

THE HABAKKUK IMPERATIVE

Introduction

Some of you may be aware of the various predictions as to the date of the end of the world. One in 2017 was that the world would end on 23 September. This of course has now passed and as far as we can tell with no obvious signs. It was based on the alignment of planets and also the timing of the annual Moedim or biblical feasts, which the predictors linked to Revelation 12

Rev 12:1-6 *Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labour and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

These predictions are of course picked up by the media and used to discredit Christianity and the Bible. As we are I am sure all aware Jesus warned us that we do not know the exact time He will return, and by implication we should not speculate. However we are also told to watch and be ready at all times, and that there will be specific indications when the time us near, many of which we do see today.

It is so easy to react in a cynical, scornful way to these predictions, but whilst we should rightly dismiss what is false and not scriptural we should also be on our watch, “Redeeming the Time” and seeking the Lord about the days we are in.

We are all appalled and pray about the earthquakes, hurricanes, famines, floods and so on that we hear about with increasing regularity. We even experience the effects of so-called climate change with unusual extremes of weather in our own country. Whether these are judgments of God is not for us to say, but they are certainly warnings.

We also face the increasing ungodliness of our culture today, even as Paul warned in 2 Timothy 3:

2Ti 3:1 *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

We are possibly in the times of the “birth pangs” referred to be Jesus, and also His own warning to be ready as for example in Luke 12, and such parables as the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

With this in mind I want to look at what I have called the “Habakkuk Imperative”.

THE HABAKKUK IMPERATIVE

Habakkuk means “Embrace”.

More like “Clinger” who clings on the Lord

Our aim should always be to fully embrace the Lord in our faith, prayer, life and calling and to hold firmly on to Him in all circumstances.

Remember Jacob who wrestled with God and would not let Him go until he received a blessing.

Introduction.

Habakkuk’s complaint to the Lord. Injustice and violence seem to rule.
Time is when Jehoiakim was king in Israel and the Babylonians were coming!

Hab 1:1-6 *The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw.*

O LORD, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? 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.

"Look among the nations and watch— be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you. For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs.

Get on your Watch.

Our time seems quite similar, with apostasy and our culture today.

Even as Paul warned of “perilous times” [2 TIM 3]

We can moan, worry, be cynical, put our head in the sand, and be an “I’m alright Jack” in our own comfort zones, or we can get on our watch and seek the Lord about how we live and what to do in our time:

Hab 2:1-4 *I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected. Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it.*

For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.

Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.

Prepare yourself to be ‘on duty’.

Be awake, alert and actively watching in prayer. Take it seriously!

Tell your heart to seek the Lord (PSA 27v8).

Speak to your soul as David did!

Also consider the importance of watching. In Luke Jesus tells us to have our loins girded and lamps burning ready for Him:

Luke 12:35-40 *"Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning, and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*

We also have the warning from the parable of the ten virgins. Note that they all fell asleep and were caught by surprise, but the wise ones already had their oil ready. This of course speaks of his second coming, but there is also a sense of being ready when the Lord turns up by the Holy Spirit in a special way, or when he calls upon you.

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On the Rampart

We need to be in a place where we can see clearly:

- Above our circumstances
Focus on the Lord. [COL 3v1-3]
- Beyond our 'opinions'
The mind of Christ)[1COR2v14-16]
- Get height to see clearly (Eph 2v6)
With Christ in Heavenly Places

We have gifts, or "tools" given to us by the Lord to help us get up there:

- Enter into Praise, Worship & Tongues
- Declare Jesus as Lord.
- Proclaim the Blood and the Cross
- Bring everything into subjection to Christ [2COR 10v3-6]
- Read and Proclaim Scripture.
- Speaking to your soul as David did [Psalm 42 and 62]
- [Eph 5:19](#) *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

However these are like power tools They need to be plugged in to work! That is to be used in faith and not as rituals. Believe in the Anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit!

It is not about just your abilities, but the "Treasure in earthen vessels".

2Co 4:7 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*

It is not about our own efforts but through faith:

Gal 3:5 *Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Wait

Open your heart and spirit to the Lord.
Invite the Holy Spirit to guide (ROM 8v26)
Enter into a time to wait quietly on the Lord
Listen. Do not be afraid of silence.

Remember you have Eagle's wings to mount up as you wait on Him.

Isa 40:31 *But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

Also in Romans Paul reminds us:

Rom 8:26-27 *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

So again trust in the Holy Spirit to lift you up and bring you to that place in the Lord where you need to be.

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See

Note that we need to **see** what the Lord says. It is not just hearing but receiving and understanding. Get the revelation. If unclear ask the Lord to show you what He is saying. Then “own” the vision.

[Psa 119:130](#) *The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.*

[Psalm 25v15](#) *The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant.*

[Deu 29:29](#) *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

We do not understand all the times and seasons, the why and when of God, but we can move and live by what He reveals to us. Also we want to know Him and His way, not just what He does:

[Psa 103:7](#) *He made known His **ways** to Moses, His **acts** to the children of Israel.*

You are Called!

Have you also **seen** i.e. understood your calling?

[Col 1:26-31](#) *For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, "HE WHO GLORIES, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD."*

[Eph 1:15-23](#) *Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, **the eyes of your understanding being enlightened**; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

You are called to being royal, priests, serving and communicating with the Living God !

[1Pe 2:5](#) *you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

[1Pe 2:9](#) *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

To see your calling is to understand it is not what your are in yourself, but who you are in Christ. **Again believe in the Anointing and the Treasure in your earthen vessel.**

We do need to move beyond the mentality of just “sinners being saved”. This is a true statement in terms of our position, but we deny the Grace of God if we are not moving into our calling as a royal priesthood. The key is that it is all based on His blood and completed work on the Cross and Resurrection !

As it says in [Heb 6:1](#) *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, **let us go on** to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,*

And Paul in [Php 3:13](#) *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

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Correction

Have humility and a "Hearing Heart" . Solomon asked for a Hearing Heart.
Ask for wisdom. (James 1v5). "Seek first the Kingdom of God ... "

Be open to receive something different from the Lord than you expect or even want.

Isa 57:15 *For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

Heb 4:12 *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Response.

We need to respond in faith and act on what we receive.

Be prepared to run with the vision. At times it will be a marathon and not a sprint!

Persevere

We are called to persist in our prayer and faith in all things and seasons:

Hab 2v4 *Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; **But the just shall live by his faith.***

This is also echoed in in the Epistles:

Rom 1:17 *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The Just shall live by Faith"*

Gal 3:11 *But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "The Just shall live by Faith"*

Heb 10:38 *Now the Just shall live by Faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in Him."*

Note Jesus' challenge with the parable of the widow and the unjust judge. [Luke18v1-8]
Jesus is laying down a challenge to find those living by faith in Him!

Col 1:11 *strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;*

Heb 6:10-12 *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

Jas 1:2-4 *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

Write it down!

Make a record of the prayer time and what the Lord says.

You need this to keep praying. It will also encourage faith as you see the answers!

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A FINAL SONG

Habakkuk finishes with a prophetic song concerning the coming judgement and to trust in Him as He will enable and strengthen you. Let's take 2 parts of it:

Hab 3:1-2 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.

O LORD, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; **In wrath remember mercy.**

Hab 3:17-19 Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labour of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— **Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.**

Psa 18:27-36 For You will save the humble people, But will bring down haughty looks.

For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

For by You I can run against a troop, By my God I can leap over a wall.

As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.

For who is God, except the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?

It is God who arms me with strength, And makes my way perfect.

He makes my feet like the feet of deer, And sets me on my high places.

He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great. You enlarged my path under me, So my feet did not slip.

The Lord has given us the way in Him and by the Holy Spirit to rise above our circumstances and limitations, even in the most difficult times or challenges. We truly can “ride the heights” in the Lord. Let us believe that in whatever circumstances the Lord gives us feet like the mountain deer that can leap securely on the heights. He shows us the way and will keep us as we seek to move to the Rock that is higher! He is our strength and our way.

It also reminds us again of Isaiah 40:

Isa 40:28-31 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

We should thus move “onwards and upwards”, with a humble, patient persevering heart, laying aside the things that hold us back, and looking to Him to lead us. The Lord has places for us to go!

Heb 12:1-2 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Heb 12:28-29 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.

Heb 12:12-13 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet

Heb 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.