

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## HOPE...IN THE CONFUSION

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Whenever something catastrophic happens in the world , people are quick to ask where God is, or they say is God not good ? Can He not see what is happening ? Why do people have to die and children have to starve? Why is good and justice too many times overtaken by evil?

Many of these questions were asked by the prophet Habakkuk around 600BC who was living in Judah, the southern part of the land of the Jews. He brought all his questions and doubts boldly straight to the Lord himself.

The Lord heard him and answered him , he told the prophet to write His answer down in order to be able to understand it fully.

God was angry with his people as they had forgotten about their God and were more inclined to do bad things than good things. In their desire to do their own thing they forgot who was really still in control.

The Lord told the prophet his plan : He will allow his people to be taken over by an arrogant and greedy nations, the Babylonians.

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### They will bring death, war and slavery to the country

The Babylonians were set to take over the world ; they prospered through the misfortune of others ; they killed and looted the nations they were invading , taking the locals as slaves

The Lord warned the prophet about what was to come and Habakkuk, understandably, becomes afraid. In chapter 1: 12,13 In spite of his fear the prophet asks God why is He allowing a nation more wicked than themselves to "swallow them up". He also asks God why He is silent when these terrible things happen.

In chapter 2 of the book , the Lord answers these questions.He tells the prophet what will happen in the long run: the Babylonians would, eventually, be held responsible for their actions ; they will give account for each person that they killed and each city that they plundered , in effect ,for each injustice they will commit. The last verse of this chapter tells us " The Lord is in his holy temple ; let the earth be silent before him." The Lord is in perfect control , no injustice and no evil deed escapes his attention.

This gives the prophet hope .Hope that there will be a time in the future , when his people will be free again. Hope that the Lord will be merciful to them again. It assures the prophet that whatever happens , whatever the future brings , it is not unknown to God ; he is able to see the complete picture and that his people will be accompanied by the Lord on their journey.

Habakkuk finishes his book with the words:

**"though the fig tree does not bud , and there are no grapes in vines ,  
Though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food ,though there  
are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls ,  
Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord , I will be joyful in my God my Saviour".**

**Chapter 3 verse 17,18.**

Justice and mercy are some of God's attributes , they are in his nature . The bible is full of statements that witness to this fact . Psalm 86:15 says: "But you O Lord are a compassionate and gracious God , slow to anger and abounding in mercy and truth." In psalm 89:14 we find this statement : " righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne, mercy and truth go before your face" .

The Lord is full of love and compassion for his people , like a father towards his children . And being a good father, He does not have spoiled brats for children. When he has to discipline them he does it having in mind the eternal benefit it will bring to them

When David sinned by counting his fighting men , something that God had told him specifically not to do,The Lord sent the prophet to David with 3 disciplinary options.

David makes his choice and in 2 Samuel 24:14 says " ..please let us fall into the hands of the Lord , for his mercies are great."

James 1: 13 tells us: " for God cannot be tempted by evil" . We serve a merciful, good and holy God. So when plagues and catastrophes happen , they are not from God. He does not stop them , he allows things to happen but we have to understand : we live in a world where sin and decay rule over people and nature. Often God makes use of the bad things that are happening in the world to bring about good. He uses the consequences of sin to search men's hearts and make them think about his sovereignty.

Last Sunday during the evening service at the Coach House Church we discussed if coronavirus is from God ; if it's God's judgement on the people of today. We reached the conclusion that it wasn't from God. Here are some of the reasons why: Unlike Israel during Habakkuk 's time, when God did sent judgement on them in the form of an invading nation, we live in a time of grace and not of judgement. The writer of the book of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95 where is said : "today if you hear his voice , do not harden your heart like in the day of rebellion" . As long as we have today , we continue to live in the time of grace.

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## But this time is still limited.

In the end the Lord will come with judgement on mankind , we are told in the Bible that he will judge the nations according to his justice . However there is good news, in accordance to his merciful nature , He prepared a way out. He made a way for mankind to escape his judgement and that way is Jesus . When Jesus died on the cross , he took mankind's punishment upon him ; In his justice the Lord will look at his Son's death as payment for our sin and therefore is able to allow anyone who accepts Jesus as saviour , into his presence .

Remember that when God created the earth and mankind , there was no illness or disease. The creation was perfect. Illness came as a consequence of sin, it was not in God's initial design .

In conclusion , when things in our world go terribly wrong is not God's fault . When people are starving it's not because God did not provide enough food for the whole earth's population but it's because people and governments have other plans - selfish ones. When people kill other people , it's because we have the power to choose good or bad. We were created free to choose.

And it is exactly that, it is our choice. God will not force anyone to love him. We are responsible for making the choice. If you want to choose Jesus today for the first time please get in touch via our website. And if you already know Jesus ask God to show you all the good things He has done for you in difficult times and give thanks to Him for His grace and mercy.



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