Come, Lord Jesus Maranatha! Part 7
"False prophets and afflictions"

Before we enter the last days before the so tender feast of the birth of Jesus starting tomorrow, it is still necessary to draw attention to further occurrences before the coming of the Lord at the end of time.

We spoke about the painful apostasy that precedes the coming of Jesus and we should also point out the appearance of **"false prophets"**.

"And while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives the disciples came and asked him when they were by themselves, 'Tell us, when is this going to happen, and what sign will there be of your coming and of the end of the world?' And Jesus answered them, 'Take care that no one deceives you, because many will come using my name and saying, "I am the Christ," and they will deceive many. '" (Mt 24:3-5)

What is a false prophet?

First of all, it should be said that a false prophet is the one who does not speak on behalf of God, as we saw in the Old Testament. There were prophets who served Baal and said what the kings wanted. On the other hand, there were those true prophets who proclaimed God's word to us unadulterated, such as the prophets Jeremiah or Elijah.

For us Catholics it is clear that if someone were to appear and claim to be the Christ or to speak in his name and says things not according to the truth of the gospel, it could only be a false prophet. But this is not so for people who have not yet come to know Jesus. They can be deceived, e.g. the Jews were also deceived by false "messiahs" in the course of their journey.

Again and again there were people who made some kind of messianic claim for themselves. They came in their own name (cf. Jn 5:43). Sometimes they were also exalted by their followers. Often they were political leaders whose end was tragic every time and who took many people with them. Such leaders and false messiahs should also be easily recognised by Catholics, but this was not always the case.

It does not always have to be concrete persons who spread false messianism. It can also be ideological and spiritual systems that claim to be able to redeem people, to

want to make the world into a kind of paradise and thus take on a religious character. Such developments were recognisable both in national socialism and communism, but also in other movements with their leader cults.

The number of "false prophets" is legion.

It becomes much more difficult for us Catholics when false teachers arise within the Church whose preaching no longer corresponds to the traditional teaching of the Church and who, in pastoral practice, take paths that are not covered by the truth. A "false spirit" is at work here, because they no longer preach in the name of Christ, but according to their own ideas. On such a path, those persons also turn into false prophets who mislead people. For this reason, the Holy Scriptures repeatedly admonish us to hold fast to the doctrine that has been handed down *(cf. 2 Thess 2:15; 2 Jn 1:9-10)* and not to be deceived *(cf. Heb 13:9).*

It remains to point out that **severe tribulations** such as wars, famines, earthquakes and severe persecutions are foretold *(Mt 24:7-9)*, as well as violent natural disasters ushering in the Second Coming of the Lord *(Mt 24:29, cf. Isa 13:10; 34:4).*

We know that many of these predictions have already happened. But it is obvious that these events will intensify as the return of the Lord approaches. It is important to be alert to such events in the light of the Word of the Lord.

With these reflections, I will conclude this subject area for the time being. It will continue to occupy us, because the worldwide shadow of the Covid19 epidemic and how to deal with it raises very serious questions. We also have to ask how this - from my point of view - apocalyptic event relates to the return of our Lord at the end of time.

Tomorrow I invite you to another lecture on YouTube, which will lead us back to the child of Bethlehem, who invites us to come to him. In the midst of all confusion, it is his love that does not let our hope die!