

## **Lent Devotional February 27, 2020**

### **Scripture**

Habakkuk 3:1-18

*1 A prayer of the prophet Habakkuk according to Shigionoth.*

*2 O LORD, I have heard of your renown,  
and I stand in awe, O LORD, of your work.*

*In our own time revive it;  
in our own time make it known;  
in wrath may you remember mercy.*

*3 God came from Teman,  
the Holy One from Mount Paran.  
His glory covered the heavens,  
and the earth was full of his praise.*

*4 The brightness was like the sun;  
rays came forth from his hand,  
where his power lay hidden.*

*5 Before him went pestilence,  
and plague followed close behind.*

*6 He stopped and shook the earth;  
he looked and made the nations tremble.  
The eternal mountains were shattered;  
along his ancient pathways  
the everlasting hills sank low.*

*7 I saw the tents of Cushan under affliction;  
the tent-curtains of the land of Midian trembled.*

*8 Was your wrath against the rivers, O LORD?  
Or your anger against the rivers,  
or your rage against the sea,  
when you drove your horses,  
your chariots to victory?*

*9 You brandished your naked bow,  
sated were the arrows at your command.  
You split the earth with rivers.*

*10 The mountains saw you, and writhed;  
a torrent of water swept by;  
the deep gave forth its voice.*

*The sun raised high its hands;  
11 the moon stood still in its exalted place,  
at the light of your arrows speeding by,  
at the gleam of your flashing spear.*

*12 In fury you trod the earth,  
in anger you trampled nations.*

*13 You came forth to save your people,  
to save your anointed.*

*You crushed the head of the wicked house,  
laying it bare from foundation to roof.*

*14 You pierced with their own arrows the head of his warriors,  
who came like a whirlwind to scatter us,*

*gloating as if ready to devour the poor who were in hiding.*

*15 You trampled the sea with your horses,  
churning the mighty waters.*

*16 I hear, and I tremble within;  
my lips quiver at the sound.*

*Rottenness enters into my bones,  
and my steps tremble beneath me.*

*I wait quietly for the day of calamity  
to come upon the people who attack us.*

*17 Though the fig tree does not blossom,  
and no fruit is on the vines;*

*though the produce of the olive fails  
and the fields yield no food;*

*though the flock is cut off from the fold  
and there is no herd in the stalls,*

*18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD;*

*I will exult in the God of my salvation.*

### **Devotional**

#### **The Rev. Dr. Stephen D. Crocco '78, Academia (2005)**

Habakkuk knew that God's judgment was real. History proved it. If the Exodus was not a story of judgment against the Egyptians in history, what was it? Yet Habakkuk struggled mightily when it was inevitable that God was going to use the nation of Babylon to bring judgment against God's own people.

When all was said and done, the cold, hard, reality of judgment did not prompt protests from Habakkuk; instead he prayed, "in your wrath may you remember mercy." What a foreign-sounding prayer today! It's not that we don't believe in mercy, it's that we don't believe in wrath!

In this season of Lent, when our sins are ever before us, dare we not take God's wrath seriously? How can we deny the times when God's judgment is inevitable in our lives as we face the consequences of our acts of betrayal, abuse, theft, failure, sloth, and faithlessness? What do we do when God's wrath washes over us like the Red Sea washed over Pharaoh's chariots? In these moments, may we join Habakkuk in praying, "in your wrath may you remember mercy."

### **Prayer**

Almighty God, soften my heart and let me see the extent to which I have sinned against your holiness and the creatures you love. Though I can only see pain ahead for now, I accept your judgment and pray that, in your wrath, you will remember mercy. Amen.