

## Sermon #7 — Habakkuk Series

Title:           **FIVE STARK CONTRASTS**

Text:           Habakkuk 1:11-3:6

Subject:       *True Religion and Idolatry*

Date:           Tuesday Evening—September 21, 2010

Tape #         *Habakkuk #7*

Readings:     *Bob Duff and Larry Brown*  
                  *Deuteronomy 32:1-52*

Introduction:

We worship the true and living God, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, the Triune Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the God of redemption, grace and salvation, the only true and living God, who is revealed and known only in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. All others who are called “gods” are but idols, useless, helpless and debasing idols. If you tried to write down the names of all the idols men worship and have worshipped through the ages, I doubt there would be paper and ink enough to do the job. Men love to make gods.

- The papists make gods of Mary and the saints, rosary beads and crucifixes.
- The Jews make gods of their laws, ceremonies and traditions.

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- The Protestants make gods of the creeds and traditions.
- The Baptists make gods of water and history.
- Mohammedans, the sons of Ishmael, used to worship hundreds of gods. Since the days of Mohammed, they worship them all the one they called the chief god before, Allah. — All is the name of their ancient moon god.
- All make gods of their “will.” — That is why all idolaters are called “will-worshippers” in Colossians 2:23.

## **NO GOD AT ALL**

Of all the imaginary gods men have concocted, none is less God like than the god of modern day Christianity. The god of this age no more resembles the God of the Bible than a gnat resembles an angel. The god of this age is no God at all.

- The god of this age is impotent before the mighty will of man.
- The Jesus of this age tries to save everyone; but has no ability to save anyone, without the assistance of man.

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- The Holy Spirit of this age is nothing but an influence for good.
- Like Aaron's golden calf, men call their god Jehovah; but the god of modern day, freewill works religion no more resembles the God of the Bible than the ancient moon god worshipped at Mecca, or the various phallic symbols worshipped by our forefathers.

Tonight, I want to show you **FIVE STARK CONTRASTS** between the God of the Bible and the gods of men. Turn with me to the Book of Habakkuk. We are going to read a rather lengthy passage for our text (Habakkuk 1:11-3:6). Habakkuk is describing the overthrow of Jerusalem and the temple of Divine worship by Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans and Israel's 70 years of Babylonian Captivity. God's prophet here told Israel that the Lord God would use base, pagan idolaters to chastise and correct his chosen. — The whole thing is a picture of Babylon, the great whore, described in the Book of Revelation, who makes the earth drunk with the wine of her fornications, the intoxicating mixture of freewill and works righteousness by which men and women

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around the world make shame their glory, expose their nakedness and uncover their foreskins.

The title of my message is **FIVE STARK CONTRASTS**. Let's begin reading in Habakkuk 1:11.

### **MEN AND THEIR GODS**

(Habakkuk 1:11) “Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god.”

You will remember that when Nebuchadnezzar attributed his greatness and his power to his god in Babylon, the Lord God almighty turned him into a lunatic and a grazing animal until he learned to “**praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment**” (Daniel 4:37).

### **O MIGHTY ROCK**

(Habakkuk 1:12) “Art thou not from everlasting,

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O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God (O MIGHTY ROCK), thou hast established them for correction.”

If you have a marginal translation in your Bible, you will notice that those words “O Mighty God” might better be translated “O Mighty Rock.”

(Deuteronomy 32:31) “For their rock *is* not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves *being* judges.”

In Deuteronomy 32 Moses shows us numerous differences between the rock of refuges the heathen flee unto and Christ our Rock, our mighty Rock of Salvation.

- The Foundation Rock
- The Smitten Rock
- The Following Rock
- The Rock of Refuge
- The Rock that is Higher than I

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(Habakkuk 1:15-16) “They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad. 16 Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion [is] fat, and their meat plenteous.”

## **HABAKKUK’S WATCHTOWER**

(Habakkuk 2:1-20) “**I will stand upon my watch**, and set me upon the tower, and will **watch to see what he will say unto me**, and what I shall answer when I am reprov’d. 2 **And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make [it] plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.** 3 **For the vision [is] yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.**”

(Habakkuk 2:4) “Behold, his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall

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live by his faith.”

### **BABYLON’S WINE**

(Habakkuk 2:5-14) “Yea also, **because he transgresseth by wine**, [he is] a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who **enlargeth his desire as hell**, and [is] as death, and **cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people**: 6 Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth [that which is] not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay! 7 Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them? 8 Because thou hast spoiled many nations, 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. 9 Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! 10 Thou hast

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consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned [against] thy soul. 11 For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. 12 Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity! 13 Behold, [is it] not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? 14 **For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.**”

(Habakkuk 2:15) “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to [him], and makest [him] drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! 16 **Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD’S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing [shall be] on thy glory.** 17 For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts, [which] made them afraid, because of men’s blood, and for the



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violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. 18 **What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols?** 19 **Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it [is] laid over with gold and silver, and [there is] no breath at all in the midst of it.** ——— 20 **But the LORD [is] in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.**”

(Habakkuk 3:1-6) “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth. 2 **O LORD, I have heard thy speech, [and] was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.**”

(Habakkuk 3:3) “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. 4 And [his] brightness was as the light; he

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had horns [coming] out of his hand: **and there [was] the hiding of his power.** 5 Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. 6 He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways [are] everlasting.”

## **FIVE CONTRASTS**

Now, let me show you **FIVE STARK CONTRASTS** between the Lord our God and the gods of men, and I will wrap this message up.

1. **The Lord our God, the true God, makes his worshippers, whereas the worshippers of idols make their gods.** — He made us; and he made us his. He made us; and he makes us his worshippers

(Psalms 100:3) “Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.”

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(James 1:18) “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

The Lord God, the true and living God, makes his worshippers by a new creation of grace.

2. **The true God is known only by self-revelation, only by the revelation of truth and grace in Christ, whereas all idols are dependent upon human teachers of lies.**

(Galatians 1:15-16) “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called [me] by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:”

- Romans Road Salvation
- Three Religious Fables

(2 Corinthians 4:6) “For God, who commanded

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the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

3. **He who truly is God prompts the work of all his servants, whereas all idols must be prompted by their worshippers.**

- He inspires worship!
- He sends forth laborers into his vineyard!
- He gives pastors after his own heart!
- He sends missionaries!

4. **The true God commands his position by the might of his own power and grace, whereas breathless idols are manipulated by the hands of men.**

(Habakkuk 2:19) “Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it.”

- **Dagon’s Ups and Downs** (1 Samuel 5:1-5)

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“And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. 2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. 3 And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon [was] fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. 4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon [was] fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands [were] cut off upon the threshold; only [the stump of] Dagon was left to him. 5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon’s house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.”  
(1 Samuel 5:1-5)

5. **The true God performs his own mighty deeds and commands his worshippers to be still, whereas the idols of men are still while their worshippers busy themselves with their**

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### religious commotion.

- Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

(Acts 17:24-25) “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”

I say, with regard to all the will-worshipping pagans of our day, **“Their rock is not as our Rock!”**

(Deuteronomy 32:3-4) “Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 [He is] the Rock, his work [is] perfect: for all his ways [are] judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right [is] he.”

(Deuteronomy 32:7-13) “Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. 8 **When the most High**

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**divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.** 9 For the LORD'S portion [is] his people; Jacob [is] the lot of his inheritance. 10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, **he kept him as the apple of his eye.** 11 As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: 12 [So] the LORD alone did lead him, and [there was] no strange god with him. 13 **He made him ride on the high places of the earth,** that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck **honey out of the rock,** and **oil out of the flinty rock.**”

I am trying to show you that “**their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges!**” — **Modem day religion makes the eternal God a pathetic failure!** Preachers everywhere tell us that

- God is trying to save multitudes who are not saved.

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- They tell us that God wants to do many things for us and with us that we will not let him do.
- We are told that Christ died for all the people of the world in an attempt to redeem and save all men; but that all are not saved.
- Modern religion tells us that the Holy Spirit of God calls all men alike to Christ; but some men resist the power of His grace, while others allow him to have his way.
- We are told that God has done all he can to save sinners, but some will not allow him to save them.

**One of these modern prophets of deceit has even dared to put his blasphemous opinions about God into print.** This is what he said — “What is hell? It is an infinite negation. And it is more than that: hell is a ghastly monument to the failures of the triune God to save the multitudes who are there ... Sinners go to hell because God Almighty Himself could not save them! He did all He could, He failed!”

**Such a god is a pathetic, miserable failure.**

- His will is limited by the will of man.



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- His power is broken by the power of man.
- His purpose is thwarted by the purpose of man.

Such a god is to be pitied, not worshipped!

**According to modern religious opinion man is sovereign over god, man is gracious to allow god to save him, god is obligated to man, not man to god.** Is this the god I must trust for the salvation of my soul? Perish the thought! Such a god as this, while he is popular with proud men, is nothing more than the idol of modern religion, the figment of man's imagination.

**The God of heaven is sovereign, majestic, glorious, almighty. He never tries to do anything.** What He purposed in eternity, He will do. He says, — “*My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*” (Isaiah 46:10). The sovereign, eternal, omnipotent God is not limited in his own power or in the accomplishment of his purpose by the free-will of puny man. God is not at man's disposal. Man is at God's disposal. God is not obligated to man. Man is obligated to God. God is not subject to man's will. Man is subject to God's will.

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**The Lord Jesus Christ, God the eternal Son, did not die at Calvary in an effort to save every person in the world.** His blood is powerful and efficacious. If He had intended to redeem and save the whole human race, all would be saved. It is written, — *“He shall not fail”* (Isaiah 42:4). If one soul for whom Christ shed his blood were to perish, his redemptive work would be a miserable failure. He would never see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Such blasphemous notions cannot be endured. — *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law”* (Galatians 3:13). Every soul for whom the Son of God suffered and died at Calvary shall be with him in heaven.

**The Holy Spirit does not try to draw sinners to Christ, hoping that they will let him save them.** His power is not defeated by the power of man’s free-will. The Holy Spirit invades the hearts of those dead sinners, who were chosen in eternal love and redeemed by the blood of Christ, giving them eternal life, creating faith in their hearts toward Christ. He draws sinners to Christ by the power of his irresistible grace. — *“Thy people shall be willing in*

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*the day of thy power”* (Psalms 110:3). — *“Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto thee”* (Psalms 65:4). This is the God of the Bible. This is the God we worship. He is the eternal triune God, the God of sovereign power and irresistible grace. This is our God. — **“O Mighty Rock!”** Hear him speak, and bow before him!

(Isaiah 45:2-3) **“I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight:** I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: 3 And **I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD,** which call [thee] by thy name, [am] the God of Israel.”

(Isaiah 45:5-7) **“I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else, [there is] no God beside me:** I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that [there is] none beside me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else. 7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make

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peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].”

(Isaiah 45:11) “Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.”

(Isaiah 45:15-17) “Verily thou [art] a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour. 16 They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together [that are] makers of idols. 17 [But] **Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.**”

(Isaiah 45:20-22) “**Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together,** ye [that are] escaped of the nations: **they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god [that] cannot save.** 21 Tell ye, and bring [them] near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient

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time? [who] hath told it from that time? [have] not I the LORD? And **[there is] no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour;** [there is] none beside me. 22 **Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else.**”

“3 ¶ God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. 4 And [his] brightness was as the light; he had horns [coming] out of his hand: and there [was] the hiding of his power. 5 Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. 6 He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways [are] everlasting.” (Habakkuk 3:3-6)

And soon, very soon, — **“The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea”** (Habakkuk 2:14). — **“Though the vision tarry, wait for it; because it will**

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**surely come. It will not tarry!**”

Amen.