

18. December 2019

“The return of the people of Israel”

Jer 23, 5- 8

Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall raise an upright Branch for David; he will reign as king and be wise, doing what is just and upright in the country. In his days Judah will triumph and Israel live in safety. And this is the name he will be called, 'Yahweh-is-our-Saving-Justice.' 'So, look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when people will no longer say, "As Yahweh lives who brought the Israelites out of Egypt," but, "As Yahweh lives who led back and brought home the offspring of the House of Israel from the land of the north and all the countries to which he had driven them, to live on their own soil." '

A promise that some Jews today claim for the state of Israel! Some go so far as to say that the fact that today there is a state of Israel and Jews from all countries come to Israel is a messianic process! With this idea, however, it is the danger that the waiting and recognition of a Messiah as a person is given up!

But the words of the prophet, which refer to a king, are too clear for us to recognize, that this is a foresight for the coming of the Messiah!

However, for most Jews this king is not yet recognizable, while the promise of this text begins to be fulfilled more and more! The Israelis have had a home in Israel for several decades, even if one must not disregard the difficult political implications, which require their own consideration and are not yet at peace! A few years ago a Jew once told me that the political solution to this complex question was like a test of maturity for the Israelis! However, he was sceptical as to whether they would pass it!

We can assume that with the return home of the Jews God's work will become recognizable! Without our "older brothers" being able to identify it, this is still for them a hidden gracious action of their Messiah. This is important for the whole region of the Middle East! Therefore the daily prayer for the Holy Spirit and the enlightenment of Israel is essential! Especially the pilgrims are called to recognize this and to give a good testimony of faith and after the experience in the Holy Land to remember that through our prayers we can give something back to our spiritual home Israel!

But it is not only that! Let us think of the deep word of St. Paul:

"But if by their failure the world and by their guilt the Gentiles become rich, this will happen even more when all Israel comes to faith (Rom 11:12)!"

With the conversion and enlightenment of the Jews, if not only the *"chosen remnant"* (Rom 11,7) attains it, according to the words of the apostle of the nations, a special grace will once again to be expected! And this for the whole Church! From this point of view it would also be a command of Christian prudence to give a certain priority to the prayer for Israel, together with our love, which should be dominant!

But there is one more aspect that we should bear in mind that serves as the spiritual basis for peace in this region! Without diminishing the merits of a meaningful dialogue and corresponding conversations, the problem to be solved goes very deep!

Both the Jews and the Muslims do not know the dimension of the love for the enemy and the depth of the divine will of forgiveness and the associated grace that God offers us through his Son! Instead, the law of *"eye for eye and tooth for tooth"* (Ex 21,24) often still applies, although even this limitation of revenge is not yet followed everywhere! But in order to achieve a reconciliation that will be lasting, we need the grace of forgiveness, because much injustice has happened on all sides! If both, Jews and Muslims, were to experience the grace of true conversion to Christ, then this way would be possible!

The king of whom the text speaks has already come, he is working and will come back at the end of the times. The return home of the children of Israel from all nations may already be the beginning fulfilment of the promise as well as the preparation for the recognition of this king who is Jesus Christ!

May a small note at the end serve as encouragement:

A very well-known rabbi died some time ago! After his death, there were records that he left behind! In it he wrote down the name of the Messiah! It was the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Also the descriptions of some Jews, who often found God in very unusual ways or better to say let themselves be found by him, give hope that our elder brothers will recognize the Messiah before the Second Coming of the Lord.

"But over the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem I shall pour out a spirit of grace and prayer, and they will look to me. They will mourn for the one whom they have pierced as though for an only child, and weep for him as people weep for a first-born child." (Zech 12,10)