

AHIA ACHER AHIA - ASHEM - EMMANU-EL GOD FOR US - I KEPT MY WORD - GOD WITH US

Exodus 3:14-Matthew 1:23

The silence of God is at an end. In the Scriptures this is communicated by the Hebrew phrases *Ahia Acher ahia*, *Ashem*, and *Emmanuel*. The past is behind us. What is over is over. What happened has happened. "I am for you" is *Ashem*; "I kept my word" is *Emmanuel*. God has entered History. It is no longer ideas- human religiosity, mysticism, mystical theologies and human ethics- but the living God and Father who is present, here and now.

This is where the vital substance of the biblical message lies. It is the "I-for-you" of the desert of Sinai, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God who dislocates Jacob's thigh at Peniel, the God who casts David into desperation, and the God who speaks to the prophets as a man speaks with another man. It is this God, the Only, True God, the living one. This is the God who is so true, so much ours, so human, that He incarnates in history. He is present in the disturbing, upsetting figure of a child from Bethlehem, and in the unlikely personality of a man- Jesus of Nazareth. This is the awe-inspiring, formidable message of the Bible: "The Word has been made Flesh". The Perfect Good, the eternal Justice, the Creator of the universe, the Holy One, incarnates. He becomes us while remaining Himself.

Ideas do not incarnate. They remain barren outlines! A God who does not incarnate Himself is but a pure idea. The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, of Moses and the prophets, is the root of Isaac, the branch that springs up from the people. He is the Christ, the living Word who is in the people and in the world. The world lives because of Him (John 1:10).

God is in Christ, The Truth incarnate, who enters into time. The living God is present as a man, as a person in history. It is precisely this sanctity of His, which is present and personified in Jesus' life, that determines the sinful reaction of the world and, thereby, judgement and crisis. This world carries within it death, determined by the justice of God. And so, the revelation of God to this world cannot come but in death, the only reality that unites us to God. God in Christ crucified marries, embraces the human tragedy unto death, immersing into it the

reality of grace and love. **And since the manifestation of divine justice is fulfilled in this sacrifice, from death itself there springs forth immortal life. Christ rises and spreads the power of the resurrection into the world, and this is the reality of the Spirit of God, alive in all believing consciences. The world from Christ onward is permeated with this awe-inspiring power of God who is and who comes.** He is the One who comes precisely because He is. He is not our idea, but the living Lord and Father. He is present, with His inscrutable will, freedom and wisdom, but never in our power! Faith is the joyous and childlike remission of our life and all its happenings into the hands of the Father who acts and lives and is present, ASHEM, through the Emmanuel in life and history. God speaks in Christ, therefore the Christian message is not a parcel of religious experiences, moral imperatives and philosophical doctrines. In its profound nature Christianity is *Ahia Acher Ahia*, "I-for-you". Christianity is *Ashem*, "I kept my word". Christianity is *Emmanuel*, "God with us". Christianity is Christ preached and experienced in the midst of His people. Christianity is the Word of God which enters history with effectiveness and works in history independently and in spite of man's deaf ears and his unwillingness to listen. It is to this man and to this world, an unbelieving world that reads in the events of history the defeat and the ineffectiveness of this Word that we believers, because of His Grace alone, are able to announce Christ unconditionally. And we must begin from this event: The Word of God made flesh. Here is God's will for salvation and freedom. It is from this very moment that we, His people by His Grace alone, discover and announce the eternity of the Word that God puts into effect and pronounces in Christ and who places it above and beyond our ministry. The generations pass, but the living Word abides forever. Man is a fragile and transient creature, but God lives in eternity.

Emmanuel, God with us, must move us to recognise in our history the work that God performs. As incapable as we are at recognising His presence in

our individual, family and community life, how may we yet venture so much to make out those signs, the work of the Emmanu-el, those indications of His presence amongst us which involve our whole life with respect to the indescribable gift that God, our Lord, gives us today? And yet, between the unveiling of the mysteries of God, and living without orientation, without an openness toward the future, we have to be capable of finding those signs, the work of Emmanu-el, those indications of His

presence among us that involve all of our life in confrontation with the ineffable gift that the Lord, our God, gives us today.

AHIA ACHER AHIA - ASHEM - EMMANU-EL -
I AM FOR YOU - I HAVE KEPT MY WORD - I
AM WITH YOU FOR ALWAYS - FOR
ETERNITY - AMEN! ALLELUHIA!!!

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