

Sermon #2¹ — Habakkuk Series

Title: **HABAKKUK**
THE WONDER OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Text: Habakkuk 1:1-3:19

Subject: *Divine Judgment and Divine Providence*

Introduction:

There is an appointed day of wrath and judgment.

(Hebrews 9:27) “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

(Acts 17:31) “He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

If you do not live in the conscious awareness of the fact that you must soon stand before the holy Lord God in judgment, in the conscious anticipation of eternity, you are living in a fantasy of unreality. You are living as a fool, in a dream world, refusing to face the facts of reality. Soon, you and I must stand before that august bar of divine judgment called “**The Great White Throne.**”

(2 Corinthians 5:10-11) “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that

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he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. (11) Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

To live in unbelief, to live in contempt of and rebellion against Christ, is to store up to yourself wrath against the day of wrath and the righteous judgment of God (Romans 2:5). In that day, there will only be two groups of people, the just and the damned, the justified and the unjustified, the righteous and the wicked.

If ever you come to face that fact, if ever you come to grips with reality, you will be forced to ask a question. You will be compelled to ask, “**How can I live before God?** How can I escape the wrath and judgment of God in that great day when he consumes the world in his holy terror? **How can I be just with God?**” If you are not asking yourself such questions, you live in utter naivety, with your head in the sand. — “**How can a man be just with God?**” If that question has become a matter of concern to you, if you would know how to escape righteous judgment of God and the fury of his unmitigated wrath in hell, — **read the Book of Habakkuk.**

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Are you confused about the things going on around you? Idolatry and the evil idolatry always spawns, crime, violence, and moral decadence, appear to utterly cover the face of the earth. Ishmael's sons seem to hold the entire world in fear. Economic disaster looms everywhere. **Would you understand these things?** Would you understand what is going on in the world in which you and I live? Would you understand the very events of providence that are most distressing to your soul? — **Read the Book of Habakkuk.**

HABAKKUK

We know very little about the Prophet Habakkuk, except that he lived and preached about the time of Jeremiah, about 600 years before our Savior's incarnation. Habakkuk lived during the reigns of the godly King Josiah and through the reign of Josiah's reprobate successor, Jehoiakim. His name, Habakkuk, means "Embrace, Embraced, or Embracer." He was a man embraced by God, an embracer of God, and one who embraced the church of God when she was at her blackest hour and in her lowest state.

The Book of Habakkuk is as modern as the 21st century. It is a prophecy for today. It is as contemporary as the

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morning paper. Habakkuk deals with the questions for which men and women seek answers...

- “Is God really in charge of history?”
- “Why is there so much evil in the world?”
- “How can I believe in a personal, loving God if He allows bad things to happen to me and others?”
- “What is the meaning of history?”
- “Why is the world in such a mess, if there is a God?”
- “**How can a man be just with God?**” — That question is really the theme of the whole Bible. Job asked, “*How should a man be just with God*” (Job 9:2). Habakkuk answers, “*The just shall live by faith*” (Habakkuk 2:4).

SALVATION SURE

These questions are all answered in this small but magnificent prophecy of Habakkuk. **The Lord God taught Habakkuk and Habakkuk teaches us that all the wheels of providence and all their works are but God’s “chariots of salvation”** (3:8), instruments by which the Almighty is accomplishing the salvation of his elect. — Habakkuk declares, “**Thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation!**”

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In fact, though Habakkuk is clearly a prophecy announcing God’s judgment upon Israel and Judah, the prophecy begins with the promise of grace and salvation (1:5).

(Habakkuk 1:1-4) “The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. 2 O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! *even* cry out unto thee *of* violence, and thou wilt not save! 3 Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause *me* to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence *are* before me: and there are *that* raise up strife and contention. 4 Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.”

Now, here’s the promise that is really the theme of this prophecy.

(Habakkuk 1:5) “Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for *I* will work a work in your days, *which* ye will not believe, though it be told *you*.”

At first glance, this verse appears to be out of place. The Lord is not telling us that the captivity of Israel in Babylon, described in the following verses would be a marvelous and

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wonderful thing. Judgment is God's strange work (Isaiah 28:21), not his wonderful, marvelous work.

We are certain that this fifth verse is a prophecy of the salvation of God's elect in and by Christ, a prophecy of the gathering of God's elect from among the nations to Christ, because that is precisely how the Apostle Paul uses this text in his sermon at Antioch (Acts 13:14-41). **After declaring the whole history of Israel, up to and including the crucifixion of our blessed Savior, the Holy Spirit, speaking by the mouth of his servant Paul tells us that through it all God was riding upon his chariots of salvation, saving his people!**

(Acts 13:14-41) "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.* 16 Then **Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said**, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. 17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

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18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. 23 Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: 24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose. 26 **Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. 27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day,**

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they have fulfilled them in condemning him. 28 And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. 29 And **when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.** 30 But God raised him from the dead: 31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, **I will give you the sure mercies of David.** 35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. 38 **Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:** 39 **And by him all that believe are justified from**

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all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. ——— 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 **Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.**”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

This little prophecy is a literary masterpiece. On one occasion, when Benjamin Franklin was visiting Paris, during his lengthy stay he frequently joined a very sophisticated literary group for a public reading of some great work one in the group discovered. Franklin was, as you know, a Deist. He did not believe the Bible to be the Word of God; but he did read it as a book of moral philosophy. On one occasion, his hosts asked him to give a reading. Franklin read the three chapters of this prophecy to the spell-bound hearers. When he was finished, they were all enthused and asked who the author was, and where they might find a copy of such a great masterpiece of literature. You can imagine their shock and disappointment, when Franklin told them that he had read to them from the Bible, that he had read the prophecy of Habakkuk.

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FAITH

There is a statement found in Habakkuk 2:4 that is quoted three times in the New Testament. — “**The just shall live by his faith.**”

(Romans 1:16-17) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (17) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, —— **The just shall live by faith.**”

- **The emphasis here is on righteousness, the righteousness of God that we receive by faith in Christ.**

(Galatians 3:10-11) “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (11) But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, —— **The just shall live by faith.**”

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- **The emphasis here is on faith.** Paul is declaring that believers do not obtain righteousness by their own works but by faith in Christ alone.

(Hebrews 10:38-39) “Now **the just shall live by faith:** — but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. (39) But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

- **The emphasis here is on life, on living by faith.** The Holy Spirit here declares that those who have been made righteous, receiving the righteousness of God in Christ by faith in Christ, live throughout their days on this earth by that same faith, trusting Christ.

Habakkuk seems to have all three of these ideas in mind. He tells us that sinners obtain righteousness and life by faith in Christ and that, being made righteous, God’s people live by faith in Christ. We know that that is Habakkuk’s message because he sings praise to Christ our Savior in the prophetic song of chapter 3 (v. 13; compare Matthew 1:21).

(Habakkuk 3:13) “Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, *even* for salvation with thine anointed;

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thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. **Selah.**”

(Matthew 1:21) “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

THE MESSAGE

In a word, Habakkuk’s message is this. — **There is only one way to live, clinging to Christ the Lord!** Remember, Habakkuk’s name means, “embrace, or cling,” and his message is just that. **If we would live, we must live by clinging to Christ, relentlessly clinging to Christ.**

- In chapter 1 the prophet prays for Judah, against whom the Lord God was determined to send the Chaldeans in judgment.
- In chapter 2 we see the watchman upon his watchtower, receiving God’s answer to his prayer.
- In chapter 3 we have Habakkuk’s prayer of praise and faith, in the form of a psalm to be sung in the worship of God.

(Habakkuk 3:1) “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet

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upon Shigionoth.”

The meaning of the word “Shigionoth” is “doubtful.” Some suggest that it means **“ignorance.”** Others think it means **“stringed instrument.”** Perhaps it is best to give it both meanings. Certainly, it is best to do so here. — **Habakkuk is here declaring,** “Though I am ignorant before him, I will bow to my God, worship him, and sing praise to him upon my stringed instruments.” **His song begins with a prayer, ends with a determined contentment of faith, and everything between is praise.** Look at the prayer with which Habakkuk begins his song (3:2).

(Habakkuk 3:2) “O LORD, I have heard thy speech, *and was afraid*: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.”

- He heard God’s pronouncement of wrath, and was afraid, not for himself, but for those the Lord was determined to punish in his holy indignation.
- Then he prays for God’s church and kingdom. — (1.) He prays for the Lord to revive, that is to preserve his work in the midst of his judgment. — Then (2.) he prays for the Lord to make himself known in the midst of

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the years of darkness and desolation, in the midst of his judgment. — And (3.) he calls for the Lord God, in wrath, to remember mercy.

That is my prayer to God in this day. — *“O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.”*

THE SITUATION

Here is the situation in which the Lord God placed Habakkuk. Judah was going to be invaded by the Chaldeans (Babylonians). The invasion took place at the end of the sixth century B.C., just before Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. The Lord revealed this to his prophets long before it actually took place. He told them plainly that Judah was going to be punished for her sin, and that the instrument he would use to punish Judah would be Babylon. **Unlike Joel, Zephaniah, and Amos, Habakkuk does not mention the possibility that judgment might be averted. He does not call for national repentance. It is too late for that.** Instead, he prophetically asserts the destruction of Judah and, beyond that, the doom of the Chaldeans themselves.

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Yet, he declares that the only way to escape the coming wrath and judgment is by faith, by believing God. Though judgment is certain, he declares that those who believe shall live. — **“We shall not die”** (v. 12).

CHAPTER 1

Carrying the heavy, heavy burden the Lord God had put upon him, Habakkuk cries out in chapter 1 (vv.2-4) that Judah is full of violence, strife, and contention, that the nation had utterly cast aside God’s holy law. — **“Therefore,” he says, “judgment proceedeth.”**

In verses 6-11, the prophet faithfully declares the precise method by which the Lord God would destroy the nation. He was raising up the pagan, idolatrous, ungodly, barbarian Chaldeans, a vile, immoral, wretched people, to execute his wrath against a people who professed to be his people and appeared to be far more righteous than those who would destroy them. It was a prophecy so contrary to nature and reason, that when it came to pass the people would deny that God did it, though he had plainly told them he was going to do it (1:5).

(Habakkuk 1:5) “Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for *I* will work a

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work in your days, *which* ye will not believe, though it be told *you*.”

I have shown you from Acts 13 that this verse is a promise of the salvation of God’s elect in Christ by his almighty grace. Yet, it is clear, from Jeremiah’s prophecy that when the Judah was carried away into Babylon, the people still refused to believe God’s prophet, and refused to believe that God had sent them into captivity.

ASSURANCE OF LIFE

Now, look at verse 12. Here the prophet of God speaks with absolute confidence, assuring God’s true saints, the true believers, among those who professed faith in him, that God’s judgment by which he would destroy the rest would not destroy them.

(Habakkuk 1:12) “*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 (**ROCK**) God, thou hast established them for correction.”

QUESTIONS

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In verses 2 and 3 the prophet cried beneath the heavy weight of his burden. “*O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear!... Why dost thou show me iniquity and cause me to behold grievance?*” Then, at the end of the chapter (1:13-17) he asked the Lord to explain himself to him, to explain to him why he would choose to use the Chaldeans to punish Judah? **His question is,** — “How is it you, O Lord, God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, will execute your wrath upon Judah by a people even worse than they?”

These were not the questions of a rebel, or a reprobate unbeliever, but the questions of a faithful man perplexed by God’s providential works. We might not be honest enough to put them into verbal expressions; but they are questions that frequently disturb us too. Are they not? **These questions remind me of David’s great struggle in Psalm 73.**

(Psalm 73:1-3) “**Truly God is good to Israel,** *even to such as are of a clean heart.* (2) But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. (3) For **I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.**”

(Psalm 73:12-28) “**Behold, these are the ungodly,**

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who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches. (13) Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and **washed my hands in innocency**. (14) For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. (15) If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children. (16) When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me; (17) **Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end**. (18) Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. (19) How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. (20) As a dream when *one* awaketh; *so*, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image. (21) Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. (22) **So foolish was I**, and ignorant: I was *as* a beast before thee. (23) **Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand**. (24) Thou shalt **guide me with thy counsel**, and afterward **receive me to glory**. (25) **Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee**. (26) My flesh and my heart faileth: *but* **God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever**. (27) For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

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(28) **But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.**”

GOD’S ANSWER

We must admit that we have struggled with the same questions. The earth is filled with glaring inequity. The wicked do seem to prosper while the righteous suffer. **After raising the questions, Habakkuk resolves to wait for God’s answer. We would be wise to do the same, and to lay the answer to heart.**

CHAPTER 2

In chapter 2 Habakkuk stands upon his watchtower to await God’s answer, and the Lord gave it to him in a vision. **He does not tell us what he saw, but it must be assumed that the rest of his prophecy is the result of the vision God gave him. I say that because God commanded him to write out the vision and make it plain** (Vv. 2-3).

(Habakkuk 2:1-3) “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. (2) And the LORD answered me, and said,

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Write the vision, and **make it plain** upon tables, **that he may run that 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.”

And the declaration of God’s vision was first and foremost a word of instruction, reproof, and assurance to Habakkuk and to us (v. 4). **Let us hear the instruction, bear the reproof, and rejoice in the assurance**.

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

The first thing we learn is that **God is running things on schedule** — “**The vision is yet for an appointed time**”(2:3). Our time and God’s time are not measured by the same clock. Israel offered sacrifices for centuries, in anticipation of Christ, the coming Sacrifice by whom sin would be put away. The Jews, in unbelief, fell into idolatry and were cast off by God, because, they **refused** to believe God, refused to live by faith. They **stumbled over the Stumbling-Stone**. Going about to establish their own righteousness, they refused to submit to the righteousness of God, never realizing that **“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.”** — **“The just**

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shall live by his faith.” But they refused to believe and perished.

Yet, “when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” (Galatians 4:4-5). You can count on it — not a single promise will fail! A thousand years are as a day in God’s sight.

This is God’s answer to all Habakkuk’s questions and his answer our own questions as well. — “The just shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4).

As I showed you at the beginning of my message, **this great statement made by God to Habakkuk is repeated three times in the New Testament.** Each place describes a specific aspect of Christ’s all-sufficient and infallibly effectual work of redemption, righteousness, and grace on behalf of his people, as our Surety and Substitute.

1. Romans 1:17

The first New Testament quotation is found in Romans 1:17. It follows Paul’s declaration, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth”* (Romans 1:16). Then

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the says, “*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith*” (Romans 1:17).

In Romans 1, Paul is standing on the threshold of the great Epistle on Justification, in which he shows us how sinners are made righteous and just before God, not by works, but by grace. **In this Book, the Book of God, God has left us a record of his wondrous work of redemption by Christ, a record of redemption accomplished by the righteousness and blood of his darling Son. Faith believes God’s witness, says “Amen,” to the testimony of God concerning his Son; and believing the record God has given concerning his Son, believing God, we receive righteousness, free, unconditional, irrevocable, and eternal justification.**

(Romans 5:9-11) “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

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Like our brother, Abel, believing God, offering God the blood of his own Son, we obtain witness that we are righteous (Hebrews 11:4).

2. Galatians 3:11

The second quote is in Galatians 3:11 — **“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, The just shall live by faith.”**

Here, Paul is saying much the same thing as he wrote in Colossians 2:6. — **“As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.”** The Galatians were being tempted by false preachers, Judaizing legalists, who taught them (as most would teach us today) that having been saved by grace, justified by grace, they must now keep themselves and make themselves perfect, that they must sanctify themselves by their own works.

Paul is not confusing justification and sanctification, but clarifying them. In the context (3:1-10) he is clearly addressing the matter of sanctification. He is telling us that both are found in Christ, that both are received by trusting Christ, that both are works of grace received by faith. He is saying, “If you could make yourself perfect by works, you

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could justify yourself by your works. But that is evidently impossible, **“for the just shall live by faith!”**

In Galatians 3:11 Paul is talking about the believer’s walk in this world. Just as we are saved by faith, we continue in life by faith.

3. Hebrews 10:38

We see Habakkuk’s words again in Hebrews 10:38. Here the Holy Spirit is talking about perseverance and the assurance of it.

(Hebrews 10:38-39) “Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. (39) But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

When the night is darkest, faith pierces the darkness and, seeing the light of God’s promise and grace in Christ, refuses to quit. Faith, like Habakkuk’s name implies, “embraces” and “clings” to Christ.”

Illustration: “*Tie a knot and hang on!*”

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Now, let's go back to Habakkuk. Judgment is coming. Every proud rebel shall be destroyed. But, even in the midst of the providential calamities of divine judgment in time, and when the great and final day of wrath shall come, those who live by faith have their eyes on One who is the Anchor of our souls, knowing that he is in his holy temple (2:14, 20).

(Habakkuk 2:14) “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

- Certainly, this is talking about that **last day**, when judgment is over and God makes all things new.
- It is equally certain that this is talking about **this gospel age**, in which the gospel of God's free, sovereign, saving, grace and glory in Christ is spread over all the earth, even as God destroys the nations by the great whore of false religion, Babylon.
- Still, there is more. If you have a marginal translation, you will see that the words of verse 14 might be translated, **“the earth shall be filled by knowing the glory of the LORD.”** That is to say, **“We who believe God, who live by faith, knowing the glory of God in Christ, see the fulness of God's purpose in all things through all the earth”** (Romans 8:28-39; John 11:40).

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HABAKKUK'S PRAYER

CHAPTER 3

The Book of Habakkuk closes with Habakkuk's great prayer of praise and faith. He gives us **a great description of God's majesty**. He declares **the wondrous history of God's dealings with his people** in bringing them into Canaan, which portrayed the far greater blessedness that is ours in Christ, as we behold him who is the brightness of the Father's glory (Hebrews 1:3).

Three times (vv. 3, 9, and 13) **in this prayer, Habakkuk uses the exclamation “Selah,”** a word found nowhere else in the Bible except in the Psalms. This word is a call for us to pause, be silent, and consider. Someone suggested, it means, **“listen to the divine illumining, to the divine light.”** How we need this silence of soul before the Lord God in these days! Let us pause and listen to the divine light.

(Habakkuk 3:1-2) “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth. 2 O LORD, I have heard thy speech, *and* was afraid: O LORD, revive (**PRESERVE**) thy work in the midst of the years, in

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the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.”

As it was upon Mt. Sinai, that the whole earth was full of the glory of God (vv. 3-4), **so it is now. If only we had eyes to see it** (2 Kings 6:17), **the whole earth is full of God’s praise.** One day soon, all things shall show forth his praise.

(Habakkuk 3:3-4) “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. **SELAH.** His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. 4 And **his brightness** was as the light; **he had horns coming out of his hand:** and there *was* the hiding of his power.”

Even when God marches through the earth in wrath, with his glittering sword drawn, he is riding upon his “chariots of salvation” (v. 8), and goes forth for the salvation of his people by Christ, his anointed (vv. 12-13).

(Habakkuk 3:12-13) “Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. (13) **Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed;** thou woundedst the head out of the house of the

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wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck.
SELAH.”

God will save his elect. Though the rebel tribes of national Israel have been destroyed because of their unbelief, “*all Israel shall be saved.*” The casting away of the physical nation was for the salvation of God’s holy nation. Indeed, the judgment of God exercised throughout history upon the nations of the earth is for the salvation of God’s chosen. **This is the vision God gave the prophet of old. Habakkuk declares,** “God is working out his eternal purpose of grace for the salvation of his people. In wrath, he does remember mercy, he is making himself known he is preserving his church and kingdom. Blessed be his holy name!”

Illustration: *Eugene and Natalie Svistun and Their Boys*

HABAKKUK’S FAITH

Knowing this, knowing that in all his works, God is saving his people, the troubled, heavy-hearted prophet closes his song and his prophecy with **a marvelous declaration of determined faith, bowing to the wisdom, goodness and grace of God’s adorable providence, even when it appears darkest and most difficult** (vv. 17-19).

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(Habakkuk 3:17-19) “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither *shall* fruit *be* in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and *there shall be* no herd in the stalls: (18) Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. (19) The LORD God *is* my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ *feet*, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.”

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

Deep, in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and will break
In blessings on your head.

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Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace.
Behind the frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour.
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower!

William Cowper

¹ Danville — Tuesday Evening — July 13, 2005
Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Princeton, NJ — (FRI 07/16/10)

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Tape # *Habakkuk #1*

Readings: *Bob Poncer and Bobbie Estes*