Fear, Faith, and the God Who Saves

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 December 2025

Preacher: Guest: Scott Rosen

[0:00] All right, well, thank you. You're good on the mic here. I was at a church a little while ago, and apparently they had a flaw in their system where you had to turn the mic on for people to hear you.

So, fortunately, I guess we got that taken care of today. I'll give you a little introduction about myself for those who don't know us, but we're going to be in Habakkuk chapter 3, verses 8 down through 19 today.
So I'll give you a minute to turn there yourself. I know texts we're not frequently in. Most likely. So if you know where the book of Jonah is in the Minor Prophets, you just have to go to Micah and Nahum, and then you're at Habakkuk.
So hopefully you can find that there. While you're turning there, as Brother Greg said in his gracious introduction, I've been here a few times before. I noticed some of you and have seen before, and some of you are new faces, so I'd be happy to get to know you.
I've been working at the seminary since about 2021, serving in the admissions and the registrar office there, and it's been a blessing to minister there. I was able to hook Brother Mark one time by announcing some things about the seminary, so if you yourself ever feel inclined towards further theological education, I'd be happy to talk to you.
[1:12] Brother Mark could share his testimony as well. And we even do have degrees that don't require you, like Brother Mark, to ride his motorcycle all the way down to Virginia Beach. You can do it remotely as well. But my family is here.

My wife Leah and my oldest son Jeffrey, Ryan, the next oldest, and little Kristen, and then little Benjamin's in the nursery right now. We do live down in Virginia Beach, of course, and right now, I don't know if Brother Greg wanted me to go into it at all, but we are considering pastoral ministry, so we've been talking to a number of churches, and I appreciate your prayers as the Lord may direct us to that role, but right now we are blessed where we are.
And it's always a blessing to be at this church. I told Brother Greg beforehand about that, not only for the fellowship, but just the attendance you guys give to the Word of God. It's always greatly appreciated and encouragement, and I'm always very blessed when I have the privilege of coming here and being able to speak to you this morning.
So I pray we would put our attention now on the Word of God and that we would be blessed by what we see in the text. So if you found your place, we are in the book of Habakkuk in the Old Testament, of course.
We'll be looking at verses 8 down through 19 in chapter 3. You can look along with me as I read the text. I'll be reading from the English Standard Version this morning, the ESV.
[2:33] The Bible says, Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Was your anger against the rivers or your indignation against the sea when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation, You stripped the sheaf from your bow calling for many arrows, Selah.

You split the earth with rivers. The mountains saw you and writhed. The raging waters swept on. The deep gave forth its voice. It lifted its hands on high.
The sun and the moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped the flash of your glittering spear. You marched through the earth in fury. You threshed the nations in anger.
You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck, Selah.
You pierced with his own arrows the head of his warriors who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28

[3:36] I hear my body trembles. My lips quiver at the sound. Rottenness enters into my bones. My legs tremble beneath me.

Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit beyond the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls.
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength. He makes my feet like the deer's. He makes me tread on my high places to the choir master with stringed instruments.
May God bless the hearing and teaching of his word this morning. Will you pray with me? Heavenly and gracious Father, Lord, we thank you for this text. We pray, Lord, that you give us attendance to your word. Lord, we do think at this time of our sisters Suzanne and Marvie, Lord.
We pray, Father God, for your mercy upon them and their comfort at this time, Lord. That you'd bless them. Bless Pastor Jeff and Pastor Greg, Lord, as they minister in this assembly. And Lord, at this time, may we delve into your word and be changed by it.
[4:48] In Jesus' precious name, we pray these things. Amen. Well, in the book of Luke in chapter 12, you might not recognize it by reference, but in verses 16 through 21, if you were to turn there, you don't have to turn there, but if you were to turn there, you'd probably see a heading or a subheading there that would say something along the lines of a rich fool or the parable of the rich fool.

And if you recall that text, what Jesus is explaining there is that there is a man who has become very successful in his agricultural enterprise there. And what he has done is he has stored up grain and what he has harvested and essentially saves the surplus.
And he plans to live on that for the rest of his life. And he can live a life of ease because of that. Now, in modern America, that man probably would not be seen as a fool, would he? He probably would have a best-selling book, a podcast, a YouTube channel, and the like, so he could tell everybody how you can replicate a success.
Just work hard for a little period of time, live the rest of your life in ease. But the Lord doesn't see it that way. Now, it's not because he's economically successful. That's not the condemnation there. It's because this man has put his entire priorities on material things and not given any attendance to spiritual or weightier, deeper matters. And what the Lord says to him is your life is going to be taken from you this very day.
[6:06] So what good was all your labor? What good was all your savings and surplus when you didn't consider more important things when now you're going to stand before God in eternity? And the reason I bring that up is I think that man's mindset is the exact opposite of what we see in the prophet here in Habakkuk.

The Habakkuk's mind was not at all, as we'll see in the text, on material things and what he can have in the present time. It was all about the future. It was all about weightier matters.
And we'll see that as we explore our text this morning. Now, one of the challenges we have when you have a one-off message like this, you don't necessarily have the background as you sequentially would work through a book or a text.
So let me just give you a little bit of that to help us understand where we are here. The book of Habakkuk, if you're not familiar, it's only three chapters, but it primarily, in fact, exclusively deals with the idea that God is bringing judgment upon Israel or the southern kingdom of Judah and he's going to use the Babylonian Empire to do this, to put judgment upon them.
And Habakkuk is not particularly pleased with God's decision here. He spends most of the book complaining against God as to why he would do such a thing. But eventually, he comes to the understanding that God can do what he wants.
[7:20] And I think that's encapsulated in verse 20 in chapter 2 where he says, But the Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him. Essentially, he understands God is on the throne and no man has the right to question him or to question his plans.

And so what we see is a transition taking place in the text from Habakkuk's complaints to Habakkuk recognizing that God can do what he wants and God is in control.
And if you look at the present chapter that we're in, this present chapter looks a little bit different than some of the other chapters. Depending upon how your text is structured, the translation you have, you probably see it looks a little bit like you'd see the text in the book of Psalms or some of

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28

the wisdom literature.
It's broken up in that way. And indeed, we're told in verse 1, if you look there, that this is a prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet, according to Shigenov. So we know this is Habakkuk speaking here and he is praying to God and it's in the format of a song or a psalm.
You see some of the notations here, like for example, according to Shigenov or according to the way that would be performed. We don't know exactly what that means, but it probably is some sort of musical notation.
[8:33] This is something designed to be performed, something designed to be sung like what we see in the book of Psalms here. And so what he is doing is he is praying to God in this format and making his petition before the Lord known.

Now, as we mentioned, Habakkuk has spent a bunch of the book not necessarily pleased with God and we see this transition here. I think it's helpful to have an understanding of just how opposed Habakkuk was to what God was doing.
And verse 13 in chapter 1 is a good summary of that. He says this, speaking to God, You are who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong.
Why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he? You see what he's doing there? He's condemning God, essentially, very bold as he speaks.
He's saying, why are you letting these righteous people of Judah, who aren't all that righteous, be oppressed by these pagan people, by these Babylonians? Why is that your plan, Lord? So he's very much opposed to what God is doing here.
[9:35] But now, as we saw from that previous passage, he does recognize that God is sovereign. And even verse 4 in chapter 2 kind of alludes to the idea that he recognizes there's a better way that he should be responding to God and a man of God should respond to God.

It's actually a famous verse because it's cited in the Old Testament, I mean the New Testament. Habakkuk 2.4 says, Behold, his soul is puffed up. It is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.
And Paul writes that or uses that term in Romans 1.17. That is, God's people shall ultimately have faith in God's plan, even one that doesn't make sense or even when it's troubling to them.
That's how God's people should respond to trial and adversity. And that is what we see here. If you look at verse 2, you see that Habakkuk is asking at verse 2 in chapter 3.
He's asking God, Okay, I'm not really happy with what's happening here, but make your vision know. Let it come. I'm fearful of it, but let your vision come. And he only asks that God may show mercy as he delivers this vision of judgment.
[10:39] One last point of background before we get into our primary text is that if you look at verse 3, what's taking place here is something we sometimes call a theophany. That is God's appearance.

So God comes onto the scene and he's interacting fairly directly with God. It may be through a vision, but nonetheless, he's acting directly with God. You see verse 3 says, God came from Taman and the Holy One from Mount Paran, Selah, his splendor covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise.
And verses 4 through 7 give us some more detail about that theophany. We won't go into it for time considerations this morning, but that serves as the backdrop for Habakkuk engaging with God. And now here's how his prayer continues and we get in our present passage in verse 8.
What is taking place here in verse 8 through 11 is that God, or probably Habakkuk, I should say, is reflecting upon how God is intervening in nature and specifically he intervenes in nature throughout Israel's history or about at least the history you find in the Old Testament.
That's going to be the common theme that we'll see recurring throughout these passages. And he begins this sequence of events or the sequence of this discourse in verse 8 by asking God three questions.
[11:57] It's really two questions because two of them are very similar, but three technically. And he asks him this, if I could summarize it this way. He's asking God if his wrath is against certain waterways.

Is your wrath against certain bodies of water? And I have here in our translation, the ESV, rivers and seas essentially is what he's asking here.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28

And this question might seem kind of out of place and even a little strange. If you were the opportunity to come before God, I imagine your first question would not be, are you angry with certain waterways?
Are you angry with the seas and the rivers? But nonetheless, that is Habakkuk's question. And some of the statements he makes here are hard to decipher unless we're really digging into it.
And so this is what Habakkuk, I think, is doing here. He's bringing up things that might seem strange or mundane, but what he's pressing on here are events that take place in Israel's history or in the world's history.
[12:56] And right here, he's asking about God's anger or wrath against these bodies of water. What I think the reference is here is that he's talking about when God has used the water in the past in Israel's history and the primary event that pertains to is the parting of the Red Sea in Exodus chapter 14.

And then maybe also when God parts the water, the Jordan River to allow the Israelites to pass through with the Ark of the Covenant. But I think primarily in view is the parting of the Red Sea here.
And so when we think about this question, as strange as it might sound, it's a rhetorical question and the answer, the answer that begs actually is no. So God, are you angry against certain bodies of water?
And the answer is no. He's not angry at certain bodies of water. He's angry at people who have defied him and defied his people. And it looks like his rage is against them because he's using these waterways.
He uses the Red Sea to part it to allow his people to be delivered and then to bring it crushing upon the Egyptians to punish that pagan nation. Is your anger against the water? No, no.
[14:07] It's against people. And why would Habakkuk bring this up? Why would this be a statement that Habakkuk would make? Well, you see, he has come to the recognition that Israel needs to be judged, that Judah needs to be judged.

But he has a hope that even in the midst of judgment, God will deliver his people, at least a remnant. And what's more, he knows that even though the pagan people may have the advantage at this time, they will not ultimately be victorious.
Just as Egypt was crushed by the Red Sea, the Babylonian Empire will not ultimately prosper.
God's wrath doesn't burn against waterways.
God's wrath burns against his enemies. King James puts it in Psalm 711. God judges the righteous and God is angry with the wicked every day.
And then after this, he comes in to make this statement where it sounds like God is essentially swooping in as a divine hero to save his people. This is the language he uses in verse 8.
[15:12] You rode on your horses, pardon me, on your chariot of salvation. That is, in using these waterways in this way, God has come in and intervened in Israel's history to essentially be their hero, to ride in and to save them.

Now God, of course, apart from the incarnation, doesn't have a body. He's not riding on horses or chariots. But this is a language that's used for a warrior king, for a heroic king, and this is how God is acting. We actually see similar language throughout the Old Testament.
Psalm 68, 17 says, The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands. The Lord is among us. Sinai is now in the sanctuary. That God delivers his people from calamity and delivers his people from oppression.
He understands that even in the midst of this challenge that's before him, God will save his people. God will deliver his people. And I think what this is showing is he trusts the faithfulness of God and in turn he is being faithful.
Remember what we saw earlier in Habakkuk 2, 4. The righteous shall live by faith. And Habakkuk is demonstrating that now. Even as the immediate future looks bleak and troublesome, nonetheless, his trust is in the Lord.
[16:26] And he continues with this imagery in verse 9 where he talks about God essentially unsheafing his bow to defend his people. And language like this is found elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Lamentations 2, 4. He has bent his bow like an enemy with his right hand set like a foe and he has killed all who were delightful in our eyes in the tent of the daughter of Zion.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28

He has poured out his fury like fire. Now here in verse 9 depending on your translation it might read a little differently but I think the ESV captures it correctly where it says that he calls or is calling for his arrows.
And the reason I think that's the best translation is contextually isn't that what you would do with a bow? That's the projectile you'd use. And so it's this idea that God is up essentially standing at least metaphorically in heaven with his bow and his arrow shooting down upon those who would assail his people protecting his people intervening on their behalf.
And you probably also notice in your translation you'd see the word Selah in the middle of verse 9. Now if you've done a word study on what that means you probably know that we don't really know what that word exactly means but most likely it's some sort of pause or break particularly as a psalm or a song is performed causing us to have a stoppage point in that song.
[17:48] And it makes sense because there's a transition that's taking place here. But what I find interesting is that it takes place in the middle of a verse here. Now we have to be careful the verses and the chapters aren't original to the text those aren't inspired now there's natural breaks in the text of course but the actual verses and numbers aren't inspired but what is taking place here is there is a clear transition and I think the reason why you see the Selah here so abruptly this pause so abruptly is what Habakkuk wants us to do is he wants us to reflect on the magnitude of what we just read.

that is that God Almighty comes down for a people even a wayward and disobedient people and rescues those people. It shows the amazing love that God has that he would deign to intervene in his own creation on behalf of his people even when they deserve judgment.
I think that's the sort of thing Paul's reflecting upon in the New Testament. The idea that God would come down and give his very life as the Lord Jesus Christ for his very enemies Romans 5 8 but God chose his love for us and that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.
This idea that the God Almighty would be even concerned at all to come down and both rescue his people temporally but also rescue them spiritually as well.
It is something well worth pausing and reflecting and considering here and I think that's why that pause takes place. But after we see this brief interruption in the text he transitions to another natural event.
[19:28] He moves along from what he previously was speaking about. It still has to deal with water but in a different sense where he asks or he states that God split the earth with water or rivers in the end of verse 9 and what I think is here is there's a couple things but initially at least he's talking about God's creative work.

He's talking about God's creative work. As you might recall in creation there was a water canopy of some sort in the sky and then you had the water below and it separated and the imagery he uses is almost like there's a river between the two of them and that's sort of the language that's used in Genesis 1-7 creation and God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse and it was so.
So there's a reference here to God's creative work here but I think there's also a reference to God's destructive work and you see that as the language continues in the next verse. The mountains saw you and writhed.
That is something violent is taking place here. Something violent is taking place here and I think as verse 10 explains it goes further he says the raging water swept on the deep gave forth its voice it lifted its hands on high that what we have in view here is another event not so much from Israel's history but from world history and that is the great Noahic flood it's the Noahic flood that's at issue here when God destroys everything on earth and suffocates all living things and the language that's used in the book of Genesis in Genesis 7 19 through 21 is pretty similar to the poetry we see here the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered the waters prevailed above the mountains covering them 15 cubits deep and all flesh died that moved on the earth birds livestock beasts all swimming creatures that swarm on earth and all mankind and the focus we have here again is God's sovereign control over nature and God using nature or intervening in nature but it also is depicting
God's mercy in the midst of all that is it not in God's creative work what is he doing he creates an environment in which Adam is to live and in which Adam and his progeny would still be alive if it were not for the fall we would still see that environment and we have that environment to some degree just under the fallen conditions right now but moreover in the midst of the flood in the midst

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28

of calamity while God brings great destruction upon the earth what does he do he sets his electing love on a group of people and he delivers them Noah and his family of course so what God is doing is through and by the elements delivering a people providing for a people even in the midst of great calamity and so Habakkuk can have great confidence and great trust knowing that God will ultimately deliver his people even in the midst of the trial that they are undergoing right now well I think it would be wise for us to reflect upon this as new covenant people because if we are God's people if our trust is in the Lord
[22:32] Jesus Christ and his sacrifice alone for salvation then should we not have the same confidence in our trials and in our challenges even if there are challenges and trials of our own making I mean recall here Judah the reason they have judgment is they brought this judgment upon themselves through their wickedness even if we bring our own judgment our own challenges upon ourselves there will ultimately be deliverance God will not let us ultimately face defeat 1st John 5 4 for everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world and this is the victory that has overcome the world our faith or as Habakkuk has put it the just shall live by faith and what he is doing here what Habakkuk is doing is he's recounting through Israel and the world's history just repeatedly how God intervenes to spare his people to bring them forth through trials and challenges even when it's trials and challenges of their own making he's reminding himself and his audience of that and he continues if you look at verse 11 the same sort of analysis takes place here as well there's three parts here where he talks about the sun and the moon standing in place and then they're looking almost as if they're standing at attention as the light of God's arrows speeds by at the flash of his glittering spear and I think of all the examples this one might be the clearest what's pretty clear is that this is an allusion to the long day of Joshua right so in Joshua 10-12 it says at that time

Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel and he said in the sight of Israel sun stand still at Gibeon and moon in the valley of Ajalon I think there are two facets to this one it's showing once again just God's ultimate might and power and stopping these celestial bodies in fact as this is recounted even to this day this is a stumbling block to those who are opposed to God to God's enemies for one thing people would ask well how on earth could something like this happen without throwing the whole natural order into disarray and then even the bigger question is well doesn't it sound here like the author of this passage does not understand how the natural world works because it seems like he's saying the sun stands in place and therefore doesn't mean the sun is revolving around the earth whoever wrote this doesn't know what he's talking about he was ignorant of the scientific analysis or discoveries we've made since then but I think to raise those objections is to miss the point the point here is that God has absolute control over everything including these celestial bodies and to say that
God things would be disrupted well just as God can control the celestial bodies he certainly can also make sure that nothing is disrupted while he does that the point is that God is in absolute control here and when it comes to the idea of the sun standing in place that's just the perspective Joshua has if the earth stops in its orbit and the sun stays still well it looks like the sun is standing in place in the sky that's what's taking place here now we could go into more depth about this but this isn't the point of the passage but I would raise one other point here that makes sense and helps us understand what's being conveyed revelation 21 23 says this about the future and the city has no need for sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the lamb do you see what it's saying there the sun and the moon are just instruments of energy and illumination they're not necessary and one day they're not going to be around anymore the power is just going to come directly from God God just chooses to use these instruments and once again the point is that
God controls everything and they are under his power and under his purview but the second element here is why does God do this God's not just putting on a show for everybody to stop these celestial bodies he does it for a purpose and the reason is it's a sign of judgment against the Amorites who God is going to put into the hands of the Israelites it's a sign of judgment against the Amorites and look at the description here it seems like the celestial bodies are standing still as God decrees and it's almost as they're looking on as the creator pours out his judgment upon these people that is the celestial bodies yield to their Lord to their creator through the imagery here and they yield as men should yield to God but yet these proud men stand against God the same God who can stop the moon and the earth in this way if he can control these celestial bodies how much

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28

more can he take down any human foe who is far more fragile when he chooses judgment rather than mercy
Psalm 76 7 but you you are to be feared who can stand before you when once your anger is roused well if we know the Lord I don't think this is a call for unrighteous boasting on our behalf in fact it's a call for us to be very humble before a God who would save us a God that's powerful who we've defied and yet would come and save his people but I think it is a reminder when the pagan when God's enemy shakes his fist at heaven he might think he is doing so in strength especially if he sees himself as very intelligent very informed very learned but he's not doing so in strength he's playing the part of the fool he's shaking his fist at a God a creator who at any time could bring his tremendous wrath down upon him and so I don't think our position what we're called to is to plead as God's apologists at least not in this way making excuses for God apologizing for God no what we are called to do instead is to warn people about the judgment that is to befall them as they continue to goad a long suffering but eventually a wrathful creator upon them and this is indeed an important and merciful warning because look at how the text continues in verse 12 verses 12 or 15 deal primarily with
[28:51] God's fury against his enemies this is how he is described by Habakkuk in verse 12 you march through the earth in fury you thresh the nations in anger that is God and when he goes against his enemies he's like a warrior king marching victoriously against his enemies when they defy he and his elect his people proverbs 30 29 through 31 gives us an illustration of this three things are stately in their tread four stately in their stride the lion which is mightiest among beasts has not turned back before any the strutting rooster the he goat and a king whose army is with him now this doesn't describe the righteousness of God but it does describe how these animals just march proudly because they're so confident in their role in nature and then a king with his army behind them is confident as he marches through and how much more confident of course is God almighty a king who cannot be defied a king who cannot be overthrown he tramples over his enemies and this idea of treading or threshing here I think is a reference to something you see throughout the

Old Testament the idea of the threshing floor you may be familiar with that essentially as a old practice where they throw wheat or grain or barley on the ground and you'd have these heavy oxen just step on them and it'd separate the stalk from the ear with such force they were walking over these things and in the same way God almighty when he pours his wrath upon his enemies he steps on them with such force as if it was something like that in fact I think Isaiah 63 3 has an even clearer image of what it looks like when God pours out his wrath upon his enemies I have trodden the wine press alone and from the peoples no one was with me I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath their lifeblood spattered on my garments and stained all my apparel and if we could bring that into a modern English idiom I think it would be this I crushed them like a bug I crushed them like a bug that's what God's enemies are when they face his wrath even as he shows mercy to his people while showing wrath to his enemies and that's kind of the point if you look at verse 13 what God does why does
God pour out his wrath upon his enemies well there's multiple reasons but in this context the primary reason that Habakkuk points out is that he's doing it for his people that is in verse 13 you went out for the salvation of your people for the salvation of your anointed he pours out his wrath for the purpose of delivering his people for saving his people now those two lines look kind of similar do they not the salvation of your people the salvation of your anointed it probably is a Hebrew parallelism where the same idea is repeated twice in slightly different ways to show emphasis that he's being emphatic here but you know the word anointed here is a word that might be familiar to you it's the word we sometimes transliterate messiah messiah and so there is probably another meaning here it may be a reference to the lord jesus christ himself coming and providing ultimate eternal delivery to his people but sometimes the word messiah is also used for somebody besides jesus besides the coming ultimate messiah other people in the old testament and one such person is the king of the made of persian empire who is to arise later on named cyrus this is what isaiah 45 1 says about him thus says the lord to his anointed his messiah literally to cyrus whose right hand i have grasped to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings to open doors before him that gates may not be closed and so the reference here to this anointed may be his anointed people it may be to the ultimate delivery through the lord jesus christ it's not just a temporal delivery but an eternal delivery but it probably also has in mind this man cyrus and why is cyrus important well

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28

who's at issue here who's the enemy who's bringing judgment upon judah it's the neo-babylonian empire who overthrows the neo-babylonian empire the medo-persians king cyrus is the one who does so and so this trust is that god will ultimately not allow the babylonians to be victorious and indeed he has in view here that it would be cyrus that god is going to raise up another empire one day to take this empire out they will not ultimately be victorious and there are times of course in our life where we wonder why are people who are so wicked why did they seem to prosper the psalmist says in psalm 73 the same thing i was envious of the arrogant when i saw the prosperity of the wicked but that victory that prosperity is very temporary it may exist for a while they may trust in it and love it but that is only a window or a small window into their lives eventually judgment will come and habakkuk has that trust about what's going to happen to babylon he says you crush the head of the house of the wicked in verse 13 laying him bare to thigh to neck so while he may have victory for a day nonetheless he will ultimately be overthrown and judgment will come upon him or upon his empire in fact there's a bit of irony that's going to take place in verse 14 you see that it says you pierced his own arrow with his own arrows the heads of his warriors essentially what they've done is going to come back to them or in english idiom they'll get a taste of their own medicine and that once again comes to the idea of
Cyrus because the babylonian empire was a very successful powerful empire in this time period but what happened historically is they over expanded they were the conquerors they spread out throughout the world but when they spread themselves too thin they left themselves susceptible themselves to being conquered the conquering army becomes the conquered the meadow persians come in and god uses them to overthrow them with their own arrows their own devices imperialism and world conquest they themselves meet their own fate through another imperial power but this babylonian empire while will fall one day it has not fallen yet and is the tool that god's going to use for judgment and habakkuk says as much about how fearful he is of this empire in verse 14 he says they came like a whirlwind to scatter me now habakkuk makes it very personal here he's using a personal pronoun they scatter me here and what this tells us is that this is not a theoretical concept it's not like when we speak here from america we're talking about things that happen in the middle east well too bad for those people that have to go through that strife right we're nice and comfortable in the united states no he is in judah right now and when the babylonian invaders come he is going to face their wrath and have to live under the repercussions of judgment and this is indeed an abusive and evil empire in verse 14 he says they rejoice as if to devour the poor in secret it's essentially that they take pleasure in oppressing people and abusing the weak the imagery here is like an animal going and taking its prey and bringing it back to his lair to devour it they're beastly vile people vicious people but nonetheless his trust is no matter how powerful they are they will eventually be brought low and be conquered themselves as is the case for all who defy the living god past present and future and then habakkuk makes one final entry in this sort of natural world israel history discourse here where in verse 15 he talks about god intervening so god's not just letting men work their own sin out in their own power no he not he directly intervenes in the the natural world and against his enemies to protect his people he describes it this way in verse 15 you trample the sea with your horses the surging of mighty waters there's maybe another reference to the exodus account where god is intervening and he is intervening against pharaoh there and brings him down and destroys his armies but nonetheless regardless what the reference is god is almighty and he reigns here and he does so in his perfect way as he describes it here and in his perfect timing and it's not just in temporal battles or temporal events where he does this no he does this eternally his perfect plan of salvation takes place in his perfect way and in his perfect timing galatians four four and five tells us that but when the fullness of time had come god sent forth his son born of woman born under the law to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons well that concludes the back its discourse about how god intervenes and has intervened for his people but now he's going to reflect on himself his own thoughts his own reflections here that as we know he's very he has great trepidation of what's taking place but he recognizes that god must execute his righteous judgment when i think about this passage of scripture i see a parallel in the the book of job you might recall the end of job a theophany appears god appears in a whirlwind and job has spent a little bit of time and perhaps from a human standpoint we can't blame him for complaining about a situation it's pretty rough but nonetheless he doesn't have the right to speak to god in that way and so what god does is he appears and he starts telling him about his creative work and how he controls all nature and all that exists in the natural world and when job hears that he has no reply except

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28

to say this in verses in job 42 5 and 6 i have heard of you by the hearing of the ear but now my eye sees you therefore i despise myself and repent and dust and ashes when god speaks and shows his power job has no response and isn't that really what we see here we have a theophany habakkuk has been complaining this whole time and now when he understands what god is doing when he understands god's intervention and power and how he has delivered his people what is he doing he's reduced to trembling before the lord and verse 16 not only does he tremble his lips are quivering so that he can't utter a response and he even goes on as he comes face to face with the lord and is lightly rebuked in this way he says rottenness enters into my bones my legs tremble beneath me and i think in this case and in job's case as well this should be the response when one is confronted by god even lightly rebuked in this way that there's a reverence and a fear before the lord and one can only can hardly even utter anything in response when confronted in this way this is a the way isaiah puts in isaiah 62 66 2 pardon me but this is the one to whom i will look he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word you know by application here it's the same thing you're not going to have a theophany of god appear to you but you have god's holy word in front of you and as it confronts us about our sins and our failures the the response should not be to try to make excuses for that but to be confronted in the same way trembling and being repentant and being more conformed to our savior as the bible corrects us in that way but here we have a backache left and he's left in this way as the verse puts it he has must wait anxiously or quietly and could you imagine the situation where you're waiting and anticipating something bad to happen and what he's waiting is for this enemy army to come marching through and he has to wait until that day of trouble comes upon him you know in the garden the lord prayed this he said my father if it be possible let this cup pass from me nevertheless not as i will but as you will you see there was this period where he had to undergo this suffering but yet there's glory afterwards in the resurrection and buying a people and that's what the lord may decree in our own lives not that exactly but there be a time of violence before there's a time of deliverance that's what habakkuk is waiting for here and so as habakkuk ends his comments here in verse 17 he lists a number of deprivations the people of judah are going to face and he'll face as well once again this is not a theoretical situation but something that is going to take place a number of deprivations he lists that's going to take place during the conquest are the fig tree will stop its production so will the grapevines and the olive trees the crops and the harvest will fail and the livestock both sheep and the cattle will be devastated and some of these things that are lost are luxuries figs were delicacies at the time you don't necessarily need grapes or wine or the juice but other things were necessities right olive oil was necessary for lighting and cooking crop failure meant famine the flocks of sheep were necessary for wool and for clothing and the cattle were essential for plowing and for agriculture but look at how verse 17 begins you probably have at least the
[41:50] ESV has the English conjunction though I think that's a right translation from the from the Hebrew text the word though essentially what he's saying is that all these things are going to be taken away if any one of these things just by itself was taken away if it's some of the luxuries well that makes life less enjoyable and one of the necessities that's going to make more more hardship in life but it's not just one of these things being taken away all of them simultaneously are being taken away and what he's saying is though though all these things will be forfeit although we'll lose all these things in life will be much less pleasant and much more difficult though that is going to take place it doesn't matter it doesn't matter or as Habakkuk puts it himself in verses 17 and 18 though the fig tree should not blossom nor fruit beyond the vines the produce of the olive fail in the fields yield no food the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls yet I will rejoice in the Lord I will take joy in the God of my salvation that is though all these luxuries are going to be swept away though we're going to face true economic and personal hardship that we're going to face ruin though the whole world may seem like it's falling down around us I will what I will rejoice in the

Lord and I'll appreciate the most wonderful gift he has given me my salvation which which no army of man can take away though he would lose everything in this world God and his salvation are far greater value the exact opposite of what we saw with the rich fool earlier on these are the words of man who lives by faith the righteous shall live by faith Habakkuk 2 4 once again and he expresses that faith in the final line in this passage God the Lord is my strength he makes my feet like the deers he makes me tread on my high places I trust in the Lord in the midst of all this well as we conclude this morning my present church Colonial Baptist Church is going through the book of

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28

Revelation and my family and I a little while ago watched a series of videos about the seven churches of Asia Minor found in Revelation 2 and 3 and one of the churches the most famous out of that as I understand it the church of Laodicea is mentioned and the commentator notes that God was really angry with the city because they lived in a very affluent society and it wasn't the affluence itself that was the problem it's the fact that they had been immersed in that affluence that that was the issue they embraced it and God has John write this to them for you say I am rich
I have prospered I need nothing not realizing that you're a wretched pitiful poor blind and naked you know that description could really well describe Christianity in the United States could it not as a event a little while ago where we're raising money for the seminary and one of the raffle prizes was one of those big TVs that you can get by on Black Friday and a couple I overheard a couple gentlemen talking and they said they weren't going to put in a bid for that TV and the reason the first man said was I have got so many TVs already they're always stacked up in my garage and the other guy said oh I have a TV in every room in my house already that's probably a sign of a fairly affluent society is it not but I understand not everyone's in that situation but even the poorest people amongst us don't they have electronic devices they have comfort food they have entertainment and even if you are in a tough spot in life even if you are in a challenging portion of life isn't there always the expectation that there's gonna be some way to make money there's gonna be something to eat something to wear somewhere to live right well what if that wasn't the case you know God can take all those things away corporately or individually he can even afflict our health or our families or our mental states as he so desires and so we might ask ourselves as we think of Habakkuk's list in verse 17 could we really say though all my luxuries are taken away though I am unemployed and don't know how to find a job though my housing situation is uncertain though my health is failing or compromise though my family is a mess and my relationships are falling apart though I never wanted my life to turn out this way though others have forsaken me though I am left with crippling depression anxiety or doubt I still will rejoice in the Lord and my salvation notice not just submit to it not just put on a brave face but truly rejoice in it can you really do that in such a situation Habakkuk could I think his declaration can be ours as well you know we spent a lot of time through most of the passage but the heart of this passage is verses 17 and 18 we didn't spend that much time there but the labor we did in those other verses make those verses real because what was a bet why could Habakkuk rejoice in even the loss and deprivation of all those things because he kept reminding himself about how God delivered his people over and over and over again and so his trust is in that the Lord will ultimately provide deliverance to him even in the midst of judgment even in the midst of your situation now of course we can't promise that God's going to deliver you from your temporary worldly woes and I'm sure many of them are very challenging but nonetheless if you know the Lord Jesus Christ then you have the promise of complete deliverance already and one day the strife of this world is going to look very very small is it is it not Peter says this in first Peter 1 3 blessed to be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to his great mercy is caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead what is the living hope?
the Lord Jesus Christ not things not comfort so the question this morning is do do you know this Savior? well if you don't then I guess there really is no hope because all you're doing is just clinging to some material things until you die and are cast into outer darkness but you know you can find this true hope this true joy and salvation in John 10 10 the Lord says this the thief comes to steal and kill and destroy but I came that they may have life and have life more abundantly if you repent of your sins and turn to Christ then you have that abundant life whatever may come in this world you have a Savior and a home in heaven and if you do know Jesus if you are confident in your salvation if he is your Lord then let us follow Habakkuk in saying what he has already stated well the fig trees should not blossom nor fruit beyond the vines the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food the flock be cut off from a fold and there be no herd in the stalls yet I will rejoice in the Lord I will take joy in the God of my salvation will you pray with me this morning oh heavenly gracious Father Lord there is much here more than we could even go through this morning but yet time and time again you are faithful you deliver your people you deliver them even in the midst of our failures and sin and foolishness because you are kind to your people oh Lord I pray that nobody would leave this room without being amongst your elect amongst your people that you would move in their hearts this morning to repent and turn to Christ and be saved and for those who do know you for those who are your children through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ may we not complain about our present circumstances as painful as they may be but rejoice in you our God and rejoice in our

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28

salvation in Jesus precious name we pray these things
Amen

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-10 15:38:28