

Coach House Church BEACONS

RAINBOWS OF MERCY

27TH APRIL 2020

Today I would like to share with you something about rainbows. Rainbows are caused by sunlight passing through water droplets in the atmosphere after rain. The sunlight is diffracted into its seven component colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Red is the colour with the lowest frequency and longest wavelength; violet has the highest frequency and shortest wavelength. However you may think of them, it is universally agreed that they are beautiful.

Did you know that it was not until after the universal flood, or Great Deluge of Noah's time that the rainbow was first seen? The Great Deluge was a universal judgement of God upon a world wholly given over to sin and evil. Only those people and animals in the Ark with Noah survived. And with them God made a covenant of mercy. Its sign was the rainbow. You can read about it in Genesis 9: 12 – 17:

And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between Me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set My rainbow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. Whenever I form clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember My covenant between Me and you and every living creature of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. And whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of every kind that is on the earth."

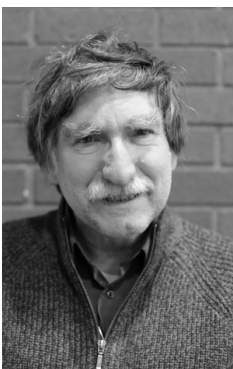
So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between Me and every creature on the earth." (Berean Study Bible).

Back in June 1987 I had a rainbow from God that signalled His mercy to my family, and on my father particularly. I was summoned to the hospital where my father had been taken following a massive heart attack that had almost killed him. I was there with my wife, mother, sister, and her boyfriend. After a considerable wait the doctor came and told us how they had to fight to resuscitate him, and that in his opinion he would have another, fatal, heart attack within the following 48 hours. After this I went off to find a bathroom, and as I walked down a corridor, I saw a rainbow painted on the wall. Amazingly, as I glanced at it, it seemed to leap of the wall at me! At that point I knew that the Lord's mercy was over my father and that he would not die then as the doctor said he would. In fact, he lived for another 20 months afterwards.

Because God is just, He must punish sin;

The point of this is that God wants us to understand from His Word, where we first see the rainbow, that He is a God of mercy. But He is also a God who judges sin. So, we see judgement and mercy together. In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, in chapter 4, John sees a vision of God seated on His throne in heaven. And the throne is over-arched with a rainbow. The book of Revelation gives many visions of God's judgements upon a sinful, rebellious world; but before they begin we are reminded by that rainbow over the throne, of His desire to show mercy – if only people will repent and turn from their sin. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked but would rather that they repent and live. (Ezekiel 18:32).

Because God is just, He must punish sin; but because He is merciful, He wants to have mercy on the sinner. These two characteristics of God meet at the cross of Calvary: justice and mercy meet. Jesus bore our punishment that God may show us mercy. There is a rainbow over-arching Jesus' cross. Why not accept His offer of mercy?



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