

IN WRATH REMEMBER MERCY

TEXT: HABAKKUK 3:1-19

INTRODUCTION:

1. Habakkuk chapter 3 is a prayer (3:1). We can apply Habakkuk's prayer to our situation today, and we too can pray to God -- "In wrath remember mercy" (3:2).
2. The book of Habakkuk is an easy book to outline:
 - I. The prophet is WONDERING.
 - II. The prophet is WAITING.
 - III. The prophet is WORSHIPPING.
3. Today many of God's people are wondering. They are perplexed. The world seems upside down. They wonder, "What is God doing?"
4. The prophet Habakkuk was a contemporary of the great prophet Jeremiah. These men lived at a time when the nation of Judah was declining rapidly.
5. You and I are living at a time when our nation is declining rapidly -- the promotion of homosexuality, abortion, pornography, drinking, and gambling will certainly provoke the wrath of God!
6. God judged Israel and God judged Judah.
7. God judged Sodom and Gomorrah.
8. God judged Egypt, and Assyria, and Babylon, and Media-Persia, and Greece, and Rome.
9. God judged the whole world back in the days of Noah.
10. But modern man thinks he can get away with his sin. And our leaders think they can govern without God and get away with it.
11. But Habakkuk knew that men cannot sin with impunity and get away with it, and so he asks, "in wrath remember mercy" (3:2).

I. HABAKKUK HEARD FROM GOD (3:1, 2).

1. Habakkuk was "afraid" because God had revealed to him the judgment to come.
2. God has revealed to you and me the judgment to come, and if we have any spiritual sense we ought to be afraid.
3. Our Lord said there will be "wars and rumours of wars" (Matthew 24:6). He said there will be "wars and commotions," and "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven" (Luke 21:9-11).

4. Our Lord spoke of persecution and the coming antichrist, and the battle of Armageddon.
5. Revelation 6:15-17 says men will hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and they will say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"
6. Revelation 9:6 says, "And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."
7. Habakkuk was "afraid" (3:2) because he knew that God must judge sin. The other day, on the morning after the big storm, the front page headline of the *New York Post* said: "GOD HATES US!"
8. God does not hate us. The Bible says, "God is love" (I John 4:8, 16). One day Spurgeon saw a weathervane with these words written on it: "God is love." He thought it inappropriate and told the man who owned the farm. The farmer said: "It is not inappropriate, sir. For no matter which way the wind blows, God is love."
9. God is love. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
10. Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
11. God loves us but God hates sin. Psalm 7:11 says, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day."
12. Habakkuk understood that God must judge sin because God is holy (cf. Hab. 1:12, 13).
13. Habakkuk was "afraid," but there is very little fear of God in America today. Proverbs 8:13 says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil" (cf. Romans 1:18; 3:10-18).
14. Habakkuk pleaded for God to send revival -- "O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work..."
15. Beloved, the hour is late, but God can send revival now just as He did in the past. After 9/11, many Christians prayed fervently for revival but America became even more ungodly.
16. Stupefied by sin and unbelief, ignorant of the Word of God and the will of God, addicted to worldly pleasures, America is racing towards the judgment of God...which brings me to my next point.

II. GOD MOVES IN JUDGMENT (3:2-15).

1. In answer to his prayer, Habakkuk received a glorious revelation of God. He saw what is described as a theophany, i.e. a glorious appearing of God (3:3).
2. The LORD is seen coming from Teman, one of the great cities of Edom. He is "the Holy One" and He is coming from Mount Paran, between Edom and Sinai (3:3).
3. Isaiah 63 refers to our Lord coming from Edom to the battle of Armageddon (Isa. 63:1-6).
4. The LORD is "the Holy One" (3:3). There is a direct connection between God's holiness and man's sinfulness. The more we comprehend God's holiness the more we abhor our own sinfulness.
5. In Chapter 1, Habakkuk was perplexed. He kept thinking that the Babylonians were so wicked and the Jews were so righteous. So why was God allowing these heathen Babylonians to punish His Chosen People? (Cf. Hab.1:1-4).
6. But now Habakkuk understands because he has heard from heaven. He has seen "the Holy One" (3:3), and he began to realize that the distinction between the Babylonians and the Israelites was relatively unimportant in the light of God's holiness, in the light of God's majesty, and in the light of God's glory.
7. Habakkuk beautifully describes the LORD'S glory covering the heavens, "and the earth was full of his praise" (3:3).
8. All creation reflects the splendor of God, and the glory of God, and the majesty of God.
9. The LORD marched in judgment, and "before Him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet" (3:4, 5, 12).
10. In verse 6, the LORD is pictured as stopping His march and causing great upheavals in the earth. The "measure" signifies a coming judgment.
11. In II Kings 21:12 and 13, we read, "Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line (a measuring line) of Samaria, and the plummet (a plumb line) of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down."
12. In Revelation 11, John is given a reed, used as a measuring rod, and the angel told him, "Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the

- Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."
13. This prophecy has not been fulfilled yet but it could be fulfilled very soon. Our Lord will drive asunder the nations (Hab. 3:6).
 14. "The everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow" (Hab. 3:6).
 15. When God marches in judgment, the rivers and seas will retreat (3:8, 9).
 16. Habakkuk uses poetic language. Merrill Unger said, "for poetic conception and splendor of diction," the book of Habakkuk "ranks in the forefront of the finest Hebrew poetry produced in the Old Testament" (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*).
 17. Using poetic language, Habakkuk describes the Lord riding upon the clouds and the winds as if they were horses and chariots (3:8, 15).
 18. Our Lord is shown unsheathing his bow (3:9; cf. verse 11). His arrows are directed at impenitent sinners. Even the mountains tremble at the judgment of God (3:10).
 19. The angry waves of the sea will lift up their hands (3:10b). We saw that recently as the waves destroyed beach towns along the Jersey shore, and flooded homes in Staten Island, and all along the south shore of Long Island.
 20. People were warned to evacuate as Hurricane Sandy moved up the east coast. But many ignored the warnings and refused to leave.
 21. Today preachers are warning sinners to get right with God, but most sinners are ignoring the warnings and will soon face the wrath of God.

III. HABAKKUK REJOICED IN THE LORD (3:16-19).

1. If Habakkuk rejoiced in the Lord, shouldn't we?
2. First Samuel 30:6 says, "And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God."
3. When Paul and Silas were in jail, they "prayed and sang praises unto God" (Acts 16:25).
4. When Habakkuk heard from God, his "belly trembled" and his "lips quivered" and "rottenness" entered into his bones, and he "trembled" in himself, that he "might rest in the day of trouble" (3:16).
5. Habakkuk trembled when he heard from God. But he was "resting" in the LORD (3:16).

6. A few days after Hurricane Sandy, a few pastors came here for a prayer meeting. Some of these pastors live close to the shoreline in Brooklyn and their homes and church building were badly flooded.
7. They lost their libraries, furniture, church piano, etc. but like Habakkuk they were "resting in the day of trouble" (3:16).
8. One pastor said the hurricane has given his church members many opportunities to help the community and share the Gospel with neighbors who previously were hard sinners but were now humbled by the hurricane.
9. Oh that God would humble hard sinners! Oh that God would save lost sinners!
10. Oh that God would restore backslidden Christians!
11. And that God would revive cold Christians!
12. Verse 16 says Habakkuk was "resting" in the LORD (3:16).
13. Are you resting in the Lord? Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15:4).
14. Are you abiding in Christ? Habakkuk was rejoicing in the LORD, in the God of his salvation (3:18, 19). Is He the God of your salvation?
15. Habakkuk said, "The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places" (3:19).
16. May that be our prayer as well!
17. Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15).
18. Philippians 4:4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."
19. Psalm 100:4 says, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."
20. Ephesians 5:20 says, "Giving thanks always for all things..."
21. First Thessalonians 5:18 says, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."
22. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

CONCLUSION:

Please allow me to apply verses 17 and 18 to our situation today. "Although I have no electricity and no heat in my house, neither do I have any gas in my car, and the gas lines are a mile long; and a tree just landed on my roof, and I have to walk to work; Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

