

EASTER 2019

In many ways the world and the church are passing through dark times, and the question is how to make sense of the darkness. We aren't the first to face that question. It lies at the heart of the Bible which is a grand and complex answer to the question, What does the darkness mean?

The Hebrew Bible came forth from the darkness of the Babylonian Exile when the religious world of ancient Israel seemed to have collapsed. The People of God sifted through the embers of hopelessness and found a spark of hope which eventually became the great flame of Judaism.

The New Testament emerged from the darkness of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and the persecution in Rome under Nero. To make sense of the darkness the early Christians turned to the death of Jesus. Calvary looked like the collapse of hope: as the disciples on the road to Emmaus say, "Our hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free" (Luke 24:21).

Facing into the darkness of the world and the church, we too turn to the Cross. Evil is powerful and the darkness is real. But the greater power which raised Jesus from the dead – we call it the love of God – will bring good from evil, light from darkness. So when we kindle the new fire at Easter we go to the very heart of biblical religion, finding fresh hope in the midst of what seems to be hopelessness. That's why even now we will sing the songs of joy. The victory belongs to love.

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