

## MARIA

In the book of the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 7: 14, it is written: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; behold, the virgin will conceive and bear a son and will call his name Immanuel."

In the New Testament, the gospel of Luke, chapter 1: 26 to 31, reports: "In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin married to a certain man of the house of David, whose name was Joseph; the virgin was called Mary.

And when the angel entered where she was, he said: Rejoice, thou most favored! The Lord is with you.

However, when she heard this word, she was very disturbed and began to think about what this greeting meant.

But the angel said to her: Mary, do not be afraid; because you have found favor with God.

Behold, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will call his name Jesus."

In fact, the virgin Mary conceived and gave birth to Jesus, who was fully man and fully God. Therefore, she was the mother of Jesus the man, and the mother of Christ, God the Son.

Yes. The Son of God that the Apostle Paul tells us in his Epistle to the Colossians, in chapter 1: 15 and 16, as follows: "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."

Thus, he who already existed, who was the firstborn of all creation, became incarnate by the will of the Father. He went through the experience of being conceived by a woman, having a mother, coming into the world as a man.

There is unanimity among Christians in agreeing that Mary was the mother of the son of God while still a virgin.

It is true that thinking about these facts differently would be like going against one of the essential points of Christianity.

However, there are disagreements on other points which we will transcribe below:

Regarding Mary being Mother of the Church, we can quote the statement of the Lord Jesus himself, when he was on the cross, reported in the book of the Apostle John, chapter 19; 26. "When Jesus saw his mother and the beloved disciple next to her, he said: Woman, behold your son.

Then he said to the disciple: Behold your mother. From that time on, the disciple took her home."

This phrase spoken by Jesus was understood by the Apostle John as if it were a request for him to take care of Mary.

And so it happened; As the biblical text says, from that moment on, the disciple took it home.

The fact is that a request could be made by the Lord in a much more direct and simple way.

So, would it be a request? An affirmation? A declaration?

But, being an affirmation, would it be only in relation to Mary and the Apostle John, or would it also be an affirmation related to Mary and the church of Christ that would be formed?

The understanding and tradition of Catholics is that the Lord Jesus declared that Mary was the mother of the Church, at that time represented by the Apostle John.

Most Protestants understand it differently.

Below are two biblical passages that make reference to the mother of the church.

The first is in the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, in chapter 4: 26 and 27. "But Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother; for it is written: Rejoice, O barren one, who does not give birth;

rejoice and cry, you who are not in labor;

because the children of the abandoned woman are more numerous than those of her who has a husband."

The second is from the book of Revelation, in chapter 12: 1 to 5, and at the end, verse 17. "A great sign was seen in heaven, namely, a woman clothed with the sun with the moon under her feet and a crown with twelve stars on her head, who, finding herself pregnant, screams in labor pain, suffering torment to give birth.

Another sign was also seen in the sky, and behold a dragon, great, red, with seven heads, ten horns and, on its heads, seven diadems.

His tail dragged a third of the stars from the sky, which he threw to the earth; and the dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, to devour her child when was born.

So there was born to him a man child, who will rule all nations with a rod of iron. And his son was caught up to God to his throne."

At the end of the chapter, in verse 17: "The dragon became angry with the woman and went to fight with the rest of her descendants, those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus; and stood on the sand of the sea."

This text from the book of Revelation teaches us about the Woman's male child and, later, about the rest of her descendants.

The woman who gave birth to the son is Mary; and the son is the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this vision, she may be personifying both the nation of Israel and spiritual Jerusalem.

The crown of twelve stars tells us both about the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, fathers of the twelve tribes, and about the twelve apostles of the church of Christ.

Those who wear a crown are kings and queens.

As for her being clothed with the sun, it tells us about the brilliance of God's glory resplendent over the heavenly Jerusalem.

The words mother and son were not spoken by Jesus just as titles. They describe a relationship that expresses love, comfort, security, trust, guidance, and reverence.

I also wish, by God's mercies and his grace, to be a descendant, a son of this woman.

We can still reflect on part of the priestly prayer of Jesus Christ; as the Lord himself asked the Father, which is reported in the gospel of the Apostle John, in chapter 17, verses 20 to 23: "I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in me through their word ; so that all may be one; and as you, O Father, are in me, and I in you, so may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me.

I have passed on to them the glory that you have given me, that they may be one, as we are one; I in them, and you in me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them, just as you loved me."

The Lord Jesus Christ transmitted to us, or transmits, the glory received from the Father so that we may be one, together with Him and the Father; as I said: I in them, and you in me. That is, Jesus in the church, and the Father in Jesus.

Christ is the church and the church is Christ; They are one.

Therefore, if Mary is the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, together with the church, are one, she is also the mother of the church.

Another point that generates divergence is in relation to sin.

Would Mary be a perfect, purest person, without any fleshly weakness; in other words, that he did not need to fight against the weaknesses of his own flesh?

The Lord Jesus Christ himself, who was also fully Man, and as a man, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us in chapter 2: 14 to 18, was tempted, he fought against sin, as we will see below: "Forasmuch as the children have a common share of flesh and blood, of which he also shared equally, so that by his death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all who, through the fear of death, were in fear of death. subjected to slavery for life.

For he, evidently, does not help angels, but he helps the descendants of Abraham.

For this reason, it was necessary for him to become like his brothers in all things, to be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God and to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

For because he himself suffered, having been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted."

Continuing the same Epistle, in chapter 5: 7, 8 and 9: "He, Jesus, in the days of his flesh, having offered, with loud cries and tears, prayers and supplications to those who could deliver him from death and having been heard because of of his piety, although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered and, having been perfected, he became the Author of eternal salvation for all who obey him,".

So, if the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was fully God and fully Man, was tempted, struggled against the weaknesses of the flesh, what about Mary, a woman daughter of Adam?

Note the words of the angel Gabriel when he was sent to her: "Rejoice, most favored one! The Lord is with you."

Very favored or full of grace, it means that God did not attribute any sin to her, by favor or by grace.

As Psalm 32:1 and 2 says: "Blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit."

Today Yes. Mary, mother of our Lord, who personifies the heavenly Jerusalem is in heaven. Perfect, without blemish, without wrinkles, without blemishes, holy, as the Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Ephesians in chapter 5: 25 to 27. "Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water by the word, that he might present her to himself a glorious church, without spot, without wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish."

Another issue that separates Catholic Christians from Protestant, or evangelical, Christians is related to Mary's marital life. In other words, whether after the birth of Jesus Christ she had a married life with her husband Joseph or remained a virgin.

On this subject, we will begin our meditation by observing the angel's speech to Joseph, reported in the book of the Apostle Matthew, chapter 1: 18 to 24. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this: when Mary, his mother, was betrothed to Joseph, without having previously cohabited, found herself pregnant by Espíritu Santo.

But Jose, her husband, being fair and not wanting to discredit her, decided to leave her secretly. While he was pondering these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying: Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

Now, all this happened so that what was said by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: Behold,

the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and he will be called Immanuel (which means: God with us).

When Joseph was awakened from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and received his wife."

We can observe that at no point did the angel tell Joseph that, in fact, Mary would be just a companion for him, a helper, and that their marriage would be different; that his role would simply be to help Mary, as a father, to raise and educate Jesus, the son of God. It may be that God placed all of this in Joseph's heart; however, at that moment, nothing of this was said to him.

And the text ends: "When Joseph was awakened from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and received his wife".

Verse 25, a continuation of the previous text, has different translations in the Bibles used by Catholics and in the Bibles used by Protestants.

In most Bibles used by evangelicals, it reads like this: "Yet he knew her not until she had borne a son, and he called his name Jesus."



Others already explain that in Aramaic, the language spoken by the Jews at the time of Jesus, there was no word relative, which, in fact, was the situation among them; then they must be understood as brothers and sisters, just relatives.

The second position prevailing, not only did they write the New Testament in Greek, but they also added some words and facts.

Because the word relative, even if it did not exist in Aramaic, existed in the Greek language. It could have been used, if that were the case.

Two of the four gospels were written, or are attributed, by the Apostle Matthew and the Apostle John, who were eyewitnesses to the facts.

To conclude, we can mention three more biblical texts, among others, that talk about Jesus' brothers:

The first is in the gospel of the Apostle Matthew, chapter 13: 55. "Is this not the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas"?

The second is in the book of the evangelist Mark, chapter 6: 3. "Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? And don't your sisters live here among us? And they were scandalized by him."

The third is in the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, in chapter 1: 19, where he says: "and I saw none of the apostles except James, the brother of the Lord."

In the first meetings, in the first councils, James who was present was the brother of the Lord or James, son of Alphaeus, as James, John's brother, had already been murdered by Herod.

There is also a historical source that describes that Jesus' brothers are only Joseph's children, the result of a first marriage; that Joseph, when he married Mary, was a widower ninety-one years of age.

With all due respect to those who think differently, with all respect, I do not consider it any offense to reason about Mary's married life.

Marriage is one of the sacraments of the Catholic Church, instituted by God; Furthermore, we could cite several biblical references where marriage is revered and considered a blessing from God.

Nor is it our intention, and God is a witness to this, to defame or diminish the Servant of God, the Mother of God the Son, the Mother of the Church, the Blessed Mary, in any way. She deserves, by the grace of God, all the honors and rewards given to her; because after all, your ministry is unique.

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Texts extracted from the biblical translation JOÃO FERREIRA DE ALMEIDA – Revised and Updated.