

## [Habakkuk 3:17-19](#)

### Rejoicing in God in the Midst of Trouble

#### **Introduction**

Consider the following troublesome events, which are found in Scripture. A husband's wife dies suddenly in the evening. The husband's response is to obey God's directions, which are not to mourn or weep. The next morning after her death he says "I did as I was commanded". A man loses everything he has, including all of his children, his property and his health. His response is to say "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

In the text, the prophet Habakkuk experienced similar circumstances in the midst of trouble and despair. In essence, he is saying that even though everything should fail, I will rejoice in the LORD. So, the central truth of God's message for us is this - **we desperately need to rejoice in God in the midst of trouble.**

So, here are three truths that we can take from God's Word in Habakkuk 3:17-19 concerning this desperate need to rejoice in God in the midst of trouble:

- God orchestrates trouble (vs 17)
- God is the treasure (vs 18)
- God provides triumph over trouble (vs 19)

#### **Historical Background**

This portion of Scripture is believed to cover the time period of approximately 640-600 BC, which included a time of fear over an impending Babylonian invasion. Habakkuk's fear of the Babylonians was certainly justified, as they were described as "dreaded and fearsome".

Habakkuk even complained to God about how He could use a wicked nation, such as Babylon, for His divine purpose. But Habakkuk said, "Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us". ([Habakkuk 3:16c](#)) Here Habakkuk exuded a sense of confidence, trust and faith that God was in control in a situation that seemed out of control.

Here is the beauty and majesty of God that He would inspire Habakkuk to write about our desperate need to rejoice in God, Himself, in the midst of trouble. This points us toward the cross of Jesus. God not sparing His own Son, orchestrated the trouble that rescued people like you and me from sin and death. Here's what God's Word says in [Isaiah 53:10a](#).

*Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief;*  
[Isaiah 53:10 a \(ESV\)](#)

That's the gospel, the good news. God orchestrated the trouble, which was Jesus receiving the punishment of God's wrath on the cross for sin. For all those who receive Him by faith, God is our treasure because in Christ our sins are forgiven by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. And that in Christ, God provided triumph over trouble through Jesus' death and resurrection.

By the way, Habakkuk pointed to Jesus when he wrote “the righteous shall live by his faith.” ([Habakkuk 2:4b](#)), which is quoted three times in the New Testament ([Romans 1:17](#), [Galatians 3:11](#) and [Hebrews 10:38](#)). Therefore, be encouraged that God orchestrated the trouble associated with Jesus bearing the weight of our sin on the cross. He orchestrates trouble to test His people's faith and prove His faithfulness.

### **1. God orchestrates trouble - [Habakkuk 3:17](#)**

All of the things that would happen as described in verse 17 certainly would cause trouble and reason for despair. In the Near East culture, figs, grapes, olives, grain, sheep and cattle were, and still are, things of security, success and prosperity. To take all of that away would result in a devastating impact to the entire society. Yet, God orchestrated the trouble that was to befall His people. [Habakkuk 1:6](#)

*<sup>6</sup> For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own. [Hab 1:6](#) (ESV)*

The word orchestrate is defined as to arrange or direct the elements of a situation to produce a desired effect. Through all of history, God orchestrates events for his glory and for the good of His people. Events that man would characterize as good or bad are all orchestrated by the God of the Bible. Here's [Proverbs 16:4](#) and [Lamentations 3:37-38](#).

*<sup>4</sup> The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. [Prov 16:4](#) (ESV)*

*<sup>37</sup> Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? <sup>38</sup> Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come? [Lam 3:37-38](#) (ESV)*

At the introduction of this message, the accounts of trouble from Scripture of the husband whose wife died and the man who lost everything were about Ezekiel and Job respectively. It was God Himself who took away the delight of Ezekiel's eyes, which was his wife. It was God Himself who orchestrated Job's suffering by allowing Satan to strike him. In each of these instances, God's sovereignty was manifested in a troublesome situation.

Why this orchestration of trouble by God? We see it in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. There was trouble in the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 3](#)), where the results were catastrophic and sin entered all of creation. There was trouble in the garden of Gethsemane ([Luke 22:39-46](#), [Matthew 26:36-46](#)) where Jesus was greatly distressed and troubled as He would take the punishment of God's wrath for the forgiveness of our sins. As mentioned earlier, God orchestrates trouble for His glory and for the good of His people. Yes, He tests our faith for our good and for His glory.

Nothing has changed in several millennia with regards to God orchestrating troubles and trials to test His people. What does that mean for us at La Crescent Evangelical Free Church (LEFC)? How will the church respond to the troubles and trials God orchestrates to test His people, especially in a culture that grows increasingly hostile toward the gospel?

For example, what would happen if LEFC were to be threatened with loss of non-profit status due to erosion of religious liberties? What would happen if preaching truth in the pulpit were to become a violation of civil liberties with regard to issues such as same-sex marriage? The answer isn't to run and hide and hope for the best. The answer isn't to tolerate and excuse sin in order to blend in with the culture surrounding us.

One of the answers is that the church will have to respond by standing firm in God's Word. This means loving our neighbor as ourselves, loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us ([Matthew 5:44](#)). This means suffering for righteousness' sake by honoring Christ the Lord as holy ([1 Peter 3:15](#)). This means putting on the whole armor of God in order to be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm ([Ephesians 6:13](#)).

Elders (currently John Young, Dan Cravillion, Ryan Perry and myself, as well as future elders) are we prepared to shepherd the church through troubled times? Church are you trusting your elders that God has appointed? But more importantly, are all of us as the church collectively trusting our heavenly Father to guide and guard us through troubled times?

In spite of Habakkuk's fear of the Babylonian invasion, he knew he could stand firm in the God who orchestrated trouble. And like Habakkuk, we, too, need to know that we can stand firm in the God who orchestrates trouble because God is the treasure.

## **2. God is the treasure - [Habakkuk 3:18](#)**

In the midst of an impending invasion by the Babylonians and the fear and trouble associated with that event, Habakkuk saw God as his treasure. Otherwise, he couldn't have rejoiced in the LORD or taken joy in Him. But what does it mean when we say "God is the treasure"? Here's what Scripture states about that in [Matthew 6:21](#)

*<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*  
[Matt 6:21](#) (ESV)

When God is our treasure, our affections and our desires are centered in Him. We see Him as more valuable than anyone or anything else. His covenant-keeping ways are proof that He can be trusted. He is our hope in all situations both good and bad. In fact, there is not one example in Scripture where God failed to keep His promises and thus be the treasure for His people. And because God is the treasure, we can confidently make a choice to trust in Him, even in trials and difficulties.

In [Habakkuk 3:18](#), the prophet makes a choice in the midst of trouble. Habakkuk says "I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk could have said something like this - "Oh no! Now what do we do? We'd better hunker down and hide and hope things turn out okay." How about you and me? Is the LORD our hope and trust today? Do we find Him to be our treasure, even during times when the shadow of death is cast upon one's life?

The name Glenn Lussky comes to mind when I think of someone who found the Lord Jesus Christ as his treasure, even during a terminal illness. Glenn was Meteorologist in Charge of the National Weather Service in La Crosse from 1994-2017. He was my supervisor, friend and

brother in Christ. Glenn was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, in October 2021. As the disease progressed and his body weakened, proclaiming God's goodness became stronger for Glenn. In fact, when I visited him about three weeks before he died in late January 2023, hardly able to speak, he was still praising and making much of the Lord Jesus.

Habakkuk, Ezekiel and Job looked ahead to the cross and found reason to rejoice in God as their treasure during times of trouble. Glenn Lussky rejoiced in God as his treasure, looking back to the cross, during a time of trouble. Through faith, all of them, and all of us too, who are believers can rejoice in Christ as our treasure. Indeed, the sweetness of rejoicing in Christ as the greatest treasure dispels the bitterness associated with the trouble of losing health, wealth and security. The apostle Paul writes the following in [Philippians 4:4](#) concerning rejoicing in the Lord:

<sup>4</sup> *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. [Phil 4:4](#) (ESV)*

Where was Paul when he wrote this? He was in prison for sharing the good news of salvation in Christ alone. Scripture is quite clear on the matter of rejoicing in the Lord and treasuring Him, even in times of trouble. Based on who God is for His people, the believer in Christ can be confident to trust in Him, be joyful to obey Him, have peace to be content in Him and be assured of His supremacy over all things, including times of trial. Is that you and me when trials come?

Habakkuk's faith was tested in a time of trial in order to produce steadfastness in the God of his joy, strength and salvation. When he wrote "but the righteous shall live by his faith", he really meant it. He saw God as his treasure, and we should too, because of His immeasurable grace, His unfailing love, and His covenant-keeping ways. And with God being his treasure, Habakkuk also realized that God provides triumph over trouble. We desperately need to realize that too.

### **3. God Provides Triumph Over Trouble - [Habakkuk 3:19](#)**

The fact that God provides triumph over trouble is heralded in the last verse of the text. We can only triumph over trouble when God, the LORD, is our strength. Everything else that we put our confidence in, such as trends in the stock market, the balance in our bank account, our job status or the state of our health will ultimately fall far short of the ever-sustaining truth that God is for us, even when things aren't going well.

Consider these truths from [Romans 8:32-35](#). "God didn't spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. How will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Jesus is the One who died, was raised, who is at the right hand of God and is indeed interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall it be tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger or sword?" Why are any of these things true? Why do any of them apply to us? **Because God in Christ triumphs over trouble.** That's the gospel! That's the good news!

How about you and me? Do we rejoice in God when there's security, prosperity and success in our life, but then grumble and question His ways when difficulties and troubles arise? When God provides triumph over trouble, it will be accompanied by situations where nothing else but totally leaning on Him is going to make the difference.

Many years ago, there was a serious health issue within our family. I remember crying out to God and saying “Where are you God? This shouldn’t be happening to us!” And the Holy Spirit in His grace and mercy reminded me: “This is my plan for you. Trust me. I orchestrated this trouble. Remember, I am your treasure. I will provide triumph over this trouble.”

What’s troubling you today? Is your marriage struggling? Maybe you or a loved one has a worsening health problem. Perhaps you’re like me and prone to wander in your walk with the Lord. Or could it be that you’re troubled because you’re not trusting in Christ Jesus as your Lord, Savior and Friend? If so, that’s the Holy Spirit working. He’s drawing you to Himself, but maybe you’re running away. Listen to the Spirit. Follow the Truth, who is the Lord Jesus. Repent and believe. Trust Christ today through faith by God’s grace. He will be your Helper and the One who provides triumph over trouble. Consider the following verses from Scripture, which we should make an effort to own, treasure and cling to during times of trouble. [Psalm 46:1](#) and [Psalm 91:15](#).

*<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*  
[Psalms 46:1 \(ESV\)](#)

*<sup>15</sup> When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.*  
[Psalms 91:15 \(ESV\)](#)

Not only did Habakkuk triumph in God as his strength, but he knew God could be trusted when He said "He makes my feet like the deer" and "He makes me tread on my high places". If you're a hunter, you know that deer are sure-footed and swift in order to escape danger. This is analogous to what Habakkuk is saying with regard to God being the only One to lift His people out of trouble. Here's what [Psalm 40:2](#) says about that.

*<sup>2</sup> He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.*  
[Psalms 40:2 \(ESV\)](#)

Only God can take a person out of the pit of despair, out of the miry bog of sin, and set his/her feet upon a rock, the rock of salvation, and make his/her steps secure in Christ. Only God can make a man or woman tread on high places and above the troubles of the world.

### **Conclusion**

So, let’s summarize the truths that point to the Lord Jesus, even in an obscure Old Testament book such as Habakkuk. God is the One who orchestrates trouble; He is the treasure; He provides triumph over trouble. Why is that good news? **We are messed up people living in a messed up world.** If we don't trust God to be the One who is sovereign over trouble, who is our treasure in trouble, and who provides triumph over trouble, then there is no hope for any of us.

But there is hope! Hope is in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do we long for Jesus? Or do we long for our success, security and prosperity? When all else fails, God does not fail. In good

times and in bad times, we have every reason to say “All I have is Christ”, which speaks to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior ([Philippians 3:8](#)).

Difficult and troublesome situations lie ahead for all of us. But here’s one thing that will remain constant. No matter what happens, God is ruling and reigning today, tomorrow and forever. God is not worried about a court’s ruling on same-sex marriage. God is not unaware when Christians are tortured, imprisoned or die for their faith in Christ. No one can snatch God’s people out of His hands ([John 10:28-29](#)). Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord ([Romans 8:38-39](#)). Not death. Not cancer. Not depression. Nothing! Nothing!

Church, we have to trust in God as our treasure and that He will provide triumph over trouble. If we trust in ourselves or anything else other than our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus, we have no hope. We all have a desperate need to rejoice in God as our joy, salvation and strength in the midst of trouble.

Here's a verse from Scripture I'd like to share with you as this message comes to a close. Jesus is speaking that there will be trouble in the world, not might be, but there will be trouble. Here's [John 16:33](#)

*<sup>33</sup> I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*  
[John 16:33](#) (ESV)