

Habakkuk (Quality: Average)

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Date: 24 September 1961

Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the book of Habakkuk.

Chapter 3 and a part of the second verse. O Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known. In wrath remember mercy.

Chapter 3, the book of Habakkuk and a part of the second verse.

I would like to feel that many of you who are here before God in the attitude of worship can find in your hearts an amen to this petition which welled up in the breast of godly Habakkuk long ago.

As I view it, it is the great need in the church of Christ nowadays. A need under union chapel roof.

[1 : 38] Needed in the pulpit and pure life. A gracious reviving of what God has been pleased to do for our souls.

That we may know and rejoice in knowing that he has done it. And that the good work is indeed begun and being carried on.

And in his time, God will finish it. I want the Lord to help me to look at this subject from just one or two viewpoints.

And it might be helpful to look at the setting of it just a little. It is said to be a prayer of Habakkuk. And in the context it says, O Lord, I have heard thy speech, margin, thy report, and was afraid.

And now, if you keep in your mind that Habakkuk, as far as can be told, was a prophet who had to do the work God ordained he should do, And just before Israel as a nation, were to be carried into Babylonian captivity and be there for 70 years long, Habakkuk did his work in the reign of King Jehoiachin.

[3 : 17] And in the preceding chapters, God had made plain that he was going to pour out, Habakkuk, his judgment on Israel as a nation.

And Habakkuk, being who he was, a godly prophet, laid it to heart. And there was one thing that surprised Habakkuk, and he needed the help of God to have a right understanding of it.

Israel as a nation, were a very wicked nation of a truth. But the nation that was to come upon them and execute the judgments of God, were, if possible, ten times more wicked still.

But they were the godly Chaldeans. And Habakkuk could not understand how that could be. But God made it plain to Habakkuk, that when the 70 years captivity had ended, which Habakkuk would not live to see, then God would deal with the Chaldeans in their turn.

And he would indeed revive his work in the land of promise, and Israel as a nation should be restored to it, and the worship of God should be carried on again as aforetime.

[4 : 56] And now that is the setting of the subject. And Habakkuk says, O Lord, I have heard thy speech, thy report, and was afraid.

And now, I turn aside a moment or two. You might look round England as a nation.

And if you are helped to do it, you will see much that should solemnise your mind and make you sad, and also cause you some searchings of heart.

As you see, how great is England's guiltiness as a nation before God. Especially when you think of how God has behaved in being England's God for so many, many years as our history tells us.

There are many instances wherein God has been our God. and we have looked on and desired to thank God and take courage for his great mercy toward England as a nation and especially to his dear people therein.

[6 : 15] And now, you must think, if you think at all, and you should do that, you must think, if you look round England as a nation nowadays, that things cannot go on much longer as they are going without coming to a crisis.

And when that crisis comes, the judgment of God will be poured out in some especial way according to his infinite wisdom to make England as a nation to know her guiltiness before his holy majesty.

But, everything hinges on this. I like to think on it, and you will remember that God made it plain to Abraham that if he could find ten righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah, then he would suspend his judgments and not pour them out at that time.

but he would spare the cities if only ten righteous could be found therein, but alas, there was but one. And he had to be sought out and delivered, righteous lot.

And now, that is the principle, speaking with great reverence, wherein God fulfills his purposes. And so, the only hope for England as a nation in the future is that there should be found from Land's End to John O'Grofe not ten righteous, but as many tens as God will grant, ten thousand times ten thousand if it could please him to make them manifest.

[8 : 11] And now, that brings us back to the starting point. Godly Habakkuk says, Lord, I see the great necessity as this.

If matters could only be made right between thy people who do indeed have thy good work begun within and thy holy majesty as the sinner's friend, then they would be like salt to preserve the land of promise from the outpouring of thy threatened judgments.

And now, that is exactly where you and I stand this Sabbath morn. Any of us, especially those with names on church rules, and somewhere under Union Chapel a roof around about, there should be sixty to be found with a name on a church roll, Union Chapel church roll, and those who love the truth.

The great antidote to the perilous times in which you and I are living, and that alone which will suspend, speaking with great reverence, suspend the judgments of God being poured out, is for you and I to have some indubitable evidence that we are numbered with the righteous, and that in our everyday life men may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

and now do suffer the word of exhortation and let your consciences tell you the truth as to what real concern there is going on between your soul and God that you might make your own contribution to the return of God to England as a nation and for his holy majesty to return in mercies to us and revive his work in the church of Christ beginning with you.

[10 : 43] And now I want then as the Lord should help me to work out that line of things. Oh Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years in the midst of the years make known in wrath remember mercy.

And now the first consideration is this says dear Habakkuk I like Habakkuk Oh Lord revive thy work and now that should be a great consideration with us any of us who hope in God you do want something from God to make it plain that what is going on in your soul is what God is the author of except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it.

I like how this is worded Oh Lord revive thy work you see in the so called religious world nowadays people get together and they have conventions and they have conferences and they say there is this that we can do and that we can do and that may bring about an alteration some improvement in the church of Christ professing we must do this we must do that listen not by might nor by power but by my spirit set the Lord of hosts you see dear friends revival can only be done from within you cannot do it from without revival can only be where there is life or there must be the root of the matter found within and then a sinner can appeal to God with whom he has to do oh Lord revive thy work in my soul let my soul live and it shall praise thee let thy judgment help me and now this reviving in our souls blessed be God there is a possibility of it

God has made all provision for it the fullness resides in Jesus our head and ever abides to answer our need the father's good pleasure has laid up in store a plentiful treasure to give to the poor and I like that scripture it seems to me very much overlooked nowadays God is able to make all grace abound toward you and in that blessed declaration there is indeed the possibility that your soul can indeed be revived and the good work begun so long ago be made manifest as your soul desires and do say thank you to

God that there is help in God and that help in God how does it come down to poor sinners like you and me sorely in need for our souls to be revived and made lively in things divine the dear saviour said long ago I am the resurrection and the life whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die I often remind you about when Jesus Christ rose from the dead on that Easter morn long ago I want you to be well acquainted with that not just as a matter of history but with the blessed reality of it because when Jesus Christ rose from the dead he rose as the church's living head the church of Christ every member of it all whom

[15 : 47] God the Father had ordained to life eternal were in union with Jesus Christ when he rose from the dead mystical union in union with the Lamb from condemnation free the saints from everlasting were and shall forever be and what I want to emphasize is this when Jesus Christ rose from the dead triumphant over sin and death and hell the church of Christ rose in him then and that means there can be no lowest state however low it may be into which anyone in the church of Christ can be found but what there is lifting up out of that low estate and there is a gracious reviving in their souls to be known who remembered us in our low estate for his mercy endureth forever and you get that set forth in that beautiful picture that

Ezekiel saw long ago when he had the vision of the valley which was full of bones you remember that God said to Ezekiel and he said unto me son of man can these bones live and I answered O Lord God thou knowest I like that answer there is in it that which is helpful instructive and in one sense of it comforting because if the question was put to you is your soul alive in things divine you could not always say yes indeed I believe it is you would say more often the Lord knows and he alone can make it plain to me that my soul is alive in things divine

O Lord thou knowest you cannot always tell out in words just what is the exact truth about your soul's experience but you have this privilege to appeal to God O Lord thou knowest and then you will say O Lord revive thy work Lord decide the doubtful case thou who art thy people's son shine upon the work of grace if indeed it be begun and now God said to Ezekiel prophesy upon these born and say unto them all ye dry born hear the word of the Lord and there was much that was done as Ezekiel was helped to prophesy upon these dry born but the word of God says follow this along for it is instructive so I prophesied as I was commanded and as

I prophesied there was a noise and behold a shaking and the born came together born to his born when I beheld lo the sinews and the flesh came up upon them and the skin covered them above but there was no breath in them alas yet it seemed to look so well and you might think sometimes in the so called religious world when we hear and read of the gatherings together of hundreds and thousands who hear the gospel as it is preached in some measure to them that the kingdom of God surely is being extended greatly by such gatherings but you need to get back to the word of God and weigh it all up because the crucial test is this is their breath noise there may be a shaking in the so called religious world bone coming together bone to his bone a great army may be assembled but you must get right down to bedrock the starting point is ye must be born again ye must be born again and to fail there it matters not what you profess besides you will have teacol stamped upon it weighed in the balances and found one thing and now

God said to Ezekiel then said he unto me prophesy unto the wind margin breath prophesy son of man and say to the wind thus saith the Lord God come from the four winds o breath and breathe upon these slain that they may live so I prophesied as he commanded me and the breath came into them and they lived and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army you see dear friends what I am aiming to help you to understand is this if you are in earnest before God this Sabbath morn O Lord revive thy work you must have this breath spirit of God come down reveal the things of God the things of God are God breathed all script to is given by inspiration of God the word inspiration means

[22 : 04] God breathed and your religion must be just like that to have the proper hallmark on it God breathed breathe on me O breath of God yes remember that and so it says they lived and stood up upon their feet and exceeding great armies what was the effect of all this what was the first evidence of this gracious outpouring of the spirit then he said unto me son of man these bones are the whole house of Israel set in forth the church of Christ the Israel of God listen behold they say our bones are dry and our hope is lost and we are cut off for our part and now that is the initial evidence that

God is beginning to revive his work within you when he the spirit of truth is come he shall convince the world of sin and instead of you feeling as people might think when there is an outpouring of the spirit of God that all people taught of God will be filled brimful with happiness unspeakable and full of glory it will not be like that at the oncoming of the spirit when he is pleased to come it will be a real gracious God honoring conviction of sin that will be known and felt and that will issue in separation from the world and the getting rid of everything that is inimical to a profession of the name of Jesus you remember that when God asked Israel to appear before him at one time when he had to deal with them because of their back sliding state what did he say

God commanded Moses to tell the people to strip themselves of their ornaments and evidently such things as were not really allowed to Israelites indeed and you remember that when there was a great outpouring of the spirit at Ephesus and God wrought mightily in many poor sinners there what happened they gathered together things in their home which ought not to be found there books works curious arts and such like things and brought them out in the Ephesus marketplace and burned them though their value was thousands and thousands of silver it was a mighty bonfire and the angels delighted to look on it and God was glorified thereby and now all these things are needful if you want this petition to be answered in your own soul's experience

I'm afraid of one word which I look at I think I've never tried to preach from it but I may do as grace is given the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God and if it begin at us what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God you can be sure dear friends that time has come judgment must begin at the house of God I thought during this year as the pastor as to whether in some sense judgment has not begun at the house of God as regards Union Chapel in so many things coming upon us as a people many of our dear friends so afflicted and having to be found in hospital wards and other troubles coming upon you as a people and causing the pastor many searchings of heart the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of

God how stands the case my soul with thee for heaven are thy credentials clear and let us return and take one more look at this valley of dry bones and see what happened and God said to Ezekiel prophesy and say unto them thus saith the Lord God behold oh my people I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves and bring you into the land of Israel you see when they were in Babylonia's captivity for 70 years it was as though Israel as a nation was buried in a grave and according to how the Babylonians viewed it they would remain there dead and buried as a nation but God purposed otherwise after 70 years I will visit you and they were brought up out of their graves in

[27 : 46] Babylonia's captivity wrought upon by the spirit of God and they did indeed return to the land of Israel and worship the Lord their God as Israel's God again therein and now these things are written to encourage you whatsoever things were written the fourth time were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort in the scriptures might have hope and if any of you dear people this sabbath morn as regards your soul's experience if you feel as though your bones are dry your hope is lost and you fear lest you should be cut off altogether and you seem as if you are in a grave and buried there is helping God for you who can tell who can tell but what God will be gracious unto you and now this is the way oh

Lord revise thy work in the midst of the years in the midst of the years make known in wrath remember mercy and now looking at this subject from another viewpoint oh Lord revive thy work I said there is the possibility of it God has made all provision for it and there is that great word I would like you to memorize and seek to put it into practice in everyday life if ye be an evil know how to give good things unto your children how much more shall your father in heaven give the holy spirit to them that ask him yes come holy spirit come let thy bright beams arise dispel the darkness from our minds and reanoint our eyes and now this reviving looking first of all at the church of

Christ collectively and then I will come to the church of Christ individually the church of Christ collectively there needs to be a revival from a threefold viewpoint first of all as regards worship it and the word of God is very plain God is greatly to be feared and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth it may be some of you lament I'm only drawing a bow with a venture some of you lament when you weigh things up over your union chapel life that you do not get as much good as you would like to when matters are right between God and your soul and that is how you feel your health your hope what you call your good time although sometimes a bad time from the pastor's viewpoint would be good and is good in God's sight you're not always to be comforted sometimes you need to be searched and stripped and tested and brought face to face with reality and to come to the light that it may be made plain that you have got some religion that is wrought in God and yet you do lament that you have so many opportunities to worship

God and you seem to gain so little for your soul thereby you give so little evidence of what it is to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ preacher and people alike must all plead guilty here and now this petition is very suitable seasonable if that is how you people and there is a great need before it because worship can be very cold formal mechanical and it is to be feared too often it is just bodily exercise which profiteth little alas that it should be so and yet the word of the Lord is in all places where I record my name there will

I come and bless thee O Lord revise thy work regarding the worship of thy holy majesty let us know more often this is none other than the house of God it is even the gate of heaven and then there needs to be a gracious reviving as I view it in our walk I'm not fitting any caps on let each one listen to what his own conscience her conscience has to say in this matter I thought sometimes and very solemn it is to think on it that the apostle Paul wrote to one church and he spoke about the walk of some and he says I tell you about it weeping because their walk is not at all what it should be according to what they profess do you think that your walk is exactly all it should be dear friends is this the truth as you have therefore received

[34 : 11] Christ Jesus the Lord so walk ye in him do you I want you to think on these things as grace is given because I want to see this petition answered amongst us O Lord revive thy work and if our walk is not consistent if it is just a formal profession of the name of Jesus then we shall not know what that breath is which brings about the Bible the spirit of God in his gracious operations known and felt within you need to examine your walk and see if there is any way wherein you are going that the word of God forbids you to go along not only so that brings us to this third thought and that is there needs to be a gracious revival amongst us as a people and all people thought of

God everywhere as regards their witness to so there need to be this gracious reviving of the work in the church of Christ collectively as to worship and to witness and to our walk and the Lord help us to lay these things to heart and now I come to how this petition is so essential to each of us taught of God individually

O Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years in the midst of the years made known this expression, the midst of the years is very suggestive some of us can hardly be said to be in the midst of the years most of you who fear God amongst us are in the midst of the years except those of us who are going down into life's evening time but wherever we are in life's journey we do need this gracious reviving in our soul's experience and now I hinted earlier on first of all there needs to be a gracious reviving as regards a conviction of sin for it seems to me that standard is at a very low level in our denominational life there are many many things that people do and there are things to be seen as to how people behave and where they go yet have a profession of the name of Jesus to answer unto God for and they do these things say these things and the word of God says this is the spirit of the Lord straightened are these his doings do not my words do good to them that walk up rightly oh it is a great petition

I wish God would be pleased to answer it for every one of us who is a sinner born again convince us of our sins then lead to Jesus' blood and to our wandering beauty the secret love of God oh Lord revive thy work and then our faith needs to be revived Lord increase our faith how often it can be said of us oh ye of little faith too often you and I are like that man in the gospel Lord I believe oh help my unbelief I thought of one word of the Saviour as a great deal be not afraid only believe and without faith it is impossible to please him for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him yes our faith is people we confess oh Lord revive thy work revive in us faith though it be as a grain of mustard seed that we may not let thee go till the blessing thou bestow hope needs to be revived because hope hope can sink very low at times and you get evidence in the word of God that some of the most notable characters who did indeed have hope full assurance of hope at times oh they went down down in their soul's feelings and I just called and I just called David for a witness and what did he say leave not my soul destitute margin make not my soul bear and he says again take not thy Holy Spirit from me the dear man was brought very low at that time oh my God my soul is cast down within me and it may be some of you were saying this Sabbath morning like Job ask for my hope who shall see it you cannot see it to your soul's peace and profit and yet you are not without God and without hope are you you are really hoping against hope this Sabbath morning and then this petition is very suitable for you oh Lord revive thy work in the midst of the year in the midst of the year make known make known my hope is a good hope through grace make known my faith is the faith of God's elect make known that what I do know of my sinnership does arise from a God given conviction of sin and not just a creed accepted good creeds may stop our heads about and in our heart no grace be found not only so oh Lord revive thy work and now our love needs to be

revived you can sing very feelingly God only knows the love of God all that it now was shed abroad in my poor stony heart then that describes you my poor stony heart but then there is this wondrous breath which is bestowed the spirit of God in his blessed operations to be known and felt yes oh Lord revive thy work and how good and how good it would be to see more of the love of God manifested and brotherly love continuing and people taught of God more earnest in endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace let brotherly love continue says the word of God and it says love is of God

[43 : 41] God is love and love is the golden chain that binds the favoured souls above and he is the hair of heaven who finds his foot and glow with love oh Lord revive thy work and you need prayer to be revised not so much as to put in words together for you may do that you do do it every day and yet you are troubled because your words seem very lifeless and you cannot feel often that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth is speaking Lord teach us to pray and if he is pleased to do it you will find it to be along this line of teaching prayer is the soul's sincere desire uttered or unexpressed the motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breath oh Lord revive thy work pour upon us the spirit of prayer and the grace of supplication and now you need praise to be revived when you look along life's way and seek to remember the way

God has led you when you see the way marks you have set up in bygone experiences when you think of his manifold mercies attending you by night and by day surely you will say oh bless the Lord my soul now let his mercies lie forgotten in unthankfulness and without praises die oh Lord revive thy work revive praise create in me a clean heart oh God renew a right spirit within me and then there is one more thought in my mind which is a word I like and that is zeal and that needs to be revived you go back to the early dealings of God with you dear friends any of you who can do so will discern

I judge a very solemn contrast between how you feel this Sabbath morn and how you felt when first of all God began to lead you into his truth and you ran with joy in the ways of God and you had zeal and glad you were to feel it and it was a little right zeal and it winged your feet and it moved your hands to do many things which you did for the love of God and you wanted to live inside that scripture as ye have therefore opportunity do good unto all men especially unto they that be of the household of faith zeal and the word of God says the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up and that was said of Jesus

Christ as verily man when he wrote that great miracle and went into the temple and turned out the buyers and sellers and the money changers and all that ought not to be there you must realize how the sovereignty of God was seen at that time because there were hundreds of people turned out and Jesus Christ as verily man did it with the majesty of who he was as verily God verily man turned them out and said my father's house is a house of prayer not to be made a house of merchandise and made a den of thieves and now we want that zeal revived dear friends because sometimes there may be things even in the house of prayer that ought not to be there is a tendency in the hope of getting revival to introduce this and that which comes to be an innovation and maybe a course of truth has been carried on for hundreds of years without it and God has walked therein and made the place of his feet glorious and instead of waiting upon him oh

Lord revive thy work people gather together to see what can be done to bring about a better safe and think we must do this and we must do that but this is the way dear friends walk ye in it wrestling prayer can wonder soon and this is the alone remedy the remedy lies before thee pray oh Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years in the midst of the years make known much might be said under that heading in wrath remember mercy and then in connection with the work being revived in your soul there are some things in which you desire God to make known just where you are in things divine you want it made known that the work within is indeed what God has begun you want

[50 : 05] God to make known that you are indeed a pilgrim to can unbound you want God to make known that your evidences in which you have hoped you're in you're out are evidences that he has wrought in your soul's experience for you dare not take it for granted a solemn thing of saints to appear grow up with wheat and prove to be a tear not only so you will have a petition like this make known thy precious blood as that blood which does for sin atone wash me and I shall be whiter than snow make known thy righteousness that I may be clothed therein and prove it to be the righteousness of God which is by faith in

Jesus Christ and be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in life and then there is this petition oh Lord revive thy work as you think of your life and with some of us so speedily coming to a close you want this nearer nearer to thee clinging oh may my helpless soul be found and you want this quickened by thee and kept alive I flourish and bear fruit my life I from thy sap derive my vigor from thy use and I keep you just a minute to make one thing plain here and now this dear godly Habakkuk had this petition welling up within oh Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years in the midst of the years make known in roth remember mercy and now as I understand it it is evident that

Habakkuk lived long enough to see the children of Israel go into Babylon's captivity and to see the land of promise just desolate and waste and although he had that painful experience yet he was given grace to rise above it and he says ere he concludes his little prophecy although the fig tree shall not blossom neither shall fruit be in the vines the liver of the olive shall fail and the field shall yield no meat the flock shall be cut off from the fall and there shall be no herd in the store just waste desolation did he look on in the land of promise and then he found he had got something wrought in his soul's experience that enabled him to rise above everything outside that was so depressing to view yet

I will rejoice in the Lord I will joy in the God of my salvation and I tell you a thought that came to me as I was pondering this subject hoping it was the right one to bring before you if the judgments of God should be poured out in the immediate future more or less immediate and if God should allow such a thing as nuclear warfare to develop and if it should reach England as a nation that would be exactly the picture that you would see if you did live to see everything that is material in its nature giving you now your happiness in your home life some measure of prosperity arising from the things of this life if there was such a thing allowed as nuclear warfare that would be the end of it all and in a day and then there would be one desolation and only those who had the mercy to live after it and who were taught of God would have a refuge to go to and find they had got something left in their soul's experience to help them live on and live with hope in God you might think that over and above all do ask

God to do this for you oh Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years in the midst of the years make known in raw remember mercy and keep this thought up and they that in the Lord confide and shelter in his wounded side to see all dangers all the past stand every storm and live at last and standing to see itos a nearly there Thank you.

[56 : 38] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[59 : 40] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.