



HALL GREEN HERALD



WAR BREAKS OUT IN HAWORTH

Every springtime tanks, armoured vehicles, military personnel and fighter planes invade the small village of Haworth, West Yorkshire to celebrate 1940's weekendⁱ. Year after year one of the worst periods of our human history is remembered. A time of destruction, death, sadness, fear and uncertainty. And as we look back we rightfully feel immeasurable thanks towards those who sacrificed so much to acquire our liberty. Surely God was with us.

BUT, perish the thought, what if the so called 'good guys' had lost, what if the other side had wonⁱⁱ? Could we conclude that God was therefore against us? Had God lost control of the situation? What would have happened

to our relatives is almost too unbearable to comprehend. The reality is that sometimes the so called 'baddies'ⁱⁱⁱ do win and in a more general sense evil often does prevail not just in War but in many other parts of our day to day lives. So many questions naturally arise –

Why? Why doesn't God stop wars? Why does God allow evil at all?^{iv} Why doesn't God do something? Is God responsible for it all? Is He powerless?

Unfortunately the bible tells us that we are pointing the finger in the wrong direction.

God is not responsible for the evil in the world, we are! Yes, you and me! A broken human race.

¹What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

James 4:1

'As James reminds us, the ultimate cause of war is lust and desire; this restlessness that is a part of us as the result of sin; this craving for that which is illicit and for that which we cannot obtain. It shows itself in many ways, both in personal, individual life, and also in the life of nations. In precisely the same way it leads to personal

quarrels and strife, [it leads] to wars between nations.' –
Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones

Right at the start of the bible we are told that when God created the perfect universe (including humans) it was 'very good' (Genesis chapter 1). Our ancestors, Adam and Eve were created sinless but importantly with a free will to be able to choose to obey God or not (as opposed to being created as robots!). As we go a little further, in Genesis chapter 3 we read how 'man' rebelled against God, or put another way, sinned. Ever since this moment the human race was broken or fallen, and every generation and every individual since has been sinful from birth, in rebellion against a holy God and therefore deserving of punishment.

In Romans 10 verse 9 we are told that '**All** have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God' (emphasis added). Sin is deeply rooted in each human beings heart (would any fair minded person deny that?). To prove it the next few chapters of the book of Genesis go on to describe to us just how bad the world became in such a short period of time, and you only have to look into a history book, or this mornings newspaper to see that it has not improved.

'...there is no such person as the innocent. We are all sinful. But furthermore, we clearly have to reap the consequences not only of our own personal sins, but also of the sins of the entire race; and on a smaller scale, the sin of our particular country or group.' – Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones

At that moment when Adam and Eve first rebelled, or at any moment since then God could have justly and fairly eradicated humanity from the face of the earth but mercifully He did not. What we find instead is the beginning of a wonderful rescue plan, a plan to save humankind from our sin, from our rightful guilty verdict and from our deserved punishment. We learn that God was going to 'crush' (Genesis 3 v 15) evil. BUT NOT YET! God is not powerless, God is in control, God will stop all evil and wars. The plan is in motion, but we still have a little longer to wait, and thankfully there is also a little longer for each of us to be rescued from the judgement to come.

John 3:36

³⁶He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

You see God is patient; the door of heaven is still open wide today welcoming anyone who wants to come in. But as we see in the bible God tolerates evil for only a brief time; then, with great sorrow, He judges. We see this in The Flood (Genesis 6:5-7), Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-25) and The Fall of Babylon (Revelation 18). But importantly we are told that another judgement is

coming that involves each of us, and that wars are a sign that the final devastating judgement is expected at any moment (Matthew 24 v 6). God in His kindness is shouting at us to look to his one prescribed route of salvation, His rescue plan, His son Jesus Christ through his atoning death on the cross for our sin, to pay our price of our sin and guilt on our behalf.

No one would respect a judge who turned a blind eye to a guilty person and let them go free. There would be a public outcry and he would be rightly relieved of his position. God is a just and fair judge and every sin ever committed is guaranteed to be either paid for by the individual concerned or by Jesus Christ stepping in to take that individuals place because they have repented and trusted him to do so. However much we might not like the idea, we are all sinners, and before the bar of heaven we are all guilty and that guilt needs to be paid, or atoned for. There are consequences. Justice must be done but if you ask for forgiveness, turn from your sin and trust Jesus, and his death on a cross then he has agreed to be punished on your behalf, taking the judgement that is rightfully yours. What a Saviour!

We will remember those who fought and died for us in wars. However in a much greater and deeper way Jesus Christ won the ultimate victory over evil, sin and death 2,000 years on a hill not far from the city wall of Jerusalem in Israel. Jesus conquered evil on our behalf if we trust in him for salvation, and live for him. He did it through suffering and death, not through war and brute force.



Wars will cease. Evil will come to an end, Jesus Christ will win the ultimate victory and he invites us to join His side, accept His terms and live for Him.

ⁱ www.haworth1940s.co.uk/

ⁱⁱ There have been books published and films produced speculating what life would have been like if World War II had turned out differently. For example - Fatherland (1994)

ⁱⁱⁱ Of course this is from our perspective and it should go without saying that Christians are often found on all sides in a war. See 'War and Grace', Don Stephens – Evangelical Press – 9780852345948

^{iv} For an in depth analysis of the subject please read – 'Where is God when things go wrong', John Blanchard – Evangelical Press – 9780852345900

**For more information please visit our website
www.hallgreenchapel.org.uk**