

# (Through the Bible) Habakkuk

by Chuck Smith

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*Habakkuk complains to God about the deteriorating conditions, and God responds by saying he is working, but Habakkuk doesn't understand what he is doing.*

**Duration:** 1:23:40

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 29:11, Habakkuk 1:13, Habakkuk 2:3, Habakkuk 3:19, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, 2 Peter 3:3-4

**Topics:** "Gods Judgment", "Earthly Corruption"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses sadness over the careless behavior of people who litter and leave debris on the ground. He reflects on the corruption that man has brought upon the earth and longs for the day when the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. The sermon then shifts to a discussion of God's judgment and the great desolation that will occur during the period of the great tribulation. The speaker also mentions a severe famine that will take place during this time. However, amidst all the despair, the prophet Habakkuk is reminded that God is working and will bring about His plans in His appointed time.

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## Transcript

So we turn at this time to the book of Habakkuk. Very little is known concerning the personal background of Habakkuk. Very little, nothing is known.

We don't know really anything about his background. There are indications from the book itself that he was of a priestly family, perhaps one of the priests in Israel. He addresses the last chapter, which is a psalm, that it might be, he addresses it to the chief singer on my stringed instrument.

And that was usually the place of the priest who were, many of them just for the, God had called him for the purpose of providing music in the temple. And so Habakkuk could have been just one of the temple priests. The time of his prophecy is not declared as so often at the beginning of a prophecy, the prophet will declare who prophesied during the reigns of Josiah and Jehoiakim and so forth.

He doesn't tell us the time of his prophecy. But again, from the prophecy itself, from the book itself, we realize that there is a great spiritual declension and the impending invasion of Babylon. Many put the prophecy during the reign of Josiah.

However, during the reign of Josiah, there was more or less a spiritual revival in Judah. After the evil, wicked reign of Manasseh, Josiah came along and instituted many spiritual reforms. The discovery again of the law of God, the instituting again of the Passover festivals, and there was a great spiritual revival under Josiah.

In chapter one, Habakkuk is complaining against the tremendous spiritual declension. And thus, probably towards the end of the reign of Josiah, and then of course, the reign of Jehoiachin and Jehoiakim. And it is in the final period of the national deterioration prior to falling to Babylon.

And of course, Habakkuk is prophesying of Babylon's coming invasion and being used as a rod of God to punish God's people. So, he begins the burden which Habakkuk, the prophet, did see. And it begins with a cry unto the Lord.

Now, Habakkuk had a very beautiful and close relationship with God. The word Habakkuk means embracer. And Habakkuk embraced the Lord and was embraced by the Lord.

And so, he begins with a prayer unto the Lord. O Lord, how long shall I cry and you will not hear? Even cry out unto you of the violence and you do not save. Why do you show me iniquity and cause me to behold these grievances? For spoiling and violence are before me.

And there are those that raise up strife and contention. Therefore, the law is slacked and judgment never goes forth. For the wicked encompass the righteous.

Therefore, wrong judgment proceeds. So, the complaint against God because of the deteriorating conditions of the country, the land. And it seems as though the stem of evil or the tide of evil is not being stemmed by God.

Lord, how long will I cry to you of these things that are taking place? And you don't answer, you don't hear, you don't respond. God, there's such a horrible deterioration in the land. There is such moral corruption.

There's such an overwhelming tide of evil. And the whole nation is just going down so rapidly. And God, you don't seem to be doing anything about it.

We pray, we cry unto you, but it seems like evil is prevailing. And that the evil persons are prevailing. And as the result, righteous judgment no longer proceeds.

The effect of the moral declension of the nation is reflected in the judicial system. So that the law is slacked and judgment does not go forth. Boy, I think of things that are going on in our own area here.

I am deeply concerned for the judicial system. Last year, this young man, Ray Hinckley, attempted to assassinate the president. And we're all aware of the incidents that took place on that fateful day.

A couple of weeks later, in Italy, a young man attempted to assassinate the Pope. Now, he has already had his day in court and was tried and is now serving his sentence. And Hinckley hasn't even come up for trial yet.

Now, there's something wrong with the judicial system that is so cumbersome. That here he is not even yet up for trial. And over in Italy, those who kidnapped Dozier just recently are already in court being tried.

I was reading where this big drug bust in Newport Beach recently, where a million dollars worth of cocaine was recovered from a house up in Spyglass Hill. Though they found, you know, the cocaine there and everything else, they did not have a proper reason to search them. And therefore, they've been dismissed and are now scot-free out, you know, buying more drugs and back into their train.

Something's wrong with the judicial system. That releases known criminals who have even confessed their crimes. But just because of a failure to inform them of their rights before their confession, they're allowed to go free.

Or because they were accomplices together in the murder and though they admitted both of them to being involved, each one said the other one did it. And because they can't testify against each other in such a case, they let them both go free. Such was the case of the two young men who murdered my friend Ray Boatwright.

And there's something wrong. The law is slacked. Judgment does not go forth.

And that is a mark of a declining moral state, a weakness of a nation. When a body gets so sick that it can no longer purge itself of its poisons, that body will soon die. And when we've become so weak in our judicial system, that we cannot purge our society of the poisons within the society, you can be sure that that society hasn't long to live.

The wicked compass about the righteous. It would seem that the humanistic liberal concepts are being embraced by the majority of the people. That those who would dare to stand up for morality and righteousness and pure living are considered as archaic, Victorian, and all of the other names that they call us.

And so the prophet Habakkuk sees all these things. He cries out unto the Lord, but it seems like God isn't doing anything about it. It seems like things are just getting worse.

There's no change. It seems like the nation is just sliding down more rapidly all the time. And so he is disraught.

He says, Lord, please, I just assume you're not show me anything else. And I've really gotten to that place almost myself. Someone came up this morning and said they now have X-rated radio.

In several of the major cities of the United States, some radio stations have gone to what they call X-rated programming in which they use all kinds of filthy language and get into all kinds of filthy type of diatribe and stories and everything else. And it says that they are such a tremendous success and have such a large listening audience among the young people that it's about the greatest success story that's come in radio for a long time. X-rated radio.

I said, oh, Lord, please don't let me know anything else. I can't take it. Lord, this whole corrupt system seems to be getting worse all the time and you're not doing anything about it.

Lord, I cried unto you. He said, how long shall I cry? And you don't seem to hear me. And so the Lord responded to Habakkuk, verse five.

And he said, behold ye among the heathen in regard and wonder marvelously. For I will work a work in your days, which you will not believe, though it be told you. Now the prophet was saying, God, please

don't show me anything else, because the whole thing is deteriorating so rapidly.

And you're doing nothing about it. And God, in essence, responded, I am doing something. I am working.

I'm doing a work in your day. And if it were told to you, you wouldn't believe it. The prophet more or less said, try me.

And so the Lord went on. And he said, for lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful.

Their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards and more fierce than the evening wolves. And their horsemen shall spread themselves.

And their horsemen shall come from far. And they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. They shall come all for violence.

Their faces shall sup up as the east wind. And they shall gather the captivity as the sand. And they shall scoff at the kings.

And the princes shall be a scorn unto them. And they shall deride every stronghold, for they shall heap dust and take it. Then shall his mind change.

And he shall pass over and offend, imputing this his power unto his God. So the Lord said, I am working. And what I am doing is I'm gathering together the Babylonian nation, the Chaldeans.

And they are going to come with their swift army. And they are going to move through the breadth of this land and conquer it and destroy the houses of these people. And so he predicts the impending invasion and victory of Babylon over Judah.

But then he says, when they have conquered, then they are going to make a mistake. And they are going to attribute the fact that they've been able to conquer Judah to their God being superior to the God of Israel. Now, when God revealed his plan to Habakkuk to use the evil nation of Babylon as an instrument to bring defeat to God's people to destroy their land, it was true, Habakkuk couldn't believe it.

As God said, I am working, but if it were told to you, you wouldn't believe it. And Habakkuk answers God. And in his answer to God, he again expresses his not understanding the ways of God.

He said, are you not from everlasting? Have you not always existed? Oh Lord, my God, my Holy One, we shall not die. Oh Lord, thou hast, that is as a nation, you know, surely we will not die. Oh Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment.

And almighty God, thou hast established them for correction. But Lord, you are of purer eyes than to behold evil. And you cannot look on iniquity.

Very interesting verses. God is of purer eyes than to behold evil. That is to behold it in the sense of approval.

You cannot look upon iniquity with approval. We are coming this week, of course, to the remembrance of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. As this Sunday throughout Christendom, they were celebrating Palm

Sunday, the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

Fulfillment of the promise of God through Daniel and through Zachariah of the coming of the Messiah. Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, Zachariah declared. But he is lowly, sitting on a colt.

Full of an ass. But even as Daniel said, when the Messiah comes, he'll be cut off. And so this is the week right after his triumphant entry.

And is being rejected officially by the religious leaders and their conspiracy to put him to death. We will be remembering again the death of Jesus Christ. And in remembering the death of Jesus Christ, we remember the agony in the Garden of Eden.

As he prayed three times to the Father concerning the cup that he was to drink. Sweating, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. As he agonized before the Father concerning the cross.

Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, if it cannot pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And as we remember the prayer of Christ.

And as we look at the cross. And we hear the cry from the cross, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Then we understand the prayer of the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. Isaiah, in prophesying concerning the death of Jesus Christ, said he was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And by his stripes you are healed.

For all we like sheep have gone astray. We turned every one of us to our own ways. But the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.

When Jesus was there on the cross, suffering in your place, taking the judgment that was due you for your sins. As the iniquities of the world were laid upon him, the history of man, all of the evil, vile acts committed by man in his history were at that point placed upon Jesus Christ. As Habakkuk said, thou canst not look upon iniquity.

And in his bearing of your iniquities, he became separated from the Father. And thus the cry, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? But we realize that God in his plan to show you how much he loved you, forsook his Son when he took your iniquities in order that he would not have to forsake you eternally. Oh, the mysteries and the depths of God's love that were revealed there on Calvary as Jesus bore your sin and my sin.

And as he suffered in our place and took our judgment, we feel like taking the shoes off of our feet whenever we talk about the things of the cross because truly we are standing there on holy ground as we consider God's great love for fallen man, for you, for me. In the Psalm that Jesus was actually quoting when he cried, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Psalm 22, it goes on to say, why art thou so far from the cry of my roaring? I cry in the day season and thou hearest not, and in the night and thou art silent. But, and in verse three, he gives the reason for being forsaken.

But thou art holy, O thou who inhabits the praises of thy people Israel. Here the prophet speaks of the holiness of God. Your eyes are so pure that you cannot behold evil.

You cannot look upon iniquity. O thou art holy, thou that inhabits the praises of Israel. And so the penalty and the result of sin, separation from God was experienced by the Son who knew no sin, but God made him to be sin for us in order that we might be made the righteousness of God through him.

Oh, I'll tell you, how can a person reject such a fabulous offer that God gives unto man? He takes our sin and gives us his righteousness. Oh, what a glorious thing to realize. He became what we are that we might become what he is.

And so the declaration of the prophet concerning God, the purity of God, the holiness of God. Now, this brings up an interesting point, you see. Because so many times we find ourselves in that position of asking God to condone our iniquity or our sin.

Paul said, don't you realize your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? Which is in you? You are not your own. You've been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are his.

Don't you realize that if you are using your body for immoral purposes and your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, you're actually asking God to condone or to go along and to partake in your iniquity. And yet God is of pure eyes and he can behold evil. He cannot look upon iniquity.

And if God forsook his only begotten son, when the iniquities of the world were laid upon him, it is sheer folly if you think that you can embrace God while doing evil. If a man says he is in the light and walks in darkness, he lies and does not the truth. Be not deceived.

Many people are deceived into thinking that they can embrace God and embrace evil and iniquity at the same time. Not so. Coming apart from them, saith the Lord, touch not the unclean thing and I will be a father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters.

But God said, Be ye holy for I am holy. Now the prophet has a problem. Lord, you are of pure eyes to behold evil.

You cannot look upon iniquity. How come, Lord? You're looking on those who deal treacherously, that is the Babylonians. And you hold your tongue when the wicked devours the man that is more righteous than he.

What the prophet is basically saying is, Hey, God, we are bad. I recognize that. But they're worse than we are.

Now, I don't understand, Lord, why you would use a nation that is even more corrupt than we are to judge us or to bring judgment on us. I don't understand this. Speaking of the Babylonians, he said, They make men as the fish of the sea, as creeping things that have no ruler over them.

They take up all of them with their hooks, and they catch them in their nets, and they gather them with their drags, and therefore they rejoice and are glad. And then they sacrifice unto their nets and burn incense to their drags, because by them their portion is fat and their meat plenteous. Shall they therefore empty their net and not spare continually to slay the nations? God, I don't understand.

Why you would use the Babylonians? They're pagans. They are idolaters. They are like fishermen, who after they have taken a great multitude of fish, they then offer sacrifices to their nets, burn incense to them and all.

And they're worshipping the wrong gods. They're not worshipping you. Why would you prosper them? Why would you allow them to have victory? Why would you allow them to have such great spoil? In other words, why would you bless the ungodly and prosper the ungodly? And so the prophet declares, I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower.

I will watch to see what he will say unto me and what I shall answer when I am reproved. He knew that he had, you know, said too much. And yet sometimes, you know, we don't understand God.

And sometimes we say things in our emotional fervor where we're sort of challenging God. And then all of a sudden, oh, I've gone too far. Well, I just go up in the tower and sit and wait and see what God has to say to me in reproving me for the things that I've said.

Go up in the tower and wait. God, I cried unto you, told you I didn't understand why you weren't working. You said you're working, but I wouldn't understand it.

And God, I sure don't understand it. Why would you use the Babylonians? They're more evil than we are. I'm just going to go up and sit in the tower and I'm going to wait and see what you have to say.

And so the Lord answered him, verse two. And he said, write the vision and make it plain upon tables that he may run that readeth it. Now, notice he may run that readeth it, not that he that readeth it may run.

But he may run that readeth it. That is, write the vision, make it plain so that when people read it, they will run to share it with others. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie.

Now, it's going to happen. It's going to happen in its appointed time. And though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come.

It will not tarry. Now, the vision for the appointed time is really looking down to the time of the coming of the Messiah. And though it tarry, he said, wait for it, because he will surely come and not tarry.

The church has been waiting for Jesus to come for almost 2,000 years of man's time. But we have learned from Einstein that time is relative and that the faster you go, the more time slows down. Until as you approach the speed of light, time almost stops.

So that if some of you could be appointed as astronauts to travel in interstellar space, and let us say that we were able to develop spaceships that could operate on the magnetic forces of the universe, and they could approach the speed of light and could travel, say, at 185,900 miles per second. And you would get into one of these spaceships and you would take off for Alpha Centauri, the next closest star to our sun. And traveling at this speed, this phenomenal speed, in around five years, you would be approaching the planetary system around Alpha Centauri.

And having entered into that planetary system and flying by the various planets to determine the possibilities that life forms might exist, you then turn your rocket ship back towards the solar system and the planet Earth. And another five years or so, you would be back on the Earth, landing somewhere upon the Earth, Edwards Air Force Base. Though you had only been gone on your calendar in your spaceship, on your little digital clocks and calendars in your spaceship, you'd only been gone on your calendar for 10 years.

By the time you got back to the Earth, because of the relativity of time, you would be looking for familiar landmarks. You'd be looking for Edwards Air Force Base, but you probably would not find it, because in the meantime, some three million years have transpired upon the Earth. So, you'd come back to an Earth that is three million years older, where you yourself would only be 10 years older.

And you'd find no trace of your wife, your family, or anybody else that was familiar to you. Now, that's according to Einstein's theory of the relativity of time. Now, how fast Jesus left, I don't know.

How fast he traveled, he said, I'm coming quickly. Now, the Earth has transpired and gone through some 2,000 revolutions around the sun since Jesus left. And though the Earth is 2,000 years older, of course, it is even ridiculous to speak of Jesus in the term of age, because he is from everlasting to everlasting.

But in that time, a sense of relativity and so forth, if he left at the speed of light and returns at the speed of light, and as the lightning shineth out of the east to the west, so is the coming of man. So, he's coming like lightning. And if he returns at the speed of light, we say, Lord, what took you so long? He said, what do you mean? He's only been gone 10 minutes.

Now, the prophet is encouraging us to the faithfulness of God's Word and God's promise. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, it will not lie, and though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come and will not tarry. Throughout the New Testament, we are encouraged towards patience as we wait for the coming again of Jesus Christ.

Peter tells us that in the last days, scoffers would come and they would say, where is the promise of his coming? You say, Jesus is coming again. Ah, go on. They've been saying that for years.

The early church looks for his coming, you know. Since our fathers have fallen asleep, all things continued as they were from the beginning. The uniformitarian theory.

Everything is going on in a uniform pattern. Nothing has changed. Since our fathers have fallen asleep, all things are just going on as they were.

But Peter said, this they are willingly ignorant of. The flood that destroyed the people before, or the people in the time of Noah. The great error that is made by the evolutionary theory in the ignoring of the flood as a more plausible explanation of the geological column.

But then Peter went on to say, relativity of time, a day is as a thousand years to the Lord and a thousand years is as a day. Time is relative. We didn't need Einstein to tell us that.

The Lord told us that before Einstein ever breathed his first breath. But then Peter went on to say, but God is not slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness, but he's faithful to us. And then he tells you the reason why he is tarried.

For God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Therefore realize that the delay of the Lord is the salvation of the lost. It's for those who have not yet received.

God is so patient. James said, have patience, brethren to the coming of the Lord. Establish your souls for the husbandman is waiting for the complete fruit of harvest.

So we are exhorted to wait, but always being encouraged. It's going to happen. Surely it will come.

Behold, his soul, which is lifted up. The Lord says is not upright in him. Again, this thing of pride, any man whose soul, and of course it was probably directed at Nebuchadnezzar, who was the leader of Babylon when they conquered over the land and fulfilled this prophecy.

And then old Nebuchadnezzar lifted up with pride and going around, parading around the city of Babylon, that fabulous city in the one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, enjoying these hanging gardens and all. And the watchers watching from heaven gave a warning to him. And he came to Daniel and said, I had this weird dream and I want you to tell me what it's all about.

I saw this tree grew up and it was mighty and all the birds were lodging in it. And then someone came and cut the tree down. They said, I heard him say, cut it down.

And the tree was cut to the ground. But then new branches began to grow out of the roots. What does it mean, Daniel? And he said, Oh, Nebuchadnezzar, it's a bad dream.

It's it's your enemies are going to rejoice when they hear this, because you have become great. Your kingdom is great and covering the earth and all of the people have found refuge in your kingdom. But pride has lifted up in your heart and the watchers from heaven, when they have seen that pride, they've ordered cut the tree down.

And you're going to be cut down. But yet you'll begin to grow again. Oh, Nebuchadnezzar, hey, man, take it easy.

Walk softly before the Lord. Walk carefully. Don't let this pride take over.

And for about a year, Oh, Nebuchadnezzar walked softly. And as he was walking in that city of Babylon, looking around, he says, is this not the great Babylon that I have built? And the watchers from heaven said, that's it. Cut him down.

And he went insane. And so here is sort of a little warning. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him.

Now, Nebuchadnezzar, after this experience of insanity and living with the animals, until seven seasons were passed over him, as again, his mental faculties were restored to him. He made a very interesting proclamation in which he acknowledges much of what the Lord had already said. He declared in coming out of this mad state.

And at the end of the days, that is of my madness, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes unto heaven and my understanding returned to me. I became sane again. And I blessed the Most High.

And I praised and honored him that lives forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion. And his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all of the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing.

And he does according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. And none can stay his hand or say unto him, what are you doing? And at the same time that my reason returned unto me for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and my brightness returned unto me. And my counselors and my Lord sought unto me and I was established in my kingdom.

And excellent majesty was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, extol, and honor the King of heaven, whose works are truth and whose ways judgment. And those, notice, that walk in pride, he is able

to obey.

Now, before this ever happened in Nebuchadnezzar, Habakkuk had warned in the prophecy, behold, his soul, which is lifted up is not upright in him. But then in contrast, the just shall live by faith. Herein is a glorious truth of God that is proclaimed three times over in the New Testament.

The just shall live by faith. Justification through faith in Jesus Christ. Justification through the principle of faith and not of works.

We're into that whole scene on Thursday nights. And so we're not going to, uh, get into it tonight, but as we're dealing now in Romans chapter three, Paul's great treatise on justification through faith, as he will continue this through chapter five. Yea, also the prophet declares because he transgresses by wine, he is a proud man.

Neither he keeps at home who enlarges his desire as hell and is as death and cannot be satisfied, but gathers unto him all nations and heaps unto him all people. Speaking how that the pride of man never has a place of satisfaction. There is no place for the man of sin to rest.

One of the sad things about the world in which we live with all of the liberties that men have been granted today, no doubt more than in any other period in history, more opportunities to indulge your own lust and desires. But the remarkable thing about it with all of the opportunities and license towards evil, there is perhaps a greater unrest and dissatisfaction in this age than any other age. Why? Because man given over to his unbridled lust will never be able to fill the void within his heart.

It's just a bottomless pit. And the more you indulge your flesh, the more your flesh demands. And rather than satisfaction, you have just the opposite.

You have a craven drive and desire and lust that cannot be fulfilled, which only increases day by day. So not all of these take up a parable against him and a taunting proverb against him and say, woe to him that increase it, that which is not his. How long? And to him that laden it himself with thick clay.

So they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee and awake that shall vex thee and thou shall be booties unto them. You've conquered Babylon. You've taken the land.

You've taken the prey. You're never satisfied. You're always wanting more.

You've got more than you could possibly spend, but you're not satisfied. One day you yourself will become a prey because thou has spoiled many nations and all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee because of men's blood and for the violence of the land of the city and of all that dwell therein woe to him that coveted with an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. Thou has consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people.

You have sinned against thy soul for the stone shall cry out of the wall and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Woe to him that builds a town with blood and establishes a city by iniquity. Behold, it is not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labor in the very fire and the people shall weary themselves for the very vanity for the earth.

And of course, he speaks, this is all directed to Babylon and to their conquering and to subsequent nations that would seek to gain by war and to conquer by war and to subdue others and to use bloodshed and

iniquity to establish themselves. But then verse 14 speaks of a glorious day that is coming for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as waters cover the sea. Oh, God knows how I long for that day when the earth is filled.

You know, this could be a nice place to live if it weren't for people, but look how man has corrupted his environment. Hey, I hate to tell you this, but I go up to the conference center when we're up there camping with you people, that beautiful place up there in the mountains with the beautiful ferns and trees and all. And you know, I find you leaving your pop cans around on the ground and you're leaving your candy wrappers and all.

You just, I don't know, you pollute the environment up there and you're good. But I get so sick when I see that people carelessly throw papers or candy wrappers or gum wrappers on the grounds. Because it's such a beautiful place and just to carelessly, you know, leave your debris around.

It's just, it's sort of sad that it seems to be just a part of man's nature. We look at the earth and we see the corruption that man has brought. Where can you escape it? But one day the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Everywhere you go, everyone you meet, just filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. The whole earth. Oh God, hasten that day.

Now the Lord pronounces a woe unto those that would give his neighbor a drink, giving him a bottle to make him drunk so that he can behold his nakedness. Thou art filled with shame for glory. Drink thou also that you might be uncovered.

The cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned unto thee and shameful spewing will be your glory. You vomit all over yourself and let that be your glory. For the violence of Lebanon, that is the way they violently destroyed Lebanon, the violence that you exercised against Lebanon.

Of course, Babylon, when they took the city of Tyre there in Lebanon, just destroyed it so utterly. And the spoil of the beast which made them afraid because of men's blood and for the violence of the land, of the city and of all that dwell therein, what profiteth the graven image? I remember the mistake of Babylon was going to be they were going to attribute their victory to their gods. Though God was using them and allowed them to be his instrument to bring judgment against his people, they in turn were going to mistake it as a victory of their gods and going to worship their gods.

And you remember when Belshazzar was in the feast with all of his princes and lords and they were praising the various gods and worshiping the various gods. In his drunken state, and drunkenness will come to you, in his drunken state, he called to his servants to bring to him the gold and the silver vessels that his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem to bring them into this orgy in order that they might drink wine out of these vessels that had been sanctified for use in the temple of God. And as he was drinking the wine out of these gold and silver vessels and praising and worshiping the gods of gold and silver, there came the form of a hand upon the wall, writing those words, meaning, meaning, Tekeleufarsin, your days are numbered and finished.

Your kingdom is to be divided between the Medes and the Persians. This night thy soul shall be required. And so here the prophet speaks about the graven images that they were worshiping in Babylon and what profit of the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it.

The molten image and a teacher of lies that the maker of his work trusted therein to make dumb idols, that is, idols that can't speak. The carving out of an idol as an object of worship has to be one of the most stupid things that man has ever done in his history. Isaiah speaks of the utter stupidity of it.

It says a guy takes a piece of wood and he starts to carve an idol out of that piece of wood. Now the chips that he carves off, he throws into the fire and burns to keep him warm. Other parts of this piece of wood he uses in his oven to bake his bread.

And the other part, he sets it on a table and he bows down and prays to it and worships it. Same piece of wood, part of it was used in the fireplace to keep him warm, part in the oven to bake his bread, and the other part of it is his God that he worships and he gives homage to. How ridiculous.

David the psalmist speaks of, again, the folly of idols. He said, the work of the heathen is vain, for they take a stick out of the forest and they carve it and they make an image likened to themselves. And he says, but though they put eyes on the little God, the eyes can't see.

Though they put ears on the little God, the ears can't hear. Though they put feet on it, they can't walk. Though he puts a mouth, it can't speak.

And then he makes a very interesting observation and he said, they that have made them have become likened to the gods that they have made. You see, the first observation is that men have to have a God and many men make their own gods. But when a man makes a God, he makes his God like himself.

The anthropomorphic concepts. Because I have eyes, I put eyes on my little God. Because I have ears, I carve ears on my little God.

Because I have a nose, I carve a nose on my little God. Because I have feet, I carve feet. Because I don't have any hair, I leave it bald.

But though I may take great care in carving out the eyes on my little God, those eyes never do see anything. Though I carve a mouth on my little God, the mouth can't speak. Though I may carve feet on him, it can't walk.

It's a dumb little idol. But tragically, a man becomes like his God. And if your God is a dumb, stupid little idol, you are becoming like your God.

Insensate. Where soon you no longer hear the voice of God, you no longer see the glory of God, you no longer feel the presence of God. You become like your God.

It's insensate to God. A man becomes like his God. That can be a glorious blessing or glorious, I mean, a horrible curse.

It all depends on who your God is. A man becomes like his God. And we, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed from glory to glory, even into the same image by the power of his Spirit within us.

Hey, I'm becoming like my God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. It doesn't yet appear what we're going to be, but we know when he appears, we're going to be like him.

For we will see him as he is. You see, you have two things. You have one, a man making his God less than himself and becoming like his God.

That's why idolatry is always a debasing, degrading experience. You're going down anytime you get involved in idolatry. It's a step down, because if an idol is your God, you're becoming like your God, but your God is actually less than you.

Because you have eyes and can see, you have ears, can hear, you have a mouth and you can talk. So your God is less than you, but you're becoming like your God. So it is a degrading experience always, downward experience to worship idols.

But to worship the true and the living God, you see, God is making man now back again into his image, into his likeness. God is restoring that which was lost through the fall. Through the power of his Spirit within us, he is bringing us back into the image of God.

When God made man, he made him in the image of God. When man fell through sin, he came from that image of God. He went down.

Now God is remolding and reshaping you back into the image of God, back into God's first intent and purpose. God's purposes are being restored in the lives of his people. But he speaks of the folly of these who make these dumb little idols.

Woe unto him that says to the wood, Awake! Wake up, little dog! Talk to me! Who says to the dumb stone, Arise! Teach me! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, but there's no breath at all. It can't breathe, but the Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him.

Contrasted with the gods of stone, overlaid with gold or wood, overlaid with silver or gold. They can't speak, they can't breathe, but the living God is in his holy temple. Now in chapter three, it is a psalm.

It is a prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet, upon Shuganon. Now about the seventh psalm or so, I think it is, was upon the Shuganon, which is the same thing, and it is with loud crying. So this is to be read with loud crying.

I'm not going to try it, but this is the prayer of Habakkuk, no doubt, prayed with loud crying, a lamentation, sort of like Jeremiah. He said, O Lord, I have heard thy speech and was afraid. Lord, I've heard what you told me you're going to do, and it's frightened me.

You've told me you're going to use the Babylonians as your whip, as your instrument to threat your people, but God, that frightens me. But O Lord, revive thy work. The word revive literally means keep alive thy work in the midst of the years.

And in the midst of the years, make known, and in wrath, remember mercy. Basically the God, I cried into you and told you my complaint that you weren't doing anything, and you told me you were doing something, and I don't understand what you're doing, but Lord, just keep doing it. I'm fearful for what I heard, but Lord, keep doing it.

Keep working. Lord, keep alive thy work, but don't forget to be merciful. In the midst of the years and in your wrath, remember mercy.

And now he describes how that God came from Teman, that is from the area of the Edomites, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens. Now he's going into a glorious prophetic description of the coming again of Jesus Christ.

And as he comes, he'll be coming from the area of south and east from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives as lightning shineth out of the east and to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Isaiah said, who is this who comes with his robes dyed red and from Bozrah with the robes that are, you know, dipped in blood and so forth. And so coming, the brightness was as the light his glory, first of all, covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise.

Oh, I can hardly wait. His brightness was as the light and he had horns, of course, coming out of his hands or radiations coming out of his hands. Have you ever seen on a sunrise beyond the clouds where the sun radiates on up above? And this is the same idea in the Hebrew, the radiations coming forth, the brightness of the light and out of his hands, these radiations.

And there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence. That is the great tribulation that will precede his coming.

And the burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood and measured the earth. He beheld and drove asunder the nations and the everlasting mountains were scattered than the perpetual hills did bow.

His ways are everlasting. Read in the book of Revelation of the great cataclysmic judgment and the changes that are coming upon the earth during the great tribulation period prior to the return of Jesus Christ. Where every mountain and every island will flee.

The ocean beds will be changed. Tremendous cataclysmic changes are going to take place upon the surface of the earth prior to the return of the Lord in the great judgment of God. I saw the tents of cushion that would be Ethiopia in affliction and the curtains of the land of Midian that would be Saudi Arabia did tremble.

Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? Was thine anger against the rivers? Was thy wrath against the sea that thou didst ride upon thy horses and thy chariots of salvation? Thy bow was made quite naked according to the oaths of the tribes. Even thy word now did cleave the earth with rivers. The mountains saw thee and they trembled.

The overflowing of the water passed by the deep uttered his voice and lifted up his hands on high. The sun and the moon stood still in their habitation and at the light of thine arrows they went and at the shining of thy glittering spear. Thou didst march through the land in indignation.

Indignation is a word in the Old Testament that is commonly used for the period of the great tribulation of the New Testament. Thou didst march through the land in indignation. Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.

Who did he thresh? The church? His children? His people? No, that's inconsistent with God. Great judgment is directed against the heathen, not against God's people. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed.

You see, indignation and his wrath upon the heathen, but for his people salvation, that is deliverance. Thou woundest the head out of the house of the wicked by discovering the foundation under the neck.

Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages.

They came out as the whirlwind to scatter me. Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly. Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses and through the heap of great waters.

When I heard my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice. Rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself that I might rest in the day of trouble. When he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his truths.

The great day of the wrath of the almighty God, as he with indignation smites the heathen, and is described here by Habakkuk. But then in the midst of all of this, the great desolation that will take place as the result of God's judgment coming upon the earth, the prophet declares, because he is a man of faith. Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines.

The labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meal. The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls. We are told that during the period of the great tribulation, that there is going to be a severe famine throughout the earth.

You talk about inflation. A measure of wheat, about a quart of wheat, will be sold for a day's wages. Now you that are putting your money in gold and silver, the Bible warns you against that.

So if you bought in gold at \$8.50, and you're weeping and howling, just know that James said, Go to now ye rich, weep and howl for the miseries that have come upon you. For you have laid up your treasures for the last days, but your gold and silver is cankered, you know, you can't eat it. Hey, put, you know, if you want to invest and be the richest man in the tribulation, put your money in wheat, futures in wheat.

You can be the richest man in the tribulation, if riches are your desire. Better to just put your trust in Jesus and lay up for yourself treasures in heaven, escape the great tribulation. But there will be a time of tremendous famine that is coming upon the earth.

Can you imagine what will be done to the agriculture of the earth, if we say have a major nuclear war between the United States and Russia? With all of the strontium-90 fallout, it would so poison all of the crops, all of the food as to make them inedible. Even the milk, because the cows eating the grass and the grains and so forth would be getting the strontium-90. And those that were dissolved in the heat of the epicenter would be much better off than those who survived the initial blast, only to starve to death later or to be killed as someone is trying to take away the food that they've stored 50 feet underground to keep it from being radiated.

I'll tell you the scenario of the aftermath of an atomic war would be so horrible. I pray that God will have mercy upon me and let one of those bombs go off directly overhead, if there is to be such a conflagration by and among men. I don't understand the mentality that is trying to survive an atomic holocaust.

I have no desire to, if man gets that far, I have no desire to survive it. I'm too old. Now, the Prophet has been talking about this great day of God's indignation, judgment.

And although the fig tree shall not blossom, no fruit in the vines, no olives on the olive trees, no grain fields, no flocks, no herds, yet, in spite of all of this, I will rejoice in the Lord. The word rejoice in the Hebrew is literally leap for joy, as North Carolina did the other night after winning the NCAA championships. Did you see those guys? Man, what leaping for joy, what spinning around.

I will joy in the God of my salvation. And that word joy is a Hebrew word gil, which is to spin around under the influence of a great emotion such as joy. I'll jump for joy in the Lord.

I'll spin around in the God of my salvation, not jump for joy because of the famine, because of the desolation. There is, again, something wrong with the teaching that you're supposed to thank God for everything. You can thank God in everything, but you can't thank him for everything.

And there's a vast difference. I many times weep over this situation, though I still joy in the Lord. It's only as I keep the right perspective and keep my eyes upon the Lord and realize his eternal plan and program that I can rejoice.

As I look around at the world, I weep. But when I look at God's eternal plan and realize it's not going to be long, I rejoice. I jump for joy.

I spin around when I think of the Lord coming again and the glory of the Lord, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the earth. Oh, I can spin around and rejoice in that. Though I have a very difficult time dealing with the current social issues of our day with any kind of joy or gladness or happiness.

The Lord God is my strength. Oh, what a glorious declaration to be able to make. God is my strength.

I feel sorry for those people who are trusting in their own strength, in their own abilities, because always, always your strength is limited and has its point of limitation. Where you've expended your strength to its fullest extent, then what? But when the Lord is my strength, there's no end. How glorious.

The Lord God is my strength and he will make my feet like Heinz feet, like the deer's feet, like the goats and make me to walk upon mine high places. And then he addresses this psalm to the chief singer on my stringed instruments. And so it was set out in Hebrew poem form and was to be sung with a cry using the stringed instruments as a background.

But yet one of the most glorious declarations of the coming again of the Lord that we find in the Old Testament. Of course, in the New Testament unfolded even in a greater measure, but from the Old Testament, one of the most beautiful passages speaking of the glorious coming of God in power to rule the earth. So we pray.

Father, again, we thank you for your purposes and your plans and that your thoughts towards us are good and not evil. Thoughts of peace that you will bring us to your expected end. Lord, help us as we wait for thee.

And as we tarry, God, we look at the world and we realize the pollution, the unrighteousness that seems to prevail, even the conditions as described by Habakkuk. And as the other prophet who cried, Lord, the righteous man ceaseth in the land. And it would seem that the forces and the tide of evil is so strong, so powerful, so overwhelming, there is no stopping, not even a slowing down.

Oh, Lord Jesus, how we long for thy kingdom to come and thy will to be done in this earth, even as it is in heaven. How we long, Lord, to see righteousness cover the earth and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord to cover the earth. Haste the day, Father.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus, is our prayer tonight. Amen. May the Lord be with you and may the Lord give you a wonderful week.

May his hand just rest upon your life in a very special way. And may your faith in God be increased. May the Lord help you, as with those men of faith, to endure because you can see actually what others cannot see, that eternal plan and purpose of God.

And may God bring you into harmony with his purposes for your life as you walk with him this week. In Jesus name.

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