The Nature of the Kingdom of God

We can easily see that the secular world has a totally different standard compared to the standard of the Kingdom of God. Ever since we were little children, in order to achieve the goals we had set ourselves, we have used, to a greater or lesser extent, the principle which states that: *"the end justifies the means".* As a result, for the man who finds himself in trouble, the thumb rule is to: become angry, lie, appeal to cunningness, act with hidden intentions, flatter, use bribery, copy, demean, steal… But the things from above, which God has prepared for us to walk in, are totally different from the things of this world; they are things which do not reach the mind of the spiritually dead man. *(Things which the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, nor have managed to enter into the human heart, so are the things which God has prepared… 1 Corinthians 2:9; If you have risen with Christ, seek the things from above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; set your minds on things*

above, not on earthly things. Colossians 3:1)

If we are going to walk after these things as for a hidden treasure, only then we will succeed. We will succeed not only in finding them, but also enjoying them, now and for eternity. (*Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Matthew 6:33; If you seek it like silver and search for it as for a hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God… Proverbs 2:4)*

The heavenly things, though so simple, are the complete opposite of the things man seeks; for many of us these things are complete nonsense. *(The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14)*

In the following lines, we will try to detail some of the values that are found within the Kingdom of God and which define its nature. We hope you will allow yourself to be attracted by them!

One of the upper things/the great values of the Kingdom of God is perfection, also described as holiness, purity, righteousness. *(Holiness is the ornament of Your House, Lord, for as long as time stands. Psalm 93:5)* Therefore we can speak of a law of righteousness that rules within the Kingdom of Heaven. *(But based on His promise, we seek new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:13)*

Those who are hungry and thirsty for the values of righteousness are received into this Kingdom. *(Happy are the hungry and thirsty after righteousness! Matthew 5:6)*

Dictionary definition for faultless: free from defect, perfect, flawless, without fault, correct, impeccable. We will list some of these values that are found in the Kingdom:

Honesty/Fairness

Within this Kingdom, no one enjoys injustice/bias; its citizens do not deceive or use gifts/bribes, they are not cunning, they do not slander. *(Everyone who remains in Him does not sin; anyone who sins… has not known Him. 1 John 3:6)*

Those in the Kingdom do not crave or assume for themselves the things of others. They do not use things from work which do not belong to them. Example: They do not use the company car or other assets for personal use. *(Do not yearn for any… thing that belongs to your neighbor. Deuteronomy 5:21)* They do not use stolen/pirated software on their computers. They do not work illegally, they declare and pay taxes for all their incomes. *(That is also why you pay your taxes, for the authorities… are God's servants. Romans 13:6)*

When they must take an exam, they do not copy/steal what is not theirs. If there are things they had stolen while they were in the darkness, they will stop using them, return them and compensate where possible. *(The person is to confess the sin he has committed. He is to pay full compensation, add a fifth of its value to it; and give it to the individual he has wronged. Numbers 5:7)*

Verification: Do you have things from work, or from somewhere else that you have assumed for yourself and your personal use? Do you have stolen software on your computer? Do you steal taxes by not declaring your work/incomes?

The heavenly citizens do not accept the use of gifts/bribes. The Scriptures tell us that those who practices bribery has a rotten heart. *(Bribing corrupts the mind.Ecclesiastes 7:7; They took bribes… and perverted justice. 1 Samuel 8:3; But the one who hates bribes will live. Proverbs 15:27)*

Bribing according to the dictionary: persuade *(someone)* to act in one's favor, illegally or dishonestly, by a gift of money or other inducement, in order to determine someone not to carry out their duties, or to perform their duties more conscientiously.

Perhaps few of us are in a position that gives them the opportunity to receive gifts/bribes, however, most of us are in the position to give. Many, in order to solve their problems, find themselves in the position of appealing to gifts/bribery. We must understand that when we initiate a reward for an already paid for service, either publicly or privately, we give the other person an opportunity to sin, to fall into sin.

To corrupt our hearts, Satan brings many such opportunities in life. *(An example being at the hospital, at the doctor.)* When we are on the hospital bed and we are in need, if we are going to make the nurse be kinder by putting something in her pocket, we will be the ones who had tempted her, bringing her the opportunity to sin.

Through our gift we are asking her to take more care of us and she will thus end up neglecting the ones who do not have the means of giving her anything. By receiving these gifts, she will corrupt her heart and wrong the one without financial means. *(You must not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and corrupts the words of the righteous. Exodus 23:8)*

Through our gesture, we are the ones who challenged/tempted her to break God's Word, we are the ones who corrupted her heart.

The teachings of the Kingdom warn us in the most serious way, illustrating how dangerous tempting other souls and corrupting their hearts is. *(It is impossible not to give others the opportunity for sinning; but woe to him through whom they come! It would be more useful for him to have a millstone tied around his neck and be thrown into the sea. Luke 17:1)*

To understand the seriousness of this sin, it is worth noting that the laws of the secular world condemn the one who instigates to bribery stronger than the one receiving them.

The citizens of the Kingdom must always be on the alert to not be among those who bring the occasion of sinning, to not do the work of the devil. *(Judge for yourselves… not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. Romans 14:13)*

Those who decide to keep the law of perfection or righteousness will be persecuted. But they will also be rewarded with the peace and rest from above, a peace that certifies their membership in the Kingdom. *(Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Matthew 5:10; The work of righteousness shall be peace, the fruit of righteousness: rest and eternal peace. Isaiah 32:17)*

A Clean Heart

Those who belong to the upper Kingdom do not contaminate their hearts with filthy things. They do not listen to the advice of the wicked, they do not put anything corrupt before their eyes, they cover their eyes so that they do not see evil, and they close their ears so that they do not hear inappropriate words. *(Isaiah 33:15)* They do not love the things that nourish and awaken the cravings of the flesh and neither do they use them; some of them consisting of the world's inventions: magazines, books, newspapers, the radio of the world and the world's television/internet *. (Do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15; Blessed is the man… who does not stand in the path of sinners. Psalms 1:1)*

Within the Kingdom/the Church, they make sure that no one spoils their hearts with filthy things and thus contaminate others. *(See to it that no one comes short… and there be no worldly person among you. Hebrews 12:15)*

For this they will watch over each other so that each of them has a clean heart. If there is a need for someone to use the internet, they will make sure that this is done in a controlled and filtered way, so as not to allow Satan to tempt us and feed our earthly nature or to awaken our desires. *(I will not set iniquity before my eyes; I despise the transgression of sinners. Psalm 101:3; Turn away my eyes from seeing **vanity. Psalm 119:7; Do not bother about the flesh, so as not to awaken it to your lust. Romans 13:14)* They do not go to places like the beaches, by the sea, so as not to feed the flesh and not to defile the heart with the naked, nor to give others the opportunity to sin. *(Adorn with proper clothing, modestly and with prudence. 1**Timothy 2:9)*

They are very careful not to awaken the lust of the eyes, as it directly affects the body. *(The eye is the light of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Luke 11:34; I had made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I have gazed…? Job 31:1)*

They keep their hearts pure and clean, as it is the only way they shall see God! *(Blessed **are the pure in heart, for they shall see God! Matthew 5:8)* For these reasons, they have removed everything in their sight which would have otherwise given them the opportunity to fall into sin. *(If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and**throw it away from you. Matthew 18:9)*

They avoid and run away from the earthly desires/desires of the flesh which harm the soul. *(Beloved ones, I urge you… to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 1 Peter 2:11; For all that is in the world, the desire of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 1 John 2:16)*

Questions for self-reflection:

- Am I searching for the peace and purity of this Kingdom just as one would for a very valuable treasure?

- Am I hungry and thirsty for holiness, to reach purity and be without

sin?

- Do I live according to the laws that govern the Kingdom of God?

Christ's peaceful Kingdom has most often been misunderstood, even by those who call themselves faithful. Very few belong to the group who understand, accept, and live by this heavenly standard. *(And they will hammer their swords into farming plows and turn their spears into pruning-hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war. Isaiah 2:4)*

The dictionary definition for peace: free from trouble, conflicts, friction; harmony, calmness, understanding. To destroy peace = to reach conflict with somebody else.

Many do not notice that the message of the Kingdom is in fact the message of peace. Few observe that the Lord of peace has come to bring on earth the peace that reigns within the Heavenly Kingdom *.(I must preach the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, for I was sent for this purpose. Luke 4:43; The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching the message of peace through Jesus Christ. Acts 10:36; May the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. 2 Thessalonians 3:16).*

When Lord Jesus said, "*Let God's will be done, as in heaven, so on earth*"; He tells us that the peace from heaven also exists on earth among those who belong to Him. (*Glory to God… and peace on earth among His people. Luke 2:14; Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest places! Luke 19:38)*

It is extremely important to understand that the law of peace that rules in the heavenly Kingdom also rules on earth among the people of this Kingdom. All born of God citizens must guard them and therefore must not learn or teach war, but live in perfect peace with one another, be kind, gentle, easy in understanding, blessing one another, not speaking ill of anyone, free from anger, foreign to quarrels, of no hostility, not judging, not opposing their fellows, not harming anyone.

To not disturb the peace from their hearts, as well as the peace of the Kingdom, they will not initiate nor enter into any type of conflict. They do not sue others to do justice. *(No nation will lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war. Isaiah 2:4)*

Conflicting situations can occur when interacting with citizens of the Kingdom of darkness. To solve their problems, God's children apply the laws of the upper Kingdom, which will take over the laws of the lower/earthly countries. They will do everything in their power to avoid conflicts so as not to cause trouble/upset. (*As **long as it will depend on you, live in peace with all men. Romans 12:18)* They seek the peace that comes from walking in/after the things from above.** ***(Walking in**the things of the Spirit is life and peace. Romans 8:5)*

When they are wronged, in order to keep their peace, which comes from above, they are left with one option: to address their Lord and then to gladly submit to His will. They do not have the police or the courts at their disposal… as the citizens of the other kingdom do. *(When he was mocked, he did not mock, and when he was tormented, he did not threaten, but committed himself to Him who judges righteously. 1 Peter 2:23)*

This law of peace will bring trouble and suffering for those entering the Kingdom of God. When a conflict will be initiated with them, the world's attitude will only help in further humiliating them; they will be ridiculed and mocked even by those at home. In order not to spoil the peace and rest of their hearts, to which they have been called to, they will proceed to follow the example of their Lord. *(For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving an example for you to follow in His steps. 1 Peter 2:21; Pursue peace with all people, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14)*

This peace will guard their hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus. They will do nothing which will disturb their hearts or the peace within. *(And the peace of God,which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7)*

The only options they have at hand during times of persecution are either patience or fleeing. *(When they persecute you in one town, flee to another. Matthew 10:23)*

Peace is a result of the hearts attitude, of living in righteousness, of giving up resistance, anger, and judgment. This peace is obtained by keeping the teachings of Christ. *(The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. Romans 8:6; Had you known the things that could give you peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Luke 19:42)*

In order to reach the peace and resting of the Kingdom of God, we have to

apply the teachings of Lord Jesus; some of these being: Judge not so that you will not be judged, do not condemn so that you will not be condemned, if someone asks you to walk a mile, walk two, give to the one that asks you, do not turn your back on the one who wants to borrow from you, if he wants to sue you for your coat, give him also your shirt, if he slaps you on the cheek, return the other one *… (The work of righteousness shall be peace, the fruit of righteousness: rest and eternal peace. Isaiah 32:17; I am giving you My peace. I am not giving it the way the world does… John 14:27)*

Even if we are not the ones initiating the conflict, resistance produces disturbance/lack of peace and can give the other person the opportunity of becoming angry, or in other words, to fall into sin. *(Be wise not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way… Romans 14:13; It is impossible not to give others the opportunity for sinning, but woe to him through whom they come! Luke 17:1)*

We must be alert to any conflicting situations and remain at peace. If we are at peace, we must do everything in our power to keep the other person to be at peace as well. *(As long as it will depend on you, live in peace with all men. Romans 12:18;Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be… sons of God! Matthew 5:9)*

Lord Jesus, as the representative of the Kingdom of God, was the first to keep the teaching of non-resistance/peacekeeping in the absolute way and taught us to live in the very same manner. *(If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must… follow Me. Luke 9:23; The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. 1 John 2:6)*

We can see this through the story at Capernaum. Although He was not obliged to pay the Temple tax, Jesus did all He could to avoid conflict so as not to allow others to sin. *(What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take taxes or tributes? From their sons or from strangers? Peter answered, "From strangers." And Jesus said to him: So the sons are exempt; however, in order not to cause them to sin, go by the sea… Matthew 17:24-27)*

When He was captured to be put to death, He did not resist, did not cause any conflict/disorder, He was led like a lamb to the slaughterhouse. *(He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. Isaiah 53:7)*

The Lord had a heart full of peace, at rest, which was not disturbed at the outbreak of that conflict. The lack of a resisting attitude shows us what the citizens of the Kingdom of Christ should be like. *("Friend, why have you come?". Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. Matthew 26:50)*

At the opposite pole we see the turmoil and anger present in his disciple Peter. He resisted and actively participated in the conflict. The disorder that manifested itself in Peter is specific to the nature of the Kingdom of Darkness. *(We were naturally children of anger, just as others were. Ephesians 2:3; "The wicked have no peace", says my God. Isaiah 57:20)*

Self-reflection:

If a conflict arises, can you say: “Friend, why have you come”? Are you at peace just like Lord Jesus, or rather you find yourself troubled, like Peter *? (And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7)*

One of the fundamental values/things that define the Kingdom of God is love. *(God is love. 1 John 4:8; Hereafter, brothers, be perfect and live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11)*

Many of us do not understand that without “love” we will not reach the proposed goal of living with God. The Scripture tells us that we will not enter the Kingdom of love if we do not come to know God, who is love, and without obtaining in us this attribute of His *.(Anyone that does not love has not come to know God; for God is love. 1 John 4:8)* Love is the bond that binds together all the citizens of the Kingdom of God.

To reach this love, we will have to assimilate the law of love that rules in the territory of the Kingdom *.**(Love does not seek its own benefit ... 1 Corinthians 13:5)*Love is altruistic, it does not seek its benefit, but the benefit of others. The love from above does not randomly come into our hearts, but is brought through the Holy Spirit by keeping the teachings of Christ. *(Romans 5:5)* Whoever attends this school will ultimately have as a result the love from above. *(The goal of the commandment**is love. 1 Timothy 1:5)***

The distance between the natural, earthly love, and the love from above is as large as the distance between heaven and earth. The love from above is abundant in patience, full of kindness, does not envy, does not brag, does not swell with pride, does not behave indecently, does not seek its own benefit, does not get angry, does not have evil thoughts, does not enjoy injustice, it enjoys the truth, covers everything, believes everything, hopes in everything, suffers everything. Love will never die. *(1Corinthians 13:4-8)*

To learn and experience this perfect love, God puts us in His Family, which is His Church/His Body. *(But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. 1 Corinthians 12:18)*

Herein Lord Jesus is found, taking good care of each of us. *(For no one ever hated his own body, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does with His Church, because we are members of His body. Ephesians 5:29)*

The church is part of God’s plan for perfecting the saints. It is the place where the love from above is learned and practiced, where babies, children and young people learn from their elders how to put on abundant patience, kindness, walking in holiness, learning to forgive, to love, or in other words, learning how to walk in the things from above/in the things of the Spirit. *(...for the perfection of the saints... to the building up of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:12)*

Here we learn to seek the benefit of others, and not to live for ourselves. (Each one receives the appearance of the Spirit for the benefit of others. 1 Corinthians 12:7; No one lives for himself. Romans 14:7; Let no man seek his own, but everyman

another's wealth. 1 Corinthians 10:24)

We learn to be closely connected to one another and to bear each other's burdens. *(The whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies,according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. Ephesians 4:16; Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2)*

In the Church we are taught to love the ones outside of it as well, even those who hurt us. When we come in contact with those outside the Kingdom of love, we must follow the example of the Lord; let us love our enemies, let us bless those who curse us, let us do good to those who hate us, because we are sons of our Father who is in heaven.*(Matthew 5:44)*

To obtain this love, which has not reached the mind of the natural man, it will become possible only by following the school in which the teachings of Christ are taught. Otherwise, no matter how hard we will try to obtain it, it will not happen. In Him is the recipe of love and whoever respects it shall end up obtaining it. *(And love stands in walking according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning. 2 John 1:6; The goal of the commandment is love. 1 Timothy 1:5)*

If we learn to keep the Word of Christ, we will reach the point of being able to love our fellow men. *(By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. 1 John 5:2; And teach them to keep all that I have commanded you. Matthew 28:20)*

Love will be poured into our hearts to the extent to which the urging of the Holy Spirit will make us accept the teachings of Lord Jesus. *(The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Romans 5:5)*

To better understand the kingdom of this world, we will highlight a situation in which we all could find ourselves in. Suppose that in the succession of an inheritance, (which could be a land, a property), a brother of ours demands that we give him a big share of that which belongs to us.

If we belong to the world, in order to refuse him, we will have at our disposal the solutions that the world gives. These may be resistance through the use of words, by force, or through the help of law enforcement, courts…

However, if we are citizens of the Kingdom of God, our position will have to be different; we will have to face him according to the solutions provided by the laws of the Kingdom of God. The requirements for those belonging to the upper Kingdom are: to live in peace with all people, to have abounding patience, to be full of kindness, to have love.

As far as we are concerned, the first thing we need to do is not give the other person the chance of falling into sin, to do everything we can not to cause him anger or unrest. For this, we have at our disposal the commandment of peace. *(Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be… sons of God! Matthew 5:9; As long as it will depend on you, live in peace with all men. Romans 12:18)* To remain in the peace of Christ, we must not oppose him who wants to take away our

belongings. *(Do not resist the one who does you evil. Matthew 5:39; Whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold… Luke 6:29)*

Afterwards, we will have to do one more thing, which is foolishness for the natural man. We will have to also give him our "shirt" – not just the thing he initially wanted to take away from us. The teaching which makes us give him even more than he asked for is not originating from human logic, but comes from above. *(If your enemy is hungry, give him something to eat. Do not allow evil to overcome you, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:20)*

If our brother wants to take some of the land which belongs to us, we will have to let him know that we are willing to give him more than he wants to take. *(Whoever forces you to go one kilometer, go with him two; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, let him have your shirt as well. Matthew 5:40-41)*

This attitude of being ready to give more when taken by force is not of human nature, it does not come from the self, but comes only by keeping the laws of the upper Kingdom. Keeping Christ's commandments gives us the perfect love, which drives away all fear and gives us full confidence in the day of judgment *.**(Love stands in living according to His commandments. 2 John 1:6; By this, love is perfected with** us, so that we may have full confidence in the day of judgment. 1 John 4:18)*

When we are admitted to the university we dreamed of attending or when we are employed in a position we longed for, we cannot help ourselves but rejoice.

However, we believe that there can be no greater joy than knowing that you have been admitted to the Kingdom of Heaven, to know that your name is written in Heaven to dwell in eternity with the righteous ones. *(Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but be glad that your names are written in heaven. Luke 10:20)*It is a great joy to know that you have been admitted to the school of Christ,

that the Lord has chosen you to work together in perfecting you/to make you like Him. *(Brothers, count it all joy when you go through various temptations, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have*

its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4)

For many, being persecuted/mocked is something unbearable, but for those who have chosen the Kingdom it is a great joy, since they know that they have been considered worthy of being processed and transformed in the school of suffering.*(So they left the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. Acts 5:41)*

Similarly, for the vast majority of people, it is a disaster when the things they have long chased after are being taken away from them; this leads many to the brink of depression, but for those who have opted for the Kingdom of God it is a cause for joy when the Lord gives them the opportunity of freeing themselves from earthly possessions. *(…you gladly accepted the seizure of your possessions, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

Hebrews 10:34)*

Compared to the world, which rejoices after gaining something or after being promoted, those who are in the Kingdom rejoice when they go through troubles, being filled with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit.*(You have received the Word in many troubles, with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 1:6; I rejoice now in my sufferings. Colossians 1:24)*

As we keep the Word of peace and righteousness, so will come the persecution, but also joy! *(Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Matthew 5:10; It is a joy for the righteous to do that which is good; but to those that do evil it is something terrible. Proverbs 21:15)*

The joy that comes from the Holy Spirit is the thing that we will find in the eternal Kingdom, which will be permanent. *(And the ransomed of the Lord will return, and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads, they will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. Isaiah 35:10)*

Joy is the result and the crown of keeping the Word/commandments of Christ. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit; the joy that you have gone through the tests to reach abounding patience, kindness, gentleness, love. *(Let ourselves fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross. Hebrews 12:2)*

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