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# The God who sees us

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ANDREAS FELGER; HAGAR AM BRUNNEN, HOLZSCHNITT

We are currently living in the time of Advent - a holy time that connects us with the high time of expectation among the people of Israel over 2000 years ago. I never refer to the pre-Christmas period. Because that does not do justice to the seriousness of the situation then and now. Because Advent means approaching, coming closer and is filled with the expectation that salvation is near, that ONE may arrive who will bring us salvation. In this waiting, the longing is kept alive that what has been promised may be fulfilled. This expectant hope never hovered in a vacuum, but was born in the distant memory that everything was once good - God and man and creation in harmony. In the beginning, everything was good. Beyond Eden, however, the paths became confused, the relationships fragile, the burdens often unbearable. There were times when people lost themselves and their God, but he showed himself to them again and again, guided them, reminded them, called prophets with the message: 'I am with you', sometimes with the plea: 'If only you would love me!' But as is still the case today: we humans hear it, perhaps consider it, forget it again and submit to other powers.

In Israel at the turn of the age, the yoke of foreign rule had become increasingly heavy; no prophet had appeared for a long time, many people had given up or gone into hiding, but others were nourished by the old promises.

»Will there still be salvation?«- »Will God still see us?« - When people ask these questions, it is about the overall picture, about existence, then and now.

There is a story in the Old Covenant: Hagar, Sarah's slave, was once in a hopeless situation. According to her mistress' plan, she was pregnant by Abraham. But then Sarah could no longer bear the self-confident Hagar and made her life a living hell, so that Hagar fled into the hostile desert. The angel of the Lord found her at a spring of water, asked where she had come from and where she was going and then pronounced a great promise over her and her as yet unborn son. »So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "So Hagar gave this name to the LORD who had spoken to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "Here I have seen the One who sees me!" « (Gen 16:13) In her hopelessness, she learnt that she was seen by God, that she was valuable and that she had a future. She could now interpret her flight to this well as her way of searching for the God who saw her. She had run into emptiness and had found her promise, with which she could return to her everyday life - at a well!

The history of the people of Israel showed time and again that this living God has been watching over his people. And the hope was expressed that one day the Saviour would come, the Messiah, who would confirm this once and for all and free his people from all misery - this promise was passed on from one generation to the next. This is how the pregnant Mary was able to sing before Elisabeth: »He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever. « (Luke 1:54-55) Thus the attitude of many of the people of Israel was Advent-like, trusting and hoping that God had not lost sight of his people.

We too need this hope and trust and can practise it during these weeks. In the face of so many dangerous developments, we can encourage each other that God sees us, that He is there and that we, His people, can rely on Him. We can practise becoming empty like Hagar, leaving behind the supposedly important things, following the longing for life. The world that surrounds us and in which we are integrated does not make this easy for us. It obstructs God's paths to us. Let us clear them so that we can perceive his gaze on us again and read in this gaze that his promise also applies to us.

For HE will come in his Son, who will show and bring us God's love for his people, for us, irrevocably and once and for all.

Let us look at ourselves and trust these faithful eyes!

*Rosemarie Monnerjahn*  
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