

THEME: Reincarnation in the New Testament

2- OBJECTIVE: The child will start learning that reincarnation was a common belief amongst early people from that time, and among the Jewish, because Jesus did often mentioned it. The child will be

Motivated to get into the habit of researching through the use of the New testament and Kardec's codification work.

3- BIOGRAPHY:

Jeremiah, 1:5

Mt, 16:13 to 16; 17:9 to 13; 18:8 and 0; Lc, 1:1 to 16; 9:7 to 9; Jo, 1:19 to 23; 3:1 to 10

ESE, cap 4; LE, 222, 612

Reincarnation in the Bible (Herminio C. Miranda)

4- CLASS:

a) Initial incentive: Dialogue

It's indispensable that the teacher take an example from the New Testament and another from Spiritism, so that one of the goals is met. The teacher must advise the children in advance, so that if the children have some of this work, they will be able to take to the class with them. In the course of the class, the teacher must teach the children to read the Gospel according to Spiritism and the New testament.

The teacher can begin a dialogue by asking: " You guys who are familiar with reincarnation, do you think it was discovered by Alan Kardec?" And go on : "Is it possible that the people who lived before Jesus, already had knowledge of reincarnation?"

b) Development: A dialogue based on the texts.

Indeed, reincarnation was not discovered by Kardec, neither was it revealed by Jesus. Spiritism teaches us that Allan Kardec studied reincarnation, talked with spirits about it, but did not discover it.

Jesus, in his time, talked about reincarnation, and he referred to it as something that was already familiar to the Jewish people. However, reincarnation was not only known by the Jewish people, but by many other races such as the Egyptians, the Hindus and the Greek.

There is reference to reincarnation even in the Old testament, like for example, the one which we can read on the book of Jeremiah, cap. 1, verse 5: "Before you were ever formed in the womb, I had already known you(...). In this sentence we can see the clear reference to the former existence of the spirit in relation to the body, for the statement "I had known you" could not have meant the body since it had not yet existed.

Although the Jewish had neither knowledge of the law of evolution, nor of the law of cause and effect, clearly they knew that the spirit can return to Earth in a new body. Evidence that reincarnation was already known at the time of Jesus can be found in the New Testament, as we can see on the texts below:

In John, cap 3, verse from 1 to 10, we see that Jesus himself talks to Nicodemus of the need of "being born again", and not from the perspective of the Pharisee who told Jesus: "How can it be possible for a man to be born, if he is already old?" Can he by any chance return to the mother's womb, and be born?" Jesus then answers: "what is born from the flesh is flesh, and what is born from the spirit is spirit." Nicodemus had not yet understood so he asks Jesus again: "How can that be ?" Jesus, surprised by the fact that he, an educated man, ignored reincarnation, said to him: "You are a master in Israel and don't know about this?"

In Mathew, cap 16, verse 13 to 14, we find the following: "And Upon arrival from Cesarea of Phillipe, Jesus asked his disciples: "Who, are men saying is the son of the man?" They said "some say John the Baptist, others Eliah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Well, if people thought that Jesus could be the return of Eliah, or of Jeremiah or even one of the prophets it's because they knew that a spirit can return to Earth in a new body, hence they believed in reincarnation.

Those who thought that Jesus could be the return of John the Baptist, certainly had heard about him but had not met him personally? And so, why did others think that Jesus could be Eliah, Jeremiah or another prophet? That's because there were many prophecies which said that Eliah would return to prepare the path for the Messiah. It's worth noting that, if some came to think that Jesus could have been Eliah, Jeremiah or other prophet, they were only able to see him via reincarnation, for these prophets had disincarnated centuries ago and with their bodies already old and Jesus had a new body, besides, Jesus had been known since childhood. The fact is, the Jewish had not a very clear concept regarding reincarnation, as spiritism gives us today.

Lucas, in cap 1, verse 13, 14, 16 and 17, reports that Zachary, Isabel's husband, when entering the temple, sees a messenger from above who addressed him by saying: "Zachary, do not fear, for your prayer was heard and Isabel, your woman, will give birth to a son, and you will name him John; and you will have much enjoyment and happiness, and many will be happy with his birth. And he will convert many of the sons of Israel to the Master your God. And he will go before his face in the spirit and in the virtue of Eliah, in order to convert the heart of parents to the children, and the rebels to the prudence of the fair; and this way prepare people with good disposition for God."

In this passage, we can see clearly that the messenger from the above claimed that Zachary's son and Isabel would be the reincarnation of Eliah, which confirmed what the prophets had predicted. However, in some translations, instead of using the word "before", meaning, before the face of the Master, they use "forward", in an attempt of saying that the spirit of Eliah would march forward, ahead of John the Baptist.

John the Baptist was already an adult and he was carrying out his mission of preparing people for the beginning of Jesus' mission, according to the gospel of John, cap 1, verse 19 to 21: "And this is the testimony of John, when the Jewish sent priests and levitas from Jerusalem to interrogate him: Who are you? And he confessed and did not deny; confessed: I am not Christ. And they asked him: Then what? Are you Eliah? And he said: No, I am not. Are you a prophet? He answered: no. And so they told him: who are you? So we can have an answer for the ones who sent us here; what do you have to say about yourself? He said: I am the voice that cries out in the desert: I will straighten up the path for the Master, as the prophet **Isaiah** said." Naturally John the Baptist would have to answer he wasn't Eliah, for he couldn't remember his past reincarnations. If they did not believe in reincarnation, this question would not have made any sense.

Another segment of the New testament in which Jesus himself affirms reincarnation is the one that takes place at the Mount **of Tabor**. Jesus climbed the hill with Peter, Tiago, and John. "And transformed himself in front of them; and his face gleamed like the sun, and his garment turned white like the light. Then Moises and Eliah appeared and talked to him." After this memorable event, his disciples asked him according to Matthew: " Why do the writers say that it is essential that Eliah comes first?" and Jesus answered: " Truthfully, Eliah will come first to restore all things, but I tell you that Eliah already has come, and they did not recognize him, instead they did whatever they wanted. And it is this that way they will also make the Son of the Man suffer." Hence, the disciples understood he was referring to John the Baptist. (Mt, 17: 2 and 3, 10 to 13)

It's worth noticing that the disciples reasoned quickly when they saw Eliah disincarnated. If Eliah was indeed disincarnated, there were then three conceivable things in question: The first one is that the prophecy which announced the the return of Eliah to prepare the path for Moises was wrong; second, that one who presented himself as Eliah was not actually Eliah, then, Jesus was not the Messiah, for according to the prophecies the one who would prepare the path had not yet incarnated!

However, Jesus, having the confidence which characterizes the ones who have the truth, answered that Eliah not only had to come, but had already come, incarnated in John the Baptist, and they had already executed him the same way as he, himself was going to be executed.

Spiritism, today, teaches us that whenever the spirit is able to remember his reincarnations he can show himself any way he chooses to appear. And that is what happened to this spirit, who could either show himself as Elisha or as John the Baptist, choosing for this occasion the form of the first one mentioned, certainly in order to leave us this teaching.

c) Evaluation: Questions and answers.

The teacher must give each student an exercise, or if he prefers, he can form groups, and ask the students to mark the number which corresponds to each answer.

- 1- Was reincarnation revealed for the first time here by Jesus?
  - 2- Was reincarnation known to the Egyptians?
  - 3- What was it proved when the priests and the levites asked John the Baptist if he was Elisha?
  - 4- Why some people used to say that Jesus could be the reincarnation of Elisha, Jeremiah or another prophet?
  - 5- Why did one of the disciples ask Jesus: "What reason do the writers say that it is necessary that Elisha come first?"
  - 6- Why was Jesus surprised that Nicodemus did not know the meaning of "being born again"?
  - 7- Was reincarnation announced by Zachary?
  - 8- Why did John deny being Elisha when he was questioned by the priests and levites?
- ( ) No, Jesus did not reveal it, but confirmed several times.

() because he did not remember, as generally happens. The incarnated do not usually remember their previous reincarnations.

() The reincarnation of Eliah, who had to be his son and had to receive the name of John.

() Because the Jewish people in general knew that reincarnation was a reality.

() Because there were prophecies which announced the return of Eliah in order to prepare the path of the Messiah and many Jewish people were not sure that Jesus was the messiah, or was a prophet who had come to prepare the way for the Messiah.

() Not only by the Egyptians, but also by the Greek, by the Hindus and other races.

() the disciple reasoned: "if Eliah is not incarnated, in order to prepare te path for the Messiah, how could Jesus be the Messiah?"

() It became evident that they had knowledge of the prophecy which had said that eliah would return and that they believed in reincarnation.