

Sermon #16 — Habakkuk Series

Title:     **REVIVE, REMEMBER, REJOICE**

Text:       Habakkuk 3:1-19

Subject:   *Evil Made Good by God*

Date:       Tuesday Evening — December 7, 2010

Tape #       *Habakkuk #16*

Readings: *Darrin Duff and Bobbie Estes*

Introduction:

There is a strange, absurd teaching floating around today called “prosperity theology.” The primary propagators of this heresy are Charismatics; but it is common for people who would never dream of being religious Charismatics to embrace the idea that if we truly walk by faith, we will never be sick and we will always prosper in this world. Multitudes who would never think of pretending to speak in tongues have the idea that it is God’s will for all believers to be healthy, wealthy, and prosperous in this world. They think that if you are not healthy, wealthy, and prosperous it is because you are lacking in faith, because you do not really believe God as you ought.

Such doctrine is totally contrary to the Word of God, the history of God’s church, and the experience of God’s saints in this world. **It is true that the Lord**

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**our God always prospers his people; but that prosperity rarely involves this world considers prosperity.** In fact, the Lord frequently sends sickness that our souls may prosper. He often sends drought that our hearts may be refreshed. He often sends trouble that our spirits may be revived.

- He abases that he may exalt.
- He strips that he may clothe.
- He lays low that he may lift up. He wounds that he may heal.
- He empties that he may fill.
- And he kills that he may make alive.

**Prosperity theology, while it very appealing to the flesh, is appalling to people who know God.** Had God's prophet Habakkuk ever heard Joel Osteen, Kenneth Copeland, or John Hagee spewing forth their health, wealth, prosperity nonsense on television, he would have laughed at them and flipped the channel to a *Gunsmoke* rerun.

**The Lord God revealed to Habakkuk he was raising up the godless, cruel Babylonians to discipline the nation of Judah for its sin.** At first,

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Habakkuk bucked at the message God gave him. It shook him to the core. His heart trembled for the nation he loved. But the message was crystal clear. God would use the Babylonians to invade and conquer Judah and take the choicest young men and women off to Babylon to be slaves. The nation of Judah would be severely disciplined. But what about the elect remnant in Israel? Habakkuk was told “*the just shall live by his faith*” in the midst of the impending judgment. The prophet was then assured by God that He would judge the Babylonians for their wicked treatment of his elect people, the children of Israel. Though the Lord raised up the Babylonian and used them as a rod in his hand to chasten his chosen, God would not let Babylon off the hook. Judgment was imminent and certain for them; but in the meantime Judah was to face horrible suffering. That fact brought Habakkuk to his knees before God.

**SPIRITUAL LESSONS**

All of this came to pass in the history of Israel according to the purpose of God to teach us things spiritual.

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- There is another Babylon, spiritual Babylon, the Great Whore religion of the world. This spiritual Babylon gives birth to, takes in, and includes all false religion, all freewill/works religion.
- All the heresies perpetrated by Babylon are ordained and used by God to chasten and prove his chosen (1 Corinthians 11:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).
- At God's appointed time antichrist shall fall, Babylon shall be destroyed, and all God's Israel shall be saved (Revelation 11). — Then that Wicked One, the Man of Sin, Antichrist "*shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming!*"

**The realization of these things ought to bring us to our knees before our God.** Turn with me to the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Habakkuk. The title of my message tonight is — **REVIVE, REMEMBER, REJOICE**. I want us to go with the Prophet Habakkuk into his prayer closet. I want us both to hear his prayer and join him in prayer. O Lord God, will you put it into our hearts

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to pray as you put it in Habakkuk’s heart to pray this prayer unto Thee?

**REVIVE**

First, in verses 1 and 2 the Prophet offers a threefold prayer for revival, begging the Lord God to be merciful to his chosen even as he pours out his wrath upon the ungodly among them.

(Habakkuk 3:1) “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.”

Habakkuk realized judgment was coming on Judah. Painful as it was to him, he quit bucking God’s revelation and bowed to his will. When he did, he began to pray. By divine inspiration he gives us his prayer in the form of a song and tells us that it is “upon Shigionoth.” Why does he tell us that?

**The Amplified Old Testament** reads, “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, set to wild, enthusiastic, and triumphal music.” The word “*Shigionoth*” suggests that this is a work of poetry set to music, a very

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unique form of music. Specifically, Habakkuk tells us that this song was to be sung to a tune that is erratic meter. The word “*Shigionoth*” may also suggest the idea of “trouble and of triumph.”

In this prayerful song, the prophet skips from one subject to another with each subject ending with “*Selah*” (vv. 3, 9, 13). The word “*Selah*” is a poetic, musical pause, a pause for meditation. It is used 70 times in the Book of Psalms.

- It indicates something admirable.
- It means “stop, pay attention, consider, admire” what has just been said.
- It means, much the same thing as the word “*Amen*:” — “Verily and forever true!”

Look at verse 2. — “*O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid!*” — Who can read and understand the warnings of divine judgment and not tremble with awe?

- Habakkuk trembled with awe when he heard what the Lord was about to do to Judah.
- Paul trembled with awe for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh.

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- He trembled with awe when he thought of Satan’s devices against God’s church (2 Corinthians 11:3).
- We tremble with awe when we read of that which the Lord God is doing in our day (2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 20:1-3).

**“O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years!”**

— Habakkuk prayed for revival in Judah but he knew revival would not come until after the nation has been severely chastened by God through the Babylonians invasion. He is praying for revival when the discipline is all over. **But the revival he sought would be at least 75 years away!** This prayer might be properly read either...

- Preserve alive Your work in the midst of the years of judgment,
- Or revive Your work in the midst of the years.

Read on: — **“In the midst of the years make known!”** — He is praying, “O Lord God, in the midst of all this darkness, heartache, pain, and trouble, reveal yourself! Let us know your presence, your power, your grace, and your strength.” Habakkuk

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must have had in his mind the promise given in verse 14 of chapter 2. — “**The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD.**” He was paying, upon the basis of God’s own promise: — “Lord, do what you promised. In the midst of the years make yourself known!”

Then, the prophet of God pleads his cause at the throne of grace, — “**In wrath remember mercy!**” Blessed be his name, he always does, because he “*delighteth in mercy!*”

- In wrath he destroyed the nation. In mercy he preserved his elect remnant.
- In wrath he cast off Israel. In mercy he gave his Son!
- In wrath he sent blindness to the nation of Israel. In mercy he sent the gospel to us Gentiles.
- In wrath he destroys nations. In mercy he gathers his elect out of the nations of the earth.

**REMEMBER**

First Habakkuk prays for revival. Then, in verses 3-15 he remembers God’s works of old for his people

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by which he made himself known to his chosen in the performance of his mercy. Let us ever pray, “Lord, revive.” And let us, like Habakkuk, remember.

While he was praying, the Lord God appeared to his servant in the manifestation of his splendorous grace and glory, causing him to remember the marvellous history of his wonders in delivering his people. Habakkuk’s mind flashed back over thousands of years of Israel’s history and how God had delivered His people time and time again.

**AT SINAI**

In verses 3 and 4 he recalls the majesty of the Lord God at Sinai, the Shikinah glory in the cloud of fire which went before the people in their march from Sinai to Canaan.

(Habakkuk 3:3-4) “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

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there [was] the hiding of his power.”

Who was this glorious Holy One, this God who came forth at Sinai? This visible manifestation of the Lord God, like all those we read about in the Old Testament Scriptures, was a preincarnate revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man Mediator and Covenant Surety, who alone is the Revelation of God.

- He who gave the law at Sinai is he who was made under the law as a man to redeem us from the curse of the law.
- He who gave the law on the mount is he who gave us the Sermon on the Mount.
- He who gave the law at Sinai is he who fulfilled, satisfied, and made an end of the law at Calvary, when he put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself!
- He who showed himself glorious on Mt. Sinai is he who was transfigured and made glorious on the Mount of Transfiguration.
- He whose glory covered the heavens at Sinai is he in whose face shines the glory of God by the gospel.

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**EGYPT TO CANAAN**

Then Habakkuk recalled how God delivered Israel out of Egypt, delivered them from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, and ultimately brought them into possession of the Land of Canaan by the hand of Joshua, fulfilling every word of his covenant to Abraham.

(Habakkuk 3:5-15) “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**. 7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: [and] the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. 8 Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? [was] thine anger against the rivers? [was] thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses [and] thy chariots of salvation? 9 **Thy bow was made quite naked, [according] to the oaths of the tribes, [even**

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**thy] word**. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. 10 The mountains saw thee, [and] they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, [and] lifted up his hands on high. 11 The sun [and] moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, [and] at the shining of thy glittering spear. 12 Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. 13 **Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, [even] for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck**. Selah. 14 Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing [was] as to devour the poor secretly. 15 Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, [through] the heap of great waters.”

When Habakkuk saw this ominous enemy, Babylon, on the horizon, he immediately began to think about the Lord God and his past dealings with his chosen

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people. He delivered his chosen in the past and, in his faithfulness, he will deliver his chosen in the future. Habakkuk understood something about history. He understood that history is “His-story.” History is the past performance of God’s purpose, assuring us that he will yet perform all the good pleasure of his will in the salvation of his elect, to the praise of his glory.

**KEY VERSES**

Here are three key verses, by which the Spirit of God shows us the greatness of God’s glory and power, that power and glory by which he rules all providence (Habakkuk 3:8, 13, 15).

(Habakkuk 3:8) “Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that **thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation?**” — (See Zechariah 6:1-3.)

(Habakkuk 3:13) “**Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed;** thou **woundedst the head out**

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**of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck.** Selah.” — (See Romans 16:20.)

(Habakkuk 3:15) “Thou didst **walk through the sea with thine horses**, through the heap of great waters.” — (See Isaiah 25:9-12.)

Blessed be the name of the Lord forever. — “**His ways are everlasting!**” He who was born at Bethlehem in God’s due time is Christ our God, the Lord’s Anointed, — “**whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting**” (Micah 5:2).

**REJOICE**

Move on to verses 16-19. This chapter begins with a prayer that the Lord God might revive his church. Then, in verses 3-15 Habakkuk remembered God’s wonders of old. And, now, the chapter ends with God’s prophet’s holy determination to rejoice in the Lord. Be sure to read the passage carefully; and it will become obvious to you that Habakkuk is not

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merely talking about carnal, physical things, but about spiritual things.

**Before he rejoiced Habakkuk trembled** (v. 16). Remember, as I told you just a little while ago, before he exalts God always abases; and before Habakkuk rejoiced he trembled. That is always true in spiritual things. — You will never rejoice in confidence until you know something about trembling in conviction before God.

(Habakkuk 3:16) “When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, **that I might rest** in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.”

Here the prophet shows us something about the wonderful and blessed consequences of grace wrought in the heart by God the Holy Ghost. When Christ is revealed in the heart as God’s great Salvation, the chosen, redeemed, called, heaven-born soul is convinced by God the Spirit *of sin, of*

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*righteousness, and of judgment.* When that happens there is a trembling under a sense of iniquity, transgression, and sin and our comeliness is turned into corruption (Daniel 10:8). — **The result of this trembling in Holy Ghost conviction is the sweet rest of confident faith.** Do you see that?

(Habakkuk 3:16) “When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, **that I might rest** in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.”

Read on. —

(Habakkuk 3:17-19) “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither [shall] fruit [be] in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and [there shall be] no herd in the stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The

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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.”

The sinner, taught of God to loathe himself, rejoices in the Lord and joys in the God of his salvation. Obviously, these two verses are given in figurative language, speaking of spiritual things.

- Fig trees never blossom.
- The grass of the field has never provided meat for man.

**These expressions picture the rich provision of grace that is ours in Christ** even when the ordinances of true worship, which are like the pleasant plants and fruits of the earth, fail and the lights of the Lord's House appear to shine very dimly. **These words of Habakkuk, are expressions of the strong faith of the man living wholly upon Christ,**

- even when there is a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord,
- even in these dark, dark days of divine judgment and apostasy,

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- when the flock of the fold appears to be cut off,
- and like Elijah we think we are alone and there is no herd for the stalls, none gathered into the fold.

Things are not as they appear. The Lord God is still riding upon his chariots of salvation. Our blessed Savior is still going forth for the salvation of his people.

(Habakkuk 3:18-19) “**Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.** 19 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.**”

(Micah 7:14-15) “Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily [in] the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed [in] Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old. 15 According to the days of thy coming out of the land of

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Egypt will I **shew unto him marvellous [things].**”

(Ezekiel 34:20-31) “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, [even] I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. 21 **Because ye** have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; 22 **Therefore will I save my flock,** and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. 23 And **I will set up one shepherd over them,** and he shall feed them, [even] my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. 24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken [it]. 25 And **I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.** 26 And **I will make them and the places round about my hill a**

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**blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.** 27  **And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I [am] the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.** 28  **And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen,** neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but  **they shall dwell safely,** and  **none shall make [them] afraid.** 29  **And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.** 30  **Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God [am] with them, and [that] they, [even] the house of Israel, [are] my people, saith the Lord GOD.** 31  **And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, [are] men, [and] I [am] your God, saith the Lord GOD.”**

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**“To the chief singer on my stringed instruments”** (v. 19). — The songs of Zion, are always upon Shigionoth, songs sung to very erratic meter, songs of trouble and of triumph.

- Praying for God to Revive.
- Seeking to Remember God’s Ways and Wonders of Old.
- Determined to Rejoice in the Lord with the Blessed Joy of Faith, Resting in the Arms of His Omnipotent Mercy!

Amen.