



The Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity
The Collect.

O GOD, our refuge and strength, who art the author of all godliness; Be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of thy Church; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2 And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. 3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. 4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. 5 Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people: 6 Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay! 7 Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them? 8 Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. 9 Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! 10 Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul. 11 For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. 12 Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity! 13 Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? 14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. 15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! 16 Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the Lord'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory. 17 For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, 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. 18 What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? 19 Woe unto him that saith 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. 20 But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him. (Hab 2:2-20)

Habakkuk has lodged his righteous indignation over the sins of his people with the Lord. He expects an answer, and the righteous will always receive such answer if they truly watch and wait upon the Lord. Habakkuk is no exception. The Lord spoke to Habakkuk and said: Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run

that readeth it. The Words of the Lord must always be written in large letters and in stark relief, for they are of greater weight than any uttered by man. *And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.* (Deut 27:8) God's Word should not only be written plainly (though modern so-called scholars wish to retranslate them wrongly), but also spoken plainly and forcefully. This latter, too, they fail to do in most pulpits today. Instead of instead of taking the Word into the world, the modern 'pulpit wimps' bring the influence of the world into into the meaning of the Word. This stands the intent of God on its head. The judgment approaches and, when it comes, even the innocent of the land shall suffer. Habakkuk is told to publish and proclaim the coming fury so that those who hear and understand may flee the wrath.

3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Once the decree is uttered by God, it shall not be annulled. Though it may not come at the moment WE expect, it nevertheless shall come at the time of God's choosing. It shall be fully manifested without fail of a single line. Though the rich, green prairies; the majestic, snow-capped mountains; the everlasting hills; and the blue and abundant rivers of America shall remain – yet, the land will be cloaked in the austere and mournful raiment of judgment. It is pointless to seek a happy ending to a judgment that God has already decreed upon the beloved land. He does not do so arbitrarily, but in accordance with His published Word which cannot be broken.

When the marauding heathen and hoarding armies infest the land, their hearts will be lifted in sinful pride, but the righteous will continue in faith – if their faith be true. *4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.* It has forever been true that the just shall live by faith. Do you have the faith that will survive such a coming tribulation and judgment? The following verse is frightening, but true when God brings judgment: *5 Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people* The coming terror will be drunk with wine and without reason in his dealings with the land. He will be proud in his gods of conquest and will neither know of home, nor honor to the families of men. His hunger and thirst for blood-conquest cannot be quenched with much effusion of it. The wicked invader shall gain much worldly power and gather people of every stripe beneath his cruel banner.

6 Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay! *7 Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?* *8 Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein* How long? If the wrath last for decades, is it unjust. Our apostasy has lasted longer! When ancient Israel, and modern Israel, awake, how great will their sufferings have been? WE will then recognize the injustice of the invader and, perhaps, remember the great injustice of our unfaithfulness to the One who is our MAKER!

9 Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! *10 Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul.* *11 For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.* *12 Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!* That very same wickedness that caused the judgment to be ordered shall

result in the oppressor's downfall. A nation that covets the treasures of others, whether by open theft, or government pillage, may expect a hard retribution. A nation that 'cuts off many people' either through wars, the ovens of Dachau, or abortion of innocents, may expect a wrathful retribution from the Almighty! There will be no venue or refuge from the accusations of guilt. Even the stones may call out our crimes. Have we not established cities of iniquity in our fair and heaven-blessed land?

13 Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? 14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The Lord will cause our labors to vanish and our wickedness to suffer in the fires. Men and women shall be so constrained by vanity in having more than their neighbor, that they shall become weary, yet not able to rest. But, nevertheless, the intent and purposes of the Lord shall be satisfied. His Name shall be known and proclaimed throughout the Land as a victorious King and Conquerer.

15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! 16 Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the Lord'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory. 17 For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, 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 of the seduction by drink and rug that prevail throughout the cities of America. Have we not angered the Majesty on High? Has there been violence in Lebanon until this very day? Will those beds of thorns which we have made for others become our own brutal abode?

18 What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? 19 Woe unto him that saith 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. Of what profit and value is false teaching. If we go seeking, with itching ears, those soft words we love to hear, if they are but lies, have we gained any value to our souls? Do we seek for those easy beliefs of men like Osteen and Hagin? Does God desire that we all be rich? If so, why do the most devoted Christians on foreign soil suffer poverty and death at the hands of evil rulers? America is full of idol-makers today who twist and contort the Word of God beyond recognition. They "speak not of sin for it makes the hearer unhappy" (Osteen)

Perhaps you feel that my understanding of God's Word to be too cruel and harsh? Did not the King torture Jeremiah for speaking those same words? We do not like to hear the truth when it hurts, but America at least deserves a warning. I will not delay to deliver that Word which I believe God intends as much for America as for ancient Israel, or the cities of the Plain. We may, at last, take heart in the promise of God: ***But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.*** Just as the adulteress, taken red-handed and in the very act, was speechless before the Lord, so shall all the earth be speechless before God. All of His judgments and mercies are beyond our comprehension – but all true!