

Message #9**Habakkuk 3:16-19**

I do not believe this world has a clue concerning the ferocious side and the angry side of God. In fact, our world makes movies about Armageddon in order to entertain people. At one Walt Disney Studio in Paris, they have made an attraction that simulates the movie Armageddon as something to entertain the family.

Now the truth is Armageddon is not going to entertain anyone. Actually Armageddon will not take place until the last part of the Tribulation just before Christ returns. But what leads to Armageddon is horrific. For nearly seven years God will be pouring out His wrath on a God-mocking, Christ-rejecting, Israel-hating world. The Great Tribulation is an unprecedented time of seven years of destructive wrath. There will be nothing entertaining about it.

In fact, when Jesus Christ was here on earth, here is what He said about this time: "For there will be a "Great Tribulation" such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short" (Matt. 24:21-22).

The Great Tribulation is not a time of world entertainment; it is a time of world annihilation. It is a time in which God uses all of His weapons to target and destroy this world and most of the people in it.

Now Habakkuk was given a glimpse of this. We saw last time that He saw and heard of a time in which God was using nature and all of His weapons to "trample the nations" (Hab. 3:12). He saw God doing horrible things, scary things to this earth and the people who lived in it.

This book of Habakkuk has been a remarkable journey. Habakkuk started as a prophet questioning God and it ends with a prophet worshipping and bowing before God. Along the way He came to terms with the fact that God is sovereign. He is totally and completely sovereign and He has a plan and He is working that plan out in His precise way.

We may recall that God had revealed to Habakkuk that He was going to send an evil power that was headed by an evil political leader who would seek to destroy Israel and take charge of the world (Hab. 1:6). That power was the Chaldeans, or Babylonians. But as God continued to reveal things to Habakkuk, He also revealed that He was on His throne and that His people could just quiet down and trust Him.

God made it clear that after He was done using these arrogant, godless leaders, He would pour out His wrath on them. He let Habakkuk get a glimpse of the moment when He would strike down all evil and trample the nations (3:13, 15). What Habakkuk saw was shocking. Habakkuk had never seen anything like this. What we see in this final text of the book is this:

WHEN HABAKKUK PROPHETICALLY SAW THE HORROR OF WHAT GOD WAS GOING TO DO, IT LEFT HIM TREMBLING; IT LEFT HIM TRUSTING AND IT LEFT HIM REJOICING IN THE FACT THAT HE WAS SAVED.

While we were on vacation, we had the privilege of listening to some lectures that were done by Dr. John Walvoord. In one of the lectures he gave, he said that one of the things he saw that seemed to be lacking in preaching was the burden to present the threat of hell. He said many preachers speak of a God of love, but they do not present the fact that they need to be saved because they are on their way to hell.

Now hell is a real place and it is a scary place. If a person dies and goes to hell, they are in a place of everlasting fire that is so painful that one drop of water from the tip of a figure would relieve some of the pain, or, as Dr. Luke described, it would relieve some of the “agony” (Luke 16:24). If you are here today without faith in Jesus Christ, you need to trust Him today because God will send you to a fiery eternity where you will burn if you do not.

God is not just a God of love and grace; He is a consuming fire and a righteous and just God. He gave His own Son to die on that cross and if you reject His Son, He will cast you into hell.

Now Habakkuk clearly saw what was going to happen in the future. It shook him; it rattled him. What he heard from God and what He had seen was scary. So as we come to the end of the book, Habakkuk reveals four final realities:

FINAL REALITY #1 – What Habakkuk heard affected him emotionally. **3:16a-d**

What Habakkuk learned about the prophetic plan of God hit him hard. Now the emotional impact that Biblical prophecy had on Habakkuk is very important to observe. Remember Habakkuk is a rare prophet of God. This is a man walking close with the Lord. Being a prophet this man dealt in Biblical truth; but what he saw about the future was something he had never seen before.

Biblical prophecy did not cause him to jump up and down in some joyful, giddy frenzy. It humbled him. It shook him. It scared him. He realized that the prophetic program of God is a sober and threatening proposition. This is how one viewed it that was very close to God.

I don't think most people have a clue as to the seriousness of the future. There are people who have not believed in Jesus Christ who are literally on their way to hell and it does not seem to faze them. They aren't afraid of it and they are not afraid to face Jesus Christ.

There are believers in Jesus Christ who are just drifting through life as if facing Jesus Christ at the Bema Seat will be no big deal. They are just drifting through life with no sense of urgency to do anything for God. It will be one very sober day that will hit them the moment they leave this world.

There are four emotional impacts that prophecy made on Habakkuk:

Emotional Impact #1 - His inward parts trembled. **3:16a**

Now the word translated “tremble” (ragaz) here is different from the trembling of the “mountains” (chil) in **verse 10**. This particular Hebrew word means that Habakkuk was so moved and disturbed by what He saw that he was afraid to the point of shaking (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 755-756). The thought of God pouring out His wrath in anger emotionally impacted him.

Emotional Impact #2 - His lips quivered. **3:16b**

This is an odd Hebrew word that would indicate this was so scary that it did physically affect his mouth. In fact, the word suggests that your voice has a difference or quivering to it (*Ibid.*, p. 710).

Emotional Impact #3 - His bones decayed. **3:16c**

He was sickened by what he heard and saw. As one writer said, Habakkuk’s nervous system was completely unraveled by what he had learned.

Emotional Impact #4 - He trembled at his own place. **3:16d**

This is the same word used earlier which again means he was literally to the point of shaking “at his own place.” I understand that to mean that he was shaken where he lived. He was shaken where he was at mentally and spiritually.

Habakkuk saw the coming judgment of God and there was not one thing he could do about it and it left him scared and shaken. He was completely drained.

FINAL REALITY #2 – Why Habakkuk became so emotional about what he heard. **3:16e-f**

There are two main reasons why Habakkuk became so emotional:

Reason #1 - Because all he could do was quietly wait for the time of judgment. **3:16e**

There was not one thing Habakkuk could do to change anything. He could not stop the future judgment. He could not change future judgment. All he could do was quietly wait for it. He knew that this would be “the day of distress” and He could not stop it. God was sovereignly going to cause it.

When a tornado warning is given, at least the people are able to get to some place of safety. When the Tribulation warning, which will be the Rapture of the Church, is given, there will be no place of safety.

When the Tribulation hits all one will be able to do is sit and wait for the tornado to hit. You will not be able to hide from it or run from it.

Reason #2 - Because he knew that God would cause people to invade them. **3:16f**

Habakkuk could not stop the plan of God. God was going to bring the Babylonians into Israel to judge her and then He would bring all the nations of the world against her, including the Anti-christ, and all Habakkuk could do was wait for the terrorists to get there.

We are seeing an invasion right now of the Muslim religion and of more and more aliens entering our country. We are seeing a rise in immorality and civil unrest. There is little doubt in my mind that God is prophetically setting the stage for the Tribulation and this invasion into the United States is all part of His plan. But here is the thing; what possibly can we do to stop it? The answer is NOTHING. All we can do is continue to be faithful to God and trust Him because there is not one thing we can do to stop anything.

FINAL REALITY #3 – What would ultimately happen to the land during the judgment. **3:17**

It is a known historical fact that when the Babylonians came against Jerusalem, many of these things literally did happen; but not everything described here. What happened during the Babylonian captivity does not compare to what will happen to Israel during the Great Tribulation.

During the Tribulation, there will be a total and complete judgment that will cause major devastation and destruction all over the world. There will be water problems and food problems. Lamentations describes a time when, in Israel, little babies are dying because Jewish mothers have no food to give them (Lam. 2:11-12; 4:4). In fact, during the Tribulation it would be better to be killed with a sword than to die of starvation and thirst (Lam. 4:9). Food will be so scarce that mothers will boil their dead babies for food (Lam. 4:10). Do you want to know why God will let this happen? Because Israel has sinned and she refuses to turn to her Messiah/Savior, Jesus Christ (Lam. 5:16-18). There are five stated realities about that judgment given here:

Reality #1 - The fig tree will not blossom. **3:17a**

Reality #2 - There will be no fruit on the vines. **3:17b**

Reality #3 - There will be no yield of olives. **3:17c**

Reality #4 - There will be no crops or food from the fields. **3:17d**

Reality #5 - There will be no cattle in the stalls. **3:17e**

During the Tribulation food and drink will be so scarce that unless you take the mark of the beast you will not be able to buy or sell anything (Rev. 13:16-17).

FINAL REALITY #4 – What God’s people should do as they wait for God’s judgment.
3:18-19

Now how should God’s people react? What should we do? Does God want us running around acting like a group of paranoid schizophrenics? Should we panic? We cannot stop prophetic events from happening, so what should we do? What we see here about Habakkuk is that he may have been shot emotionally, but he was strong spiritually.

Prophetic Knowledge Response #1 - God’s people should quietly wait and quietly trust in God. **3:16; 2:20**

One of the great marks of spirituality is the mark of quietly and patiently waiting for God. No matter what we see or no matter how we feel we must never allow ourselves to fall apart. We must quietly and patiently trust God.

Prophetic Knowledge Response #2 - God’s people should exult in the LORD. **3:18a**

No matter what happens here on earth, God is still on His Throne; he is still in His Holy Temple (Hab. 2:20). No matter what God sends our way—positive or negative; blessing or cursing; prosperity or poverty; people right with God will continue to exalt and praise God. This is so critical. We need to continue to go to church to learn about God and worship God.

Prophetic Knowledge Response #3 - God’s people should rejoice in God who gave them salvation. **3:18b**

Now matter what happens to us, we can always rejoice in the God who gave us our salvation—we are not destined for wrath (I Thess. 5:9). Happiness and joy will not be found in historical circumstances, but it may always be found in our salvation. I ask you the question again—“Are you saved?” If you are not saved, the wrath of God should scare you because it is ferocious. But we who know the Lord may always rejoice in our salvation.

Prophetic Knowledge Response #4 - God’s people should realize God is their strength. **3:19a**

Notice it is “the Lord GOD” who is the source of our strength. We are not the source of our strength. Circumstances are not the source of our strength. God is the source of our strength. Do not miss the theology of this key point.

Prophetic Knowledge Response #5 - God’s people should know God controls the place where His people walk and He enables them to walk through everything. **3:19b**

Now God enables His people to walk through difficulties because He provides the means for them to “walk on high places.”

If He lets us go into a valley, He will mount us on eagles' wings and fly us out of the valley. God will enable us to stand and walk sure-footed in the face of things that are causing people to fall apart.

While the rest of the world is experiencing the wrath of God, those whom God has saved are able to walk through anything securely, swiftly and heavenly. We are able to walk in high places. In other words, as we experience the trials and troubles, we are enabled by God to climb higher and higher in our relationship with Him. We can literally have mountaintop experiences with God when circumstances in this world are horrible.

For the church this means those who have been saved are literally in heaven via the Rapture while the Tribulation is being poured out on this earth. We will literally be walking in high places while the whole earth is experiencing the wrath of God.

Now we may notice that the book ends with the fact that this was written for the choir director on Habakkuk's stringed instrument. As one writer said, this is written as a "doxological ode." This was written as a song for worship. So this was written for corporate worship.

So this was written in the form of a musical score that was to be communicated at worship gatherings. In other words, when God's people gathered together, they were to hear about and learn about the pending judgment of God. They were to learn about the sovereignty of God. They were to learn about future things. They were to learn about the fact that there is a ferocious side to God and God's people can quiet down and trust God, knowing this.

There are some ministers who never want people to hear things negative. Well, Habakkuk not only wanted God's people to know the negative, he sang about it.

It is absolutely true, the "just do live by faith." They live their lives in this world quietly trusting in the Sovereign God. He has His plan and His plan is in full operation, even when the world does not know it or believe it.

So as we wait for the end to come, let us learn from Habakkuk. We need to:

- 1) Always trust;
- 2) Quietly wait;
- 3) Continually learn;
- 4) Corporately worship.