



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Habakkuk 1:12 – 2:1

“Habakkuk, or A Holy God and His Unholy Instrument” TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer]...to Thee with thanksgiving and praise for the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the good news concerning him who loved us and loosed us from our sins and his own precious blood. And we thank Thee that we're able to gather in his name and to look at the scriptures, which according to his own testimony, testify concerning him. Enable us, Lord, as we study then to see him and may our time together be edifying and profitable for each one of us. We pray Thy blessing upon the meetings that follow in the Bible Institute as well.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight, we turn again to the prophesy of Habakkuk and our subject is Habakkuk or A Holy God and an Unholy Instrument. The prophet has begun his book by saying “The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw.” Now, we didn't lay a great deal of stress upon the fact that Habakkuk is a biblical prophet but we should lay a little bit of stress on it. When the prophet writes that he is a prophet he means that the things that he says always come true. He does not speak as a human prophet but he speaks as a divine prophet. A few weeks ago I was reading one of the current Christian magazines and noticed some recent prophecies of the famed American astrologer and self designated

prophetess, Jeane Dixon. She has made five predictions and I’m going to give her twenty points for each one of these five predictions. Number one, she predicted that Ronald Regan would be the presidential nominee of the Republican Party. Number two, President Ford would be wounded slightly in an assassination attempt probably in July in a northern city. Well she hasn’t scratched yet. Three, a health crisis will arise for Ford, he will resign. Not much time left. Four, Jimmy Carter would be the Democratic presidential nominee but only after a battle between Carter and Humphrey at the Democratic convention. She was close there but really she missed. And five, Carter will go on to occupy the White House. So according to strict grading she made twenty.

Now the prophets of the Old Testament always were correct. Everything that they every prophesized has either come true or will come true. So when we look at the divine prophets we want to be sure to distinguish what they say from the human prophets and prophetesses.

Tonight we are turning to chapter 1 in verse 12, and for our Scripture reading, reading from verse 12 through chapter 2 in verse 1.

“Aren’t thou not from everlasting O Lord my God my holy one. We will not die. Thou O lord has appointed them to judge and thou O Rock hast established them to correct. Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil and thou canst not look on wickedness with favor. Why does thou look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why aren’t thou silent when the wicked swallowed up those more righteous than they? Why hast thou made man like the fish of the sea like creeping things without a ruler over them? The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook, drag away with their net and gather together in their dragnet.” (This might be rendered.) “Therefore they rejoice, are glad. Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net and burn the incense to their fishing net because through these things their catch is large and their food is plentiful. Will they therefore go on emptying their net?” (The Hebrew tenses here are tenses that indicated

continual action.) “Will they therefore go on emptying their net and continually slay nations without sparing? I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart. And I will keep watch to see what he will speak to me. And how I may reply when I am reproved?”

One of the great dangers of spiritual exercise is the possibility that we may over emphasize the theoretical. Someone has said, “The Scotsman is always a theologian even if he is not religious.” And sometimes that rubs off on the true saints of God too. It is possible for us to so emphasize the doctrinal that we are cold, and we do over emphasize the doctrines of the word of God. It is important that we be sure that we apply the truth that we know. And so all of our stresses on Bible doctrine we do not want to forget that it is possible for us to overdue even great thing.

I read somewhere of a discussion over translations of the Bible. And according to the translation discussion, someone said “Well I personally like the King James version I like the old English. And I think it is useful for us to read old English so that we have a little bit of culture, a little bit of education. And the translation is not all that inaccurate.” And someone else said “No, I like the American Standard Version because it is accurate and we should be interested in that which is accurate.” And then someone raised the Moffett translation which is a translation in modern English and praised that version and the forth person in the conversation was silent for a moment and said finally “Well the translation I like best is mother’s translation. She always put into practice the things she read in the Scriptures and after all that translation was really the one that appealed to me.”

Habakkuk is a wonderful picture of the proper approach to the solutions of spiritual problems. And we learned last time that contrary to many of us and our difficulties instead of complaining to our friends, instead of complaining to our neighbors, instead of complaining to our Christian leaders, the prophet complained to the Lord. And in the final analysis, he’s the one to whom we should go. Jeremiah said that “We should

call unto him and that he would hear us and he would answer our petitions.” And Habakkuk certainly illustrates that. He complained about violence in the land. He said “How long O Lord will I call for help and thou will not hear. I cry out to thee violence yet thou does not save.” So he complained of violence and then God gave him a reply that he was going to do something about it. He said “Look about the nations, observe, be astonished, wonder because I’m doing something in your days Habakkuk. You would not believe it if you were told.” And then he proceeds to describe how he is going to send Chaldeans down against the land and he is going to judge Israel and he is going to take Israel into captivity.

Now that raises a further problem with Habakkuk. What I like about the prophet Habakkuk is he didn’t mind asking God some difficult questions. And the difficult question that he asks is “Well how can a holy God use such an unholy instrument as the Chaldeans? And particularly how can he use such an unholy instrument as the Chaldeans to judge a people who are more righteous, granted all of their failings are at least more righteous than the Chaldeans?” So how can a holy God use an unholy instrument? Well that’s the problem that disturbs him and so he begins by doing something that I guess is proper and is something that we should remember too when we face a problem. For the first thing that he does is to affirm his trust in the Lord. He’s not complaining out of unbelief he’s complaining out of belief.

Now the prophet’s affirmation of trust is given us in verse 12 and the connection between verse 11 and verse 12, I think is very good. The prophet had said giving the words of God “Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on but they will be held guilty. They whose strength is their God.” So you get the picture of the Chaldeans as a nation who rejoices in their might. They praise themselves because they are so great. “Is not this great Babylon that I have built,” Nebuchadnezzar said. It is a beautiful illustration of a nation that trusts in its armed forces. All nations that trust in their armed forces, their nuclear power, and their other physical helps and forget God are destined to

disappointment. “Woe to the country that with Henley and his stirring but thoroughly unchristian invictus declares, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul,” some commentator has said. So notice in verse eleven, the Chaldeans they say “Our strength is our god.”

Now is the 12th verse we have Israel’s Jehovah who is the strength of Israel, “Aren’t not thou from everlasting O Lord, my God, my holy One, we will not die.” The first thing that he speaks of is of his confidence in God’s person. Look at the first part of verse 12, “Aren’t not thou from everlasting, O Lord.”

Now, remember the different words for Lord. We studied those in our series on Theology Proper last semester for those of you who stayed in the auditorium here. And you’ll remember that the term for Lord here is the term that refers to God as the self-existent being. The one whose being is from himself, consequently, he is absolutely independent of man. He is independent of everything outside of himself. Then the prophet says, not only does he speak of the Lord, but he calls him “My God.” And here he uses the term for God that refers to God as the strong one. The term that is used in Geneses, chapter 1 in verse 1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” So he speaks of him as the self-existent one, he speaks as the strong one, and he goes on to say “my holy one.”

Now the word holy is from Hebrew that means separated. And so he is the separated one, the holy one, the one who is different. Luther says, “The prophet here takes God by his nose.” So what he is doing, you see, is appealing to the character of God as he has seen it in the word of God. You are the eternal one, you are the self-existent one, you are the all powerful creator, you are the holy one, the separated one. And then he adds “We will not die.” Because did you notice the little pronouns “my,” my God, my holy one. You see he is speaking of God as the covenant keeping God as the God who has made certain promises to them. And since God has made certain unconditional promises to Israel he made them to Abraham, he confirmed them Isaac and

to Jacob, since he has made these unconditional promises he is sure to keep them. And so Habakkuk begins right at the beginning as complaining about his problem but he complains from the standpoint of strength.

It’s just as you and I would do if we got down on our knees before God and we praised him for who he is and what he has done for us, and then we say why what about such and such? Why did this happen to me and so on? So he begins, you see, with confidence because of his assurance that God has related himself to Israel. He is a part of Israel. He also affirms his confidence because of God’s work. He says “Thou O Lord has appointed them to judge and thou, O Rock, has established them to correct.” So he knows he’s taken God at his word, he’s believed what he has said above that the Chaldeans are going to carry out judgment on Israel. He doesn’t deny what he has just heard from God. As a matter of fact he affirms it. And, incidentally, he calls this God “a rock.”

Now, what a beautiful expression it is to think of God as a “rock” someone who cannot be moved from his promises. And because he is all of these things and because he is this stable God, therefore, he will do his work and do it in accordance with his word. Mr. Spurgeon somewhere has a story about an illiterate woman who engaged in a lot of conversation with one of her neighbors over the doctrine of the assurance of the believer. The neighbor was very skeptical and so the neighbor loved to poke fun at her. And finally one day after she had spoken again of her assurance that she belonged to the Lord and that her future was in the Lord’s hands and she was confident of it he said “How do you know that?” Why she said “God tells me that a hundred times.” And she started quoting texts to him, especially from first John, the Epistle of Christian assurance, where we know is found so many times. Finally, he shot a question at her when he was able to get a word in edgewise, “Well I suppose God doesn’t keep his word?” And she quickly answered with “Well his loss would be greater than mine, I would lose my soul, that’s true, but he would lose his honor.” So she had sensed that standing back of the promises

of God is the character of God. And it’s true it would be a loss if we were to lose our soul but for God to lose his honor that would be the ultimate loss.

So I love the way the prophet here begins. He’s complaining, he doesn’t understand things, he’s confused. But, nevertheless, he starts out “You’re the eternal one, you’re the Lord, you’re my God, you’re my holy one, we will not die.” We will survive; the nation will survive this crisis. And, furthermore, I know that you’ve appointed them to judge and O Rock you’ve established them to correct us. But now he engages in a little argument and this is the second part of the section the prophet’s argument. He’s confident but confused. Have you ever been that way before the Lord? Have you been very confident of the fact that God keeps his word but very confused? Well there are three people here that have been confused, it looks like.

But I want you to know that I have been very confident and I have been very confused. The thing that confuses the prophet is God’s method. He’s not confused about what he will ultimately do but he’s confused about his method. It reminds me of those opening chapters in the Gospel of Luke when Zechariahs and Mary hear those wonderful promises which come to them from the Lord through the angels. And you remember how John the Baptist’s father reacts to the wonderful promise that is given him concerning John the Baptist and he replies, “How shall I know this for certain?” Well that was unbelief. How should he know it? God had spoken to him through the angel that had come to him and therefore he should know it. And as a result of him unbelief he was chastised by being made dumb and deaf until John the Baptist was born. But now when Mary is given the promise concerning the Lord Jesus Christ’s birth we read in connection with her that she responded by saying “How can this be since I am a virgin.” In other words she didn’t question the fact that it would occur but she was very confused about the method by which it would come to pass. And so she was not chastised at all for asking the question. That was a confused question asking out of faith.

So here God’s method confuses Habakkuk and he states the problem in verse 13 and it is very simple “Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil and thou cast Thy look on wickedness with favor. Why doest Thou look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why art Thou solid while the wicked swallowed up those more righteous than they?” So you see he begins by saying, “Lord I know that you are a holy God, you cannot even look upon evil. Your eyes are so pure and of so much holiness you cannot look on evil. But how then can you look with favor on those Chaldeans? Explain that. That’s essentially what he’s asking. And then he gives an illustration in order to prove that it’s really a question that touches these wicked Chaldeans. They are wicked. He says in verse 14, “Why hast thou made men like the fish of the sea, like creeping things without a ruler over them?” Now he’s talking about how the Chaldeans come and people are taken by them like the fish in the sea. The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook. Incidentally, it was the custom for them in their activities with the nations to frequently take their captives and put a hook in the jaws and drag them off to captivity. So this figure of the fish hook is one that had a lot of reality to it. Drag them away with their net and gather them together to their dragnet. “Therefore they were joyous and glad.” So men are like fishes, defenseless fishes. Did you here that fisherman? So these men are likened to helpless fish. The angle, the hooks, the net, the dragnet, the Chaldeans used every means to capture them.

Now, if this was talking about real fishermen I would understand that because I need all of these means to catch one myself. But he’s talking figuratively and he says “Therefore, they rejoice and are glad and then he says therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net and burn incense to their fishing net because through these things their catch is large and their food is plentiful. Herodotus said that the Scythians use to make their swords symbol of Mars and annually offered sacrifices to them. And this was customary in ancient times and I’m sure that it was true of the Chaldeans that that is exactly what they did. They took the means with which they obtained their captives and they sacrificed

to them and praised them as if they were their gods. Luther says “Whoever boasts of something and rejoices but does not give thanks to the true God makes of himself an idol.” And they made an idol of the means by which they took the nations that they took captive, captive.”

Well he recapitulates the problem in verse 17 by saying, “Will they therefore empty their net and continually slay nations without sparing.” In other words, aren’t you going to do something about it? Lord is this going keep on constantly, the pictures of the continual capturing of men and dumping them on the shores of Babylon in captivity. Isn’t somebody going to do something about these wicked men?

Now, he anticipates an answer from the Lord. He’s confused but still basically underneath, you see, he is a believing man. So he has come to a little bit of conviction in the 1st verse of the 2nd chapter and this is the prophet’s anticipation of an answer. He says “I will stand on my guard post and station my self on the rampart, and I will keep watch to see what he will speak to me. And how may I reply when I am reproved.”

Now, I don’t think that Habakkuk really physically went up on a tower although that’s possible. It’s possible that he did go up on his guard post and sit there and wait for the Lord to speak to him. But the chances are, it seems to me, he’s speaking figuratively, and he is speaking getting off by himself and waiting to hear an answer from the Lord. In other words, this is a picture of careful scrutiny of the problem away from the mundane affairs of everyday life. Have you ever known what that is? Everybody ought to know what that is to get off alone with God from time to time. If you’re a believer in the Lord Jesus there ought to be some time, I don’t want to be a legalist and say every day but there ought to be some time in which you constantly get off with the Lord alone and spend time with him.

Now in the Hebrew text the cohortratives that are used here add a great deal of eagerness to it. It’s almost as if he says “Let me stand on my guard post and let me station myself on a rampart.” So he really is anxious for an answer to this question and

expresses it the way that he describes it. And I think that we can gather from this that it was customary for the prophet to get off by himself and to wait for what God would say to him. I will keep watch and see what he will speak. The Hebrew text says “With me.” He was used to having the Lord speak to him. And he says “Furthermore, that he wants to know what the Lord is going to say to him and how he may reply when he is reproved.” Because he rather expects the Lord is going to tell him that he doesn’t understand divine things. Then, of course, that is precisely what the Lord is going to tell him. So he says “I want to know what to say the Lord reproves me for asking this question.”

Now, I like that because evidently he wants an answer for himself and he wants and answer for others and he is not timid about getting an answer that my demonstrate to him that he, after all, is only a man because what is he doing, essentially? Well number one he is questioning the providence of God and number two he is questioning the justice of God. Now mind you he is not saying God is not just, he has protected himself by in the beginning by saying I know God is going to do this. I know he’s appointed this to happen and I know he’s the eternal God and I know he’s the holy God and all; I’m just raising some questions about it.

Now, I often have people come and ask me questions like that. They will come up and say, “Now, Dr. Johnson, I do believe in the doctrine of election. I want you to know that. I believe in the doctrine of election, but my problem is if God does elect someone does that mean the others don’t have any chance at all?” You see they’ve protected themselves. They’ve said they already believe in the doctrine of election, so they’re confused but, nevertheless, basically they know that’s in the Bible, they know that’s in his word, and that, it seems to me, is exactly the position of the prophets. So I guess that’s a proper question providing you protect yourself in the beginning.

Now, let me come to the conclusion because I want to stop and talk a little bit about the proper method for solving problems. Now, these problems that the prophets

had are problems that touch, of course in his case, the national life of Israel. But problem solving is something that touches not only national life but it touches in addition, international problems; it touches our personal problems also. And the same methods by which we solve our national problems as Habakkuk had them or problems in the local church as we always have, is the method by which we solve our personal problems.

I think the first step is to remember that we are to put away panic. Now, I think that is evident in the prophet’s words here. That is one thing that he has done. He has not panicked over this. He has his deep set problems but he has not panicked over them. And even in his complaining confusion he acknowledges the truths of the word of God. James says in the first chapter of his epistle “This you know my beloved brethren but let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.” Our trouble is that we are swift to speak and swift to wrath but slow to think.

Lloyd Jones has said “Someone has said that the trouble with the fellow that talks to fast is that he is liable to say something he hasn’t even thought of yet.” [Laughter] That often happens you know. I had an interview this week with a very lovely woman who has come in several time to talk to me. I always enjoy talking to her. She always leaves me something to think about. She left me something this past time. She has a friend who is a member of false cult kind of church and this disturbs her just as it always disturbs me. When I ride down, I’m going to go ahead and say it, it can go out on the tapes, but when I ride down Preston Road and see the Unitarian Church, I get a little upset. I really get a little irritated Unitarian Church.

And she expressed the other morning exactly what I feel. She was speaking with someone who was a member, I don’t think of that church but of another similar type of organization which is not a church at all. And she said “I told him that they had the colossal temerity to call themselves a church.” [Laughter] That was a beautiful expression. She said “If you call yourself a study group I wouldn’t mind but to call yourself a church what colossal temerity.” Then she went on to speak about the fact that she had a lot

friends who love to talk and that she had bad habit. She said occasionally I stop them and say, “Do you realize what you said.” And she said that always stops them and makes me very unpopular too. Swift to speak, we are too swift to speak.

One of the things we need to do when we face problems is don’t panic, don’t start talking, and don’t get upset. That’s the first step. What’s the next step in solving a problem? Well the next step is to put forth or reflect upon the basic principles. It seems to me that is exactly what Habakkuk has done. Now, that may be a kind of indirect approach to our problems you may think it is but sometimes the indirect approach is a good approach. When the allies in World War II began that long line of confrontation with their enemies, particularly with Germany, they didn’t begin with an attack on Germany, they didn’t begin with an attack on Europe, they began down in Africa because the indirect approach in that case was the best approach. It was the more fundamental approach they had decided. So there are times when we need to go back to the fundamentals. And here Habakkuk does that. He starts by going back to the fundamentals and saying “You are the eternal God, you are the Lord Jehovah, you are the creator of all, you are the holy God and you are my God and you are my holy one, you are the covenant keeping God. Now that settles a whole lot of questions that we might have right at the beginning, these basic principles.

Now, of course, the third step and the solution of problems is to put to use the principles that we learn and that’s exactly what the prophet does too. He follows the principle that James puts forth in James, chapter 1 in verse 22 where James says in his epistle “But prove yourselves doers of the word and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” So put to use the principles.

But what do you do if none of these things seem to work, that is, if you put away the panic, if you go back to the basic principles, and if you with the help of the Lord seek to put to use the principles that you have found and nothing seems to happen then what do you do? Well that’s when something is to be left in the hands of the Lord. And, I

think, the most beautiful illustration of that is our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. Because in the Garden of Gethsemane, even our Lord, our Lord, you know, had the problem of finding the will of God in his human nature too, day by day he had to find the will of God and right in the Garden of Gethsemane when he prayed “Oh my God if it be possible let this cup pass from me.” He was engaged in the process of discussion with the Lord over his will. And in the final analysis matters are left in the Lord’s hands.

Now, then coming to the problems that Habakkuk has here, he had the problem of violence or why doesn’t God do something? And he goes back to basic principles, he doesn’t panic, he goes back to basic principles and his basic principles are God’s is eternal, God is immutable, God is omnipotent, God is the covenant keeping God, and God is our God. He has preceded history. He has totally independent of men because he’s the self existent God, therefore he is in total control of everything and as a result of this we will not die. You could almost put QED then.

Therefore, in answer to the question why doesn’t God do something well he comes finally to that? Well what about the problem of using unholy instruments or why does God do it that way? Well the principle is stated in verse 13, the basic principle “Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil; thou canst not look on wickedness with favor.” And then he puts it in the Lord’s hands. He says in verse 1 of chapter 2 “I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart, I will keep watch to see what he will speak to me, and how I may reply when I am reproved.” That his appeal.

Now, in looking at this, of course, we naturally have the question how can we really put it in the Lord’s hands because in the final analysis it seems it comes down to that. How can we put it in the Lord’s hands? Well notice what he does. He says, “Let me stand on my guard post and let me station myself on the rampart.” So he gets off by himself with his problem and he gets away from everybody else with his problem too. Oh the unbelief of keeping a problem when we’ve committed it to the Lord. Have you ever done that? So you have recognized a problem and you have said the thing to do is

to take it to the Lord. So you have taken it to the Lord and as soon as you get up you’re still worrying about it. Have you ever felt that way? Most of you have, of course, if you have ever taken anything to the Lord. Well that is unbelief. Or have you done this, you have realized that had a problem and so the first thing you do is take it to some Christian friend, as if the Christian friend can give you some enlightenment that the Lord cannot. Or perhaps you have a problem and you not only have kept your problem after giving it to the Lord for a few moments and you have approached your friends about it and on top of that you are scheming now to bring the pass the Lord’s will, that is, what you think is the Lord’s will.

Now, the Scriptures tell us that if we are really to commit things into the Lord’s hands, it is essential we get off by ourselves and really leave it in the hands of the Lord. In Philippians, chapter 4, verse 6 and 7, the Apostle Paul speaks a word or two which I think is rather appropriate. Philippians chapter 4, verse 6 and verse 7, the apostle says “Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made know to God, and the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” So bring the things to the Lord and God promises his peace.

The wrong method is the method that Jacob followed when he struggled with Esau, constantly in trouble. The right method was the method that Daniel followed. Remember when the Satraps and the governors of the land sought to find an occasion against Daniel during the reign of Darius. They finally came to the conclusion there was no way to get to Daniel except by doing something that affected his relations with his Lord. And so they managed to get the king to sign a statement to the effect or a decree to the effect that no one should offer any petition to any other god except the god of Darius or to Darius. And remember what Daniel did? Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed he entered his house, now in his roof chamber he had windows opened toward Jerusalem, and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day

praying and giving thanks before his god as he had been doing previously. In other words, he took it to the Lord. He got off by himself; he brought the problem to the Lord. It was more important to him than all the decrees of Darius.

Now, I think, there is something else that Habakkuk tells us here in chapter 2 in verse 1, he says “I will stand on my guard post and I will station myself on the rampart and I will watch and see.” So he anticipated that he was going to get an answer. That’s faith and the character of faith is shown after one prays. He’s already prayed “Oh Lord you are too holy to behold evil, you cannot look upon iniquity. We do know that this is true of you but here are these wicked people who have come.” And so he’s prayed this beautiful prayer in which he has unburdened his complaint before the Lord and now by virtue of having finished his prayer he goes off and he waits for the Lord to answer. That’s faith.

I read a story about a Sunday school boy who raced home to his mother having been in the Sunday school class and the teacher had promised a book to him. He raced home and said as he came in the house “I’ve got a book.” She said, “Where is it?” He said, “Oh, I don’t have it yet but I’ve got it because he promised it to me.” And I think that one of the funniest stories of faith that I know of is the story of a pious but cranky old woman who was not invited to the Sunday school picnic by oversight. Now, on the day of the picnic it was realized that she had not been invited and so some young man was sent off to invite her on the day of the picnic. She said “It’s too late I’ve already prayed for rain.” [Laughter] Now that’s faith.

And one final thing and we must close notice in the 3rd verse we read “For the vision is yet for the appointed time.” This is God’s answer and we’ll speak about this next time, “It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail though it tarries wait for it.” Wait for it.

So to put it then very simply how do we put things in the Lord’s hands? Well we get off by ourselves, commit the thing to the Lord, get away from everybody else, take it

away from our friends, and stop our scheming and leave it with the Lord. We wait in anticipation. We believe that God is going to answer his prayer because he has promised this in the word of God and then we wait for that answer whether it’s a yes or a now or a wait some more. That, of course, is up to the Lord. So we put away panic, we put forth the principles of God, we put to use these principles, put matters in the Lord’s hands, and when they are in the Lord’s hands we can be sure the answer that comes is for our own ultimate good.

Let’s close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures and we ask Thy blessing upon the hours that follow now and the study of the word.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.