

SINAIESI

Epistle to the Hebrews 5: 11 and 12. "Concerning this we have many things to say that are difficult to explain, because you have become slow to listen.

For, in effect, when you should be teachers, considering the time that has passed, you again need someone to teach you, again, what the elementary principles of God's oracles are; So you became as if you needed milk and not needing milk. solid food."

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, after warning them about the lack of maturity in the knowledge of the things of God due to the time that had passed after they were converted, that is, lack of spiritual growth, in chapter 6: 1 to 3, is willing to give provide them with more solid, deeper food, as he said to them: "Therefore, setting aside the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us allow ourselves to be led toward that which is perfect, not laying again the basis of repentance of works dead and faith in God, the teaching of baptisms and the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

We will do this, if God allows it."

The "teaching of baptisms" probably refers to water baptism and baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The teaching of the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ is essential for those who are beginning to have experiences with Christ, with the word of God.

However, over time, new Christians are expected to mature, improve, and experience spiritual growth.

Still in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in chapter 5: 13, the author makes the following comparison: "Now everyone who feeds on milk is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, because he is a child. But solid food is for adults, for those who, through practice, have their faculties exercised to discern not only good but also evil."

Faculties exercised by practice. In other words, through experiences, the Christian sees the word of God being fulfilled in and through his life.

The Apostle Paul, in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, in chapter 3: 1 to 3, also exhorts: "But I, brothers, could not speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to carnal people, as to children in Christ. I have given you milk to drink, I have not given you solid food; because you still could not bear it. Nor even now can you, because you are still carnal. For if there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not carnal and walking according to man"?

While the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews relates, with more emphasis, spiritual maturity to improvement in knowledge of the word and the things of God, the Apostle Paul relates it to improvement in holiness.

This statement by the Apostle is interesting: "I gave you milk to drink, I gave you no solid food; because you still could not bear it. Nor even now can you, because you are still carnal."

And it is in this 1st Epistle to the Corinthians that he teaches us so many very important things. It guides us about the Eucharist, about spiritual gifts, about the need for order in worship, teaches about our resurrection, talks about marriage, about the family, about idolatry, etc. Then? Can we conclude that all of this would still not be solid food?

Among the many and precious teachings of the Epistle to the Hebrews are those contained in chapter 12: 18 to 24, described below: "Now you have not come to the palpable and burning fire, and to the darkness, and to the gloom, and to the storm, and at the blast of the trumpet, and at the sound of such words, that when they heard it, they begged that no more should be spoken to them, for they could no longer bear what was commanded them: Even an animal, when it touches the mountain, will be stoned. In fact, the spectacle was so horrible that Moses said: I feel terrified and trembling!

But you have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless hosts of angels, and to the universal assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous perfected, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling who speaks better things than what Abel himself speaks."

This text, in the translation we are using, has the subtitle, "The contrast between Sinai and Zion".

Sinai represents material Israel from Palestine, and Zion represents spiritual Israel.

At Sinai, the Israelite people saw the Lord descend on the mountain.

It literally happened, and they witnessed everything as described. Burning fire, darkness, darkness etc.

The spiritual Israel that we are, the church of Christ, as opposed to material Israel, has arrived at Mount Zion and the city of the living God.

Mount Zion points us to what is unshakable, eternal.

The city of the living God points us to the dwelling place of God.

Thus, we have also arrived at the heavenly Jerusalem.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, in chapter 4: 25 and 26, the Apostle Paul Teaches: "Now Hagar is Mount Sinai, in Arabia, and corresponds to present-day Jerusalem, which is in slavery with its children.

But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother."

We have also reached countless hosts of angels.

Angels are servants of God. As it is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews 1:14, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to serve on behalf of those who shall inherit salvation"?

They are warriors, messengers, etc. Everything they do is determined by God.

We have arrived at the universal assembly and church of the firstborn enrolled in heaven.

The universal assembly is made up of the church that is in this world and the church of the firstborn enrolled in heaven.

In the book of Exodus, in chapter 4: 22 and 23, the Lord tells Moses what he should say to Pharaoh: "You shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord: Israel is my son, my firstborn. Therefore I say to you, let my son go, that he may serve me; but if you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.'

Today, we are spiritual Israel, we are the firstborn.

We have come to God, the Judge of all.

Psalms 7, in verse 11, says: "God is a righteous judge, a God who feels indignation every day."

God feels indignation at injustice, evil, etc.

God judges and will judge everyone.

We have arrived at the spirits of the righteous made perfect.

Spirits of the righteous who have been perfected and not the spirits of the righteous who are still being perfected.

The spirits of the righteous made perfect, or the spirit of the righteous sanctified, or even the spirit of the righteous saints, are in heaven; and the spirits of the righteous in perfection are still here in this world, incarnated, still in the process of sanctification.

We who are still here in this world are righteous because we have been justified through the redemption that is in Christ.

As the Apostle Paul taught in the Epistle to the Romans, in chapter 3: 23 to 25. "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God purposed, in his blood, as a propitiation, through faith, to manifest his justice, because God, in his tolerance, left previously committed sins unpunished";

I believe that this text serves as a biblical basis for the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church.

It is also fully acceptable, according to Catholics, for us to ask these perfected, holy spirits, so that they intercede with Jesus Christ and God on our behalf.

Just as we ask a brother, who is still here, to pray for us, we can also ask these holy spirits to intercede for us.

They, who also lived in the flesh, who know our weaknesses, who have gone through the same trials and struggles that we went through, but who are now constantly in the presence of God, can intercede for us.

It is evident that none of these holy spirits can occupy the place of God the Father, the creator of all things, in our hearts.

In the book of Revelation of the Apostle John, in chapter 4: 11, we can read: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, because you created all things, even because of the your will came into being and were created."

Nor can he take the place of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who, as the Apostle Paul teaches us in the Epistle to the Colossians, in chapter 1: 15 to 20; "This is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. Everything was created through him and for him.

He is before all things. In it, everything subsists.

He is the head of the body, of the church.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead, to have the preeminence in all things, because it pleased God that all fullness should reside in him and that, having made peace through the blood of his cross, through him he was reconciled to himself even all things, whether on earth or in heaven."

It is certain that the intercession of the spirits of the righteous saints on our behalf does not replace our own, our devotional moments, and in no way our moments in the presence of God.

The fact that we reach these spirits inspires us, encourages us to worship, serve and seek God and Jesus Christ more and more, with even more intensity and faith. It is the proof we have of everything we have learned. They are holy examples to be followed.

And yet, we could also ask the following question: If we actually reach these sanctified spirits and we cannot even ask them to intercede for us, what would be the purpose?

We have come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.

In the 2nd Epistle to Timothy, in chapter 2: 5, the Apostle Paul teaches: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all: a testimony that must be borne in appropriate times."

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, in chapter 9: 24, it is written: "For Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made with hands, a type of the true one, but into heaven itself, to now appear before God for us";

So, the Lord Jesus is the high priest in Heaven.

He is the one who mediates between God and men, both those on earth, still in sanctification, and those in heaven, in a spirit already sanctified.

The mediation that Moses made between God and the people of Israel who were in the desert, points to the mediation that Jesus Christ makes between God and spiritual Israel, which is his universal church.

He himself taught us, as it is written in the Book of John, 14: 6, "Jesus answered, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the father except through me."

Just as we who are still in this world come to heaven and to God through Christ, man, those who have already departed, who are already in heaven, are in the presence of God also because they are in Christ. That is, they are in the presence of God through Jesus Christ.

In fact, no one comes to God unless it is through Jesus Christ.

We have also arrived at the sprinkled blood that speaks superior things to what Abel himself speaks.

The blood of Jesus speaks greater things than what Abel himself speaks.

Both Jesus and Abel, or both the blood of Jesus and the blood of Abel SPEAK. It's not in the past or in the future. It's in the present.

It is good to remember how God presented himself to Moses, a fact that is reported in the book of Exodus, in chapter 3: 6; also commented on by Our Lord Jesus Christ in one of his teachings. "And he said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob."

Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God."

God would say, if that were the case, I was the God of your father, I was the God of Abram, I was the God of Isaac, I was the God of Jacob, when they were alive.

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Texts extracted from the biblical translation JOAO FERREIRA DE ALMEIDA – Revista e Atualizada.