

SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY

The Apostle Paul in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, in chapter 8: 2, teaches: "If anyone thinks he knows something, he has not yet learned how he ought to know".

Still in the same Epistle, in chapter 13: 9 to 12, the Apostle also says: "because we know in part and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect comes, then that which is in part will be destroyed.

When I was a boy, I spoke like a boy, I felt like a boy, I thought like a boy; When I became a man, I gave up boyish things.

For now we see as in a mirror, darkly; then we will see face to face. Now, I know in part; then I will know even as I am also known.

Now, therefore, faith, hope and love, these three, remain; But the greatest of these is love."

When the Apostle says, in part we know, and in part we prophesy, he reminds us that we are still in a carnal body; we are not fully in the presence of God as we will one day be; Today, our relationship with God is through faith.

Thus, knowledge of the things of God, of his will, the understanding of his Word and of God himself is given to us through revelation granted by the Holy Spirit, and this, always confirmed, in harmony with the Word.

It is not for our own wisdom or reason.

And the Holy Spirit reveals to us according to God's will; according to your purpose and to the extent that suits you.

I believe that the inspiration to write the following text comes from the Lord. However, I ask readers to analyze and judge according to the Word; that is, checking with the Word of God.

In advance, I ask all the respects to those who understand differently.

Let's start with the passage found in the 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians, in chapter 5: 23, where the Apostle Paul, when saying goodbye, says: "May the God of peace sanctify you in everything; and may your spirit, soul and body be kept intact and blameless at the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

Based on the text above and on several other biblical passages where we find the terms spirit, soul and body being used in different ways, we adopt the trichotomy theory, according to which man is composed of these three elements; This theory opposes the theory of dichotomy, which understands that man is composed only of spirit and body, and that the soul is the same thing as the spirit.

The theories of dichotomy and trichotomy have been exposed and studied even before the Christian era, and even by cultures that are not Jewish; In the early days of classical Greek philosophy, Plato already defended dichotomy while Aristotle defended trichotomy.

Judaism embraces dichotomy.

We believe that the Apostle Paul, a man of certain education, when referring to the three elements, did so with the intention of interceding for the Thessalonians, but in doing so, he also made his understanding of the matter clear.

We will begin our exposition with the Book of Genesis, in chapter 2: 7, where it is written: "Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul".

God is Spirit; and the breath of God would be a portion of his Spirit, the breath of life, which transformed us into a living soul.

We cannot think that the breath of God brought us air, or oxygen, which is also essential for our physical body.

Also in the book of Genesis, in chapter 6: 3, it is reported that the LORD, before sending the flood, expressed: "Then the LORD said, My Spirit will not act on man forever, for he is carnal; and his days will be one hundred and twenty years."

Then, the Spirit that is of God would cease to act in man, soul and body, dust of the earth.

Until then, men lived for almost a thousand years.

The Apostle Paul, preaching to the Greeks in Athens, as reported in the Book of Acts of the Apostles, in chapter 17: 26 to 28, argued: "from one man he made the whole human race to dwell on all the face of the earth, having established the previously established times and limits of their residence; to seek God if, perhaps, by groping, they can find him, even though he is not far from each one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being, as some of your poets have said: For we are also his generation."

Thus, based on these last three biblical texts that we read, we can conclude that the breath of God is a portion of his own Spirit that gives us life and, through which, we live, move and exist; that without the spirit given by God, we die; and that it is the spirit that makes us a living soul. In other words, the spirit was given by God in the breath and the soul and body were created by God from the dust of the earth.

Also, based on the preaching of the Apostle Paul to the Greeks, we learn that God is close to man, however, there is no direct communication between the soul and the spirit; that is, the soul communicates directly with the physical, material world, while the spirit communicates with the spiritual.

Our soul communicates with the spirit through revelation, vision, dreams, etc.

In the 2nd Book of Kings, in chapter 6: 15 to 18, a situation is reported, and also, the reaction that the boy who worked for the prophet Elisha had on the day that the Syrian army surrounded the city of Dothan, where they were there, with horses, chariots and strong troops, as we will describe below: "When the young man of the man of God got up very early and went out, behold, troops, horses and chariots had surrounded the city; Then his boy said to him: Alas! My Lord! What will we do? He replied: Do not be afraid, for there are more who are with us than are with them.

Elisha prayed and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. The LORD opened the young man's eyes, and he saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha."

It can be seen that the boy's eyes, which were opened by God, were spiritual eyes, as the physical, carnal ones were already open.

We can also compare the breath of God with the breath of the Lord Jesus, according to the Gospel of the Apostle John, in chapter 20: 21 and 22, as follows: "Jesus then said to them again: Peace be with you ! Just as the Father sent me, I also send you.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit."

This happened after the Lord resurrected and appeared among his disciples.

The breath of God caused us to become living souls; The breath of the Lord Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit, which gives us a spiritual path.

In the book of Ecclesiastes, in chapter 12: 7, we have confirmation that, through the breath, God gave us a portion of his spirit, as follows: "and the dust returns to the earth, as it was, and the spirit returns to God gave it."

So, the soul would be our mind, our intellect, our training and our knowledge.

Our personality encompasses the spirit, body and soul.

The spirit of man, given by God, moves away or disconnects from the Lord when we become sinners, as God cannot have communion with sin.

This is spiritual death; that is, the spirit of man disconnected from God. The spirit never ends; It can be alive, linked to God, or dead, far from God.

Next, we will see other characteristics and situations that clearly show the distinction between the spirit, the soul and the body.

Let's start using as an example the text in the 1st Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, in chapter 5: 3 to 5: which says: "I, indeed, although absent in person, but present in spirit, have already judged, as if I were present, that the author of such infamy is,

In the name of the Lord Jesus, you and my spirit are gathered together, with the power of Jesus our Lord, handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord (Jesus)."

Here, we have a clear example that the spirit is not limited to just being with, or within, the person; that is, together with the soul and the body. As the Apostle said, "although absent in person, but present in spirit..."

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, in chapter 10: 19, there is the following exhortation: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holy of Holies, by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he consecrated for us through the veil, that is, for his flesh."

Thus, through the glorified body of Christ, man, our spirit can enter the Holy of Holies; that is, in the presence of God in heaven. In the same way that Christ manifests himself here in this world through the church, which is his body here, the Church manifests itself, has access to the presence of God in the heavens, through the body of man glorified in heaven, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is what the Apostle Paul wrote in his 1st Epistle to Timothy, in chapter 2: 5: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus".

So, while our spirit is in us, it is also in Heaven, through Christ, in the presence of God.

Both in the example of the Apostle Paul, who was absent in person but present in spirit, and in the case of being spiritually in the presence of God, the spirit will also be in us; for if the spirit leaves the body, the body dies. It is the spirit that gives life to the body.

We make the above statement based on Psalm 146:3 and 4, which says: "Do not put your trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation.

Their spirit goes out, and they return to dust; On that same day, all his plans perish."

There is also a text from the Apostle Paul found in his Epistle to the Ephesians, in chapter 6: 10 to 12, as follows: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his power.

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can stand firm against the schemes of the devil; for our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this dark world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

This text teaches us about spiritual warfare in the heavenly regions; in other words, a war that takes place beyond our physical world, in a spiritual dimension. In this case, our spirit wars in the heavenly regions, however, our soul remains here, in the physical world.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, in chapter 4: 12, it is written: "For the Word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing

soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is able to discern the thoughts and purposes of the heart.”

Here in this text, the writer of the Epistle speaks about the division of soul and spirit, distinguishing the two in a very explicit way, saying that, when faced with the two-edged sword, the Word, are revealed to us, showing us whether our thoughts, our purposes are fruits of the spirit or just our own soul.

This happens when, sometimes, we think about something and we think what we think is wonderful; we get excited, we get excited and we believe that it is the Lord who is showing us something, that we are having a spiritual revelation; This can occur in relation to the Word or even in relation to situations.

However, if what we are thinking encounters any obstacle in the word of God, or is not in harmony with it, however beautiful, however beautiful it may seem, and however much our will may be, it is not a revelation of the Spirit but, rather, of our intellect, of our human reason.

We can also reflect on Mary's song, which is reported in the Gospel of Luke, in chapter 1: 46 and 47: "Then Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my savior,"

The soul grows; that is, it, which is our intellect, values and leads us to say compliments, praise.

The spirit manifests feelings such as joy, tranquility, peace, and even agitation.

The Joy of the spirit cannot be confused with the joy of the soul which occurs when something good happens to us, materially speaking.

Our spirit rejoices when we are in the presence of God, when we receive something from him and when he reveals something from his Word to us.

How many of us have had the experience of everything being bad around us, of circumstances being totally adverse and yet we are overcome by a peace, a tranquility, a comfort that we don't know where it comes from; this peace comes to us through the spirit.

In fact, the one who provides joy, peace, tranquility and comfort is the Holy Spirit; only these things manifest themselves in us through our spirit.

So, just as our body communicates with our soul, giving us signals when we feel pain, discomfort, an increase in temperature, etc., our spirit communicates by manifesting feelings such as joy, peace, etc. in us.

In another aspect, in the Book of Proverbs, in chapter 20: 27, King Solomon was God's instrument to affirm that: "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, which searches all the inmost parts of the body".

In this case, the spirit of man connects with God, being for the Lord the light that, in truth, searches and reveals our entire soul; and not our physical body, our internal organs.

Let us also see the exhortation of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, when he taught them about order in worship, in his 1st Epistle, in chapter 14: 32, as follows: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets themselves;"

In this way, it is the person, that is, the soul and body that controls, that subjects our spirit; We do not lose control over ourselves when there is a manifestation of the Spirit through our own spirit.

We can make our spirit quiet, or act in one way or another.

About unity, as the Lord Jesus himself interceded in his priestly prayer, reported in the Gospel of the Apostle John, in chapter 17: 21, "so that they may all be one; and how are you, oh Father, in me and I in you, may they also be in us; so that the world may believe that you sent me.

This unity over which the Lord Jesus interceded is of spirit and not of soul; We are one spirit, but each of us has a different soul.

We will now talk about the passage of the spirit, from death to life.

In the Gospel of the Apostle John, in chapter 5: 24, a teaching from our Lord Jesus, as follows: "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life, does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. life".

As we said before, the spirit does not die, or rather, it does not end. Your death is being far away or separated from God.

And yet, the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, in chapter 2: 4 to 6, is written: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved, and raised us up together with him, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;"

It is evident that what passed from death to life, what was resurrected, was our spirit. Our body and soul will certainly die and, by faith, they will also be resurrected.

In the Book of Revelation, in chapter 20: 4 and 5, there is a revelation that teaches us about the resurrection of the soul, as we will see below: "I also saw thrones, and on them sat those who had been given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, as well as because of the word of God, many who had not worshipped the beast, nor his image, and had not received the mark on their foreheads and on their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection".

In this first resurrection the Apostle John saw only spirits and souls.

In other words, this is about the resurrection of the soul of those who have already died physically, and not of the body; and of the spirit of all who are united to Christ, physically alive or dead, who sit on thrones and already reign with him.

But someone may ask: Now, as it is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in chapter 12: 23, have we not reached the spirits of the righteous made perfect? Why, then, would we not have reached the spirits and souls of the righteous made perfect?

Answering, it is because we also reach the spirits with our spirit, and not with our soul. Thus, spirit connects with spirit. In fact, no one reaches the soul of Saint Mary, or the souls of the Apostles Peter and Paul, among others; We cannot talk to them, ask for advice, etc. If that were the case, they would have to know all languages to be able to talk to people from all over the world; although, for God, this would not be impossible.

Regarding the full, total resurrection, including of the bodies, the Apostle Paul assures us, clearly moved, inspired and by the power of the Holy Spirit, as in all of his work, that the bodies will be resurrected in spiritual, incorruptible bodies, as is written in 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, in chapter 15: 20 to 26, and 35 to 45, as we will see below: "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, being the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Since death came through a man, also through a man came the resurrection of the Motos.

For just as in Adam all live, so in Christ all will be made alive.

But each one in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; then those who belong to Christ at his coming.

And then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God and the Father, when he has destroyed every principality, as well as all power and power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

Pay close attention to the part where the Apostle says, "Christ, the firstfruits; then those who belong to Christ at his coming." In other words, the resurrection will only be for those who belong to Christ, despite the fact that, previously, he said that "just as in Adam all will die, so too will all be made alive in Christ".

Continuing, verses 35 to 45 follow: "But someone will say: How are the dead raised?

And in what body do they come?

Nonsense! What you sow will not be born unless it first dies; and when you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but the simple grain, as of wheat or any other seed.

But God gives it a body as He pleased, and to each of the seeds, its appropriate body.

Not all meat is the same; but one is the flesh of men, another is the flesh of animals, another is the flesh of birds, and another is the flesh of fish.

Also to celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; and, without doubt, one is the glory of the celestials, and another, that of the terrestrial.

One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars; because even between star and star there is a difference in splendor.

For so is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is resurrected in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is resurrected in glory.

It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

A natural body is sown, a spiritual body is resurrected. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

For thus it is written: The first man, Adam, was made a living soul. The last Adam, however, is a life-giving spirit."

The Apostle Paul of full resurrection. That is, of Christ, the firstfruits, who was resurrected with spirit, soul and body; then, those who belong to Christ, at his coming, who will also appear with spirit, soul and body.

RICARDO LINHARES TAMY

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