

The Book of Habakkuk

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(1992 Study)

The following notes on the Book of Habakkuk were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1992. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “**Question**”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

Note: The following study on Habakkuk was done in 1992. Events since the year 2000 indicate the likelihood that Islam and the Muslims will prove to be the antitype of the Chaldeans.

THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1992)

Introduction

The Book of Habakkuk was probably written during the reign of King Jehoiakim and after the Book of Nahum. More specifically, Habakkuk was written 15 to 20 years before 606 BC, which would be in the range of 621-626 BC.

The name Habakkuk means “wrestle, wrestling”—hence the mental and moral struggle presented in Habakkuk’s prophecy. (The verbal form of the word has to do with “cling” or “clasp.”) As we proceed, we will see that the perspective of Habakkuk’s prophecy is that of the Great Company. Therefore, by extension, the Book of Habakkuk pertains to the mental and moral struggle or condition of the Great Company, a righteously inclined class who will have problems after the Little Flock is off the earthly scene.

The Book of Habakkuk is most famous for a Scripture quoted several times in the New Testament: “The just shall live by his faith” (Hab. 2:4). See Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38. There is a lot behind Habakkuk’s statement that the just shall live by faith.

Bible Students consider the most unusual text in Habakkuk to be Habakkuk 2:2,3, “And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it [seems to] tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” Pastor Russell outlined the divine plan on a chart; he showed explicit time features on the Chart of the Ages.

Another unusual text in this book is Habakkuk 3:17-19, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.” The Pastor was the first one to explain this text, which applies to the Great Company. It gives the sentiments and declarations of the Great Company when they are strengthened *after* the Church is complete, *after* Babylon has fallen, *after* they have suffered shame and sadness because they missed the chief prize, and *after* the governments have fallen. In other words, the Book of Habakkuk presents and/or expresses the apprehension, the testing of faith, and the trials of the Great Company *after* the Church is gone.

Of course the Prophet Habakkuk wrote about conditions in his day and in 606 BC in the type, but the antitype pertains to the Great Company in the near future. *Reprint* article No. 622 entitled “Habakkuk’s Prophecy,” a one-page article, discusses the book as a whole.

Hab. 1:1 The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.

Verse 1 is a subtitle for the entire Book of Habakkuk: “The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.” The message begins abruptly with verse 2.

Hab. 1:2 O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!

In verses 2-4, the prophet described his feelings and experiences at the time he gave this

message. That time was shortly before judgment was to be executed upon Judah and Jerusalem in 606 BC by the Babylonians (called the Chaldeans in the Book of Habakkuk).

A turbulent picture is being described of evil conditions surrounding the righteous continually. The message begins with “O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear!” Habakkuk witnessed all the spoiling, violence, strife, contention, slackness of the Law, the wicked encompassing the righteous, wrong judgment, etc.—in short, a condition of *lawlessness*.

This situation was also Lot’s experience in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which were destroyed because of *iniquity*. Wickedness was everywhere. *Lot’s righteous soul was vexed daily* by the evil conditions he saw (2 Pet. 2:8). He was extricated from Sodom just as the city was going to be destroyed, being yanked out at the *last minute*. In antitype, the Little Flock will not be on the scene at this time, for just as Abraham saw the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah *from afar*, so the Little Flock will witness the destruction of Christendom from heaven.

At this time of evil, prophesied by Habakkuk, the nominal churches will already have been destroyed. Hence there will be *no religious* restraints and also *no political* restraints, for the governments, too, will have fallen. Anarchy and confusion will prevail. The Pastor explained these future events. Habakkuk 2:1-4 describes a *watchman* who was to write the vision on tables: “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.”

Let us consider the words of verse 2 again: “O LORD, how long shall I cry, ... and thou wilt not save!” Habakkuk expressed the feelings of the righteous class, who were perplexed and bewildered by what they saw and the slow response of God to correct the situation. Iniquity was abounding. “Why didn’t God stop it?” was their question.

As mentioned in the Introduction, Habakkuk 3:17,18 reveals the thinking of the Great Company class in the future after Christendom, including the governments, is destroyed. Chapter 1 also gives the sentiments of the Great Company, who will be perplexed by evil *so great* that the very survival of humanity is threatened with extinction. Matthew 24:22 adds, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” These texts are describing the *great Time of Trouble*.

Hab. 1:3 Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention.

Hab. 1:4 Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

Even the Great Company, let alone the Little Flock, must feel grieved about evil. Jesus and the Little Flock *love* righteousness and *hate* iniquity, and Lot was vexed. If the consecrated who remain after the Little Flock is gone are not greatly disturbed by the evil conditions, their destiny will not be life. The Great Company class *will mourn* the conditions and wonder why God does not stop them.

When mystic Babylon falls, God will *miraculously preserve* the Great Company class that is forced out. The truly consecrated will be kept alive for further experiences and development by God’s mercy so that they will, hopefully, get life. They must wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:13,14). The class of truly consecrated who are forced out of Babylon when the system falls will be less informed than the remaining consecrated in the Bible Student movement, who will be blessed with the mantle of Elijah that falls on them.

By far, the greater number of the Great Company at the end of the age will come out of Babylon when it falls, as compared with those who are left in the Bible Student movement after the feet members go beyond the veil. Those who leave Babylon as it falls—the vast majority—will be less informed. Hence they will be puzzled as to why God is permitting the evil conditions. Those with a present-truth background have been specially blessed to understand this philosophy. Therefore, Habakkuk was expressing the view of the preponderant number of the Great Company at the very end of the age. They will be praying earnestly for instruction.

Verse 4 says that the evil will be all pervasive because “the law is slacked.” The Torah is a compendium of righteous principles that are supposed to be in our civil law, for American law and English law are an offshoot of the Mosaic Law. The law will be “slacked” in the sense that it is not being carried out or enforced because unrighteousness and lawlessness prevail.

“Judgment [justice] doth never go forth: for the wicked [the vast majority] doth compass about the righteous.” If the majority follow libertine ways, how can the minority control the evil? They cannot—even though righteous laws are in the books. Technically speaking, all are condemned except those in Christ, for “none [are] righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). It is true that there are some nice people in the world with good sentiments, but they are a minority. “Therefore wrong [wrested] judgment proceedeth.”

“The wicked doth compass about [beset] the righteous.” When Lot was in his home, the wicked inhabitants of Sodom surrounded his house. Lot’s two guests would not have gotten out safely except they were angels. Sodom, from which Lot (the Great Company) was miraculously delivered, pictures Christendom. And so in the antitype, when the wicked beset the righteous, the wicked will be the majority, and they will prevail. Back there homosexuality and sodomy with animals were flagrant sins of the majority. Similarly, the great majority in the future will practice evil without restrictions.

IMPORTANT: *If faithful*, we will not be here when this evil condition exists, when the great tribulation occurs. We should pray to escape this trouble. “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36).

Hab. 1:5 Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

God’s unusual “work” is that He will raise up His Great Army to do a destructive work on Christendom. This evil class will be allowed not merely to providentially exist but also to have sufficient freedom to do their evil work of destruction. “And the LORD shall utter his voice before *his army*: for his camp is *very great*: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?” (Joel 2:11).

The Prophet Habakkuk had a dual role. Sometimes he expressed himself as the Great Company will see matters, but at other times, he expressed himself as a seer, as a prophet. When he prophesied, he took the role as if he were living at that future time.

Hab. 1:6 For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs.

In the type, the destruction by the “bitter and hasty” Chaldeans from the north was a pending situation. Verses 6-11 give insight into the characteristics of the enemy. The antitypical “Chaldeans” were described by the Pastor as communists, anarchists, nihilists, and socialists; that is, the Chaldeans constitute the Lord’s Great Army.

Q: “Babylon” is usually defined as the *religious* system in antitype. Does the term “Chaldeans” make the difference?

A: Here the Babylonians are the *attackers*. As such, they represent a *nonreligious* element that tears down the status quo. When Babylon itself is *being besieged*, then the term represents Christendom. The Chaldeans are related to Babylon.

Q: Based on recent events in Europe, is Pastor Russell’s definition of the Chaldeans as “communists” accurate?

A: He did not just say communism but included anarchists, nihilists, and socialists. The Latin *nihil* means “nothing,” and nihilists do not believe in any kind of government. They want to remain without any government so that they can exploit and kill or be killed. Anarchists tear down the current system but do not know what they will put in its place; they simply want something to replace the former. They are dissatisfied and want to get rid of the current government and start fresh but have no plans. Despite what has happened to the USSR, many are still communists at heart. There are also many discontented socialists around the world. Democracy is slow in getting things done, whereas communists in power just go ahead and do what they want. Gog and Magog will still come down from the north and embrace nations at large.

Verse 6 describes the Lord’s Great Army as a “bitter and hasty [fierce and tempestuous] nation,” a very cruel people. Before them, the land will be like the Garden of Eden; behind them, it will be a burning devastation—complete desolation (Joel 2:3). They will “march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces *that are not theirs*,” devouring as they go.

Comment: The Revised Standard Version has “earth” in verse 6: “For lo, I am rousing the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the *earth*, to seize habitations not their own.” That term shows a *worldwide* condition.

Hab. 1:7 They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves.

“Their judgment and their dignity shall proceed *of themselves*”; that is, they will not be curbed by any religious sentiments. When the nominal system is destroyed, there will be nothing to restrain mankind, only their own personal thinking. All false religions will be destroyed including Islam—and governments too. There will be no coordinated thinking, and each person will do as he pleases. This condition will be anarchy.

Hab. 1:8 Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.

The Pastor said that “horses” represent doctrines and that here they would be the doctrines of communism. It is true that communism spread rapidly and worldwide, causing the Cold War confrontation and having an appeal to the poorer despotic nations, but when we consider the meaning of this prophecy as a whole, the violence is seen to be *literal*. Many will *literally* be slain—worldwide. The great time of tribulation is a *worldwide* time of violence that will end in Jacob’s Trouble.

From this standpoint, the “horses” are the *means of travel*. The statement “they shall fly as the

eagle that hasteth to eat” emphasizes the *swiftness* of the travel. Armaments and the means of travel are greatly advanced since the Prophet Habakkuk’s day. Nations stockpile weapons of various kinds and armored tanks, and when anarchy occurs, the stockpile will be raided. Lawlessness and violence will prevail when there are no organized churches, armies, or police forces. Instead the “army” will comprise marauding terrorist bands—lawless bands that have the weaponry of modern warfare. They will be “more fierce than the evening wolves,” which hunt *in packs* at night.

“Their horsemen shall come *from far*.” The words “from far” suggest that the climactic end will occur in Israel. Gog will come down to Israel from afar while anarchy is occurring in all of the other nations.

Hab. 1:9 They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand.

The “east wind,” sometimes called the sirocco, is a dry, hot, withering wind that causes sandblasting (it collects a lot of sand and blows it).

“They [the Chaldeans] shall gather the captivity as the sand.” In Jacob’s Trouble, half of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go into exile (Zech. 14:2). The Chaldeans will take booty including some of the people; the remainder will be destroyed, made into a wilderness. The booty will also be food, gold, silver, etc. The phrase “as the sand” implies the booty will accumulate.

The Great Company will go off the scene *just before* Jacob’s Trouble occurs. When Gog invades the Holy Land, the fallen angels will materialize en masse, and one of their first objectives will be to destroy the Great Company, the righteous class. Thus in a very short time, the calling of all the consecrated will be finished. “Flesh and blood,” including the Great Company, cannot enter the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50). *As a group*, they will have to lose their lives at a specific time for a precise ending. The next objective of the fallen angels will be Israel. (The fallen angels hate all those connected with God’s plan.) God will then intervene in a battle royal. “Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee,” saith the Lord God (Jer. 30:11).

Q: How will the fallen angels get rid of the Great Company? What instrument will be used?

A: Just themselves and violence. Remember, governments will be gone at that time. Prior to the Flood, the fallen angels took whatever wives they chose. In the future, they will just as easily kill the Great Company. Also, prior to the mass materializations, while the feet members are still here, there will be partial or individual materializations to effect, or be, lying wonders.

Comment: Similarly, when Michael stands up, no being(s) will be able to stop him.

Reply: Exactly. And that is why Michael’s standing up is still future.

Hab. 1:10 And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it.

The pronoun “they” refers to the Chaldeans, who prefigure the Lord’s Great Army. The Chaldean area today is Iraq. In fact, Saddam Hussein even wanted to rebuild Babylon, and some Iraqis in this country (in the Midwest) call themselves Chaldeans.

The Lord’s Great Army will pull down the governments, and this verse shows a real arrogance and disdain for law and authority. “They shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn

unto them.” The Lord’s Great Army will not be part of the Establishment either religiously or politically. Rather, they will be an outside, rebellious, disenchanted group. Moreover, they are described in Scripture as God’s battle-axe or hammer, for His providences will favor circumstances for their development for the purpose of pulling down the established order (Isa. 10:15; Jer. 50:23). God will not sanction, or approve of, this class in either morals or character, but He will approve of the destructive work they accomplish.

“They shall heap dust, and take it” as they “deride every strong hold [or fortress].” This portion of verse 10 refers to tactics used in olden times. No matter how strong the fortress wall, the enemy (the Lord’s Great Army in this case) will devise a way to override it. *Nothing will stop them.* The “dust” alludes to making a ramp to get over the wall. Sometimes battering rams were used in the past—or a siege tower or fire or a siege. The Lord’s Great Army will be like locusts, climbing over everything in their way. Nothing will deter their onward march. The word “take” means “capture.” The Lord’s Great Army will capture every stronghold.

Hab. 1:11 Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god.

The Revised Standard Version correctly has “their” and “they” as pronouns, referring to the Chaldeans, the Lord’s Great Army. “Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men, whose own might is their god!” Gog’s mind will change when hooks are put in the nose to pull the host back (Ezek. 38:4). After destroying the Vatican and while battering Europe, Gog will turn toward Israel. Their “own might” (RSV) will be their god. We are reminded of the Daniel 11:38 description of Napoleon: “But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.” The “God of forces” refers to military might.

Hab. 1:12 Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

Verse 12, a paragraph break, starts to express thoughts of the Great Company. A righteous class, they will be puzzled over events that are happening. These thoughts continue through verse 17. In seeing the Lord’s Great Army, an irreligious and powerful force, tear down government and religious institutions (the old order), the Great Company will have mixed experiences: disappointment and chagrin followed by strengthening, then questioning, again strengthening, questioning, etc.

“We shall not die [as new creatures].” The Great Company from a present-truth background, as well as the Great Company from Babylon, will feel that there is still hope—that they can get life as spirit beings and not go into extinction (Second Death). The words “we shall not die” thus indicate a strengthening experience.

“O LORD, thou hast ordained them [the Lord’s Great Army] for judgment [to do a destroying work].” The Great Company will then understand that the trouble is a part of God’s plan.

“O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.” The King James margin has “O Rock.” A rock is a symbol of stability. Accordingly, the Great Company will realize that God’s omnipotence is not at all threatened by the Time of Trouble, that the lawlessness has been providentially overruled for correction and judgment.

Hab. 1:13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the

wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

Comment: Verse 12 indicates the Great Company has some understanding, but now they question why the trouble is not being stopped. Such contradictions exist in our very nature. We may profess one thing, but our words and/or actions are inconsistent at times with that profession.

Reply: The conditions of lawlessness will be a *test* upon this righteous class. They will waver back and forth on certain issues. They will have ups and downs, highs and lows.

Comment: It is a blessing to know in advance that both the Little Flock and the Great Company will have alternating discouraging and strengthening experiences. If we have foreknowledge of these experiences, then when we are discouraged, it will be of some comfort to know the Lord will help us.

Reply: Yes, to know the end of a matter and the details has definite instructional value. We will see more opposite experiences later in Habakkuk.

Verse 13 expresses questions asked all down the age, but conditions will be exacerbated and intensified in the future. It is one thing to see the Lord's Great Army pull down that which is old and effete and unjust and corrupt, but it is another matter to see this lawless element encroach upon a "righteous" class.

Hab. 1:14 And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them?

The Great Company class continue to question. Unsuspecting fish (people) will be taken suddenly in the net by the Lord's Great Army. When the Great Company see noble people and things being taken, they will ask, "Why doesn't God stop the trouble?" Ultimately, the Great Company will get the oil of understanding and zeal, as shown in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins in Matthew Chapter 25.

"That have no ruler over them." In the anarchy, the people will crave leadership, order, instruction, and help, but there will be no one. These conditions will eventually help the Great Company to wash their robes (Rev. 7:14). Instead of inspecting others, they will begin to be introspective. They will have to search their own hearts.

Hab. 1:15 They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad.

The Lord's Great Army, the ones casting in the net, will rejoice and be glad. They will have no moral restraints and will go after all, good and bad, and will be happy with their seeming success in exploiting others and with force being their god.

Hab. 1:16 Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.

The Lord's Great Army will worship "their net," their weapons, their own powers, as the reason for their success. As anarchy interrupts the food supplies, they will enrich themselves with the spoils of others—*worldwide*. They will march through the lands, taking what they want. Before them is the Garden of Eden; behind them is a desolate wilderness of looting, burning, and extinction. Remember, there will be no police or fire departments at this time.

Hab. 1:17 Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?

Verse 17 is a rhetorical question. The answer is obvious: No! The Lord's Great Army will be insatiable; they will know no end. As soon as they empty the net, they will cast it in again and again and again for more and more spoil. This element has existed all down the age, taking advantage of situations until they are stopped, but here the condition is so prevalent that only divine power will be able to stop them.

Hab. 2:1 I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd.

Notice the words "watch" and "tower." Isaiah 21:1-12 mentions a watchtower, and Pastor Russell was the watchman. Habakkuk Chapter 2 is the same interpretation but with a different perspective. The *Reprints/Watchtowers* contained current events that were pertinent—and thus constituted part of the watching.

Q: In what sense was the Pastor "reprov'd" or "argued with" (KJV margin) "concerning my complaint" (RSV)?

A: He had a questioning mind, but he could see existing conditions and hence wrote on "the permission of evil"—the result of his sober reflections on the subject. In wondering why God permits evil, the Pastor became philosophical and wrote down reasons. The primary reason is to give opportunity for the Church to be developed. Opposition from the world enables them to prove their love and loyalty for God. The permission of evil develops primarily the Church but also the world. In future ages when the world looks back, many will remember living the bulk of their lives under oppression from a clique of power. Those who get life will reflect on their former experience—physical or mental pain, oppression, poverty, etc.—and feel it was a valuable experience. That short time measured against eternity will be looked upon as a needed experience. Some with hard trials in the present life will be more appreciative of the Kingdom than those who lived in relative ease and luxury. God sees the ministry of evil as necessary; otherwise, He would not have permitted it. The Pastor gave constructive reasoning on the subject, but first, he had to have the puzzlement of mind to try to rationalize conditions. In fact, he abandoned Christianity (a Presbyterian influence) at one time and studied religions of the Orient, but they did not have the answer, so he studied the Bible. He then realized the Bible did not teach the church creeds. It will be comforting to the Great Company to have an understanding of the permission of evil during the anarchy. This understanding will increase their faith in God.

Q: Then do verses 1-3 indicate that the Great Company who come out of Babylon when it falls will get some instruction, some realization, that there was a dispensational messenger?

A: Yes, and that can occur quickly, in an hour or two, to those in the right frame of mind. They will quickly understand the philosophy of the permission of evil.

Hab. 2:2 And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

The words "write" and "tables" (charts) are significant. In other words, "Write and make a chart, a *visual aid*." The Chart of the Ages indicates trouble where the lower portion of the pyramid separates, showing the fall of the old order, Christendom.

Hab. 2:3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie:

though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

The Revised Standard is good: “For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.” Verse 3 indicates disappointment at first. The instruction “Though it [the vision] tarry [i.e., *seems to tarry*], wait for it” is directed to the Great Company class left behind. The disappointment of 1914 is hinted at here. The 1914 part of the vision was not seen with clarity, for although the vision *seemed* to tarry, it really does not. The vision, or chart, enables one to *run with instruction and wisdom*.

Comment: Isaiah 21:12 says, “If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.”

Reply: When the events anticipated did not materialize in 1914, one of two things happened. Either a person abandoned the matter, or he reinvestigated, as suggested in Isaiah 21:12. And that text continues to be important for us today.

Verse 3 suggests that after the initial disappointment, there will come a time in history when events transpiring on the earth will be so convincing that all of the consecrated will then see things are really coming to pass. For example, for those who are here when Gog starts to invade Israel, there will be no question that the event is occurring. Some of the Great Company will be here at that time. The vision will then “*speak*” in events, proving the age is ending.

Hab. 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

The first part of verse 4 is connected with verse 5 and thus will be discussed with that verse. Now consider just the last part of this verse: “But the just shall live by his faith.” What an outstanding expression here in Habakkuk! The Reformation Movement was predicated upon the statement “The just shall live by *faith*”—and not by ceremonial works and acts, which do not bring purification and justification. Since the term “the just” embraces *all* consecrated believers, the Great Company is included in this context. The consecrated are imperfect in the flesh but are justified through Christ, for the merit of his sacrifice justifies them.

What is faith? Hebrews 11:1 gives one definition: “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” We cannot see faith, but faith is very tangible. The heart is involved, and faith is a practical factor to the Christian because it has changed his life. It is *real*, and it is *solid*! The power that made and ordered the universe is real. From things that are seen, the unseen becomes a reality *through faith*. All can see the sun, for example, but faith goes *beyond* the sun to see a wise, intelligent Creator. Tenderness can be seen in the Creator by studying nature, as, for instance, in the delicateness and the variety of flowers. This encourages *natural* faith. Faith is also described as the exercise of the mind with respect to God and His promises.

What does faith mean in a practical way? We have already considered faith from *our* standpoint, and now we will consider faith from *God’s* standpoint. We say that God is faithful. “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). “Faith” can mean steadfastness, loyalty. God has made certain promises. When He has promised something, He is faithful. If we abide by His instruction, He will perform it. The problem is on *our* end. We *will get* the crown *if faithful unto death*, so from our standpoint, “faith” can mean trust in God.

In this Habakkuk setting of the Great Company class, faith is essential. Conditions will deteriorate to where there is *no human* possibility of help to restore order. Faith will be greatly tested under this condition and be very, very vital. Any of the potential Great Company who

lose faith will lose life, for loss of faith means loss of justification—and the Great Company class are *overcomers*.

Comment: The just shall get life by their *fullness of faith*. To be overcomers, they must get that degree of faith.

Reply: They have to exercise and maintain faith in order to get life.

Matthew 24:12 says of the Dark Ages, “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Those whose love waxes cold reap a destiny of Second Death, of extinction, for love becoming cold means forsaking the way. They get disenchanting because iniquity abounds in either the Church or the world. If faith crumbles, nothing is left. The anchor within the veil is gone (Heb. 6:19).

Therefore, verse 4 is dispensational advice to the Great Company. When these conditions exist, it will be absolutely necessary for them to hang on to their consecration vows in order to just get life. If faithful overcomers, the Great Company will live in the spirit realm by, or because of, their *faith*.

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:38,39). This text applies to both the Little Flock and the Great Company, although primarily to the Little Flock. Habakkuk 2:4 gives the same warning but particularly to the Great Company class at the end of the age. To get life, one must be faithful.

Hab. 2:5 Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people:

Verse 5 and the beginning of verse 4 begin to describe a class whose soul is “lifted up” and “not upright in him.” “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him.... Yea also, ... he is a proud man, ... who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.” This class is proud and has a desire that cannot be satisfied. Moreover, it gathers all nations unto itself; that is, this arrogant class is oppressing others. The Lord’s Great Army will particularly direct their wrath against this class, which does violence against land, city, and populace (see verses 6-8). The man of sin system also “transgresseth by wine”; that is, it uses false doctrine.

The third chapter of Habakkuk is a prayer of the prophet. Verses 1-16 tell how God will act mightily and be Judge. The mountains and the rivers, the sun and the moon, etc., will be affected. Verses 17-19, which describe the attitude of the Great Company class, take place in fulfillment *before* verses 1-16, for the earlier verses tell of *God’s wrath* in delivering Israel out of Jacob’s Trouble. Therefore, one segment of the chapter (verses 1-16) describes the *very end* of the age when God will stand up and make His control apparent, but the end of the chapter (verses 17-19) is an appendage describing the Great Company’s earlier experience. Chapter 2 similarly covers different time periods.

Verses 1-3 refer to the divine plan and its being made understandable to God’s people, particularly through a wise servant. In fact, the plan was explained so clearly that a chart was made of it. The watchman in the tower, Bro. Russell, was instructed so that he could make the vision plain. That has happened, and the watchman has departed the scene. Hence verses 1 and 2 have already been fulfilled but not verse 3. The vision *does not tarry*, even though it *seems* to.

Then verse 4 starts a series of verses about someone or some class whose soul is lifted up and who has an insatiable desire and gathers all nations. Verse 4 through the end of the chapter happens sometime after 1916. (Note: The fulfillment of these verses was still future as of 1992, the year of this verse-by-verse study of the Book of Habakkuk.) In the near future, Babylon will fall, and great trouble, anarchy, will follow. Then God will stand up and save Israel.

Mystic Babylon, or Papacy, has heaped the wealth of the nations to itself. Verse 6 mentions “thick clay.” The term is a reminder of the clay feet (mixed with iron) of the image in Daniel 2:33. Mystic Babylon has enriched itself at the expense of others, sucking the lifeblood and the riches of the nations. Instead of having the spiritual hope of being with Jesus as its motivating force, the false system has desired riches.

After Babylon falls, there will be more trouble and turmoil, for the Lord’s Great Army will create all kinds of violence in the earth. The turbulent conditions will lead the Great Company to question what is happening. Their very survival depends on their holding on to their faith. Generally speaking, the Great Company will be here to see both events: the fall of Babylon and the anarchy.

Both Papacy and the Lord’s Great Army are guilty of *pride*. In regard to the latter, when terrorists wreak havoc and nothing deters them, they will worship the very instruments and weapons of their violence. The religious systems, especially Papacy, have oppressed the people and accumulated and accumulated, and subsequently the Lord’s Great Army will do the same but in an overtly violent manner. The Lord’s Great Army will cause a lot of destruction in Europe and then, as “Gog,” go down to Israel (Ezek. 38:14-16).

Habakkuk Chapter 3 picks up sequentially with God’s intervention on behalf of Israel. Verses 17-19 are purposely out of place to show that the Great Company will find themselves in the interim, that is, before God actually starts to deliver Israel. The very life of the Great Company depends on maintaining *their faith and trust in God*—and in maintaining *their integrity for God*.

First, the Great Company will weep and gnash their teeth. Then they will have relative restoration of faith and zeal. Revelation 19:6-9 shows that a strengthening voice will come from heaven, saying that the Bride “hath made herself ready.” In other words, the Great Company class will be informed that the Church is complete. The words of verse 9, “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb,” will encourage the Great Company—that is, *after* the disappointing revelation that the Bride is complete makes them mourn and question their own standing with God. Habakkuk 3:18 ties in: “Yet I will *rejoice* in the LORD, I will *joy* in the God of my salvation.”

Papacy’s desire to accumulate is aptly compared to hell, which is never satisfied. “He ... enlargeth his desire as hell.” Just as more and more people can always die, so Papacy tries to accumulate more and more wealth and goods. The tomb can swallow all humanity and still be hungry for more.

Hab. 2:6 Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!

Verse 6 is a reference to Papacy, which has mingled itself with the seed of man, as shown in the mixed clay-iron toes of the image of Daniel 2:33. Clay is *imitation* stone (picturing an *imitation* kingdom) in contrast to the *real* stone (The Christ) that smites the image.

Verses 5-19 describe the drama of trouble that will occur when Babylon falls and Michael stands

up. The “taunting proverb” will be spoken by the people who rise up against Papacy. However, when the condition merges into the Lord’s Great Army, the picture will change, for the people will not taunt the Lord’s Great Army.

First, the people and the discontents will oppose Papacy. Then the Lord’s Great Army will take over. From the fall of Papacy until the time God saves the Holy Remnant will be one period of trial and trouble. During this time, the Great Company will find themselves. The vision will become *plain* to the Great Company left behind when they *actually see* Babylon fall—at least it will become plain at that time to those with a present-truth background.

For “one hour,” mystic Babylon will again manifest Inquisition power (Rev. 17:12). The persecution will awaken the masses, who have believed the propaganda that the Inquisition was greatly exaggerated. Persecution, despotic power, and animosity will be manifested by Papacy and evangelical Protestantism. These actions will expose the hypocrisy of the systems, which have professed to be so loving. The masses will then react. Those who chafe under the hour of power will *SUDDENLY ACT*, and when they *EXPLODE*, Babylon will fall. In essence, the people will be so fed up at that point that they will act and not fear for their lives.

Later, when the governments fall and there are no police or fire departments, the red hand of anarchy will be seen as the Lord’s Great Army coming into being. The sequence, which is shown in 1 Kings 19:11,12, is wind, earthquake, and then fire (anarchy). The “earthquake” is the breaking of the present status quo. After the earthquake occurs, absolute terrorism and anarchy will shortly follow: raping, looting, killing, etc., with no restrictions. The majority of the people are meek. When Babylon (the *religious* systems, especially Papacy) starts to fall, the people will taunt it, but they will not taunt the Lord’s Great Army.

If the faith of the Great Company holds up in these troublous conditions, the Lord’s spirit will enter their lives—almost like Elijah’s having the mantle—but too late to be of the Little Flock. They will eventually get oil in their vessels, as shown by the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). Meanwhile, the world will be in real turmoil and drunkenness, reeling back and forth with no moral leadership.

“Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!” Notice that verse 6 contains a “woe.” In this chapter, there are five “woes”—all indictments against Papacy (verses 6, 9, 12, 15, and 19).

Hab. 2:7 Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?

“Shall they not rise up *suddenly*?” Verse 7 refers to the fall of Babylon. In the type of Belshazzar’s feast in Daniel Chapter 5, those in Babylon (Papacy in the antitype) were feeling confident and drinking wine. *Suddenly* the waters were diverted, and the army of Cyrus *quickly* entered under the gates. The smiting of the image will also be *sudden* (Dan. 2:34,35). In other words, these two events—the fall of Babylon and the smiting of the image—are *one and the same act*. When the stone smites the feet of the image, the clay and the iron will be gone. Then, after a period of time, the stone will grow and grow and grow to fill the whole earth.

The Book of Habakkuk describes the turmoil that will occur after the Church has gone home. Elisha will know the Church is complete when the mantle of Elijah falls down, and the proof is that he was reluctant to search for Elijah’s body. There are tremors before the great earthquake, before the great Time of Trouble, and we see these tremors today (Matt. 24:21; Dan. 12:1). They are evidences of the condition of unrest.

“Thou shalt be for booties unto them.” The Lord’s Great Army will loot everything valuable. The Vatican and the churches with their gold crucifixes, silver chalices, etc., will be stolen and destroyed. This system, which enriched itself at the expense of the people, will itself become a spoil.

Money will become worthless, for anarchy will be so disruptive that there will be nothing to buy. There will be no buying or selling, no planting or reaping. Why would one plant to have another loot the produce? When the people realize that money will become worthless, some will make last-minute attempts to buy advantages of mercy—but to no avail.

Comment: The first objective will be to get material goods. Next will come the looting of food—for survival.

Hab. 2:8 Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; because of men’s blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

Verse 8 tells of the judgment against Papacy.

Hab. 2:9 Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!

“That he may set his nest on high.” Papacy has set itself up like a god. Babylon built walls—big, thick, and high—for security. The same contagious spirit of self-preservation will take place after Babylon’s fall because the people with weapons will try to protect themselves. Not only has money affected the character of the rich, but the *love* of money has affected the poor as well. *Yearning* for money can cause problems. Those who are aggressive by nature, and not humble, will be aggressive in regard to the Lord’s Great Army.

Hab. 2:10 Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul.

Hab. 2:11 For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.

The papal institution itself—the walls, beams, etc.—is crying out for judgment. And so is the aggressive individual who participates in the Lord’s Great Army. Each person is likened to a house ready for judgment. Babylon as a *religious* system and Babylon as the *aggressor*, the invading army, are to have judgment because the same spirit is in both but under different circumstances.

Hab. 2:12 Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!

Hab. 2:13 Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?

Verses 12 and 13 show the trouble coming down to the level of the people who are laboring “in the very fire” of anarchy. Self-preservation is a *powerful* force, and few will maintain a sense of reason in this confusion. The people will “weary themselves” for nothing. When the food supply is depleted, many will feel, “What can be done?” and they will resign themselves to starvation, not wanting to use guns on others and do violence. To this class, Zephaniah 2:3 applies: “Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger.”

Hab. 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

The condition of worldwide turmoil and confusion will be replaced by order and peace and truth. To have such a comforting promise inserted here shows that the Great Company will be strengthened as Scriptures come to mind—just as the Little Flock is strengthened earlier. God will bolster the faith of the Great Company with Scriptures as they try to hold fast.

The thought is of the “*seabed*,” which is a depression. “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the seabed.” Basically, mankind is humble and sheeplike, but a large element will take advantage of the anarchy. In the anarchistic leveling of society, people will become like beasts with animal instincts. The veneer of civilization will be taken off to expose men as sinners. All the nastiness in man will come out, for there will be no restraints. After the people are brought down to this base level, that condition will be replaced, and they will be covered with a knowledge of God’s glory and a Kingdom of peace. The extremity will become the moment of God’s opportunity to rescue mankind, for all else will have failed.

Hab. 2:15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

Spiritually speaking, this verse refers to Papacy’s wine of false doctrine, but in the anarchy, this verse will be literal. Some will *force* the humble to drink wine and get drunk so that they can taunt them.

Hab. 2:16 Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD’S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory.

“Let thy foreskin be uncovered.” From a spiritual standpoint, this verse also applies to Papacy, the *man* of sin. The Lord’s language is *strong*. Just as an uncircumcised male can have an odor unless he is fastidious, so the system will be revealed for its rottenness, stink, and corruption. In the anarchy, the people, too, will be exposed for what they are. Rottenness will be manifest—and the need for redemption and cleansing will be seen by all.

As a *religious system*, Babylon will have to drink the cup of retribution. Papacy will have to swallow its boasts and blasphemous claims. Later Babylon, *under the symbol of Sheshach*, will also have to drink the cup of retribution, for Gog and Magog will have to drink the cup of God’s fury when He delivers the Holy Remnant (Jer. 25:26). Hence there will be two different cups, both for “Babylon,” at two different time periods—one cup for Babylon ecclesiastical and the other cup for Babylon as the aggressive Assyrian, Chaldean, Gog, etc. The principle is that what the anarchists do will be measured back to them.

Hab. 2:17 For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts, which made them afraid, because of men’s blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

As in verse 8, retribution is being described. When King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 606 BC, the forests of Lebanon were cut down to provide material for besieging with ramps, battering rams, and wooden towers. Large cedar trees were used. Trees, beasts, and property all suffered injustice. (Similarly, it is criminal to cut down giant sequoias for man’s greed.)

In the antitype, uncontrolled desires of the Lord's Great Army will bring cruelty to beasts and land, as well as people. There will be no respect for anything. Senseless looting and burning will prevail. The worldwide situation will need correction.

Hab. 2:18 What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols?

Hab. 2:19 Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it.

There is *no profit* to any image *made by man* to be worshipped. Dumb idols cannot speak or hear whether they are composed of stone, wood, or metal. The dumbness is also true of statues of the Virgin Mary, for inanimate objects cannot see, hear, speak, feel, or move.

Hab. 2:20 But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

When God reveals Himself in Jacob's Trouble with wrath and fury, then the whole world will know Him and know He is in control. God has permitted evil especially for the development of the Church. When the Church is complete, God will show the distinction between the dumb idols and Himself (and the reason He hid Himself and did not manifest His anger sooner). God has had long patience for the "precious fruit of the earth," for the development of the consecrated (James 5:7).

Comment: Silence is contrasted with speaking. Now people do all the speaking and their idols are dumb, but when *God* speaks, the people will be silent. They will hearken to God when He manifests POWER.

Hab. 3:1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.

"Shigionoth" is a religious ballad sung with turbulent lyrics. This verse indicates that a portion of Habakkuk's ministry was sung (see King James margin). The prophet wrote music and words for his stringed instrument, which was played emotionally to fit the lyrics (verse 19). He must have had a good, strong voice for this type of ministry.

Hab. 3:2 O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.

Comment: Habakkuk had the burden of giving a heavy, emotional message, and it obviously affected him. It is touching that he said, "O LORD, ... in wrath remember mercy."

Reply: Earlier and in this chapter also, there are manifestations of God's wrath. After hearing all of these discouraging woes, Habakkuk asked for comfort. With the bad news, he wanted some good news: "Revive thy work [O God]."

Verses 3-16 may be the substance of this particular song. Habakkuk was singing about God in lyric form. He included an end-of-the-age prophecy as he told about God and the manifestation of God's mercy on behalf of Israel in the past.

Hab. 3:3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

In verses 3-15, Habakkuk recalled God's dealings in the past with Israel. He was *reminiscing*

about what God previously did in Teman (related to Edom) and Paran in Sinai. The Bible does not tell us what happened in Teman and Paran, but some of the Hebrews would have known in order for Habakkuk to allude to these two places. The experience would have been similar to that at Mount Sinai with lava, coals of fire, a shaking mountain, etc.

Deuteronomy 33:2 reads, “And he [Moses] said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir [Edom] unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.” Evidently, an awesome visual display occurred subsequent to the experience at Mount Sinai, for God “came from Sinai, and dawned from Seir [Teman]” (see the Revised Standard Version). “His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of [the acts of] his praise.” This description refers to a visual display of which we have no details; that is, spectacular demonstrations of nature elicited this praise.

Comment: The several insertions of “Selah” prove that Chapter 3 of Habakkuk was a song (see verses 3, 9, and 13).

Reply: “Selah” is more than a musical pause. It means, “Just think about that!” “Take note of what has just been said.” “Selah” is important, for it is an opportunity for reflection.

Hab. 3:4 And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.

The Revised Standard reads, “His brightness was like the light, rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power.” God “hides” His power in the sense that His power in nature is silent: the earth turns, the sun appears, etc. Nature is a quiet testimony of God’s power, orderliness, and benefits to mankind. The “horns” are likened to rays, or beams, that come from the sun and show His authority. How quiet God is, yet how *powerful!*

From another standpoint, God’s “brightness” refers to the pillar of fire in the cloud at night. Imagine such a light illuminating the countryside so that the Israelites could travel by night—when there was no electricity and just deep darkness otherwise. It was as if the light flashed from God’s hands: “He had horns coming out of his hand.” By His past acts, which are recorded in His Word, we have faith in His power and omnipotence. In other words, we can be encouraged by what God *formerly* did. Today, unfortunately, many people are so troubled with social, political, economic, and other problems that they do not take time to look at nature.

The finger, hand, and arm of God all represent *power* but in *varying degrees*. The “finger” is a tiny demonstration; for example, Jesus’ miracles were seen by only a *few*. The “hand,” seen in the dividing of the Red Sea and the plagues in Egypt, is more evident to a whole *nation*. The “arm” is a still stronger demonstration, to be seen in the sight of *all nations* in the apocalypse yet future. Jesus and the Church (The Christ) will be revealed by the “arm” of God. In spite of all the previous visual demonstrations of God’s power in His dealings with Israel, “there was the hiding of his power.” The greatest demonstration will occur in the near future.

Hab. 3:5 Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet.

Pestilence and disease (see King James margin) went *before* God. The contraction of the disease (“pestilence”) was followed by the corpse (“burning coals”), the destruction. This manifestation occurred in the plagues of Egypt, a demonstration of God’s power. The plagues preceded the opening of the Red Sea, God’s speaking to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, and other events in the 40 years of wilderness wanderings.

Hab. 3:6 He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and

the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.

God, who formed the earth, gave these subsequent *precise* demonstrations of power. Just as He perfectly and precisely formed the earth originally, so the same mathematical precision and awesome power could be seen in these smaller demonstrations.

The implication is that the God who did these things in the past will, when the end of the age comes, again manifest glory and power. Back there God led the Israelites out of Egypt to the Land of Promise. Canaan was already occupied by the Jebusites, the Hittites, and others, but God pushed them out, for the land belonged to the Israelites. Under Joshua, the land was actually measured out for the 12 tribes. And so, in the future, God will again measure out the land (see Ezekiel Chapter 48), as well as rebuild Jerusalem and construct the Third Temple. The 12 tribes will have parallel strips of land in the future.

“The everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow.” This portion of the verse refers to the future earthquake in Jerusalem. There was also an earthquake in the past, in the days of King Uzziah (Amos 1:1; Zech. 14:4,5). In other words, the great miracles Jehovah did in the past will reoccur when He delivers the Holy Remnant of Israel in the near future.

Hab. 3:7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

The “tents of Cushan” allude to the fact that before Cush’s descendants went to Ethiopia, many of them lived in Sinai. Verse 7 still refers to the Law Covenant and Sinai, the “land of Midian.” Thus the whole setting, including previous verses, is primarily Sinai.

The Israelites were *temporarily* in Egypt, which was known as the “land of Cush” during the rather lengthy period of the kings in Jewish history. (The word “tent” is a symbol of a temporary dwelling place.) From their sojourn in Egypt, the Israelites went into Sinai, the “land of Midian.” Both were testing places. In fact, Egypt was called a place of “affliction” (Exod. 3:7,17).

Hab. 3:8 Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation?

“Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers?” The “rivers” refer to the plague in Egypt in which the waters were turned to blood. “Was thy wrath against the sea”? In addition, God divided the Red Sea. The point is that even the rivers, the stars, and the oceans obey God, for He is the Lord *of hosts*. Pharaoh’s chariots pursued the Israelites, but God’s invisible “chariots of salvation” preceded and delivered Israel.

Sometimes a person smashes a vessel to dramatize his anger and vent his spleen. However, God did these powerful demonstrations to encourage those who loved Him; that is, the demonstrations were designed to be a *benefaction*. He did not act vindictively—these were lessons of faith.

After witnessing, for two chapters, that ominous trouble was about to break on Israel, Habakkuk was given a theme of God’s omnipotent power to encourage him. The picture was painted so darkly that it did not seem there would be any way out. How could order be brought out of worldwide chaos? However, if Habakkuk reflected on God’s great power, he would *not fear* and would *know* things would be brought under control. God’s power to help

Israel leave Egypt was only a *sample* of His *great* power.

The Apostle Paul said the main reason the Israelites failed was that they *forgot* God's works. The lesson for us is to not forget God's power. He can *and will* control and solve *all things*—in due time! Earlier Habakkuk expressed and experienced the anxiety of the people. Then he ended with “the LORD is in his holy temple” (Hab. 2:20). In other words, God is in control.

Hab. 3:9 Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.

Verse 9 should end with “Selah”; the remainder should be verse 10.

God's strength was revealed when He came down on the top of Mount Sinai at the time of the giving of the Law. His “bow” was made “naked”; it was unsheathed, or revealed, from an inactive to an active state. A succession of events occurred as a figurative demonstration of His power: God spoke, a dark cloud appeared, the mountain shook, lightning flashed, thunder sounded, the people held their ears in fear, Moses' face shone when he came down from communing with God, etc. The “oaths of the tribes” were made when all the tribes promised obedience, one after the other, so that collectively, the nation entered the Law Covenant relationship. Hence God's “bow” of authority and strength was particularly revealed at Mount Sinai in a *personal* way with talking and commandments.

“Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.” The account is referring to the incident at Mount Sinai when Moses smote the rock and *abundant* waters came forth. Waters (“rivers”) *gushed* out with force. “He [God] clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them [the Israelites] drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers” (Psa. 78:15,16). “He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river” (Psa. 105:41). Events also happened at the brook Arnon, which was at the border of Moab and Edom (Seir).

Hab. 3:10 The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.

“The mountains saw thee [God], and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by.” Joshua 3:14-17 tells of the Israelites' crossing of the Jordan River dry-shod. “And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.” The Ark went from the east bank to the west bank but stopped in the middle of the river until the Israelites had crossed. This prophetic picture will have an antitypical fulfillment in the near future. “Jordan” means “judged down.” When the Church and the Great Company are complete, the Adamic death sentence will be stopped. Notice that “Adam” is mentioned in the account. From Adam to where the Israelites crossed the Jordan River (and a little farther on to the Dead Sea), the riverbed was dry. The cutoff occurred at the city of Adam. Therefore, the Jordan, from Adam to the Dead Sea, represents the death penalty on the human race.

Zaretan and Adam were both little communities, Adam on the far side of Jordan and Zaretan

on the near side, across from each other. A mud slide caused by an earthquake was miraculously timed for the Israelites' crossing. Although the mud slide occurred upstream, it affected the river all the way down to the Dead Sea. The water mounted up behind the mud slide and finally burst through—but after the Israelites had crossed. Psalm 114 mentions the Jordan, the Red Sea, and Moses' smiting of the rock. "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs" in regard to the drying up of the Jordan River (Psa. 114:4). The Israelites crossed the Jordan on a dry riverbed. When they had completely crossed over, the waters burst through the mud slide and cascaded down with a tremendous volume and noise and passed by the Israelites. What an astounding miracle!

"The deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high." Here verse 10 refers to the crossing of the Red Sea, when the waters parted to give the Israelites a *wide* corridor to pass through. God congealed, or froze, the waters into walls. Icicles resembling hands protruded from the walls. As the Israelites passed through the spectral hands of ice, some of the waves threatened to crash down on them, but the ice prevented the collapse. In addition, a storm with fierce lightning and thunder was occurring as the waters churned and threatened to come down on the Israelites. Also, a wind dried the *surface* of the ground and froze it to make a firm surface for the Israelites' crossing, but for the Egyptians, the ground thawed and became soft so that their chariots sank into the sand. Moreover, when the Lord relaxed the invisible force, the waters returned to their former deep level and drowned the pursuing Egyptians. In other words, not only did the waters stand up like a wall, but there was another motion: the collapsing of the water to cover Pharaoh and his host. A rushing *sound* occurred as the water crashed back into place. In response to God's commandment, "the deep uttered his *voice*." Habakkuk wrote emotionally as if he were actually there at the time these miracles took place.

Hab. 3:11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.

"The sun and moon stood still in their habitation" during Joshua's long day (Josh. 10:12-14). It was a prolonged day in which the sun and the moonlight were extended and Israel was victorious. The enemy's sun and moon gods seemed to be going against them.

"At the light of thine [God's] arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear." In a thunder and lightning storm, streaks of vertical light are like the Lord's arrows. When the lightning is stationary for a fraction of a second, the analogy is to a "glittering spear," for in this type of lightning, a whole streak is seen at one time.

From another standpoint, "at the light of thine arrows they [the Israelites] went" at the time of the Exodus. The cloud was a wall between the Israelites and the Egyptians, casting light ahead and darkness behind in the Red Sea. Later the cloud moved in front of the Israelites to lead them, and still later it attached itself to the Tabernacle. Lightnings like electrical energy (the Lord's spear of light) destroyed Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1,2).

Hab. 3:12 Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.

Hab. 3:13 Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.

Verses 12 and 13 refer to the conquerings of Canaan under Joshua, when the Israelites entered the land and defeated the various tribes. God went forth to deliver His people all the way through, from Egypt on. Peoples who opposed Israel were "wounded."

“Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed.” In connection with the plans to take Jericho, Joshua had an encounter with an individual (probably the Logos) who said, “I am the captain of the LORD’s host, and not you, Joshua” (Josh. 5:13-15 paraphrase). This incident showed Joshua that he had miraculous support. Joshua had miraculous victories of which only a fragment are recorded. He defeated the Canaanites and wounded the heads of the tribes; he “woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked.”

“Thine anointed” can be a reference to Joshua, for his name means “Jesus,” but to Joshua, the Logos was the “anointed” one. Joshua prefigured Jesus, the real Captain of the host in the future.

All of these reflections and reminiscences of what God did in the past (verses 3-15) are inferentially being declared as if they will reoccur in the future at the time of Jacob’s Trouble. God will fight again for Israel as in the day of battle (Zech. 14:3). When conditions look black, faith will say that *the* God, the One who worked mighty miracles in the past, will again lead to victory. It is like a condition of iniquities coming to the full in the future.

Hab. 3:14 Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly.

When Israel left Egypt, the pursuers were the army, not the common people, for the Egyptian people wanted the Israelites to leave. After burying their dead, the warriors pursued rapidly in chariots and appeared suddenly. The noise of their approach could be heard from miles away. They came “as a whirlwind” to scatter Israel, but they were struck “through with ... staves”; that is, the warriors were fatally wounded, destroyed. The “head of his villages” would be the handpicked warriors.

The spiritual connotation is as follows. Satan and those aligned with him will be destroyed. Satan capitalizes on the mental and physical illnesses of people to get them to do His will. He is *selfishly*, not personally, interested in people. He has no regard, no sympathy, for the poor in spirit of this world. “Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly.” Satan takes advantage of the weaknesses of men and uses them for his own gain.

Hab. 3:15 Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters.

Verse 15 refers to the crossing of the Red Sea and/or to the mud slide upstream at the time of the crossing of the Jordan River. (“Heap” means “mud” according to the King James margin.)

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

Comment: The Prophet Habakkuk seemed to be injecting his own feelings here. The Revised Standard Version is even more personal. It ends with “I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.” The words apply prophetically to the end of the age.

Reply: Yes, Habakkuk was speaking. The Hebrew allows the liberty of “us” or “them” at the end. Verse 16 refers to Gog and Magog and the awesomeness of their future invasion of Israel.

Comment: If the pronoun is “us,” the sentiments of the Holy Remnant are being expressed.

Reply: Yes.

Comment: Habakkuk also inserted some of his own thinking in verse 2. Tying in verse 2 with verse 16 shows a development of faith and strength in the Holy Remnant class. In between verses 2 and 16, Habakkuk reflected on God's power in the past. In verse 16, he still trembled, but he would wait quietly for the Lord to act.

Reply: That is the drift. Habakkuk had a stringed instrument, but before he played it, he made his own personal comment. Then he started the singing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. At the end of the ode, Habakkuk went back to the original comment in verse 2. He did this prophetically as a representative of the Holy Remnant class. Verse 16 ends the episode. The rest of the chapter is an addendum by the Holy Spirit as a separate message to the Great Company class.

Comment: The two parts of Chapter 3 (verses 1-16 and verse 17 to the end) are essentially the same time period.

Reply: As a class, the Great Company will be here up until the Ancient Worthies are raised in the height of Jacob's Trouble.

Q: Other Scriptures show that the Great Company will give a message to Israel. Do verses 3-15 indicate that part of the Great Company's message will be to urge the Israelites to look back to God's past miracles and expect a repeat in the future?

A: Yes. As God in the past used miracles to deliver His people, Israel, so He will do again in the future.

The message today should not be on Israel solely but should include the development of the Church class and a judgment message against the nominal Church, the real enemy of the true Church. When the feet members are gone and the Little Flock is complete, the Great Company will receive persecution because of their declaration of sympathy for Israel. Other Scriptures show that the emphasis will be on repentance and cleansing for the Jew. When Gog and Magog are coming down to Israel, the Great Company will preach the need for repentance.

Comment: In verse 16, the pronoun "I" seems to refer to the Great Company, who will tremble in the day of trouble. In verses 17 and 18, the Great Company realize the Little Flock is beyond the veil, yet they rejoice.

Reply: Both applications are true—the Holy Remnant and the Great Company—but the Great Company will not be in Israel when Jacob's Trouble takes place.

The Great Company will give a *powerful* message to the Holy Remnant. The message will be encouraging and comforting to both classes. The Holy Remnant *cannot die*. Therefore, those Jews who purge their hearts *will live*, and the Great Company will have to get their own house in order to even get a resurrection. Both classes will need to do soul-searching.

The true Church's hour of temptation will precede the world's great Time of Trouble (Rev. 3:10; Luke 21:36). *Organized* trouble will come on the Church, whereas *disorganized* trouble will come on the Great Company. Israel's trouble will occur at the latter part of the world's trouble.

Hab. 3:17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

Verse 17 starts a *separate* thought (note the paragraph mark), even though the pronoun “I” continues in verse 18. Verses 17-19 are a *separate* unit giving the experiences of the Great Company; that is, they personify the feelings of the Great Company when they find themselves *between the ages*. Let us now consider the component parts of verse 17 as they are to be understood *in that time frame*.

1. The “fig tree” is the nation of Israel. “Although the fig tree shall not blossom” means that the breath of life has not entered the bones yet (Ezek. 37:1-14). The nation was formed in 1948, but not until after Jacob’s Trouble and the establishment of the New Covenant will the nation truly blossom. Then the blessings will begin immediately, and the blossoming will be a spectacle to behold. The whole world will know what has happened.

The fig tree is currently putting forth its leaf—it is in the process of budding—but the climax of the leaf is yet future. In 1948, the budding became recognizable by the other nations, but the leaf is not there yet; the blossoming is future. In fact, today many nations resent Israel’s prosperity.

2. “Neither shall fruit be in the vines.” The Church is complete and glorified, the “fruit” having been plucked off the vine down here (see John 15:5). From another perspective, Israel is not yet the blesser nation at this point in time, so the other nations have not received the benefits and blessings that will flow through Israel. In other words, there is a co-relationship between the fig tree not blossoming and fruit not being in the vines. Of course the Little Flock will have the fruits that will be available to mankind: the benefits of their knowledge and experience.

The Gospel Age has been a time for the Church class to develop fruit. When the Church goes beyond the veil, the fruit will be removed from the earthly vine. That fruit will be made available through Israel as a blessing to mankind. Therefore, in this time setting, the thought is that the fruitage of the Church in glory has not yet been made available for the human race.

3. “The labour of the olive shall fail [lie dormant].” The “olive” is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit will cease with the completion of the Church. Therefore, the special call to sonship during the Gospel Age will have ceased at this point on the stream of time. The door will be closed. This time period is equated with the half hour of silence and the foolish virgins’ going to buy oil for their lamps (Rev. 8:1; Matt. 25:8-10).

The time will come when the Great Company realize they do not have the oil they need, and their momentary sense of loss is indicated here in verse 17. The Great Company look forward to certain events that have not yet materialized, and the in-between time in which they experience these emotions is suggested by the Prophet Habakkuk. They will become more introspective as they feel a lack, a void, during the half hour of silence.

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it [the vision] tarry [*seems to tarry*], wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Hab. 2:3). The tarrying will become more acute at this juncture of history than at any previous time. Do we today find a *hungering* for the appearance of Jesus? No. Few eagerly anticipate and long to see God and Jesus. After the Church is gone, the feeling of this need will become very acute in the Great Company, but it will be *too late*. Antotypically speaking, only the 300 comprising Gideon’s band lapped up the water in eager anticipation prior to the battle with the Midianites (Judg. 7:5-7). The 9,700 who failed to drink properly represent the Great Company, who will have their share later but not in the initial battle.

Incidentally, confidence is not faith. Many are unjustifiably confident regarding their reward.

Faith is making every step based on God's will and Word, and not on suppositions or feelings. Few will make the Little Flock. We are to *run* the race as if there is only *one winner* of the crown.

4. "The fields shall yield no meat." Previously the fields (the world, the area of harvesting) did yield meat (wheat, grain) but not now; that is, the normal harvesting activities (evangelizing) will have ceased at this time. There will be no more consecrations to the high calling, for the harvest of the earth is over. The Church has been changed.

The main purpose of the Gospel Age is the high calling. What is the *good news* of the Kingdom? "If you suffer with Christ, you will reign with him." "If you repent of your sins and make a full consecration, you will be eligible for the high calling and following in Jesus' footsteps." "If you are faithful unto death, you will be given a crown of life." Fewer and fewer are interested in this call today.

The lesson for the Christian before this point in time is to be *ready* for the "coming" of the Lord for the feet members. Those who comprise the feet members will be *watchful, eager, alert, and interested* in the subject of the Second Presence.

Comment: In addition, the book *The Keys of Revelation* brought in a thought on the literal level. There will be a worldwide crop failure and/or extreme food shortage with an accompanying cessation of all commerce.

Reply: Several Scriptures tell of the hunger, for example, Isaiah 8:21, "And they shall pass through it [the land], hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward." The seller will not profit from the sale of goods, and food will not be grown. Stated another way, the time is coming when the things in verse 17 will happen on the natural level. In the Time of Trouble, there will be no harvesting, etc. Nevertheless, the *primary* application here is *spiritual*.

5. "The [Little] flock shall be cut off from the [earthly] fold." This development corresponds to Daniel 2:45 when the stone (The Christ) is completely "cut out of the mountain [earth's quarry] without [human] hands." The entire Church will have gone beyond the veil at this time but will not yet be manifested to the world. The Kingdom will not yet be established.

6. "There shall be no herd in the stalls." The Ancient Worthies have not yet been raised to perfection and put into office. The association of the Ancient Worthies with a "herd" is based on their portrayal as a red heifer in the Tabernacle arrangement (Num. 19:2-10).

Habakkuk 3:17-19 takes us to a juncture on the stream of time in which the Great Company will find themselves in this situation and experiencing these emotions. The Kingdom will not have started in a practical sense down here, and the Great Company will experience a radical change from the spiritual communion they once had. There will not be many ecclesias at that time. The Great Company will have to think of food for their own families and the basic necessities of life. The situation will be degenerate.

Q: In the Kingdom, mankind will offer bullocks on God's altar. Is that thought related to the "herd" of verse 17?

A: Yes, this portion of verse 17 is based on Psalm 51:19, "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." The bullocks represent the Ancient Worthies as *perfect men*. The

word “herd” also suggests that the Ancient Worthies will come forth in Jacob’s Trouble as a group, not individually.

Comment: A reference in the Book of Jeremiah to the *false* bullocks is a confirmation of the *true* bullocks here in verse 17. Jeremiah 50:27 is a direction to the Lord’s Great Army: “Slay all her bullocks.” The nominal Church’s false bullocks will be replaced by God’s true bullocks: the Ancient Worthies.

Reply: Yes, the bullocks of Jeremiah 50:27 represent the false leaders of Christendom.

Hab. 3:18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

The word “yet” shows that the Great Company will experience a temporary sensation of despondency, but subsequently they will be encouraged by the thought of being invited to the marriage supper (Rev. 19:9). To be with Jesus in even a secondary role and to obtain spirit nature (as opposed to human nature) are a blessing. As the Great Company begin to think these things over, the extra oil, or Holy Spirit, will start to fill their vessels. Then, with zeal, they will pursue their course and get life.

When the between-the-ages conditions of verse 17 prevail, the Little Flock will be off the earthly scene. However, the Ancient Worthies cannot be resurrected to perfection until the Ransom merit is paid, and the Ransom merit cannot be paid until the Great Company is also off the earthly scene. When God has performed His “*whole work*” on Mount Zion (both the Little Flock and the Great Company must die), then Kingdom blessings will come to the world (Isa. 10:12). “Two parts” must be cut off and die before Israel is refined (Zech. 13:8). But first, the sentiments of the Great Company will be those of Jeremiah 8:20, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”

Consider again verse 18, the words of the Great Company: “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Those who are in the Great Company at this time will rejoice in knowing that although they have been rejected from the high calling, they are, nevertheless, still favored of the Lord and will benefit from the trouble experience.

Hab. 3:19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

The Great Company continue to speak. God will make their feet “like hinds’ feet” to walk upon their “high places” (their heavenly reward, the spiritual realm). The hope of seeing God and Jesus will be a wonderful hope to them under that future circumstance. Just as deer are very adept at scrambling over tricky terrain and climbing to higher altitudes, so the Great Company will be strengthened to obtain spirit nature, getting “hinds’ feet,” as it were. Just as deer can easily vault over a fence or obstacle, so God will help the Great Company to get life. Other pictures also show this strengthening. The “little sister” will obtain the proper development (Song 8:8-10). Elisha will receive Elijah’s mantle (2 Kings 2:12-14). After a period of anxiety, disappointment, depression, weeping, and gnashing of teeth along with the hypocrites, the foolish virgins will get the extra oil for their lamps (Matt. 25:7-10). The Great Company will miss the feet members, but after they wash their robes by going through certain experiences, the void will be filled by the Holy Spirit (Rev. 7:13-17). There will be great consolation in realizing the Lord is dealing with them as a class and intimately, in a personal way, as they are taken into the wilderness by Satan and the fallen angels (Lev. 16:20-22).

“To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.” The Revised Standard Version starts a new paragraph with the words “To the choirmaster: with my stringed instruments.” The Chief

Singer, the Choirmaster, the Conductor, is God Himself. Habakkuk dedicated his song to the Almighty God of the universe.

Habakkuk was equated with the Levites and thus was able to sing in the Temple arrangement. The choirmaster chose the most skilled soloist(s) and the one(s) to play an instrument. Therefore, Habakkuk would have been subservient to the Temple choirmaster. The prophet had an instrument, and God blessed him with words as he composed, sang, and played. Thus the prophet was a bard, a singer of songs, but instead of folk music, he sang about the Lord. The Book of Habakkuk ends on a happy and exalted note.

Of the Book of Psalms, David wrote about 95 psalms, and Moses and others wrote the rest. Several in a row are to Asaph, who was given the privilege of seeing that the psalms were instrumentalized or vocalized. In the Kingdom Age, God will select various individuals down here—those whom He considers best able to perform. David will no doubt be one of the singers, but only the Little Flock will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 15:3). Jesus and the Heavenly Father will also sing. Yes, God will sing, and He will be the Chief Singer: “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee *with singing*” (Zeph. 3:17).

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NOTE: The Revised Standard Version is an excellent translation for much of the Book of Habakkuk. Therefore, it is included below as a helpful reference and supplement to the King James Version used above.

Chapter 1

1 The oracle of God which Habakkuk the prophet saw.

2 O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and thou wilt not hear? Or cry to thee “Violence!” and thou wilt not save?

3 Why dost thou make me see wrongs and look upon trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.

4 So the law is slacked and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous, so justice goes forth perverted.

5 Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told.

6 For lo, I am rousing the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize habitations not their own.

7 Dread and terrible are they; their justice and dignity proceed from themselves.

8 Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves; their horsemen press proudly on. Yea, their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swift to devour.

9 They all come for violence; terror of them goes before them. They gather captives like sand.

10 At kings they scoff, and of rulers they make sport. They laugh at every fortress, for they heap up earth and take it.

11 Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men, whose own might is their god!

12 Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them as a judgment; and thou, O Rock, hast established them for chastisement.

13 Thou who art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on wrong, why dost thou look on faithless men, and art silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous

than he?

14 For thou makest men like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler.

15 He brings all of them up with a hook, he drags them out with his net, he gathers them in his seine; so he rejoices and exults.

16 Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his seine; for by them he lives in luxury, and his food is rich.

17 Is he then to keep on emptying his net, and mercilessly slaying nations for ever?

Chapter 2

1 I will take my stand to watch, and station myself on the tower, and look forth to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

2 And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain upon tablets, so he may run who reads it.

3 For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.

4 Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

5 Moreover, wine is treacherous; the arrogant man shall not abide. His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations, and collects as his own all peoples."

6 Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, in scoffing derision of him, and say, "Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own—for how long?—and loads himself with pledges!"

7 Will not your debtors suddenly arise, and those awake who will make you tremble? Then you will be booty for them.

8 Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you, for the blood of men and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell therein.

9 Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm!

10 You have devised shame to your house by cutting off many peoples; you have forfeited your life.

11 For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond.

12 Woe to him who builds a town with blood, and founds a city on iniquity!

13 Behold, is it not from the LORD of hosts that peoples labor only for fire, and nations weary themselves for nought?

14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

15 Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink of the cup of his wrath, and makes them drunk, to gaze on their shame!

16 You will be sated with contempt instead of glory. Drink, yourself, and stagger! The cup in the LORD's right hand will come around to you, and shame will come upon your glory!

17 The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you; the destruction of the beasts will terrify you, for the blood of men and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell therein.

18 What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies? For the workman trusts in his own creation when he makes dumb idols!

19 Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake; to a dumb stone, Arise! Can this give revelation? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in it.

20 But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.

Chapter 3

1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.

2 O LORD, I have heard the report of thee, and thy work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years renew it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.

3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. *Selah*

4 His brightness was like the light, rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power.

5 Before him went pestilence, and plague followed close behind.

6 He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered, the everlasting hills sank low. His ways were as of old.

7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

8 Was thy wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Was thy anger against the rivers, or thy indignation against the sea, when thou didst ride upon thy horses, upon thy chariot of victory?

9 Thou didst strip the sheath from thy bow, and put the arrows to the string. *Selah*
Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.

10 The mountains saw thee, and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice, it lifted its hands on high.

11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation at the light of thine arrows as they sped, at the flash of thy glittering spear.

12 Thou didst bestride the earth in fury, thou didst trample the nations in anger.

13 Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, for the salvation of thy anointed. Thou didst crush the head of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. *Selah*

14 Thou didst pierce with thy shafts the head of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret.

15 Thou didst trample the sea with thy horses, the surging of mighty waters.

16 I hear, and my body trembles, my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones, my steps totter beneath me. I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.

17 Though the fig tree do not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,

18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like hinds' feet, he makes me tread upon my high places.

To the choirmaster: with my* stringed instruments.

*A footnote inserts the pronoun "my."