

Written prayer

Meditation inspired by Habakkuk 3

The summer of 2012 has been historic. But we are perhaps happier writing history than learning from it – imagining our challenges, achievements and celebrations to be new; modern; and remarkable. Many of them are. But more of them have been repeated in history. This prayer came from a place of both lament and hope – and a prayer that we might embrace the history behind us as well as in front of us – and learn like so many before us that God is our hope, our salvation and our song.

Ancient of days, first and last,
You are Lord over history;
Yesterday, today and forever -
You are our hope, our salvation and our song.

And yet in our arrogance we act as if we are the first;
As if no one or nothing could teach us but ourselves.
So we repeat history's mistakes, but refuse to learn
Its wisest lesson – and return to you.

But I cry out to you Lord,
Because I have heard of your fame
And I have witnessed your deeds in awe.
I have read your Word and I know what you have done.
I have listened to the voices of saints and lovers echoing through the generations
And rejoiced time and again at your many times mercy made known.
I have seen your miracles of provision and healing in my own life.
And I have been touched by those who have seen yet more.

Therefore, though all our society has put its trust in is falling
And all we have committed to has been found as shifting sand.
Though our finances are shaking
And the conduct of our banks is in question.
Though our government struggles to regain our trust
And scandal and rumour of scandal increase our apathy.
Though parts of our media have been found guilty of manipulation
And truth is buried and contested and denied.
Though the international headlines speak fear
And proclaim more turmoil still is coming.
Yet I will rejoice in you.

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I will be joyful in God my Saviour -
Who has saved before, is saving today, and will always save.

For you have a hopeful future for our nation
If we will simply return.

And each time I hear the church bells ringing
I rejoice.
For you will not stop calling us to worship
The God of our history and the true Lord of our present.
Not until we listen, and return -
And you show your power again.
For such is your love, your grace and your consistency
To every generation that you have breathed life into
Since you created time.

And I will not stop praying until we all return – or you do -
Or you take me to be with you.
For you have captured my heart with your faithfulness
And you can have my life for your cause.