



Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 8 2Q 2013

Trusting God's Goodness (Habakkuk)

SABBATH

Read memory text: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)

Thoughts?

What does the text mean? The knowledge of the glory of the Lord?

What is the glory of the Lord?

- Fire?
- Power?
- Energy?
- Authority?
- Character?

How would you build a case that God's character is His glory, not the might and power?

- Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. (Exodus 33:18,19)
- Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?... 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty." (Hag 2:3,9)

The second temple was so small the people wailed and mourned when they remembered Solomon's temple – but the glory of the second would be greater than the glory of the first – how?

Because Jesus would come in person to the second, but wait, what happened on the day Solomon's temple was dedicated? God's presence came down in brilliant glory and filled the place, so bright the priests couldn't enter.

So, God's presence came to both earthly temples, yet the Bible says the glory of the smaller one, the one that didn't have the bright shining glory, would be more glorious than the first. How and why? Why was the second more glorious?

Because God's glory is not might, power, or brilliant light – it is His character of love and where was God's character of love most powerfully revealed? In the life of Christ!



So, if the glory of the Lord is His character, what does it mean that the earth will be filled with the knowledge His glory? That the earth will be filled with the knowledge of His character of love!

Listen to this from a book Christ Object Lessons, written more than 100 years ago. Do you agree?

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**”
Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

How is the knowledge of God to be made known in the world?

Do we have any role to play?

What prevents this from happening?

This is message that Come and Reason Ministry is passionate to take to the world. It is our mission, to as clearly as possible, reveal the true character of God!

Over the last several years we have seen a groundswell of support for this message and doors are opening. We invite your continued prayer and support that the truth about God will go forward and the world will be lighted with His glory!

SUNDAY

Read Habakkuk 1:2-4:

How long, O Lord, must I call for help,
but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, “Violence!”
but you do not save?
Why do you make me look at injustice?
Why do you tolerate wrong?
Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and conflict abounds.
Therefore the law is paralyzed,
and justice never prevails.
The wicked hem in the righteous,
so that justice is perverted.

Thoughts?



The prophet is asking, how long they must endure? What about today? Do we ever wonder how long?

What is the answer? How long must we endure the injustice of sin? As long as it takes! As long as there is hope for any to be saved.

Why were the injustices occurring in Habakkuk's day? To whom is Habakkuk referring? It is to the Jewish people, the Jewish leaders he is referring when he speaks of injustice and abuse. He longs for God to bring reform, and he asks how long.

Why doesn't God simply send lightening bolts and fix it?

He can't – why not?

What is the just thing from God's perspective? To heal and set right.

Many times on issues like this, justice, judgment, atonement, satisfaction, etc. we have conflict with others who seem to not appreciate what we are saying, and may even oppose it. As you know in this class we have for some months now explored truth by contrasting the two ways God's law is conceived – natural or imposed. It struck me this contrast of the two laws also helps clarify much of the terminology used in Scripture, and exposes why there is so much confusion. Thus I've created a comparison chart of keywords and how they are defined under each of these two law constructs. It's on the last page so you can print it out on one sheet.

Read third paragraph, "Being a prophet..." thoughts?

Why does God allow injustice to continue?

What does God want from us?

Obedience? What does that mean? Does God want behavioral conformity, or love, loyalty, devotion, understanding commitment and agreement?

Can one get love, devotion, loyalty, understanding commitment and agreement by using force to threaten? What is the only way for God to get what He wants?

To leave people free and allow the two antagonistic principles to be revealed, and then people freely choose to trust God, open the heart and He pours out His Spirit which takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it us!

Read last paragraph, "Babylon's ruthless..." thoughts?

What does it mean that Babylon was a rod of God's anger?



What is God's anger? Does it make it sound like God is using Babylon to inflict punishment upon Israel?

How does the Bible describe God's anger?

Before we read the Scripture, think it through, use the two law concepts and predict, based on your knowledge of God's law what God's anger actually does.

If God's law is imposed, then what would His anger look like? Infliction of hostilities, punishment, torment etc.

If God's law is natural, then what does His anger look like?

Did anyone ever see the old western starring John Wayne and William Holden called *The Horse Soldiers*? It was about a troop of Union soldiers going on a raid deep into the Confederacy. William Holden played the division surgeon. In the movie one of the scouts got shot in the leg. The doctor cleaned the wound and then tied some moss around it. Later in the movie the doctor saw the scout limping and examined the leg and it was all gangrenous. The doctor asked what happened to the moss – the scout said it was itching so he took it off.

The doctor became angry – why? And the doctor then worked to amputate the leg, why? Was the doctor happy about amputating the leg? Did the doctor ever seek to hurt or punish the patient, even when angry? What law was the doctor operating under?

So, before we read Scripture, knowing God's law is the law of love, the design protocol upon which life is built, what would you predict God's anger to be – infliction of punishment, or letting go to reap the results of one's choice?

- **“My anger will flame up like fire and burn everything on earth.** It will reach to the world below and consume the roots of the mountains. I will bring on them endless disasters and use **all my arrows against them.**” (Deuteronomy 32:22,23 – GN)... **“They fail to see why they were defeated;** they cannot understand what happened. Why were a thousand defeated by one, and ten thousand by only two? **The Lord, their God, had abandoned them; their mighty God had given them up.**” (Deuteronomy 32:29,30 – GN)
- **“When that happens, I will become angry with them; I will abandon them,** and they will be destroyed. Many terrible disasters will come upon them, and then they will realize that these **things are happening to them because I, their God, am no longer with them.**” (Deuteronomy 31:17 – GN)
- **“I will fight against you with all my might, my anger, my wrath, and my fury.** I will kill everyone living in this city; people and animals alike **will die of a terrible disease....** Anyone who stays in the city will be **killed in war or by starvation or disease...**It will be **given over** to the king of Babylonia, and **he** will burn it to the ground. I, the LORD, have spoken... (Jeremiah 21:5,6,9-10 – GN)
- **“Very well, then, I will give you freedom: the freedom to die by war, disease, and starvation.”** (Jeremiah 34:17 – GN)



- **“You will feel my anger when I turn it loose on you** like a blazing fire. **And I will hand you over** to brutal men, experts at destruction.” (Ezekiel 21:31 – GN)
- **“I will hand you over to other nations** who will rob you and plunder you.” (Ezekiel 25:7 – GN)
- “The king killed the young men of Judah even in the Temple. He had no mercy on anyone, young or old, man or woman, sick or healthy. **God handed them all over to him.**” (2 Chronicles 36:17 – GN)
- **“I will attack the people of Israel and Judah like a lion.** I myself will tear them to pieces and then leave them. When I drag them off, no one will be able to save them. **I will abandon** my people until they have suffered enough for their sins and come looking for me. Perhaps in their suffering they will try to find me.” (Hosea 5:14,15 – GN)
- **God’s anger is revealed** from heaven against all the sin and evil of the people whose evil ways prevent the truth from being known. **God punishes them**, because what can be known about God is plain to them, for God himself made it plain...They say they are wise, but they are fools; instead of worshiping the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortals or birds or animals or reptiles. **And so God has given those people over to do the filthy things their hearts desire**, and they do shameful things with each other. **They exchange the truth about God for a lie**; they worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever! Amen. Because they do this, **God has given them over** to shameful passions...**Because those people refuse to keep in mind the true knowledge about God, he has given them over** to corrupted minds, so that they do the things that they should not do.” (Romans 1:18,19,22-26,28 – GN)

What is God’s anger? Letting His persistently rebellious children go to reap what they have chosen. For what purpose? So that they might realize the error of their ways and come back to Him for healing and salvation.

The reason the truth about God’s character of love, the knowledge of His glory is not being more clearly seen is because many in church leadership has accepted the imposed law construct and thus misrepresent God and His government. Examine history you will find it the same.

We need to pray for our leaders, love them, and help them see that the law is not imposed and God is not like a cosmic Roman emperor.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “In Habakkuk 1...” thoughts?

What do you think about the way this is being framed? What is the misunderstanding?

If a patient with infection refuses antibiotics, does the doctor use bacteria to punish the patient? Absolutely not, but if the bacteria is a pathogen and virulent will the patient suffer? Absolutely!



The problem with which so many struggle, is operating under the false paradigm of imposed law, thus they see God inflicting what He allows to happen through Babylon.

So how did God utilize Babylon? Did God force the Babylonians to come and raid and destroy Judah? Did God prod, cajole, encourage, bribe, threaten or in any other way use His power to make Babylon violent and abusive?

Think what they are saying? They are suggesting God is behind the actions of Babylon – this is totally false!

God withdrew His protection because of their persistent rebellion, and the Babylonians do what they do – they attack, because they have already gone down the pagan path and operate under selfishness and not love.

Read third paragraph, “Habakkuk 2:2-4 is one...” wow, that sounds very important, let’s read it:

² Then the Lord replied: “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.

³ For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

⁴ “See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright— but the righteous will live by his faith—

Thoughts? What does it mean the righteous will live by faith?

The lesson suggests that it means a legal belief in which we have faith that God credits to our heavenly account the legal record of Jesus and we are declared righteous, even though we are not righteous.

This, is again, based on the false premise that God’s law is imposed. It is commonly held, it has deep roots in tradition and it is distorted.

Let’s give some real examples of the just living by faith.

The three worthies on the plain of Durah – what was their choice – bow or don’t bow. What is the just or right thing for them to do? Can they, by their choice control the outcome, what happens? So what is their decision, in governance of themselves to be based upon? Faith that God will take care of how things turn out, if they make the just or right decision in governance of themselves.

What about Abraham, who trusted God and was recognized as righteous?

What came first, God’s recognition that Abraham was set right with God, or Abraham having a change of heart where he actually trusted God?



Our natural hearts an “enmity” toward God. We do not naturally trust Him. When Abraham trusted God it was evidence or proof of a change in Abraham, thus God recognized that change and declared what He actually saw in Abraham’s character. Thus Abraham was recognized as having been “set right” with God, from distrust to trust.

Yes, there was still clean up work in Abraham’s life to do, but once a person genuinely trusts God with their life, the clean up work is easy for God. The hard part is getting us over ourselves, our distrust and the lies we believe about God so we genuinely trust Him.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “God’s answer to Habakkuk...” thoughts?

Why is the punishment on the enemy in measure for measure? Remember Jesus said, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (MT 7:1,2)

Why? What does this mean?

Think through the two law options –

If you believe God’s law is imposed, then what does the measure for measure principle mean? It means God keeps track of what you have done and inflicts the same thing upon you. Like a Saudi court recently sentencing a man to paralysis for causing the paralysis of another.

But what if you look through the natural law lens? It means when you perpetrate evil upon another you are changing your character. If you murder you are a murderer in heart, if you steal you are a thief, if you lie, you are a liar – thus the very evil you do to another actually sears into your character and you become that evil. Thus you suffer proportionally to the evil you inflict on another. This is what Paul meant when he said they pile up wrath for the day of wrath.

Read fourth paragraph, “God’s ultimate answer...” thoughts?

What enables you to trust God? Does your trust go up when you understand God’s law of love and the way He constructed life to operate?

But, can people have false faith? Can people have faith that David Koresh was Jesus on earth and have peace as the fires consumed them?

So faith alone is not enough, it must be faith in the truth!

How can we tell if our faith is wisely placed? The Integrative-Evidence Based approach – harmonizing, Scripture, Science and Experience.



Science alone – risks evolutionism

Experience alone – risks mysticism

Scripture alone – risks false faith, faith in a false religious system that fails to heal. Look at all the religions of the world, including Christianity with 34,000 different Christian groups all claiming the Bible as their basis of faith.

Sola Scriptura has been misused and misapplied – when Martin Luther used it he used it to defend against tradition that was not supported by God’s Word. But today, theologians use this to exclude God given evidences in nature, science and experience, thus creating an atmosphere in which gross error occurs.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Habakkuk expresses...” thoughts?

Are God’s judgments ever without mercy?

Again, using the two laws – if you view God’s law as imposed what are God’s judgments? Imposed punishments.

But if you view God’s law as natural, then what are His judgments? Therapeutic interventions to minimize suffering and bring healing.

Habakkuk longs for a display of power – what kind of power do you think?

What are the different kinds of power and what are the pros and cons of each?

Power of creation – might, physical power, power over the elements. What can be achieved with this kind of power? What cannot be achieved? What are the risks of using this kind of power?

Paul talked about the power of the gospel – what is that? The power of truth and love – what kind of power is that? What can it achieve? What are the risks of using this kind of power?

Which kind does God use? Has God used both? But which is the one that wins the war?

Zech 4:6 “not by might nor by power but by the Spirit says the Lord.”

THURSDAY

Habakkuk struggles with the question of why the righteous suffer and how to make sense of injustice happening upon the earth?

Thoughts?



FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “There is an answer...” I like very much what this says.

How does God answer? Not by claims, proclamation, declaration, but by evidence!

Far too much bad theology comes because people read Scripture, find texts where God threatens, but then fail to see God’s actions, what actually happens. What does God do?

God allows events to unfold so that we may all see how His natural law of love works and that the violations of such law brings natural consequences not imposed penalties.

Read and discuss questions 2,3



	Natural Law (Law of Love) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols life is built upon • Violations inherently damage • God works to heal • Problem is sin in man • Christ died to Remedy man and destroy sin 	Imposed Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arbitrary rules • Violations- external punishment • God must inflict punishment • Problem wrath in God • Christ died to appease God and pay a legal penalty
Justification	Setting man right in heart with God	Declaring man legally right with God
Judgment by God	Diagnosis, therapeutic interventions, pronouncement of natural result	Legal finding and determination of arbitrarily imposed punishment
Forgiveness	The experience of God freely forgiving AND the sinner repenting, resulting in actual reconciliation	Legal pardon, because of a legal payment
Salvation	The experience of trusting God and accepting Jesus Christ into the heart, which results in healing and restoration to God's original ideal	Legally accepting Jesus' blood payment and having "pardon" entered into heaven's record books
Atonement	Being at-one with God	Appeasement, paying legal penalty
Satisfaction	God being satisfied with Christ perfectly completing his mission to reveal the truth and provide the Remedy which restores humans back into God's perfect ideal	God receiving legal payment of His Son's blood to "satisfy" His demand for retribution
Justice	Delivering the oppressed	Punishing the oppressor
Vengeance	Healing the damage caused by sin, i.e. destroying sin and its results	Punishing sinners for their crimes
Wrath	Letting go to reap the natural results of one's choice	Infliction of external pain, suffering, and punishment
Anger	God's rage at sin and outrage at the damage caused to the object of His love (like a doctor angry at disease but never the sick patient) and the letting go to receive what a non-compliant patient chooses	God's outrage at how He has been treated, His incensed and hostile response to violations of His law and disrespect toward Him and the infliction of punishment for such disobedient behavior
Heavenly Records	The exact transcript of each individual character (like medical records) documenting the true heart condition of each person, and the history of the Remedy offered and either applied or rejected with its results	A legal tally of every sin committed and accurate notation of each crime confessed and notated pardon by each act as the blood of Jesus is applied to the heavenly transcript