

Sermon #6 — Habakkuk Series

Title: **ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS**

Text: Habakkuk 1:12-13

Subject: *Three Divine Attributes — Our Security*

Date: Tuesday Evening—September 14, 2010

Tape # *Habakkuk #6*

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Introduction:

That which Elijah prayed, when he both denounced the prophets of Baal and mocked their god, ought to be the goal and driving ambition of every believer, every preacher, and every church. — *“It came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy Word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God”* (I Kings 18:36-37).

I want all people to know that the Lord our God is God indeed and that he alone is God. Let us ever pray that God the Holy Spirit will be pleased to use

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

us to turn men and women away from the idolatrous vanities of their corrupt imaginations that they may fall down before the throne of the living God in reverent faith and adoration.

God's greatness is to be seen in those magnificent attributes of his Being which are essential to him as God and distinguish him from all his creatures. God's attributes distinguish him from all his creatures, and the most distinctly distinguish him from all the imaginary gods of men. Tonight, I want to talk to you about three Divine attributes, three attributes of our great and glorious God that show that he alone is God, three attributes that ought to comfort our souls in the midst of darkness, trouble and adversity. The title of my message is — **ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY AND HOLINESS**. Our text will be Habakkuk 1:12-13.

When the Lord God told his prophet Habakkuk that he was about to destroy the city of Jerusalem, the magnificent Temple Solomon had built and the nation of Israel, when God told Habakkuk that he

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

would use the wicked, pagan sons of Ishmael, the idolatrous, immoral, decadent Babylonians to destroy Israel and Judah, Habakkuk found these three distinct attributes of God a source of great comfort to his soul: — **ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY AND HOLINESS**. If our great God truly is God, if he is eternal, sovereign and holy, we who are his have no reason ever to fear anything or anyone. That is how Habakkuk was inspired by God the Holy Spirit to reason with God and with us.

Proposition: In our text, the prophet wisely and rightly assures us that all is well with God's elect all the time, because our great God and Savior, our heavenly Father, he who is our Rock is eternal, sovereign and holy.

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

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, [and] holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth [the man that is] more righteous than he?”

The three attributes of God that gave Habakkuk comfort and peace in the prospect of great trial and in the midst of great confusion, (Eternality, Sovereignty and Holiness), are attributes of God alone. He who is eternal, sovereign and holy is God. These three magnificent attributes of God are full of comfort for his children.

ETERNALITY

First, Habakkuk assures us that because our God is eternal we shall not die. — “*Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? — We shall not die!*” Does that seem like strange logic to you? Does appear to you that the prophet might be stretching things just a little? The fact is, there is not a stronger, more powerful assurance the sure,

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

everlasting salvation of God's elect than the eternality of the triune Jehovah.

INFINITE — The only eternal being is God. The only thing there is without beginning, or end, or change is the Lord our God. And he who is eternal is, of necessity, infinite.

- God is eternal; and God alone is eternal.
- God is infinite; and God alone is infinite.

“When we say that God is infinite, the meaning is, that he is unbounded and unlimited, unmeasurable, or immense, unsearchable and not to be comprehended.” —(John Gill)

God dwells alone in his infinity. There is none before him to limit him, none after him to limit him, and none above him to limit him (Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6).

(Isaiah 43:10-11) “Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: before me there was

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

no God formed, neither shall there be after me.
11 I, [even] I, [am] the LORD; and beside me
[there is] no saviour.”

(Isaiah 44:6) “Thus saith the LORD the King of
Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am
the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is
no God.”

Only God, only our great, infinite God is totally independent.

- All things depend upon God; but God depends upon nothing.
- All things are of him, through him, to him, and by him; but God dwells alone.
- All things are checked by God; but God is checked by nothing.
- All things are limited by God; but God is limited by nothing.

God is infinite; and he alone is infinite. No creature is infinite. No thought, word, deed, work, or possession of any finite creature can be infinite.

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

Indeed, nothing created is infinite. Space is not infinite. Time is not infinite. Light is not infinite. Darkness is not infinite. **Only God is infinite.** **Infinity distinguishes God and sets him apart from all his creatures.**

We sometimes speak of sin as an infinite evil; but that is not strictly accurate. The God against whom we sin is infinite. But sin is not infinite. Sin is the finite act of finite creatures. **However, our sins, because they are acts of enmity against the infinite God, demand an infinite satisfaction.** That is the reason why none but Christ, the Son of God, could make atonement for sin. **Finite creatures can never render infinite satisfaction to the infinite God.** That is the reason why hell is eternal. The sufferings of finite creatures in hell can never satisfy the offended justice of the infinite God (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11). **Here is the good news of the gospel — Christ, the infinite God, our Savior, has rendered infinite satisfaction to God for our sins by his obedience and death in our nature, as our Substitute before God** (Isaiah 53:10-11). Therefore,

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

all for whom satisfaction has been made must go free.

(Isaiah 53:10-11) “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, [and] shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

Complete atonement Christ has made,
The law’s demanded price He paid:
All that His people owed to God,
He satisfied by His own blood.

Christ Jesus my discharge procured,
The whole of wrath divine endured:
The law’s tremendous curse He bore;
Justice can never ask for more!

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

God alone is infinite; and God is infinite in all the attributes of his Being. **Everything that God is is infinite.** — **His understanding is infinite** (Psalm 147:4-5). — “*He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by [their] names. Great [is] our Lord, and of great power: his understanding [is] infinite!*” — God sees, knows, comprehends and understands all things perfectly and at once. “*There is no searching of his understanding*” (Isaiah 40:28). In comparison with God’s wisdom the wisdom of the heavenly angels is only folly (Job 4:18).

His power is infinite. With God nothing is impossible. His power has never yet been exerted. All power is his. He who created one world by his eternal power could have made ten million worlds. He spoke this one into being and upholds it by the word of his power (Romans 1:20; Hebrews 11:3). There is no end to God’s infinite power. — “*Is anything too hard for the Lord?*” No. His power is infinite.

His goodness is infinite (Micah. 7:18-20).

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

(Micah 7:18-20) “Who [is] a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth [in] mercy. 19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. 20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, [and] the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

I have heard men say, “There is a limit to God’s goodness.” But that is not so. There may be a limit to your enjoyment of God’s providential goodness in this world. But there is no limit to the goodness of God. He is good, eternally good, always good and infinitely good. Particularly, he is infinitely good to all his people in Christ.

His holiness is infinite. I will say more about this in a minute; but we can never adequately address this

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

matter of God's holiness. **There is none holy but God.** None are pure and righteous before him. Even the holy angels are not pure in the sight of his infinite holiness (Job 4:17-18). **Once we understand that God alone is holy and that he is perfectly holy, so perfectly holy that he can receive, accept and look favorably upon nothing except that which is perfectly holy** (Leviticus 22:21; Psalm 24:3-4; Matthew 5:20; Hebrews 12:14), **then we know that salvation could be accomplished for us only by an infinite and perfect Substitute.** No man can make himself holy, righteous and pure in the sight of God (Job 14:4). Our only hope of acceptance with him is the imputation of Christ's purity, righteousness and the imparting holiness to us by the grace of God (Romans 3:23-26). All who are made pure before God by the righteousness of Christ (imputed in justification and imparted in regeneration) are clothed with humility before him (Isaiah 6:2-3), knowing and confessing that our acceptance with him is altogether his work (Psalm 115:1).

(Psalms 115:1) "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.”

God's love is infinite (Ephesians 3:18). Though God's love is manifestly limited to his elect as its only objects (Isaiah 43:3-4), his love toward his elect in Christ is without beginning, without cause, without condition, without end and without limit.

Do you see the unsearchable greatness of our God? He is infinite, immense, incomprehensible. The heavens cannot contain him, much less our puny minds. **God measures all things**; but he is measured by none. **God comprehends all things**; but he is comprehended by none. We know him by faith in Christ; but our ignorance far outweighs our knowledge. God is too big for our brains. No creature can ever begin to comprehend the infinite God. In heaven's glory we will know God in perfection; but even then we will not know him perfectly, fully, comprehensively. One glory of heaven will be the saints' ever increasing knowledge of our great, infinite God. The infinite Lord God is...

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

ETERNAL. — God is not limited by time. He is eternal. The infinite God is the One who inhabits eternity. He is the eternal King, the everlasting God (Genesis 21:33; Deuteronomy 33:27; Isaiah 40:28; Romans 16:26; 1 Timothy 1:17).

(Genesis 21:33) “And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.”

(Deuteronomy 33:27) “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.”

(Isaiah 40:28) “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.”

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

(1 Timothy 1:17) “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

That which is eternal is without beginning, without end and without succession of time. It never changes. In this sense God alone is eternal. We speak of eternal happiness for the saints in heaven and eternal misery for the damned in hell; and the Bible describes our salvation as the gift from God of eternal life. But the word “eternal,” in that sense, simply means everlasting. That which is everlasting has a beginning, but no end. **When the Bible speaks of God being eternal, the meaning is that he comprehends in himself the everlasting past and the everlasting future** (Psalm 90:2).

(Psalms 90:2) “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

God alone is eternal, without beginning, without end and without succession of time or change. Eternity, like holiness, infinity, sovereignty, omnipotence and omnipresence, is an attribute belonging to each of the three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **When we say that God is eternal, three things are implied.**

*First, **God is without beginning.*** There never was a time when God began to be. He is self-existent and independent. **God alone possesses immortality in the essence of his Being.** He doesn't just possess immortality, he is immortality! He has made his angels immortal spirits and men to be immortal souls. But their immortality and ours depends entirely upon God. He makes us immortal. But he could annihilate us as easily as he made us, were it his pleasure to do so. **God, however, is essentially immortal. And he alone is essentially immortal** (I Timothy 6:16), because God alone is eternal. **Everything about God, every attribute of his Being, is eternal.**

- His power is eternal (Romans 1:20).
- His knowledge is eternal (Acts 15:18).

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

- His mercy is eternal (Psalm 103:17).
- His love is eternal (Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 4:16).

All God's purposes, counsels and decrees are eternal, too. They are all of old, even from everlasting (Isaiah 25:1; Ephesians 3:11).

- His covenant of grace is an everlasting, eternal covenant (2 Samuel 23:5).
- His blessings of grace are eternal blessings (Ephesians 1:3).
- His election is an eternal election (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).
- His book of life is an eternal book (Revelation 17:8).
- His salvation is an eternal salvation (2 Timothy 1:9-10; Romans 8:28-30).

*Second, **as he is without beginning, God is without end.*** He is called, "*the incorruptible God*" (Romans 1:23). God is over all, blessed forever. His dominion is an everlasting dominion. He is the most high God who lives forever and ever (Revelation 4:9-10; 10:6).

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

Let me again emphasize the fact that God is totally independent. It is a fact that seems to have been forgotten in this day of spiritual ignorance and darkness. God does not depend upon any of his creatures for anything. **His Being, his glory, his happiness and his satisfaction are all in himself. He does not need us.** Because he is infinite and eternal, he is independent. Therefore we are assured that...

- His counsel stand forever (Psalm 33:11).
- He keeps his truth forever (Psalm 146:6).
- His covenant stands fast with Christ forever (Psalm 89:28).
- He sustains his elect in grace forever (Psalm 89:33-36).
- God will be the portion of his saints forever (Psalm 73:25-26).

*Third, **God is without succession of time.** Time means nothing to the Ancient of Days (2 Peter 3:8). God is not restricted, limited, constrained, pushed, or hindered by time. **Time is his servant, not his***

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

master. Time moves by him. God does not move by time. He never gets in a hurry, never gets frustrated, is never pushed and never changes. God is eternity; and he inhabits eternity. With him there is no beginning of days, nor end of life. God is eternal.

I said God's eternity implies that he is without beginning, without end and without succession; but Habakkuk asserts by Divine inspiration that God's eternity implies (no, necessitates) a *fourth* thing. —

Since God is eternal, “we shall not die!” How about that? Upon what basis does Habakkuk reason that God's eternity secures the everlasting life, preservation and eternal salvation of all his elect? — Without question, our eternal security is plainly stated in Holy Scripture and may be argued from many things revealed in Scripture. But how is the eternity of God connected with our eternal security as God's elect in Christ?

Hang onto your seat, we're fixing to jump a creek. — **Our life is hid with Christ in God!** We are one with God our Savior. Our Savior said, “*Because I live, ye shall live also!*”

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

- We who are one with Christ now, in the sweet experience of his saving grace, have been one with Christ from eternity.
- Our names were written with his in the book of life in eternity.
- All the works of our salvation were finished by him in eternity (Hebrews 4:3).
- We were blessed with all spiritual blessings in him in eternity!
- We were accepted in him in eternity!
- We have been his delight, his joy from eternity (Proverbs 8:30-31).
- Because he who is our Savior is the eternal God, “*we shall no perish!*” — Even if the Ishmaelites attack! — Even if the Ishmaelites succeed in their barbaric, cowardly cruelty!

“Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die!”

SOVEREIGNTY

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

Second, Habakkuk uses God’s sovereignty, particularly his sovereignty in the exercise and wise disposition of his providence to comfort God’s elect in the midst of perplexing adversity and painful sorrows. — “**O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction**” (Habakkuk 1:12). O Holy Spirit, write this upon our hearts. Make me to know it in every dark trial.

Whatever evil of any kind, from any quarter, comes upon God’s elect, comes not by accident, nor by the will of man, nor merely by Satan’s cunning craftiness, but by the all-wise, ever-good, unerring providence of our God and Savior. The Chaldeans could not move without God’s direction. They could not strike one blow against Israel, but by God’s decree. Habakkuk recognized that the Chaldeans were only God’s rod for the chastisement and correction of his people. — **What a blessed realization!** Our most implacable foes, even Satan himself and the demons of hell, are nothing but

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

instruments by which the Lord our God sovereignly accomplishes his good will toward his elect!

Children of God, take comfort here. Solace your souls with the contemplation of God's glorious sovereignty. — *“Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places.”*

There is no attribute of God more comforting and delightful to his children than his great and glorious sovereignty. **Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe troubles and when enduring the most heavy trials, we rejoice to know that our God has sovereignly ordained our afflictions, that he sovereignly overrules them and that he sovereignly sanctifies them to our good and his own glory.** Every believer rejoices in the sovereignty of God. There is no truth of Holy Scripture for which we must more earnestly contend than God's dominion over all creation, his sovereignty over all the works of his hands, the supremacy of his throne and his right to sit upon it.

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

God's saints rejoice to hear him say, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" (Matthew 20:15). Nothing is more comforting to God's elect in this world than the knowledge of the fact that "*Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased*" (Psalm 115:3). Believers rejoice in God's sovereignty.

Yet there is nothing revealed in the Bible that is more despised by worldlings and self-righteous religionists. Natural, unregenerate, unbelieving men and women are happy enough to have God everywhere, except upon the throne of total, universal sovereignty.

- They are happy to have God in his workshop, creating the world and naming the stars.
- They are glad to have God in the hospital to heal the sick.
- They are pleased to have God in trouble, to calm the raging seas of life.
- And they are delighted to have God in the funeral parlor to ease them of pain and sorrow.

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

But God upon his throne is, to the unregenerate man, the most contemptible thing in the world.

And anyone who asserts that it is God's right to do what he will with his own, to dispose of his creatures as he sees fit and save whom he will, will be hissed at, despised, and cursed by this religious generation.

Be that as it may, it is God upon the throne whom we love, trust, and worship. And it is God upon the throne to whom we are obliged to bear witness among the idolatrous people of the world (Isaiah 44:8).

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

HOLINESS

Look t our text one more time, before I send you home. Habakkuk made God's holiness an argument

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

for his consolation and hours, especially when wicked men seem to prevail and tread the righteous beneath their feet.

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

- First, the prophet calls the triune Jehovah, — *“Mine Holy One!”*
- Then, he asserts, — *“[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.”*
- Then, the prophet makes our righteousness an appeal to God, the Holy One, to defend and protect us. — *“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest*

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?”

God’s saints are not more righteous than others by nature; but God’s people are more righteous than others, because he has made them more righteous.

- In justification.
- In regeneration. — New Creation.
- In conversation. — Conduct.
- Job was not wrong to defend himself when he was falsely accused. — *“My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live”* (Job 27:6).

Children of God, find your comfort in the Triune God, and your comfort will never fail.

- Because God is eternal, we shall not perish.
- Because God is sovereign, no harm shall befall us.
- Because God is holy, he will regard, protect and keep his holy ones!

ETERNALITY, SOVEREIGNTY
AND HOLINESS

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

Amen.