

18. December 2025

THE ADVENT JOURNEY

Day 19: “The Conversion of the Jews”

Another sign that will precede the Lord's Return is the conversion of the Jews. Specifically, this means that many Jews will accept the Gospel and recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

One may wonder why the conversion of the People of Israel is so important that it is mentioned as one of the signs preceding the Second Coming of Christ. Let us try to understand this: it is not that God has rejected Israel, even if only a “holy remnant” of Israelites believed in the Messiah and took on the great task of proclaiming him to all peoples, thus fulfilling God's will. But we must never forget that it was thanks to the proclamation of the apostles, who came from the Jewish people, that faith in the Messiah of Israel reached us. Therefore, not all the people hardened their hearts and rejected the Messiah; there were those who gave their lives to follow the Lord. Let us think of St. Paul, who tirelessly proclaimed the Gospel.

Let us listen to one of his letters to see how much he loved his brothers “according to the flesh”:

“I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race. They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever. Amen.” (Rom 9:1–5)

And further on he continues:

“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened.” (Rom 10:1–2)

In these passages, it is not only the apostle St. Paul who speaks, but God's love and concern for his people resounds. There is still something pending with the children of Israel; the history of salvation with them has not come to an end.

“Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob’; ‘and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’” (Rom 11:25–27)

This passage suggests that, in the context of Jesus' return, Israel's hardening will be dissolved—that is, they will recognize the Lord. That is why I like to use the term “the enlightenment of Israel,” because it is not intended to deny that believing Jews have great zeal for the true God. However, they lack knowledge of the Messiah. Therefore, it must be said that, objectively speaking, they remain hostile to the Gospel to this day, although, in terms of election, they are loved by God, as St. Paul affirms:

“As regards the gospel they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.” (Rom 11:28)

This divergence—being loved by God with predilection on the one hand, and closing themselves off to his saving work in Christ on the other—is an unbearable condition that cries out for redemption. God has allowed this for a long time, but it will not end this way.

As St. Paul makes us understand, the conversion of the Jews to Christ will bring blessing to all humanity:

“Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?” (Rom 11:12.15)

That is why it is particularly important to pray for the Jews and to proclaim the Lord to them in an appropriate way. This becomes even more urgent in view of the

Return of Christ. At this point, we can relate today's meditation to yesterday's. Before Jesus returns in his glory, the Gospel must be proclaimed throughout the world. This obligation falls to us, who have already had the grace to convert to Jesus. Out of love for Him and for mankind, we must cooperate so that the Lord may return soon and become messengers of the Gospel. As for the role of the Jewish people, their encounter with the One who came to save them would bring great richness to the world, according to the words of the Apostle, and would give enormous dynamism to the evangelization of all peoples.

So what prevents us from including this intention in a special way in our prayers? Is it not “just and necessary” that we pray in a particular way for the people from whom the Messiah, his Mother, the Apostles, and the Church were born? In this way, we can do our “bit” to hasten the Second Coming of the Lord.

Meditation on the antiphon O for 18 December:

<https://en.elijamission.net/2024/12/18/>