

The Minor Profits

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[0 : 00] Well, if you will open your Bibles, please, to Habakkuk. We will continue our examination of the minor prophets. Just want to remind you that we are really coming kind of to a close.

Well, maybe I'd better adjust that because of the minor prophets, and by the way, you are aware, of course, that there is nothing minor about them.

They have major truths to communicate. And of the minor prophets, one whom is the most involved and the most extensive of all, we have not yet undertaken.

And that is the prophet Zechariah. And Zechariah is loaded with prophetic implications that tie in, of course, to the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation.

So we will be spending some time in that because there's about 12, 14 chapters in Zechariah. It will take us a little while to get through it. The main reason we are undertaking the minor prophets is because that was your choice, and we asked you what you would prefer to engage.

[1 : 08] This was several months ago. And the consensus was you wanted to do the minor prophets. And in a way, I was kind of glad to hear that because they do tend to be largely ignored, and they do not get the credit or the attention that they deserve because they're easy to overlook.

And when you assign the name to the minor prophets, there is an automatic tendency in our thinking to kind of dismiss them as not being that big a deal or not that important. But all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable.

So that's including the minor prophets as well. We find ourselves now in Habakkuk, and we're looking at chapter 2. We have already given some time in discussing the significance of that verse that was so powerful that actually God used to induce what is known as the Protestant Reformation. And this was spearheaded through the Augustinian monk in the Roman Catholic Church by the name of Martin Luther. So we've dealt, I think, sufficiently with that.

But in connection with chapter 2 and verse 4, we will spend a little bit of time on it if you think it is warranted.

[2 : 33] And I'll leave that to your discretion. It has to do with, Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him, but the righteous will live by his faith.

And this is repeated, of course, in Paul's letter to the Romans, and it's found again in Hebrews. But it is this verse that so captivated the heart and mind of Martin Luther that it became the impetus for what was later to be known as the Protestant Reformation.

And it is a complete contrast to what was taking place in the Roman Catholic Church, which is largely a system of merit-based works, effort, good deeds, etc., in order to be justified.

And this verse talks about those who are, those who shall live are those who are justified by faith.

That is, simply on the basis of believing. Can we leave that and move on, or are there questions or comments that are to be on behalf of that?

Anyone? Anyone? Okay, let us continue then. In verse 5, we have, Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man so that he does not stay at home.

[3 : 49] This sounds like the guy that's making his rounds on the bars, doesn't it? He doesn't stay at home. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol. This simply implies that this is a guy that cannot be satisfied.

He is constantly looking for something for fulfillment without finding it. He is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all nations, that is, all kinds, and collects to himself all peoples. This is a guy who is out to garner, to obtain, to get, to grasp, to hold, and it is all like the fleeting wind, but he doesn't realize this at the time.

Will not all of these take up a taunt song against him, even mockery and insinuations against him?

And the male that he's talking about here, of course, is this individual who is grasping after the wind,

never satisfied, never enough, always seeking and never finding.

And say, Woe to him who increases what is not his, for how long, and makes himself rich with loans.

[4 : 58] This, of course, indicates that he is engaging in the business of usury, which was strictly forbidden among the Israelites. They were not to charge usury one to another, but apparently there is that kind of thing that goes on under the table, and this guy is nothing more than a loan shark.

This is what it's talking about here. He makes himself rich with loans. Will not your creditors rise up suddenly, and those who collect from you awaken?

Indeed, you will become plunder for them. In other words, the table is turned. Because you have looted many nations, and that simply has to do with the idea of the import-export thing, all the remainder of the peoples will loot you.

Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, to the town, and all its inhabitants.

Now, let me set the stage here again for this whole prophecy, and what it is all about.

It begins, as you will recall, when we engaged Habakkuk, it began with the puzzling concept in the mind of the prophet Habakkuk.

[6 : 08] And what he was puzzled about was this. God, you have revealed that you are going to bring your righteous judgment upon the nation of Judah for their sin and rebellion against you.

And I can understand that because we've got it coming. But what I don't understand is how in the world are you going to justify using a pagan nation that is even worse than we are to judge us and our people?

I mean, we aren't as bad as the Babylonians, and yet you're going to use them and their extreme wickedness and brutality and evil to come against us?

I don't understand that. And God explains the situation to them, and largely it has to do with this.

Okay, the Babylonians, they are a pretty rotten crowd.

There's no doubt about it. But, the Babylonians have not had the information and the insight and the understanding that you have.

[7 : 16] You have been given so much by way of protection and provision from myself, God speaking, from myself, and yet you have turned against me.

I haven't done anything particular for the Babylonians, and they've just gone their own way. But you, you have sinned against an enormous amount of information and light that makes you accountable in the way other nations are not.

And that is the basis for my judging you. Because the principle is, unto whom much is given, shall him be much required. And this is exactly a principle Old Testament, New Testament, and that is, those with the most information are deemed most accountable for what they do with that information.

The Babylonians, they didn't know beans about Moses and the law or anything else. They were just pagans living their lives as pagans would. And yet, God is going to use them to judge His own people.

So, that's the theme that is taking place here. And Habakkuk is looking for some kind of explanation that satisfies him. Because he's saying, it just doesn't make any sense to me. How could you do this?

[8 : 32] And God explains to him the basis for it. And he continues, then Habakkuk is revealing the sin and the evil of the people that he is going to judge.

And in verse 8, you have looted many nations. All the remainder of the peoples will loot you. In other words, the time for Israel or the time for Judah for payback is coming.

You have been looting others. Now, they are going to loot you. And who in particular will that be?

That'll be the Babylonians. Because when they come against Judah with Nebuchadnezzar, 586 B.C., they're going to destroy the city, tear down the walls, destroy the temple, carry all of the loot from the temple, much of which was overlaid with gold, all of the items of furniture, and Hebrew slaves as captives and make them march all the way to Babylon where they will be subjected to Babylonian dominance for 70 years.

This is the Babylonian captivity. This is what's coming. And the prophet Haggai, or Habakkuk, knows that. And he says, because you have looted many nations, all the remainder of the peoples will loot you.

Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, to the town, and all its inhabitants, woe to him who gets evil gain for his house to put his nest on high.

[9 : 57] In other words, to be safe and secure and out of the way. To be delivered from the hand of calamity. You have devised a shameful thing for your house by cutting off many peoples.

So you are sinning against yourself. Surely the stone will cry out from the wall and the rafter will answer it from the framework. Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and founds a town with violence.

It is not indeed from the Lord of hosts that peoples toil for fire and nations grow weary for nothing. For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. That, of course, is ultimately, and it's speaking of the millennial reign of Christ, when the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth and that is certainly not now. Woe to you, verse 15, woe to you who make your neighbors drink.

And this, of course, is simply getting business acquaintances drunk so you can take advantage of them. This is the kind of thing that was going on. Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk so as to look on their nakedness.

[11 : 11] This is nothing more than rendering people incapable of protecting themselves or even realizing and understanding what is going on so that you render them helpless so that you can take sexual advantage of them.

So, fellas, there is nothing new under the sun. And this was going on back then. And I want you to look at this verse 16. You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor.

Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness. The cup in the Lord's right hand will come around to you and utter disgrace will come upon your glory.

For the violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you. This Lebanon, of course, is their next door neighbor up to the north. And the devastation of its beasts by which you terrified them because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, to the town, and all its inhabitants.

There is an interesting expression here in verse 15 about the mixing of the drinks. You know, this is something that is taking place and has taken place well all over the country, but especially it has become notorious in a lot of our college campuses where men have actually spiked the drinks of a woman with some kind of yeah, whatever it is that makes them incapacitated and renders them defenseless so that they can take advantage of them sexually.

[13 : 00] And it's called the date rape drug. And it has gone on in a number of places and there are whatever they are, they're pills.

Pills that can be purchased. If you can believe this. Pills that can be purchased online for this very purpose. And when you have a date, you drop this little pill in her drink and it dissolves and she doesn't know anything and it renders her completely helpless so that the individual can take advantage of it and they call it the date rape drug.

But there's nothing new about this. This is exactly what's taking place here in verse 15. And then in verse 18, let us move on if we may. What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it?

Or an image, a teacher of falsehood. For its maker trusts in his own handiwork when he fashions speechless idols.

Now fellas, I've never been quite able to get over this. There is a psychological, emotional dynamic involved in idolatry that I've never been able to get my brain around.

[14 : 12] And you know, we have discussed in time past, and I think this is one of the very most important principles to understand that we are all born with a fallen nature.

And part of that fallen nature is our intellect, our thinking ability, our ability to exercise reason and logic.

And what I'm saying is, that is impaired also. It wasn't just our physical bodies that fell, but it was our intellectual ability that fell also.

And it is through a fallen intellect, a warped logic, that we are able to reach some of the absolutely bizarre conclusions that we are.

some of which, many of which, Christians at least, would consider downright impossible, stupid, inane, whatever you want to call it.

[15 : 16] And it is described here. The image, a teacher of falsehood, a maker trusts in his own handiwork when he fashions speechless idols. Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, awake, to a dumb stone, arise, and that is your teacher?

Are you kidding me? How can this be? Only with that extreme warped intellect can people reach these kind of conclusions.

This is the whole basis of idolatry. And of course, you understand who is ultimately behind it. It is the one the Apostle Paul pointed out when he said, writing to the Corinthians, these who offer their sacrifices to idols, remember the meat offered to idols, etc.

And Paul said, they do not know it, but the idols to whom they are offering their sacrifices are really demons and they do not know it.

They do not have a clue. It is the demonic that is behind idolatry because the objective of Satan is to detract any way he possibly can truth away from God and going to God and getting from God.

[16:42] And they come up with these cockamamie ideas, fashioning a god with their own hands out of a piece of wood and then they take the leftovers and throw it into the fire to warm themselves and they call this their idol, their god.

They bow down to it and worship it. But is there anything more inane than something like that? How could logical, reasonable, thinking individuals with a brain come to a conclusion like that?

And the answer is a fallen intellect. A fallen intellect. intellect. And this is one of the, maybe this is the principal reason why we need the scriptures because guys, listen, every one of us, every one of us left to ourselves will come up with some of the most ridiculous ideas for a supreme being or lack thereof or whatever that you could possibly imagine.

And God has given us the scriptures to simply give us the real scoop. The Bible represents the truth of God and the truth of this world and the truth of our fallenness and everything else.

And guys, you know as well as I do, you will not find on the planet any explanation that reveals to us why the world is the way it is.

[18:13] you will not find that anywhere except in the scriptures. You'll not find it in the Encyclopedia Americana or Botanica. You will not find it there.

You'll only find it in the scriptures. It is the Bible alone that tells us why the world is the way it is, how it got this way, what the corrective is, and how it's all going to end.

Only in the scriptures do you find that information. And it is designed to counter the warp thinking and intellect that we all have, that we were born with.

So, the Bible is a corrective. Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof.

All of these things are designed for our maturity and understanding. And this is exactly what he's talking about here with this concept of idolatry. The Lord, verse 20, but the Lord is in his holy temple.

[19:13] Let all the earth be silent before him. In other words, God is in charge of this whole nonsense. And then getting into chapter 3, if we may, quickly, I'd like to be able to finish this. We won't finish the chapter this morning, but what is to come in chapter 3 is just absolute dynamite.

You will really appreciate it. Chapter 3, any comment or question thus far? Dan, and then David.

Dan, what? It sounds to me when I hear the root too much is given, much is expected.

I always put that in a financial constraint. It's more than that. Oh yeah. If you know this stuff and you do it, shame on you.

Yeah, exactly. You are more accountable. It's like he who, when our Lord gave one of his parables and the time came for reckoning and judgment and he reminded them of the principles and he said, he who did not know his master's will shall be beaten with few stripes.

but he who knew his master's will and did not do it shall be beaten with many stripes. And there the principle is the punishment, the punishment serves the crime and there is an equalizing there and that's exactly what he's saying.

[20:32] Dave. I'm afraid to say what I'm thinking. what's the difference, if any, between this entire chapter and what is going on today in an entire political party.

Yeah, well, I would say. We're allowed to talk politics and how can it get worse where I haven't seen it in this chapter and I haven't ever seen it anywhere in the Bible, not that I've read the entire Bible, I'm ashamed to admit.

Where has humanity ever killed its live-born babies?

Yeah, well, sure. And worse than that now, how can it get worse than that? Well, now it's being suggested that we should eat them. Yeah, well, you're right, you're right. This is humanity on the downward slide.

And the old adage, you know, that used to be the watchword of liberalism around the end of the 19th century and the 1800s, everybody was convinced that in every way and every day we're getting better and better and better.

[22 : 08] And then the ugliness of World War I came along and kind of blew that theory and they were talking about the post-millennialists, you know, that when, what about the millennium? Well, it is the church's responsibility, they were saying, to bring in the millennium and when the church has succeeded in converting the whole world, which is our responsibility, then Christ will come.

In other words, we create a millennium through the preaching of the gospel and we make the world a fit place then for Christ to return to. That's called post-millennialism, which suggests that Christ comes after the millennium, after we've cleaned up our act and gotten it decent enough to be able to receive the Son of God, then He'll come back.

That's the post-millennial thing. And that got shot right out of the water with World War I and World War II because it demonstrated that in every way and every day we are not getting better and better.

We are getting worse and worse. And the point has been made that in the 20th century alone, the 20th century alone, 1900 to 2000, with the advances in technology and standard of living and everything that goes with it, what have we really accomplished?

Well, the main thing we have accomplished is we have succeeded in destroying more of our fellow human beings in that 100 years than we did in the 1900 years that preceded it.

[23 : 47] And we call that progress. progress. What is wrong with this picture? It is the decay, the rapid decay of humanity as we know it.

Things are not getting better and better. And we are told that in the last days, evil and evil men shall wax worse and worse.

Well, hello, where are we? This is it. It has taken place right before our very eyes. And as was just suggested, we have succeeded in eliminating in excess of 55 million innocent unborns and we call that women's health care.

Amazing. One of the prophets said, woe to those who call good evil and evil good. Fellas, that's where we are in spades.

Everything has gotten turned around. And now, now, well, with political correctness and all the rest that's going on, it is just amazing. So, Habakkuk is offering a prayer.

[25 : 00] In chapter 3, prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet, according to Shigeoneth, Lord, Lord, I have heard the report about Thee and I fear. Oh, Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years.

In the midst of the years, make it known in wrath. And Habakkuk is saying, in your wrath and in your judgment, which I know we have coming, would you please remember mercy.

mercy. Mercy, mercy is the withholding of what is deserved. Grace is the imparting of what is not deserved.

And they are both wonderful. And here He is pleading for mercy on behalf of His people. Revive Thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years, make it known.

In wrath, remember mercy. God comes from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Perrin. This, by the way, is prophetic also, but we won't be able to take much time with it because it ties in with this Teman.

[26 : 14] Teman is a sister city of Basra. Both are located down by the Dead Sea. Both are located in the area of Petra. It is referred to as the land of Edom.

The Edomites, the Edomites are the ancient descendants of Esau. And they were a thorn in the side of the Israelites from the time they came out of Egypt.

You know, they wouldn't let them pass through. And they are actually distant relatives because they are all sons of Abraham. And this is referenced, I think, to God coming from Teman.

And there's a reference in Isaiah 63 where it is referred to as Basra. These are sister cities. The Holy One from Mount Perrin, His splendor covers the heavens. And this has to do with the return of Christ.

And the earth is full of His praise. His radiance is like the sunlight. This ties in also with Matthew 24 and the coming of Christ and Revelation 19.

[27 : 10] And there is hiding of His power. Before Him goes pestilence and plague comes after Him. He stood and surveyed the earth. This is speaking of Christ and His return.

He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered. This is speaking of, this is a future event that is addressed as though it is a past reality. And much prophecy is recorded that way. Because when prophecy is delivered from God's point of view, it is simply spoken of as having already occurred. Because as far as He's concerned, it's a done deal. It already has occurred. And that's exactly what He's talking about here. The ancient hills collapsed. His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Kushan under distress.

This is tribulational content. The tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling. This is the southern extreme of Arabia. This is where Moses led to when he left Egypt on the Lamb. [28 : 15] And this is where the Apostle Paul went when he received his revelations from the Lord. This is in the land of Midian. Did the Lord rage against the rivers? Or was thine anger against the rivers?

Or was thy wrath against the sea? That thou didst ride on thy horses, on thy chariots of salvation. This is a beautiful poetic expression in the Hebrew language. Thy bow was made bare. The rods of chastisement were sworn. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. The mountains saw thee in quake. This is beautiful poetry. It is attributing intelligence to the forces of nature, if you will. The mountains saw thee in quake. And this is beautiful poetry. Of course, the mountains don't have eyes. They don't see anything. But he is speaking from the standpoint of if they did, this is the way the language would read. The downpour of water swept by thee. [29 : 12] The deep uttered forth its voice. It lifted high its hands. sun and moon stood in their places. They went away at the light of thine arrows, at the radiance of thy gleaming spear. In indignation thou didst march through the earth. Well, that hasn't happened, but it is spoken of as if it has. And that we will see come to pass in Zechariah and more detail when we get to it. But if we stop here, that will be the end of this study. In anger thou didst trample the nations. These will be the forces of the Antichrist that will mass at Armageddon and then march south and Christ will arrive in Petra and march north and the forces will meet in the valley of Jezreel, also the valley of Jehoshaphat, same place, the Kidron Valley, same thing, right outside the front door of Jerusalem, right across the ravine from the eastern gate that is there on the west side of Jerusalem. And this is where this great conflict is going to occur and this is when Christ returns in Revelation 19 and we are told that the sharp sword proceeds from his mouth and that is nothing more than the spoken word and the armies of the Antichrist will be decimated on the spot and the first casualty will be the Antichrist. [30 : 47] Interesting. As he leads his armies. So, in anger thou didst trample the nations, thou didst go forth for the salvation of thy people and this will be the remnant of Israel that will have been holed up during the tribulation time that the Antichrist desperately wanted to get at because if he could succeed in eliminating them he has eliminated Jewry from the world. These are the only ones surviving. This is the Jewish remnant. We've told you before that in the Holocaust Adolf Hitler succeeded in eliminating one third of the Jewish population on the earth. Six million plus. but during this tribulation period the Antichrist will succeed in eliminating two thirds of all the Jews in the world and those remaining will be this remnant of whom he is speaking here. The salvation of thine anointed the salvation of thy people verse 13 thou didst strike the head of the house of the evil to lay him open from thigh to neck thou didst pierce with his own spears the head of his throngs they stormed in to scatter us their exaltation was like those who devoured the oppressed in secret that's the enemy the Antichrist and what they intend to do thou didst tread on the sea with thy horses on the surge of many waters this is incredible what's taking place here what is going to take place here and we will have to reserve the balance of this because the best is yet to come and that will be finishing up the chapter and some of you are thinking that the best has just arrived and it is being seated and set at your table right now so I'm not going to try to compete with that but thank you guys for it is something that the incredibly is a the team and analysts all come out when they get it and you and it can uh if it to let can