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THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK AND THE WORK OF GOD

In Isaiah 29 God speaks about pouring out punishments on Jerusalem, which city God there refers to as Ariel. The name Ariel means "The Lion of God". After mentioning certain punishments, God then presents a focus on the conditions in all of Israelite society in general at the end-time. The dominant attribute is one of **utter hypocrisy**.

Let's start by looking at verse 9.

ISAIAH 29

Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry you out, and cry: they are drunken, but **not with wine**; they stagger, but **not with strong drink**. (Isaiah 29:9)

God tells us that **people behave** just like someone who is thoroughly drunk, even though they actually are not drunk with alcohol. God is drawing our attention to the characteristics of a drunk person. So what is someone who is drunk like?

The most dominant attribute of someone who is drunk is that **the person cannot think and reason logically**. The functioning of the brain is seriously impaired. A drunk person is likely to do things that are stupid. They see things that aren't really there. They overestimate their own abilities. They are easily fooled by people who want to deceive them. And they have a false sense of security.

The fact is that the excessive consumption of alcohol, to the point of being completely drunk, has seriously impaired the sound functioning of the person's brain. It is **the brain that is adversely affected** by the excessive consumption of alcohol.

"Staggering" refers to the drunk person having difficulty in coordinating all of the body's movements, as in: the brain says "go forward", but the legs wobble out sideways. A drunk person has to constantly over-correct his walking pattern, from going too far left to going too far right. In other words, a drunk person is unable to stay on the right path. Seriously drunk individuals invariably depart to the right and to the left.

And that is the state God is referring to in verse 9.

So while people are not actually drunk from drinking too much alcohol, the attributes of most people in society are just like the attributes of a seriously drunk person. Their brains are not functioning correctly.

In other words, in our world today people:

- don't think and reason logically,

- can't stay on the right path for very long,

- fumble their way through their lives,

- easily accept as correct and valid ideas that are plain stupid,

- overestimate their own abilities to deal with problems.

That is basically the picture verse 9 presents to us. So let's continue.

For the LORD has poured out upon you **the spirit of deep sleep**, and has closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers has He covered. (Isaiah 29:10)

This verse adds another aspect to the above scenario. "The spirit of deep sleep" means that people **don't really understand** what is actually happening to them and around them. They are oblivious to the destruction that has started to come upon them. And here the focus is on leaders in society, both secular and religious, who don't understand what is actually happening.

They promote and install policies and rules and laws that destroy their own countries and their own societies. But they can't see that. They cannot understand the inevitable damaging consequences of the foolish policies they are pursuing. In this regard they are like someone who is drunk, whose brain has become befuddled.

Let's continue.

And **the vision of all** is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to **one that is learned**, saying, Read this, I pray you: and he says, I cannot; for **it *is* sealed**: (Isaiah 29:11)

And the book is delivered to **him that is not learned**, saying, Read this, I pray you: and he says, **I am not learned**. (Isaiah 29:12)

"The vision of all" refers to **the totality of life**, understanding cause and effect, understanding the consequences which every action will have. Understanding what is right and what is wrong, what policies we need to implement, what we need to do in our conduct with other nations, etc. ... these things are not being understood correctly by the educated and the uneducated alike. They all think and reason like someone who is drunk.

None of our leaders understand the real causes of all the problems in our societies. And so the leadership in our nations is bad. They make totally perverse decisions. And when leaders don't understand the real causes for our problems, they can't possibly implement the correct solutions.

This is the same problem that God had already pointed out earlier in the Book of Isaiah.

As for My people, children *are* their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people, **they which lead you cause *you* to err**, and destroy the way of your paths. (Isaiah 3:12)

The leadership amongst the nations of Israel is very bad. Now in the next verse in Isaiah 29 God gives us the reason for **why** those in leadership positions have no real understanding.

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as **this people** draw near *Me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honor Me, but **have removed their heart far from Me**, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men: (Isaiah 29:13)

The people are hypocrites!

People talk a lot about God. They profess their love for God. They make an outward show of religion. They honor God with the words they speak. They are strong on rituals. But it is all just hypocrisy, because **their minds are not seeking God at all**! Their minds are totally selfish. Their minds don't

actually want God to tell them how to live their lives. It is a spirit of hypocrisy that has affected all people.

Let's note that **people who are hypocritical don't really think in logical ways**. It is because people are so hypocritical that their brains function like the brain of someone who is drunk. Their foolish perception of "the vision of all", i.e. of all aspects of life, is a consequence of their hypocrisy.

When we are hypocritical, we become illogical in our conduct!

And because in our age hypocrisy is a major trait in the nations of Israel, therefore God says that He will do something to address this matter.

Therefore, behold, **I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people**, *even* a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid. (Isaiah 29:14)

When God says "I will do a work", then what is done in this regard can be rightly called "**the Work of God**". Now here it does not actually tell us what that work will be. Here it only tells us that it will be **in the context of those in leadership positions lacking wisdom and understanding**, i.e. in the context of leaders whose ways of leading the people are no better than the ways of someone who is totally drunk and incoherent.

But this statement regarding God doing a work is expanded in the Book of Habakkuk.

Behold you among the nations, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for *I* will work **a work** in your days, ***which* you will not believe**, though it be told *you*. (Habakkuk 1:5)

This Scripture is speaking about the same "work" as Isaiah 29:14. But here it adds the point that **people will not accept** what is done as being "the work of God". "You among the nations" is a reference to Israelites being scattered amongst all the nations of the world. The expression "in your days" tells us that this is a reference to the end-times, the period preceding the return of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul quoted this Scripture in his preaching to the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia. Having preached the message of the gospel to the Jews there, Paul then said:

Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, you despisers, and wonder, **and perish**: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, **though a man declare it unto you**. (Acts 13:40-41)

It is clear that Paul is quoting Habakkuk 1:5 and not Isaiah 29:14. The Apostle Paul used this verse to refer to his own preaching of the gospel. He was warning the Jews there not to reject the preaching he, Paul, was presenting to them. Notice that **Paul has added** the phrase "**and perish**" to the quotation from Habakkuk 1:5. This was Paul's own interpretation of Habakkuk 1:5. In other words, Paul added an element of accountability to this Scripture. Paul also turned "you among the nations", a morally neutral expression, into "**you despisers**", a morally condemning expression.

While he had been speaking to the Jewish congregation there, Paul could discern that certain people in the audience were hostile to the message he was presenting. That influenced Paul to turn the quotation into a warning with very serious consequences for rejection. Paul didn't just stick with quoting the Old Testament. No, Paul turned the quotation into **a personal warning for his audience**. And that was certainly fine.

The point of Isaiah 29:14, which is reinforced in Habakkuk 1:5, and then directly applied by Paul in Acts

13:41, is that when a servant of God preaches the truth, then it is quite acceptable to refer to such preaching as "**the work of God**".

Now while Paul applied this quotation to his particular time, in the Book of Habakkuk this statement is in fact presented in **an end-time setting**. This means that the message of Habakkuk is really for us today.

So let's have a closer look at the Book of Habakkuk, to see the actual context in which God will do a work through human beings.

HABAKKUK CHAPTER 1

The opening verses of the Book of Habakkuk give us a purpose statement for the whole book. Habakkuk said:

O LORD, **how long** shall I cry, and You will not hear! *even* cry out unto You *of* violence, and You will not save! Why do You show me iniquity, and cause *me* to behold grievance? for **spoiling and violence *are* before me**: and there are *that* raise up strife and contention. (Habakkuk 1:2-3)

Here is the situation these verses present:

Israel is being spoiled by other nations. Within Israelite society itself there is strife and contention. And there is plenty of violence. Destruction is looming ahead. And so the prophet asks the question: how long, Lord, until You intervene and help us, Your people? In other words, the question is:

How long still until the second coming of Jesus Christ?

This is the question which this Book of Habakkuk then answers. So the book gives us a rundown of end-time events, starting with the time when a specific phase of the work of God is being done, and going down to the 7th trumpet, when Jesus Christ will return.

To understand the Book of Habakkuk, it is helpful to have the general picture in mind, which is laid out for us in the Book of Revelation. The general framework consists of **7 seals** being opened, followed by **7 trumpets** being blown, followed by **7 plagues** being poured out. While Revelation presents these events in a chronological sequence, the Old Testament references to these end-time events typically only focus on a few of those events, while leaving out others. In other words, the prophetic books in the Old Testament present us with incomplete lists for these end-time events.

The Book of Habakkuk is an example of this approach. Thus, the Book of Habakkuk starts with the work of God in a lawless society, and then presents references to the **5th seal**, the **5th**, **6th** and **7th trumpets**, and the **1st**, **2nd**, **3rd**, **4th**, **5th** and **7th plagues**. Then, after this rundown, the last two verses of this book present the answer to the "how long" question at the start of the book.

So now let's take a close look at this rundown to Jesus Christ's second coming, which the Book of Habakkuk presents to us.

Verse 3 has presented a picture of a selfish, covetous, greedy, violent society. The next verse then shows that this society is also extremely lawless.

Therefore **the law is slacked**, and judgment does **never** go forth: for the wicked does compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceeds. (Habakkuk 1:4)

"Slacked" here means "feeble". So the first point is that **the law is feeble**! The law is not applied to the

evildoers. **Those who are guilty are not charged** with any crimes. "Judgment does never go forth" means that **there is no justice in the land**. "The wicked compass about the righteous" means that **the wicked surround the righteous**, frequently in the form of rioting, to pressure the law-abiding population into accepting their criminal activities. "Therefore wrong judgment proceeds" means that **justice is perverted**.

Habakkuk 1:4 gives us a fitting description of America right now, in the year 2021!

These are the exact conditions we face right now. Within the past two years we could look at **dozens of examples** for all of these things mentioned in verse 4. Can things get worse? Oh yes, certainly. But even as things are right now, that is certainly sufficient to qualify for meeting the conditions stated in verse 4. **We are living in the days of Habakkuk 1:4**.

And the question Habakkuk asked God was: Lord, why are You showing me all these evils, the violence, the suffering? How long until You intervene for Israel?

Here is the point:

God is showing us all these evils so that when we can recognize them beyond any doubts, then we can know that the clock has started ticking. We can know that the events that follow in the Book of Habakkuk are getting ready to roll. We can know that the beginning of the end is getting ready to start.

What we now need to do is watch, so that we can identify the events which the Book of Habakkuk describes, as they come to pass. We have reached the time when **we need to be watching**, precisely because we don't know when Jesus Christ will return (see Matthew 24:42). Anyone who is "watching" must know what he is watching for. So what about us ... what are we watching for?

We are to watch for the events which are presented in Habakkuk, in addition to being presented in many other places. This means we need to understand what is actually happening all around us.

It is not a matter of finding various unrelated events, and attaching a prophetic significance to each one. It is really a matter of watching for all the things mentioned here in Habakkuk coming to pass chronologically, just as they are recorded in Habakkuk.

So let's look again at verse 5.

Behold you among the nations, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for *I* will work a work **in your days**, *which* you will not believe, though it be told *you*. (Habakkuk 1:5)

While the Apostle Paul could apply this to his time, the context verses 3-4 have established is very clearly for the end-time. So at what time in history is God doing the work God refers to in this verse?

Is it the time of the apostles? No, not really. Well, is it referring to the time of Mr. Armstrong's ministry? No, not really. At what time in history does this speak about the work of God?

It is showing us the work of God at the time when the conditions mentioned in verses 3-4 are being met!

While verse 5 can in principle justifiably be applied to God's work at any time in the past, **the specific reference here does not apply before the conditions in verse 4 have come about**.

We should recognize that the start of the man-made covid-flu in 2020 started to change our world. That laboratory-created flu outbreak became the excuse to begin bringing in a new socialist world. Today we don't have the same world which we had before 2020.

It is in the past almost two years that all of the things mentioned in verse 4 have come about in a very forceful way. And all of those things have changed the world we live in.

Things we couldn't even have imagined five years ago have today changed our lives. Could you have thought that **you can't travel** to any other "free" country simply because you don't have a covid-flu vaccination? Would you have thought that **you could actually lose your job**, simply because you don't have such a vaccination? Would you have imagined that **you can't attend public sports events** if you don't have such a vaccination? In some places people can't attend their own gym because they don't have a vaccination. In several countries basic freedoms, like going shopping and visiting libraries, going to a restaurant, etc., are being restricted for people who don't have some kind of "Covid Vaccination Passport" And the list goes on.

Our changed world exemplifies the conditions in Habakkuk 1:4 in a very powerful way. And **it is in that context that God says that He will do a work**! So the work that God is specifically referring to in this verse in Habakkuk refers to a work that God will do at some point forward from 2020. It is a forward-looking statement, focused on **what God will do in the time that still lies ahead**. The work God will do is focused on the future, and not on the past.

It is clear to me that God used Mr. Herbert Armstrong to do a work in the previous century. And Mr. Armstrong died over 35 years ago. In principle Habakkuk 1:5 can be applied to the work Mr. Armstrong did, yes. But the actual reference in this verse is to **a work of God that still lies ahead of us today**. The specific application of this verse is to a work that must still be done.

This is clear from the entire Book of Habakkuk that follows verse 5. Nothing of what follows verse 5 refers to any part of the ministry of Mr. Armstrong. Nothing of what follows verse 5 has any connection to the things that occurred during Mr. Armstrong's time. Everything that is discussed after verse 5 still lies ahead of us today. Everything starts with the conditions in verses 3-4.

Those conditions were not met during Mr. Armstrong's time, but they are being met today. So **today we are standing on or close to the starting line**, so to speak, for the prophecies recorded in this book. Let's have a look at those prophecies.

THE 5TH SEAL

The 5th seal of the Book of Revelation refers to what we call "the great tribulation". It will be the time of Israel being exposed to the wrath of Satan. And it will last about two-and-a-half years.

Habakkuk 1:6-10 refers to this seal. These verses discuss Israel going into captivity.

For, lo, **I raise up the Chaldeans**, *that* bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, **to possess the dwelling places *that are* not theirs**. They *are* terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle *that* hastens to eat. **They shall come all for violence**: their faces shall sup up *as* the east wind, and **they shall gather the captivity as the sand**. And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every

strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it. (Habakkuk 1:6-10)

Taken on their own, without any context, these verses can be seen as applying only to the Babylonians who took Judah into captivity. But when we consider all of the context that follows, it should be clear that God is using the captivity, which the Babylonians imposed on the Jewish people, as a type of the yet future great tribulation on all of Israel.

The account here in Habakkuk skips over the "heavenly signs" of the 6th seal. It then also skips over the first four trumpets, which are also identified as "four winds" in Revelation 7:1. Those four trumpets are not people-events, and they are not mentioned in Habakkuk. So the account then focuses on the 5th trumpet. This trumpet is also called "the 1st woe".

THE 5TH TRUMPET

Then shall ***his*** **mind** change, and he shall pass over, and offend, *imputing* this his power unto his god. *Are* You not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? **we shall not die**. O LORD, You have ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, **You have established them for correction**. *You are* of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity: wherefore look You upon them that deal treacherously, *and* hold Your tongue when the wicked devour *the man that is* more righteous than he? And make men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, *that have* no ruler over them? They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad. Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion *is* fat, and their meat plenteous. Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually **to slay the nations**? (Habakkuk 1:11-17)

The 5th trumpet is also known as the 1st woe, because it will involve a major war.

"His mind" refers to the mind of the leader who brought the tribulation upon the people of Israel. **This is his attempt at conquering the rest of the world**. It doesn't really change anything for the people of Israel. We have typically referred to this leader as "the beast power". "You have established them for correction" refers to this "beast power" being attacked and defeated by the army in trumpet #6, which trumpet is also known as the 2nd woe.

IN THIS CONTEXT REAL FAITH IS VITAL

The three woes are going to be a terrible time for all human beings. They will be wars with staggering numbers of people being killed. The third woe will only be unleashed once Jesus Christ has returned. In this context of extreme warfare faith is going to be absolutely vital for any believer in God.

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will **watch to see what He will say unto me**, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and **make *it* plain upon tables**, that he may run that reads it. For **the vision *is* yet for an appointed time**, but **at the end** it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry (delay), **wait for it**; because it will surely come, it will not tarry (delay). Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but **the just shall live by His faith**. (Habakkuk 2:1-4)

The watchman is here pictured as expecting some message or some instructions from God. And sure enough, God gave him specific instructions. God's instruction is: **write this message down for people**

to read. This is to give those people who read it the opportunity to flee from those terrible times.

"The vision is yet for an appointed time" makes clear that this vision was not for Habakkuk's time, but for the end-time, the time shortly before Jesus Christ's second coming. It also tells us that at that end-time people will doubt the message, thinking that "my Lord delays His coming" (Matthew 24:48). God's instruction to us in that context is: **wait for these things to come to pass**!

But waiting for something always requires faith. We have to have faith that what God has said will happen, will indeed happen, even if by our calculations it is late. In that context of waiting for God's help and God's intervention the just must live by God's faith, faith being one of the fruits which God's spirit is to produce in our lives (see Galatians 5:22).

After this brief reference to the people who seek to obey God being encouraged to have real faith, the account moves on to discussing trumpet #6.

THE 6TH TRUMPET

Trumpet 6, also known as the second woe, involves an army of 200,000,000 people attacking "the beast power" in Europe (see Revelation 9:16). This trumpet is discussed in Habakkuk 2:5-19.

Verse 5 tells us about the human leader of "the beast power" and his personality and attitude.

Yes also, because he transgresses by wine, *he is* a **proud** man, neither keeps at home, who enlarges his desire as hell, and *is* as death, and **cannot be satisfied**, but **gathers unto him all nations**, and heaps unto him all people: (Habakkuk 2:5)

That leader will be an arrogant proud man, who can never have enough. He always wants more. When it says that "he gathers unto him all nations", it means that **he wants to rule the whole world**. That's the leader of the 5th trumpet.

So the next verse shows how other nations respond to this arrogant leader.

Shall not **all these** take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, **Woe to him that increases *that which is* not his**! how long? and to him that lades himself with thick clay! (Habakkuk 2:6)

The beast power increased his empire by taking "that which is not his"; i.e. he conquered many other nations. The ones speaking, here referred to as "all these", make up the alliance for the second woe. They are the ones who form this army of 200,000,000. The expression "lades himself with thick clay" means that he **burdens himself down with a very heavy load**. He has bitten off more than he can chew. That provides the opportunity for the opposition army to attack the beast power.

So when this army attacks the beast power, then they also defeat the beast power.

Shall **they** not rise up suddenly **that shall bite you**, and awake that shall vex you, and **you shall be for** booties (**plunder**, a spoil) unto them? (Habakkuk 2:7)

This army from the 6th trumpet will defeat the army from the 5th trumpet. And the loser becomes the spoil for the victor, though that victory will be short-lived.

This defeat is discussed further in the next verse.

Because you have spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil you; because of men's blood, and *for* the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. (Habakkuk 2:8)

The beast power spoiled many nations during the 5th trumpet. Therefore the beast power itself will be spoiled during the 6th trumpet. This is a penalty from God for the violent society that existed in the areas previously controlled by the beast power.

The next few verses discuss the covetousness and the violence and the brutality within the beast power's area (i.e. before the beast power is defeated). See verses 9-12. Now notice verse 13.

Behold, *is it* not of the LORD of hosts that **the people shall labor in the very fire**, and **the people shall weary themselves for very vanity**? (Habakkuk 2:13)

I'm not totally sure here, but I suspect that this is a reference to the beast power using subjugated people to perform **slave labor** in factories and for building projects, etc.

The next verse refers to the millennium, when Jesus Christ will be ruling. This statement is to show the people that **there is hope** beyond the terrible conditions extant for the whole time that is allocated to those two trumpets.

The next five verses, Habakkuk 2:15-19, focus on a discussion of the perverse, depraved state of society. I suspect that this is a discussion of society in the nations of Israel at the end-time. It most likely will apply equally to the other nations as well. Let's see how many of the points in this discussion already right now exist in our own countries.

Woe unto him that gives his neighbor drink, that puts your bottle to *him*, and **makes *him* drunken** also, that you may **look on their nakedness**! You are filled with shame for glory: drink you also, and let your foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto you, and **shameful spewing *shall be* on your glory**. For the violence of Lebanon shall cover you, and the spoil of beasts, *which* made them afraid, because of men's blood, and **for the violence of the land**, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. What profits the graven image that the maker thereof has graven it; the molten image, and **a teacher of lies**, that the maker of his work trusts therein, to make **dumb idols**? Woe unto him that says to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it *is* laid over with gold and silver, and *there is* no breath at all in the midst of it. (Habakkuk 2:15-19)

Verse 15 is certainly already true here in the USA. The matter of "looking on their nakedness" is a reference to immoral sexual conduct. Not just drunkenness, but also the use of narcotic drugs is a huge problem for us today. "Uncovering the foreskin" is a reference to immoral and illicit sex. This reference to "a foreskin" means that this may also be addressed to uncircumcised non-Israelites. However, at the end-time, to which this prophecy refers, **most Israelites living outside of the USA are no longer circumcised**. That's basically **like all of the Israelites during the 40 years of wandering** in the wilderness in the days of Moses and Joshua not being circumcised.

The point is: verses 15-19 could be a discussion of the aggressor nations in the 5th trumpet and the 6th trumpet. But these verses can equally well be a discussion of Israelite society at the end-time. The reason I think these verses are primarily focused on Israelite society is because God's attention is focused primarily on correcting the nations of Israel, the nations that **should have** understood the laws and ways of God. The customs and traditions and practices in the non-Israelite nations, whose morals are just as bad as those of the Israelite nations, if not in many cases worse, don't really get much

attention in the Bible. At any rate, all of the bad things mentioned in verses 15-19 can today certainly be found amongst the nations of Israel.

We have laws to protect so-called homosexual "marriages". We have education systems where our children are at an early age exposed to various perverse sexual practices. Our education system also teaches children to hate their own country. Our education system works very vigorously to keep the parents from knowing what the schools are teaching the children. We have plenty of "teachers of lies" in our educational system, and in our society in general. Our cities are indeed filled with violence. And yes, our cities are filled with "dumb idols" ... just look at all the cathedrals and church buildings and temples.

The news we are "allowed to see" is very perversely filtered by gigantic media companies like Google, Facebook (soon to change its name to "Meta") and Twitter, so that very much of what is true and what is actually happening is kept from the majority of all people. In the past two years there has been a very aggressive attempt by the governments in many different countries to enslave the general population. Big government is the final authority for not only what we do, but also for **what we are allowed to think**. And it is coming to be considered a crime to voice opinions contrary to what the people in power say we are supposed to think.

And all along with these things there has been **a total rejection of logical reasoning** and conduct! That is like accepting the reasoning presented by someone who is thoroughly drunk. Never before has there been such a concerted attempt by the printed news media and on radio and TV newscasts at rejecting truth in favor of foolish reasoning. Flaws in the policies that are rammed down our throats are blatantly ignored. That's just like the reasoning of a drunk man.

So all we have to do is open our eyes, and we can see that **these verses do indeed describe our societies today**. Can this description also fit other nations? Oh sure, but that's not really the issue. I believe that God is here focused on the nations of Israel.

That's also what I understand from the next verse.

But **the LORD *is* in His holy temple**: let all the earth keep silence before Him. (Habakkuk 2:20)

Jesus Christ will not be in "His holy temple" until the millennium starts. And then Christ's temple will be amongst the people of Israel. And from there Jesus Christ will rule. And all the earth will have to obey Him. This verse again goes to the time of the millennium. It is intended as a form of encouragement, for God's people to hold fast and to endure to the end. And from Jerusalem Jesus Christ's rule will extend outwards in every direction.

The point of verse 20 is that even though terrible times lie ahead, **God always remains in full control**. The ultimate outcome will be exactly what God predicted ... that Jesus Christ will be ruling over the whole world from Jerusalem.

It is in this context of the 6th trumpet drawing to a close, and the time for the 7th trumpet approaching, that people will again be looking for access to the work of God.

The work of God referred to in Habakkuk 1:5 will start shortly before the great tribulation starts. Then comes a time described in Amos 8:11 as "a famine of hearing the words of God". During that time the only ones presenting "the words of God" will be the two witnesses. And then, as the 7th trumpet is about to be blown, some of the people who have lived through all these difficult times will again make the effort to learn more about the true God. That's what Habakkuk 3:2 tells us.

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 known; in wrath remember mercy. (Habakkuk 3:2)

Throughout those difficult times people will only have been able to have some limited exposure to the truth of God through whatever the two witnesses were telling the world. But the two witnesses either have just been killed, or they are about to be killed. And so certain people will want to have more contact with God. And the good news is that **the work of God will indeed be "revived"** with the second coming of Jesus Christ.

THE 7TH TRUMPET

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. (Habakkuk 3:3)

"Teman" means "**south**", and "Paran" means "**caves**". "Selah" refers to an interruption, and it is used to mean "**stop and think on this**". The expression "His glory covered the heavens" is a reference to **the second coming** of Jesus Christ. The expression "the earth was full of His praise" is a reference to all people on earth once again having ready access to contact with God.

So converting these Hebrew names in verse 3 into English gives us something like this:

God came from the south, and the Holy One (came) from the mount of caves. Think on this. This is about the second coming of Jesus Christ, when all people will be given easy access to contact with God. (Habakkuk 3:3, alternate rendering)

This verse is a reference to **Jesus Christ's second coming**. The mount of caves could well be a reference to the general area of Petra, though not necessarily so. But Petra happens to be due south from Jerusalem.

Now as far as the return of Jesus Christ is concerned:

Those members of the first resurrection who are alive at Jesus Christ's coming will all be gathered in one location, the place of safety. This means that when He returns, **Jesus Christ comes to the air above the place of safety**. The people at the place of safety are changed in the twinkling of an eye, and then rise up into the air to meet Jesus Christ.

At the same time the holy angels are gathering all the dead in Christ from wherever they died, and escorting them to this meeting in the air above the place of safety. From there Jesus Christ and the 144,000 in the first resurrection will then attend the wedding supper in heaven, in the presence of God the Father. I have no idea how long that will take in terms of how we human beings measure time. But at the end of the marriage supper Jesus Christ and the 144,000 will return to the area from where they had left, i.e. the air above the place of safety; and then they go around the earth like lightning, before "touching down" on Mount Zion.

My article "The Prophecies of Matthew 24, Part 2" from a year ago discusses the events surrounding Jesus Christ's return in great detail. Specifically, it explains how "Mount Zion" and "the Mount of Olives" feature in Jesus Christ's second coming.

Habakkuk 3:3 is a reference to those events at Christ's second coming. It tells us that after Jesus Christ has gathered all of the 144,000 in the first resurrection, and after the marriage supper He then comes from the area of the Mount of caves, which is somewhere south of Jerusalem. This may or may not be a

reference to Petra in the modern day country of Jordan? I don't know, but we'll find out soon enough.

The next verse also applies to Jesus Christ's second coming.

And *His* brightness was as the light; He had horns *coming* out of His hand: and there *was* the hiding of His power. (Habakkuk 3:4)

The Hebrew word here translated as "horns" refers to "rays of light". There will be rays of light coming out of Jesus Christ's hand, again representing the power of God.

Habakkuk 3:3-4 is a reference to the 7th trumpet, when Jesus Christ returns to this earth. Then the account moves on and focuses on certain ones of the seven last plagues.

THE 1ST PLAGUE

Comparing the statements in Revelation and in Habakkuk, we have:

And the **first** went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell **a noisome and grievous sore** upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshiped his image. (Revelation 16:2)

Before Him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at His feet. (Habakkuk 3:5)

The Hebrew word translated as "pestilence" can equally well be translated as "plague". The plagues that go "before" Christ are obviously the 7 plagues that are poured out in His presence. Apart from those 7 plagues, no other plagues or pestilences are associated with Jesus Christ's return. Habakkuk 3:5 could be taken either as a reference to all seven of the last plagues, or as a reference to the first of those seven plagues.

He stood, and measured the earth: He beheld, and **drove asunder the nations**; and **the everlasting mountains were scattered**, the perpetual hills did bow: His ways *are* everlasting. (Habakkuk 3:6)

All the human armies are destroyed at Christ's return. Nations being "driven asunder" refers to their defeat, and also to Jesus Christ then instructing the nations where on earth they are to live. "The everlasting mountains" being scattered seems to be **a reference to** a consequence of **the 7th plague**, when "... every island fled away, and **the mountains were not found**" (see Revelation 16:20). The mountains "were not found" because they had been "scattered".

THE 2ND & THE 3RD PLAGUES

And the **second** angel poured out his vial upon **the sea**; and it became **as the blood of a dead *man***: and every living soul died in the sea. (Revelation 16:3)

And the **third** angel poured out his vial upon **the rivers** and fountains of waters; and they **became blood**. (Revelation 16:4)

Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? *was* Your anger against **the rivers**? *was* Your wrath against **the sea**, that You did ride upon Your horses *and* Your chariots of salvation? (Habakkuk 3:8)

Again we see that the account in Habakkuk ties very well into the account of the seven last plagues. When the sea and the rivers become like blood, then we can certainly say that this is an expression of God's anger and wrath. After all, Revelation 15:1 tells us that the seven last plagues "fill up the wrath of God". So the wording of Habakkuk 3:8 (i.e. displeasure, anger, wrath) also ties this verse to the seven last plagues.

The mountains "trembling" in verse 10 is another link to Revelation 16:20, one specific result of the 7th plague being poured out.

THE 4TH & THE 5TH PLAGUES

And the **fourth** angel poured out his vial upon **the sun**; and power was given unto him to **scorch men with fire**. (Revelation 16:8)

And the **fifth** angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was **full of darkness**; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, (Revelation 16:10)

So first there will be scorching heat, and that will then be followed by painful darkness. While these specific things are not directly mentioned, there is a reference to the sun and moon in the account in Habakkuk. Perhaps it has an application to these two plagues?

The **sun** *and* **moon** stood still in their habitation: **at the light of Your arrows they went**, *and* at the shining of Your glittering spear. (Habakkuk 3:11)

At any rate, the discussion in Habakkuk 3 follows right along with the outline of events in Revelation 16.

THE 7TH PLAGUE

And the **seventh** angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, **It is done**. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great. (Revelation 16:17-18)

In Habakkuk **the 6th plague is ignored** because it isn't actually a penalty in itself. The 6th plague is simply a matter of making it as easy as possible for the hostile human armies to come up to Jerusalem to fight against Jesus Christ. Three demons are sent out to inspire those hostile human armies. But otherwise this plague has no specific effect. So Habakkuk doesn't mention it.

In the 7th plague those huge human armies are destroyed by Jesus Christ. And that is what the account in Habakkuk is focused on.

You did march through the land in indignation, **You did thresh the nations in anger**. (Habakkuk 3:12)

"Threshing the nations in anger" is **exactly** what will happen at the 7th plague! The next few verses elaborate on things that will happen at Christ's return.

Having given us a rundown of prophetic events from the time just before the great tribulation will start right up to the pouring out of the 7th plague, the Book of Habakkuk now concludes with **a focus on**

Jesus Christ's return.

Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God *is* my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' *feet*, and He will make me to walk upon my high places ... (Hab 3:18-19)

In other words, in spite of all the enormous trials and troubles that lie ahead, I will focus on rejoicing in the fact that Jesus Christ has returned, and that He will set up the Kingdom of God for ruling during the millennium. Yes, **that is what I will rejoice in**!

THE ANSWER TO THE ORIGINAL QUESTION

Recall that Habakkuk's original question was in essence: **how long until Jesus Christ will return**, to straighten out all these horrendous problems in our world today?

That question has been answered by giving us **a rundown of events** that will culminate in the pouring out of the seven last plagues in the presence of Jesus Christ. And then Jesus Christ will establish the Kingdom of God here on earth. That rundown of events is in fact pretty closely linked to the rundown we see in the Book of Revelation. Instead of saying "I will return in X number of years", Jesus Christ has said: "If you can see all these events taking place within the sequence I am laying out in this book, then you can know when I will return and set up the Kingdom of God".

One more question remains.

WHAT ABOUT "THE WORK OF GOD"?

Right up front the account starts out with a wicked, evil, perverse society in Israel. And in that context God says: "I will work a work **in your days**".

What does the expression "in your days" mean? "Your days" refers to the people who will be alive when these trumpets are blown, and when these plagues are poured out! In other words, this is a reference to the work God will do in the period leading up to Jesus Christ's return.

Now there is one work of God, and only one, that will be done in the time leading up to Jesus Christ's return. You know what that work is, right?

Habakkuk 1:5 is a very specific reference to **the work of the two witnesses**!

Jesus Christ says very plainly "I will give power to **My two witnesses**" (Revelation 11:3). They will be His witnesses, and they will be doing **His work**! And Jesus Christ will protect them until they have completed the work He will have given them to do (Revelation 11:5). Habakkuk 1:5 also shows that the world will not believe that those two men will indeed be God's servants, who will convey God's messages to a rebellious world.

Instead, the people in this world will reason like someone who is drunk, and who cannot think logically. No matter what the two witnesses may do, the world simply will not accept that they are the servants of the Creator God. The world thinks and reasons like someone who is thoroughly drunk.

So yes, in principle we can apply Habakkuk 1:5 to servants of God doing the work of God at any time in human history. But that doesn't change the fact that **this verse is focused very specifically on the work that God will do through the two witnesses just before Jesus Christ's second coming**.

So what about right now ... is there still a work of God that needs to be done today?

We can see that the general conditions described in Habakkuk 1:3-4 are now upon us. Perhaps things still have to get worse? That may take time? But at some point God will move things along to verse 5, by having Jesus Christ's two witnesses start their ministry. When that specific point will be reached is entirely in God's hands, completely independent of how we may evaluate world conditions.

And we have no way of influencing this situation. We can pray "Father, please let Your Kingdom come quickly" (see Matthew 6:10), but we cannot hasten the events that still lie ahead. And until God moves to fulfill verse 5 the Church of God needs to follow Jesus Christ's instruction to "go and teach all nations".

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