

“The King is Coming!”  
Habakkuk 3:3-15  
Series: Book of Habakkuk [#7]  
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Theme: **The King Is Coming! Praise Him!**

## Introduction

We are in the final stretch of our run through Habakkuk as we plan to cross the finish line next week. Chapter 3 changes keys to a majestic psalm of praise. The Holy Spirit guided Habakkuk in this section to use images of God’s past deliverance of Israel, which the faithful clearly knew and understood, in order to encourage them in their faith. The Holy Spirit guided him to state the certainty of God’s deliverance of Judah in the future, and to give a glimpse farther into the future, to a time still future for us, when God will bring about His ultimate judgment and deliverance, and set all things as they should be.

That is part of the grand beauty of God’s Word—whether for the people at the Exodus 800 years before the events in Habakkuk, or the people of the prophet’s day, or for us who are 2,600 years after those events, God’s Word speaks clear, objective, unchanging truth. It speaks truth as *reports* or facts that we need to know and to change, shape and guide our lives so we become the people of God as He intends us to be.

The big picture in this section of the psalm is that *The King Is Coming!* And, because He is coming, we should praise Him. But even more, because of who He is, we should praise Him.

## Praise God For His Glory.

We should praise God for His glory. His coming will cover the heavens with His great glory. Look at the first verse in this section, v. 3,

“God comes from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah.  
His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise.”

First, what about that word *Selah*? It is a musical notation for singing the psalm. It occurs 3 times here and 71 times in the book of the Psalms. What does it mean? We are not sure— at least not everyone agrees on what it means. It may mean:

- to pause and reflect;
- or, to turn up the volume;
- or, to instruct the instruments to improvise on their own before the singing continues.

God, who is coming, is “the Holy One.” It may surprise you that the Bible refers to God as *holy* more often than as *almighty*. This term *holy* indicates being separate from, and also to be set apart. Of God it tells us, negatively, that there is no impurity, evil or sin in Him. Positively, it tells us God is pure, that He wills, maintains and defends His perfect character and honor.

As God set out how Israel was to live and worship in relationship with Him, He repeatedly told them, “I am holy” (e.g., Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:26). Moses sang to God, “Who is like You, majestic in holiness?” (Exodus 15:11). Hannah prayed, “There is no one holy like the LORD” (2 Samuel 2:2). Isaiah saw a vision of angels above the throne of God who call out to one another in loud chorus, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:3).

When the Holy One comes, no sin or sinner can stand in His way or approach Him.

When He comes, His splendor will cover the heavens. God’s glory is the outward display of His perfect character. Paul tells us God “alone possesses immortality and *dwells in unapproachable light*, whom no man has seen or can see” (1 Timothy 6:16). Psalm 104 says,

“Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, *covering Yourself with light as with a cloak ...*” (1-2a)

And, Revelation 21 tells us that in the new Jerusalem there will be ...

“no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, *for the glory of God has illumined it*, and its lamp is the Lamb [Christ].” (verse 23)

The bright light which surrounds God’s presence as a visible display of His character will blanket all the heavens when He comes.

As well, His coming will fill the earth with praise. We go to verse 3 again,

“God comes from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, *and the earth is full of His praise.*”

The visible display of God’s glory when He comes will be so great that it will fill the skies *and* earth. It will call for praise to Him from every corner, every person, every living being, every created thing. In God’s second response to Habakkuk back in chapter 2, He told him, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (2:14). What splendor, majesty, beauty and power! God’s coming will fill the earth with His praise!

Let’s step back and think about the impact of this truth. Habakkuk had three things front and center in his mind. First, the rampant sin in Judah. Second, God’s imminent judgment on Judah through the Chaldeans. Then, God’s later judgment on the Chaldeans. It was a terrifying time for him.

In this situation God gave Habakkuk the ability to see a picture of His coming to earth in glory and power. It was not a picture of sunny, peaceful days, where Habakkuk could relax and enjoy the serene beauty. No. God gave him a picture, God gave him the truth, of His perfect purity, of His blazing glory. A picture of truth Habakkuk was not to use to escape from his present realities, but to put them into focus. As he saw, accepted and took it as his focus, this truth reassured him, gave him perspective and confidence, and led him to sincerely sing God's praises.

God intends this truth to impact us in the same way. Unanswered questions, problems and disasters; weaknesses, imperfections and sin permeate our world. But it will not always be like this. A day is coming when God, when Christ will come to earth again.

About fifty years after these events in Habakkuk, Daniel wrote,

"I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, *glory* and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed." (7:13-14)

Jesus has told us, "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:27). And then He went on, recorded in Matthew 24, picking up Daniel's prophecy,

"And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and *great glory*."

(Matthew 24:30)

Whether it is today or then, here or there, our God radiates His perfection in great glory that we cannot begin to comprehend. He *is* perfect in all that He is and does, and that glory eternally radiates out from Him. So, because of who He is, because of what He has done and will do, we can today and every day join with Habakkuk in praising God for His glory.

### **Praise God For His Power.**

This psalm of Habakkuk notes at least six descriptions of God's power. First, His power is beyond our ability to comprehend. Look at verse 4, "His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand, and there is the hiding of His power." Literally, it could read "*horns* from His hand," but this is a figurative use of the term. Picture a bull or goat lowering its *horns* and charging.

We see the same idea back in Deuteronomy 33,

“Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death. He said, ‘The LORD came from Sinai, and dawned on them from Seir; 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.*’” (33:1-2)

So this statement in verse 4 declares that God’s power shines or flashes out from His *hand* (which also is a symbol of strength as well as authority).

Our language, including this beautiful God-directed poetry, cannot come close to adequately describing God’s power. God tells us He is *Almighty*. But can we really wrap our minds around that? He tells us His power, even though it is restrained, *flashes* out from His hand of power. And, again, we can’t fathom the greatness His limitless power. But we can and should praise Him for His power which is beyond our ability to comprehend.

Secondly, Habakkuk reminded people then and us today that God has power over the most dreaded diseases. Go to verse 5, “Before Him goes pestilence, and plague comes after Him.” Here Habakkuk and the people of Judah would think back and picture the 10 plagues that God brought on Egypt as He delivered them from slavery. And in their own days they would see the fulfillment of God’s word through Jeremiah in chapter 14,

“Thus says the LORD to this people, ‘Even so they have loved to wander; they have not kept their feet in check. Therefore the LORD does not accept them; now He will remember their iniquity and call their sins to account.’ So the LORD said to me, ‘Do not pray for the welfare of this people. When they fast, I am not going to listen to their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I am not going to accept them. Rather I am going to make an end of them by the sword, famine and *pestilence.*’” (14:10-12)

Again, in chapter 21,

“I will also strike down the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they will die of *a great pestilence.*” Once more, “He who dwells in this city will die by the sword and by famine and by *pestilence ...*”  
(6, 9)

Just as God brought the plagues upon Egypt, so also He would bring pestilence into Jerusalem as part of His judgment on Judah.

Yes, God has power over the most dreaded diseases. What we cannot diagnose or understand, God knows completely. What we cannot cure, God can. We cannot see and know how all of this plays out in our world, but we can and should praise God that even these dreaded enemies are subject to His power.

Then, this psalm praises God because of His power over the nations. Drop down to verse 12, “In indignation You marched through the earth; in anger You trampled the nations.” If you think this is strong, turn ahead a few pages to Zephaniah who wrote perhaps 20 years before Habakkuk. Chapter 3, verse 8,

“‘Therefore, wait for Me,’ declares the Lord, ‘for the day when I rise up to the prey. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal.’”

That grand choir of victorious saints in heaven will sing,

“Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Your ways, *King of the nations!*”

(Revelation 15:3)

All nations are under God’s power. As Daniel wrote, “It is [God] who changes the times and epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings ...” (2:21). So, whether it was ...

- the mighty empires of Egypt, Assyria or Babylon;
- or the Greeks and Romans who followed;
- or Great Britain, Germany, Russia, the U.S., China or India;
- or yet all the nations of the world together in that future and final battle against God,

He has power over them all. Jeremiah 10:10 declares,

“... the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure His indignation.”

So, with Habakkuk, we can have confidence in God and His power to replace intimidation and fear. We can praise God because of His power over the nations.

Next, the psalm reminds us that God has power over the enemies of His people. God is King of, has power over the nations and, zeroing in, He has power over every, over all the enemies of His people. Go on to verse 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. Selah. 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.”

God has power over and will judge the enemies of His people. In Psalm 108 King David prayed, “Oh give us help against the adversary, for deliverance by man is in vain. Through God we will do valiantly, and it is He who shall tread down our adversaries.” (12-13)

God said in Isaiah 41,

“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish. You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent. For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’ (10-13)

Moses sang,

“Rejoice, O nations, with His people; for [God] will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance on His adversaries, and will atone for His land and His people.” (Deuteronomy 32:43)

Praise God! He has power over every enemy of His people!

Now the view zooms out again: God has power over all of this planet, over all of the earth He has created. Let’s start with verse 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.”

Go on to verse 9,

“Your bow was made bare, the rods of chastisement were sworn. Selah. You cleaved the earth with rivers. The mountains saw You and quaked; the downpour of waters swept by. The deep uttered forth its voice, it lifted high its hands.”

And then, verse 15, “You trampled on the sea with Your horses, on the surge of many waters.”

God created this earth and He retains His power over it. Some day He will make a new earth, new heavens, unscarred by sin. God gave His promise in Isaiah 65:7, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.” God Himself will destroy the present and bring about the new. 2 Peter 3 tells us,

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be

destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!  
But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a  
new earth, in which righteousness dwells.” (10-13)

Praise God! He has power over this planet.

Finally, zooming out again, and as we have seen in Isaiah and Peter, God has power over the heavens. He who is the creator has power over all of His creation. Have you ever wondered how big our universe is? Many people have, and some have tried to find the answer. Some astronomers now think the universe is at least 165 billion light-years wide. Do you have a picture of that? A light year is about 9.4 trillion kilometres or about 5.8 trillion miles. So, simply multiply either one of those by 165 billion and you’ve got it... or, perhaps not.

However large all of God’s creation is, He has power over it. Verse 11, “Sun and moon stood in their places; they went away at the light of Your arrows, at the radiance of Your gleaming spear.” Habakkuk and Judah may have thought back to the conquest of the land when Joshua led them into battle, as Joshua 10 records,

“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.’ 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. 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.” (10:12-14)

We don’t know exactly what God did there or how, but whatever and however He did it, He displayed His power over all of creation, and we should praise Him.

### **Praise God For His Salvation.**

This psalm is filled with statements, descriptions, pictures of God’s glory and power.  
*Question:* “Why all of this?” Go back up to verse 8 where Habakkuk raises the question,

“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?”

The question is,

“God, You are coming in glory that will blanket the heavens and fill the earth with praise. You displayed Your power in the past and will again. *Why?* What have you done all of this? *Why* are you doing all of this?”

Are You angry with the rivers or seas? With all this devastation, are You dealing with problems with the land, rivers, seas and skies?"

The answer comes as we get toward the end of this section. Go down to verse 13 again, "You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for the salvation of [or, *with*] Your anointed." "Why all of this?" It is for the salvation of God's own people.

We already noted that God has power over and will judge all the enemies of His people. Now we see His purpose to save His own people. God used His power to save His people out of slavery in Egypt. God used His power to lengthen the day so Joshua and the army could defeat the enemy. Time after time after time the Scriptures record God using His power to save His people. As Isaiah 52:10 says,

"The LORD has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the *salvation* of our God." He has unleashed His great power to save His people.

And, as Paul states in the opening of Romans, Jesus Christ "... was declared the Son of God *with power by the resurrection from the dead*, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1:4). Habakkuk looked at all the sin, the certain judgment and devastation and looked beyond that to God's salvation. The culminating point of this entire psalm of praise is focused on the salvation of God.

## Conclusion

*The King Is Coming! Praise Him!* Jesus is coming again. We have his promise.

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:1-3)

*Jesus is coming again!*

Right after Jesus ascended to heaven, while the disciples were still looking up at the skies, angels came and said,

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

*Jesus is coming again!*

*The King Is Coming! Praise Him!* In this day, in every day. In good times, in bad times.

Christ's coming again, the Bible tells us, is a ground for hope and purity, for dedication and service. It is a reason for *Praise*.

As Paul closed his first letter to the church at Corinth, he had a one-word sentence, benediction, statement of praise: *Maranatha*. That is, "Our Lord, Come!" As the book of the Revelation closes, Jesus says,

- "Behold, I am coming quickly." (22:7)
- "Behold, I am coming quickly." (22:12)
- "Yes, I am coming quickly." To which John adds, "Amen [i.e., so it is; may it be so]. Come, Lord Jesus." (22:20)

Until that moment, or until the moment Christ calls you home, as you pray, "Come, Lord Jesus," *praise* Him that He *is* coming again. Praise Him now in these next personal, quiet moments.

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