

Sermon #14 — Habakkuk Series

Title: **WATCHING TO SEE**

Text: Habakkuk 2:1-4

Subject: *Evil Made Good by God*

Date: Tuesday Evening—November 23, 2010

Tape # *Habakkuk #13*

Readings: *Bob Poncer and Larry Criss*

Introduction:

Like us, Habakkuk was called of God to serve his generation, to labor for the good of the people among whom he lived, for the glory of God. — You do know that that is we are here to do. Don't you? **You and I are God's servants, his witnesses** (Isaiah 43:10, 12; 44:8; Luke 24:46-48) in the day in which we live.

(Isaiah 43:10-12) “Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. 11 I, [even] I, [am] the LORD; and beside me [there is] no saviour. 12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when [there was] no strange [god] among you: therefore ye [are]

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my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I [am] God.”

(Isaiah 44:8) “Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.”

(Luke 24:46-48) “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things.”

Habakkuk was one of the later Prophets sent of God to warn his ancient people of coming judgment. Before the Lord meted out their last terrible measure of chastisement, he sent Habakkuk to tell his people what he was about to do.

The Lord God sent Habakkuk to tell his countrymen that the Chaldeans were appointed for their judgment.

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When The Lord gave his prophet that heavy, heavy message, he pleaded with God about the matter. The weight of the burden on his heart pressed very heavily upon him.

He saw the nation crushed beneath their wicked oppressors and he asked, “Why?” The Lord replied, “Because of the iniquity of the people.” Habakkuk understood that, but then it occurred to him that the Chaldeans were far more wicked than the Jews. The Chaldeans were cruel, bloodthirsty idolaters. So he used that fact to plea as an argument in prayer with the Lord God, a reason for him to stop the invading barbarians and preserve his people (Habakkuk 1:12-13).

(Habakkuk 1:12-13) “[Art] thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. 13 [Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, [and] holdest

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thy tongue when the wicked devoureth [the man that is] more righteous than he?”

Like David before him, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, and like you and I sometimes are, Habakkuk was puzzled. In his distress, in his perplexity of mind, the Prophet of God wisely took his burden to the Lord, spreading open his heart to God in prayer. Then, having laid open the burden of his heart at the throne of grace, we see God’s servant watching to see what the Lord would say, watching to see what the Lord would do, watching to see what the Lord would have him do.

Turn with me to the 2nd chapter of Habakkuk. I want us to take another look at Habakkuk 2:1-4. The title of my message is — **WATCHING TO SEE**.

(Habakkuk 2:1-4) “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov’d. 2 And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make [it] plain upon tables, that he may run that

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readeth it. 3 For the vision [is] yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. 4 Behold, his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”

Proposition: In all times and in all circumstances, it is our wisdom and strength to wait upon the Lord God, the triune Jehovah, our Savior. — As we serve him, let us wait upon him, watching to see what he will do.

Divisions: Tonight, I want to show you five things from these four instructive verses of Inspiration.

1. We are the servants of God in this generation.
2. As the Lord’s servants, we should always be watchmen, watching for God’s direction (v. 1).
3. It is our business as God’s servants in this generation to make his Word known to all men (v. 2).
4. God’s promise to his servants is for an appointed time and is always sure (v. 3).

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5. We should serve our God with the joyful anticipation and expectation of confident faith in Christ (v. 4).

GOD'S SERVANTS

First, I want you to see that we are the servants of God in this generation. If I am Christ's I am his servant. If you are Christ's you are his servants. I do not mean we ought to be his servants, — We are his servants. Let us be the faithful servants of God our Savior.

Christ our Redeemer was Jehovah's Righteous Servant. He and he alone fulfilled the law of the bond-slave for us and for the glory of God.

(Exodus 21:1-6) “Now these [are] the judgments which thou shalt set before them. 2 If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. 3 If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master have given him a

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wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: 6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.”

(Isaiah 50:5-7) “The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. 6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. 7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

(Psalms 40:6-12) “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the

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volume of the book [it is] written of me, 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law [is] within my heart. 9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. 10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.”

“11 ¶ Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me. 12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.”

(Isaiah 42:1-4) “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, [in whom] my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. 2 He

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shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. 4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.”

Gospel preachers are the servants of God, gifted, called, and sent of God to preach the gospel to all men. Those who preach the gospel are called ministers, servants.

- The Servants of God
- Your Servants

And all who follow Christ are his servants. We are laborers together in the cause of Christ. We are co-laborers in the Lord’s vineyard, a people to whom the Lord God has trusted the treasure of the gospel (Matthew 20:1-16; Romans 12:1-2).

(Romans 12:1-2) “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable

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unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. 2
And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

We are God’s servants. Let us ever be found serving him!

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Second, as the Lord’s servants, we should always be watchmen, watching for God’s direction (v. 1). When you are puzzled — when you are troubled, when you don’t know what to do, then may God help you to say with Habakkuk...

(Habakkuk 2:1) “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.”

Before anyone can really do anything in the service of Christ, he must be sent to do it. We

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must receive our commission from our Master. —

—Bro. Jesse Gistand said, “Find out what God would has called you to do and set out to do it.”

- We cannot teach others aright unless we are, ourselves, taught of God.
- We cannot preach the gospel except we be sent of God.
- We cannot witness to anyone, except the Lord give us a door of utterance and grace to speak.

Troubled in heart, Habakkuk resolved to set himself to watch his God and to listen for the message he is afterwards to deliver. If we would serve our God in the right spirit, if we would do something in the service of our Master, we must be taught and led of God. Let us ever listen for a word from him. — **How much more we might know if we were only willing to listen to the Lord’s messages!**

- There is, **in the Word of God**, a voice which is often inaudible because we are so engrossed with other things.
- There is, also, the voice of the **gospel ministry** which oftentimes speaks to us, but it is like the

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cry of one in a wilderness — it is not heard by us.

- There is, also, a voice in **God's Providence**. How much the Lord says to his flock by every stroke of his rod and by every blessing of his daily Providence!
- There is a voice from **every grave** — a message in every bereavement when friends are taken away.

There are voices everywhere speaking to those whose ears are open. God the Holy Spirit communicates to us the things of Christ, teaches us the things of God by that soft mysterious whisper which none know but those who are, themselves, spiritual — and which they know at once to be the very voice of God within their spirits. — God give me grace to hear You speak! — Give me grace ever to sit at my Savior's feet and hear his Word!

As we watch to see what God will speak and watch to see what he will do, let us watch with patience.
—Habakkuk said, "**I will stand my watch.**" — "I will take my place like a sentinel who stands his guard

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until his time of watching is over.” — “**I will set myself on the tower.**” He took his position firmly and resolutely upon the tower, there to stand and not to stir till he had seen and heard what God the Lord would have him see and hear.

What an example is here given to preachers! — God give me grace to set myself on the tower, determined not go forth to speak for the You until the You have spoken to me, lest I go upon a fool’s errand, lest I run without being sent and have no message from the Lord. — **God give me grace to stand my watch faithfully.**

- To Warn Sinners of Wrath to Come!
- To Gather Sheep into the Fold!
- To Protect the City of God from Invading Troops!
- To Comfort Troubled, Frightened Sheep!
- To Arouse Lethargic Souls! — “*Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee life!*”

If any man is so highly honored of God that he is put of God into the work of the gospel ministry, let

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him constantly separate himself to that glorious work and stand upon his watch faithfully!

- If others think you are value the work to highly, set yourself upon your watch and stay there.
- If others think you carry things too far, set yourself upon your watch and stay there.
- If others think you need to lighten your load, set yourself upon your watch and stay there.
- If you begin to think it is time to cut back, set yourself upon your watch and stay there.
- If others warn you of burning out, set yourself upon your watch and stay there.

The work of the gospel is a work that engrosses a man entirely and a work in which every gospel preacher should be entirely engrossed.

But I did not come here tonight to talk to preachers. I came here to talk to you. You, too, should be engrossed altogether in the service of Christ. **God the Holy Spirit tells us that we are to work, laboring with our hands, that we may have to give** (Ephesians 4:28).

- Work so that you can support the cause of Christ.

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- Work for the purpose of serving and honoring God.

Work for the glory of God.

Notice this, too. — Habakkuk was entirely submissive to the will of God. — And he put himself into this attitude, that he might hear whatever God would say to him, and that his only thought, all the while, should be, “**What shall I answer when I am reproved?**” — “*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*” (1 Peter 3:15).

This is to be the attitude of God’s children. Get away to your watchtower, my brother. Get away to your watchtower, my sister.

- Listen for God to speak to you, to teach you and to direct your steps.
- Watch to see what God will say and do.

Get away to your tower by the brook Jabbok and wrestle with the Angel! Get away to the top of Carmel and put your head between your knees and

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cry unto the Lord until the heavens are covered with clouds, and the thirsty earth is refreshed with rain! — *“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,”* but they who do not hear God’s voice cannot effectually pray. God will not hear my voice if I will not hear his. If you are deaf to him, he will be deaf to you.

WRITE THE VISION

Third, it is our business as God’s servants in this generation to make his Word known to all men (v. 2).

(Habakkuk 2:2) “And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.”

It is our business, as God’s church, mine as a preacher and yours as a believer, to make known the Word of God in our day (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

(1 Timothy 3:14-15) “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou

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oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Paul’s purpose in 1 Timothy was to instruct the young pastor, Timothy, and us, in the affairs of the church. He tells Timothy how to honorably discharge his office as a preacher, evangelist, pastor, and teacher in the house of God. He is teaching us how we are to behave in the house of God, as members of the family of God, and he is telling us **what every local church should be.** Every local church is **“the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”** **The church of God is a spiritual kingdom, a royal family, whose one purpose and design in this world is to uphold, maintain and set forth the truth of God.**

Here the Spirit of God tells us that the church is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” The church, the local church, is the pillar which upholds, maintains and sets forth the truth. The church, the local church,

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is the ground which is the under-girding, stabilizing force of the truth.

The whole church, not just the pastor, elders, deacons, and teachers, but the whole church and every member of it, is the pillar and ground of the truth. In the church of the living God the truth is constantly uplifted as a light in the midst of darkness. The church of God is the lighthouse of truth in this world. **The one purpose and business of the church is to uphold, maintain and spread abroad the truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus.** All her strength, all her talents, all her resources are to be given to and used for this one glorious work. **Whatever God puts in our hands, whatever doors of opportunity are opened before us, all are to be used for the preaching of the gospel.** Nothing is to be wasted upon any other cause.

There are other important causes in the world. But in God's providence, he raises up other people and organizations to take care of those causes. The church must not be turned aside from her far more important work. — Members of political

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parties will support their politicians. Let God's church support gospel preachers. — Doctors build hospitals and practice medicine. Let the church of Christ build churches and practice missions. — Moralists will struggle for moral issues. Let the church struggle for the furtherance of the gospel. — Educators will teach children the "three Rs" of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Let the church teach sinners the "three Rs" of gospel truth — Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by the blood, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit. **We have no other work. Let us uphold, proclaim, and defend the truth of God with all our might.** — **Truth is what we have received from our forefathers, truth is what we must maintain, and truth is the legacy we must leave to the generations to come.**

If you are privileged to be a member of the house of God, a part of the church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, then **make it your business to maintain, defend, and publish abroad the truth of God with every fiber of your being.** See to it that the church to which you belong is "*the pillar and ground of the truth.*" **Any church which**

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ceases to be a pedestal of the truth ceases to be a church.

Every believer must be engaged in this noble cause. The church of Christ must not tolerate in her pulpit any man who is opposed to, or indifferent to the truth.

We must not tolerate any attack upon, violation of, or compromise of the Word of God. The Bible alone is the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God. It is our only rule of faith and practice (Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

(Isaiah 8:20) “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is because there is no light in them.*”

(2 Timothy 3:16-17) “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

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The Word of God alone is our creed, confession of faith and rule. We must bow to the authority of God's Book, but only to the authority of God's Book.

We must not tolerate any departure from the old paths of gospel truth (Jeremiah 6:16; 2 Timothy 1:8-13).

(Jeremiah 6:16) "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

(2 Timothy 1:8-13) "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; (9) Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who

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hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (11) Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. (12) For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. (13) Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

Without hesitation or apology, we must sound out the glorious message of God’s free, sovereign, eternal grace in Christ. We do not need to clarify the gospel, reform the gospel, or modernize the gospel. We need only to proclaim it. Let us proclaim the naked gospel, with all its barbs and rough edges. It is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. We must especially proclaim those points of gospel truth against which men most naturally and constantly rebel. Lest any should mistake my meaning, let me state plainly, though briefly, what

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those points of gospel truth are which the church of God is responsible to proclaim in every generation.

1. **Divine Sovereignty** (Romans 9:11-24). — If there is a God in heaven, he is absolutely sovereign over all things in creation, in providence, and, especially, in salvation.

2. **Total Depravity** (Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3). — Unless man is totally depraved by nature and utterly incapable of doing anything towards his own salvation, the death of Christ and the gospel of his grace are vain and useless.

3. **Unconditional Election** (Ephesians 1:3-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). — If God has a people in this world whom he loves and to whom he is gracious, he loved them and determined to be gracious to them in eternal election, before the world was made. The immutable God changes not!

4. **Limited Atonement** (Isaiah 53:8; Hebrews 2:17; 9:12). — If the Lord Jesus Christ died to redeem sinners, then those sinners for whom he died are

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effectually and eternally redeemed. He cannot fail! Both the justice of God and the merits of Christ demand the eternal salvation of his people.

5. **Irresistible Grace** (Psalm 65:4). — If God the Holy Spirit sets out to save a sinner, that sinner will be saved by omnipotent, irresistible, effectual grace. When he draws, he fetches. When he calls, sinners come. His will cannot be thwarted. His grace cannot be resisted. His power cannot be defeated.

6. **Perseverance of The Saints** (John 10:27-30). — Every believing sinner will be preserved unto eternal glory, kept by the power of God. Not one of those chosen by God, redeemed by Christ and called by the Spirit can be lost.

God's church is built with the gold, silver, and precious stones of gospel truth upon the Foundation Christ Jesus. Everything built with the wood, hay, and stubble of human devices will be burned.

God has not put the treasure of the gospel into these earthen vessels merely for the vessels' sake, but that

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the treasure may be poured out from us, that others may be enriched! God has not given us the gospel that we may keep and charm ourselves with it. He has given us the treasure of the gospel that we may spread the treasure. He did not give us this light to hide under a basket, but to hang on a lamp stand on the highest hill and in the darkest, most remote corner of the earth. He told Habakkuk to...

- Write the message plainly, so that it could be read and understood by any.
- Write it plainly, so that all who read may run!
- Write it upon tables, tablets of stone, in as permanently as possible.

GOD'S PROMISE

Fourth, God's promise to his servants is for an appointed time and is always sure (v. 3).

(Habakkuk 2:3) “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

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We preach a Gospel whose chief glory lies in the future. The blessings we proclaim have very great bearing upon the present, by all means, but the stress and emphasis of the Gospel relates to the future, to eternity. Because men do not immediately see the promise of God fulfilled, they ridicule the promise. — **But every promise of God's Word has its own appointed time.** Though it appears to tarry, God's promise is sure!

- The Salvation of God's Elect.
- The Second Coming.
- The Day of Judgment.

Did you hear me? Though it appears to tarry, God's promise is sure! The servant of God is still a prophet.

- He says, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*” — that is a prophecy!
- He says, “*Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you*” — that is a prophecy!
- He says, “*They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever*” — that is a prophecy!

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- He says, “*The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*” — that is a prophecy!

The testimony of Jesus is still the spirit of prophecy and each prophecy has an appointed time in which it will be fulfilled.

I grant, God’s promise sometimes appears, often appear to tarry; but that only makes the promise sweeter and more glorious when it appears.

- Promised Deliverance!
- Promised Grace!
- Promised Comfort!

God is never early and he is never late!

Israel went out of Egypt at the appointed time. It is written, “And it came to pass the same day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies,” and on that same day when Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Grace shall know that it

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is better for you to be delivered, you shall be delivered to the praise of the glory of God's Grace!

JOYFUL EXPECTATION

Fifth, We should serve our God with the joyful anticipation and expectation of confident faith in Christ (v. 4).

(Habakkuk 2:4) “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”

Children of God, let us ever live upon the tiptoe of faith, expecting God to fulfill his promise. — **Watch to see!**

- God Save Sinners (Isaiah 55:11).
- Your God Deliver you from Temptation and Trouble.
- The Lord God Bring us Home to Glory.
- The Lord Jesus Come in His Glory!

(Titus 2:11-14) “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us

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that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

(Jude 1:21) “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

(2 Peter 3:10-14) “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

“11 ¶ [Seeing] then [that] all these things shall be dissolved, what manner [of persons] ought ye to be in [all] holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved,

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and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

Amen.