

20. December 2025

## THE ADVENT JOURNEY

### Day 21: “False Prophets and Tribulations”

Before entering the final stage leading up to the tender feast of the Nativity of Jesus, we must address other events that will take place before the Second Coming of Christ at the End of Time. Yesterday we spoke about the painful apostasy, and today we must also refer to the appearance of false prophets.

*"As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?' And Jesus answered them, 'Take heed that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray.'"* (Mt 24:3–5)

What is a false prophet?

First of all, it must be said that a false prophet is one who does not speak in the name of God. We also find false prophets in the Old Testament. They were those who served Baal and said what the kings wanted to hear (cf. Jer 23:16–23). On the other hand, there were the true prophets, who proclaimed the Word and Will of God without adulterating them. Think, for example, of Jeremiah or Elijah.

For us Catholics, it is clear that if someone presents himself as the Christ or claims to proclaim in His Name things that do not conform to the doctrine entrusted to the Church, he can only be a false prophet. But this is not so obvious to those who do not yet know Jesus. They can be deceived. For example, throughout their history, the Jews have been deceived by false messiahs.

Time and again, people with messianic pretensions have appeared. They came in their own name (cf. Jn 5:43). Sometimes they were exalted by their followers. Often they were political leaders whose end was always tragic and who dragged many people along with them. Catholics should be able to identify such leaders and false messiahs easily, but this has not always been the case.

It is not always specific individuals who propagate false messianism. It can also be ideologies or currents of thought that present themselves with the claim of redeeming people and turning this world into a kind of paradise, thus taking on a religious character. These tendencies could be seen in Nazism and communism, as well as in other movements that worshiped their leaders.

The number of false prophets is immense!

For us Catholics, the situation becomes much more difficult when false teachers arise within the Church itself, proclaiming doctrines that do not conform to traditional teaching and undertaking pastoral paths that are not based on truth. It is a “false spirit” at work here, because it no longer proclaims in the name of Christ, but according to its own ideas. In this way, those who teach false doctrines also become false prophets who lead the faithful astray. That is why Sacred Scripture exhorts us again and again to hold fast to the doctrine as it has been handed down to us by Tradition (cf. 2 Thess 2:15; 2 Jn 1:9–10) and not to be deceived (cf. Heb 13:9).

Finally, with regard to the signs preceding the Return of Christ, it should be noted that great tribulations have been foretold: wars, famines, earthquakes, and severe persecutions (cf. Mt 24:7–9), as well as violent natural disasters that will herald the Parousia of the Lord (cf. Mt 24:29–30; Is 13:10; 34:4). We know that many of these predictions have already been fulfilled. However, these events will intensify as the Return of Christ approaches. Therefore, we must perceive them attentively and interpret them in the light of the Word of God.

With this, I conclude this topic for now so that, in the coming days of imminent preparation for Christmas, we can refocus our gaze on the Child of Bethlehem, who invites us to come to Him.

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**Meditación sobre la antífona O del 20 de diciembre:**

<https://en.elijamission.net/2024/12/20/>