

Sermon #13 — Habakkuk Series

Title: **OUT OF TRAGEDY TRIUMPH**

Text: Habakkuk 2:5-20

Subject: *Evil Made Good by God*

Date: Tuesday Evening — November 9, 2010

Tape # *Habakkuk #13*

Readings: *Joe Blakely and David Burge*

Introduction:

The title of my message is — **OUT OF TRAGEDY TRIUMPH**, or — **EVIL MADE GOOD BY GOD**. Truly God's thoughts are not our thoughts and God's ways are not our ways. Were it in our hands and in our power to control the world, we would never do anything the way God does it.

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

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Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and will break
With blessings on your head.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His works in vain;
God is His own interpreter.
And He will make it plain.”

It is written in the Book of God...

(Psalms 76:10 AV) “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”

(Romans 11:33-36 AV) “O the depth of the

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riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable [are] his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, [are] all things: to whom [be] glory for ever. Amen.”

(Romans 8:28 AV) “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.”

ISAIAH 45

Truly, God’s ways are not our ways. In the 45th chapter of Isaiah’s prophecy **the Lord God declares himself God alone by declaring his absolute sovereignty in all things and over all things, both**

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the good and the evil. Let's read the entire chapter together.

(Isaiah 45:1-25 AV) “Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; 2 **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.** — — 4 **For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.**”

“5 **I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else, [there is] no God beside me: I girded thee,**

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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 peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].** — 8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and **let them bring forth salvation,** and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. 9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! [Let] the potsherd [strive] with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? 10 Woe unto him that saith unto [his] father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?”

“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**

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of my hands command ye me. 12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, [even] my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and **all their host have I commanded.** 13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and **he shall let go my captives,** not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts. 14 Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, **shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, [saying], Surely God [is] in thee; and [there is] none else, [there is] no God.** 15 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**

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ashamed nor confounded world without end.

18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, **he created it not in vain**, he **formed it to be inhabited**: I [am] the LORD; and [there is] none else. 19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.”

“20 ¶ 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 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

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saved, all the ends of the earth: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else. 23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. 24 Surely, shall [one] say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: [even] to him shall [men] come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. 25 **In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.**”

HABAKKUK 2:5-20

Now, let’s look at our text for tonight, Habakkuk chapter 2. Let’s read verse 5-20, Habakkuk 2:5-20. Here the Lord God is speaking to his prophet about the Chaldeans (Babylonians, Iraqis) he raised up to chastise his chosen. Let me repeat what I have said in each of these messages from Habakkuk: — **Habakkuk’s prophecy is all about Christ our Savior, who was sent forth in the fulness of time to redeem and save his people** (Galatians 4:4).

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- His work of redemption and grace is wondrous, marvellous work that God has performed and is performing in the earth, that work that no man will believe until God gives him faith (Habakkuk 1:5).
- Christ and God's grace and salvation in and by and with him is God's promise that will surely come and will not tarry (Habakkuk 2:3).

(Habakkuk 2:5-20 AV) “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.”

The word “wine” is not to be understood in a literal sense. The drunkenness spoken of in this chapter is not a drunkenness caused by drinking an alcoholic beverage. The wine spoken of here is the wine of Babylon's fornications. The drunkenness is the drunkenness of one intoxicated by free-will works

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religion. The proud man here, who transgresses by wine is the preacher and promoter of false religion, the religion of that vile, strange woman described in Proverbs 7, the great mother of harlots, Babylon.

(Proverbs 7:21 AV) “With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.”

(Proverbs 7:24-27 AV) “24 ¶ Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. 25 Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. 26 For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong [men] have been slain by her. 27 Her house [is] the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.”

Go back to our text — Habakkuk 2.

(Habakkuk 2:6-13) “Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb

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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!**"

That is exactly what those men and women in **Genesis 11** were trying to do. At the tower of Babel, the great mass of fallen men were one, united in one purpose. They wanted to build a tower to heaven. They all spoke one language; and it was the language of spiritual drunkenness, the language of free-will works religion! — **Read on...**

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(Habakkuk 2:10-13) “**Thou hast 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?”

(Habakkuk 2:14) “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

ISAIAH 11

In Isaiah 11 we have another prophetic revelation of our blessed Savior’s coming. And right in the middle of that 11th chapter of Isaiah these same words are used.

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(Isaiah 11:1-12 AV) “**And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:** 2 **And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;** 3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: 4 But **with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth:** and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. 5 And **righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.** 6 **The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.** 7

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And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. ——— 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

(Isaiah 11:10-12) “**And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. 11 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people,** which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 **And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the**

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outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Now, let's back to Habakkuk 2 again.

(Habakkuk 2:15-20). “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 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

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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.”

FIVE WOES

I this portion of Habakkuk’s prophecy the Lord God pronounces five woes upon the Chaldeans who sought, by his own appointment, to destroy his chosen. Yes, the Lord raised them up to chasten Israel; and they lusted to destroy Israel. — Even the wicked intents of godless, reprobate men are absolutely ruled by our God for the salvation of his elect and his own glory.

1. The first woe is God’s curse upon the attempts of men to take to themselves that which is not theirs (v. 6). — Robbing men is robbing God; and a man’s robbing men of the knowledge of God to increase himself is the most evil of all robberies!

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2. The second woe is God's curse upon men who seek to set their nest on high, who seek to elevate themselves to heaven by the works of their own hands (v. 9).
3. The third woe of God is upon those who seek to build and establish their religion by destroying the souls of men, by blood and iniquity (v. 12).
4. The fourth woe is pronounced upon the sons of Ham, the cursed, the reprobate who intoxicate men with will-worship, by which they expose their nakedness and uncover their foreskins, showing themselves to be among the uncircumcised (vv. 15-16).
5. The fifth woe is God's curse upon all idolatry, upon all the intoxicated people of the world who "*pray unto a god that cannot save*" (v. 19; Isaiah 45:20).

GOD'S REVERSAL

Yet, right in the middle of these woes, the Lord God declares that he will reverse all the intentions of the

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wicked. — “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14 AV). Let hell do what it will, let Satan roar as he may, let wicked men do what they choose, God’s purpose stands fast. All are but the servants of our God, either willingly or unwillingly, either wittingly or unwittingly; but all serve our God and all serve his people. Ham is still servant of servants unto Shem and Japheth!

(Romans 8:35-37 AV) “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

(2 Corinthians 2:14 AV) “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his

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knowledge by us in every place.”

Yes, the Lord our God uses evil to perform good for his elect. He uses wickedness to perform righteousness. He uses all the heinous crimes of hell, all the evil deeds of men, all things for the salvation of his elect and the everlasting glory and praise of his great name. All the events of providence are his chariots of salvation (Habakkuk 3:8).

God sees all things externally, as perfectly smooth and straight, no crooks, no bends, no valleys, no hills, no mountains! — Would to God we could never cease to see all things as he sees them!

Does our God bring good out of evil, triumph out of tragedy, light out of darkness, order out of chaos, calm out of storms? — Does he make a curse a blessing? — Is our God indeed so great, so glorious, so singularly and solitarily magnificent that he makes all things good and uses all things for the everlasting salvation of his elect, so that ultimately “**The earth**

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shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord”? — O my God, my blessed heavenly Father, my great Savior, forgive me for ever having even a thought that questions your sovereign goodness! — We have countless illustrations of the fact that God does just this in Holy Scripture. **Behold, out of tragedy triumph!**

- In the Creation, Chaos and Regeneration of the World (Genesis 1:1-2)
- In the Fall and the Revelation of Christ — Saved sinners know God, the triune Jehovah as God our Redeemer and Savior: something angels can never know. — No Ruin No Redemption! — No Fall No Forgiveness! — No Sin No Salvation! — No Guilt No Grace!
- In the Flood and the Bow of the Covenant
- In Joseph’s Slavery
- In the Famine and Elimelech leaving Bethlehem-judah
- In Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:1-16)

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- In the Betrayal and Crucifixion of Our Blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ
- In the Heresies that Must Come (1 Corinthians 11:19)
- In the Sorrows that Make Christ More Precious and Heaven More Glorious
- In Bereavement, Death, and the Resurrection

In the light of these things, all we can do is bow before our God and worship him. — “**The LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him**” (Habakkuk 2:20 AV).

Amen.