



**17. December 2020**

**Come, Lord Jesus Maranatha! – Part 5  
“The Conversion of the Jews”**

One of the signs that precedes the Second Coming of the Lord is the conversion of the Jews. This specifically means that many Jews accept the Gospel and recognise Jesus as the Messiah.

One may ask why the conversion of Israel has such significance, so that with the return of the Lord the conversion of the people of Israel is mentioned as a sign. Let us try to understand:

God did not reject Israel, even if only the “holy remnant” took over the mission of proclaiming the Messiah to all peoples and thus complied with God's will! But let us never forget: Through the proclamation of the apostles from the Jewish people, faith in the Messiah of Israel came to us. So it was not the whole of Israel that closed itself against the Messiah. Instead, the apostles gave their lives in following the Lord and the apostle Paul tirelessly proclaimed the Gospel.

Let us hear how much he loves his brothers by descent:

*“This is the truth and I am speaking in Christ, without pretence, as my conscience testifies for me in the Holy Spirit; there is great sorrow and unremitting agony in my heart: could pray that I myself might be accursed and cut off from Christ, if this could benefit the brothers who are my own flesh and blood. They are Israelites; it was they who were adopted as children, the glory was theirs and the covenants; to them were given the Law and the worship of God and the promises. To them belong the fathers and out of them, so far as physical descent is concerned, came Christ who is above all, God, blessed for ever. Amen.” (Rom 9:1-5)*

*“Brothers, my dearest wish and my prayer to God is for them, that they may be saved. I readily testify to their fervour for God, but it is misguided.” (Rom 10:1-2)*

Not only do we hear the apostle Paul speaking here, but God's love and concern for his people resounds through. There is still something unfinished with the children of Israel, the history of salvation with them has not come to an end.

*“I want you to be quite certain, brothers, of this mystery, to save you from congratulating yourselves on your own good sense: part of Israel had its mind*

*hardened, but only until the gentiles have wholly come in; and this is how all Israel will be saved. As scripture says: From Zion will come the Redeemer, he will remove godlessness from Jacob. And this will be my covenant with them, when I take their sins away.” (Rom 11:25-27)*

The text suggests that the hardening of Israel will be resolved in the context of Jesus' return, or in other words, that they will recognise the Lord. That is why I like to speak of the enlightenment of Israel, because the zeal of the believing Jews towards God is not denied to them, but the knowledge of the Messiah is lacking. Thus they remain so far objectively in enmity to the Gospel, while by election they are beloved of God.

*“As regards the gospel, they are enemies, but for your sake; but as regards those who are God's choice, they are still well loved for the sake of their ancestors.” (Rom 11:28)*

To be loved by God in a special way and at the same time to be barred against His saving action in Christ is an unbearable condition that calls for redemption.

God has allowed this for a long time. But this is to end differently!

As Paul tells us, the turning of the Jews to Christ will bring blessing to all people.

*“And if their fall has proved a great gain to the world, and their loss has proved a great gain to the gentiles - how much greater a gain will come when all is restored to them! Since their rejection meant the reconciliation of the world, do you know what their re-acceptance will mean? Nothing less than life from the dead!” (Rom 11:12.15)*

Therefore, it is especially important to pray for the Jews and to witness to them about the Lord, which is most important when we think of the Second Coming of the Lord.

Now here we combine this reflection with the one from yesterday.

Before the Lord returns, the Gospel must be proclaimed everywhere. This refers to us who have already experienced the grace of conversion to Jesus. Out of love for the Lord and for the people, we can participate to hasten the return of Jesus by becoming messengers of the Gospel.

If our gaze now turns even more sourly to the Jewish people, we can say something similar. Their return to their Saviour would, according to the apostle's words above, mean riches for the world and would probably once again immensely dynamise evangelisation.

What prevents us from including this dimension especially in our prayer. when it is brought to us? Is it not a salutary and awakening thought to pray especially for that people from whom the Messiah, his mother, the apostles came and the Church was formed? In this way we can do our small part to hasten the return of the Lord!