

# SURVIVAL IN TIMES OF CRISIS

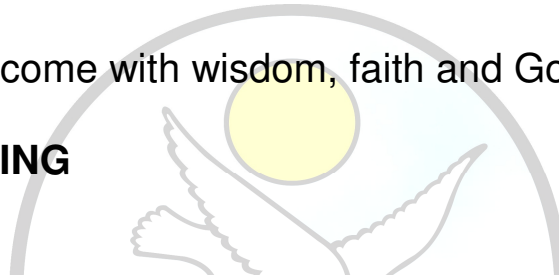
## GOLDEN TEXT

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

## USEFUL PRACTICE

Crises can be overcome with wisdom, faith and God's help.

## SCRIPTURE READING Habakkuk 1:1-17



<sup>2</sup> How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, “Violence!” but you do not save?

<sup>3</sup> Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.

<sup>5</sup> “Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.

<sup>6</sup> I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings not their own.

<sup>7</sup> They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.

<sup>8</sup> Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk.

Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like an eagle swooping to devour;

<sup>9</sup> they all come intent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand.

<sup>10</sup> They mock kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; by building earthen ramps they capture them.

<sup>11</sup> Then they sweep past like the wind and go on—guilty people, whose own strength is their god.”

<sup>12</sup> Lord, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, you will never die. You, Lord, have appointed them to execute judgment; you, my Rock, have ordained them to punish.

<sup>13</sup> Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

<sup>14</sup> You have made people like the fish in the sea, like the sea creatures that have no ruler.

<sup>15</sup> The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad.

<sup>16</sup> Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food.

<sup>17</sup> Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy?

## **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

To show that the crises we are facing in our nation and the world are the result of the fallen world.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

**I. To recognize** that crises are a reality of today's world;

**II. To show** that crises are a result of sin;

### III. To explain the reason for political, economic and spiritual crises.

## INTRODUCTION

In this quarter, we will study the crises that the fallen world has been facing over time. Jesus warned us that in the world we would have tribulation: but he promised to be with us every day to the very end of the age (Mt 28:20). We are not alone in the midst of crises. We know that Brazil is facing an unprecedented serious political, moral and economic crisis.

There is talk of 11 million unemployed people. Many businesses are closing their doors; the industry cannot transport the products, because companies do not have people to sell their products to. And the result is the dreaded economic recession. The crisis has also affected the health sector. Those who seek public hospitals suffer on waiting lists. There is a shortage of doctors, medicines and beds, and many people die without getting care. Education has also faced crises. We live in a chaotic society, but we have a God who cares for us. That is what we will see in this lesson.

### I - CRISES AS A REALITY

**1. God created a perfect world.** God created a perfect world and put man in it in order to care for the creation and live with it. Adam received from the Creator the mission to rule the earth and cultivate the soil. For a period of time (we do not know for how long), Adam and Eve lived without crisis and in harmony, ruling the world. However, Adam and Eve fell into the devil's temptation, disobeying God's command. With sin came God's judgment on Adam and Eve and the serpent. The earth also suffered the consequences of sin (Gen. 3:17). Sin deformed the human race and caused the world to experience the different crises we have seen. The first crisis that Adam was faced with was in his relationship with his wife, Eve. Adam blamed God and the woman for his wrongdoing (Gen. 3:12). Amid crises, whatever they are, we tend to always blame someone.

**2. A society in crisis.** With the Fall came evils and crises, which have plagued the earth to the present day. Apostasy has become universal. Today there seems to be no more limits to adultery, immorality and corruption. Mankind is every day more distant from God and committing all sorts of shameful acts. Our generation is similar to the days of Noah. However, God is in control. The Day of the Lord will come and his justice

will be done. We live in a corrupt and wicked society, but we do not belong in this world, so we cannot conform to its way of thinking and acting (Romans 12:2).

## **II - CRISES AS A CONSEQUENCE OF SIN**

**1. Crises in the antediluvian society.** After the Fall, sin spread through the human race as a lethal virus (Gen 6:5). But the antediluvian world did not live in chaos. According to the Scriptures there was no famine and human health was good, because life expectancy was very high, reaching almost a thousand years (Gen. 5:27). Although there were provisions, health and life expectancy, mankind was still far from God and given to all sorts of vile acts.

The land was corrupt and filled with violence (Gen. 6:11). Many mistakenly believe that violence is a consequence of modernity and capitalism. Violence is an outcome of sin and hardening of the heart of man, who lives away from the Creator. In saying that, we are not denying that poverty, unemployment and lack of access to education contribute to increased violence.

God is holy and cannot tolerate sin, so he decided to stop the wickedness of mankind by bringing the flood (Genesis 6:13). But God is also merciful. In his goodness and mercy, He told Noah to build an ark. The ark would serve to house Noah and his family, the animals and all those who believed in the preaching of the servant of God. The ark was a refuge from the wrath of God. But those people did not believe in Noah's warnings and did not want to seek refuge in God. Only Noah and his family were saved from the Flood waters, forming a new civilization.

**2. Crises in the postdiluvian society.** Noah repopulated the land, but mankind went ahead with the seed of sin in their heart. It did not take long for cruelty to enter the house of Noah himself. The servant of the Lord planted a vineyard, made wine and got drunk (Genesis 9:20,21). His son Ham, seeing his father drunk, exposed his nakedness. Ham was cursed by Noah (Genesis 9:25), in a clear evidence that sin brings a curse on the family and the nation. Very often, a crisis is a result of sin. Mankind settled in the old plain of Sumer and it did not take long for them to start building a tower. This was a monument to the development of man. It was the quest for power. Many today are building monuments to themselves (houses, imported cars, jewelry, brand clothes), but they do not help those in need. God was not pleased with that arrogant design and made each speak a different language, hampering the gathering of people in one place. The postdiluvian society did not become better than the

antediluvian one, because human wickedness continued to grow.

**3. Crises in the times of Jesus and the early church.** Jesus was born in the land of Israel, in a region known as Palestine. The Son of God came into the world at a time when the Roman Empire ruled Israel. The political tension and social instability were great. It was a time of political, social, moral and spiritual crisis. But, amid crises, the light shone, dissipating the darkness and bringing hope to mankind. In Jesus' day, there were many poor and needy people. Therefore, the Master taught that it was necessary to fulfill what was said by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 58:6,7). It was no use saying that they were children of Abraham, if they did not undo the burden of the oppressed and share the bread with the hungry. This reminds us that faith without works is dead (James 2:15-17). The early church faced a terrible persecution. There were many people in need, but Christian brothers helped the poor and needy. In times of crisis, the goods were shared (Acts 4:34,35). It is in the midst of a crisis when we can see how generous people are. Generosity, combined with fellowship, caused many to be drawn to Jesus Christ, contributing to the growth of the church.

### III – THE CRISIS

**1. The political crisis.** Israel faced a terrible political crisis after the death of Solomon. Rehoboam, his son and successor, asks the elders for advice, but ignores their guidelines. He prefers to follow the advice of his friends (1 Kings 12:10). Rehoboam sought to do the best for him and not for his people. The results were the worst possible. The nation was divided, getting the people away from God. This division lasted a long time, bringing pain and suffering to all. When foolish men take power, the nation suffers the consequences. Currently, Brazil is facing an unprecedented political crisis. It has been featured in major newspapers around the world. Every day a new scandal emerges. We are living a very delicate moment. Corruption has spread like a cancer, reaching all the powers. As the Lord's Church, we must pray for our nation and fight against all forms of corruption, because we have a God who is holy and abhors such a condition. When we choose an unfit person to represent us in both the Executive and the Legislature powers, injustice becomes widespread and many problems arise, such as those that occurred in Israel (Deut 16:18-20; Isaiah 1:23).

**2. The economic crisis.** Many countries have already faced terrible economic crises over the years. In the Holy Scriptures, we find, in the book of Genesis, the extraordinary food crisis through which all the earth passed (Gen 41:55,56). However, the crisis was revealed to Pharaoh

through a dream (Gen. 41:1-8). God gave Joseph the interpretation of the dream and he was raised up as governor of Egypt. Joseph received wisdom from God to administer in times of crisis. The crisis was so intense that people of all lands were going to Egypt to buy food (Gen. 41:57). In Brazil, the economic crisis we are facing is directly linked to the political crisis. According to some economists, "Brazil will not get out of the economic crisis if it does not solve the political and ethical crisis". Amid a crisis we cannot despair nor be saddened. We must pray and trust in the God of all provision.

**3. The spiritual crisis.** In the biblical text of this lesson, the prophet Habakkuk, who lived and ministered in Judah, questioned God about the crisis that his people were facing. The prophet was in the midst of a dying society, and therefore he wanted some answers from God. Oftentimes, as Habakkuk did, we also ask ourselves amid the chaos: "Why Lord?" The prophet was troubled when he saw that the wicked prospered and the righteous went badly. God, however, heard the prophet's question. He hears and answers our questions, although we do not always have the answers the time we want them. The Lord did not leave Habakkuk without an answer (Hab 2:1,2). The Lord said that his judgment would come upon Judah. God does not tolerate sin. To discipline his people, he would use the Babylonians (Hab 1:5-12).

Habakkuk questions God, but he was a man of faith. His questions were not the result of doubt or disbelief. He trusted that God could meet the needs of his people, though the fig tree did not bud and there were no grapes on the vines (Hab 3:17). Even if there were no provisions, he would go on trusting in the Lord's faithfulness. Trusting God in times of plenty is relatively easy; the difficult thing is to keep relying on his provision in the midst of scarcity.

## CONCLUSION

The world may be in crisis, but the kingdom of heaven is not. The Lord is sovereign and has not lost control of the situation. The government is in his hands. The Day of the Lord will come and the righteous and the wicked will have their reward. Do not be discouraged. Just trust, because soon the Lord will come to our rescue.