in everything one does, just as the Greek also does not believe that man is entirely incapable without God or that the human has the need to depend on God for everything one does.

By means of natural knowledge or intelligence, on which the Greek model seeks to base itself, the human being is not capable of achieving a real and lasting benefit for one's life. However, one is equally not able to do so by means of an intense devotion to God that is based on the effort of the natural man, as proposed by the concept associated with the term Jew. A reason why the two styles in reference are equally vain before the condition of life “in Christ.”

The concept aligned with the term Jew, or with circumcision, encompasses in one way or another the proposition of justification of people by obeying a law of rules and precepts, and by the fulfillment of the works or acts of this law according to the effort of the creation.

The Greek concept already sees life more at random or by change than the so-called Jew concept.

The Greek model may propose, for example, the existence of multiple gods who from time to time may come to Earth and demand something from human beings, the absence of any deity, numerous deities expressed in the most diverse aspects of the creation or, still, the existence of a “greater God” who created the universe, but who, in turn, “wound up the mechanism of the universe” and now lets the creature manage life grounded on its forces or the force of the energies of nature. The Greek concept may even propose that the strongest should prevail over the weak so that in some way the preservation of the human species or creation might be guaranteed.

Nevertheless, once again looking at the essence of the thinking of the model associated with the term Jew and the model related to the term Greek, it can be observed that both have in common the idea that the life and actions of life are not entirely sustained by God, and that the human being, by one's own strength and will,

can lead a truly productive or beneficial life. By the law associated with the term Jew, this respective model also claims that only the strong and law-keeping should prevail.

One of the lines of the Greek concept attributes the continuity of life to the various energies that exist in the universe, but the concept line associated with the term Jew also attributes the continuity of life to the human being and the effort one makes to achieve the fulfillment of the law, thus acting both in opposition to the teaching that the universe is sustained by the Word of the power of God as described in the Scriptures.

A line of the thinking of the so-called Jew model understands that God will either move or cease to move because of man obeying or not obeying the rules of a law, which, in the end, is a thought also equivalent to that Greek thought which states that “a major god or strength” put the universe “on track” and that the creation itself will determine its destiny.

Both the idea of the universe going by chance from the energies or the gods created by men and the idea that the obedience of men is that determine the actions of God lead to the concept that proposes the elimination of the full sovereignty of God over all life and over all things that exist.

Both in the thinking of the model denominated Jew and according the Greek model, there are subtle thoughts that propose to define sovereignty over the universe from the human being, where, in both concepts, the creation (the human being or other parts of the creation) is stronger than God, since they claim that it is the very creation or the very universe that ends up determining the fate of themselves, and not the Eternal Lord.

While the Greek reference model tends to disregard the existence of the Unique Eternal Lord, the thought associated with the term Jew tends to place the Unique God obligated to serve the creation, if only the creation comes to obey a kind of law by which human beings think that they, by themselves, can please God.

The Scriptures, however, reject the vain thoughts of humans, whether associated with the Jewish term or associated with the Greek term, for God is sovereign and intervenes in history when He wills and when He decides. Life, in fact, would not last a second if God would not continually sustain it with the strength of His word and His power.

*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.*

Psalms 99: 1 The LORD reigns; Let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; Let the earth be moved!

*Acts 1: 7 **And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority."***

Neither the concepts associated with the term Jew (or circumcision) nor the concepts related to the term Greek (or uncircumcision) are in line with the word of God recorded in the Scriptures for the new creature in Christ, for God is always the One who, first, takes the initiative in all things that affect the creation. And God is not dependent on the works of human beings to offer them salvation, an aspect presented in many texts and of which we exemplify some more below:

*Romans 1: 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.***

*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.***

*Isaiah 59: 15 **So truth fails, And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him That there was no justice.***

*16 **He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.***

*1 Corinthians 4: 7 **For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?***

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

*Romans 5: 8 **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

Moreover, **yet another way exposed in the Bible to cooperate with the understanding of the division between the style named “Jew” and the “Greek” style is the concept presented in the Scriptures describing people living by the law and living without the law, referring to the Law of Moses or similar to it.**

In this other form, the term “Jew” is applied generically to those who seek a “law of preordained rules” to know what they can and cannot do, to then, through natural effort and human discipline, seeking to fulfill the law under which they have chosen to submit themselves with the expectation that by it they can attain the favor and justification of the Lord.

In this last line of thinking, God would, in a sense, be obliged to bless people if they came to fulfill the whole law to which they subordinated themselves, as if God would come to be a debtor to them by the fact that they had fulfilled a particular set of rules and deeds.

The term “Greek,” in turn, is applied to those who live a sort of life without a law of rules and conduct supposedly agreed before a “Unique God,” trying to live according to the most varied natural instincts, feelings, or laws and rules created according to their different intents, thus allowing themselves to be guided by the most diverse aspects that arise during their lifetime on Earth.

At one extreme of the example of the “Jew <_____> Greek” linear ruler or scale mentioned above, there are those who seek with their strength, mind, and devotion to fulfill the aspects of a particular law before the Unique God in whom they claim to believe. At the other end of the same linear ruler of human thought, are those who are not inclined to seek a Unique God or do not even acknowledge that He exists, and may come to think, for instance, that they are “on their own” in this world or that life “depends on” a variety of energies or a multitude of gods created according to their imaginations.

Nevertheless, reiterating once again, both the “Jew” and “Greek” terms are in the same linear ruler on which they think that life can be ruled and controlled by humans, even though it seems that one side is serving a Unique God and the other not. Both try to live life in the strength and disposition of the soul and the human body, but both are entirely incapable of doing the will of God while they are treading the path that is devoid of the dependence on the Lord and the newness of life granted by the Eternal Creator of the Heavens and the Earth.

The model called Jew and the Greek model represent the opposite ends of that which ultimately is the same line of thought. The two concepts, basically, make use of an equivalent message by which they claim that it is the creation that knows or determines, through its practices, what is good and what is not good for it.

The model denominated Jew proposes the way of following a set of pre-established external rules, for they think that people may reach life by doing so. However, the law, or the letter, does not grant and cannot grant eternal life or newness of life since it is only God who gives it, as exemplified also in the following text:

*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.***

The fulfillment of the “Ten Commandments of Moses,” for instance, cannot produce life by itself, for it is God who grants life and not the fulfillment of the rules in itself. Compliance with the rules is not above God or more powerful than the Lord. If someone could fulfill the “10 commandments,” he or she would not yet find life, for it is not in the works performed by humans, but in the Lord of life who gives life and strength even for the performance of works.

The concept associated with the term Greek, in turn, proposes a life dissociated from a single Sovereign and Eternal God, for in it, among others, is suggested the idea that true life may only be found if the human being or the creation are also free to redefine and manage their very existence.

However, like an existence dedicated to an external law of the concept called Jew, the idea associated with the term Greek is also not able to achieve the life that people need so much, for the real novelty of life for an individual is likewise not in the way proposed by the concepts designed by humans, but it is and always will be in the Creator of life and true freedom.

*John 11: 25 **Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.
26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"***

*John 8: 36 **Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.***

For those who receive Christ in the heart, the newness of life is the one that only Christ grants to them, both for the present time and for the time yet to come.

E. Neither Jew nor Greek, and nor a Mix Derived from the Concepts Called Jew and Greek

Following on from the previous topic, we understand that here it is still worth pointing out another way in which people resist the proposition of life in Christ Jesus or as a new creature in the Lord.

Not satisfied with the unprofitable condition or the lack of virtue of the most extreme propositions of each of the basic lines of human thought, that is, of the concepts associated with the terms Jew and Greek, people, in resistance to Christ, still end up yielding place also to the most diverse combinations that they try to make from the two human propositions in reference.

Because they do not properly know the Gospel of God or because they are not pleased with the newness of life that God offers them, but also because they are not satisfied with what the models called Jew and Greek propose in their respective concepts, people seek, then, to create the most diverse dosages or mixtures of the two natural models in reference, not paying attention to the fact that in doing so they continue remaining in the same linear and limited ruler of the natural man's thought.

When, for example, an individual of the model called Jew begins to grow weary of its religiousness and is afflicted by frustration with its rules and rites, one may also begin to think of becoming a little “more Greek” in the expectation of achieving something differentiated or reaching a little more freedom. One begins to be flexible in one's rigidity of religious discipline, although one often does so in a veiled way or when he or she is not being monitored by one's mentors of the law.

Respectively, the individual in the Greek model, when one cannot satisfy the emptiness of one's life with the things of the world and its pretense or vain freedom, may also begin to consider adopting some rules of the line of thought called Jew. The Greek, in one's pursuit for something more meaningful for one's life, may start to consider practicing a sporadic prayer, to offer some help to a needy person or to do some so-called good work, and so on.

The more significant matter, however, is that when people move away from the concept of religiousness related to the term Jew or from the more liberal idea of the Greek model to just go in the opposite direction, they still or indeed continue to move themselves only on the same and limited ruler of the natural or human thought.

Therefore, understanding the behaviors of the concepts associated with the terms Jew and Greek is crucial in relation to the new creature, first, so that an individual may be willing to receive the new life “in Christ,” but also so that Christians themselves do not let them be ensnared by thoughts that aim to make them return to the ways that are vain before the Lord.

If a Christian does not keep a proper distance from the propositions associated with the terms Jew or Greek, one may even come to the point of mistakenly adopt part of the own Bible teachings addressed to Christians in the sense of trying to practice them under the concepts of the terms Jew or Greek.

If a Christian, for instance, embraces the mentality associated with the term “Jew,” one may come to think that the principles of the Gospel addressed to him or her are like a manual of rules of life to be followed and to which, then, one should dedicate oneself with all his or her natural effort, as was required in the Law of Moses. Thus, this Christian forgets that instructions and strength for life are granted to the new creature by the Spirit of the Lord, and not only by following a written letter as intended in the Old Covenant.

Paul, an apostle of Christ, declares that the return to the concepts or ideas associated with the term “Jew” is like fascination and foolishness.

- 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?**
- 4 Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain?**
- 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?**

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.**

A person interested in the Christian life, but dazzled by the concept denominated Jew, may easily think that if one only exchanges one’s dedication to the Law of Moses for a similar commitment to Christian precepts, one will attain the newness of life that one longs to achieve.

Nevertheless, the Christian life is not only related to adopt or not to adopt the principles written to Christians. One of the first points in the Christian life is that the new creature is conceived from a spiritual birth and that the new person receives the nourishment from the fellowship with Christ to be strengthened and to be fruitful according to the will of the Lord. The new creation does not seek to establish oneself by the fleshly efforts of wanting to live the Christian life in the same manner as it was in the old model associated with its old law or concepts.

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.**

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.**

For the Christian, obedience to the instructions that God has for his or her life is a consequence of the life and love that the Lord first gives and pours out in his or her heart, and not of the human effort to fulfill predefined external rules as it was in the proposition of the Law of Moses.

Through fellowship with Christ, the Christian receives the love of the Heavenly Father and, through this received love, the Christian takes pleasure in the instructions that God directs him or her to do, being the Christian also strengthened by the Lord to accomplish them. This aspect is the opposite of seeking to fulfill the precepts to after that reach the favor of God and to receive through them the love of God as it basically is stated in the concept called by the terms “Jew,” “Circumcision,” or “Old Covenant.”

It is crucial to keep the following words always alive in the heart: ***“We love Him because He first loved us,”*** and not that we will love him with all human strength so that God may then bless us, for no human being, by oneself, can indeed fulfill this latter goal.

In the Law of Moses, to attain salvation and eternal life, it was necessary to fulfill all the commandments and to love God with all heart, with all understanding, and with all strength, a goal that no natural descendant of the “first Adam” achieved or will be able to reach no matter how intense one's devotion and efforts might be.

In Christ, the Heavenly Father pours out His love into the hearts of all who believe when they become born again (Romans 5: 5). And what the Lord asks of those who believe in Him is that they keep the flame of this love lit by fellowship with the Lord, for it is through this love that God operates spontaneous willingness and obedience toward His instructions.

On Earth, there may be several types of models of the concept called “Jew.” There may be the concept “Jew” according to the Law of Moses, there may even be the concept “Jew” according to Christian precepts, and yet there may be the concept “Jew” related to several other religions that exist, for **if a person's trust is in the adoption of precepts of religious conduct, in order to thereby attain justification and the favor of the Unique Eternal God, it is similar to the so-called “Jew” type behavior.**

In a similar way to the foregoing over the last paragraphs, if a person that already is a Christian, for instance, embraces the mentality associated with the term “Greek,” one may come to think that the Gospel addressed to him or her is the liberation of the obligation of the Law of Moses to live similarly to the “Greek” model in general. Thus, thinking that the grace of God is as a synonym for a liberal grace, in which the Christian would be free to do as one wished without having the consequences of his or her acts judged according to the righteousness of God.

People who think that the Christian life is the opposite of following the Law of Moses, because this law cannot provide the justification of those who follow it, may also easily think that the grace of God is the freedom for them to do what they want and not necessarily what is right and just to be done before the eyes of the Lord, thus forgetting that the Christian is called to no longer submit to the Law of Moses, but also to no longer submit to sin, but, yes, to the Lord and the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus.

*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?***

...

- 1 **What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?***
- 2 **Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?***
- 3 **Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?***
- 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.***

One of the most fundamental aspects in the understanding that the life of the new creature is not associated with the term Jew (or circumcision) and nor with the term Greek (or uncircumcision) is the fact that the new creature in Christ is in no way equal to any proposition or concept that human beings have already tried to follow on Earth, a reason why it also is called the “newness of life.”

If the life of the new creature were like the life of the concept called Jew, then we would have what some people try to call as “Christian-Jew” or as “Jewish-Christian” as if the new creature were the result of a mix of the old with the new, which it is not indeed.

On the other hand, if the life of the new creature were the expression of life like the Greek concept, then we would have the so-called “Christian-Greek” or “Greek-Christian” model as if the new creature were the result of a mix of these two, which indeed it also is not.

There are still those who want to propose that the new creature is the result of a mix of three concepts, where we would have the “Christian-Greek-Jew,” by which they propose, for instance, that on “Tuesday” a Christian can be a liberal and perverted Greek if one just plays, on the “Ash Wednesday,” the Jewish role of confessing his or her sins according to exterior rules and prayers, which is even more absurd, evil, and perverse than the propositions of the two preceding paragraphs.

The claims that propose a new creature resulting from the attempts of mixing the models called Jew and Greek with the Christian life refer to propositions that try to please, in any way, people in their fleshly or corrupted longings without, however, separating them from the way that only looks like a Christian life, as if the mere outward use of the name “Christian” could save those who deliberately resist the will of the Lord.

The newness of life offered by God to people is not a life focused only on a new profile of external appearances or some style of life that has the objective of satisfying, in a new way, the yearnings of the concepts denominated respectively of Jew and Greek. The novelty of life in the Lord is a whole new condition so that those who receive Christ in the heart may

also have the choice to live not under a constant practice of sin or of the carnal longings.

- 1 John 3: 5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.*
- 6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.*
- 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.*
- 8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*
- 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*
- 10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.*
-

The propositions which claim that the Christian life is or could be a combination of the concepts associated with the term Jew or the term Greek are deceitful and corrupted fables that, on the one hand, attend to the fleshly demands of the people, but which, on the other side, aim at imprison people under false teachings or doctrines that present in a misleading way the offer of true freedom and life that God offers in Christ Jesus to all human beings.

Situations such as those described in the preceding paragraph represent, then, one of the reasons why God exhorts Christians to announce the word of truth continually and in conformity with what is taught by the Lord in the Scriptures, as also exemplified in the following text:

- 2 Timothy 4: 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.*
-

Returning once more to what has been commented previously, any concept that departs from the extremities of the “Jew <_____> Greek” ruler that has been used as an example, but still derives from the same ruler, is a sort of mix of both and, therefore, also dissociated from the new life according to the new creature.

In this way, the most central point of the “Jew <_____> Greek” ruler, that is, the point of a broad mix of both, is the point called by many as the “Ecumenical” point, and from which some try to create a new concept of life, trying to extract from the two old models something new or trying to find the newness in the old things. However,

distorted and corrupted sources do not spring up or are not able to spring up or provide the novelty of life.

Through propositions that try to create concepts centered in the middle of the exemplified ruler, people want to introduce the thought that everything that is in the whole ruler is acceptable. They try to introduce an idea that everything is valid, that the important thing is to try to accept everything if just the intention by which something is done has the appearance of being good. However, in all these attempts, people continue to insist on trying to make the new from a raw material that cannot produce something really new.

From these mixing points of human models, people try to propose the idea that a little of the Jewish concept can compensate for all the Greek liberality, or that some of the Greek liberality can compensate for the heavy burden of the model so-called Jew. At the points of concepts mixing, people begin to think that a bit of religiousness and generosity can compensate for the liberal acts of the flesh that they deliberately want to indulge in, or that a bit of liberality can ease the burden of trying to keep all the commandments of the law.

So, for example, some people, in some particular days, seek to get drunk, render themselves to gluttony or to all kind of fleshly desires believing that in the next day the religiousness of their sacrifices and prayers may provide forgiveness to them, but without actually thinking to change their hearts and abandon the practices of a sinful pattern.

Over the centuries, people have tried to make a syncretism, a mixture of the Greek concept and the model called Jew, as if the combination of both or the tolerance with both could justify them. However, through these practices, people continue to remain in the illusion of the same ruler of human concepts, in which they think they can locate the solution to their lives.

If the formula of mixing parts of the “Jew <_____> Greek” models has not yet provided them with the true newness of life, many people begin to think and delude themselves that they have not yet found the “proper point of equilibrium” of the dosage of their mixed “Jew <_____> Greek” concepts. And with this kind of posture, they only will postpone the inevitable encounter with the frustration of life according to the same human ruler, as well as will sink deeper into their lusts and destruction.

The extremities of the model called Jew and the extremities of the Greek model, in principle, do not tolerate each other, they are enemies. However, despite their enmity, from time to time people try to conciliate them or try to establish peace between them. These attempts, however, generate many frustrations, for the commandments of life of each model are very divergent, though they are as equal when it comes to the matter of not having value or virtue in the face of the condition of life of the new creature in Christ.

Thus, people float from the ends of the ruler trying to find newness of life in the middle of the scale, but as there is no consensus at any point of the ruler, they return to the extremities of it in a repetitive cycle, and which can never be solved on the same ruler.

A much unfortunate aspect regarding what is represented by the human ruler or scale is that many do not realize that the problem is the very ruler of models or the whole ruler of concepts they adopt, not just parts of it.

When it is mentioned in the Scriptures that the model called Jew and the Greek model cause enmity among people, it is not the conflict between nations that is being focused in the first place, for in the same house, for instance, there may be one of the spouses with a mentality according to the model called Jew and the other with a mentality according to the Greek model, which, for this reason, may oppose each other even with high intensity and frequency.

If the first spouse is more adept at the model called Jew, whether one is the husband or the wife, one will tend to a more disciplined life and more inclined for rules and order. The second spouse, on the other hand, being more a follower of the Greek model, will tend towards a more liberal life, more driven by the moment and the feeling in each new day, establishing a divergence of views and behaviors already in their own house.

In this simple example of matrimony, the ruler with distinct extremities may already be established. If each of the spouses pulls to one's own side of the ruler, there will be no agreement, and the gap between them probably will increase. However, if both try to join in a mixed concept of the ruler, each one probably also will have a personal and internal tension by continually yielding oneself to an opposite direction of one's personal style or beliefs of conduct.

Given all this, the Scriptures teach that in the “Jew <_____> Greek” ruler, there is no definitive and lasting solution to a peaceful gathering of people, as well as there is no way in the human concepts that can lead them to a life in conformity with the Lord's will for them.

In the wisdom that is under the sun, neither the model called Jew nor the model denominated Greek is in line with the Heavenly Father's instructions. Both models are under the same scale, ruler, or line of thoughts in which there is no solution of a newness of life, generating, therefore, continuous tension and conflict, instead of a stable peace.

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?

The problem of the concept called Jew and the concept denominated Greek is that they are both dissociated from the living and continual direction of God and that both suggest a life from the strength and the rules of the natural creation, even though several times they try to use the Scriptures for their confused propositions, remembering once again that:

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, 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.

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.

According to the Scriptures, there is no solution for the model called Jew nor for the Greek model at any point in the ruler used until here as an example. Neither in the middle nor in the extremes and in no other measure combined on the ruler. According to the Scriptures of God, in the referenced ruler, there is no such “balance or equilibrium point” that many seek to achieve in order to find a suitable model for all.

Now, if neither the model called Jew nor the Greek model is applicable, adaptable, or adjustable to the new creature, and if both cover the sum of all human behavior contrary to God's will, with which human model can the new creation then be compared?

The newness of life according to the new creature has no parallel on Earth and cannot be compared to any worldly model, for it is the novelty of life from the heavenly kingdom and unlike anything that the human being has ever known under the sun.

The solution for the people who are associated with the models or styles of life of the linear ruler exemplified above can only be found outside the ruler in reference.

In Christ, the point is no longer to be “Jew,” “Greek,” “Christian-Jew,” “Christian-Greek,” or “Christian-Greek-Jew,” but the matter is to be a new creature according to the new standard coming from heaven, according to the pattern which is born of the Spirit of God, not according to the will of the flesh or of men, but born of God to live and walk in Christ Jesus.

The newness of life of the “new creature” is not known in the ruler of the “Jew <_____> Greek” model, for the “new creation” is generated according to the “heavenly man,” that is, the new being created in truth and the righteousness that are according to God and His eternal kingdom.

The newness of life, available only to the new creature, encompasses the condition of being able to be guided by God in everything, not by a code of external rules. It comprises the possibility of being guided by a living instruction that associates the words of the Scriptures with an active and specific direction of the Spirit of God according to the Lord's righteousness for the most diverse areas of the life of the person born again or made alive in Christ Jesus.

There is a life and wisdom that come from above or that come from God. And only this new life, with its respective wisdom, can bring peace to the inner conflicts of hearts to prepare them for the relationship with the Lord, with themselves, and with others according to the will of the Heavenly Father.

It is only in Christ, and in the new creature that God grants, that an appropriate reconciliation of a person with God, with oneself, and with others can occur.

It is in Christ, the King of Righteousness, as well as the King of Peace, that people can find the only possibility of destruction of the divisions or barriers between human beings caused by the divergences of their lifestyles so-called Jew or Greek or any mixing attempts derived from them.

In the example of the divergent couple mentioned in some paragraphs above, neither the part concerning the model called Jew nor the part concerning the Greek style should have the aim of overlapping the other party, but both spouses should give up their human thoughts of the “Jew <_____> Greek” ruler and should begin to seek the thoughts that Christ has for each one and for their joint life.

If the husband and the wife follow the instruction of Christ, who is the Prince of Peace and King of Righteousness, they will also be directed to the peace between them and for their home that they will be building up. (A theme widely discussed in the subject on The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, more specifically in the chapters that address the glory of Christ as the Head of each of God's children).

If people cease to prioritize the wisdom of the “Jew <_____> Greek” ruler and begin to prioritize the wisdom that comes from God for their lives, they also choose the wisdom that can lead them to overcome divisions among them, including in the same home.

*James 3: 13 **Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.***

*14 **But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.***

*15 **This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.***

*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.***

The man in a home may have different operational attributions than the woman, and vice versa, but “in Christ,” man is not accepted more before God than the woman, nor is the woman more accepted than the man, as well as the free, naturally speaking, is no more accepted than the slave or vice versa.

In the new creature, both the man and the woman individually are “a new man,” “a new being” in Christ, as are also the Jew, the Greek, the free and the slave, according to the text we repeat one more time below:

*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.***

“In Christ Jesus,” the human divisions of the “Jew <_____> Greek ruler” cease, they are no longer accepted or also have no more virtue.

Before God, all human beings who receive the salvation of Christ and the new life in Him are individuals who are equally new creatures, of inestimable value, saved by the same heavenly grace, and born again through the same Spirit of God.

A person who relates more to the Lord and benefits more from the life of the new creature can indeed reach more of God than the one who does not use his or her new condition, but it is not the Lord who shows partiality between one or another because of the natural conditions of gender, social freedom, race, language, people, tribe, or nation.

Access to God is not associated with a person's social status, cultural condition, or one's nationality, but it is individual and can be made personally by faith in Christ Jesus. Many times, however, the people that are more in need on Earth are they who turn to God more, and for this, they also reach more of the newness of life of the new creature.

The Lord does not want people to give up their human thoughts simply for His to prevail, but He proposes that they give up worldly concepts to follow the divine will because it is good, acceptable, and perfect for those who follow it in Christ as new creatures born and guided by the Spirit of God. The thoughts of the Lord are thoughts of good and peace, and not of strife and dispute as are the thoughts of both the model called Jew and the Greek model.

To assimilate that in Christ all have available the same spiritual conditions of fellowship and life with God is not such a simple task for a merely human mind and trained in so many natural and cultural differences. In fact, the human mind, in its exclusively natural condition, cannot comprehend this mystery.

Only the Lord can truly enlighten a person's eyes to the new reality that is in the new life in Christ, and through which a person can see and enter the heavenly kingdom that God grants to all who believe in Christ and receive Him as Lord.

Finally, in this topic, returning once again to the titles of the previous topics and their first considerations, we can note in the New Testament Scriptures that there are indeed only two types of life, the first being divided into two distinct styles within the same type.

The 1st type of life is that of the exemplified single linear ruler that encompasses the basis of human thinking about life under the sun. This 1st type, in turn, is divided into two extreme styles or combinations of them, where the styles are called, respectively, Jew and Greek or circumcision and uncircumcision, but they are always based on the strength of the creation for the performance of the works.

The 2nd type of life is the life made alive by the Spirit of God, called the life of the new creature. This life has its source in the direction, wisdom, and strength of God. It is the life that is dependent on God and willingly submissive to the Lord. And it is the life available to every human being who believes in Christ and receives Him as Lord.

In Christ, "THERE CANNOT BE" the 1st type, there can be neither earthly circumcision nor uncircumcision, neither Jew nor Greek, for these are worldly marks and not of the heavenly kingdom.

Christ is all in all, and He is no more to some than to others just because in the past they were Jews or Greeks, circumcised or uncircumcised, for He is the same Lord, rich to all who call upon Him.

Romans 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.

Previously we have also seen that **the Gospel that saves and teaches about the new birth in Christ is the same and the unique Gospel with the power to save people from both models or styles of the first type of life and to equally make, of both, new creatures born of the Unique Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

In Christ, all are justified equally by the righteousness of God, through faith, and become one family of those justified by Christ, or through the blood of the Eternal Lamb, in order to live their new lives in Christ and with Christ Jesus, regardless of the style or model of life they found themselves before coming to believe in the Lord.

In Christ, all are called to live according to the same way of life, which is to live through Him who died for them, redeemed them from a life without virtue, and granted them the condition of being able to live the life that the Unique Creator of Heavens and Earth wants to give them forever.

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

And only as a complementary consideration, it should yet be highlighted here that when some New Testament texts exceptionally mention the term Jew associated with the faith of Abraham or the new condition of life in Christ, they are still embracing, in their contexts, all persons who have been made alive in Christ, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, regardless of whether they are men or women or whether they were previously of the model called Jew, Greek, Gentile, circumcision in the flesh, or uncircumcision.

The meaning of the expression that refers to being part of the “Eternal Israel of God” or “sons of Abraham by faith” also refers to the condition of the new creature, and is, in no way, an instruction for a return to the model denominated Jew, circumcision, or of the system of the law that has no value or virtue for the new creation in Christ Jesus.

We still recall that the aspects exposed during the last topics were also addressed particularly in other subjects of the Systemic Teaching about Christian Life, such as:

- ⇒ The Letter or Life;
- ⇒ Knowing about God or Knowing God;
- ⇒ The Core Principle of Life for a Christian;

- ⇒ The Gospel of the Grace of God;
- ⇒ The Gospel of the Righteousness of God;
- ⇒ The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, in which there is even a chapter with a title similar to the last topics and called The Two, not Three, Positionings of Life that Are Revealed in the Understanding of the First and the Second Priesthoods.

F. Abraham was Circumcised because of the Mercy of God also toward the Circumcised

Many people, as well as the Scriptures, often associate the act of circumcision with the Law of Moses and all its commandments, as was also mentioned in the previous topics.

Nevertheless, this act was not initially associated with the commandments recorded by Moses. The first person to whom circumcision was associated in the Scriptures was Abraham, whose circumcision occurred more than 400 years before the introduction of the Law of Moses.

Something important to emphasize once again about Abraham's history is that the circumcision in his case was only a symbol, a representative mark of what a person had already adhered to in the heart or an outward sign of what a person had come to believe and that one also wanted to follow.

It has also already been mentioned previously that, over the years, circumcision began to migrate from a mere symbol to a mark of distinction of people already from the mark itself. Over the years, circumcision, by itself, had already become a mark that characterized the people who belonged to a group even though they did not actually practice a series of principles of the line of belief they claimed to have accepted.

In this latter sense, circumcision also came to be regarded as a special “status” of life, leading many circumcised to pride and contempt for those who did not receive this circumcision, becoming uncircumcised to be seen by many as people of lesser importance.

However, in the beginning, when the Lord instructed Abraham to practice circumcision, did He ask for people to rise up in pride towards their fellow men who were not circumcised?

And considering that circumcision would come to be distorted from a mere outward symbol of what a person started to believe in the heart to the condition of a mark of identity by the mark in itself, and that it also would generate arrogance and pride, why, then, did God ask Abraham that he should practice circumcision?

The answer to the above questions is found in the following text:

- Romans 3: 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.**
- 31* **Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the
contrary, we establish the law.**
- 4: 1* **What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found
according to the flesh?**
- 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."**

- 4 *Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.*
- 5 *But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,*
- 6 *just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:*
- 7 *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;*
- 8 *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."*
- 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.*
- 14 *For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect,*
- 15 *because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.*
- 16 *Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all*
- 17 *(as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed, God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;*
- 18 *who, 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.*
- 22 *And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."*
- 23 *Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,*
- 24 *but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,*
- 25 *who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

In the case of Abraham, circumcision was attributed to him only as a seal or a symbol of what he had previously believed in his heart, for Abraham, without any mark of circumcision, believed in the Unique living God and Creator of the Heavens and the Earth when the Lord presented Himself to him and spoke to him in a living and real way.

In the text of Romans presented above, it is possible to see with clarity that Abraham was justified by faith for salvation being still uncircumcised (before circumcision), that is, circumcision had nothing to do with his justification and salvation.

Merely external acts, in no way, have the power that could make an “unsaved” person become a justified and saved person before God.

Eternal salvation is given as an offer or a gift from God and can be received only through faith in the Lord. And the gift of God's salvation has a name; it is called the Lord Jesus Christ, one of the reasons why a person reaches his or her justification by faith in Christ Jesus.

It is very significant to note what has been outlined in the text of Romans above because, through it, the Lord teaches us that Abraham's act of circumcision did not define his justification by faith, for his justification occurred before the act of circumcision. As already mentioned, the circumcision performed by Abraham was for another reason or for another very specific purpose also clarified in the same text.

Abraham was justified and saved by having listened to the voice of God and opened his heart in trust to the Lord and the instruction of God for his life, and that's it. That is what the text of Romans teaches us.

Abraham's circumcision has nothing to do with his very salvation. Abraham was already justified before God when he believed in the Lord, and the remaining uncircumcised or become circumcised was not explicitly related to Abraham's own life or salvation.

God did not ask Abraham to be circumcised so that Abraham could become justified or saved, but the Lord asked him to become circumcised because of what was to happen in his future generations.

Does the commentary in the last paragraph mean, then, that future generations could come to be saved by circumcision?

No, under no circumstances! On the contrary, **circumcision could even complicate, for some, the understanding of justification and salvation by God's grace, through faith in the Lord, if they, in a wrong way, started to rely on circumcision to see themselves as justified.**

Earlier, we have also seen that from the natural perspective, people essentially are divided into two groups, namely the group associated with the term “Jew” and the group associated with the term “Greek,” that is, those of “circumcision” and those of “uncircumcision.”

Moreover, we have likewise seen that God's solution for the salvation of both groups is the same and applies both to the people of the model called Jew and to the people of the Greek model, which is the salvation provided by the heavenly grace and which can be received through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as we are taught by the Gospel of the Lord.

*Romans 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 critical question related to circumcision, however, is that even after Christ's redemptive work has already been performed on the cross of Calvary, some people both from the group of the so-called Jew and the Greek group, based on their natural or external aspects, still may continue to see themselves “with distinction” in relation to God. Despite all that God teaches us and offers through the Gospel, people may continue to try to sustain the distinction between the two groups in reference.

Thus, as people, from their natural perspective, try to divide themselves into two “distinct” groups, God, by His wonderful mercy, previously or in advance, showed in Abraham that the salvation of the kingdom of God is for all people, that is, for all the people of the two groups in reference, without distinction.

Abraham was saved uncircumcised, and, in this condition, he was justified by the heavenly grace, through faith in God, so that all uncircumcised ones may know that the same justification and salvation is also available to them in God.

Nevertheless, the Lord, knowing of all things yet to come, knew that in the future, or throughout history, people would end up trying to divide themselves into two natural groups. And, therefore, to show that no one is despised by the offer of salvation, the Lord instructed Abraham that he should be circumcised to show everyone that even those who are circumcised need the same salvation by faith in the grace that God offers.

The circumcision instructed by God to Abraham was not taught to him aiming at the creation of a select group that would reach salvation by differentiated human behaviors or external marks. Circumcision was asked by the Lord to Abraham so that the circumcised in the future also knew that their salvation only occurs because of the same faith of Abraham in God, faith by which Abraham believed in the promise of the coming of Christ to the world and through which he was justified before God.

Let us see below again some verses of the text already quoted previously:

*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.***

*14 **For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect,***

15 because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.

16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

17 (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed, God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.

Therefore, how can an individual obtain justification for the heavenly life before the Lord and enter into the salvation offered by God to human beings?

And the answer is believing in the righteousness of God and having faith in the salvation offered in Christ.

Furthermore, who can receive the salvation offered by God?

Both the uncircumcised and the one who has been circumcised can receive the salvation offered by God, as long as they believe in the Lord and receive salvation by heavenly grace and through faith in Christ.

The uncircumcised who does not believe in Christ does not reach the justification of his or her sins and eternal salvation, but the circumcised who does not believe in Christ also, equally to the uncircumcised, does not obtain the favor of God offered to him or her by the heavenly grace.

On the other hand, **the uncircumcised who believes in Christ receives salvation, just as the circumcised who believes in Christ also receives it.**

All who believe in justification by grace, through faith, are those who are saved, whether they were previously circumcised or uncircumcised, Jew or Greek, for this no longer matters in the face of the eternal offer of life that the Lord extends to all human beings.

All those who believe in Christ are those considered by God as the true descendants of Abraham, who was saved even Gentile and uncircumcised, but who also was sealed with the circumcision so that the circumcised of all generations also knew that salvation in Christ is equally necessary to them, just as it is also available to them by grace, through faith in the Lord, not by circumcision.

The same Gospel of Christ, which is for the salvation of the people of one of the two groups of people in reference, is also for the salvation of the people of the other group. The Gospel pre-announced to Abraham, from the beginning of its proclamation, had already been presented as the offer that would be granted for the blessing, justification, and salvation of all peoples, and not only for one group of people to the detriment of others or for other peoples to the detriment of one group of people.

The Gospel of Righteousness, Grace, Salvation, Peace, Promise, and Power of God, already from the beginning of its announcement, has been directed or addressed to all human beings, without exception.

*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.***

*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.***

So, the divisions and barriers between Jew and Greek, circumcised and uncircumcised, right from the pre-announcement of the Gospel were foreseen as unacceptable in the newness of life "in Christ." And also for this, they could not receive any recognition of value or virtue after Christ was revealed as the Lord and Savior to all human beings, remembering once more that:

*Romans 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.***

*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."***

*Galatians 3: 7 **Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.***

As we have already mentioned, in the eyes of God, after the revelation of Christ to the world, there is not this human and fleshly division of two groups as people do among themselves. In the eyes of God, all are equally people in need of the mercy and the heavenly love that are extended to all in the Son of His Love. However, in the eyes of many people, there is still resistance to the Lord's grace, and there is yet the commitment to maintain the division of these two groups.

It is crucial to understand that God did not make provision for two solutions of salvation for eternal life, that is, one for the uncircumcised and one for the circumcised. God has only one, and the same, solution of salvation for the people of both groups. However, it is precisely the equation or equality of all under the same necessity and under the same salvation that is rejected by many of those who try to sustain the

differentiation of the two groups, because they want to insist on the distinction of each other.

God only offered and offers a single way of salvation. However, in order for the message of this one salvation to become evident to both the circumcised and the uncircumcised, the Jew and also the Gentile, is that the Lord instructed Abraham also to be circumcised even after he was already justified by faith being still uncircumcised.

Those who are of the circumcision are often even more resilient and hardened to allow themselves to be reached by God than those who are of uncircumcision. Those who are of the circumcision may come to think that the sign of circumcision and their religious practices are participants in the solution of their salvation. Throughout human history, those who are related to the lifestyle denominated in the Scriptures as circumcision have continually been and continue to be at risk of developing a particular pride because of their signs they carry, and the acts they practice, as if the salvation of the soul is depended on this kind of marks or practices.

God knew beforehand that in every generation there would be people who would refocus the thought that through outward acts and outward marks they might come to salvation. God, in advance, knew that many people would find themselves more special than others because of their external acts and traits or their heredity. People who would come to think and propagate the thought that God favors or disadvantages individuals for what they are in the natural world, denying that God loves all without partiality. People who would try to sustain a mentality that individuals are classifiable between the especially privileged and the unprivileged, also creating their distinctions, classes, or “castes” by human concepts, and not according to the heavenly kingdom in which there is no partiality toward people.

Abraham was instructed to carry out the circumcision precisely because of the mercy of God also to the people who distinguish themselves from the others for thinking that by their external acts and marks they are more deserving of the favor of God than the others, and also because of the mercy of the Lord to those who stand apart and on a pedestal of distinction because they think they are worthy of heavenly salvation primarily because of the external acts they practice.

Many of those who are in favor of any sort of circumcision are also the people who most insist on the thought that salvation can be achieved by human works or natural symbols. For this reason, they are also easily led to “religious pride” and to the idea that they are more spiritual and worthier of salvation and blessings than others, thus resisting the provision of justification by the heavenly grace offered by God to them, but also offered equally to all human beings.

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.***

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.**

Titus 2: 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

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

Those who are of the circumcision (speaking conceptually of all those who wish to please God by their religions, even though they do not have the physical mark of circumcision) may even be zealous of God's things, but with human zeal, in the strength of the fleshly arm, and deprived of the understanding from the Father of Lights.

Before becoming an apostle of Christ, Saul, also called Paul, was an intense defender of the thought of circumcision. He prided himself on the fact that he had been circumcised on his eighth day of life as the law demanded, was zealous of the Law of Moses, and was zealous of his religion for being conceptually a Jew since his birth.

Saul was confident in what he had inherited through his culture and tradition, as well as in his zealous conduct regarding what he had learned from his childhood.

However, Saul's pride lasted until he met the Lord Jesus Christ personally, making all this past worthless before the Christ, the Messiah, the only Eternal High Priest, the King of Righteousness and Peace.

In the face of Christ, Saul understood that his condition of being a follower of the circumcision did not make him any better than any other sinner from anywhere in the world, and he also understood that he needed the grace of God as anyone else needed it, coming to declare the following words:

1 Timothy 1: 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.

Philippians 3: 7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

Circumcision was instructed by God to Abraham because the mercy for those who rely on their works and in their associations with the so-called circumcision or Jew

models, or similar to them, so that they know that the offer of redemption, salvation, and life “in Christ” is also for them. Recalling here also once again that the term “Jew” in the New Testament does not refer primarily to a connotation of nationality, but rather to the conditions of beliefs that rely on human works or of the flesh to try to obtain eternal salvation and the favor of the Lord.

Thus, any person, of any nation, in any generation, might be found in this similar condition of the model called Jew or circumcision, and this occurs when one mistakenly thinks that he or she has guaranteed justification and salvation before God because of one's religious practices or one's natural background or nationality.

Abraham's circumcision was not necessary for the salvation of Abraham, but it was a sign or a pre-announcement that the salvation that would be offered to all through Abraham's descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ, would come not only to those called by the religious as laymen or unbelievers but also for the religious themselves.

Abraham's justification by grace, through faith in God, when he was uncircumcised, was a beforehand announcement that salvation in Christ Jesus would come to the uncircumcised and sinful. However, circumcision was performed as a previous announcement that justification by faith is also necessary for the circumcised or religious who think that they already have the justification in their religious acts, which, however, before God, are nothing but filthy rags.

The justification of Abraham through faith in the Lord was a pre-announcement that salvation in Christ Jesus would be offered to all who would need it, but Abraham was instructed later by the Lord to practice circumcision to make clear that those who rely on their marks, symbols, images, human associations, or religious acts are equally in need of the same salvation through faith in the Lord.

The salvation offered by God to all human beings, and granted exclusively by His grace and through faith in Christ Jesus, is equally necessary for the one who not even seeks it in the Lord, as well as for the one who seeks to attain it by efforts, signs, or human works, which, in turn, have no value or virtue of justification before the Lord.

Abraham was saved uncircumcised! However, afterward, he was circumcised so that his descendants who would become circumcised knew that the salvation of the soul is by the grace of God through faith in the Lord, and not by circumcision, by the Law of Moses, or by merely being the natural offspring of Abraham. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself warned the natural descendants of Abraham not to rely on their ancestry, but to repent and convert to a life according to faith or trust in God.

*Luke 3: 8(a) **Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father.”***

*John 6: 29 **Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”***

Like those of the circumcision, there are people in every generation who think that eternal salvation is transferred from generation to generation, whether by the mark of circumcision or, for instance, by the external baptism of newborns. However, the central points of the concepts of these two practices are the same and equally mistaken, for it is by individual faith in God and in His grace that a person reaches justification from sins and the salvation of the soul, not by mere external rituals or signs.

Abraham was also circumcised so that those who were baptized as “children of Christians” know that they also need salvation by individual faith in Christ and by the new birth through faith in God, for there is no salvation in the natural baptism itself. Just as any uncircumcised is saved only by grace through faith in Christ, so it is equally for any person who has Christian parents as his or her background or ancestry.

Abraham was circumcised so that those who think they are worthy of salvation know that they are equally unworthy like any other human being because, for all, salvation is through the same grace and faith in Christ, both to the Jew and to the Greek or Gentile, both to the descendants of a Christian as for the descendants of non-Christian parents.

In the sonship or lineage according to the new creation, to the heavenly kingdom, or to the being born again of the Spirit of God, and not only of the flesh, there are no grandchildren, great-grandchildren and wide genealogies, for all those who believe in God and receive in the heart Christ as the Lord are equally children of God, brothers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and brothers of others who have already become children of the Heavenly Father through the heavenly grace and faith in Christ.

Because of the feeling of being unworthy of the salvation of God, many who are considered uncircumcised present themselves with humility more easily before God and even reach their salvation in the Lord before several who were instructed in parts of the word of God, for some of the later, sometimes, rely on what they have received culturally or traditionally and do not rely on the practice of personal and living faith in the Lord.

In many situations, those who are considered unbelievers reach the relationship with God even more easily than those who regard themselves religious, not because the former are better or worse than the religious, but because many readily accept salvation by grace and by the mercy of God when the offer is made to them.

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: 28 ***But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’***

29 ***He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went.***

30 ***Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go.***

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.***

32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him."

Those who are associated with propositions of life that have characteristics of the concepts of circumcision may become blinded by their presumptions of whom they are descended and of the religious works of which they are part, to the point of not seeing how they are equally unworthy and how much they need the same salvation that the uncircumcised or not religious people need. And this is a kind of behavior that has already been practiced for many centuries, as also exemplified in the text below narrated by the Lord Jesus Christ:

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, 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 (the tax collector who saw himself as a sinner) went down to his house justified rather than the other (the religious); for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."***

No symbol or merely external acts can save a person or make him or her worthy of being saved. No one can become worthy of salvation through circumcision, works of the Law of Moses, natural lineage, or aspects like these or even titled with other modernized names.

The children of Christians are no less in need of salvation by heavenly grace and by faith in the Lord than the children of parents who were not Christians.

Some may presume that the children of Christians should have more access to the Gospel of God and therefore should understand this need for salvation by faith before others. Unfortunately, however, in several cases, many people think that merely attending meetings they call Christian is enough to keep them in line with salvation. If this last aspect is a person's thinking, one is subject to misconceptions similar to those of the circumcision, thinking that one already has "Heaven guaranteed" for being the child of Christians and fulfilling some of the rituals called Christian.

The manners of what may be considered circumcision have changed over the centuries, from the literal circumcision of the foreskin to a series of other forms of association or "membership" to specific groups, but its concept is basically the same and thus it becomes repeated again and again in the most diverse people from generation to generation.

Nevertheless, **as much as the concept of circumcision gains new forms or versions, it does not, even in the most varied diversity of manners, contain**

and will never contain a right path for a person's justification from sins and for the eternal salvation of the soul.

For example, if the act of a person becoming a member of a religious group or a particular denomination is associated with the idea that therein is one's salvation, confirmation of one's salvation, or maintenance of it, this practice is equivalent to circumcision and, therefore, it is of no value to the eternal salvation of a person and presents no virtue to the life of a new creature "in Christ."

When people begin to believe that they are saved by adherence to particular groups, including those who somehow call themselves as "Church," they may easily and mistakenly come to believe that membership in a group or institution is an act by which they can be saved.

When an association with a group, denomination, or institution, or maintenance of it, comes to be regarded as an action also associated with salvation or its maintenance, people put before themselves one more highly significant obstacle to understanding that salvation in the Lord is given only by grace of God and through the new birth received because the personal faith in Christ Jesus.

Adherence to human groups, with a connotation attached to salvation, is essentially an act of circumcision, but without any validity to the true salvation offered by God and to the condition of the new creature.

When a person fears the loss of salvation because one is no longer listed in a group of members of a human group, one begins to value "circumcision" more than salvation by direct faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and more than the new birth granted by the Lord, putting at high risk the salvation of his or her soul.

Therefore, the name of the one who is a Christian indeed, of that individual who is truly born of God, does not need and should not be rolled up in the list of human groups in the expectation that his or her salvation, through this, will be reaffirmed or more guaranteed.

A Christian does not need an act that resembles in some or another way to circumcision, for the name of a Christian, born again by the Spirit of the Lord, is written directly in heaven before the Heavenly Father and before the Eternal Lord.

We recall here yet, that the theme mentioned in this part of this topic is addressed more widely also in the subjects on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, The Fellowship of Christians in the World, and The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, particularly, in the latter, in the chapter on The Glory of Christ as King and Unique Head of His Body or His Church, of which we recall below two texts, namely:

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.***

*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.

Nowadays, the so-called human circumcision encompasses a multitude of propositions of acts that seek to impose signs, symbols, works, or actions to people under the pretext that if people do not join them, or the groups that proclaim them, they could be in a condition which keeps them short of the full guarantee of eternal salvation. These propositions, however, are the expression of fleshly works and are opposed to salvation by the grace of the Lord and through faith in Christ Jesus.

Human circumcision is a concept that insists on resisting the grace of God and can be presented through the most varied forms. Under the idea of circumcision, many people insist on proposing the most diverse references or external acts to try to corrupt the simplicity of eternal salvation that is in Christ Jesus, thus acting contrary to the offer of the Gospel of God and thereby working to keep people from the Lord's eternal path so that they do not walk in the freedom that the Lord offers them.

Nevertheless, **although many resist the Gospel of the Righteousness of God through some form of propositions similar to circumcision, God, in His mercy, instructed Abraham to receive the sign of circumcision as a pre-announcement that the salvation that would come to be manifested in Christ Jesus would also be offered, by heavenly grace, equally to those who so vigorously resist the way of life that God proposes to them.**

Abraham received the sign of the circumcision so that future generations would know that besides offering salvation to the uncircumcised, God would likewise also offer it by His mercy to all those who have somehow associated themselves with circumcision, whatever "types or variations of their circumcisions."

Through Abraham, God foretold that He would not despise those who have already tried to attain salvation by means other than the salvation that He would provide in His Beloved Son Jesus Christ, thus offering the same salvation to all by faith in Christ and His work on the cross of Calvary.

The salvation of God is offered by grace to all who have never heard of Christ or who have never sought the Unique and Eternal God, but the salvation presented by the Lord to the world is likewise offered by grace to all those who from childhood or for some time attended religious groups.

Abraham received the circumcision as a sign to announce that the circumcised also can come to repent of their religiousness and be saved by faith in the same way as the uncircumcised.

All people of both groups in reference need the heavenly salvation, both need the new birth, both need to be born of the Spirit of God, but for the circumcised and

children of the circumcised, it may often be more difficult to visualize and understand that they need the same mercy which the uncircumcised also need. For this reason, a highlight for them has already been foretold since Abraham, who was an example of the justification by grace and faith in God, and not of the justification by works, the law, circumcision, or other natural characteristics or practices of people.

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

Galatians 6: 15 **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.**

- John 3: 3* **Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."**
4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"
5 Jesus answered, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."**
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.'**"

For God, both the uncircumcised and the circumcised are equally and incalculably valuable. God loves both and wants everyone to receive His mercy and wants everyone to receive the abundant life in His Only Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, rich to all. For this reason, the Lord, through Abraham, preached salvation to all peoples, without exception, and to all the families of the Earth, also without exception.

Romans 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.**

- 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.**
33 **Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!**
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!**

John 3: 16 For God so loved the world ("including uncircumcised and circumcised") 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.

Justification, salvation, and the new birth for a person to be constituted as a new creature can only be achieved by grace, only through faith in Christ Jesus. The way to these aspects is one or the same for all people in all nations, including those who descend from parents who during their lifetime have faithfully served 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."

So, considering that justification and heavenly salvation are not granted to an individual because one was circumcised or because one was uncircumcised before coming to Christ, these same conditions also have no value or virtue before God regarding the new creature in Christ.

Those who have received the justification of the Lord and become new creatures through the eternal grace of the Heavenly Father do not have their support or endorsement in earthly and passing things, but, yes, in the life of faith in Christ Jesus and the love of the Lord poured out in their hearts.

Galatians 3: 6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

7 Know you therefore 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.

11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."

22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

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.*

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 (that is, in Christ) 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.*

G. Why To Teach Christians that “in Christ” Circumcision Does Not Avail Anything?

Considering that “in Christ” there is no distinction between Jew and Greek and that the condition of circumcision or uncircumcision does not present virtues for the new creature, why then should a Christian have an understanding of these matters?

The answer to the above question is straightforward. A Christian should have due knowledge about these aspects because these themes are recurrent in the lives of human beings and their societies in each generation, as has been mentioned in previous topics.

Since not all people know the newness of life in Christ and since not all people want a life in Christ, the two distinct styles of the same kind of life that exist in the exemplified “Jew <_____> Greek” ruler end up manifesting themselves repeatedly among people of all epochs.

We have seen previously that many of those who are associated with the style of circumcision or similar to it, for instance, do not want the people who live in Christ to remain steadfast in their new way of life, for this newness presents an alternative of life different from the life that is lived by those who defend the model of circumcision and challenges them to change when they do not really want to change.

We have also seen that many people do not want to change to the new life in Christ because of their greed and the gains they think they are getting by the model of life contrary to the will of God. Proposals that are in line with the concept of circumcision may even be financially very profitable for those who propose them to others, even generating great trades around this lifestyle and all the rituals associated with it. (A point also addressed in the subject on The Christian and the Riches and about The Other Gospel).

On the other hand, there are also groups of people who like the fact that someone establishes rules of discipline and predetermined conducts to be followed and obeyed.

Many people want the convenience of not having to seek God and His truth personally, but who do not want to go so far as to despise God entirely. Thus, they are pleased when others set out to guide their so-called “spiritual lives,” and when others are willing to give them manuals of rules and conduct that they must practice daily in an attempt to be right with God and continue to be “blessed” by Him.

Some people even pay fortunes for someone to tell them the “n” steps they must take to be successful before God and to succeed in the face of human beings.

Many people, indeed, prefer a life governed by some previous writings of conduct exposed to them by their fellow men instead of depending daily on the leading of God through the Holy Spirit.

Many people prefer to memorize a list of commandments (including the 10 commandments of the Law of Moses) than to prostrate themselves in true humility before God to be personally and continually instructed by the Lord.

Even some Christians who do not remain in the Lord's direction through the Holy Spirit granted to their hearts may fall back on concepts that are in line with the propositions or ideas associated with circumcision.

This return to the lifestyle in conformity with some propositions associated with circumcision attracts some people also because this style may seem safer and less challenging to them than to continually seek fellowship with the Heavenly Lord.

Nevertheless, **one of the main problems of returning to the precepts associated with the model of circumcision lies in the fact that a little return to the style of circumcision is like “a leaven that corrupts the whole lump.”**

If a person wants to adopt a little of the concept of circumcision, one places oneself under the obligation to return to all aspects of circumcision or to the full practice of the whole Law of Moses, including the practice of acts and sacrifices that are not pleasing to him or her.

Moreover, **the sad thing is that the practice of the items of the Law of Moses, or similar to it or with other names, is vain, for whoever goes back to being under the concepts of circumcision also puts oneself under the condition of cursed before God.**

And in turn, cursed means not blessed, it means one who is not seen as a righteous person because one has not been justified by the grace and righteousness of Christ freely offered to all.

In other words, **the one who returns to the items of the law or the concepts associated with circumcision also despises, simultaneously, the justification of Christ performed on the cross of Calvary.**

The practice of items of the Law of Moses or similar to it may have an appearance of being more convenient for the flesh or the soul, but it is only in the appearance level, for if a person opts for the “convenience” of some items of the law, one also becomes obligated to keep all the items of the law. And this is a path without any possibility of success before the Lord and with a burden that cannot be successfully borne by any human being.

The practice of law items may look more comfortable, but it will never fill the “existential emptiness” that is in the hearts of people who are estranged from their Creator, for as it is an option to walk by fleshly striving and not by the presence of the Spirit of the Lord in the heart, the person who follows it also becomes deprived of the newness of life and strength that can only be provided to him or her by the Spirit of the Lord.

A person being situated in a cursed condition before God does not always imply that one is not going to achieve material successes, but it means that one is alienated from reconciliation with God for eternal life and continual fellowship with the Lord. It is only by the grace of Christ that a person can achieve the condition of being blessed and reconciled with God.

Circumcision, as has already been said, came to mean a concept that may be expressed by many different acts. And if a person returns to performing actions associated with circumcision, one will also need to be perfect in everything he or she does, for by opting for the path of circumcision, an individual also chooses to seek justification or righteousness through one's works, and not through the redemptive grace of the Heavenly Father and faith in Christ.

Repeating once again here what the Scriptures teach us, if someone associates oneself with the concepts behind circumcision, which is justification by signs, ancestry,

or works of the law or the flesh, one is also bound to keep all the items of the law that he or she has decided to follow.

Going back, for example, to religiously keeping a day of the week, whether it be the Sabbath, Sunday, or any other day, thinking that it is a way of justification before God, is a way for a person to return to the precepts associated with circumcision.

Going back to the practices of giving tithes and offerings to some priests or Levites, even if they are called by other titles, such as pastors, leaders, spiritual fathers, or guides, is a very energetic return to the way of life of the order of Aaron or the Law of Moses, and, therefore, of the concept of circumcision.

In a sense, the practice of giving tithes and offerings to structures and people who present themselves as priests or Levites of others may still do damage far beyond the religious keeping of the Sabbath or Sunday. Tithing and offerings provide support for the establishment of persons and institutions that become ministers that propagate, preach, officiate services, and instigate other individuals to become again followers at the concepts that are associated with a model of life that is like circumcision or like a law of works similar to those of the Law of Moses (even if their rules of conduct are called by other names).

The person who gives tithes, firstfruits, or offerings in a manner akin to the Law of Moses not only opposes the grace of Christ, but also “sponsors” the emergence of ministries that subsequently will stand up in resistance to the grace of God and will try to impose on people the most diverse forms of acts practiced according to the concepts associated with the idea of circumcision.

It is, therefore, vital for Christians to be aware that the seemingly harmless propositions of the concepts associated with the circumcision model are also related to vain philosophies, doctrines, and even to the spirits of deceit and fascination, and which, if accepted, may do great harm to the condition of faith and of a new creature that a Christian receives from the Lord, as exemplified in a few more texts below:

- Galatians 5: 1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*
2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.
3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.
4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.
5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.
6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.
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.

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.

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?

3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

4 Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain?

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?

6 Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

7 Therefore know that those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

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.

A little devotion to the concept that is associated with the model of circumcision has the power to leaven and corrupt the whole lump, the entire heart that embraces it and perhaps even a whole group that surrenders to its propositions.

A Christian who allows oneself to become embroiled in the practices associated with the concept of circumcision, and does not repent in due time and does not return to the direct relationship with Christ, may even become estranged from Christ and fall from God's heavenly grace that has been granted to him or her.

Also, the idea that a person who once accepted Christ is forever saved ("once saved, always saved"), regardless of one's attitudes, is a concept equal to the concept of circumcision or the model so-called "Jew." This concept relies on a sign, act, or practice made once in a lifetime, and not on the Christian's remaining in the heavenly grace and the living faith in God. Therefore, this idea similarly is a corrupt proposition, just as it is the attempt to sustain the concepts associated with the so-called circumcision.

And if someone has distanced oneself from the grace of God and from Christ Jesus, the solution is just one, namely: An immediate, personal, and

direct return to Christ, through faith in the Lord, increased, according to the Lord's direction, of repentance of the practices and concepts associated with circumcision which were accepted in the heart.

But if a person who was in Christ and turned away from Him came to associate with the concepts of circumcision, can he or she still return to the Lord?

Let us see what the following texts teach us:

*2 Corinthians 3: 16 **Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.***

*Romans 11: 23 **And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.***

On the other hand, as it has been mentioned before, a severe or dangerous problem in the practice of the concepts of circumcision is that these are like leaven that grows and yeasts all the lump that lies ahead, which may lead a person to a condition where the return to Christ becomes increasingly difficult because of the hardness of heart that these concepts can produce.

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

8 but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.

Why, then, is it so significant for a Christian to know that circumcision has no value or does not avail anything regarding the new creation in Christ?

The Christian needs to be warned about the dangers associated with the concepts and practices that are related to circumcision in order not to return to them, or yet to return to Christ and repent as soon as one realizes a little or a lot of the leaven of the concepts of circumcision in his or her life.

When there is repentance in leaving the yeast that is associated with the concept of circumcision, the Christian presents oneself to God as a new lump so that the Lord may perform in him or her, or on behalf of him or her, the wonderful works of His goodness and which the Lord has reserved for those who have in high esteem their life as a new creature in Christ Jesus.

The propositions associated with the concepts of circumcision are often presented as harmless, beneficent, or that even could serve as valuable disciplines so that the Christian life itself could be better practiced. However, they are not beneficial and, if accepted, may grow and take up a much larger space in a person's life than an individual might have initially considered.

The concepts of circumcision, once accepted, will always try to reconstruct or reconstitute as much as they can from the various aspects that were in the Law of Moses, even though they try to do so with practices with distinct appearances or renamed with other terms or names.

What, for instance, begins with a small routine of keeping the Sabbath or Sunday considered as an external expression that proposes to ratify a person's faith, in the sequence grows into a need for temples made by human hands for the realization of meetings. The temples, in turn, need priests and Levites to administer them, and the priests and Levites need the tithes and offerings of the people to perform the administration, under the allegation that everything is for the good of the people. But deep down, they are all practices of the ancient patterns of circumcision that have no virtue before the new creature in Christ.

Finally, the more expressive priests, Levites, or “ministers” assume the thrones that temples and human structures require to be assumed, and the people who should serve God in the freedom that the Lord offers to the new creature start again to serve the structures, institutions, priests, Levites, or the so-called leaders who officiate their ministries in these structures.

When people return to the attempts of building up, even partially, what the Lord Jesus Christ has already declared to be outdated and revoked by His work on the cross of Calvary, they end up putting themselves in danger of returning to the bondage of laws associated with the concepts of circumcision. They place themselves at risk of becoming enslaved again to the conditions they no longer need to undergo because Christ has already made provision for their freedom in the Lord.

And wide is the list of texts in which the Lord warns Christians no longer to subject themselves to precepts that are associated with the broad concept of circumcision, as presented in a few more examples below:

- 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.

- 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.

The concept of circumcision, when it is given space for it to grow in the heart of a person or a specific group of people, may reach such boldness that people simply let themselves be led to despise the direct words of the Lord Jesus Christ, such as those

proclaimed by Him when He told His disciples that they should never have among them the practice of electing people to call them their guides, leaders, teachers or masters, or fathers.

The concepts associated with the idea of circumcision, when welcomed by an individual, have a very strong power of fascination and enchantment, to the point that this person may come to think that the Lord is pleased with temples made by human hands, despising that God is looking for broken and contrite hearts so that He may dwell in His children and that He may have continuous fellowship with them at all times and in all places.

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

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."***

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."***

Since the concepts associated with circumcision are so directly opposed to the newness of life offered by God in Christ Jesus, it is crucial for Christians to be aware of these concepts in order to duly stay away from what is not intended to benefit them.

What, then, is the new creature called to do or follow each new day? What is the predefined set of rules for it?

The new creature is not called to be guided by the beforehand written or defined rules as it was in the model of circumcision. The Christian is called to be guided in all the truth and all the will of God by the living Holy Spirit of God, Who always instructs him or her according to the written word of God, but also according to the living instruction for every circumstance.

The concept of circumcision may have the appearance of humility or godliness, but since it is based on human, natural, or temporal actions, its foundation is not durable or reliable, a reason why it should be known in its broader concept to be duly rejected.

Knowing, therefore, the fragility and inefficacy of the concepts associated with the circumcision can be vital or decisive for a person to remain dissociated from them, as well as to have a broader understanding that only the grace of God can establish an individual in the unshakable and eternal 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.

H. Why To Teach Christians that “in Christ”

Uncircumcision, in Itself, Does Not Avail Anything?

If the model associated with circumcision intends to present itself as a foundation of faith in predetermined external signs or works in which a person seeks to trust, the model associated with uncircumcision is the proposition of a life that may even cogitate that there is no need of any predefined foundation.

Uncircumcision tends more to chance, a life governed by fate, “whatever has to be, will be,” “each one chooses the way one wants to worship” or “if one wants to worship,” or even the thought of “*let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.*”

Nevertheless, as much as some lines of thinking about it claim that it is not necessarily a model of creed, uncircumcision is, actually, also a belief system. The uncircumcision model is a type of belief that proposes, for example, that at the end “believing in nothing” or “believing in anything” may turn out to be a right path to be followed.

If the circumcision model proposes definite marks, symbols, or pre-established rules in the attempt of people to remain faithful to what they previously define to believe, the model of the uncircumcision proposes to “believe” that life without rules or life with rules chosen freely by anyone or a group of people is the model of life that will bring real happiness to those who adhere to this model.

The model of life associated with uncircumcision uses phrases such as: “Happiness lies in each one doing what makes one happy,” “all paths lead to God,” “no matter what religion a person follows, the important thing is to believe in something,” “the human is the one who determines one's destiny,” or even that there will be no future destiny, and so on.

The model of circumcision is linked to the inclination to the flesh (soul and body) in order to seek pre-established disciplines and rules to be managed and performed under the force of one's own flesh, the strength of one's determination and will. The model of circumcision advocates propositions of life in which each person can do right if one really decides to follow the predefined rules of good.

While he did not yet know Christ personally, Saul was the man who in all human history probably more committed himself to keep the law of written commandments. When, however, he became a follower of Christ and more often called Paul, he went on to expose the fragility and the uselessness of the life attempts he previously followed, as it can be noted below:

*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.***

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*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.***

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, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

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? (NKJV + AV)

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

Paul teaches us that trust in the flesh is a way of death and not of life. Paul teaches us that the extreme zeal of the law does not solve the problem of not doing evil that one does not want to do and does not produce the capacity to do the good that one wants to do.

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

One of the central problems of circumcision is not always necessarily only the law or the laws in reference, but it is the desire to fulfill the will of God by depending only on human strength. It is the mentality that with great effort or will, a person can find something good in one's flesh (body and soul). However, if a person's acts are not subject to God's will for him or her, they will not produce a newness of life, even if they have been accomplished with great effort or zeal.

Galatians 6: 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Returning, however, to the uncircumcision, where it enters into all this?

The aspect of the condition of lack of virtue of uncircumcision regarding the new creature is also relatively simple, but perhaps not so simple to be seen.

Let us try to formulate other questions to try to explain what we are looking to highlight also about the uncircumcision when it is observed from the perspective of equally having no value for the newness of life in Christ.

If, for instance, a person, like Saul, exhaustively tries, with all zeal and heart, to serve God through his effort, but finds out that this is in vain, what will be the tendency of his reaction? Is it not to drop the whole pattern of circumcision and incline to go to the Greek extreme of the “Jew <_____> Greek” ruler and give freedom for the flesh to go beyond limits and live out of rules and disciplines?

And it is precisely at this point that there is something that is of particular relevance to be highlighted, as follows in the next paragraphs.

The opposite of the model of circumcision is not the model of uncircumcision, as much as the latter may appear to be an attractive alternative in counter position to circumcision.

Although uncircumcision may seem distinct from circumcision, uncircumcision is another way in which a person tries to live life also by the effort of the flesh (body and soul).

Similar to the circumcision model, but from other angles, in the model of the uncircumcision is also found the mistaken idea that the human being, in one's fleshly effort or even in one's contempt for God, can come to define and reach a solution that is indeed beneficial to the most enduring issues of one's life.

When someone follows the pattern of uncircumcision and, for example, says that an individual's life ends when one dies, one continues to declare, according to the human and fleshly understanding, concepts about how one thinks or would like life to be, trusting or relying on worldly thoughts and not on the instruction of the Eternal God on how life is in the present and how it will be in the future.

Although the models of circumcision and uncircumcision claim to have distinct and opposing angles about life, the two end up having equalities because they are both grounded in fleshly beliefs and not in the eternal foundation of life revealed by God.

Thus:

- ⇒ 1) **The opposite of “Jew” or “circumcision,” to God, is not “Greek” or “uncircumcision,” but to be a new creation created according to the truth and righteousness of God and the heavenly kingdom.**
- ⇒ 2) **The opposite of “Greek” or “uncircumcision,” to God, is not “Jew” or “circumcision,” but a person becoming a new creature.**
- ⇒ 3) **The proposition of life according to the new birth, neither is a person to become of the model “Jew” or “circumcision,” nor it is a person to become of the model “Greek” or “uncircumcision,” but to become a new creature in Christ Jesus, born not according to the will of the flesh or of the man, but born according to the Spirit of the Lord.**

In Christ, each person is called to reconciliation and peace with God. Thus, God proposes to guide the person in all the ways that are good for one's life, doing it through the Scriptures, but also through living and specific directions for his or her life.

After a person receives the condition of a new creature, God is willing to teach him or her in a living and continuous way about the paths one should follow, but also about the ways that he or she should avoid.

Therefore, as a new creature in Christ, a person is not called to follow a code of external rules, but also or equally one is not called to a life without principles of truth and righteousness or under a false claim to be living in a time or a sort of dispensation

of “a grace of God” in which the Lord, supposedly, would no longer see a Christian practices of sin as being indeed acts of transgression and sin.

The proposition of circumcision as well as the proposition of merely not adhering to circumcision, that is to say, uncircumcision, are both contrary to the new creation, which, in turn, and as we have said before, has no parallels on Earth. The new creature is entirely new and granted to be lived “in Christ,” “in God,” and no longer according to worldly wisdom and that is disconnected from continual fellowship with the Lord.

When a person receives the condition of a new creature and indeed has the Lord as his or her Shepherd, one places oneself in a situation like the one described below:

- 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.
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.
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.
-

And yet, what is the House of the Lord to which the Christian is called, by the Psalm 23, to dwell in? Is not this house the condition of being “in God” or abiding “in Christ Jesus?”

*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.”***

Would dwelling in the house of the Lord not be equivalent to taking refuge in the “secret place of the Most High,” as also announced in the following Psalm?

- Psalms 91: 1 **He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.***
2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."
- ...
- 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.
12 In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.

- ...
- 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."***
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The model according to the circumcision proposes that with predefined rules and precepts to be followed, a person will be able to lead his or her life towards the good.

The model according to the uncircumcision or the term Greek might regard as ordinary or habitual that some people do not even want to know very well about the paths of life. It might also suggest a freer approach to rules, announcing concepts under a so-called more "open mind," and neither trying to clarify much precisely about where people's lives could eventually flow into. And yet, it might also present the argument that probably everything will end well regardless of the most varied paths that people will choose in their human trajectories or still that there even will be no future.

On the other hand, **the new creature is the one who has Christ as the Good Shepherd of his or her soul, has fellowship with Christ as the path of his or her life, and has the confidence that the Creator Himself, who made his or her spirit alive, will also lead him or her in His good, acceptable, and perfect will.**

*Romans 8: 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.***

The Christian, or the new creature, is not called to live by the Law of Moses or according to the model of circumcision, but he or she is also not called to live and walk according to one's own thoughts or the most different thoughts of the creation. The Christian is not a person "without God in the world," for he or she, together with his or her new condition, also starts to have the living instruction of the Lord available in one's heart.

The Christian "in Christ" is free from subjection to the commandments and rules of the Law of Moses, but on the other hand, he or she does not give liberty to the flesh, for he or she gives freedom to the Spirit of God to guide him or her in all the moments of his or her new life in the Lord.

*Galatians 5: 13 **For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.***

*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.***

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

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

The Christian should not confuse liberty in the Spirit of God with the thought that freedom is to do what one oneself wants according to one's human mentality or that one has received a renewed strength from the Lord to fulfill the precepts associated with the law of circumcision.

The Christian's freedom lies in following the Spirit of the Lord. When the Christian does what the Spirit of God instructs him or her to do, one also finds the way to true freedom in life. And true liberty, in turn, enables the Christian, through the Spirit of the Lord, to live and walk according to the truth and righteousness of God.

Following the instruction of the Spirit of God is the only way in which a person can be free from the bondage of both the sin of seeking to follow in the flesh the concepts of the model called "Jew" or "circumcision" and the sin of seeking to follow the passions of the flesh of the concepts of the model so-called "Greek" or "uncircumcision."

Both the style called "Jew" and the model called "Greek" are inclinations to the flesh and not to the Spirit, that is why they cannot provide true freedom.

Both circumcision and uncircumcision are propositions of inclination to human desire and not to the will of God, which is why they are so fragile and limited.

Why, then, is it so significant for a Christian to know the two basic styles of natural life and which do not corroborate with the new creature?

- ⇒ 1) To know that the life in the flesh, in both its extremes, as well as in any attempt of a mix of them, will never produce true novelty of life, which, in turn, is found only in the life guided by the Spirit of God.
- ⇒ 2) For not to be blinded by the fascination of a pretended life based on predefined disciplines or rules, nor by the attraction of the propositions of a false grace which proposes that a Christian could give way to the desires of the lusts of the flesh without becoming exposed to the damages of sowing in the flesh.
- ⇒ 3) To know that the true newness of life and freedom in the Lord can only be found in Christ and the words which He grants, through the Holy Spirit, to our quickened spirit.

Romans 8: 6 ***For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.***

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.
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,
17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

I. Wide Gate and Broad Way or Strait Gate and Narrow Way?

*Matthew 7: 13 and 14 **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. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (NKJV + AV)***

In addition to the above topics, **life as a new creature still differs from the concepts associated with the model of circumcision and uncircumcision because it is always the result of a personal decision and not a result of a hereditary or collective decision or which merely manifests itself in the natural flow of the world.**

While a person is born into the world first in the condition of the model of the uncircumcision and might be associated with the circumcision model even as a little child and without understanding, the association with the condition of a new creature is manifested by a new birth which, in turn, is granted by God individually to those who personally come to believe in Christ Jesus and receive Him in the heart as the Eternal Lord.

While the conditions of association with the concepts of uncircumcision and circumcision present a wide gate and a broad way with their many variations, the association with the newness of life of the new creature, the life born of the Spirit and not of the flesh, presents a strait gate and a narrow way because to become associated with it only an individual and voluntary decision through faith in Christ Jesus is accepted, since faith in the Lord and the Gospel is personal and nontransferable.

Although the life of the new creature is offered by God widely or broadly to all human beings, receiving it, associating with it, and remaining in it are connected with a personal choice according to the individual faith of each person in Christ Jesus.

In the circumcision model, a person, for instance, can be considered part of a group for having listed his or her name on some list of this group, just as a person who is not part of a group of the circumcision can automatically be part of the uncircumcision and the current thinking in the society of which one is a part. However, regarding the life as a new creature, a person cannot associate with it through a natural group or remain part of it because one remains associated with some human group, for the process of becoming a new creature depends on the personal faith in Christ and is established by the Lord directly with each person.

The Lord Jesus Christ, when He proclaimed prophecies about the coming of the heavenly kingdom to eternally gather to this kingdom those who received Him personally in their life, said that it might happen that even one of the spouses will be brought to the eternal presence of the Heavenly Father and the other not, by one believing in the Lord and the other not. And if the faith of a person is not even transferable to one's spouse or does not produce guarantees of salvation even to the person with whom one became one flesh, it is not an association with a group of

circumcision or uncircumcision, or to their beliefs, that will guarantee the salvation of an individual.

In another passage from the Scriptures, we find explicitly expressed that each person shall give account of oneself to the Lord. Thus, the human systems, models, guides, leaders, pastors, or representatives that a person may have chosen for the purpose to be guided or protected in one's trajectory on Earth can do nothing for him or her at the time of the mentioned accountability, for no human being or human model of life can provide any support to others during the occasion in reference.

Romans 14: 12 ***So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.***

People can propose broader or easier-looking paths to their peers in the world. Ways that do not make them walk differently from the crowds. Ways that even may spare them opposition or resistance from other people. However, when the life of a person on Earth ends, those people who have so boldly uttered their human propositions to others will not stand before the Lord to give support to those whom they preached their messages.

People can promise a broad variety of gates and the most diverse ways for the salvation of a soul, but the matter is not just about what they promise, but about the capacity of the foundation on which their promises are grounded.

As much as the models of circumcision and uncircumcision use broad philosophy and vast arguments about what they propose to human beings, their foundation and assurances are nothing more than guarantees of the creation and without validity or virtue before God and the new creature.

Only Christ is the gate of eternal salvation and the way that leads to the truth and newness of life that is in the Heavenly Father. Only in Christ can a person be born again. And it is just in Christ that a person finds the unwavering foundation to live and walk according to the will of God and to enjoy eternal life in the Lord.

John 10: 7 ***Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.”***

Colossians 2: 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;*
¹⁰ *and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality*
and power.

C7. The New Creature Evidenced by the New

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.**

Galatians 6: 15 **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.**

In the previous chapter, divided into several topics, we sought to highlight several aspects mentioned in the Scriptures that teach us what the new creature is not indeed in the eyes of the Lord. And this, as a way of showing that the new creature is not equal to the models of life that are based on the natural attempts and efforts of the creation.

On the other hand, of course, we can also observe in the teaching of the Scriptures that the knowledge of the new creature should occur as well or mainly by the knowledge of the very newness of life that is in the proposition of the Gospel and that is so generously offered by God, through His grace, to all human beings.

Although a Christian living on the Earth is still surrounded by conceptions according to the model of circumcision and the model of uncircumcision, conceptions of the exemplified “Jew <_____> Greek” ruler, this same Christian objectively also receives the invitation and the exhortation, on the part of God, to place his or her attention sharply on the “new” that is offered and given from Heaven to him or her, as exemplified below:

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.

While the Scriptures exhort the Christian to leave entirely both the model of circumcision and the model of the uncircumcision, which are models of “sin which so easily ensnares” people in the world, the same Scriptures invite and exhort the Christian to be intense in observing and following the newness of life offered and granted to him or her from the heavenly kingdom. It is for real growth in the knowledge of the novelty and for indeed experiencing this newness of life that a Christian is called by the Lord.

The proposition of novelty of life that the Lord extends to all those who believe in His offer and receive it is not limited to, or just refers to, a proposition that exclusively enables a person to abandon the aged and unprofitable models of life as are the circumcision and the uncircumcision, but the Lord's offer also, or mainly, has its

greatness exalted by the novelty that is included in the proposition of the new life in Christ.

The proposition of the newness of life in the Lord is worthy of all exaltation by offering people their deliverance from the yoke of sin and the law to which they are subject while dissociated from the grace of God, but the offer of the novelty of life is also worthy of all exaltation precisely because it offers something new.

God sent Christ Jesus for the salvation of people while they were still sinners in order to free them from the yoke of sin and the condemnatory law according to the concepts of the Law of Moses, but God also sent Christ Jesus to grant a new life to all who receive the salvation provided and offered by the Lord.

The prophet Isaiah prophesied to the peoples that God would provide them with an Eternal Savior, but he also foretold of the need of people to realize that, besides providing for the indispensable liberation of the yoke of the ancient life models adopted by these peoples, this salvation would also be accompanied by the heavenly novelty of life.

*Isaiah 43: 19 **Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert.***

Yet in another part of the writings of the prophet Isaiah, speaking about the purpose of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ, he similarly announces the liberation of people of the burdens who oppress them, but not without also prophesying the coming of an abundant pouring out of the novelty of life for the people who receive liberty in the Lord.

*Isaiah 61: 1 **The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;***
2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,
3 To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

No one can ever fully exalt or praise the value of the deliverance that Christ gives to the people who were enslaved to sin and the condemning law of the antiquated models of circumcision and uncircumcision, but still, Christ did not come just to take people out of the condition of being subjected to the slavery of the unrighteousness that these ancient models cause.

God sent Christ to provide and offer deliverance to all so that everyone who welcomes His provision of liberty also becomes free to receive the abundant provision of life that is in the Lord.

*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.***

Still in other statements about those who would come to believe in Him as the Only Begotten Son sent by the Heavenly Father as the Eternal Christ, the Lord Jesus declared:

*John 7: 37 **On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 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.***

*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: 13 **Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 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."***

While the fleshly or antiquated models of creation at the most manage to provide temporal satisfaction, such as an enchantment or a torpor to alleviate for a short time the anguish of the soul, Christ offers liberty to people from that which is just temporal and false, but Christ also provides the newness of life in continuous and eternal abundance which can only be granted by God to the people who need it so much.

*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.***

The Lord Jesus Christ indeed does invite people to become free from the oppressive and fruitless burdens they carry from the “Jew <_____> Greek” models. However, He also teaches that it is by associating indeed

with Him, in Whom is the newness of life, that a person finds the place of rest for his or her soul and finds the condition of being fruitful with eternal fruits and according to the divine will.

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.

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.

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."

A Christian is called to resist the propositions of the concepts of circumcision and uncircumcision, but not in his or her own strength, for if it were so, the Christian would be called to be freed from the models devoid of value before God to return to try to live again by the same models from which one got free.

A Christian is called to resist the propositions associated with both circumcision and uncircumcision because he or she is offered a new condition to be lived in the Lord and in the power of the Spirit of the Lord, which is also called the newness of life in Christ Jesus.

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

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

- 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*
- 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*
- 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.*
- 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*
- 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*
-

Life according to the new creature encompasses the provision for a person to be able to abstain from that which does not fit in the life in Christ Jesus, but it also includes the provision extended to the new creature for a Christian to live and walk according to the newness of God.

The life of the new creature in Christ, when practiced, does not just grant victory over the slavery of the models contrary to the will of God, but also, together, produces continuous newness of life.

The Christian is not called to live and walk according to the model of circumcision and nor of uncircumcision, and neither to adopt a percentage of the first model and some parts of the second in an attempt to create a new model of the two, thus remaining no human model to be followed. However, on the other hand, the Christian is not called to be disoriented in life as someone who is lacking guidance or subject to a “vacuum of existence or purpose.” That is why every Christian has, in the Lord, at his or her disposal an abundant supply of wisdom and instructions, being so, by the Spirit of God, also able to live according to the new creature, even though one still inhabits the present world.

*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: 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?***
-

Finally, in the present subject, we would yet like to emphasize that life according to the new creature is not a proposition to just be admired, contemplated, or studied, but, above all, to be experienced or known every day in a living, real, and practical way.

Whoever practices faith in the Lord indeed, eats of the Lord or feeds on Him, and whoever practices fellowship with the Lord, drinks continuously from the Lord. And it is by this abiding in the Lord that a person can come to know who he or she is “in Christ Jesus” and what is God's instruction for his or her life.

We recall here also that the mentioned abiding in the Lord refers to a personal and practical task, and which, therefore, cannot be delegated so that some do it for others.

Similar to natural life, in which an individual cannot eat or drink instead of another person and expect that the other person will be fed, so it also is regarding the fellowship of the new creature with Christ Jesus.

*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.**
58 **This is the bread which came down from heaven, not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.***

The salvation provided by the Gospel of God, or the Gospel of Salvation, is also the same salvation of the Gospel of God's Power for a new life, to which every Christian is called to live from the first moment one receives Christ Jesus in his or her heart.

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

*2 Timothy 1: 7 **For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.***

*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.***

...

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

The condition of the new creature is evidenced, indeed, by what a person ceased to be, of what was left behind or passed away.

However, by the resurrection in Christ Jesus, the condition of the new creature is also, or mainly, evidenced by the newness of life in the Spirit of God that is granted to each person who receives the salvation of the Lord.

In Christ, a new living and walking are before every Christian and to which each one is invited to grow daily.

Colossians 3: 1 till 15
If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

***Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.
 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
 When Christ who is our life appears (or will manifest Himself), then
 you also will appear (or be manifested) with Him in glory.
 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth:
 fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness,
 which is idolatry.
 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of
 disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived
 in them.
 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice,
 blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.
 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his
 deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge
 according to the image of Him who created him,
 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor
 uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all
 and in all.
 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender
 mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with
 one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint
 against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.
 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of
 perfection.
 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were
 called in one body; and be thankful.***

Psalms 25: 4 till 6

***Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths.
 Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my
 salvation; On You I wait all the day.
 Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your
 lovingkindnesses, For they are from of old.***

Bibliography

Note on Biblical Texts referenced:

- 1) The biblical texts without explicit indications of reference were drawn from NKJV Bible, as indicated below.
- 2) Highlights in the biblical texts, such as underline, bold, or similar were added by the author of this study.

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