

1The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw.

*2How long, O LORD, will I call for help,
And You will not hear?
I cry out to You, "Violence!"
Yet You do not save.*

*3Why do You make me see iniquity,
And cause me to look on wickedness?
Yes, destruction and violence are before me;
Strife exists and contention arises.*

*4Therefore the law is ignored
And justice is never upheld.
For the wicked surround the righteous;
Therefore justice comes out perverted.*

*5"Look among the nations! Observe!
Be astonished! Wonder!
Because I am doing something in your days—
You would not believe if you were told.*

*6"For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans,
That fierce and impetuous people
Who march throughout the earth
To seize dwelling places which are not theirs.*

*7"They are dreaded and feared;
Their justice and authority originate with themselves.*

*8"Their horses are swifter than leopards
And keener than wolves in the evening.
Their horsemen come galloping,
Their horsemen come from afar;
They fly like an eagle swooping down to devour.*

*9"All of them come for violence.
Their horde of faces moves forward.*

They collect captives like sand.

*10“They mock at kings
And rulers are a laughing matter to them.
They laugh at every fortress
And heap up rubble to capture it.*

*11“Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on.
But they will be held guilty,
They whose strength is their god.”*

*12Are You not from everlasting,
O LORD, my God, my Holy One?
We will not die.
You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge;
And You, O Rock, have established them to correct.*

*13Your eyes are too pure to approve evil,
And You can not look on wickedness with favor.
Why do You look with favor
On those who deal treacherously?
Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up
Those more righteous than they?*

*14Why have You made men like the fish of the sea,
Like creeping things without a ruler over them?*

*15The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook,
Drag them away with their net,
And gather them together in their fishing net.
Therefore they rejoice and are glad.*

*16Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net
And burn incense to their fishing net;
Because through these things their catch is large,
And their food is plentiful.*

17Will they therefore empty their net

And continually slay nations without sparing?

Ch2. I will stand on my guard post

And station myself on the rampart;

And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me,

And how I may reply when I am reprov'd.

Fiction: 14 Oct. 2014

There were tremors for months, so no one was really surprised when the unimaginable happened. The big one.

Not a physical earthquake, a financial meltdown that made the Japanese nuclear plant at Fukushima seem like candles on a 4 year old's birthday cake.

A year earlier, if you had asked 'google' "how much cash are Americans storing for their retirements?", the answer would have come back instantly. 17 trillion dollars.

It should have given us odd butterflies to think; 'that number sounds familiar - our national debt.'

Our government had squandered every penny of real money that it's citizens had labored to store away for their future retirements.

Gone! Stolen really, but they called it 'borrowing'.

A year later the debt was at 22 trillion and reality was closing in fast. The number games in the computers and the printing presses had come up against the reality that - there's no money left and nowhere to borrow more.

We'd bilked the Chinese for a couple of trillion but that source was gone.

Overnight - everything ground to a halt. Panic set in. Wall street -

gone. The banks - gone. Assets, those numbers on a computer screen, - worthless.

Panic. Looting. Rioting. Violence. Shelves, stripped of whatever was on them when the melt-down happened. Morality, just as gone as the money. Although in reality, it had slipped away years ago, and no one said much about it. The guy with the biggest gun gets the last box of Cheerios.

Meanwhile, the news station with a big tank of diesel and an emergency generator, is announcing something even more frightening.

Our collapse has brought down the whole world economy. The entire world financial system is in panic and chaos.

Then, from out of no-where it seems, a man emerges, and he says, he can put Humpty Dumpty back together.

And he does! This man seems to have a connection to other-worldly powers. He can do miracles! - and the whole world is awe struck!

"Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" Rev. 13:4

Well, that was a fictional account, but I want you to turn with me to the obscure little book of Habakkuk. Or as the British say, habba cook.

And I want to lay some ground work for us. My plan is to take you on a whirlwind trip through Habakkuk in the next 2 weeks.

What we have here is a man, a prophet, with man-like blinders on who thinks he's stating the problem and what he thinks God ought to do about it, but he's missed the BIG picture - by a mile!

That's what we do. We're all like the proverbial frog in the frying pan. We think we're a little bit broke, but ultimately, we're just about cooked.

God, if you could just please replace those republicans with democrats (or vice versa) - we'd be fine. That's our limited view of the problem, and our shallow remedy, but we've missed the real problem by a mile. An ocean really.

God see's this world as putrification. Over-ripe fruit is just one of many simile's.

Ever go away from home for about 5 days during the summer heat and get home to a bowl of fruit you left on the drainboard. Everything's just sort of relaxed and the shapes aren't as distinct as before. So you pick some up and say - I can just cut out these bad spots and throw the rest into the juicer. So you cut in and the dark brown color has spread throughout. It's totally rotten. Useless, and you feel your gag reflex kicking in, and wish you'd carried the whole bowl to the garbage with your breath held.

That's us. Over ripe. Putrid. Vile. Rotten. Ready for the garbage.

That is the world that Satan has destroyed. That is Satan's kingdom, and we're sort of immune. We don't see it like the Almighty see's it.

That's Habakkuk's problem here. He's shouting for God to cut out a few blemishes, and God says - no - this world is ate up by cancer, and it's gotta go.

But, I'm getting ahead of myself.

Habakkuk. We don't know anything about him. Just his name.

But his book is unique.

He has a conversation with God. He asks some of the hard questions, and the answers are even harder.

He's a prophet to the 2 tribes of the southern kingdom. Judah, and Benjamin. The Northern 10 tribes have already been taken away in

slavery by the Assyrians.

We can date the book to perhaps 605 - ish BC. The Chaldean empire is forming. Nebuchadnezzar came and invaded Israel within perhaps 20 years of this vision.

Interesting historically. It's always interesting when God gives men visions of history before it happens, and then it does. There's only one book that does that, and it isn't the Koran, or the Book of Mormon, or any of the other ones out there.

There's only one God that does that, and it isn't Allah. Our God reveals history before it happens. That should make our faith soar!

There is a component to this little book that I believe looks way beyond Judah in 587 BC though. And that is where my interest lies.

We can cite many places where a prophecy has an immediate fulfillment, a mountain peak if you will, then a seemingly endless valley we can't see, and then another mountain peak further on. Scholars call that types. Typology.

Antiochus Epiphenes was a type of another man that would come centuries later. For lack of a better name, we call him Anti-Christ.

That's what I think we have in Habakkuk's vision. We have the immediate fulfillment in 587BC where the Chaldean armies of Nebuchadnezzar sweep in and carry Judah away to Babylon. But the descriptions in chapter 2, I believe, look all the way to the end of time. Nebuchadnezzar becomes a type of a greater fulfillment at the end.

The question (complaint really) Habakkuk poses to God isn't answered ultimately by spanking Israel. It's answered in 2:14.

Hab. 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

That's the ultimate answer to Habakkuk's complaint. Satan is deposed.

Removed! His authority to reign on earth is ended! And the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel will reign, on this earth. ...*thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*

That's the big picture answer. We think small. God answers BIG! That's where this story is going! That's the BIG answer that solves the mischief that Satan began in the Paradise of God when he said to Eve, '*Hath God said.....*'

That's what the book is about folks. Nothing less than Habakkuk 2:14 will ever solve the problem. So let's dive in, and I think this will take us a couple of weeks to get through.

1The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw.

This is all we know about Habakkuk. He tells us he's a prophet. He's never mentioned anywhere else.

Oracle; in the Hebrew this could be interpreted as burden. This is heavy. There is weight. And then finally, it says he 'saw' it. This is a vision that he gazed at. He saw these things that he'll be describing later.

Now, the complaint in vss. 2-4

*2How long, O LORD, will I call for help,
And You will not hear?
I cry out to You, "Violence!"
Yet You do not save.*

*3Why do You make me see iniquity,
And cause me to look on wickedness?
Yes, destruction and violence are before me;
Strife exists and contention arises.*

*4Therefore the law is ignored
And justice is never upheld.
For the wicked surround the righteous;*

Therefore justice comes out perverted. X2 I'll read it again, and as I do, think of our own supreme court, and congress.

Is there an echo in the room. Have I not thought these exact things about America, a thousand times of late?

I normally start my work week days by getting to my work station a few minutes early. I make my toast and pour some coffee, and then I go to albertmohler.com and listen to a daily 20 minute thing he calls 'the briefing'

Al Mohler is the president of the Southern Baptist's flagship Seminary in Louisville, KY. When I joined with the SB's here in Tonopah 30 years ago, I didn't want anything to do with their denomination. But in the last 10 years, largely because of men like Al Mohler, the SB's have made me proud again. In fact it was after I read Al's book, He Is Not Silent, that I finally threw up my hands and left the Southern Baptist church and came over here.

Anyways, Al's little program, The Briefing, takes 4, 5, 6 news stories every day from secular sources, about what the world is up to, and he analyzes the news from a Christian World View.

A christian world view. The clash in America is between 2 "world views". What's left of a historic christian world view, where morals are roughly drawn from the 10 commandments, and a secular view which has jettisoned anything judeo-christian-ethical.

The folks on the other side think they are god. So they get to make up the rules. They can fix what's broke. As long as there's more of someone else's money to spend.

There is a clash in Washington these days that is un-resolvable because these 2 different "world views" have gotten such a gap between them there's no common ground. Discussion is over.

The long and the short of it is; if you want to pray for America, and the world, memorize Habakkuk 1:2-4. It is spot on. In fact if God doesn't

move soon, He'll need to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah and Israel because this world we live in is about a thousand times more wicked!

*2How long, O LORD, will I call for help,
And You will not hear?
I cry out to You, "Violence!"
Yet You do not save.*

Where is God these days? Why is He silent? We cry out but it seems like all we see is wickedness, secularism, homosexuality, every other sexual sin, pornography, greed, breakdown of the family, breakdown of societal order and civility, breakdown of any kind of work ethic.....

.....and why not? God is replaced with evolution! (see the progression in Romans Ch. 1) What a slap in God's face. All this happened by accident. In spite of the fact that good science says that idea is ridiculous, no one is worried about a God who will judge. Evolution killed God. And God in turn gave us over...

There's no morality, and every basis, every foundation for a moral code is gone, because creator God is gone. We're re-writing any mention of God in our nations history and slogans. The military is quickly erasing God from their slogans. God is ordered out of our schools.

That's where we're at. We make Judah look like the Boy Scouts in the 1950's.

So where IS God? How many school slaughter's. How many level 6 tornadoes. How many more headlines where Gay marriage people put christian businesses out of business? What's going on!! WHERE IS GOD??? Preach it, Habakkuk!

The answer is, I think, more frightening than the question.

God is not mocked. But just like in Habakkuk's case, the answer was, God had no intention of 'fixing' the mess according to what Habakkuk wanted. Habakkuk was envisioning a small spanking and a return to Hezekiah's time frame.

We've been praying for a small spanking, and please God, can you find us a Ronald Reagan??

His silence in the face of the level of the wickedness of this nation can, I believe, only mean one thing.

He's waiting for His time, His day, His hour, and he's going to sweep the entire mess away, wholesale. I don't think there's any Ronald Reagan's in our future.

Look at His answer to Habakkuk. When Habakkuk heard what God had planned, his jaw hit the floor. God's plan is shock and awe, not Ronald Reagan. Total destruction of the wicked, total removal of the nation.

Fasten your seat belt. Here comes God's answer to Habakkuk in vs. 5

*5“Look among the nations! Observe!
Be astonished! Wonder!
Because I am doing something in your days—
You would not believe if you were told.*

*6“For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans,
That fierce and impetuous people
Who march throughout the earth
To seize dwelling places which are not theirs.*

*7“They are dreaded and feared;
Their justice and authority originate with themselves.*

*8“Their horses are swifter than leopards
And keener than wolves in the evening.
Their horsemen come galloping,
Their horsemen come from afar;
They fly like an eagle swooping down to devour.*

*9“All of them come for violence.
Their horde of faces moves forward.*

They collect captives like sand.

10 *“They mock at kings
And rulers are a laughing matter to them.
They laugh at every fortress
And heap up rubble to capture it.*

11 *“Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on. (pause)
But they will be held guilty,
They whose strength is their god.”*

We could spend months in this book. There's no way I'm going to do it any justice in 2 weeks!

God's answer is a tidal wave of people is going to come through your land and sweep you away and there'll be nothing left. Shock and Awe! NOT what Habakkuk had in mind.

I want you to notice a couple of things here before we move on. First, in vss. 5 and 6, who is behind the Chaldeans. Who 'raised them up'? Who enabled them to march through the earth and sweep everything in their path away like a tidal wave?

He tells you 2 times. I am. I AM! God is doing this. Sovereign God is in control of the wicked Babylonians and will use them for HIS purposes.

And they are indeed wicked. Look at vs. 7. Their justice and authority originate with themselves. They answer to NO god. They do as they please. Or so they think. Here, we see that it was God that made them great, and God who used them as a hammer to pummel His people Israel.

I'll just make you nervous here. Babylon is still in business. The moslems are the only people groups on earth with a replacement birth rate that is sustainable. They are still impetuous. Still evil. Still fierce. They kill christians and think they've honored God. Just saying.

Look at vs. 11. *But they will be held guilty*

I can't resist expounding on a lesson that is here.

Wickedness does not originate in God. But sovereign God uses the wickedness of men to accomplish His purposes. Let me read you a parallel passage from Isaiah.

Now this was a few years earlier and involved the 10 northern tribes who were at the same place that Judah is at in Habakkuk's vision. God uses Assyria to punish Israel, and then He punishes Assyria for punishing Israel.

God uses Assyria like a hammer to pound Israel flat. Then he punishes Assyria for pounding Israel flat.

Does your brain hurt yet? Has human logic kicked in yet. Why does He punish Assyria when it was Him that caused them to be big enough to punish Israel. They were just doing what He sovereignly caused them to accomplish.

Listen to Isaiah. I'm in Isaiah 10

*1 Woe to those who enact evil statutes
And to those who constantly record unjust decisions,*

*2 So as to deprive the needy of justice
And rob the poor of My people of their rights,
So that widows may be their spoil
And that they may plunder the orphans.*

*3 Now what will you do in the day of punishment,
And in the devastation which will come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help?
And where will you leave your wealth?*

*4 Nothing remains but to crouch among the captives
Or fall among the slain.*

*In spite of all this, His anger does not turn away
And His hand is still stretched out.*

*5Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger
And the staff in whose hands is My indignation,*

*6 I send it against a godless nation
And commission it against the people of My fury
To capture booty and to seize plunder,
And to trample them down like mud in the streets.*

*7Yet it (talking about the Assyrians here) does not so intend,
Nor does it plan so in its heart,
But rather it is its purpose to destroy
And to cut off many nations.*

8For it says, “Are not my princes all kings?”

*9“Is not Calno like Carchemish,
Or Hamath like Arpad,
Or Samaria like Damascus?”*

*10“As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols,
Whose graven images were greater than those of Jerusalem and
Samaria,*

*11Shall I not do to Jerusalem and her images
Just as I have done to Samaria and her idols?”*

*12So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on
Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He will say, “I will punish the fruit of the
arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness.”*

*13For he has said,
“By the power of my hand and by my wisdom **I** did this,
For I have understanding;
And I removed the boundaries of the peoples
And plundered their treasures,*

And like a mighty man I brought down their inhabitants,

*14And my hand reached to the riches of the peoples like a nest,
And as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth;
And there was not one that flapped its wing or opened its beak or
chirped.”*

Then God says;

*15Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it?
Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it?
That would be like a club wielding those who lift it,
Or like a rod lifting him who is not wood.*

*16Therefore the Lord, the GOD of hosts, will send a wasting disease
among his stout warriors;
And under his glory a fire will be kindled like a burning flame.*

*17And the light of Israel will become a fire and his Holy One a
flame,
And it will burn and devour his thorns and his briars in a single
day.*

*18And He will destroy the glory of his forest and of his fruitful
garden, both soul and body,
And it will be as when a sick man wastes away.*

*19And the rest of the trees of his forest will be so small in number
That a child could write them down.*

Did you follow what's happening there. God, in sovereign wisdom, raises up Assyria to punish His people Israel, and they boast as if it were their wisdom and gallantry that made it happen, and when He's through punishing Israel, he turns great Assyria into a number that a child could manage easily.

Is your brain big enough to get around a God, who knows no evil, that uses evil to accomplish what He intends, and then punishes the evil

nation and turns them into nothing.

Me neither, but I love it that I have a God that is beyond my comprehension. I have little time for people who think they're smart enough to figure out God.

That's what God tells Habakkuk He's going to use the Chaldean's to do. They're going to sweep through Judah like a tornado, destroying and uprooting everything in their path, and they aren't even interested in Judah, they're on their way somewhere else actually.

So God says He's going to use them to destroy Judah, then He's going to punish them for destroying Judah.

Get your head around that! I want you to go home with your brains hurting. We have a God who is infinitely wise. We can't understand Him!

And that's where Habakkuk is at. Basically in these next few verses, he says, excuse me God, but have you lost your mind?? Let me get this right you're going to use somebody 10 times more wicked than we are to destroy us!

He says it nicely because you can't just say that to a King, but listen and see if that isn't pretty much what Habakkuk says back to God.

*12 Are You not from everlasting,
O LORD, my God, my Holy One?
We will not die.
You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge;
And You, O Rock, have established them to correct.*

*13 Your eyes are too pure to approve evil,
And You can not look on wickedness with favor.
Why do You look with favor
On those who deal treacherously?
Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up
Those more righteous than they?*

*14 Why have You made men like the fish of the sea,
Like creeping things without a ruler over them?*

*15 The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook,
Drag them away with their net,
And gather them together in their fishing net.
Therefore they rejoice and are glad.*

*16 Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net
And burn incense to their fishing net;
Because through these things their catch is large,
And their food is plentiful.*

*17 Will they therefore empty their net
And continually slay nations without sparing?*

Let's look at just a few things in Habakkuk's logic here. First vs. 12. I love what's going on here.

*12 Are You not from everlasting,
O LORD, my God, my Holy One?
We will not die.
You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge;
And You, O Rock, have established them to correct.*

Habakkuk repeats what he knows about the God of scripture, back to the God of scripture.

You are the everlasting God. Lord of earth and heaven. Creator and infinitely Holy one.

It sounds like God said He was going to sweep the place clean like a tidal wave or a tornado would do so that nothing is left. But Habakkuk starts there. The Holy, Everlasting, Creator, Lord of heaven and earth God has a covenant with His people Israel.

Habakkuk knows that God will ultimately keep His promises. All of

them! Abrahams seed like the sand of the seashore in Glory! And that's why Habakkuk confidently states; *We will not die.*

They're going to judge us. They're going to correct us. But ultimately *We will not die.*

Having established that though, he moves on to state his confusion. It's almost as if Habakkuk quotes Psalm 11:3-5 back to God.

Ps. 11:3 *If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?"*
4*The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. 5The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates....*

Habakkuk says; *13Your eyes are too pure to approve evil,
And You can not look on wickedness with favor.*

If you're the God who hates evil, why are you going to embrace evil and make the ones who are more wicked than we are, winners? Listen again to the rest of his argument with God;

*Why do You look with favor
On those who deal treacherously?
Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up
Those (Judah) more righteous than they?*

Then he digs himself in deeper and asks what we all want to know. Why is it that evil men are allowed to prosper, seemingly, unrestrained...

*14Why have You made men like the fish of the sea,
Like creeping things without a ruler over them?*

We have 20-20 hindsight having studied the word of God post resurrection. We know that the answer is that Satan, for now at least, has the authority to reign in this world. Habakkuk doesn't get that. He is asking why is everything so messed up? Why is good so weak and

evil so strong?

*15The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook,
Drag them away with their net,
And gather them together in their fishing net.
Therefore they rejoice and are glad.*

*16Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net
And burn incense to their fishing net;
Because through these things their catch is large,
And their food is plentiful.*

Here Habakkuk argues that God is showing favor to people who will take that favor and turn it into idol worship. God gets no credit for their strength, their victory. God's going to do it, and they're going to burn incense and worship their strength.

Judah is bad, but not as bad as this scenario. Why would you do that, God??

*17Will they therefore empty their net
And continually slay nations without sparing?*

Is it always going to be like this, God. The wicked prospering. The world seemingly upside down. It seems to Habakkuk like this cycle is endless and mindless. He doesn't understand why it's this way, or where it's going.

When he's finished, he says he's going to brace himself for the inevitable reproof that must come from correcting God Almighty.

*Ch. 2:1 I will stand on my guard post
And station myself on the rampart;
And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me,
And how I may reply when I am reproved.*

Habakkuk says I'm going to brace myself for the inevitable reproof that must come from arguing with the Almighty.

What a sweet and gracious God we have that we can cry out to Him about things we don't understand, that just don't make sense to our limited IQ and God doesn't reprove. Not really.

We're going to find in these next chapters that the answer reaches all the way to the end of history.

Like we said when we started, the answer to all of these questions is in Vs. 14 of chapter 2.

*14 "For the earth will be filled
With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
As the waters cover the sea.*

A physical reign of the Glorified Christ on this earth!

But how God chooses to bring that about is not according to your logic, or my logic, your time scale or my time scale. Sovereign Creator Lord of Heaven and Earth is in control, and it will happen just as He says, just when He decrees.

I think the vision God shares with Habakkuk in chapter 2 reaches all the way to the end.

I think the things that he sees and describes are quite literal. Some of them had a partial fulfillment in the Chaldeans, and some look through Nebuchadnezzar all the way to the final "proud *one*" that we meet all over the Bible. The anti-christ that God will use to punish the whole world before Jesus returns.

Some of the descriptions we'll see next week, read like the front page news. They should make our hair stand up.

Oh, and by the way, when Jesus returns to this world, the wicked will see a tidal wave and a hurricane of judgement that makes Nebuchadnezzar's look like child's play.

Vs. 14 is for the righteous. Those that have had their sin removed by the blood of Jesus. The rest, who hate God, will meet the armies of the Lord Jesus in judgement.

Even so, the Jews, some of them, can still say with Habakkuk, *We will not die.*

Come back next week.