

lifeLines reference  
Homes Built on GRACE & TRUTH  
Why Give Thanks? Acknowledge

WORD

(You are welcome to gather in groups of 3 or 4 for all or part of this discussion.)

Read Habakkuk 3:17-19

Habakkuk is basically a verbatim of a fierce conversation between the prophet and God. What's the conversation about?

How would you summarize Habakkuk's complaint?

Where does the prophet end up? (Chapter 3)

What can you take from this fierce conversation and apply to your own relationship with God?

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

(17) **Although**.—Better, *For*. The conjunction connects this verse with what precedes, and explains Habakkuk's affliction more fully. With the sword shall come famine, invasion as usual producing desolation.

Benson Commentary

**Habakkuk 3:17-18**. *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom* — Though all outward means of support should fail, yet will I still have a firm confidence in the power, goodness, and faithfulness of God, that he will preserve me, and supply me with all things necessary; and therefore, amidst the most threatening appearances of affairs, I shall still preserve inward peace and serenity of mind, as trusting in him *in whom is everlasting strength*, [Isaiah 26:3-4](#). The state of the land during the captivity may be here prophetically described, when the vineyards, olive-yards, fields, and pastures, would be in a desolate and barren state: or the prophet may be considered as declaring, that even such circumstances should not shake his confidence in God. *Yet will I rejoice in the Lord* — I shall have him to rejoice in, and will rejoice in him. *I will joy in the God of my salvation* —

In the knowledge and love, the favour and friendship, the care and kindness of him in whom I have present, and hope to have future and eternal salvation. Observe: reader, this is the principal ground of our joy in God, that he is *the God of our salvation*; our everlasting salvation, the salvation of our souls; and if he be so, we may rejoice in him as such in our greatest distresses, since by them our salvation cannot be hindered, but may be furthered. Instead of, *the God of my salvation*, the LXX. read, **ἐπι τῷ Θεῷ τῷ σωτηρι μου**, *in God my Saviour*; and the Vulgate, *in Deo Jesu meo, in God my Jesus*, or, *in Jesus my God*. "That Jesus," says Calmet, "who is the joy, the consolation, the hope, the life of believers; without whom the world can offer us nothing but false joys; who was the object of the desires, and the perpetual consolation of the prophets and patriarchs:" see [John 8:56](#).

### Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

3:16-19 When we see a day of trouble approach, it concerns us to prepare. A good hope through grace is founded in holy fear. The prophet looked back upon the experiences of the church in former ages, and observed what great things God had done for them, and so was not only recovered, but filled with holy joy. He resolved to delight and triumph in the Lord; for when all is gone, his God is not gone. Destroy the vines and the fig-trees, and you make all the mirth of a carnal heart to cease. But those who, when full, enjoyed God in all, when emptied and poor, can enjoy all in God. They can sit down upon the heap of the ruins of their creature-comforts, and even then praise the Lord, as the God of their salvation, the salvation of the soul, and rejoice in him as such, in their greatest distresses. Joy in the Lord is especially seasonable when we meet with losses and crosses in the world. Even when provisions are cut off, to make it appear that man lives not by bread alone, we may be supplied by the graces and comforts of God's Spirit. Then we shall be strong for spiritual warfare and work, and with enlargement of heart may run the way of his commandments, and outrun our troubles. And we shall be successful in spiritual undertakings. Thus the prophet, who began his prayer with fear and trembling, ends it with joy and triumph. And thus faith in Christ prepares for every event. The name of Jesus, when we can speak of Him as ours, is balm for every wound, a cordial for every care. It is as ointment poured forth, shedding fragrance through the whole soul. In the hope of a heavenly crown, let us sit loose to earthly possessions and comforts, and cheerfully bear up under crosses. Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry; and where he is, we shall be also.

### Pulpit Commentary

Verse 17. - The prophet depicts the effects of the hostile invasion, which are such as to make the natural heart despair. **Although the fig tree shall not blossom**. The devastations of the enemy leave the country bare and uncultivated. The Chaldeans, like the Assyrians and Egyptians, cut down and burnt the fruit-bearing trees of the countries which they

invaded (comp. [Deuteronomy 20:19](#); [Isaiah 9:10](#); [Isaiah 37:24](#); [Jeremiah 6:6](#)). The trees most useful and abundant in Palestine are mentioned (comp. [Deuteronomy 6:11](#); [Hosea 2:12](#); [Joel 1:7](#); [Micah 4:4](#); [Micah 6:15](#), etc.). **The labour of the olive shall fail**; literally, **shall lie**. The "labour" is the produce, the fruit. Though the yield shall disappoint all expectation. The use of the verb "to lie" in this sense is found elsewhere; e.g. [Isaiah 58:11](#); [Hosea 9:2](#). So Horace, 'Carm.,' 3:1, 30, "Fundus mendax;" and 'Epist.,' 1:7. 87, "Spem mentita seges." The fields; the cornfields ([Isaiah 16:8](#)). The flock shall be cut off from the fold. There shall be no flocks in the fold, all having perished for lack of food. "Omnia haec," says St. Jerome, "auferentur a populo, quia inique egit in Deum creatorem suum."

### Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament

"Therefore will He give them up until the time when a travailing woman hath brought forth, and the remnant of His brethren will return, together with the sons of Israel. [Micah 5:4](#). And He will stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God, and they will dwell, for now will He be great to the ends of the earth." "Therefore" (lākhēn): i.e., "because the great divine Ruler of Israel, from whom alone its redemption can proceed, will spring from the little Bethlehem, and therefore from the degraded family of David" (Caspari).

This is the correct explanation; for the reason why Israel is to be given up to the power of the nations of the world, and not to be rescued earlier, does not lie in the appearance of the Messiah as such, but in His springing from little Bethlehem. The birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem, and not in Jerusalem the city of David, presupposes that the family of David, out of which it is to spring, will have lost the throne, and have fallen into poverty. This could only arise from the giving up of Israel into the power of its enemies. Micah had already stated clearly enough in what precedes, that this fate would fall upon the nation and the royal house of David, on account of its apostasy from the Lord; so that he could overlook this here, and give prominence to the other side alone, namely to the fact that, according to the counsel of God, the future Deliverer and Ruler of Israel would also resemble His royal ancestor David in the fact that He was not to spring from Zion the royal city built on high, but from the insignificant country town of Bethlehem, and that for this very reason Israel was to remain so long under the power of the nations of the world. The suffix attached to יתנם points to ישראל in [Micah 5:1](#); and נתן is applied, as in [1 Kings 14:16](#), to the surrender of Israel into the power of its enemies as a punishment for its sins. This surrender is not the last of many oppressions, which are to take place in the period before the birth of the Messiah (the Roman oppression), but a calamity lasting from the present time, or the coming of the judgment threatened in ch. 3, until the time of the Messiah's coming; and יתנם points back not merely to [Micah 5:1](#), but also to [Micah 4:9-10](#). The travailing woman (yōlēḏāh) is not the community of Israel (Theodoret, Calvin, Vitringa, and others), but the mother of the Messiah (Cyril, and most of the Christian expositors, including even Ewald and Hitzig). The supposition that the congregation is personified here, is precluded not only by the fact that in the very same sentence the sons of Israel are spoken of in the

plural, but still more by the circumstance that in that case the bringing forth would be only a figurative representation of the joy following the pain, in which the obvious allusion in the words to the Messiah, which is required by the context, and especially by the suffix to **אחיו**, which refers to the Messiah, and presupposes that His birth is referred to in **יולדה**, would entirely fall away. But Micah had all the more ground for speaking of this, inasmuch as Isaiah had already predicted the birth of the Messiah ([Isaiah 7:14](#)). **יולדה** has no article, and the travailing woman is thereby left indefinite, because the thought, "till He is born," or "till a mother shall bring Him forth," upon which alone the whole turns, did not require any more precise definition.

### Pastor Jeff's brief thought to ponder

This is one of my favorite Thanksgiving texts to preach on. We tend to return thanks when we see the bounty and as we flourish. Returning thanks when we are in need is an altogether different proposition. Why?

#### **PRAY**

Are there "unfruitful" times you are aware of right now? In your life, or others? How could you use vs. 17-19 to help you acknowledge God in prayer in spite of the current circumstances?

#### **LOVE**

Who do you know that would be blessed in their current trial if you prayed for them to see the truth of this passage in their own lives? Will you commit this week to pray this for them?

