

Habakkuk 2:1 - 3:19

Last week, by way of reminder, we looked at chapter 1. A conversation, perhaps a heated discussion, although there's no heat on the Lord's side, between Habakkuk and the Lord God Almighty.

Habakkuk cries out to the Lord in a loud complaint. He accuses the Lord of not hearing his cries, of ignoring his petitions, and of doing nothing in the face of the ever increasing evil in Judah.

We find ourselves in a similar situation in America. For years it seems, christians have given up their high ground and our nation has slipped down a slippery slope until recently with all of the hubbub over sodomite so-called "marriage" and a secular world view that can't seem to embrace evil fast enough, we've gone over the edge. No more slippery slope, we've tumbled over the cliff and are in free-fall!

Habakkuk got God's attention though! And the answer he got was not the answer he wanted.

Habakkuk complains that evil is winning and righteousness is losing, and God doesn't seem to care. He's not doing anything to tip the balance for the righteous. He seems to have gone deaf.

God says, Righteousness *will* win, but not on your scope and timescale Habakkuk.

Habakkuk would have been happy with a good king and 40 years. That's really all he's looking for. Tip the balance back towards righteousness. Give us a good king and some good years. Give me an insurance policy that guarantee's me plenty, and comfort.

It's been about 5 years ago when I was going through the minor prophets book by book over at the Baptist church that I began to take an in depth look at Habakkuk.

There's some things here in Ch. 2 that just made me do a double take. Does that say what it seems like it says? No commentaries. No experts.

Just me, and the Holy Spirit.

What I'm going to suggest isn't the prevailing thought in the commentaries. The easy road is to just assign this to Nebuchadnezzar and leave it alone. All of this happened allegorically when the Chaldeans swarmed through Judah and carried them away. A very bad time and a lot of poetic hyperbole.

My mind works sort of like the IRS computers though. Flags get set off.

The proud one. That's a flag. One world rule. That's a flag. Utter darkness. That's a flag. Mountains crumbling away. That's a flag. The earth moving off it's orbit. The heavens opened. All of these themes keep recurring throughout the Bible and they all point to 'the day of the Lord'.

The physical cataclysmic return of Lord Jesus Christ to judge His enemies, to depose and remove Satan who has been reigning on this earth, and to set up a physical kingdom and reign on this earth.

So if what we've got here is a whole lot of hyperbole about the destruction of Judah, well, Habakkuk was quite the poet. But I don't think that is all that's going on here.

How much mischief can I accomplish if I'm wrong? There's what, 40 of you? Let's look at it a different way. If all I do is make you aware that sovereign God Almighty is in control even if we stick around long enough to lose everything we love, that's huge.

I look around me in America and the christianity I see doesn't have any legs. No muscle. A little tiny bit of wind will blow the house that I see down.

If the country we love and the life we love and the freedoms we love and the money and comfort we love gets taken away, do we have the stamina to not lose our faith?

Look at vs. 4 in chapter 2. *But the righteous will live by his faith.*

That's a big deal. Because Jesus says over and over and over that it isn't the starters that count for anything, it's the finishers.

How much can Sovereign God take away from the life you love, and your faith still remain intact.

We have this goofy mindset that our comfort and ease are our birthright and will remain. Anyways God's going to rapture us outta here before any of the bad stuff starts to happen.

That's the depth of the church in America. I look at the pictures on TV and visit these mega churches and think to myself, we just look ridiculous. Somebody needs to slap the church awake.

Get some legs under you! If the tidal wave comes during my watch, I want, by God's grace, to be standing after it passes over me.

IF the authorities come and accuse me of saying sodomite one too many times and take my house and my old cars and my cameras and seize my bank accounts, I not only want to be standing when it passes over me, I want to have joy that the world will be forced to admit is 'other-worldly.' Get some legs people, so we can say with Paul, '*and having done all, to stand!*'

That's what this book is about, if not for our generation, certainly for Habakkuk's and the one at the end that sees some of the things that I believe are literal, not hyperbole.

So let's jump in. Habakkuk has got the Lord's attention. He's pushed the buttons and is about to get an answer. Is evil going to just go unchecked, forever?

I love verse one. The picture I have for verse one is from the 1996 movie with Helen Hunt, Twister. Where they strap themselves to the well pipe casing and wait for the inevitable.

I think that's what Habakkuk has going on here.

*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.*

If you don't take away anything else, I want you to take away this. When God gets done with Habakkuk, he's a changed man. Ch. 1 is Habakkuk shallow. Fix it God, so I can sit under my fig tree. Ch. 3 is Habakkuk with legs.

The last 4 verses at the end are among the most classic literature ever written. Sweep it all away God, as long as I've got YOU.

*Vss.2 Then the LORD answered me and said,
"Record the vision
And inscribe it on tablets,
That the one who reads it may run.*

*3 "For the vision is yet for the appointed time;
It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail.
Though it tarries, wait for it;
For it will certainly come, it will not delay.*

Vs. 2 is why we're here this morning. Get your head around it. This was written on tablets, not so long after men began to have the means to record anything, 2,720 years ago. And we have it intact! That's amazing!

And inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run

Can you think of any other place in the Bible where people are instructed to run? That's a flag! You're absolutely right. Jesus, telling about the end time events on the mount of Olives to his disciples. Matt. 24, Mark 13, Luke 17

For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail.

What do you think the 'appointed time' means? There's a clue. It hastens toward the 'goal'. What's the goal??

If you grew up in a christian home, you've been praying for 'the goal' since you were a toddler. *Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth . . . as it is in heaven.*

That's the goal of this book from the fall in Genesis to the New Heavens and New Earth in Revelation. Satan is deposed. Order is restored on earth. Paradise lost. Paradise, regained!

So God is telling Habakkuk that this vision is about the end.

Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. We're locked in this space time continuum. It seems slow. At 61 things are already speeding up though. Seems like 5 minutes, and 60 years went by.

It hastens toward the goal. I think that means that once this time frame begins, it moves really fast.

Jacob's trouble. I'm of the school that believes there is 7 years exactly, left of the time ordered for God's people Israel in Daniel chapter 9. That's a whole 'nother topic and we're not going there this morning, but 7 years is a short time. The tribulation period, when it begins, will move smartly towards the goal.

Vss 2 and 3 are God's promise. 2700 years later it's not only intact, it seems strangely pertinent!

Vs. 4 *“Behold, as for the proud one,
His soul is not right within him;
But the righteous will live by his faith.*

Another flag goes up. The proud one. Code for Anti-Christ. Everywhere you find him spoken of, this is his one consistent characteristic. He has a mouth, a big one, and it speaks boastful things.

Rev. 13:5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

Certainly Nebuchadnezzar was proud. Daniel 4 and 5 have quotes to prove that. But Nebuchadnezzar may be in heaven with us. God punished him for his pride. He lost his mind and grazed with the cattle for 7 years. When God was finished, everything was restored to him and he praised the God of heaven.

I think this passage has dual fulfillments. **The** proud one has a soul that is controlled by Satan. What was Satan's sin. Pride. I will be like the most High.

Now it gets chilling.

*5“Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man,
So that he does not stay at home.
He enlarges his appetite like Sheol,
And he is like death, never satisfied.
He also gathers to himself all nations
And collects to himself all peoples.*

This isn't the usual wine. This man is drunk with power. He doesn't stay at home. He's a ruler of some kind to begin with. But he gets drunk with the prospect of controlling the entire world. He abandons his own country and gathers to himself, the nations.

*6“Will not all of these take up a taunt-song against him,
Even mockery and insinuations against him
And say, ‘Woe to him who increases what is not his—
For how long—*

And makes himself rich with loans?’ (If that doesn't send a chill up your spine, nothing will) And makes himself rich with loans?’ other peoples money!

7“*Will not your creditors rise up suddenly,
And those who collect from you awaken?
Indeed, you will become plunder for them.*

8“*Because you have looted many nations,
All the remainder of the peoples will loot you—
Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land,
To the town and all its inhabitants.*

OK, this gets real interesting. I began last week (notes avail if you missed) with a scenario where a financial meltdown triggers the anti-christs rise and somehow enables him to gain control over all the nations.

My reason for believing something like that might happen is these verses. Whoever this man is, he has an enormous debt problem. He puts Humpty Dumpty back together but the finances behind what he accomplishes causes some to hate him and cast these insinuations against him.

He makes himself rich with loans. Hmmm.

Again, a double fulfillment. Certainly the Chaldeans looted every place they passed through. But national indebtedness is more of a modern phenomenon.

Has the stage ever been more set and ready for end time events. Consider that 50 years ago we were on the brink of a nuclear holocaust. But no one was thinking one world government.

Now we're all connected and interconnected and everybody depends on everybody world wide. A slight recession in America puts business in China into a tail spin.

Maybe I've just got an over-active imagination, but I can see how easily a financial meltdown here would take down the entire world, and the way to solve it would be some kind of one world ruler that adjusts all the numbers with a bunch of treaties and promises of repayment and . . . Bamm. Where would you find someone like that?

Can you imagine the power that one man could wield. The whole world depends on his scheme. And it works! Miraculously! Who is like the beast??

Naturally there's going to be some hatred. Consumers and producers so out of balance that the consumers need all of the producers money to get propped back up? Maybe our president's not so dumb after all. That's what he's trying to accomplish on a smaller scale. Everybody's equal. Nobody likes it.

This man does exactly that. He loots the entire world. And he skims enough off to be the worlds most powerful man.

There is bloodshed involved. Lots of it.

*9“Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house
To put his nest on high,
To be delivered from the hand of calamity!*

You know what that means. Look at it again. Who-ever this man is, he sells out his own people in order to rise above the calamity. He betrays his own nation in order to put HIS nest on high. He sells his people out. It costs his own people to rise above the chaos, and he sells them out!

*10“You have devised a shameful thing for your house
By cutting off many peoples;
So you are sinning against yourself.*

What he does to his own people is tantamount to murder!

Cutting off many peoples. That's old testament for murder. To cut off is to murder.

I don't think this only speaks of one thing, but think about abortion. Who-ever this man is, he's done a shameful thing by murdering many peoples.

Abortion is one of the things that has caused us to be unsustainable. It takes 2.4 babies per couple for the world to maintain it's numbers. We're at 1.9 I think, and nations like China are much scarier.

Abortion truly is *sinning against yourself*. It's the single most deadly sin that has caused our nations downfall. God always judges governments that do that. He's about to judge US.

That may be part of what causes the problem but I don't think that's all of it. I think this guy comes to power and murders wholesale to accomplish his goal of being in control of the entire earth.

*11 "Surely the stone will cry out from the wall,
And the rafter will answer it from the framework.*

This is an old axiom that means long after the evil is gone, even the empty places will cry out in remembrance. Visit the buildings in Germany where the holocaust occurred and think about this verse!

It's fascinating in regard to this truth that while we speak this morning, the very bricks that formed Sandy Hollow School are being reduced to powder and the steel is being melted down to puddles.

They aren't just demo-ing the school buildings, they're spending lots of money to remove every trace that might have any memory attached to it.

This is a chilling verse.

*12 "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed
And founds a town with violence!*

A one world government is formed. Not the easy way. The hard way. Bloodshed. Violence.

Woe! The very word means repayment is required. What will the repayment be for this level of evil. The world has never seen anything like it in all of its history. Woe!

*13 "Is it not indeed from the LORD of hosts
That peoples toil for fire,
And nations grow weary for nothing?"*

Another flag goes up here. One of the common threads of the tribulation period right at the end where Jesus returns is darkness. Total darkness world wide.

Every commentary will tell you this is a spiritual reference. They're in spiritual darkness. Why not literal? Listen to Isa. 60:2 *"For behold, darkness will cover the earth And thick darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you."*

I think it's literal darkness. Jesus described it in Matthew 24:29 *"Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."*

Zephaniah 1:14-15 sound very similar;...*14 Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. 15 A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers....*

Revelation 9:2 says;
When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.

I think what you have here in Habakkuk is people gathering firewood, wearying themselves, trying to make some kind of light in the thick

darkness.

They won't be flipping on the light switches any more. The world will go dark in judgement and anything that will make a torch will be your only comfort in darkness. Thick darkness where you can't see your hand in front of your face.

*13 "Is it not indeed from the LORD of hosts
That peoples toil for fire,
And nations grow weary for nothing?"*

And then, as if in contrast;

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

From thick darkness to a baptism in light! From Satan's kingdom of chilling painful darkness, to the Lord Jesus kingdom of Glorious light!

The sun and the moon and the stars no longer needed because the glory of the Lord fills the earth! We can only imagine. Some day we'll see.

*15 "Woe to you who make your neighbors drink,
Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk
So as to look on their nakedness!"*

*16 "You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor.
Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness.
The cup in the LORD'S right hand will come around to you,
And utter disgrace will come upon your glory."*

I think this is a veiled reference to the whole 666 mark of the beast thing that will happen.

The whole world will be forced to drink from that cup of venom. But then the cup of judgement will be forced onto him.

These next verses get even more obscure. I don't have much of a sense

of what they may mean. I think a generation is coming who will read through these things and know exactly what the profit was speaking of - over a 2700 + year gap.

*17“For the violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you,
And the devastation of its beasts by which you terrified them,
Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land,
To the town and all its inhabitants.*

devastation of animals? Terror? Germ warfare? Pestilence?

*18“What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it,
Or an image, a teacher of falsehood?
For its maker trusts in his own handiwork
When he fashions speechless idols.*

*19“Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, ‘Awake!’
To a mute stone, ‘Arise!’
And that is your teacher?
Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver,
And there is no breath at all inside it.*

Again, I'm not sure exactly what this means, but I think it is probably a reference to the 'image of the beast' spoken of in Revelation 13.

Whatever that thing turns out to be - it has no breath of it's own, but it is given to the beast to cause it to breathe. Demonic? Electronic?

This image doesn't shut up for 42 months. Worldwide, constant, continuous noise about worshipping the beast.

The time of jacob's trouble, the tribulation is a cacophony of noise. In these verses, we see the contrasts of the Kingdom of our God, and the kingdom of Satan. Darkness and glorious light.

All the noise of false worship and war and human suffering as blood is let all over the world, in verse 20, is silenced.

20“But the LORD is in His holy temple.

Let all the earth be silent before Him.”

Jesus restores order just the same way He created it in the first place. He speaks it into existence.

*20“But the LORD is in His holy temple.
Let all the earth be silent before Him.”*

OK, I want to move quickly through Habakkuk's prayer and just point out a few more end times flags. I want to get to the final verses with you this morning. So beautiful and hopeful.

1A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.

A prayer now. He's not shouting any more. That's what happens when we encounter the real God. All of a sudden we seem very small. We realize how insignificant we are and how glorious He is.

*2LORD, I have heard the report about You and I fear.
O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years,
In the midst of the years make it known;
In wrath remember mercy.*

A prayer for revival. A petition for mercy in the midst of wrath.

If you study Revelation with us on Sunday evenings you'll see that God does exactly that. In the midst of the tribulation there will be thousands of people who recognize Jesus as Saviour and cling to Him even though it costs them their lives.

God answers this prayer exactly as prayed.

In these next verses Habakkuk is going to talk about the vision. What he saw is breath taking. It is the return and reign of Jesus.

*3God comes from Teman,
And the Holy One from Mount Paran.*

*His splendor covers the heavens,
And the earth is full of His praise.*

*4His radiance is like the sunlight;
He has rays flashing from His hand,
And there is the hiding of His power.*

This is the physical return of Jesus in power and glory to this earth. Remember it's thick darkness until light breaks forth in the sky from His glory.

These verses parallel Ch.2: verse 14

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

*His splendor covers the heavens,
And the earth is full of His praise.*

4His radiance is like the sunlight;

*He has rays flashing from His hand,
And there is the hiding of His power.*

Jesus returns in glorious splendor. Radiant light. Beams flashing from his hand. So much power that some of it is restrained.

*5Before Him goes pestilence,
And plague comes after Him.*

Remember that He returns to make war with His enemies. Jesus comes the 2nd time in judgement. Frighteningly beautiful, but awesome in judgement against those who hate Him.

*6 He stood and surveyed the earth;
He looked and startled the nations.
Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered,*

*The ancient hills collapsed.
His ways are everlasting.*

*7 I saw the tents of Cushan under distress,
The tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling.*

This is a common theme seen over and over in prophecy. In the day of the Lord, when Jesus returns to take this world away from Satan, at His return, the mountains are going to melt like wax.

That's literal. The entire region around Jerusalem is going to get flattened. That mountainous area is like a rug with rolls and lumps that a person grabs at one end and snaps until all of those rolls are gone and it lies flat. The world has never seen anything like it since creation.

The next section of 3 verses is another one of those flags. Water is a player in these final events. Listen to Revelation 12: 13-16

13And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. 14But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. 15And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. 16But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

See if what Habakkuk says next doesn't sound like the same thing.

*8 Did the LORD rage against the rivers,
Or was Your anger against the rivers,
Or was Your wrath against the sea,
That You rode on Your horses,
On Your chariots of salvation?*

*9Your bow was made bare,
The rods of chastisement were sworn.*

You cleaved the earth with rivers.

*10The mountains saw You and quaked;
The downpour of waters swept by.
The deep uttered forth its voice,
It lifted high its hands.*

Now listen to Zechariah 14:1-5

1Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 2For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. 3Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. 4In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. 5You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!

I think the Lords feet splitting the mount of Olives so the children can flee, and the water, and the earthquakes, it's all talking about that great day. The Day of the Lord.

Satan tries to destroy God's people with a flood, but Jesus makes this way of escape. Hollywood has never imagined the drama that is going to play out in that day. No reason for these things to not be quite literal.

*11Sun and moon stood in their places;
They went away at the light of Your arrows,
At the radiance of Your gleaming spear.*

*12In indignation You marched through the earth;
In anger You trampled the nations.*

*13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people,
For the salvation of Your anointed.
You struck the head of the house of the evil
To lay him open from thigh to neck.*

Jesus comes in Judgement. Indignation! Dja think? The nations who believed the most ridiculous lies about evolution, trampled!

The people of God, saved.

The anti-christ and the false prophet and the Serpent of old, laid open from thigh to neck.

*14 You pierced with his own spears
The head of his throngs.
They stormed in to scatter us;
Their exultation was like those
Who devour the oppressed in secret.*

*15 You trampled on the sea with Your horses,
On the surge of many waters.*

This sounds like a reference to the final battle against the armies that have surrounded Jerusalem.

*16 I heard and my inward parts trembled,
At the sound my lips quivered.
Decay enters my bones,
And in my place I tremble.
Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress,
For the people to arise who will invade us.*

What is our reaction. Is it anything like Habakkuk's? I think we've grown dull to these warnings. We've become sort of immune. We hear these things and we're un-moved. Callous.

What about us? Is there any cause for alarm?

Al Mohler, one of my heroes, president of Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, was invited to speak at Brigham Young University about the peril of our freedoms and the erosion of religious liberties and morality.

Al is like a modern day Daniel. He gets invited to those venues just because he is such an excellent person. They know exactly what he believes and that he isn't going to pull any punches.

And he didn't! He presented the gospel clearly during his talk. He majored on the truth's we do hold in common though. Marriage of a man and a woman. Families. Work. Religious liberties. Freedom from government meddling.

At the end he re-states that he believes in historic christianity. The one with the trinitarian God. At the last, he says "I do not believe that we are going to heaven together, but I do believe we may go to jail together."

Are you ready to lose it all, if necessary, for the Glory and the Doctrines of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to Habakkuk. Post vision of the end. No more whining about wanting God to do the little fix. No more complaint. Listen.

*17 Though the fig tree should not blossom
And there be no fruit on the vines,
Though the yield of the olive should fail
And the fields produce no food,
Though the flock should be cut off from the fold
And there be no cattle in the stalls,*

*18 Yet I will exult in the LORD,
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.*

*19 The Lord GOD is my strength,
And He has made my feet like hinds' feet,
And makes me walk on my high places.*

For the choir director, on my stringed instruments.