The Heavenly Paradise

A "Land, a Kingdom with streets of gold," where there are no tears and no pain, where there is no more death, may well catch the attention of many of us. (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; the street of the city was pure gold. Revelation 21:21)

We can safely say that there is no one who, on hearing of a land offering a life full of joy, without trouble, without suffering and without death, would not long for such a Kingdom.

But this Kingdom with "streets of gold" also holds spiritual things that the human mind struggles to grasp and finds hard to understand, things that to most of the people around us are sheer foolishness. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14)

These things from above are entirely different from the things found in the world we were born into. That is why, for many of us, "the Kingdom of God" remains a great mystery. (Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9)

We notice that when we are asked to give an answer about what comes after this life is spent, and what we must do to live forever in the Kingdom of God, the vast majority of people are deeply confused. Because the Scriptures are not known, we can see today how many multitudes of people are led astray by all sorts of theories that claim to explain how one can reach the Kingdom of God.

Most have come to be convinced that we will obtain salvation (which for many means nothing more than the forgiveness of sins) if we admire God for what He has done for us, if we believe in the sacrifice on the cross. Many believe that if we confess our sins and have a form of godliness that consists of being thankful for what the Lord Jesus has done for us, that is enough to give us free entry into His eternal Kingdom.

Most of us stop at repentance, at the work of the cross… at the covenant made in the waters of baptism, at the forgiveness of sins. All that is left, then, is to assume that God will make us perfect by some formula unknown to us, which He will apply after a person dies.

And this first part is roughly where most of us stay. We went to church, we had our own pew, we confessed our sins, we were baptized, we sang, we upheld the teachings of the church we belong to, we lived a religious life, and so, we think, we will enter the Kingdom of God.

For most people, the work of salvation ends here, without anyone realizing that **God's plan** provides both for the restoration and for the perfecting of a person's character.

Almost no one believes that, in order to be found worthy of the life awaiting us in His eternal Kingdom, we must grow until we reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (And he gave some, apostles; and some… pastors and teachers; **for the perfecting of the saints,** … till we all come… unto a perfect man, unto **the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.** Ephesians 4:11-13)

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