

# In Wrath Remember Mercy

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[ 0:00 ] Take your copy again of God's Word, and you can open with me to the Old Testament book of Habakkuk.! We'll be in chapter 3, and we'll be reading the first 16 verses together.

! Habakkuk chapter 3, beginning in verse 1. A prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet, according to Shigianoth.

O Lord, I heard the report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years, revive it. In the midst of the years, make it known.

In wrath, remember mercy. God came from Taman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran, Selah. His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

His brightness was like the light. Rays flashed from his hand, and there he veiled his power. Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels.

[ 1:05 ] He stood and measured the earth. He looked and shook the nations. Then the eternal mountains were scattered. The everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways.

I saw the tents of Kashan in affliction. The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. 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 chariots of salvation?

You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. Selah. You split the earth with rivers. The mountains saw you and writhed.

The raging waters swept on. The deep gave forth its voice. It lifted its hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their place, at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear.

You marched through the earth in fury. You threshed the nations in anger. 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.

[ 2:14 ] Selah. 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.

You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters. I hear, and my body trembles. My lips quiver at the sound.

Rottenness enters into my bones. My legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.

While we haven't quite reached the end of our study of Habakkuk, we're getting close. And any time I've preached through an entire book of the Bible from start to finish, I feel a little sad when I come to the end.

You have to understand that Pastor Colin and I have spent more than a few hours getting to know this prophet and his concerns and his prayers, not to mention all of the lessons that God taught him along the way.

[ 3:23 ] So it's hard to think of moving on. But as I said, we're not there yet. We have one more chapter to examine, and you'll find that this chapter is distinct from the first two.

It's certainly a logical and appropriate conclusion to the book, but we see a definite shift from chapter two to chapter three in its tone and its character.

If nothing else, you'll notice that this chapter is written like a psalm. It is written according to the Shigiono, which is an inscription that we find at the start of Psalm 7, for example.

We don't know what it means, but most assume it refers to a tune or perhaps a melody. Several of the psalms, including Psalms 17, 86, 90, 102, 142, are inscribed as a prayer of, in this case, it's a prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet.

You'll notice the use of the word *sila* a few times in this chapter. Again, we aren't sure what that means, but it's been suggested that it's either a musical annotation of some kind or possibly a word that tells the choir master to pause for a moment and allow the people to reflect on what's been sung up to that point.

[ 4 : 49 ] And lastly, you'll see that the chapter ends with the words, to the choir master, with stringed instruments. And of course, we find that many times in the psalms, no less than 55 of them, if I counted correctly.

So it's interesting that what clearly begins as a private, very personal prayer was published for the benefit of all of God's people.

We can all relate to this prayer. We can all relate to its theme. So God, in his wisdom, gave this prayer for all of us to read, if not sing.

And maybe it shouldn't surprise us that Habakkuk should write this prayer in the style of a psalm, because throughout the chapter, he makes several allusions to the Psalter.

There's a lot of familiar language here, assuming you're familiar with the psalms. So it's at least possible that Habakkuk has the psalms in mind. Perhaps he's been reflecting on what those psalms say as he considers what the Lord is currently teaching him in his present circumstances.

[ 6 : 00 ] And as a result, you might think of his prayer naturally coming out as a psalm because his head is so filled with those psalms. I know this happens to me sometimes when I'm writing.

I often, unknowingly, default to the style of the last book I read or the book I'm currently reading. And maybe that's what's happening here with Habakkuk. As he reflects, the psalms just come out.

Regardless, this chapter does have a distinct quality from the rest of the book. Yet, again, it feels very appropriate. This ending feels like the way this book should end.

It brings resolution to all of Habakkuk's struggles and questions, all of those themes that were introduced in the first two chapters. You likely remember how this book began.

The prophet was disgusted by the injustice and the violence he was seeing throughout Judah. God's covenant people were acting like anything but faithful.

[ 7 : 05 ] And Habakkuk was greatly troubled by this. And he cried out to God, Oh Lord, how long shall I cry for help? And you will not hear. And I have few doubts that what he really wanted to see happen was a great revival in the nation of Judah.

He wanted to see the Lord intervene in such a way that would produce repentance among the people. But the Lord replies to Habakkuk's astonishment, really.

He says, I am doing a work in your days. For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, the Babylonians, that bitter and hasty nation.

In other words, the Lord would intervene. But it would not be through a quick, painless spiritual revival. Instead, he would use the ruthless Babylonians to bring judgment against the people.

And unsurprisingly, this leads the prophet to ask, How can this be? How can this be? On the one hand, we see Habakkuk soften as he acknowledges the Lord's holiness and his sovereignty.

[ 8 : 17 ] But on the other hand, he continues to accuse God of idleness. He asked, Why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?

He's speaking, of course, of the Babylonians swallowing up Judah. Yes, Judah had their sins, but aren't the sins of Babylon even greater? In Habakkuk's mind, it's like using a serial killer to punish someone who has stolen a mere candy bar from the store.

The justice of it seems out of balance to him. The prophet seems to have forgotten his initial distress over the sins of Judah. Before Babylon came into the picture, he couldn't imagine anything worse than what he was seeing among God's people in Judah.

Then he speaks as though the sins of Judah were nothing compared to the sins of Babylon. And there was an element of truth to that. But as we've learned, God is impartial.

Sin is sin. And God is a righteous judge. But more than that, as we move into chapter 2, we see how God continues to display both his wisdom and his sovereignty.

[ 9 : 34 ] Put simply, he knows what he's doing. And he's in full control of the situation. He knows how corrupt and wicked Babylon is. So while he might use them to discipline Judah, he's not about to overlook their sins.

Woe to Babylon, God says. The Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him. Babylon will eventually face its own judgment.

And when it does, it will not have anything credible to say in its defense. But you may have noticed that God doesn't give Habakkuk a timeline for any of this.

He doesn't tell his prophet when these things will come to pass. And that leaves both him and us with a question. When our world is overcome by evil, violence, injustice, idolatry, sin, what should we do?

What should we think? How should we respond? Well, that's what we have here in chapter 3. Interestingly, not much of Habakkuk's prayer is what we would call intercession.

[ 10 : 49 ] The only real petition he makes is in verse 2 when he says, in the midst of the years, revive it. In the midst of the years, make it known.

In wrath, remember mercy. So his petition is, revive it, make it known, and remember mercy. And the rest of his prayer focuses on what God has done in the past, expressing his trust in God, and, believe it or not, rejoicing over God, despite everything that's coming.

And that may surprise us. After all, when we're in trouble, our most natural response is to turn to God and say, help. We need help. Please do this.

But I believe there's a good reason that his final prayer isn't really filled with petitions. Habakkuk has learned the lesson of chapter 2, verse 4.

You remember, the righteous shall live by his faith. He essentially reminds himself of who God is and what he has done for his people.

[ 11 : 57 ] And instead of further pleading with God to do something, he calmly reflects. And he says, I will wait on the Lord to carry out his plans.

I dread what's coming. I dread what's coming. But the Lord is good. And his plan will prove good. So I will trust him.

I will walk by faith. With that, let's consider his prayer. Beginning with his petition in verse 2. Again, he says, O Lord, I have heard the report of you and your work, O Lord, do I fear.

In the midst of the years, revive it. In the midst of the years, make it known. In wrath, remember mercy. So the prophet begins by affirming God's past actions.

I have heard the report of you. Which is to say, I have heard of your deeds. I'm aware of your work. And as we'll discover, he has the good deeds of God in mind.

[13:02] Now, this affirmation is especially meaningful in the context of this book because it was the absence of the Lord's good deeds that troubled Habakkuk to begin with.

Again, he accused God of sitting idly by while wickedness in Judah ran rampant. He essentially asked, Lord, why aren't you doing something about this? But not here.

Here, he says, Lord, I've heard about the great things you've done. He might have said, Lord, I now remember the good things you've done. What kinds of things?

Well, that's what we have in verses 3 through 15, which we'll come to. Now, not only does Habakkuk remember the great things God has done for his people, but he also says, end your work, O Lord, do I fear.

I fear. He's in awe of what the Lord has done. And as we'll see throughout this prayer, he's stunned by the Lord's power. And again, this is a remarkable contrast from where we saw him at the beginning of this book.

[14:11] At the beginning, he was complaining, saying to God, Lord, you're not doing anything. You're just watching evil win. But now he's turned completely around saying, Lord, you are doing something.

I see it. And it's awesome. It's overwhelming. Eric Alexander, in a book titled *Feed My Sheep*, writes this, The fear of the Lord is just the proper reaction of sinners to God's infinite holiness or of creatures to God's infinite majesty.

As we grow in the knowledge of God, we will learn truly to tremble before his great glory and burning purity and see this as indeed the beginning of wisdom.

In his book, *Pursuing Wisdom*, Kenneth Boa adds to that, writing, To fear God is to nurture an attitude of awe and humility before him and to walk in radical dependence upon God in each area of life.

The fear of the Lord is similar to the mindset of a subject before a powerful king. It is to be under divine authority as one who will surely give an account. Fearing the Lord relates to trust, humility, teachability, servanthood, responsiveness, gratitude, and reliance on God.

[15:36] It is the exact opposite of autonomy and arrogance. And that's where the prophet Habakkuk finds himself.

In the first stage of his transformation, you might say, at the end of chapter 1, he stopped complaining. He set his heart to wait for the Lord and anticipated that the Lord would come along and correct his misunderstandings.

And now we find him humbly submitting to the Lord's will, standing in awe of his great works. And from that posture of reverence and on the basis of God's awesomeness, it is that the prophet prays, in the midst of the years, revive it.

In the midst of the years, make it known. In wrath, remember mercy. You see, he has completely shifted his position regarding the Lord's work.

He goes from thinking the Lord was doing nothing to standing in awe of God as he is actively involved in the affairs of humanity. And because Habakkuk knows he's actively involved, he is sovereign over the affairs of humanity, he can rightfully make these requests.

[16:50] But what is he requesting? Well, first of all, we should ask, what is the it in this petition? Revive it, he prays.

Make it known. What's he referring to? Well, the most natural reading is that Habakkuk is referring to the Lord's work.

Remember that the prophets first complained about the injustice in Judah. It was the injustice in Judah. And though he never explicitly accused God of being unjust, he came dangerously close by suggesting the Lord doesn't seem to care about the injustice in Judah.

And what does the Lord show him? He showed him that he does care about injustice and that he himself is certainly just and he will prove it in a sense by punishing Judah and second, by punishing the Babylonians for their sins.

So at the core of Habakkuk's request is a desire for the Lord to do this work, to administer justice, to punish the wicked.

[18:02] But that's not exactly what he asks for, is it? No, he petitions the Lord not for death and destruction and some of the things that might be coming, but for life and mercy.

Well, as it happens, these are two sides of the same coin. Habakkuk now realizes that God's means of purifying and restoring righteousness requires judgment.

You see, justice on the one hand means upholding good while on the other hand putting an end to what destroys good. So even in discipline, there is love.

Even in God's wrath, there is a gracious purpose. When God tears down what is evil, he does so so that what is good and what is holy can stand in its place.

grace. And that's why Habakkuk doesn't pray, Lord, forget your judgment. Please cancel your plans. Do something else. No, he's come to understand that the Lord's plan is good and it is necessary for Judah.

[19:13] So he prays, Lord, revive your work. Let's see it. Make it known. Do what needs to be done. And as you do, all I ask is that you remember mercy.

You see, he's no longer questioning the Lord's plan. He's not asking whether or not the Lord should be angry with his people. He's only asking that the Lord temper his righteous wrath with compassion.

Now moving on to verse 3, something really extraordinary happens. here's how one commentator describes it. It is as if the prophet is looking at a vast painting of the Exodus experience that hangs in the gallery of Israel's faith.

Surveying the various details of the masterpiece, the prophet surprisingly steps into the painting and walks alongside Yahweh as he marches through the desert to deliver.

As he walks with the Lord, Habakkuk wonders at the majesty and power of God. He is overwhelmed by Yahweh's move to save his people, to save his anointed.

[20:28] From his new perspective, Habakkuk can see his place in a whole new way, encouraged by the power and compassion of Yahweh at his side. That's a neat picture.

You see, it's almost as though God takes Habakkuk, who once thought God was completely absent from the affairs of Judah, and allows his prophet to walk with him as he reveals himself to be this divine warrior fighting for the salvation of his people, for the good of his people.

Habakkuk gets to step into the painting, if you will, and actually see how God is moving through history. So there's a sense in which Habakkuk is seeing what God has done in the past for his people, as we heard about during the Sunday school hour, but in another sense, he's watching what God is doing now, as God appears to be repeating himself at this moment in history in a certain sense.

Many of the descriptions here take us back to God leading the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt. But the opening verbs aren't really in the past tense. They're in the imperfect tense, which would indicate that what Habakkuk is seeing is currently happening or will soon happen.

In short, Habakkuk is being shown that God is an unchanging God. Just as he rescued his people in the past, he will rescue them again.

[ 22 : 04 ] There may be times in history when God doesn't seem like he is leading his people. He seems distant or silent, but he is leading his people. Verse 3, God came from T-Man and the Holy One from Mount Paran.

T-Man and Mount Paran are names that would have immediately sent Habakkuk's mind back to the story of the Exodus. T-Man is associated with Edom to the south.

Mount Paran is in the same wilderness region. And Deuteronomy 33 speaks of the Lord coming from Sinai, shining forth and radiating from Mount Paran as his glory settled on the mountain and the angelic hosts surrounded him.

In other words, when Habakkuk says God came from these places, the Holy One from Mount Paran, he is saying the God who saved our fathers from Egypt, who led them through the wilderness, who descended on Sinai in glory, that God is on the move again.

This is the Holy One. The same Holy One the prophet addressed back in chapter 1. Are you not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One?

[ 23 : 21 ] That Holy One is now pictured as stepping into the world, not merely watching Babylon and Judah from a distance, but actually stepping into history to judge and to save and to keep his promises.

His splendor covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise. Suddenly, we move from a path through the wilderness to a view of the entire cosmos.

The heavens are covered with God's glory and the earth is full of his praise. never mind those puny Babylonians.

They may think they rule the land. They may sweep across the land without anyone seemingly there to stop them. But Habakkuk, he now sees that they are nothing compared with the great power and glory of God.

And God himself said back in chapter 2, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. This is ultimately where history is headed.

[ 24 : 29 ] And while Habakkuk's focus might have been on God's glory in Jerusalem, maybe specifically the temple, God says that's just a drop in the bucket compared to what's to come.

Just wait. One day, the whole earth will be my dwelling place. My glory will cover everything. Everything. Then in verse 4, we see this divine warrior as he really enters the scene.

His brightness was like the light. Rays flashed from his hand and there he veiled his power. So he reaches for the strongest image he can find which is light itself.

God's brightness is the light. The Bible often uses this imagery. The Lord is my light and my salvation. God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

Jesus says I am the light of the world. Light represents a number of things from purity to truth to joy to guidance sometimes life itself.

[ 25 : 39 ] And Habakkuk is seeing that when God comes he doesn't come shrouded. There's nothing cloudy about who he is or who his character might be. He is in radiant holiness.

Yet even here there's a kind of mercy. We're told there he veiled his power. As bright and overwhelming as this revelation is it's still veiled to some degree.

So what Habakkuk is allowed to see is incredible but he's not seeing the fullness of God's infinite power. He couldn't bear it. So God is revealing just enough to strengthen Habakkuk's faith and to correct his doubts and to reorient his fears but mercifully not so much that it destroys him as a sinner.

Then we read before him before this divine warrior went pestilence and plague followed at his heels.

And that's a somewhat disturbing image. It sounds as though plagues and pestilence breaks out wherever God moves as though he's casting judgment in every direction just wherever he goes.

[ 26 : 59 ] But I don't think that's quite what we're seeing here. Yes he can and he does use plagues as he did when he rescued Israel from Egypt but this is more about his authority and his power.

Pestilence and plagues are described as though they are dutifully walking right alongside God. You see that? Think of dogs on a leash. So as scary as these things are God has a tight grip on those leashes.

They can't go any farther than God allows them to go. This is part of the answer to Habakkuk's original complaint. He looked at Judah's injustice and Babylon's aggression and concluded the world's out of control.

Evil's running free. God must be doing nothing. And now he's shown that even those events which feel so chaotic which can bring such terrible pain are still bound by the authority of God.

Plague and pestilence war and disaster these are not loose cannons. They go before him and they follow at his heels. He's not surprised by them.

[ 28 : 14 ] He's not scrambling to respond to them. He harnesses them. He restrains them and sometimes he uses them to accomplish his mission of judgment and even restoration.

Habakkuk continues. He stood and measured the earth. He looked and shook the nations. then the eternal mountains were scattered. The everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways.

So God takes his stand as judge and king here. He measures the entire earth as a property owner might survey his land. Clearly he's not a stranger intruding on someone else's territory.

This is the creator examining what belongs to him. And when he looks nations tremble.

All he has to do is set his gaze on them and they're startled. They're shaken out of any false sense of security. And then comes this powerful contrast. The eternal mountains are scattered.

[ 29 : 20 ] The everlasting hills sink low. We tend to think of mountains and hills as permanent, don't we? They're unshakable. You can't really destroy them.

They're there. They've always been there. After all, they were there before we were born. They will probably still be there after we die. But when God appears, even they crumble.

The prophet Micah says the mountains will melt under him and the valleys will split open. The psalmist in Psalm 97 says that the hills melt like wax before the Lord.

So what looks solid to us is not solid compared to Almighty God. And then that last line, His were the everlasting ways.

You see, the hills and the mountains only seemed everlasting, but their apparent permanence evaporates in light of the truly eternal one.

[ 30 : 20 ] God's ways, His paths, His purposes, those are truly ancient, truly enduring things. long before those hills or those mountains were made, God was God.

And long after they erode, God will still be God, walking His everlasting way on what the prophet Jeremiah refers to as the ancient paths. Then Habakkuk brings this section to a close with a picture of the nations themselves trembling.

I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction. The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Cushan and Midian may have been a nomadic, couple of nomadic people groups from the same general region, maybe to the south and east.

Their tents and their curtains seemed to refer to their homes, to their families, maybe to their entire ways of life. And just as the mountains shook, so did these people.

When God moves to judge, when God moves to save, the distant nations, the wandering tribes, the mighty cities, the proud empires, all of them have to reckon with the presence of this divine warrior.

[ 31 : 42 ] So, maybe we should pause here and ask, what does all of this mean? Why did the Spirit preserve this vivid, almost overwhelming description of God as a warrior striding through the earth, shaking nations, scattering mountains, marching with plagues and lightning and glory?

What's the point of all of this? Well, part of the answer is that this vision is meant to relativize human power.

If you compare chapter 1 and chapter 3, you can see the parallel. In chapter 1, the Babylonians come, they all come for violence. They gather captives like sand.

They laugh at kings and laugh at every fortress. They sweep through the land like wind. And Habakkuk is stunned by their speed and their cruelty.

They appear unstoppable. But in chapter 3, we see a very different army. God comes. He shakes the earth.

[ 32 : 49 ] He looks and startles the nations, which I assume includes Babylon. He doesn't build siege ramps. There's no need. The mountains themselves crumble before him.

The Babylonians had horses like leopards and wolves. God rides on the storms. He commands the rivers as we see throughout this, halts the sun and the moon in their courses.

The Babylonians strength, that was their God. This God's strength is hidden in its very hand and it is limitless power.

Limitless. The Babylonians, they swept through like the wind and passed on God's pathways. Wherever he moves, his ways are everlasting. Not temporal.

You see, Habakkuk is being shown, and we are being shown, that no human power, no empire, no regime, no movement, no cultural wave is ultimate.

[ 33 : 50 ] Sometimes it feels that way, but it's not. Sometimes we may be terrified for a time. Sometimes we may come under immense suffering, but none of it can outlast the Lord, and none of it will escape his scrutiny.

His splendor still covers the heavens, and the earth will in the end be full of his praise. Let's not forget that. But there's another purpose here.

This vision is meant not only to humble the proud, but also to comfort the faithful. For those who persist in rebellion, the coming of the divine warrior is terrible news.

But for those who belong to him by faith, his arrival is the best news imaginable. God, the same God who strides across the earth in wrath, is also the same God who, in the same chapter, look at verse 13, is said to come for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed.

This warrior is also a savior. Now, in verses 8 through 15, this warrior continues his march, and as he does, all of creation reacts.

[ 35 : 10 ] Habakkuk sees rivers part, mountains tremble, waters surge, even the sun and the moon pause in the sky. Everything that once appeared powerful and immovable suddenly gives way before the Lord.

So, while a nation like Babylon may seem unstoppable, compared to God, they are nothing. But we should notice why God is moving in such power.

He's not lashing out randomly. Again, verse 13 tells us, you went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed.

So, we need to understand that God's wrath here is tied to his love. He judges to save. He tears down evil to actually deliver his people.

Even the strong imagery of crushing the head of the wicked shows us how God is dealing decisively with the forces that oppose him and oppose his people.

[ 36 : 13 ] In verse 14, the very weapons of the enemy are turned back on themselves. So, those who came to scatter God's people end up scattered.

Those who had mouths full of confidence, they're silenced. The Lord even rides upon the terrifying waters, fully commanding what everyone else fears.

So, do you see why Habakkuk is being shown all of this? If nothing else, it reminds him that Babylon is not ultimate. It reminds him that history is well within God's control.

It reminds him that God is working. He is working to judge and he is working to save. The God who has split the sea, who has halted heavenly bodies, who has shook nations, who has rescued his people in the past, has not changed.

He is, he will do it again. This vision shrinks Babylon down to size, and it lifts God up back to where he belongs, on his throne, sovereign over history, unstoppable in his judgment of evil, and unfailing in the salvation of his people.

[ 37 : 32 ] And after seeing all of this, Habakkuk gives us insight into how his heart was changed. Look at verse 16. I hear, and my body trembles.

My lips quiver at the sound. Rottenness enters into my bones. My legs tremble beneath me. So clearly, he's not unfazed by everything he's seen.

He's not stoic about it. He's been physically shaken by what he's seen and heard. His stomach is in knots. His lips are trembling. His bones feel like they're wasting away.

His legs are about to give out from underneath him. If you've ever gotten a phone call with really bad news, maybe you can relate to a point. Habakkuk now understands the weight of what's coming.

That is not lost on him. Judgment is coming to Judah. The ruthless Babylonians will invade. No doubt people he knows and loves will probably suffer and die.

[ 38 : 42 ] Many will be taken captive. And even though this is God's will, he's not unfeeling about it. This is hard. This is a painful situation. But notice what he says next.

Yet, I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. Yet, may be the most important word here.

The prophet basically says, I am trembling. I'm not okay. Everything in me is shaking. Yet, yet, I will quietly wait.

I will wait for God. I will trust his timing. I will trust his purpose. I will rest myself on his character, even while my legs are trembling.

Do you see the connection back to chapter 2? The righteous shall live by his faith. This is what living by faith looks like. It doesn't mean the righteous never tremble.

[ 39 : 49 ] But when we do, we plant our feet as best we can on the unshakable character of God and say, yet, I will quietly wait.

Of course, standing where we stand, we have even more reason to do so. We've seen the divine warrior literally, physically, step into history in a way that Habakkuk could only glimpse from a distance.

The Holy God, the same Holy God who marched through the earth in judgment back in Habakkuk's day has come in the person of Christ. At his first coming, the lightning and the bow and the chariot, those were all veiled.

Those were set aside, if you will, because he came in weakness and in humility and in human flesh. He didn't come at first to crush his enemies, but to be crushed for his enemies.

On the cross, the wrath of God and the mercy of God met. Habakkuk's prayer, in wrath, remember mercy, was fulfilled at Calvary, where the judgment that should have fallen on us fell on Christ instead.

[ 41 : 05 ] And yet, as we follow the New Testament, that warrior imagery doesn't disappear. The New Testament still speaks of Jesus returning in glory, riding on a white horse, judging and making war in righteousness.

The one who is pierced will appear again, and every eye will see him, we're told in Revelation. On that day, he will finally destroy every Babylon and make good on that promise.

The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. of course, we live between those two comings.

We live in a world that still looks a lot like Habakkuk's, full of injustice, full of violence, full of idolatry, full of confusion. We feel it in our body, sometimes we tremble, we grieve, we ask how long, but we should remember that we've seen even more than Habakkuk ever saw.

we've seen the word who became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth.

[ 42 : 22 ] We have seen the light. We know the name of the divine warrior who came to save and will come again to judge. We know what it cost for God to remember mercy.

and we know the warrior savior has already fought and he's already won that decisive battle at the cross.

So when evil seems to prevail, when we are overwhelmed by what we see in our world and in our own lives, we do what Habakkuk did. We rehearse who God is.

We remember what he's done in the past. We rest in what he has promised. We fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and coming again. And we say sometimes through trembling lips, yet I will quietly wait because the righteous will live by faith.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word and for this glimpse we have been given into your power, to your holiness, to your faithfulness.

[ 43 : 37 ] You rule the nations and you keep your promises. When our hearts tremble and our world feels very uncertain, I pray that you would help us to live by faith.

Pray that you would help us to remember who you are and what you've done. Help us to trust you in both days of blessing and in days of hardship.

And by your spirit, help us to say with the prophet, I will quietly wait. And we pray that those who do not know the Savior, that they would come to trust in him, that you would draw them to yourself through your son, that they would realize that when judgment comes, when the warrior returns, they will not stand, but will be condemned if they are not safely in Christ, having been atoned, having their sins atoned for by his precious blood.

And for the rest of us, Lord, help us to continue trusting in that blood, that when the warrior returns, he will truly be a beautiful Savior to us.

And it's in the name of this warrior Savior we pray, Jesus. Amen.