

# The Glory of God

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. We're going to turn back then to Habakkuk. Habakkuk and chapter 1.

And we'll just read the opening verses again. We looked at them earlier on today. That's on page 826 of the church Bible.

. . . . . the back road which the prophet Habakkuk saw, O Lord, how long shall I cry and you will not hear?

[1:05] Even cry out to you violence and you will not save. Why do you show me iniquity and cause me to see trouble?

For plundering and violence are before me. There is strife and contention arises. Therefore the law is powerless and justice never goes forth For the wicked surround the righteous Therefore perverse judgment proceeds I want us actually to look at this passage we thought about earlier on today But to take a different angle on it this time And to think about Habakkuk's underlying concern And that is the glory of God We noticed earlier on today Habakkuk struggled with the ways and the will of God In that he had allowed such a terrible state to come about in the land

In Judah and the city Jerusalem It was a difficult thing for him to take We noticed how that all that had been done to strengthen the work in the days of Josiah Only a few decades before Seemed to be disappearing very, very quickly And there was nothing but violence and plundering Strife and contention And the law that had meant so much in the days of revival In Josiah's day was powerless It was ineffective Because the people simply didn't want to apply it Didn't want to live by it And although Habakkuk, as we saw earlier on today Habakkuk struggled with God's ways and God's will at that time Habakkuk's underlying concern

Which we are looking at tonight Is the glory of God He wasn't self-interested He wasn't obsessed with having it easy himself His underlying concern was the glory of God And the prophet effectively in this passage Pleads with the Lord to act To vindicate his own truth And cause the people to recognize That it was God that was speaking to them And not simply the prophet He wanted God to vindicate his truth And he wanted God to, if you like Plead his own cause in the land And that there would be Rather than perverse judgment That there would be a righteousness in the land again Habakkuk, you see, as we saw already Didn't understand why the Lord had allowed all this decline Spiritual and moral decline He didn't understand why the Lord let it all get so low And Habakkuk cared for the honor of God And he cared for the cause of God And my friends, we can identify with that We can take a contemporary look at it And we can say, well, we understand what he was like All those long centuries ago We feel that way today We can identify with him We want the Lord To act and to vindicate himself Just like Habakkuk did in his own day But just a few days ago I was talking to someone About this very subject And that someone said to me I've heard you say before And we need to remember this That God has a far greater zeal For his own cause

[5:26] And a far greater love For truth and righteousness Than we have or ever can have We mustn't lose sight of that God has an interest in his cause That's infinitely greater than yours and mine God has a concern for his honor Far transcending what we could ever have If the whole church of Christ In the world today Combined its zeal And its desire for the vindication Of God's name and truth and cause If the whole world of Christians combined It would be as nothing Compared to God's own desire To vindicate his name You see what I'm saying?

So, although we can identify with Habakkuk We must keep a sense of balance We must have a realization in our minds That God has a far greater interest In the vindication of his name And he has a far greater interest In his law being effective In this country or another Than ever we can have

So that when things change for the worse They're changing in his will And we're wise to recognize that And to live with it And to go about our duty faithfully In these trying times And that's what Habakkuk, you see Had to learn to do God is always jealous With a holy, sinless, eager desire For his own glory And his own cause

In the world today And Habakkuk no doubt understood that And in this passage tonight We're going to remind ourselves That for all his concern And his questioning And his distress Underlying it all He desired that the God of glory Would glorify his name Among the people His own people And we can identify with that very thing And so there are a couple of things We want to look at tonight To help us with this To have our supreme concern For the glory of God And that that glory May be experienced and known Among our people So the first thing we want to look at then Is at Habakkuk's selfless concern Habakkuk in that sense

Was very much like the prophets before him Habakkuk didn't care about making a name for himself That was the business of the false prophets They wanted to make a name for themselves They wanted to be big in the eyes of the people And they wanted to be popular Habakkuk wasn't like that He was concerned with the glory of God And so too While the prophets before him They had the same concern They wanted They wanted people to Look to the Lord And not them They weren't interested in themselves You remember We referred to this Not so long ago When we were studying In the life of Elijah When Elijah was on Mount Carmel Surrounded by all these thousands of Israelites

From all the parts of the land And surrounded by the hundreds of the priests of Baal What was the burden of his cry to the Lord To let fire come down from heaven So that I can get a better name So that the people will recognize me As your prophets simply know That all the people of Israel may know That you, O Lord, are God in Israel And that I have done all these things At your word That was Elijah And you can go to the other prophets too The same thing They desired the glory of God They weren't concerned about themselves Indeed they were selfless They wanted God to have glory And the people to have God That's what they were about

[10:31] They spoke the truth of the Lord And so very often They were rejected And their message was rejected People didn't like it People even called the good news Bad news Because in it It contained a challenge It contained a rebuke To their lifestyle And thought processes Do you remember when When the prophet Isaiah Spoke to the people In those very familiar words In Isaiah 1 I think it's verse 18 Following Come now he said Let us reason together Says the Lord Though your sins be as scarlet What?

How dare you speak to me like that? That's the popular approach They can be as white as snow No, no, no There's no need for that sort of stuff I'm a good person I don't need that It was no different in those days Than it is today Don't give us that stuff That's not good news That's bad news You're telling us we're lost We're held to serving That without Christ We're going to perish eternally No, no Bad news No, no None of that Stop Enough And the prophets Who went to Israel Had the same problem The people didn't want to hear We read there in Jeremiah 6 And in the passage Verses 14 and 15 They wanted to hear Peace, peace Tell us that we have peace Don't tell us

We have no peace Tell us what we want to hear Give us what we want Not the word of the Lord We don't want the word of the Lord And you see the people simply didn't want to hear what Jeremiah had to say And they didn't want to hear And they didn't want to hear Habakkuk either And they didn't want to hear the message Because Habakkuk and Jeremiah himself put the finger on the people You're sinning You're sinning grievously against the Lord Against the light of the word he's given you There is injustice There's strife There's bitter conflict The poor are oppressed Wickedness is everywhere The law is powerless Verse 4 Perverse judgment proceeds Hasn't that got a modern ring?

How often are we infuriated At the judgments that are made In the courts of our lands By people who seem almost to allow the wicked to get away With the most heinous of acts People think that And sometimes people cry out against it It's not that they cry out against judges per se Not at all It is that they cry out against the lenient sentences Therefore perverse judgment proceeds Let the crime have a punishment That is a weighty punishment When it is a severe and serious and heinous crime Habakkuk Shet it Enough of that

And you see Habakkuk was hurt by that Just as Jeremiah was too Jeremiah tells us a lot more about his hurt But he was hurt by that Nobody wanted to listen to him And I think that this has a

contemporary relevance to you and me There are ministers all over Scotland Apart from the odd situation where there is a work of God clearly going on Most of the ministers of the gospel Who love the gospel Are struggling And people in their communities don't want to hear their message They simply don't want it There are faithful men who If I can indulge myself in a reference to the Beatles song Eleanor Rigby They are like Father Mackenzie They are writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear

[ 15 : 28 ] No one comes near They know that They feel that And Habakkuk was in that position As was Jeremiah But you see Habakkuk's concern Was not himself It was the honour The glory Of God And therefore I think As a practical level We can remember all the more Those who are tasked With preaching the gospel In our day Bring them up Frequently before the Lord That they may be upheld To honour King Jesus And that others would come in time To honour him too He had a concern His whole burden in the passage Although he's speaking in this way He's questioning the Lord

He wants the Lord To vindicate himself He wants the Lord To vindicate his law And he wants the Lord To be just in his judgment That people Would see and know That the Lord is God And that leads us then To the second thing We want to look at Is that Habakkuk Was concerned People Would honour God He was concerned The people Would honour God After in all He ministered To the covenant community To those sovereignly chosen To be Israel The Lord's people And he was ministering To people Who were in a serious situation They had forsaken the Lord They had embraced the world

In its principles And religion And he can tell us And indeed Jeremiah tells us In detail He can tell us That there's strife And contention Plundering And violence The law is powerless Justice never goes forth You see what's happening here He's looking at the whole Cross-section Of society In his day And he's thinking about the king And he's thinking about the priests And the judges And the prophets And the people And he's saying Effectively There's no justice There's perverse judgment Just a wee reminder here About the king's role In all this The king of course

Was Jehoiakim At that time Deuteronomy 17 Verses 18 and 19 Tell us That of course This was looking forward From Moses' time To when there would be A king in Israel And it tells us there In detail That one of the things The king would do Is that he would himself Not only memorize the law He would write it out For himself He would acquaint himself With it By writing it out No downloading it Off the internet No typing it up He would have to write it He would have to do The Hebrew script A long process He would have to Do that And he would have to Read what he wrote out For himself All the days Of his life But you see King Jehoiakim

And the priests And the officials And the people And the false prophets Resented The truth of God They wanted Rid of His faithful prophets If you read In Jeremiah 26 And verse 7 When they heard Jeremiah's words That's the king And his officials When they heard Jeremiah's words They seized him And said You must die How about that Jeremiah the prophet You must die What am I going to die for He says You're going to die For preaching The word of God To us For speaking The truth of God When they heard The words Jeremiah's words They seized him And said You must die

[ 20 : 32 ] And this is a helpful insight Into the violence And injustice And the cruel Oppression Which pervaded The society At Habakkuk's time And prevailed Even against The godly In Israel And this Can be brought Right up to date As it should be The godly In the 21st century Cannot but share The prophet's concern As we look around us In Britain As we look around The world today So much Is it true That violence And strife And plundering And perverse Judgment Are on every hand We can identify

With the prophet We can long That this would Be turned back And the people Would learn Afresh The ways of God We can identify With the weeping prophet And his contemporary Habakkuk And pray for a turning Of the hearts Of the people You see A little bit Further on In Habakkuk 1 The prophet When he realizes The Lord Is bringing The Chaldeans Verse 6 Verse 12 Let's us into Habakkuk's thinking Are you not From everlasting O Lord My God My Holy One We shall not die O Lord You appointed Them for judgment O rock You have marked Them out For correction But you are Of pure eyes And to behold Evil And cannot Look upon

Wickedness Why Do you look On those Who deal Treacherously You see He thinks Here About the Chaldeans And why do you Hold your tongue When the wicked That's the Chaldeans Devours a person More righteous Than he He's burdened About this He wants The people To Be brought Into a state Of grace And salvation Not to be left To perish In their sins He wants them To come to know

The glory of God And honour The Lord God And from our Own standpoint That's the way We should be We see the plight Of the people You see And we want The best For them We want them To honour God As we ourselves

Seek to honour God And how best Can we do that Except we pray Except we Seek The Lord Himself To Work in their Hearts That they might Honour Him You remember Jesus Himself Our divine Redeemer Said He who does Not honour Me That is the Son Does not honour The Father If you honour The Father You will honour Me For the Father Sent me And so when When our divine Redeemer Is mocked And ridiculed And perverse Things Are said about Him We ought Not to Plead for Judgment on Them But for Mercy on Them That they would Come to see That the very One they fail To honour Is to be Honoured If they are To have The eternal Life that is In him He has to Be seen Another way He has to be Looked upon In a Differently And We want To pray That they will Come to know What it is To embrace Him by Faith And to Embrace Him by Faith Is to Have a Desire To do His Law The law Becomes Operative In the Life Of those Who come To honour The Son Of God Remember What he said Himself In Matthew 11 Come to me All you Who labour And are Heavy laden Verse 28 And I will Give you rest And then he Said Take my Yoke Upon you And learn Of me There is a

[ 25 : 36 ] Yoke That is upon Us Not the Yoke of A law We cannot Keep But the Yoke of A law That we Can live And keep By the Grace Of the Lord Jesus Christ My Yoke Is easy He says And my Burden Is light But it Is a Yoke We go In his Precepts And you See Habakkuk In his Day Wanted That He wanted People to Honour The Lord And not Die In the Judgment That they Deserved And we Can identify With him This is what I'm saying We can Identify him We can Want the People That deserve To be Cut off To come To know And to Know what It is To obey His Law From the Heart And you See We are Not Therefore To be Inconcerned About the

Plight of People Going on Their own Merry way On the Broad Road We are To be Eager to See God Honoured In the Land You Remember In Psalm 11 And verse 3 There is A question Asked If the Pillars That is The Spiritual And moral Pillars Of society If The Pillars Of a Healthy Society Are Removed By Unrighteousness What Have The Godly Done The Godly Have This Laid Upon Them That They Ought To Be Doing Something And Not Retreating And Not Pretending That There is Nothing They Can Do What Have The Godly Done We Are To

Be Doing What We Can Every Opportunity To Lobby And To Plead At The Court Of Heaven To That God Would Be Honoured Among Our People That Men May See And Know And Consider And Understand That Christ Is The Glory Of God And The Father Would Have It That All People Would Honour His Son The Kingdom Is The Lord's And We Ought To Pray For Those Who Are Therefore In Authority In The State And For The People Of The State You Remember How Paul And With This We Bring It To A Close Remember How Paul In His Pastoral Letter To Timothy Urges That Requests And Prayers And Intercessions And Thanksgivings Be Made For Everyone For People At All Levels In Society And Then He Begins With Kings And Those In Authority That We May Live A Quiet And Peaceful Life In All God Godliness And Sincerity 1st Timothy 2 Verses 1 To 4 You See The Point See The Connection Here Between Apostolic Teaching And Prophetic Desire And Teaching In Habakkuk's Time We We Ought To Care And We Ought To Act And We May Be Limited In The Impact We Can Make Physically Going Out But We're Not Limited At The Throne Of Grace We Can Lay Hold Of Him Who Rules Ever By His Power And Who Can Change Hearts And Lives Let

Us Therefore See Our Own Role In Promoting The Honor Of God In The Land We Are Our Brother's Keeper Even If The Brother Is A Pretty Rebellious Sword We Are Our Brother's Keeper Let Us As We Were Thinking Recently In Philippians 2 Verse 4 Let Us Good Of Others At All Levels In Our Society And Not Simply Our Own Comfort Or Our Own Honor Let's Learn From Habakkuk He Had A Selfless Concern For The Glory Of God He Had A Desire That The People Would Glorify God Would Honor Him In Their Lives And Therefore We Ought To Seek By

[ 30 : 38 ] All Legitimate Means To Promote The Honor Of The Lord Jesus Christ In What We Do For The People Around Us Amen