

21. November 2020

“The two witnesses”

*Rev 11:4-12*

*These are the two olive trees and the two lamps in attendance on the Lord of the world. Fire comes from their mouths and consumes their enemies if anyone tries to harm them; and anyone who tries to harm them will certainly be killed in this way. They have the power to lock up the sky so that it does not rain as long as they are prophesying; they have the power to turn water into blood and strike the whole world with any plague as often as they like. When they have completed their witnessing, the beast that comes out of the Abyss is going to make war on them and overcome them and kill them. Their corpses lie in the main street of the great city known by the symbolic names Sodom and Egypt, in which their Lord was crucified. People of every race, tribe, language and nation stare at their corpses, for three-and-a-half days, not letting them be buried, and the people of the world are glad about it and celebrate the event by giving presents to each other, because these two prophets have been a plague to the people of the world.' After the three-and-a-half days, God breathed life into them and they stood up on their feet, and everybody who saw it happen was terrified; then I heard a loud voice from heaven say to them, 'Come up here,' and while their enemies were watching, they went up to heaven in a cloud.*

There are many considerations as to who the two witnesses could be who are described here and carry out their mission with authority. Perhaps this can only be seen when they appear and publicly oppose the powers of darkness.

Perhaps it is similar to the Antichrist announced at the end of times. Only when he is present and exercises his dominion will it be possible to identify him! Unless God gives someone a special insight to make them understand beforehand that this or that concrete person is the Antichrist! This may be come to be able to warn others, because the Antichrist will probably exercise a global dominion that surpasses all previous forms of dominion. The technical means for a global control of the people are now available, and to evade such a control would be difficult. God, however, will lead His flock through such an affliction!

Interpreters of these passages see that the two witnesses will fulfil openly their mission in this time of distress, to warn people and to counteract the power of the

Antichrist and his followers. They obviously do this with a special authority that reminds us of the work of Moses and the prophet Elijah.

Moses was able to turn the water into blood (*cf. Ex 7:19-21*) and Elijah closed the sky so that no more rain fell (*cf. 1 Kgs 17:1*). This power of authority leads some to believe that these two persons are the real ones who will appear in public at the end of time. Others think that it is Elijah and Enoch because, according to the Bible, they did not die and will return and perform their ministry at the time of special tribulation. There are many more interpretations about these two witnesses, which we cannot all list.

My personal view is that there will indeed be two specially authorised witnesses - real persons - who will act in the power of Moses and Elijah, as John the Baptist did, acting in the power of Elijah (*cf. Mt 17:10-13*)! They must be seen with the eyes of faith, because many signs will be done through them, and their testimony will obviously be known everywhere! The believers will know that they speak the truth and expose the lies of the Antichrist. With today's technical possibilities, it is easy to imagine that their message will be widely spread!

What is now important for our discipleship to take with us from the texts, because we can name neither the Antichrist nor the two prophets concretely so far?

On the one hand, it is an invitation to be able to rely on and trust God in the most difficult times. He does not leave us in such a dark time without giving his help. The two witnesses, whoever they are, will come to the aid of the faithful and give them orientation. Even if many people would let themselves be deceived by the Antichrist - which God may prevent - there will be a holy remnant that will not bend their knees before the Baal.

A second point is that we are called to live in great vigilance. The antichristian spirit is already at work in the world and in the church, and many do not even identify it as such. Therefore, we should listen attentively to those voices which give us a clear path to the Catholic faith and pay no attention to those who seek to mislead us. We have to practise this already now, so that - if an even more intensive influence of those anti-God forces takes place - we are prepared. We have to use all the spiritual weapons so that we can perceive the evil spirit even in its finest manipulations.

After all, we know an essential witness, the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth, and we can trust the authentic teaching of the Church. If we do this conscientiously

and cultivate our spiritual life, then we are prepared for all situations, for no one can snatch us from the hand of the Lord (*cf. Jn 10:28*)!