The Kingdom of God

A Kingdom with golden streets, where there are no tears, no suffering, and no death. Such a place can stir the interest of many. We believe that provided the opportunity, no man would refuse the chance of having a better life, without death. (…*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Revelation 21:4*; *Every gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold. Revelation 21:21*).

However, in addition to these "*golden streets*", there are also spiritual things within this Kingdom, which are difficult to comprehend and hard to register for the human mind. To most of our dear ones, these things are pure nonsense. *(…the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him.* *1 Corinthians 2:14)*

These things will turn the values of our lives upside down, since they are incompatible with the things we have learned from this world. For these reasons, the Kingdom of God will remain a mystery to most of us. (*Things which the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, nor have entered into the human heart, so are the things which God has prepared… 1 Corinthians 2:9*)

The Son of God said to seek not only the Kingdom of God, but also His righteousness, which means that the Kingdom of God is much more than just a place of comfort. (*Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Matthew 5:48*)

Many of us want to be saved, to be part of Heaven, and not Hell – but reaching the righteousness of this Kingdom is not that easy; it requires us to give up on many things that have so far been our way of life.

One of the things we often use and will have to give up is lying, whether it be small or big. We can easily notice that there is no human to have never used a lie. It is used when we are late for work or when we arrive home later than expected by our dear ones. Lies are also frequently used in business, sales… However, those who want to give up lying will have to pay the price of losing the advantages it brings.

Another thing we all have chased after is self-love/selfishness. Since we're born, we are directed solely towards ourselves. The entire episode of our life is then concentrated only on this. We must however note that self-love cannot be found among the things of the Kingdom of God.

The Holy Scriptures point out some of the world's values and traits, which cannot be found within this Kingdom: self-lovers, lovers of money, braggers, prideful, demeaning, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, not loving what is good, traitors, reckless, conceited; lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. (*2Timothy 3:2*)

"*For everything in the world: the desires of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and **the pride of life— is not from the Father, but is from the world*." (*1**John 2:16*)

To find out what are the values of the Kingdom of God, it is crucial not to let other think for us by following the crowd or traditions, but to perform a personal investigation and find out for oneself. Whoever will not be drawn to these values and will not understand that he is called to live in the peace, purity and righteousness of God, will not come to know the mysteries of this hidden Kingdom.

There are many questions that we must ask ourselves, the answers to which we are unable to find anywhere else other than in the Holy Scriptures. (*You are lost because you do not know the Scriptures… Matthew 22:29*) To find these answers, we are required not only to read the Scriptures, but to study them attentively and in humbleness. Here are some of the questions that we should ask ourselves:

- Who belongs to this Kingdom and what are its citizens like?

- What are the values of this Heavenly Kingdom? (*Things which the eye has **not** seen… **such** are **the** things **that** God **has** prepared.**1** Corinthians2:9*)

- We know that every birth is based on a seed out of which new life is born. This seed contains the genetic information required for the new life to take place. The Scripture tells us that the birth in God's Kingdom is also based on a seed from which new life will germinate. (*Whoever **is** born **of** God… **His** seed **remains** in **him.** 1 **John**3:9*) Have you ever wondered what type of genetic information can be found within God's seed? Whose image is in this seed from which man is born again? What does this image look like?

- Have you considered that this Kingdom has laws regarding the new way of life? Can you enter/be born again in this Kingdom without knowing them and without entering an agreement/taking a solemn pledge through which you undertake to respect them? (*Read: Exodus 24: 3-8*)

- What are the criteria by which God selects the few, out of the many that are called? (*For many are called, but few are chosen. Matthew 22:14*)

- Are we required to reach Christ's stature, the perfection of our character during this lifetime? (…*nothing unclean will ever enter it. Revelation 21:27*)

In the upcoming pages we will try to provide you an answer to these questions, which we hope will awaken in you a burning desire in getting to know the mysteries of this Kingdom and knowing God as He is. (*Eternal **life is this: to know the only true God. John 17:3*) The Scriptures reveal to us that God foresaw the creation of beings that would have His features, beings made in His image and likeness. (***God** created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him. Genesis 1:27*)

The purpose of creation was for man to live in communion with God, according to the laws that govern His Kingdom. However, man was deceived by

Satan and got separated from God, losing as such His likeness/image. (*You were once dead in the sins… Ephesians 2:1*)

The Word shows us that even before He founded the world, God foresaw the possibility of the fall and prepared a solution for restoring and perfecting mankind. (…*in **Himself, God chose us to be holy and faultless before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4*) Thus, God made it possible for man to be born again of God and to grow towards having His character/image. (*We are God's children now, and what we will be is not yet revealed; but we know that when**He will appear, we shall be like Him. 1 John 3:2*)

But just as Adam and Eve faced Satan's cunningness, so will those who want to reach God's Heaven. As he deceived the first humans, undermining the authority of God's Word, so will he come to us using the same temptations and methods. (*Is it true that God has said ? Genesis 3:1*)

Nowadays, one of Satan's great battles is for man not to rise from the spiritual death in which he finds himself in. He does everything he can to keep us away from being born again, since that is the moment when he loses his right over us. (*Unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. John 3:5-7*)

His purpose is for us to remain only with a mental *(dead)* faith, preventing us from understanding that we are called to live in the peace and righteousness of His Kingdom. (*When **someone hears the Word of the Kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. Matthew**13:19*) Just like he tempted Lord Jesus, Satan can tempt us using specific passages from the Scriptures. (*Matthew 4:6*) Thus, to annihilate any preoccupation related to us being transformed after the Lord's image, Satan comes through his servants to deceive us by teaching that to be saved, only a mental faith in the Lord's sacrifice is sufficient, while our acts of faith/efforts are not required.

For this reason, these teachers only point out certain texts from the Scriptures, such as, "*For **by grace you have been saved*". *(Ephesians 2:8)* However, they will never mention nor highlight the verses which clearly point out that our effort is needed. (*Seek after peace and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews**12:14*; *Whoever says "I know Him", but does not keep His commandments is a liar,and the truth is not in him. 1 John 2:4*)

If we look at the reality around us, we find that Satan has deceived many with this teaching. It can be noticed that those who have been deceived by this teaching have reduced the Scriptures to only a few verses, one of which is: "*Not through works, so that no one may boast". (Ephesians 2:9*) However, those who have received this false and deadly teaching will have to hope that during resurrection, God will have a special formula to *"somehow"* cleanse their character of all the vices with which upon death they will depart from earth: anger, envy, pride, slander… *(Some examples are the countless existing doctrines and theories which aim to tackle

this crucial aspect of God's Kingdom, its perfection, such as the theory about purgatory, the theory about the 7 thresholds, the thousand-year reign…)*

It is true that for those who believe in Him and His sacrifice, forgiveness of sins and redemption is made possible through Lord's work at the cross. (*Colossians 1:13-14*) In the process of restoring mankind and bringing them to the stature and character of Christ, the Lord does not work alone, but with the acts of our faith done in humble obedience to His teachings. (*For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor… counts for anything, but only faith which works… Galatians 5:6*) The work of the cross will not benefit us if we have a dead faith. (…*faith without works is dead. James 2:26*)

The Scripture warns us that if we hear the gospel and are not hungry and thirsty for the righteousness and purity of the Kingdom, God will give us a work of delusion to believe a lie. (*Therefore,God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but found pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:11*)

The Scripture tells us that if we do not adhere to the words of Lord Jesus, we shall be contaminated with the disease of pointless research, which will ultimately lead to our destruction. (*If anyone… does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ… has an unhealthy craving for controversy and quarrels about words… is depraved in mind… and of the truth. 1 Timothy 6:3*)

If we look at the multitude of religious groups, each professing to be holding the truth, we can easily see how many go on this path of supporting teachings specific to their group, which can only lead to arguments between various parties. If we won't research the Scriptures with the purpose of living our lives in the holiness and righteousness of the Kingdom and according to the law of Christ, and will limit ourselves to studying and supporting only certain teachings such as: speaking in tongues, concerning the return of the Lord, the importance of the "*Jehovah*" name, the importance of keeping a certain day… then the devil has already won the battle.

Many have thus been deceived, believing that the true spiritual life consists of being concerned with supporting the teaching of the group to which one belongs to or the various other existing theories. Whoever has eyes will see that these teachings are in fact intended to keep us away from the true calling – that of living in the peace and righteousness of the Kingdom.

In order not to be deceived by Satan, every God seeking man must understand that he is called not to uphold a theory, but to be born again and grow so that he can become just like Him! (*Therefore, be perfect, as your Father in the heavens is perfect Matthew 5:48*) If we are to be honest with ourselves, we will have to admit that many of us might know very little about this. When we think of this resemblance to God, many of us tend to think of it as something that can be perceived by the physical eyes. God however does not reveal Himself to us in this regard. When we talk about His image in us, this type of external knowledge will be of no help to us in getting to know Him.

There is however an inner part in which we can resemble God, an aspect which can be known by man, but is ignored by most.

This aspect is God's heart, namely His way of being. We must understand that we will not be able to become like Him and be like Him if we do not want and are not eager to get to know Him, if we are not motivated in knowing His character, without wanting to have a heart like His. (*Please, show me now your ways, so that I may know you. Exodus 33:13*)

Here is how the Scriptures describe God's Image/His heart: *"Lord God is merciful and abounding in patience, slow to anger, and full love and faithfulness." (Exodus 34:6); "Lord God is gracious, full of compassion and of great mercy." (Psalm 145:8); "…all His works are perfect; a God of faithfulness and without injustice; righteous and upright is He." (Deuteronomy 32:4); "God is love." (1 John 4:16).*

Thus, to become like Him, we will have to love His way of being, to be drawn to the beauty of His character. (*No one can come to Me unless he is drawn by the Father. John 6:44*) Afterwards, we will have to throw away all the things which were values to us and start following/imitating Him just as a child does with his parent in everything the parent does. Just as a baby becomes accustomed to the new things in life by copying and mimicking his parents, so will the one born of God. The Lord will be our Father and He will work with us to imprint His traits unto us.

Only if we allow ourselves to be processed by Him will our hearts become more and more like His, as we find written about David, who was a man after the heart of God. (*I have found David…a man after My own heart. Acts 13:22*)

Source: *The Kingdom of God* — Unmodified Word
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