

# Theodicy: The Problem of Evil

## Habakkuk

Sermon

*Hobart, April 10th, 2011*

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## Scripture Reading:

### **Habbakuk 1:12-2:6, 12-14**

<sup>12</sup> O LORD my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal—is your plan in all of this to wipe us out? Surely not! O LORD our Rock, you have decreed the rise of these Babylonians to punish and correct us for our terrible sins.

<sup>13</sup> You are perfectly just in this. But will you, who cannot allow sin in any form, stand idly by while they swallow us up? Should you be silent while the wicked destroy people who are more righteous than they?

<sup>14</sup> Are we but fish to be caught and killed? Are we but creeping things that have no leader to defend them from their enemies? <sup>15</sup> Must we be strung up on their hooks and dragged out in their nets while they rejoice? <sup>16</sup> Then they will worship their nets and burn incense in front of them. “These nets are the gods who have made us rich!” they will claim.

<sup>17</sup> Will you let them get away with this forever? Will they succeed forever in their heartless conquests?

**2** I will climb up into my watchtower now and wait to see what the LORD will say to me and how he will answer my complaint.

<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD said to me, “Write my answer in large, clear letters on a tablet, so that a runner can read it and tell everyone else. <sup>3</sup> But these things I plan won’t happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed.

<sup>4</sup> “Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked;\* but the righteous will live by their faith.\* <sup>5</sup> Wealth\* is treacherous, and the arrogant are never at rest. They range far and wide, with their mouths opened as wide as death,\* but they are never satisfied. In their greed they have gathered up many nations and peoples. <sup>6</sup> But the time is coming when all their captives will taunt them, saying, ‘You thieves! At last justice has caught up with you! Now you will get what you deserve for your oppression and extortion!’

**v 12** “How terrible it will be for you who build cities with money gained by murder and corruption! <sup>13</sup> Has not the LORD Almighty promised that the wealth of nations will turn to ashes? They work so hard, but all in vain! <sup>14</sup> For the time will come when all the earth will be filled, as the waters fill the sea, with an awareness of the glory of the LORD.<sup>1</sup>

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\* **Habakkuk 2:4a** Greek version reads *I will have no pleasure in anyone who turns away.*

\* **Habakkuk 2:4b** Or *the just will live by their faithfulness.*

\* **Habakkuk 2:5a** As in Dead Sea Scroll 1QpHab; other Hebrew manuscripts read *Wine.*

\* **Habakkuk 2:5b** Hebrew as *Sheol.*

<sup>1</sup> *Holy Bible : New Living Translation.* 1997, c1996 (electronic ed.) (Hab 1:12). Wheaton: Tyndale House.

## INTRODUCTION:

### I. EVIL

#### A. EVIL IS A WORD THAT GETS THROWN AROUND A LOT IN POLITICS AND THE POPULAR MEDIA

#### B. IN THE 1800'S THE IDEA OF EVIL WAS DENIED

1. Mankind was viewed as fundamentally good, and evil didn't really exist
2. This modernist, pollyanna view was shattered completely, and very much reversed because of the terrible atrocities and carnage of World War I
3. World War II, the atrocities in the Congo and other African countries that have followed there and elsewhere around the world, topped off by the attacks of September 11th in the US, have tragically confirmed in most minds the shocking, devastating and clear presence of real evil in human beings

#### C. BUT OUR CURRENT CULTURE OF "POSTMODERNISM"

1. recognises the power and reality of evil, but offers as Tom Wright explains;

no redemption, ... now way out, no chance of repentance and restoration...

a) and he adds that;

it gives us no real clue as to what we should do about [evil].<sup>2</sup>

#### D. AT TIMES OF TRAGEDY, HORROR AND DEVASTATION, PEOPLE OFTEN ASK, "WHERE IS GOD IN ALL OF THIS?"

1. This subject is technically termed Theodicy
2. By definition, theodicy is;

the branch of theology concerned with defending the attributes of God against objections resulting from physical and moral evil<sup>3</sup>

3. It comes from two Greek words;

a) *Theo*; God; *dike*; justice

<sup>2</sup> N.T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, p.33

<sup>3</sup> theodicy. (n.d.). Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/theodicy>

## **E. THE PRESENCE OF EVIL IN THE WORLD IS USED BY MANY ATHEISTS TO DENY GOD'S EXISTENCE**

### **1. Thomas Warren wrote, that**

it is likely the case that no charge has been made with a greater frequency or with more telling force against theism of Judeo-Christian [Biblical] tradition" than the complication of the existence of evil. <sup>4</sup>

## **F. MANY OF THE BIBLICAL WRITERS COMPLAINED ABOUT GOD ALLOWING EVIL TO GO ON**

### **1. David and other Psalmists often debated God over it**

### **Psalm 94:3-7**

<sup>3</sup> How long, O LORD?  
How long will the wicked be allowed to gloat?

<sup>4</sup> Hear their arrogance!  
How these evildoers boast!

<sup>5</sup> They oppress your people, LORD,  
hurting those you love.

<sup>6</sup> They kill widows and foreigners  
and murder orphans.

<sup>7</sup> "The LORD isn't looking," they say,  
"and besides, the God of Israel doesn't care."

## **A. A FRIEND FROM COLLEGE POSTED A COMMENT ON FACEBOOK**

### **1. in order to bring about a discussion of God's response to evil and suffering**

Martin Bashir, in a now infamous interview, asked: "...help us with this tragedy in Japan. which of these is true? either God, is all powerful but doesn't care about the people of Japan and they're suffering or he does care about the people of Japan and but he's not all powerful? Which is it?"

..... how would you have answered him?<sup>5</sup>

### **2. Here are a couple of responses**

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas B. Warren, Have Atheists Proved There is No God? (Gospel Advocate Co., 1972), vii.

<sup>5</sup> [Mike Limanni](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1463894651); <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1463894651>

- a) Only an idiot would present only two possible answers to any complex question
  - b) I've been asked questions like this many times. How would I answer? Like this: "Martin, you've presented a question that is unfair, in that you've given a view of God that is incomplete. God is all-powerful AND he cares about the people of Japan. If you're asking me about why God allows suffering to exist, then please, by all means we can have that discussion. If you're asking me how a loving God can be sovereign over all of the universe and yet nature seems to run amok, then we can have that discussion. However, the question as you presented it is unfair, illogical, and restricts God to being one or the other in a construct you've built that is limited",
3. Some others gave similar answers
- a) It is a good question to think about

## S.P.S:

- A. TODAY LET'S START TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE TOPIC OF EVIL**
    1. And what God is doing about evil, suffering and injustice in the world
  - B. WE ARE GOING TO FOCUS TODAY ON WHAT WE LEARN ON THE TOPIC FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT**
    1. Starting with the book of Habakkuk
    2. Over Easter we can take some more time to explore the topic from a New Testament perspective
      - a) and see how Jesus' death and resurrection are the full and complete answer to sin, evil, injustice, suffering and death
  - C. LATER IN THE YEAR, I PLAN TO RETURN TO AND FINISH THE SERIES ON LESSONS WE LEARN FOR OUR LIVES FROM THE TRINITY**
  - D. PRAYER**
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## BODY:

### II. HABUKKUK

#### A. TODAY OUR TEXT IS FROM THE BOOK OF HABBAKUK

1. **Written around the 7th C B.C; At a time of when violence and evil in Israel just continued on and on without any end in sight, Habakkuk complained to God about it all**

#### Habakkuk 1:2-4

<sup>2</sup>How long, O LORD, must I call for help? But you do not listen! "Violence!" I cry, but you do not come to save. <sup>3</sup>Must I forever see this sin and misery all around me?

Wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight. <sup>4</sup>The law has become paralyzed and useless, and there is no justice given in the courts. The wicked far outnumber the righteous, and justice is perverted with bribes and trickery.

#### 2. **Ronald Blue in his introduction to the book says;**

Planet Earth may look marvelous from a satellite, but for those who live on the dusty globe things tend to look rather grim. Increased turmoil, rising terrorism, mounting tragedies, unprecedented trauma, increasing pollution, deepening trials, and unparalleled tensions cast dark shadows over earthlings. The world looks more and more like some ominous black sphere with a very short fuse, a time bomb sizzling to explode.

It is little wonder thinking people begin to ask questions. Why is there so much oppression? Why all the injustice? Why do evil men prosper? Why do the righteous suffer? Why doesn't God do something? Why doesn't God clean up this mess? Why? Why? Why?

These penetrating questions are hardly new. Centuries before Christ visited this planet, an ancient prophet looked around at the violence and wickedness of the world and cried out to God, "Why do You make me look at injustice? Why do You tolerate wrong?...Why are You silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?" (Hab. 1:3, 13)

The prophet not only asked the mysterious whys that plague mankind; he also received answers to his questions. The answers given by the Creator of the universe are carefully recorded in the little book called Habakkuk.

Habakkuk is a unique book. Unlike other prophets who declared God's message to people this prophet dialogued with God about people. Most Old Testament prophets proclaimed divine judgment. Habakkuk pleaded for divine judgment. In contrast with the typical indictment, this little book records an intriguing interchange between a perplexed prophet and his Maker.

Habakkuk took his complaint to God. "Why don't You do something?" God answered, "I am doing something."<sup>6</sup>

## **B. GOD GIVES HIS REPLY TO HABAKKUK'S FIRST COMPLAINT**

### **Habakkuk 1:5-6**

#### *The LORD's Reply*

<sup>5</sup>The LORD replied, "Look at the nations and be amazed! Watch and be astounded at what I will do! For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it. <sup>6</sup>I am raising up the Babylonians\* to be a new power on the world scene.

#### **1. Habakkuk is now even more upset that God would use such an unrighteous nation to bring an end to the evil in Israel**

### **Habakkuk 1:12-14, 17 2:1-3**

#### *Habakkuk's Second Complaint*

<sup>12</sup>O LORD my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal—is your plan in all of this to wipe us out? Surely not! O LORD our Rock, you have decreed the rise of these Babylonians to punish and correct us for our terrible sins. <sup>13</sup>You are perfectly just in this. But will you, who cannot allow sin in any form, stand idly by while they swallow us up? Should you be silent while the wicked destroy people who are more righteous than they?

<sup>14</sup>Are we but fish to be caught and killed? Are we but creeping things that have no leader to defend them from their enemies?

v <sup>17</sup>Will you let them get away with this forever? Will they succeed forever in their heartless conquests?

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<sup>6</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (1505). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

\* *Habakkuk 1:6* Or *Chaldeans*.

**2:1** I will climb up into my watchtower now and wait to see what the LORD will say to me and how he will answer my complaint.

**C. GOD GOES ON THEN TO SHOW THAT HE WILL BRING JUSTICE AND DEAL WITH THOSE LIKE THE BABYLONIANS, WHO ARE PROUD IN THEIR EVIL AND OPPRESSION OF OTHERS**

*The LORD's Second Reply*

<sup>2:2</sup> Then the LORD said to me, "Write my answer in large, clear letters on a tablet, so that a runner can read it and tell everyone else. <sup>3</sup> But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed.

<sup>4</sup> "Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked;\* but the righteous will live by their faith.

**D. THIS IS AT THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM OF SIN AND EVIL**

**1. Mankind has turned away from God**

- a) they have failed to understand who he is
- b) that he has created us out of love, for love
- c) He has created us from the relationship that he is as Father, Son and Spirit,
- d) He has created us to live and thrive in relationship with him, and with one another and the creation itself

**2. The heart of sin and evil is when we turn away from God, when we trust in ourselves, and our lives become crooked**

**Habakkuk 2:4a** Greek version reads I will have no pleasure in anyone who turns away.

**3. This is at the heart of God's answer to the problem of evil and injustice on the earth**

- a) This is the cause
- b) God's answer is that we need to accept God's love, and be turned back to him

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\* *Habakkuk 2:4a* Greek version reads *I will have no pleasure in anyone who turns away.*

- (1) To be reconciled, forgiven, and brought back to faith in him
- (2) To live again as he created us to live in loving relationship with him and our neighbour

#### **4. Habakkuk is assured that God will act to bring peace and rid the world of evil, oppression and injustice**

**Habakkuk 2:5** \* Wealth\* is treacherous, and the arrogant are never at rest. They range far and wide, with their mouths opened as wide as death,\* but they are never satisfied. In their greed they have gathered up many nations and peoples. <sup>6</sup> But the time is coming when all their captives will taunt them, saying, 'You thieves! At last justice has caught up with you! Now you will get what you deserve for your oppression and extortion!'

#### **Habakkuk 2:12**

<sup>12</sup> "How terrible it will be for you who build cities with money gained by murder and corruption! <sup>13</sup> Has not the LORD Almighty promised that the wealth of nations will turn to ashes? They work so hard, but all in vain! <sup>14</sup> For the time will come when all the earth will be filled, as the waters fill the sea, with an awareness of the glory of the LORD.

#### **5. God promises that all the evil and oppression on the earth will cease**

- a) In the end the earth will be full of the knowledge of God, aware of who he is, and the glorious life he has to share with everyone, everywhere

<sup>v 18</sup> "What have you gained by worshiping all your man-made idols? How foolish to trust in something made by your own hands! What fools you are to believe such lies! <sup>19</sup> How terrible it will be for you who beg lifeless wooden idols to save you. You ask speechless stone images to tell you what to do. Can an idol speak for God? They may be overlaid with gold and silver, but they are lifeless inside.

#### **6. Looking to anyone, or anything but God for life and happiness is vain**

<sup>20</sup> But the LORD is in his holy Temple. Let all the earth be silent before him."

#### **7. God hasn't gone away, he is always there.**

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\* **Habakkuk 2:4b** Or *the just will live by their faithfulness.*

\* **Habakkuk 2:5a** As in Dead Sea Scroll 1QpHab; other Hebrew manuscripts read *Wine.*

\* **Habakkuk 2:5b** Hebrew as *Sheol.*

a) We all need to stop, and listen to him

**8. Habakkuk has done, and now praises God for his justice, for his plan to rescue his people and defeat evil**

a) To bring peace and salvation to the earth by bringing people back into a relationship of faith with him

*Habakkuk's Prayer*

**3** This prayer was sung by the prophet Habakkuk:

<sup>2</sup> I have heard all about you, LORD, and I am filled with awe by the amazing things you have done. In this time of our deep need, begin again to help us, as you did in years gone by. Show us your power to save us. And in your anger, remember your mercy.

<sup>3</sup> I see God, the Holy One, moving across the deserts from Edom and Mount Paran. His brilliant splendor fills the heavens, and the earth is filled with his praise! What a wonderful God he is! <sup>4</sup> Rays of brilliant light flash from his hands. He rejoices in his awesome power.

**9. In the end God will judge evil, and bring mercy, justice and peace**

a) All will love and live in a relationship of faith praising and loving God

**E. AS WE READ IN HABAKKUK 3:2,**

**1. Habakkuk reflects on how God has dealt with evil, and brought about justice, redemption and salvation down through the ages**

**Habakkuk 3:2**

<sup>2</sup> I have heard all about you, LORD, and I am filled with awe by the amazing things you have done. In this time of our deep need, begin again to help us, as you did in years gone by. Show us your power to save us. And in your anger, remember your mercy.

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**III. BIBLICAL THEODICY**

**A. THE OT TELLS STORY AFTER STORY ABOUT GOD BEING A GOD WHO ACTS TO BRING US OUT OF OUR DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF SIN AND EVIL**

**1. Showing his loving and never ceasing will to forgive us and redeem us from sin and rescue us from evil**

a) To restore us, and the creation to be the way he intended

**b) But as we look through history, we see God works through his servants to accomplish his work**

- (1) He partners with us to do his work in our lives
- (2) He works in us and through us to transform and restore us
- (3) This is why it takes time, and why he allows us in our freedom, to bring about sin, injustice, and evil

**2. We see this throughout the OT**

a) God doesn't take away our freedom as he seeks to restore his people to him

**3. Adam & Eve**

a) Adam and Eve were to be God's partners, his agents in making the creation all that he intended it to be

b) But in refusing to live in communion and partnership with God; Adam and Eve followed Satan's temptation to go their own way apart from God

- (1) To decide for themselves what was right and wrong

**4. This is at the heart of sin and evil**

a) Turning away from the God of life and love

b) Turning away from our calling to be God's agents in dressing and keeping the earth

- (1) Failing to take good care of each other, and the world around us
- (2) Failing to follow the way of giving, of love and generosity, peace and harmony

c) Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, thought and wrote about the nature of evil. Gary Crampton writes;

In his City of God, and elsewhere, he maintained that since God has created all things "good" (Genesis 1:31), evil cannot have an independent existence. Evil is the absence of good, as darkness is the absence of light. ...Evil...is the result of the creature's turning away from the commands of God to a lesser good: the will of the creature.<sup>7</sup>

**5. God told Adam & Eve what the result of turning away from him would be**

a) Life would be hard for men and women

b) There would be much pain and suffering

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<sup>7</sup> Augustine, in *W. Gary Crampton, A Biblical Theodicy*, <http://www.leaderu.com/theology/theodicy.html#text2>

**6. He expelled them from the Garden so they wouldn't take of the tree of life and live forever in their fallen, sinful state**

- a) As we will see God continues to do down through history, he restricted the extent of evil, he kept it from getting completely out of control

**B. TOWER OF BABEL IS AN EXAMPLE**

**1. Man's evil and arrogant independence from God was getting out of hand, so God limited their power and influence by confusing their languages**

**C. FLOOD**

**1. God was so distressed over the preponderance of evil in the world that he regretted creating it**

- a) But he intervened, again limiting the degree of evil on the earth

b) and he made plain that he wasn't always going to allow evil to dominate, but also that he would not destroy mankind

**2. Tom Wright talks about how God limited evil through death and other interventions to limit the growth of evil;**

"death" takes various forms: exile for Adam and Eve; the flood for Noah's generation, confusion and dispersal for Babel.<sup>8</sup>

**3. Remember also, God didn't work alone, he chose to work through his servant Noah to bring about his purposes**

**D. HOPE**

**1. We see through God's actions in the OT that God not only restricted the extent of man's evil actions, but that in the midst of evil times and calamities,**

**2. God continually offered the promise and hope that he would restore people to himself, give them the chance to start again, to change, to live in relationship with him free of evil and suffering**

**3. At the height of the flood, the dove sent out came back with an olive branch**

- a) symbolising the hope of a new life, a new world on the other side of evil and destruction

b) Tom Wright talks about how the flood brought a new start, and our role as his agents in the world today;

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<sup>8</sup> Tom Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, p.53

not least through the sign of the rainbow, [the flood] becomes the means of a new start--a new covenant.

If we can work toward understanding and being the willing agents of both the divine tears over the world's evil and the fresh creativity that sends out the dove to find new olive branches emerging from the waters of chaos, we shall, I think, be on the right track.

The sea is powerful, but God the Creator is more powerful still.

*Evil* may still be a four-letter word. But so, thank God, is *love*.<sup>9</sup>

**4. God in the OT, continually reminds us that in the midst of the evil and chaos of our world, he is there to offer us restoration, new life with him**

a) Hope beyond the gloom and overwhelming doom that can surround us

b) Evil is not the final word, he is

(1) We are to be his agents of hope and change in this evil world

**E. ABRAHAM**

1. Abraham was called by God out of the evil society he lived in, to wander through the wilderness, with the hope and promise of the blessings of a new family and land in the future

2. He was to be God's agent, the one whom God worked through to fulfil his plans bring about the end of evil and the restore mankind to relationship with him

3. Through Abraham's seed, all of the earth would be blessed

**F. GOD'S HAS STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT EVIL AND SUFFERING**

1. Wright points out how God suffers at seeing all the suffering we cause, and how he will ceaselessly continue on his work of redemption through Abraham's seed;

until blessing replaces curses, homecoming replaces exile, olive branches appear after the flood and a new family is created in which the scattered languages can be reunited. That is the narrative which forms the outer frame for the canonical Old Testament.<sup>10</sup>

**G. NO MATTER HOW EVIL THE WORLD BECOMES**

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<sup>9</sup> Tom Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, p.41

<sup>10</sup> Wright, p.53

1. **And no matter how off the track and apart from God the people God has called to be his agents in restoring the world to him,**
2. **God never gives up**
  - a) He keeps rescuing and seeking to restore his people
  - b) Tom Wright talks about God's justice and his plan to set things right through his people;

God's justice is a saving, healing, restorative justice, because the God to whom justice belongs is the Creator God who has yet complete his original plan for creation and whose justice is designed not simply to restore balance to a world out of kilter but to bring to glorious completion and fruition the creation, teeming with life and possibility, that he made in the first place. And he remains implacably determined to complete this project through his image-bearing human creatures and, more specifically, through the family of Abraham.<sup>11</sup>

#### **H. WE SEE THE WAY GOD WORKS YET AGAIN IN HOW HE RESCUED ISRAEL FROM EGYPT**

1. **Through the events of the first Passover, God dramatically defeated the evil oppression, captivity and attempted genocide of the Egyptians;**
  - a) and led the people free to be in communion with him
2. **And of course all these things, the Passover and Exodus especially, point to God's plan to send his Son to be his ultimate human partner in judging and destroying, evil, sin, Satan and death**
  - a) to forgive and redeem us, and bring us back into his life
  - b) to be his people, and be part of the work of healing and restoring the whole creation

#### **I. ISRAEL FAILED TO BE GOD'S AGENTS IN BRINGING LIGHT AND RIGHTEOUSNESS TO THE WORLD**

1. **Instead, refusing to live in communion with God, Israel ended up subject to the evil forces and violence of the surrounding nations**
2. **But in the midst of the chaos and darkest times, God sent prophets, such as Habakkuk to give them hope**

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<sup>11</sup> Wright, p.64

- a) He promised repeatedly, that they would eventually be redeemed and rescued through the work of the coming Messiah, the second Adam
- 3. **As one of us, the perfect High Priest, the one who would sit on David's throne, and be God's agent in bringing justice and righteousness to the world**
  - a) The seed of Abraham who would be a blessing to the nations
  - b) The one through whom God would again bring his people back into relationship with him, to bring them rescue, healing, peace and love

### **J. AT A TIME OF GREAT EVIL IN ISRAEL, AND THE REST OF THE WORLD;**

- 1. **Habakkuk reflected on God's rescue, delivering Israel through the Red Sea,**
  - a) bringing them out of Egypt (a symbol of evil, sin and death) to be his people once more

### **Habakkuk 3:8-15**

<sup>8</sup>Was it in anger, LORD, that you struck the rivers and parted the sea? Were you displeased with them? No, you were sending your chariots of salvation! <sup>9</sup>You were commanding your weapons of power! You split open the earth with flowing rivers! <sup>10</sup>The mountains watched and trembled. Onward swept the raging waters. The mighty deep cried out, lifting its hands to the LORD. <sup>11</sup>The lofty sun and moon began to fade, obscured by brilliance from your arrows and the flashing of your glittering spear.

<sup>12</sup>You marched across the land in awesome anger and trampled the nations in your fury. <sup>13</sup>You went out to rescue your chosen people, to save your anointed ones. You crushed the heads of the wicked and laid bare their bones from head to toe. <sup>14</sup>With their own weapons, you destroyed those who rushed out like a whirlwind, thinking Israel would be easy prey. <sup>15</sup>You trampled the sea with your horses, and the mighty waters piled high.

<sup>17</sup>Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, <sup>18</sup>yet I will rejoice in the LORD! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation. <sup>19</sup>The Sovereign LORD is my strength! He will make me as surefooted as a deer\* and bring me safely over the mountains

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\* *Habakkuk 3:19* Or will give me the speed of a deer.

## IV. CONCLUSION:

### **A. THIS IS THE ONGOING GOOD NEWS GOD CONTINUALLY REVEALS THROUGH HIS ACTIONS ON EARTH DETAILED THROUGH THE OT**

1. From the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, to captivity in Egypt, to the expulsion from the Promised Land
  - a) In the midst of suffering,
    - (1) from their own sins
    - (2) and the evils suffered at the hands of others
  - b) God gave his servants the hope of being rescued from evil
    - (1) forgiven from their own sins
    - (2) rescued from the evil of others, freed from suffering and injustice
2. This is what we can put our faith in, especially when it seems evil is triumphing over good, and all seems lost
  - a) God is still on his throne, and we can put our full trust in him

### **B. RONALD BLUE SUMS UP THE GOD'S THE MESSAGE OF HABBAKUK**

Habakkuk's book begins with an interrogation of God but ends as an intercession to God. Worry is transformed into worship. Fear turns to faith. Terror becomes trust. Hang-ups are resolved with hope. Anguish melts into adoration.

What begins with a question mark ends in an exclamation point. The answer to Habakkuk's "Why?" is "Who!" His confusion, "Why all the conflict?" is resolved with his comprehension of who is in control: God!<sup>12</sup>

Habakkuk 3:19 The Sovereign LORD is my strength! He will make me as surefooted as a deer and bring me safely over the mountains Jesus is our Lord, and he is our strength,

- a) God is the one we can look to in faith
  - b) and he will make us sure footed as a deer as he brings us safely into the fullness of his kingdom when all evil will be fully and finally dealt with
2. This is the message we look forward to focusing more about and celebrating during Easter

<sup>12</sup> *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1507). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.