

## Sermon #24 — *Habakkuk Series*

Title:            **WHEN IT'S TIME**

Text:            Habakkuk 2:3

Subject:        *God's Promises and Their Time*

Date:            Tuesday Evening — April 5, 2011

Tape #            *Habakkuk #24*

Readings:      *Larry Criss and Joe Blakely*

Introduction:

My good friend, Pastor Tim James, is well known among his friends for a phrase he commonly uses when parting company. Most of us will say to friends, “I hope to see you again soon.” Bro. Tim almost always says, “When it’s time.” That’s the title of my message tonight: — **WHEN IT'S TIME**. Our text will be Habakkuk 2:3. While you are turning there, let me tell you about an email I received this morning.

Some of you are aware of the fact that back in 1994 an old man on the West Coast, a self-appointed prophet, announced that Christ would return on September 4, 1994. His name is Harold Camping. I’ve never said anything to you about that foolish prediction, or about those that have followed. I’ve said nothing about them because, in so far as I am

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aware, none of you knew anything about those predictions at the time, and I saw no reason to expose you needlessly to all the nonsense surrounding Camping and his prophecy. I received an email this morning from a man in California who listens to our messages on [www.FreeGraceRadio.com](http://www.FreeGraceRadio.com). He wrote...

“I have read your posts as you directed. Jeanette and I praise the Lord for faithful men like you who preach the Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace.

I have another issue I would like your comments on. On the Island where we live a group from California associated with **'Family Radio,'** led by one Harold Camping, are handing out information that our Lord's coming will happen on May 21<sup>st</sup> 2011. What is your take on this, and the time line of history as posted on their web site?

Bro Fortner, we are well aware of what the Bible says about this subject. But is it possible that 'the book' that Daniel was told to seal up 'untill the

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time of the end' is now being opened? What are those things that Daniel was not clear on that was/are sealed up in that 'book'?"

I responded...

“I have not read Camping's most recent prediction. Unless I have a compelling reason to do so, I never read garbage. So I haven't read anything on the Family Radio Webpage in years. I only read good, edifying stuff, and recommend that you do the same.

However, to answer briefly, ‘NUTS!’ — Back prior to September 4, 1994 (Camping's First Prediction of Christ's Return) I asked him pointedly and face to face, ‘Are you prepared to acknowledge your error when it is proved wrong? No man in history who made such a prediction has ever recanted. All have found another meaning for their words and another date for the event. Are you prepared to acknowledge your error when it is proved wrong?’ Harold did not respond to my question then, but this is his

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fourth or fifth attempt to get it right. As with September 4, 1994, I am dead sure certain that our Lord Jesus will not appear the second time on May 21, 2011. He may appear on May 20th or May 22nd; but for certain He will not appear on May 21st. I know that because the Book of God says ‘No man knows.’ That means ‘No man knows, not even those who are sure they do, especially not them.’”

No man knows the day nor the hour of Christ’s coming. But I can tell you with absolute certainty when our Lord Jesus shall appear in His glory. — When it’s time! Christ shall come when it’s time for Him to come. That is exactly what the Lord God told His prophet Habakkuk in our text (Habakkuk 2:3).

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

**There is no question that Habakkuk 2:3 was a prophetic declaration concerning the coming of**

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**our Lord Jesus Christ.** — The Septuagint translation reads...

“For the vision is for a time, and it shall shoot forth at the end, and not in vain: though He should tarry, wait for Him; for He will surely be come and will not delay.”

**In Hebrews 10:37 God the Holy Spirit tells us plainly that God's words to Habakkuk in our text were prophetic of Christ's coming.** You will notice that the man inspired of God to write the Book of Hebrews was inspired to quote the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew text. Let's begin at verse 35 — Hebrews 10:35...

(Hebrews 10:35-37) “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

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Without question, at the time appointed, our Lord Jesus Christ shall appear in His glory with ten thousands of His saints! But we miss much, we miss very much, when we think of our Lord's coming only in reference to that great day. The Lord Jesus comes to His people in many ways and at many times, set times, appointed times.

**There is always a set time to favor Zion.** David sang...

(Psalms 102:8-13) “Mine enemies reproach me all the day; [and] they that are mad against me are sworn against me. 9 For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, 10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down. 11 My days [are] like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.”

“12 ¶ But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations. 13 Thou shalt arise, [and] have mercy upon Zion:

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for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.”

There is always a set time to favor Zion. It may not be as early as we desire. It may not come at the time we look for it. That time set by God's infinite wisdom and goodness may be deferred until our impatience has given up every hope and expectation of it. Nevertheless, *“it will surely come; it will not tarry.”*

We are like impatient children, always anxious to pick fruit before it is ripe. **But God is never in a hurry.** He is never ahead of time and never behind time, but always right on time. **He waits until the mercy he intends to bestow is fully prepared, and until He has fully prepared our souls to receive the mercy prepared for us.** And when the mercy prepared has been received it is dearer than words can express to our souls because we are made to know that the Lord our God appointed it for us from everlasting. — *“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*

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*come, it will not tarry.”*

**“The vision is for an appointed time.”** — In our minds, God’s promised mercy may seem long and wearisome in its coming. The time of our waiting may seem it may seem excruciatingly painful, but God’s promised mercy never comes a moment beyond its appointed time, and never comes a moment before. **And when it arrives, the mercy received will explain the reason it did not come sooner, by making us to understand how suited and seasonable it is once it appears.**

*“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.”* — My soul, let this sweet portion of Holy Scripture never be forgotten! O Holy Spirit of God, enable me not only to remember the words but the message too! — *“For the vision [is] yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”*



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God's appointments are sure. Never shall His people be disappointed in them, nor disappointed of them. Come they will, and at the very hour appointed. And all these appointed mercies are but the coming of Christ to His chosen. — *“For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry”* (Hebrews 10:37).

**Israel was by Divine appointment to be in Egypt for a specific period of time.** When that time was accomplished, God brought Israel out of the house of bondage. At the set time, He favored Zion with His promised grace (Exodus 12:17, 41, 51)

(Exodus 12:17) “And ye shall observe [the feast of] unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.”

(Exodus 12:41) “And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.”

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(Exodus 12:51) “And it came to pass the selfsame day, [that] the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.”

Exactly the same thing was true concerning Israel's 70 years of Babylonian Captivity and their deliverance at the appointed time. So it is with God's Israel in all ages. In all our trials, in all our spiritual exercises, the hour is marked, the time is set when deliverance shall come. — “*The vision is for an appointed time.*” Though it tarry much beyond the time expected, it cannot tarry beyond the time of the Lord's appointment.

Oh! for grace, upon every occasion, to follow the counsel of Inspiration: — “*Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD*” (Psalms 27:14). When it's time He shall come.

Now, let me apply our texts and its blessed sweet promise to those things of which I am sure it speaks.

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1. **CHRIST'S FIRST ADVENT**

Without question God's word to Habakkuk in our text were God's own promise concerning our Savior's first advent and all the work of righteousness and redemption He would accomplish for us by His obedience unto death as our Substitute.

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

(Hebrews 10:37) "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

(Romans 5:6-8) "For when we were yet without strength, **in due time** Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

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(Galatians 4:4-5) “But when **the fulness of the time** was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

**In John 17:1, the Scripture says,** — The Lord Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, “*Father; the hour is come.*” This is the hour of all hours. This is the hour of which He spoke when He said to Mary; “*Woman, have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.*”

This is the hour of which He spoke when He said to His disciples, — “*What shall I say, Father save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour.*” This is the hour; this is the great hour of redemption.

This is the hour prophesied, promised, and typified throughout the whole Old Testament Scriptures. This is the hour in which the fulfillment of all things took place. This is the hour of the cross, the hour of the

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sacrifice, and the hour of the sin offering. This is the hour of the atonement.

Our Lord Jesus, speaking to His Father, said; *“Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify Thee.”* God’s great glory is His redemptive glory. What took place at Calvary is the great revelation of the great glory of the great God.

Moses said to the Lord, — *“Lord; show me your glory.”* God said, *“I will cause my goodness to pass before you. I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”*

The Lord Jesus Himself spoke to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God. He was speaking to the Father about God’s redemptive glory. He said, *“The hour is come,”* that great hour of all hours, the climax of the universe, the accomplishment of the atonement, and the redemption of His people; *“The hour is come, now glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify Thee.”*

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Certainly, Habakkuk 2:3 was prophetic of that great day when Christ came into the world in human flesh to redeem us and of that very hour when He cried “*It is finished*” and breathed out His spirit!

“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.” (Habakkuk 2:3)

“For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” (Hebrews 10:37)

## **2. JERUSALEM'S DESTRUCTION**

Again, without question, our text refers to our Lord Jesus coming in judgment to destroy Jerusalem, the Temple, and Judaism in 70 AD (Matthew 24:1-2).

(Matthew 24:1-2) “And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to [him] for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There

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shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

The vision and prophecy were sealed up by our Savior. He fulfilled everything (Daniel 9:24).

(Daniel 9:24) “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.”

When Daniel’s seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, were accomplished, which were the determined and appointed space of time set by God for the Messiah’s coming, the time appointed of the Father, the fulness of time. Shortly after He had finished His work and ascended back into Heaven, He sent Titus into Jerusalem to destroy it forever. And destroy it He did!

**3. COMING IN GRACE**

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I am equally sure that our text is talking about the promise of God that Christ will come at the set time of love to every chosen, redeemed sinner in the mighty operations of His saving grace (Ezekiel 16:6-8). — He will send His saving mercy precisely at the moment He has prepared His chosen to receive His mercy!

- Hosea and Gomer
- Onesimus and Paul

(Ezekiel 16:6-8) “And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee [when thou wast] in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee [when thou wast] in thy blood, Live. 7 I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: [thy] breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou [wast] naked and bare. 8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time [was] the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee,



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and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.”

We preach the Gospel with confidence. As I preach the Word, I am absolutely certain that at God's appointed time the Lord Jesus will come and will save every chosen, redeemed sinner. — *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power!”* **I don't know when He will come; but I do know this: — When it's time, He will come to save the soul He bought with His blood!**

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

(Hebrews 10:37) “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

**4. DELIVERANCE FROM TRIAL**

With every time of trial and trouble, with every season of darkness and languishing in our souls, with

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every storm, with every fall, there is a set time for deliverance (Exodus 9:1, 5-6; 2 Samuel 24:15-16; Isaiah 54:9-13).

(Exodus 9:1, 5-6) “Then the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.”

“5 And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land. 6 And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one.”

(2 Samuel 24:15-16) “So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men. 16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now

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thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.”

(Isaiah 54:9-13) “For this [is as] the waters of Noah unto me: for [as] I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. 10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.”

“11 ¶ O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, [and] not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. 12 And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. 13 And all thy children [shall be] taught of the LORD; and great [shall be] the peace of thy children.”

**I don't know when the Lord will come to you and bring you out of your present trouble and sorrow;**

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but I know this: — When it's time, He will come to you walking across the stormy waters. He will step up into your little boat, and say to your soul, — “**It is I; be not afraid!**”

- **Peter's Fall and Restoration** — “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.” (Habakkuk 2:3) — “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” (Hebrews 10:37)

**5. DAY OF DEATH**

Here is a fifth thing that we should always bear in mind: — There is a set time, an appointed time, fixed by God's wise decree before the world was made, when our Lord Jesus shall come for each of His chosen in death, to take us home to Glory. — Blessed, joyful prospect! — “*To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord!*” — “**Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?**” (Job 7:1)

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——— **“All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come!”** (Job 14:14)

(2 Corinthians 5:1-9) “For we know that if our earthly house of [this] tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For we that are in [this] tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. 5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing [is] God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6 Therefore [we are] always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, [I say], and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.”

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(John 14:1-3) “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also.”

**I do not know when the Lord will come for me; but I know this: — When it’s time, I’m gone; and I’m glad!**

Let me share another note with you. I got this from my friend in Phoenix, Arizona, Bro. Jim Jemsek. I’ve been saving this one for you for a few weeks. Jim wrote to me about something he heard a very dear friend say to someone many years ago. The man knew he was dying. He was just 45 years old. Before he died, he and Jim were together with some religious people, when a will-worshipper accosted his friend, saying, — “If you knew you were going to die tonight what would you do” and my friend who clearly had as much as he was going to take, sat up

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the best he could and said “I would go to bed early”. (Recalling that event, Jim said to me) “Don I had a good laugh today...I haven’t laughed that hard in a long time. This guy just turned and walked away. One of the great answers of all time, he so wanted to go home to be with his Lord.”

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

(Hebrews 10:37) “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

**6. CHRIST’S SECOND COMING**

God’s words to Habakkuk in our text, most certainly, have reference to our Savior’s glorious second advent, too. I do not know when our Lord shall appear; but when it’s time, He shall appear. — “*To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation*” (Hebrews 9:28).

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(2 Thessalonians 1:7-10) “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

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

(Hebrews 10:37) “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

**I don't know when our Lord shall appear, and don't want to know. But I do know this: — When it's time Christ shall appear. — “Behold, He**



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*cometh!*” — Then, the resurrection! He shall change our vile bodies and make them like unto His glorified body! And after that...

**7. THE JUDGMENT**

Yes, there is a day appointed of God, a set time, called the Day of Judgment. — “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*” (Hebrews 9:27)

**Illustration: Rowland Hill's Dream**

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

(Hebrews 10:37) “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

“*Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!*” — When it's time!

Amen.