

# Habakkuk 3:8-15

Habakkuk talks with the Lord at his coming. Similar to Isaiah talking with the Lord at his coming in Isaiah 63.

Hebrews 12:18-29

“At that time his voice shook the earth,

but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”

This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that

have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken...”

- Hebrews 12:26-28

Habakkuk 3:8 – “**Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord?**

**Was your anger against the rivers,  
or your indignation against the sea,  
when you rode on your horses,  
on your chariot of salvation?**

1. Habakkuk begins speaking in third person “your” about the Lord, but soon begins to speak in second person “you”.
2. Habakkuk continues to speak to Yahweh in the second person “you” beginning in 3:8 until 3:15
3. Rivers were territorial borders and may indicate a reordering of the Lord’s land
4. Yahweh struck:
  - a. Red Sea
  - b. Jordan River
  - c. Kishon River in Judges 4-5
5. The waters are stuck in Revelation in the trumpets (8:8-11) and the bowls (16:3-4). The Euphrates is dried up (Rev. 16:12)
6. Baal rode on a chariot
7. David called the mercy seat the chariot in 1 Chronicles 28:18

3:9 – “**You stripped the sheath from your bow,  
calling for many arrows.**

**Selah**

**You split the earth with rivers.**

776 [e]	1234 [e]	5104 [e]	5542 [e]	562 [e]	4294 [e]	7621 [e]	7198 [e]	5783 [e]	6181 [e]
'ā·reš;	tə·baq·qa'-	nə·hā·rō·wt̄	se·lāh;	'ō·mer	maṭ·ṭō·wt̄	še·bu·'ō·wt̄	qaš·te·kā,	tē·'ō·wr	'er·yāh
ארץ	תָבְקַעַת	נָהָרֹות	סֶלָה	אָמָר	מִטּוֹת	שְׁבֻעֹות	קָרְבָּן	תְעוּרָה	עֲרֵיה
the earth	You divided	With rivers	Selah	speech	[over Your] arrows	was sworn	Your bow	was made ready	quite
N-fs	V-Piel-Imperf-2ms	N-mp	Interjection	N-ms	N-mp	N-fp	N-fsc   2ms	V-Nifal-Imperf-3fs	N-fs

1. Lamentations 2:4 Jeremiah complains that the Lord bent his bow against his own people
2. “arrows” could be “battle rods”
3. 9b – “you split the earth with rivers” reflects creation accounts, but now at the end of time

3:10 – “**The mountains saw you and writhed;  
the raging waters swept on;  
the deep gave forth its voice;  
it lifted its hands on high.**

8415 [e] te·hō·wm the deep N-cs	5414 [e] nā·tan uttered V-Qal-Perf-3ms	5674 [e] 'ā·bār; passed by V-Qal-Perf-3ms	4325 [e] ma·yim of the water N-mp	2230 [e] ze·rem the overflowing N-msc	2022 [e] hā·rīm, the mountains N-mp	2342 [e] yā·hī·lū [and] trembled V-Qal-Imperf-3mp	7200 [e] rā·'ū·kā Saw You V-Qal-Perf-3cp   2ms
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5375 [e] nā·sā. .	3027 [e] yā·dē·hū [And] lifted V-Qal-Perf-3ms	7315 [e] rō·wm N-fsc   3ms	6963 [e] qō·w·lōw, its voice N-msc   3ms
.	nā·shā: its hands	rō·m on high	kō·lō: its voice

1. “the deep” – *tehom* – means “deep, sea, abyss” and is used in:
  - a. Genesis 1:2 “the surface of the deep, and the Spirit...”
  - b. Genesis 7:11 “on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened”
  - c. Genesis 8:2 “The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained”
  - d. Genesis 49:25 (Jacob to Joseph) “by the God of your father who will help you, by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches beneath”

3:11 – “**The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear.**

1. Sun, moon and stars respond just as when the Lord appears at the sixth seal in Revelation 6:12-17
2. Psalm 77:16-20 is similar

3:12 – “**You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger.**

1. Here begins the answer to the question in 3:8, “Was your wrath against the rivers?...”
  - a. Not against nature. That would be irrational.
  - b. The Lord’s wrath was (is) against the nations.
    - i. Deborah and Barak – Judges 5:4-5 -  
“When you, Lord, went out from Seir,  
when you marched from the land of Edom,  
the earth shook, the heavens poured,  
the clouds poured down water.  
The mountains quaked before the Lord, the One of Sinai,  
before the Lord, the God of Israel.”
    - ii. Psalm 68

3:13 – “**You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked,**

**laying him bare from thigh to neck.**

**Selah**

7218 [e]	4272 [e]	4899 [e]	853 [e]	3468 [e]	5971 [e]	3468 [e]	3318 [e]
rōš	mā·ḥaṣ·tā	mə·šî·he·kā;	'et-	lə·yē·ša'	'am·me·kā,	le·yē·ša'	yā·ṣā·tā
רֹאשׁ	מָחַץ־תָּ	מְשִׁיחָה־	אֶת־	לִישָׁע	כָּפָעַ	לִישָׁע	יָצָאַ
the head	You struck	Your Anointed	with	for salvation	of Your people	for the salvation	You went forth
N-ms	V-Qal-Perf-2ms	Adj-msc   2ms	DirObjM	Prep-I   N-ms	N-msc   2ms	Prep-I   N-msc	V-Qal-Perf-2ms

5542 [e]	6677 [e]	5704 [e]	3247 [e]	6168 [e]	7563 [e]	1004 [e]
ph	se·lāh.	ṣaw·wār	'ad-	yə·sō·wd	'ā·rō·wt	rā·šā',
סְלָהּ	צְנַעַר	עַד־	יְסֻוד	עֲרוֹת	רְשָׁעַ	מִבֵּית
-	Selah	neck	to	from foundation	by laying bare	of the wicked
Punc	Interjection	N-ms	Prep	N-ms	V-Piel-InfAbs	Adj-ms
						Prep-m   N-msc

1. God's purpose was to bring salvation.
2. This is the Day of the Lord where judgment is brought to the nations and salvation is brought to his people
3. "anointed" – *mashiach* /maw-shee-akh/ means "anointed", "the anointed". Comes from *mashach* /maw-shakh/ which means "to smear" or "to anoint"
  - a. The use of this word is more unusual than it first appears
  - b. The OT use of this term to refer to messiah as a future deliverer is only in:
    - i. Psalm 2:2 – "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed."
    - ii. 1 Samuel 2:10 – "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."
    - iii. Isaiah 61:1 – "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound."
    - iv. Both a 538 BC anointed Cyrus and a future messiah ("anointed one") could be in mind here in Habakkuk just as it was in Isaiah44:24-25:7
  - c. Isaiah 45:1 uses it to refer to Cyrus
    - i. This would mean that just as Isaiah was looking for the anointed Cyrus to destroy the Babylonians, so here Habakkuk is looking for the same "anointed one" Cyrus to destroy the Babylonians.
    - ii. This interpretation fits the context
  - d. Here the word "anointed" is used in parallel with "your people", so many understand this as God's deliverance/salvation of his anointed people.
    - i. But, to do this the singular "anointed" in Hebrew text must be translated as plural.
    - ii. Nowhere in the OT are God's people referred to as "the anointed of the Lord"
  - e. Note the "with" – 'et - in front of "anointed" which means:  
"You went forth for the **SALVATION OF YOUR PEOPLE WITH THE SALVATION OF YOUR ANOINTED ONE**"

3:14 – “**You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors,  
who came like a whirlwind to scatter me,  
rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret.**

1. The Lord’s enemies defeat themselves.

- a. Enemies of the Lord are by nature self-destructive.
- b. The strength of the Lord’s enemies (and, the enemies of the Lord’s people) may at first seem intimidating, but ultimately that same strength will turn on itself. So, the greater the enemy’s strength, the greater resources the Lord (and his people) have fighting against that self-defeating enemy.
- c. Enemies of the Lord cannot create an actual force of real power outside the Lord and his reality. Any appearance of power against the Lord and his reality is empty, vain and a delusion.
- d. Examples:
  - i. Haman came against the Jews and Esther, but was hung on his own gallows – Esther 7:10
  - ii. Daniel’s Persian adversaries were devoured by the lions in the den they forced Daniel to be thrown – Daniel 6:24
  - iii. Proverbs 26:27 – “Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back on him who starts it rolling.”
  - iv. Psalm 57:6 – “They spread a net for my feet; my soul was despondent. They dug a pit before me, but they themselves have fallen into it! Selah.”
  - v. Proverbs 28:10 – “He who leads the upright along the path of evil will fall into his own pit, but the blameless will inherit what is good.”
  - vi. Psalm 7:15-16 – “He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made. His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends.”
  - vii. Psalm 9:15 – “The nations have fallen into a pit of their making; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.”
  - viii. Psalm 10:2 – “In pride the wicked pursue the needy; let them be caught in the schemes they devise.”
  - ix. Psalm 94:23 – “He will bring upon them their own iniquity and destroy them for their wickedness. The Lord our God will destroy them.”
  - x. Abimelech aligns with Shechem, but the curse becomes self-destruction – Judges 9:19-20
  - xi. Jehoshaphat and Judah come upon the self-defeated coalition – 2 Chronicles 20:17-24
  - xii. The fall of northern Israel before 722 BC and Judah in 586 BC, Isaiah 9:19-21 says – “Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts the land is scorched, and the people are like fuel for the fire; no one spares another. They slice meat on the right, but are still hungry, and they devour on the left, but are not satisfied; each devours the flesh of his own arm, Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim devours Manasseh; together they are against Judah. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.”
  - xiii. Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38:21 – “I will summon a sword against Gog[d] on all my mountains, declares the Lord God. Every man’s sword will be against his brother.”

- xiv. The Anti-Christ destroys the city Babylon the Great before the nations gather together for battle in the end:
1. Revelation 17:15-18 – “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”
  2. Revelation 16:12-16 – “The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, **who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.** (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) **And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.**”
- xv. Final battle for Jerusalem in Zechariah 14:13 – “And on that day a great panic from the Lord shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other.”
2. “me” refers to the prophet Habakkuk who will himself be scattered by the Babylonians.
- a. Habakkuk knows that at his point in history he himself will see defeat.
  - b. Ultimately Habakkuk knows that from the divine point of view his nation’s enemies will not survive their own power and limited time in history.

**3:15 – “You trampled the sea with your horses,  
the surging of mighty waters.**

1. Habakkuk now records again the ultimate presence of the Lord on earth
2. No matter how powerful the enemy, the Lord has already in the past trample more powerful opposition – the sea and the mighty waters
  - a. This could be the Red Sea and the Jordan River
  - b. This could include the waters of the chaos at creation
  - c. This could include the waters sent and controlled at the flood of Noah
3. No Babylonian forces will be able to stand in the way of the Lord when he begins the next phase of history

**3:16 – “I hear, and my body trembles;  
my lips quiver at the sound;  
rottenness enters into my bones;  
my legs tremble beneath me.  
Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble  
to come upon people who invade us.**