

Habakkuk 3 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission

[Habakkuk Drawn out in Pictures - Interesting](#)

HABAKKUK: THE RIGHTEOUS LIVE BY FAITH "From Worry to Worship"		
Problems of Habakkuk Hab 1:1 -2:20		Praise of Habakkuk Hab 3:1-19
Opens in Gloom: Begins with an Interrogation Mark?		Closes in Glory: Ends with an Exclamation Mark!
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Watch and See			Stand and See	Kneel and See
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The Prophet Wondering & Worrying			The Prophet Watching & Waiting	The Prophet Worshiping & Witnessing
Habakkuk's First Question Hab 1:1-4	God's First Answer Hab 1:5-11	Habakkuk's Second Question Hab 1:12-2:1	God's Second Answer Hab 2:2-2:20	Habakkuk's Prayer of Praise
Habakkuk Speaks: Why Does God not Punish Wicked Judah?	God Speaks: Judah Will Be Punished!	Habakkuk Speaks: Why Will God use Pagans to Punish Judah?	God Speaks: Yes And Pagans Will Punish Babylon!	Word of Praise Hab 3:1-15 Words of fear & faith Hab 3:16-19
Oracle Related to Judah ca 607BC				

Habakkuk moves from **burden to blessing**, from **wonder/worry to worship**, from **restlessness to rest**, from **a problem to God's Person**, and from **a complaint to consolation**, from confusion to confidence! Beloved, only our great God and Savior can supernaturally turn sighing into singing so we must like Habakkuk take time to wait before Him in prayer and listen to His Word. It is always "worth the wait!"

Timeline of Habakkuk

BC

722: Northern Kingdom of Israel (10 tribes) falls & is exiled to Assyria

627: Jeremiah begins his prophetic ministry

621: Rediscovery of Book of Law which had been lost in House of God! Josiah's reformation (but not lasting revival)

612: Fall of Nineveh, capital of Assyria

609: Death of godly King Josiah

607: Habakkuk begins his prophetic ministry

605: Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh Necho of Egypt at Battle of Carchemish = "the turning point of world history"

605: First invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon; Daniel taken captive

597: Second invasion of Judah by Babylon; Ezekiel and 10,000 taken captive

592: Ezekiel begins his prophetic ministry to Babylonian exiles

586: Fall of Jerusalem, Destruction of Temple

538: Exiles return from Babylon to Judah (relatively small number return)

Habakkuk 3:1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.:

- **Prayer:** Ps 86:1-17 Ps 90:1-17
- Ps 7:1-17
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A PRAYER
A PSALM
A SONG

Kitto introduces this great section of Scripture...

Language is at best an imperfect instrument of thought—still more imperfect as the vehicle of high inspirations from heaven. And, in the case of Habakkuk, we seem to see the prophet grasping to seize words worthy to express his great conceptions, and images which may adequately represent them. Sometimes he adopts the expressions of earlier prophets, but he does not imitate them; and all that he takes becomes his own, fused up in the solid and glowing mass of his golden prophecy. ([Daily Bible illustrations](#))

A prayer of Habakkuk - Hab 2:20 ends with God in His Holy Temple, which provides a natural transition into the prayer beginning in Hab 3:1-2. Imagine Habakkuk's worshipful reverence as he is made aware of Jehovah in His Holy Temple.

While the tone of this chapter is distinctly different from the previous two, the author is clearly stated to be the same individual, albeit a man now supernaturally transformed by a "close encounter" with God, with His Word of Truth and Life and a vibrant trust in His Word (Hab 2:4-note). How ridiculous are those "experts" who reject Habakkuk's authorship of chapter 3!

Recall that **Habakkuk's** name means "**the embracer**" and as **Spurgeon** says "he truly was one who saw the promises afar off and was persuaded of them and embraced them. He took fast hold upon the goodness of the Lord and rested there." ([Sermon](#))

A prayer - This is not just a **prayer**, but a prayer that reads like a **psalm**. Indeed, it is a **song** to be sung, one that all of God's people can sing. Note that Shigionoth is translated "ode" or song in the Greek. And the last phrase in Hab 3:19b makes it clear this prayer is to be sung...

**For the choir director,
on my stringed instruments.**

From the NT we know that a song on one's lips is a sign of the Spirit filling one's heart (Eph 5:18-note, Eph 5:19-note). While Habakkuk does not mention the Holy Spirit, there is no doubt that the Spirit was inspiring and infilling the prophet to record one of the most magnificent descriptions of Jehovah in the entire Word of God. We too would do well to "sing" this great psalm frequently, especially when we find ourselves in a "Habakkuk-like hole" so to speak, when we find ourselves seemingly overwhelmed by the circumstances (real or imagined), unable to find rest and peace in our own strength. In that state, instead of looking inward, we do well to imitate Habakkuk and looking back to remember the great and mighty works of our great God, and then looking forward, confident of the future fulfillment of every one of His great promises given to us personally in Christ Jesus.

[Henry Morris](#)...

This psalm, designed to be sung as a prayer hymn, seeks both to review God's works of old for His people, as a means of encouraging them in relation to the troubles that were coming, and also to assure that God's ancient promises will surely be fulfilled (**Ed**: Stated another way, God is a Covenant Keeping God and His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/Israel is everlasting, just as is His covenant with all who are in Christ by grace through faith.)

Corrie Ten Boom's well known quote is a great subtitle for Habakkuk 3...

**If you look at the world, you'll be distressed.
If you look within, you'll be depressed.
If you look at God you'll be at rest.**

Shigionoth - Lxx translates it with Greek word **ode** meaning "song." The NASB has a note says it is "a highly emotional poetic form", that it may refer to "a wild passionate song with rapid changes of rhythm" which presumably is why the Amplified version is translated as follows...

**A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet,
Set to wild, enthusiastic, and triumphal music.**

NET Note on Shigionoth: The meaning of this word is uncertain. It may refer to the literary genre of the prayer or to the musical style to be employed when it is sung.

And so we see the prophet turn his worry into worship, a prayer in the form of a song. As Corrie Ten Boom said "Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be made into a burden."

As **Spurgeon** wrote "It was a divine song which Habakkuk sang when in the night he said Hab. 3:17-18. No man can make a song in the night of himself. He may attempt it, but he will find that a song in the night must be divinely inspired. Oh, Chief Musician, let us

not remain without song because affliction is upon us; tune our lips to the melody of thanksgiving. (Daily Help)

Habakkuk 3:2 LORD, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.:

- **I have:** Hab 3:16 1:5-10 Ex 9:20,21 2Ch 34:27,28 Job 4:12-21 Ps 119:120 Isa 66:2 Jer 36:21-24 Da 8:17 Heb 11:7 12:21 Rev 15:4
- **report**, or hearing, Isa 53:1 Ro 10:16
- **O Lord:** Ezra 9:8 Ps 85:6 Ps 90:13-17 Ps 138:7,8 Isa 51:9-11 Isa 63:15-19 Isa 64:1-4 Hos 6:2,3 Jn 10:10 Php 1:6
- **In the midst of the years:** Jer 25:11,12 Jer 52:31-34 Da 9:2
- **In wrath:** Ex 32:10-12 Nu 14:10-23 Nu 16:46,47 2Sa 24:10-17 Ps 6:1,2 Ps 38:1 Ps 78:38 Jer 10:24 Jer 29:10 La 3:32 Zec 1:12)
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Play Robin Mark's great song Revival](#) - and then ask God for personal, corporate and national revival for the Glory of the Lord. Amen

LXX = O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and was afraid: I considered Thy works, and was amazed: Thou shalt (future tense) be known between the two living creatures, Thou shalt (future tense) be acknowledged when the years draw nigh; Thou shalt (future tense) be manifested when the time is come; when my soul is troubled, Thou wilt in wrath remember mercy.

The Prophet's fear—"O Lord, I have heard Your speech, and was afraid."

The Prophet's prayer—"O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years."

The Prophet's plea—"In wrath remember mercy"

LORD, I have heard the report about You - Literally, "Yahweh I have heard the hearing of You." Notice that Habakkuk begins his prayer with **Jehovah**, the covenant Name of God, the God Who keeps covenant! (Compare Hab 1:2-note). As a result of the vision in the previous chapters, we can only imagine the depth of the prophet's awe at the greatness of His God. Undoubtedly Habakkuk is forever changed by this encounter and rightly so! How do we know? He no longer accuses the God of not hearing (Hab 1:2-note), because he himself has now heard the report ("the hearing"). Notice also how the complaint has changed to a petition, for he knows that Jehovah is not silent, and he desires to see more of His great work (Hab 3:2). Is this not the case in our life -- when God reveals some aspect or truth about Himself, it often kindles in us a desire for even more of Him. Indeed, the invitation is ever to

**O taste and see that the LORD is good;
How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!
Psalm 34:8-note**

Robert Spendera makes an interesting observation - An important feature of Bible study is to observe the use of pronouns and determine each referent. Habakkuk's personal plea (Hab 3:2) is followed by a magnificent description of the Lord's coming using third person forms (Hab 3:3-6). A change back to the first person signals the end of the description and transitions to the next section of the psalm (Hab 3:7). The second part of the psalm moves on a more personal level by employing second person forms (Hab 3:8-15). Finally, the psalm ends with Habakkuk's personal reaction to his encounter with the Lord (Hab 3:16-19). ([Grow Your Faith With Habakkuk - Emmaus Journal 11:1, Summer, 2002](#))

I fear (Literally "I am afraid") - KJV = "was afraid"; NET = "I am awed"; CSB = "I stand in awe"; ESV = "your work, O LORD, do I fear" rather than "You...I fear." The godly man has a healthy (reverential) fear of God. The ungodly in their arrogance and self-deception do not fear Him (Ps 36:1-note).

Spurgeon - It is the fear of solemn awe—it is not dread or terror, but reverence. Read it in connection with the 20th verse of the preceding chapter (Hab 2:20)—"But the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him. O Lord, I have heard Your speech, and was afraid." All else was hushed and then, in the solemn silence, he heard Jehovah's voice and trembled. It is not possible that mortal men should be thoroughly conscious of the Divine Presence without being filled with awe. I suppose that this feeling in unfallen Adam was less overwhelming because he had no sense of sin, but surely even to him it must have been a solemn thing to hear the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. ([Sermon](#))

**PETITIONS FOR
REVIVAL & MERCY**

Habakkuk 3:1 designates this chapter as a prayer and it is notable because Habakkuk has only 2 petitions -**revive Your work...make it known** and remember **mercy**. This psalm, designed to be sung as a prayer hymn, seeks both to review God's works of old for His people, as a means of encouraging them in relation to the troubles that were coming, and also to assure that God's ancient promises will surely be fulfilled.

Revive (piel imperative) **your work** - preserve or make alive. Habakkuk prays for God's redemptive intervention during the period of their chastisement ("in the midst of the years"). Although God's warnings surely were enough to make them afraid, Habakkuk and the people could still pray for revival and for God to be merciful, even in His wrath against their sins. Habakkuk prayed for a fresh manifestation of God's power.

Patterson adds "He asked that God would again make known his work of redemption. With aching heart, he urged God to be compassionate in the coming turmoil (cf. Ex 34:6, 7; 1Kgs 8:33, 34, 46–53; 2Chr 6:24, 25, 36-39; Isa 54:8). Habakkuk's prayer would be answered according to the terms of Israel's covenant with God (Deut 4:25–31) and also the prophecies of Jeremiah (**Ed**: The Historical Fulfillment = Regathering after Babylonian Captivity = Jer 25:1–11; 29:10–14; cf. 2Chr 36:22; Ezra 1:1; Da 9:2). **His prayer and its realization stand as a harbinger of God's future gathering of His people (Israel) in redemptive power (Ed**: The Eschatological or Future Regathering of Israel and Redemption of the **Remnant** = Read Dt 30:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; Ezek 36:24–38; 37:21-28; Amos 9:14, 15; Mic 4:6; Zeph 3:20; Zech 10:5–12)(**Ed**: cp Ro 11:25, 26, 27-note). (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 10: Minor Prophets, Hosea–Malachi; Tyndale House Publishers)

Revive is the verb *chayah* = to live, to have life, to give, to restore life.

OT passages that speak of "revival" = Ezra 9:8 Ps 85:6 Ps 90:13-17 Ps 138:7-8 Isa 51:9-11 Isa 63:15-19
Isa 64:1-4 Hos 6:2-3 Ps 119:25, Ps 69:32 Ps 71:20 Ps 80:18 Ps 119:37, 40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159 Ps
138:7 Ps 143:11 Hab 3:2

Tozer said "Revival will come when prayer is no longer used as a substitute for obedience." (1Sa 15:22,23) Or stated another way ""There will be No **Revival** without **Rebible!**"

Leonard Ravenhill - In revival God is not concerned about filling empty churches, He is concerned about filling empty hearts.

Habakkuk may have had something like this in mind...

Send a revival, O Christ, my Lord,
Let it go over the land and sea;
Send it according to Thy dear Word,
And let it begin in me.
-McKinney

Patterson writes that "The verb (for **revive**) can denote not only giving, calling, or creating life (Ge 7:3; Dt 32:39) but also reviving and renewing life (Ps 80:19; 85:6; Ps 119:25) as well as preserving life (Ge 12:12; Dt 6:24; Ps 22:29). **The reference here points to the redeeming work of God that is rehearsed in Hab 3:3-15.** (See [Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah - Exegetical Commentary](#))

Ryrie explains that Habakkuk is asking God to preserve or make alive His "declared program of judgment on Judah and then on Babylon (Hab 1:5-11-note). Habakkuk was satisfied that God's ways, though not fully comprehensible, are best.

The **Psalmist** prays...

Will You not Yourself revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? (Ps 85:6)

Criswell comments: "In You" (lit. "You alone") is emphatic and underscores the biblical premise that any genuine restoration of the national and spiritual life of a country has its origin **in God**. (**Ed**: Similarly, note that any manifestation of **genuine joy is in God** = Hab 3:18 "Yet I will exult in the LORD. I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.")

Your work - Jamieson says "Perfect the work of delivering Thy people, and do not let Thy promise lie as if it were dead, but give it new life by performing it [Menochius]. Calvin explains "**Thy work**" to be Israel; called "the work of My hands" (Isa 45:11). Israel is peculiarly **His work** (Isa 43:1), pre-eminently illustrating His power, wisdom, and goodness. "Though we seem, as it were, dead nationally, revive us" (Ps 85:6)."

In the midst of the years - Only here in the OT. Meaning uncertain.

Earlier in His declaration of the coming judgment on Judah God gave Habakkuk a specific time of fulfillment...

Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something **in your days**– You

would not believe if you were told. (Hab 1:5-note)

In wrath remember mercy - "in turmoil remember [to show] compassion." **Spendera** writes that "Habakkuk's fear of coming judgment is genuine but his knowledge of God's merciful character is equally genuine, so he intercedes for his people." (Ibid)

Mercy (07355) (**racham**) reflects a deep love (usually of superior for inferior) rooted in some "natural" bond. **Racham** is a revealed attribute of the Lord (Ex. 33:19; See discussion of **God's Attribute of Mercy**) and reflects the tender feelings that a mother has for the fruit of her womb.

Racham - 45v - ompassion(1), compassionate(1), find compassion(1), finds mercy(1), had(2), had compassion(2), has compassion(4), have compassion(20), have had compassion(1), have mercy(2), have pity(1), have...compassion(3), have...mercy(2), love(1), mercy(1), obtained compassion(1), Ruhamah(1), show compassion(2), surely have mercy(1). Exod. 33:19; Deut. 13:17; Deut. 30:3; 1 Ki. 8:50; 2 Ki. 13:23; 2 Ki. 13:25; 2 Ki. 14:3; Ps. 18:1; Ps. 102:13; Ps. 103:13; Ps. 116:5; Prov. 28:13; Isa. 9:17; Isa. 13:18; Isa. 14:1; Isa. 27:11; Isa. 30:18; Isa. 49:10; Isa. 49:13; Isa. 49:15; Isa. 54:8; Isa. 54:10; Isa. 55:7; Isa. 60:10; Jer. 6:23; Jer. 12:15; Jer. 13:14; Jer. 21:7; Jer. 30:18; Jer. 31:20; Jer. 33:26; Jer. 42:12; Jer. 50:42; Lam. 3:32; Ezek. 39:25; Hos. 1:6; Hos. 1:7; Hos. 2:1; Hos. 2:4; Hos. 2:23; Hos. 14:3; Mic. 7:19; Hab. 3:2; Zech. 1:12; Zech. 10:6

Jeremiah wrote...

Lam 3:32 For if He causes grief, Then He will have compassion According to His abundant lovingkindness.

Guzik comments that...

Habakkuk prays knowing well that they don't deserve revival, so he prays for mercy. The idea is, "Lord, I know that we deserve your wrath, but in the midst of your wrath remember mercy and send revival among us."

As Habakkuk prays for revival he begins to praise the God Who brings revival. In this song of praise (punctuated by several expressions of Selah, as in the Psalms) Habakkuk glorifies the power and majesty of God. It is good to praise God like this, and God's people need to do more of it. It is good to praise God because . . .

- Because it gives appropriate honor and glory to God
- Because declares God's specific works
- Because it teaches and reminds us of who God is and what He has done
- Because it places man in proper perspective under God
- Because it builds confidence in the power and works of God

F B Meyer - O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years. Habakkuk 3:2

When we are oppressed with the state of the Church and the world, as Habakkuk was, there is no resource but to turn to God. It is of no use to say to our brother, "What shall we do?" Better at once get into the presence of the Almighty. All conferences with flesh and blood are wasted breath, unless there has been a previous one with God.

Note also the unselfishness of the prayer which precedes revival. We must not pray "Revive my work," lest the insidious temptation come in of using the stream of God's blessing to turn our own tiny water-wheels for our own profit. Let us get beyond the narrow limits of our church or section, and ask for a revival of God's work everywhere.

We do not need a new Gospel, but a revival—a revivifying of the old Gospel. If any preach another Gospel than that which the apostles preached, let him be accursed; he is selling bran for wheat; he is filling cartridges with sand. We want nothing but the Gospel of the Cross of Jesus Christ, proclaimed from lips which have received a new baptism of heavenly power.

Note the time. Not at the end of years, but in the midst. This is a prayer for those in middle life. They are apt to think that their power for service has passed its prime, and that the successes of their early days cannot be paralleled. But let them remember that in the midst of the years God can revive his work, and ask for it.

What an argument! "Remember mercy." We cannot appeal to merit, but can lay great stress on mercy. Lord, have mercy on thy Church—revive her; and ere the dispensation close, may she arise for one great work of soul-salvation! (**Our Daily Homily**)

Habakkuk 3:3 God comes from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, and

- **O Lord:** Ezr 9:8 Ps 85:6 Ps 90:13-17 Ps 138:7,8 Isa 51:9-11 Isa 63:15-19 Isa 64:1-4 Hos 6:2,3 Jn 10:10 Php 1:6
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

LXE = God **shall come** (future tense) from Theman, and the Holy One from the dark shady mount Pharan. Pause. His excellence covered the heavens, and the earth was (Actually no verb in the Greek) full of His praise.

NLT = I see God moving across the deserts from Edom, the Holy One coming from Mount Paran. His brilliant splendor fills the heavens, and the earth is filled with His praise.

NET = God comes from Teman, the sovereign one from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the skies, his glory fills the earth.

THE THEOPHANY THE COMING HOLY ONE

God come from Teman...Mount Paran - God answers Hab 3:2 with a description of His glory (*glory* is that which gives a proper opinion of someone) from Hab 3:3 through Hab 3:15. Hab 3:16 is the prophet's reaction to God's Self Revelation and Hab 3:17-19 is his final declaration of trust. The reader needs to be aware that there are two ways Hab 3:3-15 is interpreted, one school seeing this description as only **past history** with no prophetic implications, but another school seeing it as a description of God's actions in the past and a prophecy to be fulfilled in the future at the Second Coming. This commentary favors the latter view as will be explained in the following exposition.

Related Resources:

- Parallel passage - Exposition of Isaiah 63:1-6
- See also Proposed sequence of events when Messiah Returns

Spendera comments that this next section recalls "the wilderness period, the next section of the psalm begins and ends with southern geographical references (Hab. 3:3, 7). Exact locations for these places have yet to be determined, but their general location in the Sinai parallels the poetic description of God's movement during the wilderness period." (Ibid)

God (Eloah) - Thought by some to be the singular of the noun elohim. David uses Eloah to describe Jehovah in Ps 18:31. **Eloah** is used once in the phrase "**God of Jacob**" (Ps 114:7) and once in the phrase, "**God of forgiveness**" (Neh. 9:17).

Eloah - 56x in OT - Dt 32:15, 17; 2Chr 32:15; Neh 9:17; Job 3:4, 23; 4:9, 17; 5:17; 6:4, 8f; 9:13; 10:2; 11:5ff; 12:4, 6; 15:8; 16:20f; 19:6, 21, 26; 21:9, 19; 22:12, 26; 24:12; 27:3, 8, 10; 29:2, 4; 31:2, 6; 33:12, 26; 35:10; 36:2; 37:15, 22; 39:17; 40:2; Ps 18:31; 50:22; 114:7; 139:19; Pr 30:5; Isa 44:8; Da 11:37, 38, 39; Hab 1:11; 3:3

Teman ([Dictionary Description](#)) - This word means "south" and describes southern **Edom**. ([see map](#))

Holy One - Used in Hab 1:12, cp Hab 1:13. This name expresses God's absolute holiness, His set apartness so to speak from sin and all things unholy.

Holy One - 58x in 56v (50v in OT & 8v in NT) - 2Kgs 19:22; Job 6:10; Ps 16:10; 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; 106:16; Prov 9:10; 30:3; Isa 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:17, 20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19, 23; 30:11f, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 40:25; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14f; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9, 14; Jer 50:29; 51:5; Ezek 39:7; Dan 4:13, 23; 8:13; Hos 11:9, 12; Hab 1:12; 3:3; Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; John 6:69; Acts 2:27; 13:35; 1 Pet 1:15; 1 John 2:20; Rev 16:5

Mount Paran ([Dictionary Description](#)) - According to most sources this describes a wilderness area south of Judah, west of Edom, and north of Sinai. Israel camped there after leaving Sinai during the Exodus and sent spies to scout out the Promised Land from Kadesh, a location in Paran (Nu 10:11-12; 13:3,26). In short, Habakkuk received an answer to his prayer that consists of an awesome description of God coming from the southern portion of Israel, the general direction of Sinai. The mention of **Teman** and **Paran** appear to be allusions to the events of Israel's wilderness wanderings during which God demonstrated great power to His covenant people as He brought them on their journey to the Promised Land.

There are several other majestic descriptions of God similar to that of Habakkuk 3 which also recall God's past presence, power and provision during the time of Israel's wilderness wanderings...

Deut 33:2 And he said, "The LORD came from Sinai, and dawned on them from **Seir** (which is sometimes equated with Edom - see comment below for location); He shone forth from **Mount Paran**, and He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones; At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them.

Comment: **Seir** ("hairy, shaggy") is a mountainous region, south and west of the Dead Sea with Mt. Hor (burial site of Aaron = Nu 20:27, 28) as the highest point. "**Seir**" was originally occupied by the Horites (Ge 14:6), who were afterwards driven out by the Edomites (Ge 32:3 = "the land of **Seir**, the country of **Edom**").

Jdg 5:3 "Hear, O kings; give ear, O rulers! I—to the LORD, I will sing, I will sing praise to the LORD, the God of Israel. **4** "LORD, when Thou didst go out from **Seir**, when Thou didst march from the field of **Edom**, the earth quaked, the heavens also dripped, even the clouds dripped water. **5** "The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD, this Sinai, at the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel.

Comment: The context of these passages is a song of Deborah and Barak celebrating victory over Jabin King of Canaan (Jdg 4:24). While this was Israel's victory, it was clearly one won by their God, the writer recording that "**God subdued** (to bring a proud people to subjection, make them bend the knee) **on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the sons of Israel.**" And so Deborah and Barak's song begins much like the description in Habakkuk 3, recalling God's past presence and power in behalf of His covenant people as they traveled through the wilderness toward the promised Land. Indeed, Israel had entered into a covenant with the Lord at Mount Sinai, and He would fulfill His promises to His special people.

Bible Knowledge Commentary adds that: A typical proclamation of praise (Jdg 5:3) is followed by a historical recital of the Lord's previous saving deeds (Jdg 5:4-5). Yahweh is identified as the One of Sinai (cf. Ps. 68:8) and associated with events prior to the crossing of the Jordan under Joshua.

Barnes: The subject of (Jdg 5, Hab 3:3-16, Ps 67:7-9) is the triumphant march of Israel, with the Lord at their head, to take possession of Canaan, and the overthrow of Sihon, Og, and the Midianites. This march commenced from Kadesh, in the immediate neighborhood of Seir. ([Habakkuk 3 Commentary](#)) (**Comment:** Clearly Barnes feels that the Hab 3:3-16 is all past completed history with no eschatological application.)

Ps 68:7 O God, when Thou didst go forth before Thy people, When Thou didst march through the wilderness, Selah. 8 The earth quaked; The heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself quaked at the presence of God, the God of Israel. 9 Thou didst shed abroad a plentiful rain, O God; Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance, when it was parched.

Paran - 10x - 10v: Ge 21:21 Nu 10:12 Nu 12:16 Nu 13:3 Nu 13:26 Dt 1:1 T 33:2 1Sa 25:1 1Ki 11:18 Hab 3:3

Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes that Hab 3:3 places Messiah's

initial return (at His Second Coming) in this area. Both **Teman** and **Mount Paran** are in the vicinity of **see map**) and located in the same mountain range of Mount Seir ([note](#)). The context is obviously speaking of the Second Coming and that event is said to be in the same area." (The Messianic Bible Study Collection)

In another discussion **Fruchtenbaum** has this comment on Habakkuk 3:3 -

Habakkuk pointed out the place of the Second Coming. Teman is a city located in Mount Seir, within the land of Edom or Southern Jordan, just north of the city of Bozrah or Petra; mount Paran is in the southern Negev, across the Arabah from Mount Seir. According to Micah 2:12–13; Isaiah 34:1–6; and 63:1–7, the initial place of the Second Coming will be the city of Bozrah, its Hebrew name, or Petra, its Greek name. This verse gives the route that the Messiah will take. He will first go north of Bozrah or Petra until He comes to Teman; from Teman, He will make His way down Mount Seir, cross the Arabah proper into the Negev Desert, and come by way of Mount Paran; and then into the Land of Israel from the southeast. So as to place, He will return to Israel from the direction of Teman in Edom and mount Paran in the southern Negev. (Ibid)

Selah ([05542](#))(**selah**) is used 3x in this chapter (Hab 3:3, 3:9, 3:13) which are the only uses outside of Psalms where it is found 71 times. **Selah** invites the reader/singer to stop and think about that thought. This expression is thought to be equivalent to a musical *rest* in which the reader or singer was instructed to stop and think about what he just sang or read. It affords an opportunity for pause and reflection upon what has been said. Someone has suggested that when we read it, we probably should not vocalize it anymore than a singer would vocalize the *rests* of a musical composition. Whatever its meaning, an obvious break was intended in the middle of Hab 3:3. For some reason, the **ESV** choose to place **Selah** at the end of verse. The **NJB** translates it as "**Pause.**" (Related - [What Does Selah Mean?](#))

Gilbrant - Various theories have been suggested for its meaning:

- (1) The Septuagint translates it with the Greek word *diaspalma*, which is usually understood as a "musical interlude."
- (2) Strong and others have suggested that it be explained as a "pause," claiming that it comes from the verb *sālāh* in the sense of "to weigh," so that it means "suspension"; thus, a "pause."
- (3) A Palestinian Jewish tradition adopted by Jerome translated it as "forever," though the basis for this rendering is slim. It was seen as a direction to insert a benediction or chorus at that point.
- (4) Most commentators believe it is derived from the verb *sālā*, which means "to lift up," "to exalt." If so, there is still room for discussion as to whether it means to raise one's voice and sing loudly or to lift up the volume of the instrumental accompaniment. (The Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary – Nun-Ayin.

Selah - 74x in 74v - Ps. 3:2; Ps. 3:4; Ps. 3:8; Ps. 4:2; Ps. 4:4; Ps. 7:5; Ps. 9:16; Ps. 9:20; Ps. 20:3; Ps. 21:2; Ps. 24:6; Ps. 24:10; Ps. 32:4; Ps. 32:5; Ps. 32:7; Ps. 39:5; Ps. 39:11; Ps. 44:8; Ps. 46:3; Ps. 46:7; Ps. 46:11; Ps. 47:4; Ps. 48:8; Ps. 49:13; Ps. 49:15; Ps. 50:6; Ps. 52:3; Ps. 52:5; Ps. 54:3; Ps. 55:7; Ps. 55:19; Ps. 57:3; Ps. 57:6; Ps. 59:5; Ps. 59:13; Ps. 60:4; Ps. 61:4; Ps. 62:4; Ps. 62:8; Ps. 66:4; Ps. 66:7; Ps. 66:15; Ps. 67:1; Ps. 67:4; Ps. 68:7; Ps. 68:19; Ps. 68:32; Ps. 75:3; Ps. 76:3; Ps. 76:9; Ps. 77:3; Ps. 77:9; Ps. 77:15; Ps. 81:7; Ps. 82:2; Ps. 83:8; Ps. 84:4; Ps. 84:8; Ps. 85:2; Ps. 87:3; Ps. 87:6; Ps. 88:7; Ps. 88:10; Ps. 89:4; Ps. 89:37; Ps. 89:45; Ps. 89:48; Ps. 140:3; Ps. 140:5; Ps. 140:8; Ps. 143:6; Hab. 3:3; Hab. 3:9; Hab. 3:13

The noun **diapsalma** means musical interlude or break and is the most common word used to translate **selah**.

Diapsalma - 81x all in the Septuagint - Ps. 2:2; Ps. 3:2; Ps. 3:4; Ps. 4:2; Ps. 4:4; Ps. 7:5; Ps. 9:16; Ps. 9:20; Ps. 20:3; Ps. 21:2; Ps. 24:6; Ps. 32:4; Ps. 32:5; Ps. 32:7; Ps. 34:10; Ps. 39:5; Ps. 39:11; Ps. 44:8; Ps. 46:3; Ps. 46:7; Ps. 47:4; Ps. 48:8; Ps. 49:13; Ps. 49:15; Ps. 50:6; Ps. 50:15; Ps. 52:3; Ps. 52:5; Ps. 54:3; Ps. 55:7; Ps. 55:19; Ps. 57:3; Ps. 57:6; Ps. 59:5; Ps. 59:13; Ps. 60:4; Ps. 61:4; Ps. 62:4; Ps. 62:8; Ps. 66:4; Ps. 66:7; Ps. 66:15; Ps. 67:1; Ps. 67:4; Ps. 68:7; Ps. 68:13; Ps. 68:19; Ps. 68:32; Ps. 75:3; Ps. 76:3; Ps. 76:9; Ps. 77:3; Ps. 77:9; Ps. 77:15; Ps. 80:7; Ps. 81:7; Ps. 82:2; Ps. 83:8; Ps. 84:4; Ps. 84:8; Ps. 85:2; Ps. 87:3; Ps. 87:6; Ps. 88:7; Ps. 89:4; Ps. 89:37; Ps. 89:45; Ps. 89:48; Ps. 94:15; Ps. 140:3; Ps. 140:5; Ps. 140:8; Ps. 143:6; Hab. 3:3; Hab. 3:9; Hab. 3:13

TWOT on Selah - Many are the conjectures as to its meaning, but nothing certain is known. Other terms also probably musical but of uncertain meaning are, 'ālāmôt, shemînî, gittî, maḥlāl le'annôt, negînôt, nehîlôt, higgāyôn, shiggāyôn, lammenaššēaḥ maskîl, miktām. Other enigmatic terms perhaps refer to tunes. (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Scott feels that **Selah** "is used in this chapter (vv. 3, 9, 13) as a pause to allow the reader time to reflect upon God's deliverance of His people." (When Prophets Speak of Judgment)

Henry Morris - Habakkuk here refers partially to God's leading His people in their Exodus from Egypt, with the veiled revelation of His glory on Mount Sinai. However, the dramatic events described following the "**Selah**" pause did not take place at that time. The literal fulfillment must be at His glorious coming following the **Great Tribulation** of the end-times. It seems that Habakkuk's prophetic vision, on which his psalm was based, contained a blending of both God's past miraculous deliverances of His people and also the future deliverances of which these had been a type.

Cyril Barber - In his prayer Habakkuk portrayed God as coming **from Teman**," a district of Edom, and **from Mt. Paran**, a region south of Seir. Habakkuk amplified the word he used for God, 'Eloah, by the descriptive term "**Holy One**," emphasizing a specific aspect of God's deity in keeping with the judgment He was about to execute. The historic backdrop of the events described by Habakkuk were portrayed by Isaiah as having a future fulfillment. Isaiah described the Lord as advancing in judgment upon his enemies and coming "from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah" (Isa. 63:1–6-note). The context of Isaiah's prophecy definitely has application to the second advent of Christ and the events bringing to a close the Battle of Armageddon. **That which Habakkuk saw, therefore, apparently had more than one fulfillment. It had an immediate context that foreshadowed a final, ultimate victory.** (Habakkuk and Zephaniah - Everyman's Bible Commentary)

A C Gaebelein offers a very lucid summary of Habakkuk 3:3-15...

The great description of His coming must be linked with similar prophecies (See Dt. 33:2; Ps 18:8-19, 33, 34; Ps 68:8, 34; Ps 77:17-20). The great ode, cast in the form of a Psalm, begins with the statement that God cometh from Teman and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Moses in his prophetic blessing also begins with a similar declaration. "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose from Seir unto them; He shined from Mount Paran, and He came with the thousands of His saints (angels); from His right hand went a fiery law for them." Just as

He was manifested when He had redeemed them out of Egypt, and constituted them His Kingdom people at Sinai (Ex 19), so will He appear again to deliver the remnant of His people from the dominion of the world-power, and judge them as He judged Egypt. He comes from the direction of Edom, for Teman is the southern district of Idumea, while Paran is more southward. Isaiah also beheld him advancing from the same direction. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" (Isa 63:1-6-note). It is unfortunate that the Authorized Version has "God came from Teman," when it is "God cometh," not a past but a future event. After this opening statement the first **Selah** is put. This means to pause and to lift up. We are to pause and meditate, and then to lift up our hearts and voices in praise and thanksgiving. It is found seventy-one times in the Psalms and three times in this chapter of Habakkuk. (**Gaebelein, A. C. The Annotated Bible, Volume 5: Daniel to Malachi**).

His splendor covers the heavens (See Shekinah glory) - KJV = "His glory covered the heavens." Picture the sunrise and how the sky is lit by the sun. Yahweh's coming causes the heavens to light up with His glory, while the earth reacts with joyful praise.

Wiersbe - Everything about this stanza reveals the glory of God. He is called "the Holy One" (Hab. 3:3, and see Hab 1:12), a name used in Isaiah at least thirty times. "His glory covered the heavens" (Hab 3:3) is an anticipation of the time when His glory will cover all the earth (Hab 2:14). (Be Amazed)

Spendera observes that...

Such universal **praise** is both warranted and prophetic. The synonymous parallelism in the second half of verse three effectively carries a sense of the future manifestation of God's glory. Already the Old Testament understands that praise is due to God (Ps 48:10; Isa. 42:10), but the thought that all the earth will praise God moves toward an eschatological goal (Zeph. 3:19, 20) yet to be fulfilled (Phil 2:11).

Splendor (KJV = "Glory") (01935) (**hod**) describes kingly authority (Nu 27:20; 1Chr 29:25), as well as splendor, majesty, that which is glorious (1Chr 16:27; 29:11; Job 37:22; 40:10; Ps 8:2; 21:6; 45:4; 96:6; 104:1; 111:3; 145:5; 148:13; Isa 30:30; Jer 22:18; Da 11:21; Hos 14:7; Hab 3:3; Zec 6:13). God's **splendor** is often linked with His **majesty** - 1Chr 16:27, Job 37:22, Ps 21:5, Ps 45:3, Ps 96:6, Ps 104:1, Ps 111:3, Ps 145:5.

The point is that the Holy One is sovereign over His creation and the history of the world ("His" story).

The earth is full of His praise - NET, NJB = " his glory fills the earth" Compare the similar phrase in Hab 2:14 "the earth filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD."

Praise (08416) (**tehillah**) refers to glory; praise; song of praise; praiseworthy deeds. Tehillah can denote a quality or attribute of some person or thing, "glory or praiseworthiness." Secondly, in some cases tehillah represents the words or song by which God is publicly lauded, or by which His "glory" is publicly declared (Ps 22:22). Third, tehillah can be a technical-musical term for a song (sir) which exalts or praises God. (Ps 145:1).

NET Note writes that "earth is full of His praise"...could mean that the earth responds in praise as God's splendor is observed in the skies. However, the Hebrew term תְּהִלָּה (tēhillah, "praise") can stand by **Metonymy** for what prompts it (i.e., fame, glory, deeds).

NET BIBLE NOTE ON FUTURE TENSE

NET Note writes that in Hab 3:3-15 there are some **30** verbs in the Hebrew...

a mixture of **11** prefixed verbal forms..., **16** suffixed forms, and **3** prefixed forms with *vav* consecutive. All of the forms are best taken as indicating **completed action** from the speaker's standpoint (all of the prefixed forms being regarded as preterites).

The forms could be translated with the past tense, but this would be misleading, for this is not a mere recital of God's deeds in Israel's past history. Habakkuk here describes, in terms reminiscent of past theophanies, his prophetic vision of a future theophany....

From the prophet's visionary standpoint the theophany is "as good as done." This translation (NET) uses the English present tense throughout these verses to avoid misunderstanding. A similar strategy is followed by the NEB; in contrast note the NIV and NRSV, which consistently use past tenses throughout the section, and the NASB, which employs present tenses in Hab 3:3-5 and mostly past tenses in Hab 3:6-15.

Comment: In light of the above somewhat technical note, it is notable that the Greek (Lxx) does use the future tense in translation of a number of the Hebrew verbs in Hab 3:3-15.

- **Radiance:** Ex 13:21 14:20 Ne 9:12 Ps 104:2 Isa 60:19,20 Mt 17:2 1Ti 6:16 Rev 21:23 22:5
- **The hiding:** Job 26:14 Pr 18:10
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**GOD, THE HOLY ONE
TOO AWESOME TO VIEW
TOO POWERFUL TO MISS**

His radiance is like (= simile) **the sunlight** - Imagine staring at a created object like the sun on a cloudless day. Now imagine Habakkuk's vision of the Creator's "**radiance...like sunlight!**" Little wonder that Habakkuk adds "there is the hiding of His power!" This reminds one of Jehovah's warning to Moses after he had asked "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory" (Ex 33:18)...

"I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." 20 But He said, "**You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!**" 21 Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; 22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. 23 "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen." (Ex 33:19-23)

Other translations of Hab 3:4a - NET = "He is as bright as lightning"; ESV = "His brightness was like the light"; NIV = "His splendor was like the sunrise"; NLT "His coming is as brilliant as the sunrise"; LXX = "His brightness **shall be** (future tense) as light". The NET felt that instead of light or sunlight, a better translation would be *lightning*, reasoning that this picture fits better with "rays flashing from His hand". They felt that the fact that this Hebrew word does refer to *lightning* in Job 36:32, 37:3, 11, 15 also supported that translation in this passage.

Sunlight (light, lightning)([0216](#)) (or) refers to literal light (Ge 1:3), light from a heavenly body (Jer 31:35), the light from the "pillar of fire" (Ex 13:21), light as the "clothing" of God (Ps 104:2) or originating from Him (Isa 60:19, 20). The Bible versions differ in their translation (sunlight, lightning, sunrise), but each is still a picture of the awesome appearance of God.

John MacArthur's comments that...The **Shekinah glory**, which protected and led Israel from Egypt through the wilderness (cf. Ex 40:34-38), was the physical manifestation of His presence. Like the sun, He spread His radiance throughout the heavens and the earth.

He has rays flashing from His hand - KJV "He had horns coming out of his hand." It is as if rays of God's glory break through "the hiding of His power" and allow the prophet to view the "**rays**" of His glory.

David Levy writes that - The phrase "horns coming out of his hand" (v. 4) is an anthropomorphic phrase (giving human form to God) to simply say that rays of God's glory were emitted in all directions. Although God's glory was greatly manifested, He still hid "his power" (v. 4) from the people, for no man can see God and live. So awesome was His glory that Moses had to be hidden in the "cleft of the rock" when God passed by (Ex. 33:18-23) or he would have perished. (Borrow [When Prophets Speak of Judgment](#))

Thomas Constable comments that...Power seemed to flash from His fingertips as rays (lit. horns) of light stretch from the rising sun (cf. Ex. 34:29, 30, 35). In spite of this, most of His power remained concealed.

Rays ([07161](#)) ([qeren](#)) means a literal horn (Ge 22:13), but also referred to horn-like extensions (Ex 27:2, Jer 48:25). In other contexts, qeren was used figuratively to describe **strength** (1Sa 2:10) or power (2Sa 22:3). The Lxx translates **qeren** in Hab 3:4 with **keras** which literally means a horn. Figuratively **keras** was used to describe exceptional might or power (Lk 1:69, Ps 89:17, Ps 148:14). **Keras** is used to translate the Hebrew **qeren** in the expression "the horn of salvation" (Ps 18:2, 2Sa 22:3).

Patterson...Roberts (1991:153) remarks, "The form Habakkuk sees has two prongs (qarnayim) extending from his hand. This is an apt description of the standard representation of the Syro-Palestinian storm god. He is usually portrayed standing, one hand grasping a lightning bolt as a weapon, and the end of the stylized lightning bolt that extends above the hand forks into two or more prongs that closely resemble horns. Here, of course, the description is of the Lord in all his radiant glory." (Ibid)

And there is the hiding of His power - ESV = "and there He veiled His power", NAB = "where His power is concealed", NIV = "where His power was hidden"; NLT = "where His awesome power is hidden." - This description seems to refer to the unfathomable "inner recesses of the divine power." How can a finite being, even the godly prophet Habakkuk, comprehend and stand in the presence of infinite power? **But dear child of God, don't forget that this very One is also YOUR Father, YOUR God, YOUR**

Protector! Be encouraged!

There is a verse in **Job** which alludes to the fact that we only see a small fraction of Who God really is, which makes sense for if He is infinite, everything about Him is infinite including His power and His glory. Thus **Job** declares...

Job 26:14 "Behold, these (What? Read Job 26:6-13) are the **fringes** of His ways; and how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand?"

Habakkuk 3:5 Before Him goes pestilence and plague comes after Him:

- Ex 12:29,30 Nu 14:12 Nu 16:46-49 Ps 78:50,51 Na 1:2,3
- **after Him:** Ps 18:7-13
- **Plagues** Dt 32:24
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JEHOVAH'S JUDGMENT MANIFESTATION OF HIS POWER

Before Him goes...comes after Him - Lxx = "Before Him shall go (future tense)...it shall go forth (future tense)." Here is the other dimension of God's coming. First His brilliance and glory but not the pestilence and plague. As Spendera says...

The plague, visited upon Egypt during the Exodus, will come upon those who resist God. Babylonians beware!
But Judah must also take note. Judah's sins have become worse than the surrounding nations (2Ki 21:11; cp. Dt. 28:20-22), so the plague will include God's people. (Ibid)

Pestilence ([01698](#)) (**deber**) refers to any kind of plague (think '[Bubonic plague](#)'!) or pandemic (think the [1918 flu pandemic](#)) that results in widespread death and most uses speak of divine punishment. Death and destruction are clearly the results of pestilence and plague. John describes such a divinely decreed devastation in the end times when "*A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues*" (Rev 9:18-[note](#), cp Rev 15:1-[note](#))

Deber - 48v - Not surprising, this Hebrew noun is prominent in the Prophets! - Ex 5:3; 9:3, 15; Lev 26:25; Num 14:12; Deut 28:21; 2 Sam 24:13, 15; 1Kgs 8:37; 1Chr 21:12, 14; 2Chr 6:28; 7:13; 20:9; Ps 78:50; 91:3, 6; Jer 14:12; 21:6f, 9; 24:10; 27:8, 13; 28:8; 29:17f; 32:24, 36; 34:17; 38:2; 42:17, 22; 44:13; Ezek 5:12, 17; 6:11f; 7:15; 12:16; 14:19, 21; 28:23; 33:27; 38:22; Hos 13:14; Amos 4:10; Hab 3:5. **Translated** = pestilence(38), plague(10), thorns(1).

Plague (KJV = "burning coals") ([07565](#)) (**resheph**) refers to a flame, live coal. Figuratively of love in Song 8:6. **Resheph** was the name of a pagan god of fever and pestilence, so this could be a play on words. Another source says **Resheph** is a name for the Canaanite god of pestilence and sterility.

The "holy fire" of the Holy One burns up that which is unholy.

Resheph - 7x in 6v - Deut 32:24; Job 5:7; Ps 76:3; 78:48; Song 8:6; Hab 3:5. Translated in NAS as - bolts of lightning(1), flaming(1), flashes(2), plague(2), sparks*(1).

Pestilence...plague - As alluded to above, these terms most frequently speak of God's judgment (on sin, unrepentant sinners) (Ex 7:14-12:30, 12:29, Nu 16:46-49, Lev 26:25; Dt 28:21, 22; Ps 91:3, 6).

Scott comments that...

The Israelites saw the same manifestation of God's power when they murmured in the wilderness. The glory and power revealed to Israel during that time will be experienced again when God destroys their enemies (Hab 3:12) and delivers them in the future (Hab 3:13). (When Prophets Speak of Judgment)

Habakkuk 3:6 He stood and surveyed the earth; He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered, The ancient hills collapsed. His ways are everlasting.:

- **Surveyed:** Ex 15:17 21:31 Nu 34:1-29 De 32:8 Ac 17:26
- **Startled:** Jos 10:42 11:18-23 Ne 9:22-24 Ps 135:8-12

- **Everlasting:** Hab 3:10 Ge 49:26 Dt 33:15 Judges 5:5 Ps 68:16 114:4-7 Isa 64:1-3 Na 1:5 Zec 14:4,5
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE HOLY ONE ARRIVES! RESPONSE TO HIS PRESENCE

He stood and surveyed the earth - His arrival causes an appropriate response in the topography and the nations. And so we see the aged mountains "rearranged" by the power of His presence. This picture of the arrival of the Holy One to earth is reminiscent of the response of the Roman soldiers who came to arrest Jesus: "When therefore He said to them, **"I Am [He],"** (cp Ex 3:14, Jn 8:58, 59 = another response!) they drew back, and fell to the ground." (Jn 18:6) So great is His power and authority! **This is our God!**

Henry Morris comments that...

This scene is similar to that in Revelation 10:2-[note](#): "He set His right foot upon the sea, and His left foot on the earth," claiming the world as His possession. The judgments on the nations, the scattering of the everlasting mountains and perpetual hills—such things may have been prefigured by the events at the Exodus, but their literal occurrence is yet future (e.g., Revelation 6:12-17-[note](#)). ([Defender's Study Bible - Habakkuk 3:6-18 Commentary](#))

Surveyed (KJV = "measured") (NAS has [04058](#) = **madad**; KJV has [04128](#) = **mod**) refers to measuring lengths or distances and thus means to measure, to mete out, to stretch. **Baker** says **mod** "*refers to the LORD's surveying the earth as He prepares to demolish it.*" (Word Study OT Dictionary) **Madad** is used 53x in 51v and is translated continues(1), measure(9), measured(41), stretched(1), surveyed(1) - 30x in Ezek 40:1–47:23 to specify the measurements of the **Millennial Temple**.

Some translations prefer "shook" (instead of surveyed) following the lead of the Lxx which translates the Hebrew verb madad with **saleuo** which describes "the unexpected and disastrous shaking of what would be thought to be stable" (Friberg). Saleuo means to put into a state of rocking or vibratory motion. (cp Lk 21:26). **Saleuo** can also mean a measure as of a quantity that has been "shaken down" (Lk 6:38).

The **NLT** paraphrases it...

When he stops, the earth shakes. When he looks, the nations tremble. He shatters the everlasting mountains and levels the eternal hills. He is the Eternal One!

The picture one has is of God "stepping off" the area that He will destroy. He is like a commanding general who arrives at the place the battle will be waged, carefully surveying the landscape.

He startled the nations - The Hebrew word for "**startle**" ([05425](#) - **natar/nathar**) means to jump, to leap, to be violently agitated, to be shocked! It can describe "*the shuddering motion of fear as a basal response of the body to stress*" (DBL Hebrew). In Job 37:1, this Hebrew verb describes the pounding motion of the heart that is overstimulated by excitement! What a picture - the nations "**jump**" out of the way at His coming! What an apt description of that future judgment day when the godless, God hating, God rejecting unholy nations of the world are confronted with the sudden arrival of the Holy One! Their worst nightmare has just become their reality! The Septuagint translates the Hebrew (nathar) with the Greek verb **diateko** which means to melt away, also a fitting description of the response of godless men dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-note) to the Living God! (cp Rev 1:7-[note](#))

Earth...nations - These words speak of a global effect, which seems to enlarge this picture so that it applies not just to ancient Judah and Babylon (past historical fulfillment) but to the entire world, which speaks of an eschatological (future) fulfillment.

Perpetual mountains...ancient hills - parallel terms both of which would normally symbolize permanence (**perpetual...ancient**), having existed since the day of creation but now shaken and shattered by the arrival of their Creator, the Holy One.

As Scott rightly says "*Nothing will stand before God—neither nations nor nature.*" (Ibid)

Shattered (NAS = patsats) - 3x - Job 16:12, Jer 23:29, Hab 3:6. Lxx = *diathrupto* = break into pieces (Lxx uses in Lev 2:6, Nahum 3:6, Hab 3:6)

Collapsed (shachach) - means to bow or to be brought low.

Spendera writes of Jehovah's impact on the mountains and hills that...

Historically this recalls God's appearance on Mount Sinai when the mountain shook amidst lightning, thunder, and smoke (Ex. 19:18, 19). Habakkuk's vision, however, is preparation for a yet future coming of the Lord. Any form of God's revelation provides assurance to the eye of faith. So the prophet was willing to wait, for he knew

that God's ways are eternal (Hab 3:6). (Ibid)

His ways are everlasting - This phrase presents a striking contrast between the Creator and His creation - the "perpetual mountains" and "ancient hills." Everything God is and does is **everlasting**. Indeed, His very Name is **El Olam, the Everlasting God**. Why is this mentioned in this context? What is the context of Habakkuk? Is it not his angst over the coming Babylonian invasion and destruction of the beautiful land, the Holy City of Jerusalem, and God's Holy Temple? Even though these horrible events would occur just as He promised, **His ways are everlasting**. And so just as He delivered Israel in the past, judging Egypt who had held them captive, and led them through the wilderness giving them victories over other nations, so once again He will trample the nations (as He did to Babylon who was defeated by the Medes and Persians) and go forth for Israel's salvation in the future. Indeed, in the end times, the earth will be full of His praise (Hab 3:3) and full of the knowledge of His glory (Hab 2:14-note). Habakkuk like many of Israel's prophets had a message of **judgment** for the enemies of Israel and a message of **hope** for Israel in the end times. Indeed, as **Scott** says "What He did for Israel in the past He can do in the future." (Ibid)

Spendera writes that "Every generation wrestles with the **Coming of the LORD**. Habakkuk learned to wait faithfully and accept the fact that God would come, but in His own time. Believers are encouraged to look for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13-note; cp **Second Coming**). As time progresses faith is challenged, especially in view of growing apostasy (2Peter 3:4-note). Dangerous to the truth of the return of Christ are the date-setters like **Harold Camping**, whose failures cause more confusion than stability. Rather, the Lord calls His own to faithfully serve Him, like Habakkuk, as they learn to watch and pray (Matt. 26:41-note).

C H Spurgeon offers a practical application of the truth in the phrase "His ways are everlasting." — Habakkuk 3:6

What He hath done at one time, He will do yet again. Man's ways are variable, but God's ways are everlasting. There are many reasons for this most comforting truth: among them are the following—the Lord's ways are the result of wise deliberation; He orders all things according to the counsel of His own will. Human action is frequently the hasty result of passion, or fear, and is followed by regret and alteration; but nothing can take the Almighty by surprise, or happen otherwise than He has foreseen. His ways are the outgrowth of an immutable character, and in them the fixed and settled attributes of God are clearly to be seen. Unless the Eternal One Himself can undergo change, His ways, which are Himself in action, must remain for ever the same. Is He eternally just, gracious, faithful, wise, tender?—then His ways must ever be distinguished for the same excellences. Beings act according to their nature: when those natures change, their conduct varies also; but since God cannot know the shadow of a turning, His ways will abide everlastingly the same. Moreover there is no reason from without which could reverse the divine ways, since they are the embodiment of irresistible might. The earth is said, by the prophet, to be cleft with rivers, mountains tremble, the deep lifts up its hands, and sun and moon stand still, when Jehovah marches forth for the salvation of His people. Who can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou? But it is not might alone which gives stability; God's ways are the manifestation of the eternal principles of right, and therefore can never pass away. Wrong breeds decay and involves ruin, but the true and the good have about them a vitality which ages cannot diminish. This morning let us go to our heavenly Father with confidence, remembering that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever, and in Him the Lord is ever gracious to His people. (Morning and Evening)

Habakkuk 3:7 I saw the tents of Cushan under distress, The tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling:

- **Saw:** Ex 15:14-16 Nu 22:3,4 Jos 2:10 Josh 9:24
- **Cushan:** Ge 10:6,7
- **Midian:** Ge 25:1-4 Nu 31:2-12 Ps 83:5-10
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DISTRESS AND TREMBLING AT HIS COMING

NET = I see the tents of Cushan overwhelmed by trouble; the tent curtains of the land of Midian are shaking.

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

I saw - The prophet again speaks of his own experience. What he witnesses is distress and trembling of two representative tribes, which give further evidence of the impact of Jehovah's coming.

Scott comments that...

Two nations, **Cushan** and **Midian** were selected to illustrate how nations that opposed God and His people stood in fear. (Ibid)

Tents of Cushan (means blackness) - This tent dwelling people is visualized as experiencing God's wrath. The parallel with **Midian** makes people think of an Arabian tribe, possibly nomads.

The **ISBE** entry on **Cushan** comments that the...

Septuagint renders Cushan, kushan, by Aithiopon (= "Ethiopians"), reading perhaps kushim, or kushin (kushin). The context indicates that the same land or people is intended as the Old Testament elsewhere calls Cush, yet vaguely and not in any strict geographical usage that would limit it to Africa.

Distress (0205) ('aven) conveys the idea of to come to naught and thus is strictly nothingness. 'Aven speaks of calamity, trouble, misfortune, suffering, some unfavorable circumstance which causes hardship (Nu 23:21; Job 5:6; 18:12; 21:19; Ps 55:4; 56:8; 90:10; Pr 12:21; 22:8; Jer 4:15; Am 5:5).

Trembling (07264) (ragaz) means to quake, shake, quiver as with any violent emotion, in this context clearly fear of God's wrath.'

Richard Patterson sums up this previous section noting that...God is here portrayed as the Divine Warrior who intercedes on behalf of his own. This motif will reach its climax in Hab 3:8–15. With such a defender available, the believing heart may rest secure (Ps 27:1). God's past victory is a harbinger of a yet future day when the Lord shall intervene once again on behalf of his own in awesome power (Rev 19:11–21). Robertson (1990:224) appropriately remarks, "*These past manifestations on a limited scale may be regarded as anticipations of the great final epiphany of the glory of God, when the Son of Man shall come in the clouds, accompanied by lightning shining from the East to the West (Mt 24:27). Then every eye shall see Him, and the vision of Habakkuk shall receive its finalized fulfillment.*" (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 10: Minor Prophets, Hosea–Malachi. Tyndale House Publishers).

Habakkuk 3:8 Did the LORD rage against the rivers, or was Your anger against the rivers, or was Your wrath against the sea, that You rode on Your horses, on Your chariots of salvation?:

- **LORD:** Ex 14:21,22 Jos 3:16,17 Ps 114:3,5 Isa 50:2 Na 1:4 Mk 4:39 Rev 16:12
- **Rode:** Hab 3:15 Dt 33:26,27 Ps 18:10 45:4 68:4,17 104:3 Isa 19:1 Rev 6:2 Rev 19:11,14
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CSB = Are You angry at the rivers, LORD? Is Your wrath against the rivers? Or is Your rage against the sea when You ride on Your horses, Your victorious chariot?

ESV = Was your wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation?

NET = Is the LORD mad at the rivers? Are you angry with the rivers? Are you enraged at the sea? Is this why you climb into your horse-drawn chariots, your victorious chariots?

NLT = 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!

HABAKKUK QUESTIONS

Did the LORD rage...- This is a rhetorical question. Interestingly some commentators say this calls for a "no" (He did not come to fight the natural forces) or "yes" the LORD came in rage, anger, wrath.

Spendera feels the answer is "no" because...He came riding on His chariots of salvation to deliver His people. Behind Habakkuk's description of this salvation is the Exodus experience. God did not fight against the sea, but used its power to defeat the Egyptian army.

Rage...anger...wrath - This passage clearly highlights the anger of God. Earlier the prophet had alluded to God's anger, referring to His wrath in Hab 3:2.

In the previous passages Habakkuk has presented a majestic theophany, depicting God's awesome presence and power. Now in this one verse, Habakkuk speaks not *about* God but directly *to* God ("Your anger...Your wrath...You rode...Your chariots"). The prophet then returns to his description of God's appearance in Hab 3:9.

That You rode on Your horses - Lxx = "Thou wilt mount (future tense) on Thine horses."

John MacArthur adds that...With rhetorical vividness, Habakkuk addressed the Lord directly, rehearsing His judicial actions against anything that opposes His will. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

[ESV Study Bible \(borrow\)](#)...The chariot of salvation is a picture of God bringing deliverance to this people.

Salvation (03444) ([yeshua](#)) means deliverance, help, victory, prosperity. The main idea is to rescue one from danger (Ex 14:13, 2Chr 20:17). To move from distress > safety requires deliverance. Generally deliverance comes from an outside source. A title of God, Savior (Dt 32:15).

Yeshuah - 77v - **Translated** - deeds of deliverance(1), deliverance(6), help(4), prosperity(1), salvation(61), save(1), saving(1), security(1), victories(1), victory(1). Gen 49:18; Ex 14:13; 15:2; Deut 32:15; 1 Sam 2:1; 14:45; 2 Sam 10:11; 22:51; 1Chr 16:23; 2Chr 20:17; Job 13:16; 30:15; Ps 3:2, 8; 9:14; 13:5; 14:7; 18:50; 20:5; 21:1, 5; 22:1; 28:8; 35:3, 9; 42:5, 11; 43:5; 44:4; 53:6; 62:1f, 6; 67:2; 68:19; 69:29; 70:4; 74:12; 78:22; 80:2; 88:1; 89:26; 91:16; 96:2; 98:2f; 106:4; 116:13; 118:14f, 21; 119:123, 155, 166, 174; 140:7; 149:4; Isa 12:2f; 25:9; 26:1, 18; 33:2, 6; 49:6, 8; 51:6, 8; 52:7, 10; 56:1; 59:11, 17; 60:18; 62:1; Jonah 2:9; Hab 3:8.

Patterson comments that "God's deliverance (is) represented by the "chariots of salvation.""

Habakkuk 3:9 Your bow was made bare, the rods of chastisement were sworn. Selah. You cleaved the earth with rivers:

- **bow:** Dt 32:23 Ps 7:12,13 Ps 35:1-3 Isa 51:9,10 Isa 52:10 La 2:4
- **Sworn:** Ge 15:18-21 17:7,8 22:16-18 26:3,4 28:13,14 Ps 105:8-11 Lu 1:72-75 Heb 6:13-18
- **You cleaved:** Ex 17:6 Nu 20:11 Ps 78:15,16 Ps 105:41 1Co 10:4
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GOD, THE MIGHTY WARRIOR

ESV = You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. Selah You split the earth with rivers.

NET = Your bow is ready for action; You commission your arrows. Selah. You cause flash floods on the earth's surface.

NIV = You uncovered your bow, You called for many arrows. Selah You split the earth with rivers;

NKJV = Your bow was made quite ready; Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah You divided the earth with rivers.

NLT = You brandished your bow and your quiver of arrows. You split open the earth with flowing rivers.

The [NET Note](#) on "**the rods of chastisement were sworn**" explains that this refers to those that have sworn allegiance. In context...the Lord's arrows are personified and viewed as having received a commission which they have vowed to uphold. In Jer 47:6-7 the Lord's sword is given such a charge. In the Ugaritic myths Baal's weapons are formally assigned the task of killing the sea god Yam.

You cleaved (ESV = "split") **the earth with rivers** - The omnipotence of God is emphasized in His control of the rivers which He is able to use to split the earth.

The [NET Note](#) on "**You cleaved the earth with rivers**" explains that...A literal rendering like "You split the earth with rivers" (so NIV, NRSV) suggests geological activity to the modern reader, but in the present context of a violent thunderstorm, the idea of streams swollen to torrents by downpours better fits the imagery. As the Lord comes in a thunderstorm the downpour causes streams to swell to river-like proportions and spread over the surface of the ground, causing flash floods.

Habakkuk 3:10 The mountains saw You and quaked; The downpour of waters swept by. The deep uttered forth its voice, It lifted high its hands.:

- **mountains:** Hab 3:6 Ex 19:16-18 Jud 5:4,5 Ps 68:7,8 Ps 77:18 Ps 97:4,5 Ps 114:4,6 Isa 64:1,2 Jer 4:24 Mic 1:4 Na 1:5 Mt

27:51 Rev 6:14 20:11

- **Downpour:** Ex 14:22-28 Jos 3:15,16 Jos 4:18,23,24 Ne 9:11 Ps 18:15 66:6 Ps 74:13-15 Ps 77:16-19 Ps 114:3-8 Ps 136:13-15 Isa 11:15,16 63:11-13 Heb 11:29 Rev 16:12
- **The deep:** Ps 65:13 Ps 93:3 Ps 96:11-13 Ps 98:7,8 Isa 43:20 Isa 55:12
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CREATION'S REACTION TO GOD'S COMING

These next two verses show that creation reacts dramatically to the coming of the Lord.

Quaked (ESV = "wriethed", KJV = "be in pain") is translated in the Lxx with the Greek verb **odino** which means to experience pains of childbirth (e.g., Dt 32:18; Isa 13:8; 26:17; Jer 4:31)

The deep - word often refers to the forces of the sea which obey the Lord (Ex 15:5, 8; Isa 51:10; Ezek 26:19; 31:15; Ps 33:7; 77:16; 135:6).

Lifted high its hands - A figurative description personifying the waves of the sea (all under the control of the sovereign God).

Habakkuk 3:11 Sun and moon stood in their places; They went away at the light of Your arrows, at the radiance of Your gleaming spear.:

- **sun:** Jos 10:12,13 Isa 28:21 Isa 38:8
- **Places:** Ps 19:4
- **At the light:** Jos 10:11 Ps 18:12-14 Ps 77:17,18 Ps 144:5,6
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

NLT = The lofty sun and moon began to fade, obscured by brilliance from your arrows and the flashing of your glittering spear.

Sun and moon stood still - This presumably refers to another time in history when God's enemies were judged by His intervention as recorded in Joshua 10:12-14

Joshua 10:12 Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon." 13 So **the sun stood still, and the moon stopped**, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. 14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for **the LORD fought for Israel**.

Patterson "For the participation of other celestial phenomena in earthly events, see Jdg 5:20; Isa 60:19, 20." (Ibid)

Habakkuk 3:12 In indignation You marched through the earth. In anger You trampled the nations:

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

BGT Habakkuk 3:12 ν πειλ λιγ σεις γ ν κα ν θυμ κατ ξεις θνη

LXE Habakkuk 3:12 Thou wilt bring low the land with threatening, and in wrath thou wilt break down the nations.

NET Habakkuk 3:12 You furiously stomp on the earth, you angrily trample down the nations.

CSB Habakkuk 3:12 You march across the earth with indignation; You trample down the nations in wrath.

ESV Habakkuk 3:12 You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger.

NIV Habakkuk 3:12 In wrath you strode through the earth and in anger you threshed the nations.

NLT Habakkuk 3:12 You marched across the land in anger and trampled the nations in your fury.

NRS Habakkuk 3:12 In fury you trod the earth, in anger you trampled nations.

NJB Habakkuk 3:12 In rage you stride across the land, in anger you trample the nations.

NAB Habakkuk 3:12 In wrath you bestride the earth, in fury you trample the nations.

YLT Habakkuk 3:12 In indignation Thou dost tread earth, In anger Thou dost thresh nations.

GWN Habakkuk 3:12 You march through the earth with fury. You trample the nations in anger.

BBE Habakkuk 3:12 You went stepping through the land in wrath, crushing the nations in your passion.

RSV Habakkuk 3:12 Thou didst bestride the earth in fury, thou didst trample the nations in anger.

NKJ Habakkuk 3:12 You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger.

ASV Habakkuk 3:12 Thou didst march though the land in indignation; Thou didst thresh the nations in anger.

DBY Habakkuk 3:12 Thou didst march through the land in indignation, Thou didst thresh the nations in anger.

- **Marched:** Nu 21:23-35 Jos 6:1-12:24 Ne 9:22-24 Ps 44:1-3 Ps 78:55 Ac 13:19
- **Trampled:** Jer 51:33 Am 1:3 Mic 4:12,13
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MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUS WRATH

In indignation You marched...in anger You trampled - This reads as a past tense event, but the Septuagint uses the **future** tense for both verbs. As discussed below this description seems to have eschatological implications, awaiting a yet future fulfillment.

In indignation - God's anger is not like man's anger! God's wrath is never petty or inappropriate, but is always perfectly righteous.

Indignation ([02195](#)) ([za'am](#)) describes either the expression or experiencing of intense anger or wrath. Most often **za'am** refers to God's **indignation**, but occasionally to individuals (Jer 15:17, Ho 7:16). **Za'am** is often coupled with other Hebrew words that also describe anger ('**ap** [0639](#) in Ps 69:24, Isa 10:5, 25, 30:27; Zeph 3:8; '**ebrah** [05678](#)] in Ps 78:49; Ezek 21:31; Ezek 22:31 and **qesep** ([07110](#)) in Ps 102:10; Jer 10:10).

Za'am - 15x in OT - indignation(21), insolence(1). Ps 38:3; Ps 69:24; Ps 78:49; Ps 102:10; Isa 10:5, 25; Isa 13:5; Isa 26:20; Isa 30:27; Jer 10:10; Jer 15:17; Jer 50:25; Lam 2:6; Ezek 21:31; Ezek 22:24, 31; Da 8:19; Da 11:36; Hos 7:16; Nah 1:6; Hab 3:12; Zeph 3:8

In Daniel 11 **za'am** describes the time of the Great Tribulation (cp Zeph 3:8 which describes Rev 16:14-16 [note](#))...

Daniel 11:36-note "Then the king (The Antichrist) will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the **indignation** is finished (Greek reads "until the wrath shall be accomplished"), for that which is decreed will be done.

Through the earth - If one interprets this passage literally, it seems to describe God's wrath poured out on the entire world. The only time yet future that such an event will occur is in the time **Daniel's Seventieth Week**, a seven year period, the last 3.5 years of which Jesus designated the **Great Tribulation** (Mt 24:21, When is "**then?**" - See Mt 24:15 = begins at the midpoint of the 7 year period, coinciding with the "revelation" of the Antichrist as predicted by Daniel in Da 9:27-note), which will be abruptly brought to an end when Messiah returns to defeat all His enemies (Mt 24:27-31, Rev 1:7-note [Click for an interesting discussion of "The Coming One"], Rev 19:11-21 [note](#)).

Trampled (KJV = thresh) ([02195](#)) (**dus/dush**) refers to threshing (oxen moving around in a circular pit trampling the wheat or barley to separate the grain from the stalk) and is often used figuratively to depict military invasions and/or the execution of judgment. Threshing was often a symbol of judgment (Isa 41:15; Mic 4:13).

The **Lxx** uses the Greek verb **katagnumi** which means to break in pieces or break in two (Mt 12:20, Jn 19:31-33) and is in the future tense which indicates in His wrath, God **will break the nations in pieces**. Has this event happened? Clearly this prophecy awaits a future fulfillment when God's wrath is finally and fully poured out on the nations, those who have rejected His offer of salvation.

Barker comments that...Habakkuk saw God the Master Farmer threshing the nations, throwing them away as useless chaff in order to preserve his chosen people. (Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah - Broadman & Holman Publishers - The New American Commentary)

Habakkuk's description parallels the picture described in...

Isa 63:3+ "I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger, and trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment. (Related Resource: [Isaiah 63:1–64:12 The Advent in Judgment - S Lewis Johnson](#))

There are two similar descriptions of God threshing His enemies in the book of the Revelation

Rev 14:19+ And the angel swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God **20** And the wine press was **trodden** outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

Tony Garland comments on Rev 14:19: This is not a fruitful winepress, for it is the winepress of the wrath of God. This is the time of the treading of the grapes of wrath (see discussion of [Grapes of Wrath](#)), the final conflagration when God wipes out all His enemies at the second advent of Christ (Isa. 34:2-8; Isa 63:1-6-**note**; Joel 3:12-14; Zep. 3:8; Rev. 19:15). For comments on Rev 14:20 see

Rev 19:15+ And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

Garland comments: He Himself treads is *autos patei* : He, He is presently treading. As with His rule, His identity as the One Who treads is emphasized. His rule is future tense whereas His treading is present tense. This indicates He is treading the winepress at His Second Coming before He takes up His rule over the nations. This provides further evidence that His rule upon the throne of David begins after His return (Mt 25:31).

Although the armies of heaven are with Him (Rev. 19:14, 19), it appears that He alone does the work of judgment: "*I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. . . . I looked, but there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me*" [emphasis added] (Isa. 63:3-5-**note**). Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes that "Isaiah 63:1-6 made it clear that although the armies of saints and angels will return with Him, they will not participate in the fighting. Messiah will fight this battle by Himself."

He is responding to the command recorded by Joel: "*Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision*" (Joel 3:13-14). When John saw Him in His glory, He had feet like fine brass, "as if refined in a furnace" (Rev 1:15). This glowing hot feet foreshadow His trampling the winepress in judgment which John sees now. See commentary on Revelation 1:15..

Here are some other "**threshings**" in a military or war context - Judges 8:7; 2Ki 13:7; Isa 21:10; Isa 25:10; Da 7:23; Amos 1:3.

The nations (01471)(**goy** - plural = **goyim**) - Usually "nations" represents the Gentiles as distinguished from the Jews. In many contexts the Gentiles are also referred to as the "peoples." In Revelation 19:15+ which was quoted above, we note that at His Second Coming, Jesus will "smite the **nations** (at the end of the Great Tribulation); and He will rule **them** (the **nations** in the **Millennium**) with a rod of iron."

Habakkuk 3:13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for the salvation of Your anointed. You struck the head of the house of the evil to lay him open from thigh to neck.:

KJV Habakkuk 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.

BGT Habakkuk 3:13 ξ λθες ε ς σωτηρ αν λαο σου το σ σαι το ς χριστο ς σου βαλε ς ε ς κεφαλ ς ν μων θ ναπον ξ γειρας δεσμο ς ως τραχ λου δι ψαλμα

LXE Habakkuk 3:13 Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, to save thine anointed: thou shalt bring death on the heads of transgressors; thou has brought bands upon their neck. Pause.

NET Habakkuk 3:13 You march out to deliver your people, to deliver your special servant. You strike the leader of the wicked nation, laying him open from the lower body to the neck. Selah.

CSB Habakkuk 3:13 You come out to save Your people, to save Your anointed. You crush the leader of the house of the wicked and strip him from foot to neck. Selah

ESV Habakkuk 3:13 You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. Selah

NIV Habakkuk 3:13 You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, you stripped him from head to foot. Selah

NLT Habakkuk 3:13 You went out to rescue your chosen people, to save your anointed ones. You crushed the heads of the wicked and stripped their bones from head to toe.

NRS Habakkuk 3:13 You came forth to save your people, to save your anointed. You crushed the head of the wicked house, laying it bare from foundation to roof. Selah

NJB Habakkuk 3:13 You marched to save your people, to save your anointed one; you wounded the head of the house of the wicked, laid bare the foundation to the rock. Pause

NAB Habakkuk 3:13 You come forth to save your people, to save your anointed one. You crush the heads of the wicked, you lay bare their bases at the neck.

YLT Habakkuk 3:13 Thou hast gone forth for the salvation of Thy people, For salvation with Thine anointed, Thou hast smitten the head of the house of the wicked, Laying bare the foundation unto the neck. Pause!

- **Went forth:** Ex 14:13,14 Ex 15:1,2 Ps 68:7,19-23)(Ps 77:20 89:19-21 99:6 105:15,26 Isa 63:11
- **Struck:** Ex 12:29,30 Jos 10:11,24,42 Jos 11:8,12 Ps 18:37-45 Ps 68:21 Ps 74:13,14 Ps 110:6
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

IN WRATH GOD REMEMBERS MERCY

You went forth for the salvation of Your people- God comes to save Israel.

Salvation (03468)([yeshā', yēsha'](#)) means deliverance, safety, rescue, liberty. Occasionally used as a title of God (2Sa 22:47; 1Chr 16:35; Isa17:10).

Your anointed ([mashiach/masiyah](#)) - To whom does this title refer? Scholars differ widely in their interpretation. Some say Moses, others Cyrus (Isa 45:1). Some favor that this refers primarily to the **Messiah** (the Hebrew masculine noun masiyah which means "anointed one"-see Da 9:25-26-note) or the corresponding NT term **Christ**, the Greek noun **Christos** (Which is the word used in the Lxx translation) which is derived from the verb **chrio** meaning to anoint, rub with oil or consecrate to an office, as was done in the OT for a prophet, priest or king (Jesus is eternally all three!) Others interpret anointed as referring to "Your people" (but see MacArthur's note below).

John MacArthur comments on "**Your anointed**"...Both the parallelism with Hab 3:13a ("Your people") and the numerous contextual allusions to the Exodus make this a likely reference to Moses and the chosen people of Israel, who, as God's anointed, achieved victory over Pharaoh and the armies of Egypt (cf. Ps 105:15). **Ultimately, it foreshadows a subsequent, future deliverance in anticipation of the Messiah** (cf. Ps 132:10-12) **promised in the Davidic Covenant** (cf. 2Sa 7:11-16).

NET NOTE Heb "**anointed one**." In light of the parallelism with "your people" in the preceding line this could refer to Israel, but elsewhere the Lord's anointed one is always an individual. The Davidic king is the more likely referent here.

A C Gaebelein adds that...

But while He comes thus, executing wrath and judgment upon the ungodly, He comes in mercy. He goes forth for the **salvation** of His people, for the **salvation** of Thine **anointed**, that is, the elect nation (Israel) and the God-fearing, waiting **remnant** of the last days (see Ps. 105:15).

Spendera comments that...

The context portrays the Lord (not a king) delivering His people, and since "**Your anointed**" is parallel to "**Your people**," it is best to understand "**anointed**" as a reference to God's people, Israel (NET NOTE DISAGREES). Use of the singular "anointed one" leads some interpreters to take it as a reference to the king, but it may simply be a collective use of the term. The Lord's anger goes out against the nations who have opposed His people. His victory, then, was over the enemy that is represented as the "head of the house of evil".

Historically the evil head may refer to Pharaoh, who led Egypt against Israel. For the prophet it would be equally relevant to see a coming judgment upon the king of Babylon. But there is also a future dimension to Habakkuk's psalm that envisions God's triumph over all evil. So whether the reference includes the Exodus, the Exile or an eschatological enemy, it places the victory squarely with the Lord. To this, the psalm adds its third "Selah" (Hab 3:13).

(**COMMENT** - Spendera says "the evil head may refer to Pharaoh," but is there not a final, more fulminant evil in the last days? Indeed, there is for the Antichrist is himself empowered by Satan and seeks to rule the world portraying himself as god. 2Th 2:2-4, Rev 13:3-5)

Habakkuk 3:14 You pierced with his own spears the head of his throngs. They stormed in to scatter us; Their exultation was like those Who devour the oppressed in secret.:

- **the head:** Ex 11:4-7 Ex 12:12,13,29,30 Ex 14:17,18 Ps 78:50,51 Ps 83:9-11
- **They stormed:** Ex 14:5-9 Ex 15:9,10 Ps 83:2,8 Ps 118:10-12 Ac 4:27,28
- **Scatter:** Da 11:40 Zec 9:14
- **Exultation:** Ex 1:10-16,22 Ps 10:8 Ps 64:2-7
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ESV = You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret.

The reader should note that this verse is extremely difficult to interpret, leading one writer to state "this text seems to defy comprehension." It may be a possible reference to the pursuit of fleeing Israel at the Red Sea by Pharaoh's army (Ex 14:5-9). Like the poor, Israel appeared to be easy prey for the pursuing Egyptians. Others see this as an allusion to the Babylonians.

Habakkuk 3:15 You trampled on the sea with Your horses, on the surge of many waters:

- **Trampled:** Hab 3:8 Ps 77:19
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

You trampled on the sea - Compare a similar description in...

Ps 77:19 Thy way was in the sea, and Thy paths in the mighty waters, and Thy footprints may not be known.

When you don't know where God is, when your circumstances seem to be crashing down on you, and you are trying to get a perspective take the approach of Habakkuk. Don't look outward, looking to man for solutions. Don't look inward, looking for a solution. Look upward. Look to God! This is what Habakkuk does. He prays and the result is he sees the Holy One, trampling the sea with His horses. He sees God going forth for the salvation of His people, etc. We need to remember that whatever our circumstances are now, one day God will get the final victory for His people.

Habakkuk 3:16 I heard and my inward parts trembled, at the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, and in my place I tremble. Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, for the people to arise who will invade us.:

- **I heard:** Hab 3:2 1:5-11
- **My inward parts:** Ps 119:120 Jer 23:9 Eze 3:14 Da 8:27 Da 10:8
- **Because I must wait quietly:** Ps 91:15 94:12,13 Isa 26:20,21 Jer 15:10,11 45:3-5 Eze 9:4-6 2Th 1:6-9
- **The people:** Hab 1:6 Dt 28:49-52 2Ki 24:1,2 Jer 25:9-11
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PROPHET'S RESPONSE TO REVELATION

LXE = I watched, and my belly trembled at the sound of the prayer of my lips, and trembling entered into my

bones, and my frame was troubled within me; I will rest in the day of affliction, from going up to the people of my sojourning.

NJB = When I heard, I trembled to the core, my lips quivered at the sound; my bones became disjointed and my legs gave way beneath me. Calmly I await the day of anguish which is dawning on the people now attacking us.

NET = I listened and my stomach churned; the sound made my lips quiver. My frame went limp, as if my bones were decaying, and I shook as I tried to walk. I long for the day of distress to come upon the people who attack us.

I heard and my inward parts trembled (NET = "I listened and my stomach churned") - Habakkuk reverts to first person.

Guzik...

Habakkuk shows the proper response of man under the sovereign power of God. He recognizes his own weakness and low standing before this God of all majesty and power.

At the sound my lips quivered - The **Pulpit Commentary** says that "The word rendered "quivered" (tsalal) is applied to the tingling of the ears (1Sa 3:11; 2Ki 21:12), and implies that the prophet's lips so trembled that he was scarcely able to utter speech.

Decay enters my bones (NET = "My frame went limp, as if my bones were decaying") - A figurative description denoting that the strongest part of his body (his bony framework) was weakened by the awesome nature of the overwhelming vision he had just received and recorded. This description suggests that his skeletal frame could not even stabilize him, making him unsteady on his feet.

In my place I tremble (NET = "I shook as I tried to walk." NIV = "My legs trembled")

Wait quietly (KJV = "rest", NIV "I will wait patiently") ([05117](#)) (**nuach**) literally describes an absence of movement (the ark "rested" on Mt Ararat = Ge 8:4). **Nuach** means to rest, to remain, to be quiet. Compared to Habakkuk, Job was "not at rest" (Job 3:26). The **Lxx** renders **nuach** with the Greek the verb **anapauo** (word study) means strictly to make to cease and then comes to mean to remain quiet or restful, to be still and in some contexts includes the ideas of to revive or refresh (as used in Mt 11:28-note).

The **TWOT** writes that

Spiritual rest (the absence of trouble) is seen in Isa 14:3, 7 (cf. Pr 29:9), and most clearly in Isa 28:12 (although this has clear soteriological overtones). The only true place of spiritual rest is God (mānūah, Ps 116:7).

At the beginning of his prayer, Habakkuk said **"I have heard the report about You and I fear."** And now after Hab 3:3-15 he says he trembles, convulsing to the very depths of his being! Why? He has been overwhelmed by his theophany or manifestation of the coming Holy One. Picture Habakkuk's his heart pounding, his respiratory rate racing, his lips quivering.

The phrase **"decay enters my bones"** Can we not identify with Habakkuk's description? He was a real person just like us and so the reality of the coming Babylonian judgment caused him to tremble. There are times in our life when we tremble, when we are so weak, we feel we might faint from fear or despair. And yet Habakkuk was to experience what Paul later described declaring "When I am weak, then I am strong." (2Cor 12:9).

STRENGTH TO WAIT QUIETLY

Given his feelings, how could Habakkuk wait quietly for the day of distress? Clearly if he had depended on and yielded to his feelings ("inward parts trembled...my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones...I tremble"), he could never have waited quietly nor make such a great confession of faith. So what was Habakkuk's secret? A better question to ask is where was his focus?

Warren Wiersbe explains it this way...

If Habakkuk looked ahead, he saw a nation heading for destruction, and that frightened him. When he looked within, he saw himself trembling with fear, and when he looked around, he saw everything in the economy about to fall apart. But when he looked up by faith, he saw God, and all his fears vanished. To walk by faith means to focus on the greatness and glory of God. One of the marks of faith is a willingness to wait patiently for the Lord to work. "Whoever believes will not act hastily" (Isa. 28:16NKJV). When we run ahead of God, we get into trouble. Abraham learned that lesson when he married Hagar and fathered Ishmael (Gen. 16), and so did Moses when he tried to deliver the Jews by his own hand (Ex. 2). "In quietness and confidence shall be

your strength" (Isa. 3:15). Habakkuk could wait quietly because he knew that God was at work in the world (Hab. 1:5-note), and he had prayed that God's work would be kept alive and strong (Hab 3:2). When you know that God is working in your life, you can afford to wait quietly and let Him have His way. Furthermore, God had commanded him to wait (Hab 2:3-note), and "God's commandments are God's enablements." No matter what we see and no matter how we feel, we must depend on God's promises and not allow ourselves to "fall apart." "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him" (Ps. 37:7).

Over the years, I've often leaned on three verses that have helped me wait patiently on the Lord. **"Stand still"** (Ex. 14:13), **"Sit still"** (Ruth 3:18), and **"Be still"** (Ps. 46:10). Whenever we find ourselves getting "churned up" within, we can be sure that we need to **stop, pray, and wait** on the Lord before we do some stupid thing. ([Be Amazed - Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Malachi](#))

And as Paul Harvey used to say "Now for the rest of the story" in Habakkuk 3:17-19. His triumphant conclusion can also be ours beloved, for we worship and serve the same covenant keeping God!

Patterson comments...

Having been dramatically reminded of God's past exploits against the wicked and his saving intervention on behalf of his people, the prophet was overwhelmed. Once he understood who God is and the principles and methods of his activities, Habakkuk was satisfied. He would trust God through the coming hour of judgment and rejoice no matter what may happen. (Ibid)

Distress ([06869](#))(**tsarah** from **tsar** = narrow or tight space) trouble, distress, anguish calamity, straits. It indicates intense inner turmoil (Ps 25:17) focusing on the emotional pain and distress of the situation (Dt 31:17) and the extreme discomfort. God delivers His people from this affliction (Ge 35:3; Job 5:19; Ps. 9:9). It is comparable to the pain of a woman bearing her first child (Je4:31). It refers to terror at the approach of a raping army (Jer 6:24). It defines the quality of time when Judah suffers her severest punishment for violating the covenant (Jer 30:7; cf. Ps 78:49). The land of a people that reject the Lord's word is described as full of distress, darkness, and the gloom of anguish (Isa 8:22 30:6).

The **Lxx** translates **tsarah** in this verse with the Greek word **thlipsis** (from **thlibo** = to crush, press together, hem in) which originally expressed physical pressure. Figuratively **thlipsis** pictures one being "crushed" by intense pressure, difficult circumstances, suffering or trouble pressing upon them from without. **Tsarah** is used to describe Israel's future **time of distress** (Da 12:1-note), synonymous with **the time of Jacob's distress** (Jer 30:7-note), which will come to pass in the **Great Tribulation**.

Tsarah - 71v in **NAS** - -affliction(1), anguish(2), distress(34), distresses(1), trouble(22), troubles(11).

Gen 35:3; 42:21; Deut 31:17, 21; Jdg 10:14; 1 Sam 10:19; 26:24; 2 Sam 4:9; 1Kgs 1:29; 2Kgs 19:3; 2Chr 15:6; 20:9; Neh 9:27, 37; Job 5:19; 27:9; Ps 9:9; 10:1; 20:1; 22:11; 25:17, 22; 31:7; 34:6, 17; 37:39; 46:1; 50:15; 54:7; 71:20; 77:2; 78:49; 81:7; 86:7; 91:15; 116:3; 120:1; 138:7; 142:2; 143:11; Pr 1:27; 11:8; 12:13; 21:23; 24:10; 25:19; Isa 8:22; 30:6; 33:2; 37:3; 46:7; 63:9; 65:16; Jer 4:31; 6:24; 14:8; 15:11; 16:19; 30:7; 49:24; 50:43; Dan 12:1; Obad 1:12, 14; Jonah 2:2; Nah 1:7, 9; Hab 3:16; Zeph 1:15; Zech 10:11

Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress - What was the "**day of distress**?" In context this has to refer to the coming Babylonian invasion which results in capture of Jerusalem and destruction of the Holy Temple. This **day of distress** would bring a day of great calamity leading to severe famine and ultimate death for many of those in Judah. And yet even in the face of such sure and devastating defeat Habakkuk voiced one of the greatest expressions of undaunted faith, a most beautiful testimony of the supernatural power of true belief to be found anywhere in Scripture. In the following passages, Habakkuk declared that although everything fails, yet he will trust in the unfailing God, Yahweh, Who keeps covenant forever.

Here is the application to our lives beloved of the Lord - There is no affliction, however severe or trying, which can ever separate us from our Father in heaven (Ro 8:35-39). His covenant with us is sure and everlasting, because it is founded on the once for all shed blood of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Hold fast to His Word of truth when the winds of affliction blow hard, so that this truth can hold you and support you through the storm. The storm will pass, but God's presence and comfort will endure forever for His ways are everlasting! (Hab 3:6)

George Matheson was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1842. As a child he had only partial vision, and his sight became progressively worse, until it resulted in blindness by the time he was eighteen. Despite his handicap, he was a brilliant student and graduated from the University of Glasgow and later from seminary. He became pastor of several churches in Scotland, including a large church in Edinburgh, where he was greatly respected and loved. After he had been engaged to a young woman for a short while, she broke the engagement, having decided she could not be content married to a blind man. Some believe that this painful disappointment in

romantic love led Matheson to write the beautiful hymn which begins with the following stanza:

O love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

Criswell comments...

Anticipating the consequent calamity which shall ensue (in Judah and Jerusalem) and lead to famine and death, **the prophet voices one of the greatest expressions of undaunted faith, the most beautiful exhibition of the power of true religion to be found anywhere in the Bible.** Habakkuk declares that although everything fails, he will trust in Yahweh. No affliction, however severe or trying, can sever the believer from his Lord.

For the people to arise who will invade us- The vicious Babylonians.

Constable...

It is a terrible feeling to know that calamity is coming but that one can do nothing to prevent it. He could endure the prospect because he remembered that the omnipotent God of Israel had consistently defended her in the past and promised to do so in the future. Earlier when the prophet heard about the powerful Babylonians, he wanted to talk with God (Hab 2:1-note). But now having been reminded of the infinitely more powerful Yahweh, he had nothing more to say (cf. Job 42:1-6). God would handle the Babylonians. All Habakkuk had to do was wait.

Ironside writes...

All this is but the proof that in Habakkuk's soul at least revival had already taken place. Oh, to enter more fully into the same spirit!

Guzik...

Knowing God's strength, Habakkuk can trust the Lord even in a crisis.

Gaebelein...

The prophet now speaks of his own feeling, which reflects the feeling of the godly among the Jews when this great theophany becomes history. There is fear and trembling in view of the coming tribulation. When he heard it he trembled; he is completely prostrated. He desires rest in the day of trouble, the day when the final enemy of God's people marches through the land. Then faith is triumphant, and in one of the most magnificent outbursts the prophet declares his confidence in his God (Hab 3:17). Such will be the faith of the godly who pass through the time of great trouble. Finally he rejoices in the God of his salvation and declares his hope (**Ed**: not hope so but absolute certainty!) that his feet will be like hinds' feet to escape to the high places. Even so the remnant of Israel will be delivered. We leave the application to the Church-Saints with the reader.

Habakkuk 3:17 Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls,:

- **Fig tree:** Dt 28:15-18,30-41 Jer 14:2-8 Joel 1:10-13,16-18 Amos 4:6-10 Hag 2:16,17
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DESOLATION

G Campbell Morgan writes "This is an arresting text. There is rhythm in its movement and a vividness in its description which compel our attention, yet that which is most impressive is the contrast between the conditions described and the experience claimed. The conditions are these (Hab 3:17) and the experience is this (Hab 3:18). The earlier part of the text constitutes one of the dreariest pictures man ever drew. To summarize in a word, it is the picture of a scene of desolation. ([Jubilant in Desolation](#))

Though the fig tree should not blossom - In context of the coming Babylonian invasion, Habakkuk is referring to the

overwhelming desolation of the land and livestock which would be wrought by the invading hordes of savage soldiers.

**Faith in Christ knows
The best is yet to come.**

Constable notes that "Many of these bad conditions did mark Judah when the Babylonians overthrew the nation (cf. Lam. 2:12, 20; 4:4, 9–10; 5:17–18).

Habakkuk 3:18 Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation:

- **Yet I will exult:** Dt 12:18 1Sa 2:1 Job 13:15 Ps 33:1 46:1-5 85:6 97:12 104:34 Ps 118:15 Ps 149:2 Isa 41:16 61:10 Zec 10:7 Lk 1:46,47 Ro 5:2,3 Php 4:4 Jas 1:2,9,10 1Pe 1:8 1Pe 4:12,13
- **the God:** Ex 15:2 Ps 25:5 27:1 Ps 118:14 Isa 12:2 Mic 7:7 Lk 2:30
- Habakkuk 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**JUBILATION:
REJOICE IN THE LORD
NOT THE CIRCUMSTANCES
"Jubilation in Desolation"*****

(** From a sermon by that title from G Campbell Morgan)

Yet - Yet is clearly a **term of contrast**. Whenever you encounter a term of contrast ("but" is much more common -), pause to ponder the passage in context, asking questions like - What is being contrasted?, What is the writer's change of direction?, How is this change possible?, How does this change apply to my life?, etc. Your Teacher the Holy Spirit (1Cor 2:12-16, Jn 14:26, 16:13, 14, 1Jn 2:20, 27 where "anointing" ~ the indwelling Holy Spirit, cp 2Cor 1:21, 22, Acts 10:38) will reward your diligence and desire to actively interact with the supernatural Word, often by illumining the passage in ways you would have missed had you read through quickly without taking time to "Wait on the Lord." This "**yet**" is one of the most beautiful and meaningful in all of Scripture.

Habakkuk 3:17-18 presents one of the most striking contrasts in the entire Word of God. Habakkuk moves from a description of stark devastation to striking declaration of joy, from abject desolation to absolute jubilation, and all that in the space of two passages! In short, the prophet moves from a natural reaction based on his feelings to a supernatural reaction based on his faith. His faith is founded on the revelation of God - Jehovah's plan, Jehovah's presence (cp Ps 16:11) and Jehovah's power (as recorded in Habakkuk 2-3).

G Campbell Morgan writes that "If we were reading this for the first time, or if we found it in any other literature than this, we should be driven to inquire, Was this man a fanatic? Was he deluded? Or did he speak a wisdom of which this world knows nothing when he crowned the song which describes desolation with the song which expresses jubilation? We believe that this is a song of the higher wisdom, and that the singer was a philosopher in possession of the true secret of life....His knowledge of God produced his confidence in God, and that confidence in God immediately and inevitably produced joy.

I will exult (I will jump for joy)...**I will rejoice** - Habakkuk makes a volitional choice is to rejoice, even in the face of imminent judgment. However, this choice is not simply "mind over matter", but reflects God giving His prophet the desire and the power to exult and rejoice (Php 2:13NLT).

Exult ([05937](#)) (**alaz**) means to rejoice, to exult, to be jubilant and describes a state and act of celebration.**TWOT** says this Hebrew word group describes "an emotion of joy which finds expression in singing and shouting." This Hebrew verb is translated in the Lxx by agalliao (from **agan** = much + **hallomai** = jump; leap, spring up) which literally means "jump for joy" (Mt 5:12 Lk 1:47 10:21)

Alaz - 16v in NAS - become jubilant(1), exult(11), exults(1), jubilant(1), rejoice(2).

2Sa 1:20; Ps 28:7; 60:6; 68:4; 94:3; 96:12; 108:7; 149:5; Pr 23:16; Isa 23:12; Jer 11:15; 15:17; 50:11; 51:39;
Hab 3:18; Zeph 3:14

Rejoice ([01523](#)) (**giyl/gul**) is derived from a root word which means "to circle around", from which such ideas as "to circle in joy" are readily derived. It is more applicable to vigorous, enthusiastic expressions of joy and can even mean to spin round (under influence of any violent emotion)! It is not surprising that most of the uses are in the psalms (songs) and mean to rejoice or be glad.

Habakkuk has two uses of this verb, but in markedly contrasting contexts, for the first use of giyl/gul refers to the rejoicing of the

pagan Babylonians.

(Hab. 1:15) The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook, Drag them away with their net, And gather them together in their fishing net. Therefore they rejoice and are glad.

Giyl/gul translated in this verse with [chairo](#) meaning to rejoice or be glad in NT.

Ancient Hebrew Lexicon Definitions **giyl/gul** - Something that is round or a second time around of a time or event. A dancing in a circle. (eng: skull - an added s and an exchange of the k and g, Greek golgotha)

Giyl/gul - 44x - cry(1), exult(1), glad(3), rejoice(38), rejoiced(1), rejoices(1).

1 Chr. 16:31; Ps. 2:11; Ps. 9:14; Ps. 13:4; Ps. 13:5; Ps. 14:7; Ps. 16:9; Ps. 21:1; Ps. 31:7; Ps. 32:11; Ps. 35:9; Ps. 48:11; Ps. 51:8; Ps. 53:6; Ps. 89:16; Ps. 96:11; Ps. 97:1; Ps. 97:8; Ps. 118:24; Ps. 149:2; Prov. 2:14; Prov. 23:24; Prov. 23:25; Prov. 24:17; Cant. 1:4; Isa. 9:3; Isa. 25:9; Isa. 29:19; Isa. 35:1; Isa. 35:2; Isa. 41:16; Isa. 49:13; Isa. 61:10; Isa. 65:18; Isa. 65:19; Isa. 66:10; Hos. 10:5; Joel 2:21; Joel 2:23; Hab. 1:15; Hab. 3:18; Zeph. 3:17; Zech. 9:9; Zech. 10:7

Gilbrant on giyl/gul -

Gil is primarily concerned with verbal expressions of joy, it may also include the action of turning in circles with joy, based upon an Arabic cognate (cf. *gālal*). The word often occurs in parallel constructions with other Hebrew words. It is found with *sāmach*, "to rejoice"; *sûs*, "to exult"; *rānan*, "to cry out loud"; *‘ālaz*, "to exult"; *rāwach*, "to shout" (in the Hiphil, or causative stem); *pātsach*, "to break forth with joyous shouts"; and *hālal*, "to praise" among others. It refers to spontaneous and enthusiastic cries of joy.

Most of the references are concerned with rejoicing in God's actions, but there are a few passages that refer to rejoicing in other things. A father and mother rejoice in their son who lives a godly life (Pr 23:24f). Friends rejoice over the groom and in his love for his bride (Song 1:4). The Lord disapproves of rejoicing over the failure of an enemy (Pr 24:17).

The Lord promises living by godly wisdom will save a person from those who rejoice in the perverseness of evil (Pr. 2:14). The people and priests of Samaria had rejoiced over the splendor of their calf-idol (Hos. 10:5). Habakkuk compared the victories and joys of the Babylonian nation over the nations they conquered to a fisherman who rejoices over his catch (Hab 1:15).

Many people are called to rejoice in the Lord, and many reasons are given for expressing this joy. Those who have experienced the Lord's forgiveness and received his righteousness are to express their joy to the Lord (Ps. 32:11; Isa. 61:10). The gods of the nations do not reign, but the Lord reigns, and He judges in righteousness and justice, so let all the people of the earth be glad (Ps. 97:1, 8). The kings and rulers of the earth are to act wisely and rejoice with trembling in the King of heaven (Ps. 2:11). Zion should rejoice in their King who is also their Maker (Ps. 149:2). Those who have experienced the Lord's care and concern, and his deliverance from their enemies should rejoice in the Lord (Ps. 9:14; 16:9; 21:1; 31:7; 49:13; Hab. 3:18). After David was confronted with his sin with Bathsheba, he repented and sought God's forgiveness and cleansing. He prayed, "Let the bones you have crushed rejoice," indicating joy can emerge from the Lord's conviction in our lives (Ps. 51:8).

The messianic hope, was cause for rejoicing in the Lord. Zion is called to rejoice and shout because their King will come with salvation riding on a donkey (Zech. 9:9). The New Testament writers quoted this passage in reference to Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:5; John 12:15). The stone the builders rejected became the cornerstone, and that day of rejection became the day of salvation. The Lord made that day, and we are to rejoice and be glad in it (Ps. 118:24; Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10f). The Lord promised Israel one day he would judge their enemies, restore them to their land, bless Jerusalem, and cause their land to produce abundantly. This is cause for rejoicing (Isa. 41:16; 66:10; Joel 2:21, 23; Zech. 10:7). In the future reign of the Messiah, the people of God will rejoice because their hope in the Lord as their savior will be rewarded. Total healing will come to all God's people, and they will reside in God's creation of the new heavens and earth (Isa. 25:9; 29:19; 35:1f; 65:18).

Many passages refer to God's people rejoicing in their Lord, but two passages indicate God rejoicing over his people. The Lord will rejoice over the New Jerusalem and delight in his people (Isa. 65:19), and the Lord will save his people, and He will sing a song of joy concerning them (Zeph. 3:17). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

G Campbell Morgan has some insightful comments on these two Hebrew words for **exult** and **rejoice**...

I hope I shall produce no shock when I translate them literally. Take the first Hebrew word and express it quite literally, and this is it: I will jump for joy in the Lord. Take the second of the words and translate it with equal literalness, and this is it: I will spin round in the God of my salvation. Does that seem as though I were spoiling a great passage? I think some of these passages need spoiling in this way in these pre-eminently respectable days when congregations are shocked if a man say Amen! Exuberant joy, a bounding joy was this man's experience, and in these words we have such joy expressed. This was no cool, calculating word. I will jump for joy in Jehovah, I will spin round with delight in the God of my salvation. Do we know anything of that emotion in the midst of desolation, not when the ordinary activities of everyday life are prospering, but when it seems that there is the most calamitous failure everywhere, no blossom on the fig tree, no fruit on the vine, the labor of the olive failing, the flock gone from the field and the herd from the stall? It is all Eastern; I should hardly know how to express that in the language of London, but you business men know. Perhaps we might employ a modern word, bankruptcy. Everything gone, yet will I jump for joy in the Lord, I will spin round with gladness in my God. I believe that one thing the Church most sadly lacks today is exuberant, buoyant joy in the Lord God. I do not forget that a woman laughed at a king who danced before the Lord; but I thank God that the king danced before the Lord. This word of Habakkuk was compelled by the **joy that sprang within him**. This was **not imitation joy**. It was that of a **man filled with delight** even in the midst of circumstances of **desolation**.

Exult in the LORD...rejoice in the God of my salvation - The **source** and **sphere** of our joy is *in* the Lord. As Spurgeon said "Joy in God is the happiest of all joys." In fact, joy ceases to be joy when it ceases to be "in the Lord."

G Campbell Morgan has a superb discussion of the sphere of the Habakkuk's joy...

"I will rejoice *in the Lord*." "I will joy *in the God of my salvation*," not *in circumstances* but *over them*, not *in the part that is seen*, but *in the whole that faith alone can comprehend*. Not in circumstances can I rejoice oftentimes, but if I have this clear vision of God it is given to me to rejoice over them; if I simply look at them my heart will be depressed, filled with a sense of sorrow; but if I see the whole, the ultimate, the unveiling of the purpose of God; if I really believe that the bud may have a bitter taste but sweet will be the fruit; if I have seen God and know that His purpose is a purpose of great love, then surely I may triumph over circumstances, not in self, but in God.

The **NT** formula for believer's to have joy independent of circumstances is...

Rejoice **in the Lord** always; again I will say, rejoice! (Phil 4:4)

Billy Graham said it this way...

We have to be tuned to God. We will never be free from discouragement and despondency until we know and walk with the very fountainhead of joy....The ability to rejoice in any situation is a sign of spiritual maturity....No matter what the climate is, what the troubles are, what the difficulties are, there is joy for the child of God, because joy is produced supernaturally by the Holy Spirit in us. (Billy Graham in Quotes)

Wiersbe astutely notes that...

By the time Babylon was through with the land of Judah, there wouldn't be much of value left (Hab 2:17-note). Buildings would be destroyed, treasures would be plundered, and farms and orchards would be devastated. The economy would fall apart and there would be little to sing about. But God would still be on His throne, working out His divine purposes for His people (Ro 8:28). Habakkuk couldn't rejoice in his circumstances, but he could rejoice in his God!

G. Campbell Morgan said

Our joy is in proportion to our trust. Our trust is in proportion to our knowledge of God. Our trust is in proportion to our knowledge of God. To know Him is to trust Him. To trust Him is to triumph and excel. May we be led into fuller knowledge and so find fuller faith and so enter the fuller joy. (From his sermon [Jubilation in Desolation](#))

As someone has well said "Joy is the flag that is flown from the citadel of the heart when the King is in residence."

John Calvin said it this way "There is nothing in afflictions which ought to disturb our joy."

J I Packer noted that "Joy is a condition that is experienced, but it is more than a feeling; it is, primarily, a state of mind."

Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary - Joy is the fruit of a right relation with God. It is not something people can create by their own

efforts. The Bible distinguishes joy from pleasure. The Greek word for pleasure is the word from which we get our word "hedonism," the philosophy of self-centered pleasure seeking.

William Cowper paraphrased Hab 3:17-18 in the poem entitled "**Joy and Peace in Believing**"...

Though vine nor fig tree neither
Their wonted fruit shall bear,
Though all the field should wither,
Nor flocks nor herds be there:

Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice;
For, while in Him confiding,
I cannot but rejoice.

([Habakkuk 316](#))

Corrie Ten Boom has several quotes which nicely summarize the book of Habakkuk...

Habakkuk 1

The Prophet Worrying

Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow,
it empties today of its strength.

Worrying is carrying tomorrow's load with today's strength-
carrying two days at once.
It is moving into tomorrow ahead of time.

Worrying doesn't empty tomorrow of its sorrow,
it empties today of its strength.

Worry is a cycle of inefficient thoughts
whirling around a center of fear.

Habakkuk 2

The Prophet Trusting

Never be afraid to trust an unknown future
to a known God.

Faith is like radar that sees through the fog --
the reality of things at a distance that the human eye cannot see."

It is not my ability,
but my response to God's ability, that counts."

Habakkuk 3

The Prophet Worshipping

This is what the past is for!
Every experience God gives us,
every person He puts in our lives is the perfect preparation
for the future that only He can see.

You can never learn that Christ is all you need,
until Christ is all you have.

Skip Heitzig sums up Habakkuk's message

"Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, though the labor of the olive may fail and the field yield no food, though the flock may be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will

rejoice," or exult in Hebrew. Jump for joy (Ed Note on [gil](#) from TWOT - Root meaning is "to circle around" from which such ideas as "to circle in joy" are readily derived. The root meaning is more applicable to vigorous, enthusiastic expressions of joy; but, in the OT, it and its derivatives serve as poetic and prophetic terms for various kinds of joy) Spin around. A hallelujah jig. "I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength. He will make my feet like deer's feet. He will make me walk on my high hills to the chief musician with my stringed instruments." He looks ahead. He sees the Babylonians coming. He doesn't understand the means that God is going to use to judge His own people, the Jews. But he does trust in the motives of God, and that's important. Sometimes we question the means that God uses to do His work. Why would God do that? I don't get it. But never question God's motive. Here the prophet ends in faith. He begins with a furrowed brow. He ends with his hands raised. I'm going to rejoice in the Lord. Though I know the Babylonians are coming and they're going to strip the vines and the fig trees and the olive groves, and they're going to wipe us out with our animals in the stalls, I, he says, will rejoice not in my situation, not in the sorrowful condition and the temporary punishment. I'll rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. When we face trouble and our first instinct is, oh, Lord, how can I get out of this? Stop and think. Hold on to those things you know to be true about God. God's holy. He's my God. I'm under his new covenant, the blood of the cross. He has a plan for me. He has a plan to deal with the evil. In the meantime, I'm going to trust. The just shall trust. That will bring a level of joy as you commit it to the Lord. Your eyes are off of what you see, and by faith, you see him. And the joy comes from him. So instead of, how can I get out of this? Lord, what can I get out of this? What are you trying to teach me? So from perplexity to anxiety, and now to ecstasy, how? The same journey as the prophet. The life of faith. Now you know, we do suffer. In this world, you will have tribulation. That's a promise for you from the word of God. It's not a promise you like to hear, but it is a promise. In this world, you will have tribulation. However, do you know that suffering in the hands of a loving God can result in some of the most marvelous work of God in your life? God can take and use the most horrible situations and bring about great good. And if you think about it, God proved that on himself. God played by His own rules God show that the very worst thing that could ever happen in human history could actually become the best thing. I'm talking about the cross. When God died, that could be regarded as the greatest historic tragedy. Deicide. God was killed on a cross. But God showed that what could be regarded as the greatest tragedy was actually the greatest blessing, because it opened wide the doors of salvation to anyone who would believe in the finished work on that cross. God showed that He can take the worst situation and work the best. If God can do that at Calvary, then God over and over again in our lives can bring great good out of what we think is horrible. God, I don't get it. I don't understand. Shh. The just shall trust. Live by faith. Your joy will go sky high when you learn to commit what you don't understand to God. And just hold on to those things you do, understand. (See full [Transcript](#) of Habakkuk 1-3)

Marvin Williams writes: Habakkuk concluded his book with a wonderful affirmation: "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab 3:18). Though it was not clear how Judah would survive, Habakkuk had learned to trust God amid injustice, suffering, and loss. He would live by his faith in God alone. With this kind of faith came joy in God, despite the circumstances surrounding him. We too can rejoice in our trials, have surefooted confidence in God, and live on the heights of His sovereignty.

Be this the purpose of my soul
My solemn, my determined choice:
To yield to God's supreme control,
And in my every trial rejoice.
—Anon.

**Praising God in our trials
turns burdens into blessings.**

The Choice To Rejoice --Habakkuk 3:18 - When a grief-stricken woman was sharing her feelings, her friend said sympathetically, "Sorrow does color life, doesn't it?" "Yes," the woman agreed, and then added, "but I intend to choose the colors." In today's Bible reading, the prophet Habakkuk expressed the same intention. Facing the possible loss of crops and livestock, he declared, "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab 3:18). The words "I will" revealed Habakkuk's belief that he could choose his response to loss--either to sink into despair or to rejoice in God's redeeming power. His decision to rejoice wasn't a denial of the pain. It was a decision of trust based on the truth that God would remain with him to be his strength and enabler (Hab 3:19).

The choice to rejoice is with us every day (**Comment:** One caveat - Don't try to make this choice in your own strength - yes, we must each individually make the choice to rejoice, the **desire** and the **power** to do so comes from the indwelling Spirit - see Php

2:13NLT-note. It's not "*self reliance*" but "*Spirit reliance*" that will allow us to rejoice [supernaturally] independent of the circumstances we are experiencing!). To refuse to choose is itself a choice. It's an unconscious consent to be overcome rather than to be an overcomer (**Ed**: See 1Jn 5:4-5, faith/trust in God's goodness, His promises, etc, will allow us to be experiential overcomers - all believers are positionally overcomers, but not all are living up to their position and privileges in Christ, enabled by His Spirit!). I recently met a disabled elderly woman who exemplified this. When I inquired, "How are you," she replied cheerfully, "Just fine! If I were any better, I'd have to be twins!"

Loss and pain do color life, but we can choose the color--joy! —Joanie Yoder [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When rough the path from day to day,
When sorrows fill our eyes with tears,
Our choice to find our joy in Christ
Can soothe our soul and calm our fears.

-DJD

**When you choose to rejoice,
your life takes on a beautiful color.**
(See above caveat re "choice to rejoice")

Joy—Even In Poverty - In the book 450 Stories for Life, Gust Anderson tells about visiting a church in a farming community of eastern Alberta, Canada, where there had been 8 years of drought. The farmers' economic situation looked hopeless. But in spite of their poverty, many of them continued to meet together to worship and praise God.

Anderson was especially impressed by the testimony of a farmer who stood up and quoted Habakkuk 3:17-18. With deep feeling, he said, "Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Anderson thought, That dear saint has found the secret of real joy!

It's not wrong to find pleasure in the good things money can buy, but we should never rely on them for happiness. If our fulfillment depends on material possessions, we are crushed when we lose them. But if our joy is found in the Lord, nothing can disrupt it, not even economic distress.

Yes, those who know and trust the Lord can rejoice—even in poverty! —Richard De Haan [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Pleasures of earth, so seemingly sweet,
Fail at the last my longings to meet:
Only in Thee my bliss is complete;
Only, blest Lord, in Thee.

—Anon.

**Happiness depends on happenings;
Joy depends on Jesus!**

CAN WE REJOICE?—Habakkuk 3:18, 19 - I'll never forget the question our Bible-study leader asked: "What do you fear would test your faith in God the most?" We were studying Habakkuk 3:17, 18, where the prophet said that even if God sent suffering or loss, he would still rejoice.

As a single woman in my twenties, my answer was "I don't know if I could stand the pain of losing my parents." But I told God that day that even when they died I would rejoice in Him. I found out too soon that it's easier said than done.

A month later, Dad learned he had heart disease and didn't have long to live. He didn't know Jesus as his Savior, so I begged God not to let him die without coming to know Him. Not only did he die that year, so did Mom, who was a believer. I didn't know if my prayer for Dad was answered. I couldn't rejoice; I wondered if God had even heard my prayer.

As I wrestled with Him about my questions, I experienced the Lord as my "refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). I found hope in the truth that God, "the Judge of all the earth," would do what was right by everyone (Genesis 18:25).

We can rejoice—when we are rejoicing in the Lord, our strong refuge and righteous Judge. —Anne Cetas [Our Daily Bread](#).

Why must I bear this pain? I cannot tell;
I only know my Lord does all things well.
And so I trust in God, my all in all,
For He will bring me through, whate'er befall.
—Smith

God tries our faith so that we may try His faithfulness

The Secret Of Joy - One of the shortest books in the Old Testament is the book of Habakkuk. In its three brief chapters we see an amazing transformation in the prophet's outlook on life. His opening words express depths of despair, but at the close of the book he has risen to heights of joy.

What caused this remarkable change? Why did Habakkuk begin with a complaint and end with a song of praise? The answer lies in three verses in Habakkuk 2. In addition to God's message of judgment on the wicked, the Almighty told the troubled prophet, "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:4-note). He also promised that someday the earth would "be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab 2:14-note). Finally, He assured him that "the Lord is in His holy temple" (Hab 2:20-note). These wonderful truths were just what Habakkuk needed to lift him out of his deep depression. By fixing his eyes on God, he rose above his discouraging circumstances and found a source of lasting joy in the Lord.

Like the prophet, we too must walk by faith and look forward to that glorious time when Jesus will return to earth to set up His kingdom of peace and righteousness. Maintaining our confidence in Him is the secret of true joy!— by Richard De Haan

Rejoice in Christ the Lord, again
The Spirit speaks the word;
And faith takes up the happy strain:
Our joy is in the Lord.
—Anon.

**To improve your outlook,
Keep looking up.**

Counterfeit Happiness - It's easy to fool people about how we really feel. Simply wear a deceptive smile or hum a cheerful song like this one that was very popular during World War I and many years afterward:

What's the use of worrying?
It never was worthwhile,
So, pack up your troubles
In your old kit-bag
And smile, smile, smile.

Those words, written by British vaudeville actor George Powell, were set to a cheerful melody by his piano-playing brother Felix. It earned them \$60,000. Yet one day years later, Felix sat down at a piano and played his well-known melody "Smile, Smile, Smile." Then he went into a room where he was all alone and shot and killed himself.

Troubles can't be packed away and magically forgotten. A smile and a song may camouflage deep unhappiness, but only God can lift the burden of gnawing worry from our hearts. Knowing that He cares for us, we can cast all our anxiety on Him (1Pe 5:7). If in our difficulties we trust in the Lord as our strength, He will do even more than give emotional relief. He will enable us to rejoice (Hab 3:17-19).

A smile can conceal pain
And camouflage despair,
But trust in God gives inner peace
And joy beyond compare.
—Sper

**Joy is the byproduct
of trusting God.**

ABOVE THE CIRCUMSTANCES - I remember a story about a woman who was very discouraged because of the many problems in her life. As she was walking down the street, she met a fellow believer who asked, "How are you doing today?" With a sour look and a bitter shrug she replied, "Oh, not too bad--under the circumstances." The other person quickly countered, "Well, get above the circumstances! That's where Jesus is."

The prophet Habakkuk was of the same mind. He refused to let circumstances dampen his faith or crush his hope. He looked to the future not with pessimistic fears of what else could go wrong, but with faith in God no matter what would happen. Even if he lost all his possessions, Habakkuk proclaimed that he would continue to trust the Lord to meet his needs (Hab 3:17-19).

Our eyes are to be focused on the Lord, not on our circumstances. We are to live above the shadows of fear and bask in the sunlight of faith. Even though we, like Habakkuk, may have a long list of troubles, faith's answer to disappointment must always be:

**"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will joy in the God of my salvation"**
(Hab 3:18).

That type of attitude will enable us to live above the circumstances instead of under them. - Henry G. Bosch

Although my trees are fruitless,
No grapes are on the vine,
Yet Christ is all my fullness,
And all His sweetness mine.
-Anon.

**As you go along life's weary road,
let Jesus lift your heavy load.**

Always Thankful--Habakkuk 3:18 - Perhaps Habakkuk 3:17-19 was an unusual Bible passage to read as our family and guests sat down to a traditional feast of turkey with all the trimmings. But I had a reason for choosing it. Simply to bow my head and give thanks didn't seem to be enough. Compared with the poverty of many of the world's people, I am wealthy.

The prophet Habakkuk was awaiting the destruction of his country by the ruthless Chaldeans, whose army was called by God to punish His people for their disobedient and evil ways (Hab. 1:5-6-note). He said, "Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls--yet I will rejoice in the Lord" (3:17-18).

Those words made me stop and ask, "Am I thankful to God regardless of what He gives or withholds?" Habakkuk pondered how he would respond to the loss of every material blessing. He concluded, "I will joy in the God of my salvation" (v.18).

Circumstances may change, but God remains the same. That's always cause for thanksgiving. —David C. McCasland [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

We can give thanks in every trial
And say, "Your will be done,"
For God's at work in everything
To make us like His Son.
-DJD

**Thankfulness depends on what is in your heart,
not what is in your hand.**

The Smile Of Joy -1 John 1:4 - Remember those round, yellow, happy-face stickers that showed up frequently on stationery and postcards? They were often accompanied by the one-word message, "Smile." They implied that you can put a smile on your face as easily as you can put a hat on your head. In a sense, that is true. A good actor can look happy even when his heart is breaking.

Favorable circumstances can also produce smiles. A person with good health, an adequate income, and a nice house finds it easy to look happy. The best smile, though, comes naturally from within. It reflects a joy that remains even when a person has few of life's material blessings. It comes from knowing God, believing and obeying His Word, being assured of sins forgiven, possessing eternal life, and anticipating the glories of heaven. The believer who depends on God for these blessings can smile despite adversity.

In today's Scripture reading, the prophet Habakkuk declared triumphantly, "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:18). Even if everything were taken from him, the Lord would be his strength. He didn't need to "put on" a smile, because the joy in his heart would do it for him. —Richard De Haan —Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A smile can conceal our pain
And lighten our despair,
But trust in God gives inner peace
And joy beyond compare.
—Sper

**Happiness depends on happenings,
but joy depends on Jesus.**

A M Hodgkin summarizes Habakkuk 3...

Habakkuk begins by questioning God, but he concludes his book with a psalm of praise for the person (Hab 3:1–3), power (Hab 3:4–12), and plan (Hab 3:13–19) of God. He now acknowledges God's wisdom in the coming invasion of Judah, and though it terrifies him, he will trust the Lord. God's creative and redemptive work in the past gives the prophet confidence in the divine purposes, and hope at a time when he would otherwise despair. "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab 3:18).

Targum Jonathan to the Prophets:

"Then, in consequence of the miracle and deliverance which Thou shalt perform for Thy Messiah and for the remnant of Thy people who remain they shall give thanks thus, says the prophet: "I take joy in the Memra of the Lord, I rejoice in God, who accomplishes my deliverance."

Though the prophet trembles at the revelations of the LORD, yet he stays himself upon Him in quiet confidence, knowing that he can rest in the day of trouble. He sums up in the finest poetical language the failure of everything of earth, and when all nature and every seeming hope is dead, he adds, "**Yet will I rejoice, as with exulting joy, in the God of my salvation.**" It is almost the name of Jesus, for Jesus is 'Jehovah—Salvation,' or "Jehovah is Salvation," whence the words are here rendered, even by a Jew, "**in God the Author of my redemption,**" and by Augustine, "**In God my Jesus.**" (Christ in All the Scriptures)

Habakkuk 3:19 The Lord GOD [is] my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, And makes me walk on my high places. For the choir director, on my stringed instruments.:

- **my strength:** Ps 18:1 Ps 27:1 Ps 46:1 Isa 12:2 Isa 45:24 Zec 10:12 2Co 12:9,10 Eph 3:16 Php 4:13 Col 1:11
- **Like hinds' feet:** 2Sa 22:34 Ps 18:33
- **Walk:** Dt 32:13 Dt 33:29 Isa 58:14
- **Stringed:** Ps 4:1-8 Ps 6:1-10 Ps 54:1-7 Ps 55:1-23 Ps 67:1-7 Ps 76:1-12

**LITERALLY:
JEHOVAH THE LORD
MY STRENGTH!**

LXE = The Lord God is my strength, and He will perfectly strengthen my feet; He mounts me upon high places, that I may conquer by His song.

When we meditate on the little book of Habakkuk, we need to remember that we are to live by faith (Hab 2:4), and we are to rejoice in the Lord (Hab 3:18). His Spirit will enable us to exult in the Lord and give us the confidence to proclaim that one day "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord" (Hab 2:14), and the assurance that at that time the Lord will be in His holy temple (Hab 2:20). The Lord is our strength, and He makes our feet like hinds' feet on our high place.

Constable sums up **Habakkuk** writing that "This book can be a great help to people who are **discouraged** about their present circumstances and or can see nothing good coming in the future. It helps us adjust our attitude from one of pessimism and even despair to optimism and rejoicing. The crucial issue is whether we will listen to God and believe Him, namely, exercise faith."

Warren Wiersbe's closing comments on Habakkuk are priceless - Habakkuk teaches us to face our doubts and questions honestly, take them humbly to the Lord, wait for His Word to teach us, and then worship Him no matter how we feel or what we see. God doesn't always change the circumstances, but He can change us to meet the circumstances. That's what it means to live by faith. (Hab 2:4)

Spendera comments...

Habakkuk has learned that the waiting of faith and the waiting of doubt produce vastly different results. Doubt raises fears and creates turmoil. As Christians we can learn from Habakkuk on this matter. The best thing to do with our doubt is to take it to the Lord. Our willingness to struggle with the Lord will produce a greater faith. And a willingness to wait in faith merges our desire to serve with submission to the Lord's authority.

The Lord has come, not just to startle nature and nations, but to save His people. Salvation and faith are closely linked in this book. For Habakkuk, the silent Lord (Hab 1:2-note) has become the strong Lord (Hab 1:19). Further, his view of a God who did not deliver (verb from the root *יָשָׁא*, *yāša*, Hab 1:2) became the "God of my salvation," (noun from the root *יָשָׁא*, Hab 3:18). Remember too, that Habakkuk is rejoicing in God even though disaster looms on the horizon. He has understood the vision of God. He has applied it to his life in a very practical way, and he rises above the turmoil to walk in high places with God (Hab 3:19).

Like Habakkuk the growth of our faith can give us the surefooted nature of the deer, so that we too can walk in the heights with our Lord. Ironically, high places in the Old Testament were often places of idolatry, but God wanted Israel to destroy centers of idolatry and to eradicate the names of the places from the land (Deut. 12:3). In faith the believer can walk with the Lord in new and higher ground.

Habakkuk's closing note reminds us that this psalm, uttered first as a prayer, continued to be used by Israel in song. After the exile they again rejoiced in the victory of faith and God's salvation.

The Lord God is my strength (See Isaiah 12:2, Isaiah 49:5) - It is not that the Lord God had lent Habakkuk strength, but that God Himself was his strength. The corollary is "I am *not* my strength," contrary to what the modern physical fitness movement would have us believe (However, as an aside - I love to bike and swim and highly recommend physical exercise of some kind.) Habakkuk had come to understand that he needed God's strength to be on his high place and so do we as His beloved children. Indeed, as difficult as this truth is to fully grasp, it is still true that the Almighty God Himself becomes our strength!

As **Corrie Ten Boom** said...

Trying to do the **Lord's work in your own strength** is the most confusing, exhausting, and tedious of all work. But when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, then the ministry of Jesus just flows out of you. (**Amen!**)

Comment: Every believer is "in ministry." No, not all preach or teach or sing solos on Sunday, but all of us who are in Christ, are priests, ministers in His Body, each with at least one unique spiritual gift and each of us in "full time" ministry! The difficulty comes when we try to carry out the ministry He has given us by relying on our own strength. So here is the question - "Are you confused and exhausted and finding ministry tedious?" If so, it may be that you have not yet come to the realization of Habakkuk, that the Lord God is your strength! We all need to pray the prayer (for ourselves and those saints in our sphere of influence) which Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus that God the Father would grant "according to the riches of His glory, (that we would each) **be strengthened with power through His Spirit** in our inner being" in the Name of Christ. Amen (Eph 3:16) Then strengthened with the Spirit of Jesus, the ministry of Jesus will flow forth as a river of living water (John 7:38, 39).

Like hinds' feet - This is **simile** (term of comparison), which helps us visualize Habakkuk's confidence in God even in the face of overwhelming odds. As an aside, **terms of comparison** can add wonderful "color" to a passage, but one must be careful to not see these terms as "license" for fanciful imaginative interpretations, because such language while figurative is always meant to convey literal truth! The **hind** (doe, female deer) was a surefooted animal, able to make its way on high, dangerous terrain. In context, Habakkuk is alluding to the security God gives to those who place their trust in Him (cp Hab 2:4-note). Below are similar descriptions in Dt. 32:13; 33:29. **David** rejoiced that God had made his feet like a doe's feet in preparation for battle (Ps 18:33 - see Ps 18:34,).

Ps 18:33-note (David declares) **He makes my feet like hinds' feet**, And sets me upon my high places (See also 2Sa 22:34). 34 He trains my hands for battle, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

Deut 32:13 **"He made him (Jacob/Israel) ride on the high places of the earth**, And he ate the produce of the field; And He made him suck honey from the rock, And oil from the flinty rock,

Deut 33:29 "Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, Who is the shield of your

help, And the sword of your majesty! So your enemies shall cringe before you, **And you shall tread upon their high places.**"

Spurgeon comments - Note, that the Lord also gave him sure-footedness. The hinds leap over rock and crag, never missing their foothold. Our Lord will give us grace to follow the most difficult paths of duty without a stumble. He can fit our foot for the crags, so that we shall be at home where apart from God we should perish. One of these days we shall be called to higher places still. Up yonder we shall climb, even to the mount of God, the high places where the shining ones are gathered. Oh, what feet are the feet of faith, by which, following the Hind of the Morning, we shall ascend into the hill of the Lord!

Herbert Vander Lugt - A friend who has been working with Christians in India told me that hundreds of thousands of new converts reflect a joy and gladness that puts him to shame. Could it be that because they are desperately poor they focus more fully on Christ? This friend and I have Jesus Christ plus many earthly possessions and pleasures. They have Christ plus nothing. He's all they need, and so they sing with greater fervor than I, "God is so good!" Yes, God is good, no matter what our circumstances. It's a lesson we all must learn sooner or later.

O taste and see that God is good
To all who seek His face;
Yea, blest that one who trusts in Him,
Confiding in His grace.
—Psalter

**Even when everything looks bad,
God is good.**

Fast Feet - While in Chile for a Bible conference, I was resting at the hotel when a rugby match came on the television. Though I don't fully understand rugby, I enjoy it and admire the courage it takes to play such a dangerous sport.

During the match, one of the French players was injured and had to be taken to the sidelines. As the trainers attended to him, the camera showed a close-up of his shoes. With a black marker the player had written the words: "Habakkuk 3:19" and "Jesus is the way." Those expressions of faith and hope were a strong testimony of that young athlete's priorities and values.

The verse cited on that rugby player's shoes is not just one of heavenly hope and persevering faith. It is one of practical value—especially to an athlete dependent on speed for success. It says, "The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills."

In all of life, we need the strength and supply of our God. He alone can give us "feet" that are swift and strong. He alone can equip us for all of the uncertainties of life, for He alone is our strength. With Paul, we can be assured: "My God shall supply all your need" (Php 4:19-note).— by Bill Crowder

In You, O Lord, I take delight,
My every need You will supply;
I long to do what's true and right,
So, Lord, on You I will rely.

—D. De Haan

We always have enough when God is our supply.

TODAY IN THE WORD Habakkuk 3:19 - Physicist Stephen Unwin recently wrote a book entitled The Probability of God. "I don't consider anything to be understood until numbers have been applied," he said. "I have made a career of understanding and analyzing uncertainty and probabilities. Therefore, it seemed obvious to apply these methods to the ultimate uncertainty—whether God exists." Using something called Bayes' Theorem as well as other equations, he reviewed evidence from observation and experience in an attempt to assign a mathematically rigorous number to the probability of the existence of a personal God. He concluded that the probability of God's existence was 67 percent.

People wrestle with their spiritual doubts in many different ways—the prophet Habakkuk took his questions directly to God. Habakkuk ministered around the same time as Jeremiah. In his book, written mostly as a dialogue, he asked and argued about the comprehensibility and justice of God's ways—especially regarding His punishment of Israel through conquest and exile—and God answered. This prophecy encouraged the faith of the godly remnant of Israel.

Today's reading is a prayer or psalm that was Habakkuk's concluding response to God's answers. His central petition was for God to do what He had done in the past, that is, to show His power and love in the lives of His people in order to make His name known in present times: "Renew them in our day, in our time make them known" (Hab 3:2). His poetic recounting of the Exodus in Hab 3:3-15 described God's unstoppable power exercised on Israel's behalf—it was a faith-boosting recollection of what God could do. These memories made the prophet's heart pound with excitement, even though he would have to wait for God's judgment on Babylon (Hab 3:16).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Did you know you're allowed to ask God tough questions? Even to express doubts? God is far bigger than all your questions and doubts—He can handle them, and your faith will be strengthened as a result. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Surefootedness—Habakkuk 3:19 - THIS confidence of the man of God is tantamount to promise, for that which faith is persuaded of is the purpose of God. The prophet had to traverse the deep places of poverty and famine, but he went downhill without slipping, for the Lord gave him standing. By and by, he was called to the high places of the hills of conflict; and he was no more afraid to go up than to go down. See! the Lord lent him strength. Nay, Jehovah Himself was his strength. Think of that: the Almighty God Himself becomes our strength!

Note, that the Lord also gave him sure-footedness. The hinds leap over rock and crag, never missing their foothold. Our Lord will give us grace to follow the most difficult paths of duty without a stumble. He can fit our foot for the crags, so that we shall be at home where apart from God we should perish.

One of these days we shall be called to higher places still. Up yonder we shall climb, even to the mount of God, the high places where the shining ones are gathered. Oh, what feet are the feet of faith, by which, following the Hind of the Morning, we shall ascend into the hill of the Lord! (Faith's Checkbook)