

PURGATORY

Place of purification of souls

1st Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians 5: 1 to 5. "It is reported generally that there is immorality among you, and such immorality as is not found even among the Gentiles, that is, someone has his own father's wife.

And yet you are proud and have not mourned, so that he who has done such a disgrace might be taken away from among you?

I, in truth, though absent in person, but present in spirit, have already sentenced, as though I were present, that the author of such infamy be, in the name of the Lord Jesus, you and my spirit being gathered together, with the power of Jesus, Our Lord, delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord (Jesus)."

When I first read this text, I immediately understood that it was a type of purgatory. In other words, the sinner would be purified of his sin by having his flesh destroyed by Satan, so that his spirit would be saved. This is different from the purgatory emphasized by the doctrine of the Catholic Church, where purgatory is, or would be, a place where the person's spirit goes after his death.

A few years passed until I met a man at work who was a practicing Catholic, the kind who participates in some of the pastoral groups and attends Mass whenever he can. From time to time, we would talk about the church, and one day, since he gave me the freedom to talk to him about these subjects, I asked him: What are the biblical texts that the Catholic Church uses as a basis for teaching about purgatory? I even commented on purgatory in the previous text, from the Apostle Paul; I explained to him what I understood, and he was satisfied.
bring me the answer.

After a few days, my friend came to me with two references to biblical texts written on a piece of paper and gave them to me.

The first text was in the **1st Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians 3: 10 to 15.** "According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another builds upon it. But let each man take heed how he builds upon it."

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

But if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will expose it, because it is revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work of what kind it is.

If any man's work which he hath built upon the foundation survive, he shall receive a reward: but if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved so as through fire.

This text certainly also brings up the idea of purgatory. In other words, through suffering a person will be saved; but it did not provide an answer as to whether purgatory would still be here in this life, or after death. Or even whether there are both types.

The second is in **Matthew 5:25 and 26.** "Agree quickly with your adversary, while you are with him on the way, so that the adversary does not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer

of righteousness, and be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.”

Note that this text speaks of imprisonment, if the person does not reconcile with his adversary and he takes the situation to the judge.

It was only a few years later that I began to fully understand the meaning of the phrase, “Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.” In other words, after you have paid the last penny, you will get out. The prison will not be permanent.

We have one more purgatory, but it is still unclear whether it would be before or after death.

Time continued to pass, life went on, until I began to understand a certain biblical text in a different way than I had understood it until then.

This is the parable of the rich man and the beggar, found in **Luke 16:19-31**, which reads: “Now there was a certain rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who fared sumptuously every day.

There was also a certain beggar named Lazarus, who was laid at the rich man's gate, covered with sores, and longing to eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; and even the dogs came and licked his sores.

It happened that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

In hell, being in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

Then he cried out and said, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted here; but thou art in torments.

And besides all this, between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those who want to pass from there to us.

Then he said, Father, I beg you to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of destruction.

torment.

Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.”

But he said, No, father Abraham: if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.

But Abraham said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rose from the dead.”

The first thing that caught my attention is that the Bible does not say that the rich man was an evil, wicked man, a Nabal or a son of Belial. It only says that he wore very expensive clothes and lived off the best of the best.

So, we can imagine several situations about this man. It is almost certain that he did not care about the poor and sick homeless person who lived on his doorstep.

I mean, caring enough to help them, to help them. Today, there are not many Christians who help and welcome homeless people, especially in big cities.

Although the text does not say so, we can imagine that he was an evil man. On the other hand, we can also think that he was a successful Jew, who fulfilled his religious obligations, who was well positioned in the society of the time, etc.

Continuing, the text says that the two died and were buried, and that in hell, being in torment, the rich man raised his eyes and saw Abraham in the distance with Lazarus in his bosom.

Here we have to make some comments about the word hell.

Very briefly, in the Greek language, in which the original New Testament was written, the word hell in our Portuguese appears as HADES and as GEENNA.

HADES – world of the dead; it would be a hell

GEHENNA – lake of fire; the definitive hell, second death.

I will use here the biblical version of JOÃO FERREIRA DE ALMEIDA, Revised and Corrected – 2009, which in **Revelation 20: 11 to 15**, tells us: “And I saw a great white throne and him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God; and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and Death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

And Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whoever was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.” The New Almeida Updated version also uses the word hell. Others use the words beyond, HADES, world of the dead, etc.

This text reveals to us about God's judgment.

So we can see that the sea gave up its dead, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; and each one was judged according to his works. In other words, in the end, Hades will give up its dead and they will be judged according to their works. This is what is written. This hell is Hades; a transitory hell for those who go there.

In the gospels, the word hell appears as GEHENNA every time Jesus pronounced it, with the exception of **Matthew 11:23, Matthew 16:18, Luke 10:15 and Luke 16:23**, which is exactly the text we are studying, where it appears as HADES.

What really caught my attention in this parable, still in relation to the rich man, is that father Abraham calls him his son. Would Abraham have a son in the lake of fire, hell?

Jesus, when he went to Zacchaeus' house, after he said that he was going to give half of his possessions to the poor, and that he was going to return 4 times more whatever he had stolen from someone, said: “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.”

RICARDO LINHARES TAMY

Biblical texts, with the exception of one, taken from the JOAO FERREIRA DE ALMEIDA version – MAGAZINE AND UPDATED