

Moravians Women's Association

Devotional Paper

October 2015

Messages from the Mountains

Genesis Ch 9 v 8 - 17

The first mountain I think of mentioned in the Bible is Mount Ararat. It is located in Eastern Turkey on the borders of Iran and Armenia. This volcanic mountain rises just short of 17,000 feet high, far above the plains below and is the highest in the region and possibly the largest single mass mountain in the world.

The story of Noah, his family, the procession of animals and the devastating flood is well known to us all. Some of you may have seen the television programme, "The Ark", shown earlier this year just before Easter. Cynics picked holes in it, as you would expect, saying "Where did all the wood come from?" and "He couldn't possibly have built it with only his wife and sons to help" but I thought it was very good. It showed Noah's strong faith in God and brought out firm family values still relevant today. The final words of the programme – "has man learnt" - and "only time will tell" could still spark many a discussion. Although most religions record some kind of flood covering the earth way back in history, it is the punch line of this story that means the most to us as Christians. God sent the rainbow in the sky – a sign of his promise that he will never send a flood again. (Read Ch 9 v 14 - 17).

God never breaks his promises and we see the rainbow in the sky time and time again.

We make promises on many occasions but unfortunately we often break them. At our children's baptism parents and godparents make promises that are not kept. Brownies and Guides make promises that sometimes are not carried out. Marriage vows are broken and politicians manifesto promises are never fulfilled. Yet the rainbow still appears. God's promise holds fast. He doesn't give up on us.

You will remember that just before the end of the flood story Noah sends out birds to see if the waters have subsided enough to once more sustain life. First he sends a raven and then a dove. The raven returns, as does the dove, the first time it is sent but on the second occasion the dove returns with an olive branch. The image of the dove with the olive branch has become a sign of peace – peace again between God and his people. Noah builds an altar to God as a sign of being given a new beginning and of his thanks for keeping him and his family safe. The sign of peace and God's covenant with his people are both signs of hope and optimism for the future.

We too constantly have to ask God for new beginnings. The real message from this mountain story, however, is that God never breaks his promise. He does not promise us a life without floods or storms but he does promise to always be with us. His hand will always be there for us to pull us back to him.

For Discussion

1. Do you feel that you have ever broken a promise? Is it something you can rectify?
2. When you have faced storms in life how did you feel God with you?

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