

Kings and Prophets 16-01-28

This is Thursday, the 28th of January, 2016, which, if I remember right, is the 30th anniversary of the Challenger disaster. I was teaching school that day, and we actually brought a TV into my science class and watched that coverage with my high school students, which included Diana, on this day 30 years ago. But it is the 28th, and we continue our study tonight in the book of Habakkuk as a part of our Kings and Prophets study.

We'll be in Chapter 3. We'll take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and then begin. Father, it is a privilege to be enabled and empowered by the presence of Your Spirit, to be encouraged in the presence of fellow believers, to enjoy fellowship and motivation and recognition of the wonderful potentials that You have put before us in saving us and in relating us to Yourself through the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that as we look at this portion of Your Word tonight that Your Holy Spirit will make it clear and understandable and meaningful to each one of us in a way that is life-changing, in a way that sustains us and guides our thinking as we seek to live our lives in a way that pleases You and glorifies our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray it in His name. Amen. You remember Habakkuk is at the beginning of the final generation in the southern kingdom of Judah.

Some 40 or 50 years ahead, there is the end of both the southern and northern kingdoms. The northern kingdom is already gone. Judah is going to be attacked and sacked three different times by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C., in 597-598, and then in 586-587 along in there.

It depends on who you read and who you talk to, but 605, 598, and 586, that's the years I like to use. And this is more in the realm of about 650-645 B.C., back just before and at the inception of the reign of King Josiah and the beginning of Jeremiah's reign. You have Nahum and Zephaniah and a few other prophets holding forth as well.

The reason I review that is for general context, but also because one of the great prophets that we have studied and are familiar with has already exercised his ministry in the northern kingdom, and that is the prophet Isaiah. He is known in the northern and the southern kingdom both. He was a major prophet.

And if you keep your finger in Habakkuk and turn back to Isaiah, I just want to quickly review a particular passage in Isaiah 6. Isaiah 6. I don't mean to be confusing. He was, of course, a prophet to Judah and in Judah, but his words were known up north as well, and he prophesied during a time when they were still in existence. But he is predicting what is now starting to come to pass in the southern kingdom.

Isaiah is. And in the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up. The train of His robe filled the temple, seraphim, six wings, three pairs.

Holy, holy, holy. The whole earth is full of His glory. There is the earthquake effect there in verse

4. He says in verse 5, Woe is me, for I am undone.

I am a man of unclean lips. I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. My eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

My eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then one of the seraphim flew, had a coal, touched my mouth. Has touched your lips, your iniquities taken away, your sin is purged.

I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? I said, Here I am, send me. He said, Go and tell this people. This is what's pertinent to our study tonight.

Now go and tell this people, Keep on hearing, but do not understand. Keep on seeing, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people dull and their ears heavy, And shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed.

How did Isaiah start out? What did he say? Woe is me. Why? My eyes have seen, But the people see and don't perceive. They hear and they don't understand.

Their heart is calloused over. And he says, Go and preach the message. Make the heart of this people dull.

Now is that people who would otherwise respond and they would be anxious to have faith and be obedient and fruitful and righteous and serving and worshiping the Lord God? What does it mean when he says, Make, in verse 10, Make the heart of this people dull. If I go through an entire week and never see a green pepper, then I express no attitude about a green pepper. But if you bring me a green pepper and chop it up in front of me and tell me that's supper, you have made me have an attitude that I would not have otherwise manifested.

That's what this is talking about. Go and preach the message and it will force a reaction. And God says, I already know what the reaction is going to be.

You go forth and bring it out. Make it plain. Cause it to manifest.

When you preach this word, you're going to see these blind eyes and deaf ears and calloused hearts. Nobody's talking about this. Nobody is manifesting these attitudes overtly because the word is not being clearly taught and clearly presented.

But when Isaiah goes out and preaches this message, it is going to, in effect, make the eyes blind, make the ears deaf, and make the hearts calloused because that is what people are going to choose to do when they hear the message. Makes sense, right? Okay. Chapter 3. Do you remember the structure of the book? I'm not going to go over it again.

This is the psalm. This is the prayer. Because Habakkuk asked a question and God answered it.

Habakkuk had a second concern and God addressed that. Do you remember the two

questions? I don't need to go over that, right? Okay. Well, keep in mind now that based on God's answer, based on Habakkuk's observation of the people of Judah, he knows in present observation what Isaiah saw incipient and beginning to happen.

They were already growing cold, indifferent, deaf, blind, insensate in Isaiah's day. It has done nothing but go downhill so that when Habakkuk looks around very near the end of the southern kingdom, the apostasy and the indifference to God are at a level of maturity that is now ripe for the judgment that Isaiah predicted. Make sense? So don't forget Isaiah because Habakkuk knows Isaiah.

He knows that prophecy. He has heard the word of God. He is familiar with it.

We know this. We know that's why he's such a wonderfully perceptive believer, why he has gone up into his tower and he's comforted by what God tells him. Yes, I'm going to use the evil nation to discipline this nation, but it is not permanent.

It is not a wiping out. It is a judgment that is designed to prune the tree so that it can start bearing fruit again. So he is now, Habakkuk, going to respond to the answers to his two concerns, his two questions in chapter one and chapter two, the woes that were pronounced.

Remember those? The five woes in chapter two? Okay, so now this is his response. First point of observation, interpretation, and application here is when we learn things about God from God's word, it's a great thing to pray. It's a great thing to incorporate into our prayers.

Pray it back to God. You know, it's an old, oft-reviewed principle that the more you interact with a piece of information, the better you remember it. Those of you that are still in school, it's one thing if you're sitting there half daydreaming, you're staring off and you hear the drone of the teacher's voice or the lecture or whatever the thing is and someone says, you know, the diameter of a circle is πd or some such thing.

Is that right? The radius, πr^2 , whatever it is. The circumference is πr , something, is that right? No, that's the area. Yeah, $2\pi r$, which is πd . $2r$ is d . So, and the area of a circle is πr^2 because you get square, that's the only way I can remember it.

Stuff like that. So, people are saying this and you have about the same grasp of it that I do because I haven't even thought about it until this moment in a great long time. But, if you are forced to do some problems using that formula and solve it and interact with it and you see it and you read it and you work it into your thinking, it sticks with you much longer.

And back in the Neanderthal days when I did geometry problems, I learned it well enough that I can still dredge up that formula from some dark place in my memory because I had to work with it. Same thing here. Same thing here.

A prayer of Habakkuk upon Shigionov. This was, it's been speculated that this was a tune or a

musical form that was somewhat energetic, that was maybe like a Beethoven symphony or something, something that had some memorable rhythm to it. But, it is plural and it is designed to be reviewed, to be thought about more than once.

He says, O Lord, I have heard your speech and was afraid. O Lord, revive your work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years, make it known.

In wrath, remember mercy. We looked at this last time and I was just deeply dissatisfied because I couldn't make much sense out of that. Can you make sense out of it? I get the first part, O Lord, I have heard your speech, although we don't hear the voice, I've never heard the voice of God.

Thank God. I think it would scare me to death. And then I would be wondering, was it really the voice of God or did I imagine it? But, I have heard your speech.

We say, well, that's your report. We saw the Net Bible translation. I have heard the report.

But this is, I have shamad the shamah, basically. I have heard what there is to be heard. It's the word.

And it says, I was afraid. And this is, fear is Yara, Y-R-A. But I see it comes from Rah, which is R-A-H.

And it's easily confused. In fact, a lot of people don't know. Is he saying I saw or I feared? So just keep that on board.

We have an option here. It's perfectly legitimate in Hebrew to translate this. It's either I was afraid or I saw.

Then he says, oh Lord, revive your work in the midst of the years. I want to slow down here and bear with me. This is going to get a little bit, a little bit stumpy to walk through.

But it's like walking through a bit of a briar patch. But just hang with me for about a minute to a minute and a half. Because we're going to retranslate this verse.

I personally, and this is just me and a few others. I don't think this is what this verse is trying to say. So let me give you a little bit of Hebrew here, because Hebrew is fun.

It's a prayer of Habakkuk upon Shiginoth. And it says, the first word in Hebrew is Yahweh. It's actually Yehoah.

Yehoah. It's pointed with the vowel points of Adonai. But it's the consonants of Yahweh.

That's where the Germans got, because they can't say Y and they can't say W, they got Jehovah. So it's Yahweh. It's the first word.

Y-H-W-H. The Tetragrammaton. First word in the prayer.

Translated here, O Lord. Good so far. Shammati shamakah.

Shammati is shamah with me on the end, with myself, T. I shamad. Then shamakah. Kah is you.

So I heard what was to be heard of you. Now, it could be a report about you. It could be what you said.

It's shamakah is what is it that can be heard from you, of you, about you, by you. That's the way Hebrew is. It's very poetic.

But it's interesting because you have shamah, shamah. Shamati, I heard. Shamah kah, the hearing of you.

I heard the hearing of you. And it connects Habakkuk to the Lord in the sense of hearing. Then the next word is Yerah T. Y-R-A.

Remember I said Yerah is the word for I fear. But Yerah on the front of Rahah also means I see. Then you have the Tetragrammaton again, Yahweh.

Then you have pahal kah. Pahal is basically works. Kah is you.

Now, thinking back, hang with me now. We're going to connect Habakkuk to Isaiah chapter 6. Woe is me, I have seen. God says you go give the message, seeing they will see and not perceive, hearing they will hear and not understand.

The verbs in Isaiah chapter 6 are Rahah and Shamah. What is Habakkuk saying here? This is what I think he's saying. And while I can't prove myself right, nobody can prove me wrong.

Because this is poetic Hebrew, so I get to say what I think it means and people can thumbs up or thumbs down. This is what I think it means. Oh Lord, I have heard your word.

I have seen, oh Lord, your work. Let me repeat that. Oh Lord, I have heard your word.

I have seen, oh Lord, your work. Make sense? Now, I have heard, I have seen. So what kind of guy is he? Is he an Isaiah kind of guy or Southern Kingdom of Judah kind of people that are going to be dull, calloused and headed for judgment? He's a good guy.

And I think he knows Isaiah. I think he knows chapter 6 really well. And I think he says, oh Lord, I am one who sees and I am one who hears.

But when I see, when I hear your word and when I see your work. How many things is that by the way? Word and work. Count them.

How many? Two. That's two things. If you have two kings and you want to talk about them in Hebrew, and I've looked all over the Old Testament and found multiple instances of this.

The word for both or two is shanim. S-H-A-N-I-M. Which also happens to be the word for years.

Identical same word but derived from two different etymologies. Shana means to change. So the word years, shanim, comes from the changes.

You know, they talk about ringing the changes. Well, the change, when the seasons have changed and now you're repeating, that's a year. So when they say seven years, you know, manumission of domestic servitude in Israel, seven years, it's shanim.

Seven changes. Seven Passovers. Seven cycles where everything has changed and now it's starting to be the same.

It's repeating. Shanim. So shana means to change.

Well, it also means two or both. So I'm going to suggest, and I wouldn't die for this, but I'm going to suggest that if you fix the verb in the first line to see, I have heard your word. Oh Lord, I have seen your works.

In the midst of both, in the midst of the two, in the midst of your words and in the midst of your works. See what I mean? In the midst of those two, your words and your works. Because we hear Isaiah six, what God says, we see with our eyes what God does, what God has done.

Habakkuk says, I get that. I'm getting the same message from what I hear you saying and what I see you doing. Oh Lord.

And in the midst of those two, in the midst of those two, cause it to live. What's the great Hebrew toast that you hear at a wedding and so on? They put their glasses on high and what do they say? L'chaim. Chaya with a hard ch at the beginning.

Chayim is life. It's actually a dual. It's like life to the fullest.

It's emphatic like shamayim, the heavens. But la means to, to life. L'chaim.

Well, chaya means to live. This is a PL imperative. It's an intensive and it's a request that God would make it or him.

We had ti for me and kha for you, right? Now we have u, which is it or him. So in the midst, and by the way, midst is kerev, and kerev means the inward part, the middle of a thing. Kerev, you know, you cut a thing and that's what's inside.

The sword and the spirit, the joints and the marrow, the whole thing, right? So in the midst, in the middle, in the midst of these two things, cause it to live. Cause what to live? It's poetry. He hasn't told us what it is yet.

It's going to come in the next line. In the midst of the two, may it live. Cause it to live.

Next line, make known. This is from yada to know, but this is todaya. And this is another imperative form here.

It's an imperfect used as an imperative. Make known in anger, rahem. This is manifested compassion.

This is to be compassionate. This is to show mercy. So my suggested translation of this whole thing, and this is the, this is the punch line here.

Let me get the Hebrew back up here. Cause I, I've got to follow it. Oh Lord, I have heard your word.

I have seen, Oh Lord, your work in the midst of the two, in the midst of both. Cause it to live in the midst of both. And then he repeats that again, but carev in the midst of both.

Cause it to live in the midst of both and see that's going to make a parallel so that we can figure out what it is in the midst of both. Remember to make known compassion in anger. Remember in anger to make compassion known.

That's probably how I would write it down. Remember in anger to make compassion known. You have the words there for anger.

You have the word for compassion and you have the word for remember. And twice we have in the midst of the two. So now let's think about the whole context of Habakkuk.

The first two chapters, there's rampant evil. There is departure from covenant responsibility. There is apathy and difference.

There is outright bail worship. The people in the Southern kingdom are worse than the people in the Northern kingdom were, if that's even possible. But what makes it worse is they're doing it in the shadow of the temple.

They're doing it in the region of Mount Zion. They're doing it in God's capital and in God's very presence. The people who should know better after all of the teaching, going back to the days of Jehoshaphat and the wonderful Bible classes they had for so many years.

These people have gone from bad to worse to worst. So God says, I'm going to bring in the Babylonians and I am going to wax these people flat. I am going to wreak havoc and destruction.

And Habakkuk says, well, I know I wanted the evil in our land remediated, but are you going to remediate it with a worse evil? And God says, look, I'll deal with the worse evil also. And I am not going to utterly destroy the people, but this is a part of the long view. This is the plan over a long period of time.

I will work it together for good. Habakkuk says, okay, well, I'm going to get up in the tower and watch. Now in his prayer, as he thinks about this, he knows God's record in the past of judgment.

He knows about the flood. He knows about Egypt and the plagues. He knows about what happened to the Amorites when they first came into this land, that they're about to be taken captive back out of.

He knows this. He knows what God did to the Israelites in the wilderness when they complained at Meribah, when the quail, and they were dying with quail between their teeth, when they were bitten by serpents and had to look to the bronze. He knows how severe the judgment of God can be.

And he knows from Isaiah that God's word says these people are going to be judged and he knows God's works in the past. So what is his prayer by extension? As we look around in our day and we see rampant decay and disintegration of moral values at every turn, the active wanton destruction of Christianity, the abandonment of the core teachings and doctrines of Christianity by people claiming the name of Christ, it's horrific. And a lot of it has been happening while, you know, many of us were just working and finishing school and try to get stuff done.

Somebody changed out the country and changed out the churches and changed out the peoples in the pew and changed everything out. And now when you go out there, it's unrecognizable. It's, it's horrible.

And we know that the judgment of God will come upon people who lose their way and forsake their first love. Read Revelation chapter two and three judgment is coming. So how do you pray? What do you pray? Habakkuk is praying such a prayer at such a time.

And what does he say? Lord, I have heard your word and I have seen your works. We have heard God's word and we've seen God's works not only in, in his word, but in our own lives. We know those things and we know that he is a righteous and Holy God and we know that he will not countenance rebellion and sin of the high hand and want an apostasy on the part of his people.

He will judge. So how do we pray? Habakkuk says, Lord, I've I've heard your word and I've seen your works. Oh Lord, I know the judgment is rightfully coming.

And if I could paraphrase, I'm cool with that, but Oh Lord, in the midst of the fulfillment of your word and the midst of the execution of your works of judgment, please remember in your anger, mercy to Habakkuk, God's word and God's works are equally real, equally firm, equally, uh, almost tangible realities. And he says, I know your anger is coming and just put me in the cleft of the rock with your hand over me. When the storm comes in the midst of your anger, Oh Lord, remember to be compassionate for those of us who do see and do here.

It's a fair thing to pray. Don't you think? Oh Lord, remember me, remember us, remember your mercy, your compassion, because that's also a part of your word and also a part of your work in anger. The anger part of the word and work.

Remember the compassion part of your word and work. It's a wonderful way to open a prayer. That's what I think the prayer begins with.

So then this, the rest of this now is, is going to follow that theme. So you'll remember God came from Taman, the Holy one from Mount Paran. This is Sinai.

This is the mountain quaking and shaking with the giving of the law. By the law comes the knowledge of sin. Um, on the testimony tour through witnesses under the law, a man could be executed.

You pick up sticks on the Sabbath, you're stoned. It's, it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, right? His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was like the light.

He had rays flashing from his hand. By the way, the, when it says rays flashing from his hand, the way this is constructed, there's the idea of two rays in his hand. There's, there's a dual idea here.

And I think it's poetically harking back to the word and the works. God has magnified his word above his name. His name is his reputation for his works.

So there, these are like horns or, or rays. These are flashings forth. And the, the connotation here is that there are two of them.

So you could almost translate this. He has two rays or two horns in his hand. And there it says his power is hidden.

But this is a strength. And then this word that's translated hidden is actually the word for covering. But the idea there for, for covering may not be the one that is, it may be just the opposite.

Remember that it is only the splendor of light hide at the, and if you look at the net Bible, I think they, they caught this nuance. This is the outward display of his power. This is just what you see.

This, this is what you can see and stand and not die. The it's, it's the, you could look at the Lord Jesus. He is God, but you can see him and not die.

And so the idea of this not so much hidden, but covered it's, it's, it's seeable. It's you, you can, you can perceive this and, and still be alive. But it is the manifestation of God's divine essence.

That is such that if it wasn't covered, you would die along with it. It sort of poetically speaks of the covering of the hand. When Moses is in the cleft of the rock, I will cover you with my hand.

Remember Psalm 91 under the, under the wings, under the shelter, you're covered when this judgment comes. So with the flashing forth of these two rays, God's word and God's work, his

power is, is hidden in the sense that, that there is a cover that protects those who know what it is and recognize it for what it is. Notice before him went pestilence and fever followed his feet.

Disease followed his feet. This is the judgment. This is the, this is the promise, the fulfillment, the curses.

You remember Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, the blessings and the curses. I will bring on you all of those things that I have brought on the Amorites because their iniquity is full. If you follow in their ways, you will share in their judgment.

And this is that pestilence and disease. Then it says he stood and measured the earth in verse six. Well, again, this, this, this word translated measure is mud mood.

Actually it's M U D in Hebrew. Um, but it's, it's actually an Hebrew because it's got so few letters. Sometimes you get a choice of words and maybe the scribes understood it one way, but there's another word that's got essentially the same constants.

Maybe they just pointed it differently, but this is the word that means to shake. And in the context, shake makes a lot more sense than measure. God's not coming down to see how tall the mountain is.

God is coming down to destroy the mountain, to turn big ones into little ones, to mash things up and crack it and break it and melt it. And this is God in judgmental wrath in the anger that Habakkuk said, Lord, I know you're angry. Please remember your compassion.

I'd like to be Noah in the ark. I'd like to be Moses in the cliff. I'd like to be, you know, Elijah at the brook while everybody else is suffering famine.

Oh Lord, remember compassion. So with these double rays, his power is hidden. His power is covered.

We, we have some protection here. We've got the shielding, you know, those when they did the nuclear test, the guys were in the bunkers with the thick glass and the, the welding goggles and you know, the lead impregnated and everything to try to shield the radiation. It's there, there's a cover, there's a shield between.

He stood and shook the earth. He looked and startled the nations. This is, he makes them jump literally.

It's, it doesn't mean to startle. It means make them jump. So shake and jump are the same thing.

Then they, they're destabilized. They're not firm. They're not standing still.

He's shaking the earth and the nations are moving. They're, they're jumping. The ancient mountains crumble, break in pieces.

What's the point of measuring them? If you're just going to crumble them into, into pieces, he's not measuring them. He's shaking them. They crumble.

And the, this is La Olam. Ancient means that they've been there forever. People thought, well, that mountain will never disappear.

Well, God breaks it up like a dry cookie. It's, it's just falling all apart and the ancient hills are flattened. In verse six, you have all of these references to ancient to what is old and it's, it's Olam.

So the, uh, the mountains of, of old, this is odd or Olam in, in all of these cases, uh, they're old, but they are shattered. Um, the, the old ways, the old highways though, you know, the old look, here's a deer track. This, this is a hunting trail that goes back to the days of the native Americans.

Well, it's wiped out. Uh, when it says he, um, uh, his ways are everlasting. Uh, the, that's not what it's saying that that would be a change of idea.

The, the old pathways are as destroyed as the mountains and as the hills. So, uh, the hills, uh, the mountains are collapsing the hills and the ways are, uh, are falling apart to him or for him, or because of him in his presence. That's the idea.

We saw last time, the tents of Kushan and the curtains of the land of Midian. Everything is shit. These are the, some of the oldest nations, some of the most ancient civilizations they've been around forever, but their stuff is all shaking and crumbling and falling apart.

Everything that people look to for security, for stability. I was reading some economic advice and everybody says, Oh, you know, the 2016 is going to be even worse. Uh, the, the great, uh, the, I was reading a guy that was talking about, stuff I couldn't even understand, but it's all supposed to unravel in 2016.

And they were saying, you know, the only thing that can save you is gold. Uh, you know, put your stuff in gold because gold will hold its value and everything else is falling down around your ears. And, and, uh, I read two different, uh, advisors and, and they were both saying the same thing.

And this guy has been giving advice for like 50 years and he's predicted all kinds of things in the past. He says 2016, the economy, uh, and, and by the way, what he wrote was written in December of 2015. And he, I am reading an article that was written in December and he said, the stock market is going to tank, which of course it did this month.

Uh, the beginning of this year, it did. And, and this guy had written it like two weeks ahead of time. So I was reading on what he said.

And he said, it, he said, this, these are just shocks before the big one. And he said, you better,

I'm telling all my investors to get out of these things. The only people that are going to do well or some kind of foreign stock and gold.

But he, he said that there are people who are actually predicting that gold could potentially, and they have graphs and they say, you know, percentage wise of this. And I don't understand it, but they're saying the price of gold could actually go to, you know, \$20,000 an ounce sometime in the next few years, because everything else is going to be so valueless. And all of these, uh, uh, what do you call them? Uh, currencies, Fiat currencies.

Everybody's going to finally realize that they've been printing this stuff on toilet paper and it's worthless. And unless you've got, uh, precious metals in your hand, not a piece of paper that says you own one, but this guy with a 50 plus year track record is telling all of his people by gold, get small pieces because you're going to need, you know, you don't want to try to bite off pieces of a full ounce because they're going to be incredibly valuable. But what he said that I thought was interesting is, um, that, uh, that's the one secure thing.

Go, go to the precious metals, go to gold. What this verse is saying is all of the things that people think, well, this has always been the safe haven. This has always been the bastion.

Habakkuk here is saying all of that stuff is going to crumble as well. When the Lord goes into judgment, nothing is safe. Nothing on this earth is safe.

If you're relying on the earth, whether it's a mountain, whether it's an ancient highway, whether it's an old civilization, I'll go hide out with the Moabites like, uh, Naomi's family did. You know, it's a famine. I'll go to Moab.

You know, they always do well in Moab. Well then Moab, everybody dies. That didn't work out.

This is what Habakkuk is saying. When God decides he's going to judge his people there, you cannot escape. There is no place safe unless God remembers mercy in the midst of fulfilling his word and fulfilling his work.

You have got to go to God and remind him that in his word and in his work is also compassion. Compassion on whom? On whom? Isaiah chapter six. When you see, do you perceive? When you hear, do you understand? Is your heart receptive? Are you a Proverbs two son of God that inclines her ear, applies their heart, lifts up their voice, cries out, seeks it as silver, searches for it as for hid treasure.

Do you have faith in the word of God and in the work of God? When you see disaster and judgment coming, do you remember? But this is my father. And although he is angry, he's not angry with me because I am not in line for judgment. Faith is a tricky thing.

A lot of people think, well, I've got to have, I've got to have something to convince me. I can't just look at passive evidence. I, you know, God needs to smack me in the head.

God needs to do a miracle. God needs to, you remember the rich man in Lazarus? I was, I was trying to go back and listen to Luke 16 and discovered that both the parables and the Luke series on the web don't have our Luke 16 coverage in either case. I've got to dig the tapes out and get them, get them posted and so on.

Our whole parable series from 99 is, is not up. I've got to, got to fix that. But I was thinking about Luke 16, rich man in Lazarus.

Remember what Abraham says to the rich man? When the rich man says, send Lazarus, the old dog licked scabby guy, let him dip his finger in water to cool my tongue. I'm not so worried about what he looks like or what he smells like, or how many dogs have licked him anymore. Let him dip his finger in water and put it right on my tongue because that's how bad off I am.

What does Abraham say to the rich man when he says, go send Lazarus to my brothers who are still alive on the earth so that they do not come to this place. They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear those words in the law.

And the prophets are the word and the work of God. It isn't. I believe because God gave me an impression.

It isn't. I believe because God appeared. Jesus appeared at my foot of my bed in the middle of the night.

I had a vision. I was struck by a ball of lightning. An angel came, the flaming sword waved in front of my burrow or something.

It is the word and it is the work. It is the record and it is evidence. We have a record in the rocks.

We have a record in the background radiation of the space. The Hubble telescope can show us stuff that's trickling in from the past via these tired out photons that have been flying across the universe for thousands, millions of years, finally get here. I always feel like I sort of have an obligation to go out and look at the stars at night because here this photon has traveled across all this vacuum of space.

That particular photon, if I don't go out and let it hit my retina, it wasted the trip traveling all that way. And you get to the earth and you just hit a blade of grass and you're gone. What if it's cloudy? Yeah, what if it's cloudy? You know, it's Hank Williams, Jr. I went to all that trouble for nothing.

So, you know, it's good to go out and catch a few of them and say, Hey, good job. Nice trip. You know, a long way to go.

Sit down. Take your shoes off. Set a spell.

But, you know, we have the record and people are very ready to base their decisions and their thoughts on a record that's in the rocks that we interpret. Many interpretations. Many different

ways to construe it.

We pick a particular construction, a particular interpretation, and we build a faith system on that. Many ways to interpret what's in space. Is Einstein right or wrong? You know, is Hawking right or wrong? Is it quantum? Is it classical? Is it a melding of both? Is it, you know, quarks and the Large Hadron Collider and the stuff that they're getting? You know, the whole Large Hadron Collider thing is still just fleshing out a theory.

They fleshed out a theory that said the solar system was Earth-centric. And they made it work for a long time until it began to crack around the edges and they finally figured out, Oops, it's a solar system, not an Eartho system. And you've got Copernicus and the rest of it.

But they made it work for a while, but they goofed. Theories are being revised all the time because of the record and finding the data and interpreting it. Well, the Word of God is data.

And it is no more compelling than finding a leaf impressed in some ancient piece of shale and saying, Hey, a tree lived here a long, long, long time ago. A fish lived here a long, long, long time ago. Look, I can see his imprint.

How long ago? Well, I don't know. Well, the Bible is the imprint. The Bible is the Word and the record of God's works.

And even if you don't have the Bible, so many people have come to faith in God and they had no Bible. Why? What may be known of God is manifest in creation. Design, designer.

If you see a pulse out in the middle of space and it pulses a series of prime numbers, a series of prime numbers, well, that's some new piece of physics that we have. No, that's a sign of intelligence. The little gold plaque they bolted to some spacecraft and sent out in the middle of nowhere and, you know, they should have just bolted old Carl Sagan to it and let him fly out there and see who reads it.

You know, they put a phonograph record as though, well, we assume that they're going to have needles and figure out rotation and phonograph. But there's a recording on there and it's got like whale noises. They're going to, well, what is this? This planet's crying out because of indigestion or what are these sounds? They won't even know.

And there's a picture of a naked man and a naked woman and they're going to look at that and, you know, if they were spiders or something, they'd have no idea, except maybe it's prey, it's something to go eat. But here's the bottom line. God has a record of His Word.

That's the Bible. It's unique. Nothing else like it.

No other religion in the world comes close. It doesn't give us purpose. It doesn't promise conscious resurrection.

It doesn't provide, no other religion provides a solution for sin and for corruption to rebirth us

and fit us for an eternal life and explain why and how and whose plan it is. Individual, personal, relationship with the Creator God who made us for a purpose, the way we make things for a purpose. It's His Word and then it is His work.

Habakkuk says, I see those things and I know that there's a righteous God and He will cleanse and purge. And in that cleansing and purging, I think it would behoove me to remind Him of His promise of compassion in the midst of the execution of His anger. And that the rest of these verses talk about what's going to happen under the anger of God.

God tolerates the mountains and the valleys and these ancient ways for a while. But when those mountains are high places and there's Baal worship and Ashworth worship and all of these heinous practices taking place, God's going to come down and shake them to pieces and crumble them to dust. There is going to be pestilence in front of Him and disease behind Him as He goes through and executes judgment.

It's His Word. He has done it throughout history, especially in the Old Testament day that we have recorded here. Then He says in verse 8, O Lord, were you displeased with the rivers? Was your anger against the rivers? Was your wrath against the sea that you rode on your horses, your chariots of deliverance? The bow and oaths were sworn over the arrows.

We'll get into this next time. But the first part of this is all the judgment part. But you notice that word deliverance is chariot of salvation in verse 8. This is the second part.

This is what Habakkuk is reminding God to remember, that even as He is angry with all of these things, there is deliverance that is incorporated into it. It isn't a universal flood. There are eight souls saved by water.

It isn't a complete destruction of the northern and southern kingdoms. There is a remnant, Ezekiel, Daniel, Ananias, Mishael, Azariah, and hundreds of others going all the way down to the days of Mordecai and Esther. Right? And those faithful Jews who rise up and enter into their heritage.

So, bottom line, it is good to remember as we look around us and we expect the judgment of God and we will see the very mountains shake around us. Do not be stressed. Do not be unduly worried.

It's a good idea to take precautions. It's a good idea to know when you got to run out of the house without grabbing your coat and head for the hills. But no worries, no loss of sleep, because we remind God of what we know.

And we know that along with His promises of judgment and His righteous coming down with shaking and vengeance on evil and evildoers, that He also has promises of deliverance, of salvation, of preservation, of life. Words of life, even in the midst of judgment. So, this is a very powerful statement.

And Habakkuk just goes up and up in our estimation with every fresh night of study because he is so perceptive. He is one who sees. He is one who hears.

He is the exact opposite of those that God sent Isaiah to back in chapter 6. So, we'll straighten out and clarify a little bit the last half of this chapter next time so that we can appreciate the beauty of this poetic prayer. It is a comfort. It is an encouragement.

He is a kindred spirit to any believer who loves God, who is confident in God's mercy, God's love, God's provision, even in the midst of radical judgment. We'll close here tonight in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for the record of Your works. It gives us confidence. It gives us confidence.

It makes sense of our world and gives us light on our path to see clearly how we should live, what our priorities and goals should be, and how to accomplish them, how to walk that narrow road that leads through that straight gate of life. We know that as we do this, Your glory shines on us and reflects from us, even as it does the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that as we try to apply this in our own lives and remember that we are here to shine as lights in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation, that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us and guide us, bring to our minds the pertinent parts of Your truth that will help us to think and act and speak in a way that accomplishes Your purpose for us as we live the remainder of this life and await the soon return of Your Son, the Lord Jesus.

We pray these things in His name. Amen.