Life in the Kingdom of God

God created the universe and put all things in a perfect order, each one of them with their respective laws of operation. One of these laws is the law of gravity. Due to this law, the earth does not deviate from its trajectory right or left. The sun also has its precise course in the constellation of the universe. All these things were made by the Word of God and follow His perfect laws. (*The heavens were made by the Word of the Lord. Psalm 33:6*)

The same is true of man. God's laws according to which man must live are perfect, as they lead him to the ultimate goal, which is perfect love. (*The goal of the **commandments is love. 1 Timothy 1:5*) The only option is therefore to accept God's standard of obedience, and this will ensure our success. Any deviation from these perfect laws will make us miss the mark. *(If the word spoken through angels proved unalterable,** and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Hebrews 2:2)*

God's standard of obedience

Lord Jesus came into our world to teach us through His personal example the way of living in the Kingdom and to show us what type of relationship is required between God and those who will be admitted into the upper Kingdom. He was sent by the Father to be a model for us. A model in everything: in love, in abounding patience, in kindness, in humility… and above all – a model of obedience. He was obedient in all things, unto death. (*He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:8; His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. Isaiah 11:3*)

Lord Jesus gave up His own will, renounced Himself and took the form of a slave. (*I can do nothing of myself: as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is righteous;because I seek not my own will, but the will of Him that sent me. John 5:30; He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and came to be in the likeness of men. Philippians 2:7*)

When we are called to salvation, to be saved, Lord Jesus asks us to follow His personal example and deny ourselves, just as He did. (*If **anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. Luke 9:23; The one who says that he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He** walked… 1 John 2:6*)

Through the way He lived His life on earth, He shows us the path that leads to perfection. He kept the Word before telling us to keep it. *(But I do know Him and keep His word. John 8:55*) We can see this from the way he kept the law of the Kingdom concerning judgment: "Judge not, so that you will not be judged". (*Matthew 7:*1)

Before telling us not to judge, He first kept this law unto death. (*"Man"answered Jesus, "who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?*" *Luke 12:14; Idid not come to judge the world, but to save the world. John 12:47)* He submitted Himself to God and did not judge even those

who killed Him. (*In His humility, His judgment was taken away. Acts 8:33; When he was mocked, he did not mock… but he committed himself to Him who judges righteously. 1 Peter 2:23*)

Moreover, to better understand the way of life from the upper Kingdom, we also have the Lord's angels as an example. When they find themselves in the position of keeping the Heaven's law regarding judgment and slander, they do so without transgression. (*Read 2 Peter 2:11*) One of them is archangel Michael. He did not dare to break this law of the Kingdom. (*Michael, when he was fighting the devil over the body of Moses, did not dare to pronounce against him a railing judgment. Jude 1:9*)

Many will perhaps excuse their disobedience by saying that it is normal for those that live in the presence of the Lord to have the power to obey without deviating. However, the Scriptures also give us as an example of obedience in Noah and Abraham, this time they are representatives of ours, people subject to mistakes, just like us. When they found themselves in the position of keeping the Lord's command, they did not murmur, did not negotiate, but only did exactly as they were told. *(So did Noah: according to all that God had commanded him. Genesis 6:22; By faith Abraham, when he was tested, brought his son (Isaac) as a burnt sacrifice. Hebrews 11:17*)

To understand the consequences of partial obedience, the Scriptures give us King Saul as an example of someone who kept God's command, but not entirely. When God told him to utterly destroy everything that belonged to the Amalekite people, Saul obeyed, but did not follow "everything" that the Lord had commanded. (*But Saul and the people spared king Agag and the best of the sheep… and were not willing to utterly destroy them. 1 Samuel 15:9*)

At a first glance, he obeyed God because he kept much of what God had commanded him to do. (Saul told Samuel: "I did obey the voice of the Lord, and went on the mission on which the Lord had sent me." 1 Samuel 15:20) However, this type of partial obedience, which Saul was convinced to be obedience, God calls disobedience, which is just as guilty as guessing. Here is what Saul believed and said: "*I have kept the word of the Lord". (1 Samuel 15:13)* God's answer is quite different: "*I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned his back from following Me and has not carried out My commands". (1 Samuel 15:11)*

We will have to understand that we are not called to obey a trivial or superficial God – obedience is crucial in ensuring our salvation.

Just as Noah had to build an ark to save himself from the flood, so will we have to work to have the image of Christ in us for our salvation. (*I feel the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! Galatians 4:19; Christ in you, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27)* In order to be saved, Noah kept all that God had told him. In the same way, for Christ to take shape in me, I will have to keep everything that the Lord has commanded me to do. (*Obey Him in everything He tells you. Acts 3:22)*

We must keep the law of Christ in its entirety, because in it we find the God's thought, namely the image of His character, an image that nowadays is seen by

very few people, but it nonetheless cannot be otherwise seen. (*The one who says, “I have come to know Him” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 1 John 2:4; … so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, which is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4)*

Here are some of these commandments that show His way of being: “*Whoever wants to sue you for your coat, leave him your shirt as well.” (Matthew 5:40); “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.” (Luke 20:25); “Beware of slandering.” (Matthew 18:10)*

The question is: How are we currently keeping these commandments? The way Noah and Abraham did; doing all that God told them to do? Or are we partially keeping them, just like Saul did?

The Lord wants to work with any person that allows himself to be shaped by Him, just as He has worked with Noah/Abraham, in order to bring that person to the stature where he can say that he is worthy of inheriting the Kingdom of God. (*I am confident that He who has begun this good work in you will finish it until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6; …until we all reach… the stature measured by Christ’s fullness. Ephesians 4:13)*

For the Spirit to work towards perfecting our character, we will have to live in full obedience/as slaves to the Lord and His laws. (*You have become slaves of God,your fruit is sanctification, and the end is eternal life. Romans 6:22)*

Only he who will be in this position of full obedience, of unwavering loyalty that characterized Noah and Abraham, (which lies at the opposite pole of Saul’s (dis)“obedience”), will be able to finish building the “ark of salvation”. We are sorely deceiving ourselves if we live our lives in an obedience like that of Saul, telling ourselves and others as a justification that we are all weak, and believing that we will be made perfect during the resurrection, on the basis of Christ’s sacrifice.

The blood of Christ has flowed for the forgiveness of sins, but the perfection of our being is done by the Holy Spirit; and this only if we keep the word of the Lord. (*We are transformed into His image… by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18*)

Let us ask ourselves: Can Christ take shape in us without full obedience? (*My little children… I feel the pains of childbirth until Christ takes shape in you! Galatians 4:19)*

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