

17. December 2019

“The peoples render him obedience”

Gen 49,1-2;9-10

Gather round, sons of Jacob, and listen; listen to Israel your father. Judah, your brothers will praise you: you grip your enemies by the neck, your father's sons will do you homage. Judah is a lion's whelp; you stand over your prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, a mighty lion: who dare rouse him? The sceptre shall not pass from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute be brought him and the peoples render him obedience.

The obedience of the people is due to Jesus Christ. Those who have already accepted Jesus as their Lord and serve him know that! Throughout history it has always been a question of what this obedience should look like, and there have been ideas of a real, earthly kingship of Jesus or that the representative of Christ would have to exercise political power on earth. In fact, they still exist today, for example in certain areas of Judaism, ideas that the Messiah will be an earthly ruler, and occasionally one also believes that the returning Jesus would visibly establish his kingdom in Jerusalem in order to rule there.

If we follow the word of the Lord Himself, then we are directed to something else, because before Pilate Jesus testifies:

“My kingship is out of this world. If it were from this world, my people would fight so that I would not be handed over to the Jews. But my kingship is not from here” (Jn 18,36).

The kingdom of the Lord is therefore another kingdom, it is of a different kind than an earthly kingdom. We can call it a realm of love and truth, a realm that comes from heaven - out of the glory of God into this world! Sometimes we can see a reflection of it, for example in a wonderful liturgy, in a loving community with people, in the inner area of the heart!

Since the kingdom of the Lord is a kingdom of love and truth, the obedience of the peoples is due to him. God's judgment will show us how we lived according to love and truth!

It takes a right understanding of obedience. Everyone is obliged to follow the truth as far as he can recognize it. Not following the truth means living against yourself and against God. If man does not know the truth or understands it insufficiently, or if his life opens up to deception or even lies, life is darkened.

"The truth will set you free" (Jn 8,32), Jesus tells us and:

"I am the way and the truth and the life" (Jn 14,6).

We can choose whether to follow the truth or not, but it is always an abuse of freedom if we do not choose it, which has major consequences!

From this point of view, that man is obliged to truth and also to love, one understands the sentence in today's text that - meaning the coming Messiah - he deserves the obedience of the people!

This sentence has important consequences for us Christians. Because if there is an inner obligation to truth, there is also an obligation to proclaim the truth, whether it is convenient or inconvenient, and to live according to this truth.

So it's a triple aspect:

For one thing, the truth in itself requires us to look for it.

Then truth demands to be announced because it is the Lord's mandate.

As a consequence, truth demands that we live according to her.

If we follow the Word of the Scripture, there can be no relativism in preaching the truth. It cannot be, like it is more and more common today, that everyone lives "his truth", so to speak, and that these "different truths" coexist on an equal footing. That may be a modern thought and seems to show an apparent positive tolerance. However, the truth is different.

Certainly there are different degrees of knowledge of the truth, and we also cannot see whether the lack of knowledge is always culpable. Only the Lord knows! However, from the standpoint of truth, we can measure how far a person is from knowing the truth. This is easier to determine than for example to grasp his ethical behavior with the inherent motivation.

So we can for example say that on the one hand there is a great knowledge of God in the Jewish religion, but it still lacks the knowledge of the Messiah, which is a crucial lack and therefore cannot yet shine in it the bright light of the gospel.

In this way we could now look at the different religions and also life situations. Because only from the truth we can get the right light!

Love now teaches us how to deal properly with the knowledge of truth, because when we have recognized the Lord, there is no other way but to testify Him in the way He recommends it to us and that means:

To proclaim the truth in love!