

Christ in Prophecy
Jesus in the Old Testament 41
The Coming Day of the Lord (Habakkuk & Zephaniah)

Key Verses: Habakkuk 1:5, 2:4; Zephaniah 1:7

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Opening

Tim Moore: Greetings once again and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I'm your host, Tim Moore, and I'm joined by my co-host, Nathan Jones. We are nearing the end of our Jesus in the Old Testament series, and there are some important insights yet to be mined from the rest of the Minor Prophets.

Nathan Jones: We've come to a couple of books that not every student of Bible Prophecy is already familiar with: Habakkuk and Zephaniah. Sadly, without preaching and teaching on Bible Prophecy, many Christians have little exposure to these insightful books, unless they have come across them in a yearly Bible reading plan. But we've talked about these books many times—because they offer such insight into God's judgment of Israel and Judah, and because they point to the coming Tribulation and return of Christ.

Part 1

Tim Moore: We're delighted to welcome a very special guest to our program today. Coming to us all the way from Cape Town, South Africa, Marko Kiroglu is the director of Countdown to Christ Ministries—one of the sister ministries Lamb & Lion supports in proclaiming the soon return of Jesus Christ. Marko, thanks for connecting with us through the miracle of modern technology from half-way around the world!

Marko Kiroglu: Tim, praise the Lord, it is a great honor to be with you.

Tim Moore: Well, it is a great honor for us to have you. And before we jump into Habakkuk and Zephaniah tell our viewers how you came to know the Lord, and how you came to launch Countdown to Christ Ministries.

Marko Kiroglu: Tim, I was born in Turkey to a very secular Muslim family. Right after I completed my military service in the Turkish Army I met, if I can put it that way, the Lord Jesus came into my life. I read the Bible for the first time in my life. I gave my life to Him. Joined the local congregation. Soon after that became a pastor, one of the pastors there. And the Lord called me to South Africa to start this ministry. Eventually in 2009 I started this ministry with my wife who is a South African national.

Nathan Jones: Fantastic. You have a further testimony; I think people ought to check out our Christ in Prophecy YouTube channel where you explain the journey of being a persecuted Muslim to going to South Africa. But we are going to go back in the past, even farther than your history, we are going to go back to 605-630 BC, it is under the reign of the evil king Jehoiakim, and we've got the prophet Habakkuk. And the prophet Habakkuk is seeing all the evil that

Jehoiakim's government is doing in the world, and the sense of righteousness that's built in him is really vexed. And so, he has this great lament that he prays out to the Lord. Can you tell us what was that lament?

Marko Kiroglu: To start with I find Habakkuk very relevant to us today in South Africa, where we live, because Habakkuk is crying out to the Lord because of the problems of violence, strife, contention, wickedness, lawlessness, perversion in the society. And we find these problems very real today in our lives where we live as well. And I assume America is not much better than here.

Nathan Jones: Oh, not at all.

Tim Moore: Yeah, exactly right.

Nathan Jones: And then we kind of had that same cry that Habakkuk had in chapter 1 verse 2 he says, "Oh, Lord how long shall I cry, and you will not hear? Even cry out to you, "Violence!" And you will not save. Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me." Brother, when COVID happened we saw South Africa descend into chaos, here in the United States it did as well. And we saw all the evil going on, and yet it was supported by the media, and it was supported by government officials. So, it is interesting to read Habakkuk because it is very much a snapshot of what you guys are going through in South Africa and we are going through in the United States.

Marko Kiroglu: It is shocking, Tim and Nathan. This morning I was talking to one dear friend and we find ourselves in the pages of the Bible. The level of corruption. The level of wickedness and evil, and the authorities either being silent about it or being practically involved in it is shocking. I find myself in the same shoes as Habakkuk, if I can put it that way.

Tim Moore: You know Habakkuk wanted the Lord to give a little wake up call to his society back in the day. And sometimes we would want the same thing, but the Lord had a different plan which was shocking to Habakkuk. What was the Lord's plan?

Marko Kiroglu: Well, I think one of the books that Dr. David Reagan mentioned in some of his books about this problem, God's remedial judgment, and I think God's answer to Habakkuk was pretty much the same thing, the nation has past the no turning point. And if I look at our societies today I see the same thing, our society has past the no turning point. And as God said to Habakkuk, God's answer is actually judgment by an even more wicked, even more corrupt society. And I find that we seem to be sitting exactly in the same place.

Tim Moore: Yeah, we sure do. And it is galling to us to think that we are going to suffer even greater, but I think you are right, the Lord's ways are beyond our ways. And Habakkuk's response was how can you judge us by those who are more wicked? And yet, today we see in places like Ukraine where Russia is just devastating that nation, where wickedness seems to be devastating urban areas and cities in particular, but really whole nations, whether in South Africa, in the United States, all around the world. This is not a new problem, it is the same kind of thing that Habakkuk saw.

Marko Kiroglu: And Tim, if I can insert here, a local situation from where we live our country statistically shows that about 85% of our population is proclaiming to be Christian. But recently statistics reveal that South Africa is the most crime ridden country in the world at the moment. At the moment every day nearly 153 women get raped, 65 people per day get killed, more than

300 violent crimes get committed per day, to say the least. And in the middle of this we cry, "Lord, how long? That our people Lord, how do you allow this?" Just like Habakkuk used to say, "Lord, have mercy on us." And the Lord's answer is, "Well, you have seen nothing, because of the wickedness of this nation I will give it into the hands of those who are even more wicked."

Nathan Jones: Who happened in Habakkuk's time to be the Babylonians, right? Eventually the Babylonians became powerful. In 586 they destroyed Judah which was the people group that Habakkuk was ministering to. We are kind of Habakkuk's today as we all minister to our culture and our civilization as prophets, so to speak, we are forth tellers, we are not foretellers.

Tim Moore: Prophetic voices.

Nathan Jones: Prophetic voices, yes, that calls society to repent and turn back to Jesus Christ. Now, it is interesting that as Tim said, when Habakkuk heard God says, "Okay, I'm going to deal with this evil by destroying you with the Babylonians," he was kind of shocked, right? He did something really neat, he went up into the walls and the ramparts and he kind of demanded God to give an answer. Can you tell us what God's answer was?

Marko Kiroglu: Well, God's answer was, "Write this vision, so easily readable, that even the man who is running fast can read it." As if God was saying, "You know broadcast it in every airway, broadcast it on the internet, broadcast it on the TV, broadcast it on the radio, I am bringing a judgment upon this nation." And I find that to be very prophetic. And now, thinking back Dr. Reagan's ministry, Lamb & Lion Ministry, warning the nation in America, God's judgment is coming, turn back to God. And we are doing the same thing here, turn back to God. The only safe place for us is in the hands of Jesus. And I tend to think that national redemption, or national restoration is maybe too far gone, and it is impossible, but individual salvation is still available. Maybe nations will not go back to their golden days in terms of the United States or South Africa or Europe, but each and every individual can still turn to God for personal salvation.

Tim Moore: Exactly right. I'm reminded even as Nathan was talking about us being prophetic voices in this day and age to forthtell God's truth. You know Elijah was telling truths to his nation, calling them out for wickedness, and yet he was labeled by the very king of that land a troubler of Israel. And he was not a troubler, he was a truth teller. And today Christians in South African, and here in the United States are labeled as the troulbers because we are calling out the wickedness, but really we are calling people to repent and to put their trust in Jesus Christ. And Habakkuk was faced with a very challenging decision, would he trust in the Lord God, would he accept His plan, His judgment, or would he still stand on those ramparts and pout? And Habakkuk came to a very tough faith.

Marko Kiroglu: Yes, and it is so true. And today there are many people they would like us to tell them soothing messages, they would like us to tell them, you know what it is alright to kill unborn babies because after all we don't have enough food to feed everybody. It is alright if a man becomes a woman and a woman becomes man. It is alright if churches go down the drain, they would like us to say that. But when we stand up and preach biblical truth, then we are isolated as troublemakers. Tim, you have said very rightly we are finding ourselves exactly in the same position as the prophets of the Bible.

Nathan Jones: It is neat how the prophets when Habakkuk tried to call out, Well how could you punish us with a more evil nation? And God in chapter 2 says, "Hey, this is surely going to

happen. Nothing is going to change this.” Just like today we know the Tribulation is surely going to happen. And it is wonderful to see Habakkuk’s faith because he ends chapter 3 with verse 19, “The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer’s feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills.” So, it seems like as a musician he was doing a prayer, as well as a song in chapter 3. Where even though he knew that the world was going to end as he knew it, he has put his faith and trust in Jesus Christ, or God at the time, like we can put our faith in trust in Jesus Christ. Do you have advice for us today as we are approaching the collapse of western civilization and we know the Tribulation is on the horizon? What should Christians be doing today?

Marko Kiroglu: Nathan, you have actually highlighted a very important point. Habakkuk has coined this phrase of “in the last days the righteous shall live by faith.” That is, for the last two years, that has been the most used verse that I have most frequently preached on and talked about in our context here in South Africa. In the middle of all of the calamities, in the middle of all the great pandemic of corruption, wickedness, violence, destruction of everything that seemed to be good and beautiful all around us.

Even in all that, when I stand before a group of believers I need to give them hope. What hope can I give them? You know what hope can you give to some people in a world like this? But the hope is exactly what Habakkuk was saying. Yes, while all these things are happening, when God is gradually handing people over to their sinful desires, as is happening in our world today, the righteous shall be saved. The righteous shall live by faith. And that is God’s promise to us.

You know I fall right in there, the Blessed hope, or the golden promise as we read in the New Testament, the Blessed Hope is right there in Habakkuk as well. In the middle of all kinds of Tribulation the righteous shall live by faith. Our citizenship is not here, Tim. And Nathan you were asking what would I say, there in Philippians chapter 3, verse 20 we read, our citizenship is not of this world. We are citizens of Heaven, we belong to Jesus, we are here temporarily. If the governments and society and the infrastructure in this world are collapsing that is not our prime concern, our prime concern is to serve our eternal Father God. And yes, the Bible says all these calamities are going to fall upon the earth, and this is still nothing. I often say, this is just warming up the world for what is coming.

Tim Moore: Oh, amen.

Marko Kiroglu: What is coming is so much worse.

Tim Moore: It really is. And if we get shaken by these early birth pang, and what is coming then our faith is fragile indeed. And yet, we stand on a rock that cannot be shaken. I was reminding my wife the other day, because we were talking about living in an earthquake zone, and I said, “Well, if you will sink your foundation down to solid rock, your house actually will not tumble because it is built upon the rock.” The only houses and buildings that tumble are when they are built on soil that tends to move around. Well, we stand on the rock that cannot be shaken, and therefore our faith is not based on our ability to have faith, but it is based on His solid foundation. And so, you are exactly right, Marko we should not be distracted even as the world goes into chaos, as all the signs that we have talked about for many years come to pass, it should just ground us even further on Jesus Christ.

Marko Kiroglu: Yes, that is so true. And Tim we have a beautiful future, a fascinating, wonderful, amazing future awaiting us in Jesus. He will come one day, in the blinking of an eye,

take us out of this increasingly darkening world. And after that a glorious future is waiting for us. And we should be excited about it. We have no reason to get into paranoia. We have no reason to get into depression. All the more we should be excited because everything in this world is playing out exactly as they have been prophesied in the Bible, God is in control.

Tim Moore: Amen.

Nathan Jones: Well, I love Habakkuk, back when we had the Unshakeable Conference I got to preach on Habakkuk, and then I wrote a whole book along with Pastor Steve Howell on the “12 Faith Journeys of the Minor Prophets,” and Habakkuk is one of my favorite. But why don’t we switch gears, if you are ready for that.

Tim Moore: Yes, let’s. Sure.

Nathan Jones: Now we’ve got another book we want to cover and that is the book of Zephaniah, he was also called Sophonias. He was a little earlier than Habakkuk, about 640 BC, and he was under a time of great revival under King Josiah, little young King Josiah. But his name has kind of a prophetic meaning, can you tell us what that is?

Marko Kiroglu: This is a beautiful question, Nathan. His name, if I can say, his name embodies the entire theology of the Rapture in one word.

Nathan Jones: Okay.

Tim Moore: Give it to us.

Marko Kiroglu: Alright his name literally means, despite the impending judgment, despite the impending judgment there is going to fall on all people, the righteous ones will be hidden. They will be the redeemed.

Tim Moore: Amen, the Lord protects or hides, and preserves those who are His. It is a beautiful name. Sometimes our names I think are little bit more banal, but in Scripture especially these prophets have names that point to the one who preserves and protects, who in wrath remembers mercy. And so, Zephaniah is yet another demonstration of God’s grace poured out to His people, and by extension to those of us who put our faith in Him. But he expands his understanding of the righteous outpouring of God’s wrath that is coming to encompass not just the wicked and wayward nation of Israel and Judah, but also the whole earth. And sure enough we are seeing that coming to pass in our very day, how the whole earth is worthy of God’s wrath and His judgment.

Marko Kiroglu: Yes, that is very true, Zephaniah like many prophetic books has double fulfillment. On the one hand it was the immediate fulfillment of his prophecy right there in those days. And the secondly, the second layer of his prophecy is what we are going through right now, and what will happen at the time of the Rapture and after the Rapture. This is a beautiful prophetic book, it just summarizes prophetically the build up to the seven year Tribulation, the Rapture and God’s impending judgment on those who have been shaking their fists against God, generations after generations.

Nathan Jones: Zephaniah chapter 1 verse 14 has this interesting passage that there is a term that you see throughout the Bible, it says “The great day of the Lord is near; It is near and hastens quickly.” And it goes on to describe it, it is a day of bitterness, where men cry out, it’s a day of wrath, and trouble, and distress, desolation, darkness. And it goes on and on and tells

about this horrific, terrible time when God's wrath will be poured out on the earth. Can you tell us what is this day of the Lord that we read about all throughout the prophets?

Marko Kiroglu: Nathan, there is as far as I understand there is a unanimous agreement among the seasoned, solid Bible students, and Bible teachers that the day of the Lord is the day when Jesus comes to take His vengeance. When God comes to take his vengeance against those who have been blaspheming Him, shaking their fists against Him, launching wars against God, and literally doing everything they can do against God, but God has been silent and patient with them, as if, if I can put it in my words, the day of the Lord is the day God pays it back. God pays them back what they deserve. In other words, it is the seven year Tribulation.

Tim Moore: Well, you know the other thing that it makes very clear in Zephaniah is that God is proclaiming judgment not just on Israel and Judah, not the world, but he also calls up very specifically the enemies of Judah in addition to Judah itself. He declares woe on Jerusalem and on the nations who come against her. So, God is kind of equal opportunity in His righteous indignation towards wickedness all around the world, but He does call out those who have an evil intent toward His people and toward Israel.

Marko Kiroglu: Yes, that is so true, Anti-Semitism will receive its due response from God. Replacement Theology will receive its due response from God. All false theology will receive its due response. But at the same time among the Jews the practice of denying Yeshua, the practice of refusing Yeshua as the King of the Jews will also receive its due response from God. It is a day God will pay them what they have been craving for generations.

Nathan Jones: As we have been going through this series on Jesus in the Old Testament we are looking for types of Jesus, symbols, even Christophanies, and both Habakkuk and Zephaniah we see Jesus coming back as the conquering King to bring wrath. Clearly it is pointing to the Day of the Lord, culminating in the Second Coming which is the Day of Christ. And I find that fascinating that these two books which were written 2,600 years ago point to God's final return to bring tribulation. But its not only about Jesus bringing wrath, its also about Him bringing justice, and its also about Him bringing love. So, Marko could you tell us how does God bringing justice and wrath also an act of love?

Marko Kiroglu: Often we have a very wishy-washy culture. This 20th and 21st Century culture is so incredibly soap opera wishy-washy, isolated from logic and reality, it is so bad that when somebody stands up and talks straight forward to them they take offense, and they say you are loveless. They make God to be this sugar daddy sitting on this cushiony, cloud up there and just looking for someone to give some candy so that they can entertain themselves. God's Word is very clear, either you are for God, or you are against God, there are no two ways, there is no third way here, there is no middle ground here. Either you acknowledge God and pay Him His due respect and stand before Him as a faithful servant and a child of God, receive His salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus made it incredibly plain in the Scriptures, there is no other way one can come to follow except through Jesus Christ. Either you live by these, or you are an enemy of God, there is no third ground here. Now, God also made it incredibly clear to us that if we don't turn to God after all that God has done for us, and if you continue rebelling against Him there is only one future that is awaiting us, that is the wrath of God.

Nathan Jones: I think for those of us who are going to be raptured one day, the wheat with the tares so to speak, yes God does bring justice on those. We have been crying out for justice, just like in Habakkuk, Lord, how can you let evil stand? And His answer is the Tribulation, evil will be

defeated. To me that is an act of love, because not only does He rescue us, or hide us like Zephaniah's name means, but then protects us by rapturing us, but that is an act of love too because He rescues us from His wrath, He judges the world, and this is all the birth pains leading into the Millennial Kingdom where Jesus will rule and reign in peace and righteousness and justice. We have to get rid of this old evil system, it has to fall away.

Marko Kiroglu: Yes, it is very true. And also, Nathan in other respect of the love of God is I am marveled at the patience of God. Look for 2,000 years God has been preaching, proclaiming His love through thousands, and thousands of missionaries, pastors and preachers through Lamb & Lion over four decades, many ministries over the internet, over the radio waves, and TV waves, and books and magazines. Did you know about, I'm sure you know it there is no land where Christian missionaries don't go, there is no language where missionaries are not eager to learn and proclaim the Gospel, it is all an expression of the love of God for people. And after the Rapture happens God is still going to use 144,000 special chosen and sealed Jews for them, God is still giving them another chance. And I am fascinated to read in the book of Revelation that towards the middle of the seven year Tribulation God is even sending the flying angels, flying in the sky and screaming out to the people turn to God, turn to God.

Nathan Jones: The Gospel Angel.

Marko Kiroglu: How amazing God's love, it is so persistent.

Tim Moore: It is so persistent; you make me excited just listening to you talk. You know Habakkuk made a prayer which makes me just think God had to shake His head because Habakkuk prayed, "in wrath remember mercy." And I'm reminded that God always remembers mercy, He is merciful. Zephaniah in chapter 3:17 talking about the wrath of God said, "The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exalt over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy." So, even in the wrath that is poured out He is still speaking of God as this tender bridegroom, almost sounding like Song of Solomon. And as you just declared again, Marko in the midst of their tribulation God will still remember mercy because He will still hold out the opportunity for those who put their trust in Jesus Christ to be saved, to have eternal salvation even as wrath is being poured out in that day of the Lord. Marko we are so grateful for your voice, which is proclaiming, which is forthtelling God's truth, we pray a great blessing on you, on Countdown to Christ Ministries, and we hope that next time that you are in the United States you will join us here in our studio for another continued conversation.

Marko Kiroglu: Tim, that will be fantastic. And you know you are great friends, and a great blessing to us. Thank you so much, Tim I appreciate this great time together.

Tim Moore: Godspeed, Marko. God bless you and all your work.

Closing

Nathan Jones: Habakkuk's plea to God still echoes in our hearts today. We would all like God to send a little wake-up call to the world that ignores Him and flaunts its sin to His face.

You know God has sent wake-up calls—in the form of His prophets, His Word, and prophetic voices even today who have been calling individuals and nations to repentance for many years. But time is running out.

Peter tells us that God is patient—because He does not wish for any to perish, but for all to have the opportunity for repentance. That is why He sent Jonah to Nineveh, Habakkuk and Zephaniah to Judah, and Jesus Christ for sinners like Tim and me.

Tim Moore: For over 42 years, Lamb & Lion Ministries has been proclaiming the soon return of Jesus Christ. We do not know when He will break from the heavens, but we believe all the signs foretold in Scripture point to the imminence of His coming. Do not delay. Put your trust in Him—right now, this day. God’s patience will not endure forever. Soon, He will gather His Church in an event called the Rapture, and then pour out judgment after judgment upon an unrepentant world. Do not miss this opportunity to be saved from the wrath to come.

Please know that we pray every day, before every show that hearts will be impacted, souls will be saved, and God will be glorified. That is our prayer today as well.

Until next week, “Look up, and be watchful, for Jesus Christ—the LORD who is our strength and our salvation—is drawing near!”

End of Program