

Kings and Prophets 16-01-07

This is Thursday, the 7th of January, 2016. We continue our study in the historical survey of the kings of the northern and southern kingdoms and the prophets that ministered during their reigns, especially the latter portion of their time. And we have come to the place in the ongoing dynasty of David in Judah, where King Josiah is coming to the throne.

And it is the day in which Habakkuk delivers his prophecy from God. He is the messenger. God provides the message and provides it by request.

There is a question that is asked. And so we'll be picking up our study in Habakkuk chapter 2. We've had almost a month-long hiatus due to the holidays and other intervening crests, as we like to look at in artillery. Got an intervening crest that interrupts your trajectory.

Then you go into high angle fire. It takes longer, but it eventually gets there. And that's what we're doing.

We're a little further along time-wise, but the rounds will still be delivered on target. They will impact. They will have their effect.

And so if you have found the place in your Bible, you might occasionally have to run that little song through your mind about the minor prophets. Let's sing the minor prophets. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nehemiah, Habakkuk.

There you go. So we'll take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer. And we'll pick up at verse 4. Father, thank you for the many blessings you have bestowed on us.

We think over the time of celebration that we have experienced in recent weeks, focusing culturally, if not chronologically, on the birth of the Lord Jesus, the Incarnation, the beginning of that great work of salvation that culminated with His securing our salvation on the cross. We thank you for His resurrection. We thank you for His ongoing life in your presence.

We thank you that we have Him as our guarantee that we too will live again and live forever in your presence. We're grateful for the personal presence that we experience of your Holy Spirit, of the Lord Jesus, and of yourself as we endeavor to have your word and keep it. We pray that as we spend this time together looking at Habakkuk, that the truth of these scriptures will be meaningful to each one, that it will serve as a foundation and a framework for understanding, for confidence, for motivation, and for stability and long-suffering as we look around us and see that much as the circumstances were in Habakkuk's day, we see them around us as well.

We pray that as a result, our lives will reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as we await His return for us and as we anticipate being qualified and useful in your service now and in the ages to come. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen. You remember, and I'm not going to go into an extensive review, Habakkuk is ministering very close to the end.

We're going to be seeing as well Jeremiah's ministry during this closing period in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but Jeremiah has a different mission and a different message. Habakkuk is much like us. If you've been watching the news and you see the ever-widening cracks in the economic structures of not only our country, but the world, and because we are so entangled with international situations such as the Chinese economy.

When I was little, the only thing I was interested in is that Black Cat firecrackers came from China and now somebody sneezes in China and our stock market drops 300 points. So it's a much different world now. And it's the things to which people look for their confidence and their expectations for the future, their security, their retirement, their investment picture and so on can look solid one day and very ephemeral and transient the next.

We're convinced of better things concerning you brethren, things that accompany salvation. My hope is built on nothing less than my 403B portfolio at Guidestone. No, it is built on the Lord Jesus, the solid rock and all other ground is sinking sand.

And interestingly, it's a great illustration of Habakkuk's question and answer session with the Lord God. Very quickly, just to read this into our context in chapter two, you remember what chapter one had to say. The prophet says, oh Lord, I am expressing my concerns to you and I'm not getting an answer.

How many times have people sort of, it's a, I mean, if you stop and think about it, we don't stop and think where we're concerned. It's easy to see in others. You look at somebody over here and you say, so you wake up and realize that there's a situation.

You have a concern, you have a question, you have an observation and you run to the Lord God and say, Lord, Lord, I need an answer for this right now. And God doesn't immediately drop everything he's doing in the universe, tell all the angels to be quiet in the third heaven and say, oh wait, Sam's got a question. Hold on, stop the universe while I go down and arrange to be sure that he's, you know, gets some immediate answer to his little question.

What happened to our reverence, to the awe that sees the holy, holy, holy of the cherubim and the seraphim and those that surround the throne of God as he sits in the midst of the glassy sea, omnipotent creator God of not only every single atom molecule and subatomic particle in this universe and all of the energy and space in which those things are contained, but I suspect when we get a chance to see the real perspective, it's one of those little glass shaker paperweights on God's desk. We are small business. We're a demonstration in a much larger conversation with a much larger civilization in a much larger context.

So for us to dwarf God down to our proportions and say, well, I've got a question and I don't understand why he hasn't dropped everything and sent an angel or poked his face through the fabric of the universe and said, hello there, here's your answer. We need to remember who we are and to whom we speak, capital W. Habakkuk approaches with that reverence. He has a burden.

He has a case. He has a situation that has arisen and he goes to the Lord with it. It's the right place to go.

But even the prophet Daniel hands up everyone who thinks that they are a greater, more important, more worthy conversation partner with God than the prophet Daniel. You remember Daniel had some questions. God sent an angel from heaven to answer Daniel's question but Daniel had to wait.

Remember that? I would have been here sooner. Little issue with the Prince of Persia. There are, and what does that tell us? Why is that recorded in scripture? He could have told Daniel that offline, so to speak.

That could have been an aside, but Daniel wrote it down in his book. It's recorded in scripture to remind us everything looks big to us in the same way that toys and meals and naptimes are real big in the life of a two-year-old. And a two-year-old, I see it, I want it, give it to me now or I'm gonna throw a tantrum.

And this is what we train out of young children. This is how we teach them self-control, patience. Think about the bigger picture.

You're not the only apple in the basket here. You're not at the center of a gigantic cosmos and everything revolves around you. What they like to say or what they used to say in more recent times is get over yourself.

And we have a culture today that promotes self-centeredness and immediate gratification and a sense of injustice and insult if we don't get what we want, when we want it, how we want it on a silver platter. There is this tremendous hubris that accompanies a lot of human action today and people who want questions answered. My internet's not fast enough to give me the answer, give me more bandwidth.

So remember in chapter one, the approach that Habakkuk makes he goes to the right place, but he also understands and this is not a snippy remark by Habakkuk. There are people who, anybody that's run a business or been on the service end of some provision for people knows that what it's like when people come to you, ask you questions that it's like when some poor ninth level person calls you up on behalf of pennies or something to tell you that your curtains have been delayed again, or you call and they say, well, I'm checking the inventory and they're not in. And somebody just wants to cloud up and rain all over this poor girl making minimum wage, answering phone calls at the store on orders as though this is the right person to talk to about the global shipping practices of whoever you ordered from.

They have no power, they have no ability, you're talking to the wrong person and you're just venting and it makes you feel good, but you've ruined somebody else's day. And you've really made a poor example of yourself, especially if we're believers. So patience is a virtue, objectivity and recognition that yes, you may have a question and it may be very important to you, but the

fact that you don't get an immediate answer isn't necessarily carrying the significance that we want to attach to it.

Well, I asked God a question and he didn't answer, he doesn't care. That's a very childish conclusion. Stop and think, maybe I've already been given the answer.

Do you ever think of that? I'm pounding on the door of heaven with a question and God says, did you check that Christmas card I sent you five weeks ago? The answer was in there, did you read it? No, I wanted to rush up and bang on the door and yell through it and say, Lord God in heaven, where's the answer to my question? This is why reflection at a time of what we call devotions or quiet time or whatever is really good for calming ourselves, praying, seeking the active ministry of God's Holy Spirit to give us that objectivity that we naturally lack. So Habakkuk says, oh Lord, how long shall I cry and you will not hear cry out to you violence? He says, look, I'm not just saying, hey, where's my supper? There's an emergency here. I'm dialing the heavenly red phone with 911 and nobody's picking up.

He's respectful and he's trying to be patient, but he says, the reason I'm pretty concerned about this is it's not just there was an injustice and bank error not in my favor. There's violence, people are dying here. There's great and tragic happenings going on and Lord, I've made my heavenly notification and why is it that you do not yet answer? And so after he details this, God says, look among the nations and watch and be astounded.

I will work a work in your days. He doesn't say, I will work a work in a few minutes. Lay the phone down, step back.

I'm gonna work a work right this minute and you're going to see. He says, I will work a work. How long are your days? What's the biblical typical total for a lifespan? How many score? Three score and 10, right? I will work a work in your days.

So it's possible that you could bring a report to the Lord when you're 20 and you might have to wait 50 years to see the answer. And we say, well, I need a different God. That's too long.

You know, I want better service. Again, A, get over yourself. B, do you not think God already knew this and has woven everything into the fabric of his plan and the only reason you're aware of it is so that you can have the opportunity to ask the question and develop your faith by waiting for the answer, realizing that God has probably already delivered the answer and instead of trying to get it over the phone, read the manual.

Anybody that's done phone support, how do I load the general ledger in this software? Did you read the manual? Chapter three is called loading the general ledger in this software. Well, I just want you to tell me. You want me to tie myself up for 25 minutes, taking you through, set up an operation of accounting software, general ledger functions.

That's why you got the manual. It's part of what you paid for. R-T-H-M, read the heavenly manual, right? It's already been delivered.

You're looking in the wrong place. You're asking the wrong question at the wrong time. God says, look, I'm going to work a work in your days.

Think about the reign of King Josiah. We haven't covered it in detail yet, but do you remember how long he is king in Judah? Do you remember that it's on the order of four decades and Habakkuk is likely at the very beginning. Jeremiah is going to cry and weep and lament and get thrown in and out and have his stuff cut up and burned and rewritten for decades.

Decades. God says, my plan, my work is going on in your days, but we're so impatient. We're so short attention span.

We want everything now. And God says, I will work a work in your days. God's not going to rush the history of the planet for me.

Lord, I really am torqued about these religious fanatics doing X, Y, and Z over there, over here, right out there, down the street. I demand justice. I demand satisfaction.

Lord, drop what you're doing and be the genie of my lamp and grant my wishes. God says, look, I'm doing a work in your days. And the fact that you are made of mud is the only reason I don't disintegrate you to make you be quiet.

I'm doing a work in your days. You wouldn't believe it if it were told you. It's going to be miraculous.

It is going to be supernatural. You wouldn't think that I would use a nation even more evil than all of this evil and violence that you've been haranguing the courts of heaven with, telling me about violence and injustice and all of that. I'm going to take people twice as bad and use them to judge the people you're complaining about.

I'm going to fight fire with Holocaust fire. I'm going to fight a skillet fire with a house fire. You say, they've lit my dinner on fire.

I'm going to burn their house down. This is not the normal human response. Well, Lord, I didn't mean, you know, out with the whole nation, 70 years of captivity.

I just wanted these injustices and these bad rulers. God says, you don't know what I'm doing. This is going to take place across your days.

That's essentially chapter one, remember? God gives the answer and he says, I'm bringing the Babylonians and they're twice as bad as anybody you're looking at. So that brings up Habakkuk's second question in verse 12. Lord, and look at the beauty of Habakkuk getting it.

I hope and pray that I personally and we collectively can be as quick on the uptake as Habakkuk is. Remember when God started out saying, in your days, I will do this. Look at what Habakkuk says in verse 12.

Lord, you are from everlasting. I get it. Your scale of time dwarfs mine to microscopic insignificance.

You are from everlasting. Right away, the first thing God said is the first thing Habakkuk processes and incorporates into his viewpoint and his thinking. Wouldn't it be great if all of the Bible truth that we learned was this way.

As soon as we learned it, it just, you know that, I've been looking at giant flagstones trying to get them all level to make a patio. And you know how this is, they're gigante, they're very heavy. And so you can't just, it's not like a patio block where, oh, that corner is sticking up a little bit.

I believe I'll just flip that up and dig out a little sand and put it back down. It's a gigantic rock. And so you get a shovel under one end, pry up one end, you heave it up out of place.

And then you, you know, I try to use my eye and try to get it level and you flop it back down. Well, now it's too low. I took out too much dirt.

It's extremely difficult, but it's a massive undertaking to do what looks like a fairly simple thing. You, oh Lord, are from everlasting. Oh Lord, my God, my holy one.

We shall not die. Notice he doesn't say Habakkuk, turn your face to the wall because you shall die and not live. He says, I'm going to do a work in your days.

And so the next thing Habakkuk processes out of that is first of all, God's got this massive timescale. Secondly, God's going to do the work in his days. So whatever happens, Habakkuk's not going to perish.

Instant observation, instant interpretation, instant application. God says it, Habakkuk gets it. I crave this kind of understanding, this spiritual sensitivity where God could say a thing and I could nod my head and really mean it.

I, okay, great. Your timescale is big and whatever it is you're going to do, I will live to see it. He's going to do it in my days.

And that's days plural, meaning I've got a minimum of 24 hours left. Oh Lord, my God, my holy one. His confidence, his assurance is on his relationship.

He doesn't say, oh Lord, you are the holy one, does he? My God, my holy one. This is rare in the Old Testament. For an Old Testament saint to David is one of the few other examples where you see this intimate personal connection between the believer and God in heaven.

This is what the Lord Jesus came down to provide for all of us. When you pray, pray this way, our father. You didn't hear the priests in the precincts of the tabernacle in the temple saying our father.

It's the name, it's the holy one, it's the ineffable name we're scared to even write down on a

piece of leather. There was that respectful distance and acknowledgement of God's holiness and his grandeur and his majesty. Even while seeing that, Habakkuk says, you are from everlasting and you're my God.

You're my holy one. You're the standard of holiness beyond the universe, but you're my holy one. And it's a tremendous thing that he says.

We shall not die. Oh Lord, you have appointed them for judgment. That's the third thing that he gets.

Okay, you have heard, you do know about the violence and the injustice that I have been praying about and bringing to the heavenly throne. And from these few verses of information, the third thing he understands is you have appointed them for judgment. Okay, God says, I've got this.

Just let me have it. I'll take it. Vengeance is mine.

I will repay, saith the Lord. And Habakkuk says, okay. So the time thing is solved.

My situation is secure in you, my God, my holy one. And you've got them appointed for judgment. That gives me great peace of mind knowing that you have seen, you are aware.

And in my days, you have appointed a judgment. He is so quick, all of this in a verse. Oh, rock, you have marked them for correction.

And it's real interesting because he uses the words for judgment and for correction, not for destruction. Implicit in this as a fourth observation is as bad as it is and as serious as the judgment is that God has pronounced coming through the Babylonians, they will not be destroyed. And Habakkuk is no doubt familiar with the promises to the house of David, the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

And so he sees even in the tremendous violence of this judgment that it will not destroy. It will judge and it will correct. You don't simultaneously correct and destroy a thing.

You do sort of one or the other. I was working on an electronic device a week or so back because I wanted to correct it. Had a little power problem.

I thought, well, I'll fix this power problem. I'll give it a steady source instead of running on batteries. But I did not correct that problem.

Instead, I destroyed the device. I don't know how. It's relatively unusual for something to go that wrong in my efforts, but it just went to sleep and never woke up.

It's, as Jonathan Winter said about the frog in his pocket, his eyes are closed. That's it for that little device. It is no more.

It has gone away. It was destroyed. Its function will never again take place.

If I had corrected it, it would still exist and function better than it did before. That was my goal. That was not my outcome.

So when he says, you have marked them for correction, you mark a thing for correction, that you have confidence it is not going to be wiped out, eliminated, dead to rise no more. And he says, this makes sense based on what I know of you, O Lord, because you are the standard of holiness. You are my holy one.

Your eyes are purer than to behold evil and continually look on wickedness. So this makes sense. I can account for your answer in the framework of what I already understand about you.

And this is a fifth thing. When we get a message from the Lord, it should be consistent with what we know of God. Any puzzlement on Habakkuk's part isn't gonna be, well, this doesn't make theological sense.

This doesn't seem in character for God. He says, I know your character and you are going to judge wickedness. But it does raise a different question.

If you're gonna use a house fire to judge and correct the skillet fire, what's your view on this whole house fire thing? You're using a greater and more evil nation to judge your people who are engaged in wickedness and evil. So I'm a little bit confused about what your view is toward your scourge nation. What's, are you now going to bless them? Is this gonna be an ongoing source of example to Judah or these Babylonians, their war machine, their military and their rolling up of nations before them in the initial phase, these scourge nations that you've used in the past, like Egypt and like Assyria, when they throw a net, they just get all the fish, all the surrounding little nations, they gather them up.

And so, and they don't worship you. They don't honor you. They don't attribute their victory to your blessing.

They worship the net. They worship the means by which they scooped up all of these smaller entities and made them their own. That's his point there in verse 14 and verse 15.

And verse 16, they sacrifice to their net. They burn incense to their drag net because they see the mechanical cause for their prosperity and their victory. And they're looking at the materialistic immediate cause, not the ultimate cause that you, oh Lord, have set them up for this and raise them up as God told Pharaoh, for this reason I've raised you up to manifest my glory in you.

Well, you think again about the wrong Indian nature of things, we look and we say, well, how could God use an evil nation to accomplish his purpose? Because we're looking at the rise of the evil nation. And that's as far as we see, we're short-sighted, we're myopic, we're nearsighted. God says, yeah, it's gonna look for a time like evil is prevailing and like these guys are the

biggest cheese in the house, but that cheese is on a trap to be nibbled by mice.

And I've got much bigger notions than the fate of cheese. Cheese is just a means to my much greater ends. And God says, you've got to think outside your little human box.

It isn't that an evil nation is rising and that an evil nation is overcoming and judging and means of correction for the people of God, think big. What about the end of that nation? Where are the Babylonians today, by the way? Where is the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar? You ever seen that, I've mentioned a time or two before the Ozymandias poem. I was out in the trackless, I'm slaughtering that poem, but I was out in the trackless waste of the desert and I came upon two trunkless legs of stone and this plaque with this fallen, chopped, broken statue.

Hail the great Ozymandias, well, here he is out in the desert, middle of nowhere, so much for your greatness. Sick transit, Gloria Mooney and all of that. Well, we need to think about this.

Point of application, point of application. Stop at the point of frustration, at the point of, well, I'm about to attribute some either inability or inattention or the inconsequentialness to God because I have thrown questions his way and I didn't get the answer I wanted, when I wanted it, in the way I wanted it to satisfy my particular, you know, there's a preponderance of the first person pronoun there. God says, yeah, I'm raising him up, but you know, I'm the God of endless vistas of time and I'm more interested in what's going to happen to them afterward.

God already sees the might of Nebuchadnezzar and this is before Nebuchadnezzar's time. This is before the head of gold that sits atop the shoulders and arms of silver and the belly and thighs of brass and the legs of iron and the feet of iron mixed with clay. God's got this huge program going.

Babylon is the head of gold. If Habakkuk prays, oh Lord, you can't do that, oh, okay, Habakkuk, well, boo on the Babylonians, I'll just send a giant disease that will wipe them out and nip them in the bud. Well, Judah never gets judged, never gets corrected.

Can you see the violence that that would do to everything that happened afterward? We're so small, we're so transient, we are so individually insignificant from a historical point of view. What makes you significant? Why should God pay any attention to you? What did Peter say? You are not redeemed with corruptible things, silver and gold, mere massive amounts of wealth. What were you redeemed with? The precious blood of Christ.

That is the price that was paid for you. Do you think you're valuable in God's eyes? Absolutely. Do you think that God is anxious for us to understand the answers to questions such as Habakkuk raises? Of course, at the same time, the part of humility is to recognize where we are.

And God's got significantly larger fish to fry than the plan of Sam or even the question of Sam. God will answer and God has made arrangement for me to understand. And in many cases, God has already told me.

We had a study a few years back talking about how people will pray for strength to obey. People will pray for strength to prevail in the face of temptation. Anything wrong with that? It's fine to acknowledge that temptation exists.

Jesus gave that to the disciples in the model prayer. But did he say, when you pray, pray this way. Oh Lord, when we enter into the valley of temptation, give us the strength to stand up as David did before Goliath and to sling the mighty stone of faith into the forehead of doubt and none of that, right? Because the way to prevail in testing isn't through prayer.

How do you stand and having done all, still stand against the onslaught of evil? Put on the full armor of God. You know that memory verse, right? Which of the pieces is prayer? Does it strike you at all that it's not the helmet of prayer? It's not the breastplate of prayer. It's not the sword of prayer.

It's not gird your way through with prayer. It's not shod your feet, shoe your feet with prayer. Why? Because prevailing in the face of difficulty isn't done by, well, wait a minute, let me get down on my knees and pray.

It is preparation. It is daily strapping on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. What quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one? Prayer.

What quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one? Faith. Look at Habakkuk chapter two, verse four. The proud, more on that in a moment, his soul is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith.

The just will stand. The just will prevail. The just will succeed by his faith.

And the word faith here can be equally translated faithfulness. Stop banging on the door asking questions. Start being faithful.

That's the answer. You've already been given the answer. Oh Lord, give me strength.

You know, how many parents, God give me strength. Well, that's not the right prayer to pray. You've already been given strength.

It is laying there in the armory. Pick up the shield, put on the boots, strap on the sword, stick on the helmet, gird your waist with truth. Do them, of course, in the right order.

And there is an order and it's significant, right? But it doesn't say, well, if you hear the roaring lion seeking whom he made of our, get together and pray. You know, assemble a group and let's all pray. It's a wonderful thing to pray.

And we can pray about anything and the Lord will never turn us away. But how much more effective instead of saying, well, Lord, you know, send a supernatural intervention. I'd want a ball of fire to come down and destroy the wicked one or whatever.

Bind Satan, you know, that's a prayer a lot of believers in our day like to pray. Oh Lord, bind the demon of poverty, bind the demon of illness, bind the demon of, you know, if I was of that persuasion, I would just bind the demon that's in charge of all the other demons. Oh Lord, just bind them all.

I don't even want to be specific. And do you seriously think that God is going to stop everything in heaven, find every demon and just tie them all up, leave them all just wiggling around in bonds because one little uninformed puny human prayed and said, oh Lord, bind a demon. If God wanted the demons bound, do you think they would be bound? Yes, they would.

Why are the demons not bound? The same reason you get a shot, an inoculation. They are useful for target practice. God says, I'm going to put these defeated demons out here for you to practice on.

They're practice dummies. Oh Lord, bind the practice dummy. Why are you afraid of the practice dummy? Why do you want it tied up? It's already defeated.

It is only there for your benefit. And now you foolishly want God to tie it up. It's ridiculous.

You don't have the picture. So there are answers that have already been provided. So when Habakkuk asks his second question and he says, Lord, I get it.

I appreciate this great answer that has been long in coming. But now that I recognize it, it is consistent with everything else I know about you. So look at what he says in chapter two, verse one.

I will stand my watch. I'm going to keep performing my duties. I have specific assignments and responsibilities.

And I was tempted to be unstable. I was tempted to make an excuse and say, well, but violence, Lord, how can I continue? I will stand my watch. I will do my duty.

And I will set myself on the rampart. Set myself on the rampart. I'm going to go to the place of stability.

By the way, it's a little higher than the ground, isn't it? The watchtower, the rampart is elevated. You know what's great about that? Better view. You can see more.

You can think more strategically and less tactically. You can think more about the big picture. This is what I used to love about the Hornblower books that C.S. Forrester wrote.

One of the reasons Hornblower, in the fictional world of the wars against Napoleon and so on back around 1800 to 1815, along in there, one of the reasons Hornblower succeeded is he was just a junior captain, but he was real interested and he kept himself informed and he knew the big picture. And when he got in certain situations, he was able to pull a brilliant maneuver or do something really significant because he wasn't just concerned with the immediate who's

shooting at me and how can I stop them. He knew what was going on in the war.

He knew that this ship leaving a harbor had to be stopped at all costs because of what it was going to tell somebody that would make an influence. They could lose a whole fleet over it. He was, as it were, in the watchtower.

He knew the issues that count. Habakkuk says, I'm going to try to stay up here. You've given me this elevated view in your answer, oh Lord.

And I want to stand here in the watchtower and parse the situation around me from that perspective, from the divine viewpoint, if you will. That's what I'm going to do. I'm going to keep fulfilling my responsibilities and I'm going to try to keep this higher view of what's going on.

It is going to be great to meet Old Testament believers like Habakkuk because in their day, they figured it out. They loved the Lord. God loved them.

God gave them answers and they used them in this way. I'm going to get up in the tower and watch to see what he will say to me and what I will answer when I am corrected. God says he's going to correct the people.

Well, correction begins with me. And I've been letting myself get panicky and get too concerned with the details of life here. I've been corrected.

I'm going to watch and see the larger venue of God's correction for his people. And it will inform me about my own correction and my own correction will inform me about what God is doing. Let me leave you with this one closing thought because we're out of time for tonight.

I will stand my watch, Habakkuk 2.1, and set myself on the rampart and watch to see what he will say to me and what I will answer when I am corrected. I want to learn and have something new to say when I see this correction unfold. Then the Lord answered me and said, write the vision and make it plain on tablets.

Remember, this is where we closed last time. It's written down in a permanent form that he may run who reads it. There are others, Habakkuk, who are going to benefit from my conversation with you.

Point of application. When we are faithful, when we are patient, when we wait on the Lord, when we find the answers that he has given us, and we stand our watch and set ourselves in our watchtower, and we have that orientation to the plan and person of God, we will be a blessing to others in the same way that Habakkuk is here even now, 2,500 years later, being a blessing to us. This man is still being a blessing two and a half millennia after he died.

That's the power of God in the life of one believer. And it's true for you and true for me. When we are faithful, the benefit goes beyond ourselves.

It is a tablet that can be read by others who will know when they need to travel. The vision is yet for an appointed time. God says, you're right, I am the God of eternity.

I am the God of the long view. And not only is there a situation involving the Babylonians and Judah at this time, but this whole thing, take another step up the rampart, go a level higher in the watchtower, and you're gonna see that not just your correction personally, not just the correction of Judah by Babylon, but in human history, there is a future appointed time where all of this is gonna be highly significant. We live in such a time now.

And it is the manifold, multiplexed nature of God's plan. This, by the way, is something that naysayers and rock throwers against the Bible have not got the first clue of the beauty and the fineness of the weave of what's, trust me, if you can go to this book in Hebrew and in Greek, word by word, verse by verse, as we have done together over many years, and all you find is greater and greater consistency, greater and greater complexity. It's like a beautifully woven, I was thinking about this the other day, it reminds me of the garments of the Lord when they took him to the cross and they were parting his garments, but you remember there's one thing that they would not divide, and it was his cloak that was woven in one piece, and it was seamless.

That to me is emblematic of the word of God. It's the outer garment of the Lord Jesus. You see that, you see the Lord Jesus.

And there's no seam, there's no flaw, there's no place where it begins and ends. It's perfect. And as many years as we've been looking at the word of God together, you know as well as I do the perfection of that weave, the beauty of it, the complexity beyond anything a human mind could imagine.

It's like science, we observe a lot of things, we don't invent them. We didn't develop the multidimensional system of subatomic particles, and we didn't fix all of the great constants of the universe and decide, well, let's make the charge on a proton this much. You know, it's all we can do just to observe.

And when we observe its beauty and its intricacy and its balance and its symmetry, you know, we're in awe. Anybody is in awe. Not everybody's in awe for the right reasons, but you can't help but see that it's an awesome creation.

Well, the word of God is the pinnacle of God's creation, and it is exponentially even more perfect than the creation around us. So at the end, it will speak and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it.

You had to tarry in chapter one, after praying and praying, you had to wait for answer. Well, the human race is gonna have to tarry waiting for this answer. It will not tarry.

Behold the proud. And this is our last point for tonight. The word proud here is really kind of problematic.

There are lots of words for proud. This word is actually from that complex of words that has to do with going up or even puffing up. And you say, well, it's an elevated attitude.

It's kind of a strange way to say the proud. And you'll see this if you look at modern English translations. It's translated in several different ways because of this.

But the idea here isn't Allah, to go up or to be high and lifted up. This is a fall. And it means to get bigger in the vertical direction or to move in a vertical direction, to swell, to puff, to it's got kind of a, I don't know, sort of a mushroom cloud notion to it.

It's something that swells, but in sort of an airy kind of way. It's not, you know, they built the Tower of Babel and it off all up to heaven. It's not solid.

It's a, you know, knowledge puffs up, love builds up. It's the puff up idea. So it's not so much proud in the sense of, you know, pride goeth before a fall and all of that.

All of this is a fall. Pride goeth, I just made a nice little word play. A-P-H-A-L is the root word here.

Pride goeth before a fall. That's for Dan's benefit. But it actually has the idea of being heedless.

You're just kind of up on a cloud. You know, we talk about people having their head in a cloud. Yeah, it's a fall.

It's the puff. So it's not so much, look at me. I've got my elbows to my sides because I'm so great.

It's more of a heedlessness and I'm not connected to reality very tightly. And that's why it says, the one who reads these tablets will run. The message is on tablets of stone.

And the one who reads them is gonna have his feet on the ground and is going to run. He's connected. Habakkuk is going to get up in a tower of stone.

It's stability. It's connected to the foundations in this way. A fall, the guy riding on a bubble is not so.

His soul is not upright. Because he's not connected to the ground, it's like having no rudder on your ship. You know, you just got a flat bottom scow of some kind and you can't keep the vertical.

You don't have anything for your rudder to dig in and pry with. And that's what chapter two, verse four actually means. The one riding a bubble of hot air, his soul, and you've got that nephesh idea.

It's all kind of airy. He's in a bubble and his nephesh, his wind, his invisible self doesn't have any reference to go vertical. But the just, the righteous will live.

He will abide. And this is life, not only the sense of existence, but life in the sense of fruitfulness. He will live by his faith.

And this yet idea is the same root from which God's name comes. I am that I am. This is the I am verb.

And the just, there's the implication that you partake of God and of his life by Emunah, E-M-U-N-A-H. It's a beautiful word in Hebrew. And it means, it's attributed to God as faithfulness, the faithfulness of God.

And it also means your trust, my trust, in the faithfulness of God. It's connected at both ends. It is faith on this end, it is faithfulness on God's end, and that whole complex is Emunah.

Faithfulness of God is meaningless if you don't trust in it. And your trust is meaningless if it is directed at something ethereal, something ephemeral, something transient, and of the a fall characteristic. Your trust can't be in a balloon, it's got to be in the solid rock.

That's the idea. Well, despite my intentions, our review has basically brought us back to where we ended a month ago. So we'll pick up at chapter two, verse five next time.

But hopefully with more of this as a context, because this next section of Habakkuk is the central section. It stands on the pillars of chapter one and chapter three. Chapter three being Habakkuk's praise response to God for everything that God says and does and is going to do as expressed in this book.

But chapter two is really the crux. And so we're slowing down to take a good look at it. I just want to be sure we've got that foundation so that this beautiful stone in the center is upright.

We'll close here for tonight in word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for its pertinence and its relevance.

The fact that it was written down for us in antiquity is so typical of your eternity and your seeing the end from the beginning of being in the beginning and being at the end and comprehending everything in between. And we are humbled. We are grateful that you care for us, that you have purchased us with the blood of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And because of that and because of him, you treat us as precious. You take your time, you teach us, you mature us and you incorporate us into this beautiful fabric of your plan. We thank you for that.

We thank you for the opportunity. We pray that the things we've studied tonight will equip us to fulfill that goal and that purpose and allow us to identify and achieve those good works for which we were called and in which we are to walk. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.