

***Your message burns in my heart and bones, and I cannot keep silent.*** (Jeremiah 20:9)

***The testimony of JESUS is the spirit of the prophecy.*** (Revelation 19:10c)

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### ***Habakkuk – Prophet for Today (Commentary)***

The whole globe is in the ***great storm (great cataclysmic upheaval)*** of the age that leads to the coming of King Jesus and the open manifestation of His kingdom to and among the nations. Soon the great announcement will go forth that ***our God reigns*** – there will no longer be any doubt or rejection of this truth. Gradually, *the many* will ***bow the knee*** before the King of all kings, confessing that He is Lord, to the glory of ***God the Father***. Then, the ***inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness***, justice will prevail, and, as Habakkuk declared: ***The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD (Yahweh) as the waters cover the sea*** (2:14).

This leads to the burden of Habakkuk, the prophet.

(As an aside, have you noticed that, in scripture, the word *prophet* is not used as a title but rather to describe a function? Scripture never refers to one as “prophet so-and-so.” It is always presented as *the prophet*, and more times than not, the term *the prophet* follows the name [there are a few exceptions where it precedes]. The point is that the man is not exalted with a title. Simply, he has been called of God to deliver a message from the heart of God to His people. Why is it that, today, so many of the Lord’s people exalt themselves with ***titles?***)

Of all the prophets, I find Habakkuk the one who speaks to where we are in history, not predictively but in principle. Mind you, Habakkuk was raised up during a serious time in which Judah was in declension and God was about to judge them by raising up the Chaldeans, ones more unrighteous than Judah. This all occurred historically, just as the Lord had related to Habakkuk. However, fast forwarding to our day, we see elements of this ancient prophet’s burden and the Lord’s response being played out before us as we have entered the great storm, even ***the perfect storm***, that has yet to peak. Be assured; it is coming! We’ll touch upon this briefly, but let’s start with Judah’s great storm.

Habakkuk carried a heavy burden (oracle) for his nation as he called out to the Lord for help. *Will You not hear?* Looking out upon Judah, he saw iniquity, wickedness, destruction, violence, strife, and contention that vexed his soul to the point that he cried out to the Lord: *Why do you make me see these things?* We can only assume he felt all alone in his anguish, as many around him did not see it. The law was being ignored, justice was never upheld, and the wicked surrounded the righteous to the point that justice came out perverted. In other words, it looked like the bad guys were winning. *Where is the Lord in all this? Doesn’t He take note and won’t He step in to rectify the situation?*

Do you get the sense that we are living through days just like this? What has transpired in 2020 mirrors Habakkuk’s day in so many ways that it is hardly necessary to recount them. Even as I finish writing this insight, we have learned that the US Supreme Court rejected Texas’ challenge to the election in a clear denial of their duty to adjudicate between the states per the US Constitution. Where is justice?

Perhaps Habakkuk cried out to the Lord with an expectation that He would step in and deal with the bad guys (the wicked) of Judah so that the good guys (the righteous) would prevail. It seems as if many

Christians in America today have this same expectation. If we are following the same path as Judah in the day of this prophet (I believe we are), then such an expectation is, at best, misguided.

The Lord heard Habakkuk's cry and answered it in a way that probably surprised him. The Lord was going to do something in those days that if one were told what was coming, they wouldn't believe it. They would be astonished. Why? Because the Lord was raising up an enemy (Chaldeans) that was more unrighteous than unrighteous Judah. They were worse than Judah, and the Lord was going to send them to judge His people through their violence. *You, O Lord, have appointed them to judge; and You, O Rock, have established them to correct!* Consider what probably went through the mind of a Judahite: This will never happen; after all, we are God's chosen people. We are of the bloodline of the patriarchs. God has brought us forth as His nation on earth. He is on our side. Didn't this same attitude prevail all the way to the cross of Calvary and the final nail in Judah's coffin in 70 AD?

Even Habakkuk was astonished. *Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You cannot look upon wickedness with favor. Why do you look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they?* The prophet was complaining about the Chaldeans, but the issue was that Judah's righteousness – although better than the Chaldeans – fell woefully short of God's standard of righteousness. Thus, *God, my Holy One*, could not look upon their wickedness with favor either. He had to judge them for their iniquity, and He did just that by raising up a treacherous, wicked people to administer judgment.

As Christians in America, do we have this same attitude – as if we are so special and chosen that the Lord turns a blind eye to our condition? Are we so blind to our condition as a nation – we believe was birthed by God – that we don't think He will ever judge in a like manner? Do we think that all we need is better government with the right leaders and all will be well, when the heart of the nation is sick and we are divided on so many fronts? Do we think God will never judge us as a nation? We need to be reminded of not only Habakkuk's cry but also of the condition of Judah when Jesus walked among the religious elite nearly two millennia ago. Further, we need to be reminded of how God judged Judah from 66-70 AD. I'm not saying God is going to judge (or: is presently judging) us in the exact same way. What we can be sure of is that He alone knows how to right this nation through His fiery judgment.

After offering his complaint to the Lord, Habakkuk silenced himself, keeping watch to see what the Lord would speak to him and how he might reply when reproved. Then the Lord answered.

Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision and inscribe *it* on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. "For ***the vision is yet for the appointed time***; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay. (Habakkuk 2:2-3 NASB [bold added])

Judgment was coming. There was nothing Habakkuk could do but record the vision of it and wait, for it was an ***appointed time*** and would not fail to materialize. It was coming like a freight train barreling down a track (modern-day metaphor) that could not be stopped. But there was some good news in this, for, although He raised up the Chaldeans as His implement of judgment, He would ultimately hold them guilty because their strength was their god. In other words, they worshipped their own ***carnal flesh*** that was unmatched by any nation in their day.

Do you not see a parallel in our day for a nation called *America* that has made its strength its god? Have we become so proud of our “exceptionalism” and hegemonic status as the *superpower* of the world that we are failing to recognize the true source of this power? Do we realize that exceptionalism might just be a sign of a **carnally-driven people**, not a spiritually-driven people? Do we acknowledge that the Lord alone raises up and takes down nations? Do we acknowledge that what power we might have comes from the one who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth? His name is *Jesus, the King of all kings*.

O, yes, our politicians end speeches with *God Bless America* and our motto is *In God We Trust*, but are these simply words or are they written on the heart of this nation? Do we even know the loyalty, commitment, and obedience to our Creator God that these words require?

I’m not proposing that the baby gets thrown out with the bath water, as the saying goes. God has His righteous in our nation, but He had His righteous in ancient Judah, as well, and this did not stop Him from bringing down His *hammer* upon the nation. Besides, let’s not forget that Israel fell before Judah did.

The point is that God alone knows what’s best for us and how to right His nation that is divided in a multitude of ways (not just in half) at the moment. Let’s not be presumptuous in thinking that He is going to spare us His rod. He chastises those He loves, even if the chastisement is quite painful. And, let us not be so naïve to think that the end result is going to be just a cleaned-up version of what the Founding Fathers envisioned. We might not even be one nation when it is over, or we might be part of a larger federation, especially when the ultimate endpoint is the open manifestation of the kingdom of our Lord.

I realize I often present more possibilities than answers, that is, not nailing down some specific future event or status. I contend that scripture does not make such things clear, but the one thing that it does make clear is that God has installed His king on Mount Zion, and this king, King Jesus, is returning to this earth to openly manifest His kingdom of glory to the nations. Everything, including judgment of America and all the nations of the world, for that matter, drives toward this one goal. God’s purpose and His plan to attain His purpose of *all in all* is centered in His Son, along with the many sons of glory soon to be transformed into the image of God’s *Pattern Son*.

Now, back to Habakkuk. This ancient prophet has left great encouragement for nations that find themselves in the throes of judgment, even severe chastisement. He tells us what we must do in the midst of such trying times. We are in those times at this very moment!

***The righteous shall live by his faith.*** (2:4)

This is one of the most important truths of the new covenant, repeated in Romans 1:17, Galatians 2:20, 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38. Regardless of the condition of the day, good or bad, we are to live by faith, that is, if we are counted among the righteous who believe on Jesus and are obedient to His life in us. But a point made elsewhere is that the faith we hold is not our faith; it is the very faith of the one who is the *Author and Perfector of faith*. It is His faith that we receive that becomes our faith. ***The righteous shall live by the faith of the Son of God!***

***The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.***  
(2:14)

This isn’t the first we hear of this promise. Habakkuk reached back to the days of Moses and repeated the

Lord's promise to Israel in their fallen condition. In response to Moses' plea for God's mercy on the Israelite nation that had little, if any, faith, the LORD said, *I have pardoned them according to your word; but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD* (Numbers 14:20-21).

This word still stands and, in fact, God's glory has gradually been driving toward its ultimate goal of filling the earth. It might not appear that there is much glory in the earth today, but this is not what God sees as He looks out upon His people whose lives are hidden with Christ in God. *When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then we who belong to Him will be revealed with Him in glory* (Colossians 3:3-4). The good news is that this glory will soon burst forth in open manifestation for all the world to see, and then God's glory will truly begin to fill all in all.

***But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.*** (2:20)

Paul reminds us that we who believe are ***the temple of God***. God no longer resides in buildings made of dead stones; He resides in ***living stones***. We must be silent before the Lord in this day to hear His voice and tune out the many voices of man, including the religious and prophetic, ministry-driven ones. In this day of chaos and confusion, *silence is golden*, as they say.

***O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.*** (3:2)

The prophet's cry was for the Lord to revive His work, which is like saying: *Don't stop pursuing Your purpose. Don't let it die with us. As You pour out Your wrath, remember Your mercy that is new every morning.* As God's wrath increases in our day, let us not forget that our heavenly Father is a merciful and loving God who knows what is best for humanity and how to reach His end in the Son of His love.

***You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. Selah*** (3:13)

Although it appears as if evil is winning, it is not true, and never will be. God's promise is to crush the head of evil. Good conquers evil. The cross, the blood of Jesus, and the empty tomb have seen to it!

***Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*** (3:18)

Even if it appears that all is lost, we must be like Jesus, the Author of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross. We may yet have a cross to bear as we near the end of this age, so we must endure to the end, knowing full-well that our ***Salvation*** is with us. The same joy He saw beyond the cross is the same joy we are to see and hold tightly to in this day. Joy is summed up in the word *glory*.

***The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon my high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.*** (3:19)

Finally, our strength to endure to the end of the age is in King Jesus. In scripture, ***mountains*** often signify ***kingdoms***. Our Lord's kingdom is like a mountain that we are to spiritually ascend to reign with Him. Make Jesus our ***trust***, and He will make our feet like that of a female deer that climbs steep mountains by perfectly placing her hind feet in the exact spot where her front feet stepped. In this way, she does not falter but can ascend to the high places in safety. It is time to start climbing! He awaits!