

Cat.7 # 3 Some more about the covenant God intends to have with the creature, and with the nations. By Pieter Bos

God wants us to have friendship, even intimacy with God. Therefore, we now turn to the intimacy of God. That starts with his majestic glory, his blazing holiness, his destroying wrath. I want to talk about covenant. Covenant is God's idea. It is through covenant that God expresses his intimacy.

Moses saw God... and fell on his face. The same with Isaiah and John. Ezekiel saw God... and was undone, perplexed, for seven days. These great men knew from experience: God is to be feared. The psalmist says: "My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Ps 121:2, 124:8), highlighting that God is really big. And listen to the comparing of gods (n.b. we are talking nations all the time): "The gods of all other nations are only idols, but the Lord created the heavens" (1Chr 16,26;Ps 96,5). And to this prayer of the prophet to the "true God": "You, Lord, are the true God... When you are angry, the world trembles. The nations cannot endure your anger... tell them that the gods who did not make the earth and the sky will be destroyed. The Lord made the earth... and stretched out the heavens..." (Jer 10:10-12).

This great, awesome, terrifying, splendid God stoops down to creature, saying: "I love you, I choose to love you, I choose to commit myself to love you, to protect you, to prosper you..." This is God's intimacy. Do we fathom the enormity of this stooping down of God?

This great Creator God bridges the huge gap between himself and creature by covenant commitment, the covenant with all nations, before the fall. This God even covenants creature after the fall, with the gap so utterly widened: the covenant to Abraham, to Israel, to David. In some cases, the covenant is unconditional: God so longs to bridge the gap! In some cases, the covenant is conditional, with laws and regulations carefully in place, because of the un-holiness of creature, and measures in case of breach of covenant of the weaker party, because again God so longs to keep the gap bridged. How gracious, how spectacularly gracious! How intimate.

The often-repeated covenant formula is: "I am your God and you are my people". With all the covenant rules and regulations in view, this can be summarized: "I am there for you!" This great and awesome God is there for us, for my nation and yours, for the Virgin Daughters US and Brazil, for Ghana and Tibet, for the Tuaregs and the Kurds. He stoops down, he bends backwards, crying out: "Come to me, burdened Virgin Daughters Korea and Eritrea, proud Virgin Daughters Greece and Afghanistan, my rules are light, my regulations are clear, just follow me and let yourselves be disciplined". That is God's intimacy, God's heart (for the nations).

Of course, Israel and the Church are God's partners to bring this about. Therefore, the covenants for these partners are more in focus. But these partners are means to an end: God's intimate love for the Virgins, the nations is the red line of His story.

(The indications towards this covenant are numerous, though for western readers of the Bible rather implicit. The most clear are in Deut. 32, Isa 2, Isa 24-25, Matt 25, Acts 16, Rev 21.)