

Triennial Torah Study – 3rd Year 09/02/2013



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Deut 4		Habakkuk 1-3	2 Corin 12-13
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Moses Exhorts Obedience (Deuteronomy 4:1-43)

Moses cautions Israel not to “add to” nor “take from” God’s commandments (verse 2), but, rather, to “carefully observe” them and to “act” in accordance with them (verses 2, 14, 5-6). To know God’s Word is not enough—indeed, it is quite useless unless one acts on it and does His will (see Matthew 5:19; 7:24-27; James 1:22-25). If Israel does this, then they will be recognized by others as a great, wise, understanding, righteous and God-fearing nation (verses 6-8). But since such recognition could be a source of pride, Moses warns them to not forget God and His wonders (verses 9-10). He reminds them that God was the originator of this wise law—that He appeared to them on the mountain to proclaim His Ten Commandments (verse 10).

At that time, the people did not see a “form” of God (verse 12). He points this out to dissuade the people from crafting any images of Him. However, as a consequence of this statement, some believe that God is formless and shapeless. Yet this is emphatically false, as the fact that God does have form is clearly stated in Numbers 12:6-8. In fact, God created man in His image, in accordance with His likeness (Genesis 1:26), as Adam’s son Seth was in the image and likeness of Adam (5:3). Moreover, God revealed His glorified form to Moses (compare Exodus 33:18-23). Both the Father’s and the Son’s glorified appearance are described in the Bible (compare Daniel 7:9, 13; Ezekiel 1:26-28; Revelation 1:12-16; 4:2-3; 5:1), clearly proving that God has form. Further, although the people as a whole did not see any form when God spoke to them from the mountain, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the 70 elders of Israel clearly did see a form shortly thereafter (Exodus 24:9-11). Nevertheless, in no encounter did anyone see the full glorified appearance of the Almighty. And not only can no image truly capture God’s glory, but any image would limit Him in people’s minds.

In Deuteronomy 4:13, we read that God “declared...His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.” Some have taken this passage to mean that the Old Covenant was the same as the Ten Commandments, and that when the Old Covenant was abolished, so were the Ten Commandments. This understanding, however, is not correct—since a covenant is a contract or an agreement, which

is based on law but not identical to the law. For instance, we read in Exodus 24:8 that God made a covenant with Israel “according to all these words.” The Revised English Bible renders this, “on the terms of this book.” In Exodus 34:27, it is again explained that a covenant is made based on law, as we read, “Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made [or, better, I will make] a covenant with you and with Israel.” Again, the Revised English Bible states that “the covenant I make with you and with Israel is on those terms.” We have already seen that the Ten Commandments were in force long before Moses lived, so the Old Covenant did not bring them into existence—nor was it identical to them. What the Old Covenant did not bring into force could not be abolished when that covenant ended at the time of Christ’s death. The reason that the Ten Commandments are especially emphasized in Deuteronomy 4:13 is that they are the heart and core of the law on which the Old Covenant was based (compare 5:22)—but they are not all the law on which the covenant was based (compare 4:14).

Moses begins to admonish the Israelites again not to make any carved images, in whatever form, to portray or picture God as an aid to worship (verses 15-18, 23-25). Further, he warns them not to worship anything else in place of the true God (verse 19). Earlier, in Exodus 32, God had condemned Israel for making a golden calf representing Him (verse 8). Rather than using physical pictures, portrayals or representations of God in our worship of Him, we are to worship God “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24)—not with idolatrous images and practices adopted from false religions. Moses warns the Israelites that if they would not obey God’s commandments, God would scatter them among the nations so that only few would survive (verses 26-27). The fulfillment of this prophecy lies ahead of us, as it was meant for the end time or the “latter days” (verse 30).

A hint of man’s amazing destiny is given in verse 19, where it says that “the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven” are for “all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.” Thus, though mankind was only given dominion over the earth in Genesis 2, we are to ultimately inherit the entire universe. This is the same incredible message conveyed in Romans 8:16-25 and Hebrews 2:5-11.

Deuteronomy 4:29 is a wonderful comfort. It assures us that we will find God if we search for Him with all our heart and soul (compare Jeremiah 29:13). Indeed, God wants not just part of our affections but our entire being devoted to Him (compare Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 22:37).

Habakkuk

Introduction to Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1-2)

Habakkuk, whose name appears to mean “Embraced”—that is, it is typically concluded, by God—may have served as part of the temple music service at the time of his writing (see Habakkuk 3:19). The inscription in the Greek Septuagint to Bel and the Dragon, an apocryphal

book in which Habakkuk is mentioned, says he was a Levite, which would fit with such musical service (Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary, introductory notes on Habakkuk).

In his prophecy, Habakkuk decries the wickedness of the Jewish society around him, and God warns that punishment is soon going to come from the Chaldeans—the ruling class of Babylon. The prophet's "reference to the Babylonians indicates that they had already become an independent and terrifying presence, a state of affairs which surely presupposes the accession of Nabopolassar to Babylonian kingship in 626 (1:6-11)" (Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, p. 455). That is, Nabopolassar must already have been on the throne and advancing against Assyrian power. As we have seen, his forces, along with others, finally sacked Nineveh in 612 B.C. and thereupon began a mop-up operation to stamp out pockets of Assyrian resistance. In 609 a residual Assyrian force was defeated at Haran, but Assyria's ally Egypt gained control over Judah and Syria upon the death of Josiah. Four years afterward, in 605 B.C.—as we will see more about later—the Babylonian forces under Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar crushed the last Assyrian holdouts and their Egyptian allies at Carchemish on the Euphrates. Egypt retreated and Judah came under Babylonian dominion.

For this reason, Habakkuk's book being no later than "605 is virtually certain since the judgment upon Judah appears to be totally in the future. On the other hand, Judah is in such a perilous state—injustice abounds and there is no redress—that one can hardly envision Josiah in power any longer. The description of moral and civil anarchy fits very well the early years of Jehoiakim (608-605) just before the evils of Judah brought divine intervention in the form of Nebuchadnezzar" (p. 455). A date of "somewhere around 607 or 606 b.c." seems most likely (p. 455, footnote).

Habakkuk is disturbed at the rampant sin around him—yet he is disturbed still further at the agents of punishment God is going to use to deal with that sin. "Some people believe that human beings should never question the ways of God. They may even feel that it borders on sin to ask God, 'Why?' But the book of Habakkuk counters that idea. It is filled with a prophet's perplexing questions—and the Lord's penetrating answers. God never seems to reproach his servant for asking two basic questions: Why does the Lord seem not to respond (Hb 1.2-4) to the injustice and violence that Habakkuk sees around him?; How can God use the vicious and idolatrous Babylonians (1.12-17) to judge his people?" ("Questioning God," Word in Life Bible, sidebar on 1:2).

As in Psalm 73, "this problem has troubled believers in one form or another from the beginning. Why does God permit the wicked to succeed in this world? Why doesn't He act, so that the good rather than the wicked prosper? The answers we find in Habakkuk show us that the wicked do not succeed—and that no one, good or bad, can avoid the disciplining hand of God. There are moral and theological questions raised by sin's presence, in our own lives and in the ways of the wicked. Perhaps the best and most satisfying answers to be found in Scripture are revealed here in this small, but vital, Old Testament book" (Bible Reader's Companion, introductory notes on Habakkuk).

It should be noted that while the book of Habakkuk was a message to the people of his day, it well applies to our time too. Indeed, while the terrible societal problems the prophet mentions at the outset no doubt applied to what he himself witnessed in seventh-century-B.C. Judah, it is interesting that the nation of Judah is not actually named. Thus, it could also apply to all of Israel in the end time—which, as is clear from other prophecies, will suffer at the hands of a modern revival of Babylon. Notice Habakkuk 2:3 regarding Babylon's fall: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak...." While this could have applied to ancient Babylon, the fall of which occurred nearly 70 years later, it seems more applicable to events much farther off in time. The "day of trouble" here (3:16) is the time of the fall of Babylon—and the ultimate day of trouble, which will accomplish the ultimate fall of Babylon, is the future Day of the Lord, immediately preceding the time of Jesus Christ's return. Finally, the clearest indication of all that this is a prophecy of the last days is the mention of Christ's future reign over all nations (2:14).

Habakkuk's Questions; Chaldean Invasion (Habakkuk 1-2)

The book begins with Habakkuk's first question. He asks God about the violence, lack of justice, and lawlessness he sees (1:2-4). He does not state where these problems are occurring, but "when these terms are used in the O[ld] T[estament] without reference to some specific foreign enemy, they typically characterize conditions among God's people" (Bible Reader's Companion, note on verse 3). Indeed, it is likely that this is what Habakkuk witnessed in the society of Judah in his day. However, his words "Why do You show me...and cause me to see...?" may also indicate that these were visions God gave him of the future—of our day.

Verse 4 says, "Therefore the law is powerless." This can be viewed in one of two ways. For one, all the law that God gave is powerless to itself properly direct one's conduct. It is up to each person's choice and will whether or not he or she will obey God. The apostle James later described how someone could look at God's instructions and ignore them (James 1:22-25). Yet, while a true principle, that may not be Habakkuk's actual point here. The NIV renders his words, "Therefore the law is paralyzed." The implication seems to be that the legal system—the administration of law as given in the Law of Moses—is supposed to function so that the innocent are vindicated and the guilty are punished. But when witnesses and those who run the system are given over to wrong values and behavior, the law—again, the legal system—is prevented from functioning as it should. That was true when Habakkuk wrote—and it is sadly true today (considering that numerous elements of modern justice systems in the free world derive from Mosaic precepts).

In the face of such rampant evil and corruption, Habakkuk essentially asks God, "Why don't You do something about all this? When are You going to act?"

God responds in verses 5-11. He has an "astounding" plan underway to punish His people. God says this will happen "in your days" (verse 5). But it is not clear exactly whom God is speaking to here. It could be Habakkuk. But God says, "...which you would not believe, though it were told you" (same verse). While this could perhaps mean that it was too horrible for any person to

really grasp even if he thought he did, it seems more likely to refer to a faithless rejection of God's message. Since Habakkuk himself does believe God, as the rest of the book shows, the message would appear to be directed at God's faithless people—God speaking through Habakkuk but to them. Thus, the “your days” would be their days. It likely did apply to the Jews of the prophet's time. But it could also be addressed to all Israel of our day.

In responding, God lays out the terrible punishment that is coming. The instruments of punishment will be the Chaldeans, a terribly fierce people (verses 6-11). During earlier days of Assyrian rule, these people had moved southeast from the area of Armenia down into Babylonia. The emerging Neo-Babylonian Empire was thus a mixture of earlier Babylonians and the Chaldeans—the Chaldeans actually making up the ruling class. Babylon was currently ruled by the Chaldean king Nabopolassar, who led the overthrow of Assyria. His son and soon-to-be successor Nebuchadnezzar would soon visit destruction on Judah—an obvious fulfillment of this prophecy. But it was also a prototype fulfillment of a greater fulfillment to come in the end time. As explained earlier in the Bible Reading Program, many of the descendants of the Babylonians—original and Chaldean—later ended up in Italy and other areas of southern Europe (see highlights for Isaiah 13:1-14:2). In the last days, they and the modern Assyrians of north-central Europe will together form a final revival of the Roman Empire that the Bible refers to as Babylon (see Revelation 17-18). This final Babylon—a significant portion of its population actually being Chaldean—certainly fits the description given in Habakkuk's prophecy. This coming empire will be used to invade and destroy end-time Israel and Judah and take those who are left of them into captivity.

The translation of Habakkuk 1:11 is not certain. This rendering makes sense: “Then they sweep on like the wind and are gone [on to some new conquest], these men whose power is their god” (Today's English Version).

This brings Habakkuk to his second question. He is glad that God is going to take action on his initial complaint—and that God will deliver the righteous in the land. But he is confused as to why God would use the wicked Babylonians to bring judgment. He basically asks God, “How can you, the Holy God, use an evil, treacherous people for correcting your nation? The Babylonians' sins are worse!” (compare verses 12-13). Habakkuk wants to know why God would allow it to appear “that mankind is like fish in the sea, with no moral governor

supervising human affairs. How can God permit the wicked to prosper and thus raise questions, not only about His moral governance of the universe, but about His very existence?” (Bible Reader's Companion, note on verses 13-17). Habakkuk reasons with God this way: “With the Babylonians allowed to continue conquering other nations, they're not learning to worship You. They're worshipping their tools of conquest. So why do You let them enjoy the fruit of their conquests and keep devouring other nations?” (compare verses 15-17).

Habakkuk then recommits himself to the responsibility God has given him to serve as a watchman and relate what he sees and hears to others. He is most interested to hear what God

has to say in response to what he's just said (2:1). Indeed, his wording almost makes it look like he is braced for impact—knowing that he has made some pretty bold statements. But he is in no way antagonistic toward God. In fact, he deeply wants God to set Him straight (same verse).

The Just Shall Live by Faith; Woes for the Wicked (Habakkuk 1-2)

The rest of chapter 2 is God's answer. God tells Habakkuk to write it "in large legible characters...upon tables—boxwood tables covered with wax, on which national affairs were engraved with an iron pen, and then hung up in public, at the prophets' own houses, or at the temple, that those who passed might read them" (Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary, note on verse 2). "We might paraphrase the meaning here by saying 'Write it on a billboard, so large a running man might read it.' What God is about to reveal to the prophet is important, and everyone [not just Habakkuk] needs to understand the Lord's response" (Bible Reader's Companion, note on verse 2).

In verse 3, God is basically saying, "Look, what I'm about to tell you isn't going to happen overnight. It's going to take time for the full measure of these words to be demonstrated—indeed, that won't happen in an ultimate sense until the end of the age. But just wait—you'll eventually see that it's just as I'm saying." The New Testament book of Hebrews, likely written by the apostle Paul, quotes this verse as applying to the return of Christ, who will bring with Him the full measure of reward to the righteous and of punishment to the wicked (10:37).

Returning to Habakkuk 2, God's explanation then begins. "The proud" of verse 4 refers to the Babylonians, those exulting in great conquests, as is clear from verses 5 and 8. "His soul is not upright in him" could simply mean "His life is not straight," that is, his path of life is crooked and twisted—cursed. On the other hand, "the just shall live by his faith." In contrast to the cursed path of the wicked, the righteous have a blessed life—a happy and hopeful life guided by faith. This doesn't mean nothing bad ever happens to them. But by faith they know that God's way is right and will ultimately bring great reward; and this causes them to live the right way and experience true blessings thereby—ultimately life eternal. Verse 4 is quoted in Hebrews 10:38, just after the Hebrews quote previously mentioned, to show that faith gives us endurance to ultimately be saved (see verses 35-39). Paul also quoted Habakkuk 2:4 in relating the fact that we as Christians must live through believing the gospel message Christ brought—as it is the way to eternal salvation (see Romans 1:16-17). And in another context he used the same verse to show that justification—being right with God—comes through faith (Galatians 3:11).

Continuing in Habakkuk 2, God then runs through the cursed life of the proud such as Babylon. "The Lord shows Habakkuk that He does not tolerate the treacherous. Even as the wicked appear to triumph, God is in fact at work judging them! Their success is superficial, for the wicked are never satisfied (vv. 4-5). Their mistreatment of others creates enemies (vv. 6-8). They are driven to build 'secure' retreats which will never protect them (vv. 9-11), for they have no future (vv. 12-14). Coming disgrace is certain (vv. 15-17), for they have no place to turn for guidance or help (vv. 18-20). When we understand what is going on within the heart of the

wicked, and when we understand that forces their wicked acts set in motion will surely destroy them, we realize that God does not tolerate them. At the height of their success He is in the process of judging them. Severely” (Bible Reader’s Companion, chapter 2 summary).

In verse 5, the transgression appears to begin with wine. “Love of wine often begets a proud contempt of divine things, as in Belshazzar’s case, which was the immediate cause of the fall of Babylon (Dan. 5:2-4, 30; cf. Prov. 20:1; 30:9; 31:5)” (JFB Commentary, note on verse 5). However, the wine here is most likely figurative—expressive of intoxication over former success. It is also possible that it relates to false ideology, as Revelation 17:2 mentions the “wine” of Babylon’s immorality. This is what leads them into their false pursuits. In any case, whatever they have is not enough. They are never satisfied (Habakkuk 2:5; drawing imagery from Proverbs 27:20). “What a terrible judgment this is. To have everything you want—except satisfaction” (Bible Reader’s Companion, note on Habakkuk 2:4-5).

Verse 6 introduces a taunting song or poem: “The ‘derisive song’ here begins [with the word ‘woe’], and continues to the end of the chapter. It is a symmetrical whole, and consists of five stanzas.... Each stanza has its own subject, and all except the last begin with ‘woe’; and all have a closing verse introduced with ‘for,’ ‘because,’ or ‘but’” (JFB, note on verse 6).

In the first stanza (verses 6-8), God condemns Babylon’s aggression, thievery and bloodshed. He states that the conquered peoples who’ve been stolen from will rise up and demand what is theirs—and seek vengeance over the harm they’ve been done (verses 7-8). In the second stanza (verses 9-11), the taunt is over their covetousness and attempt to secure themselves through wealth. In verse 10, Babylon has conquered many peoples to build its “house” or empire but this will come back on its head—for various parts of the “house” will call for rebellion and others will join in (verse 11).

In the third stanza (verses 12-14), the concern is over building an empire through bloodshed and lawlessness. The fact of the matter is that all their efforts are going into something that will ultimately be burned to the ground (verse 13). In verse 14 God reiterates His wonderful millennial prophecy from Isaiah 11:9. “God intends to fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, not with monuments to murderers. Whatever the wicked accomplish will crumble, and the wicked person himself will be forgotten” (Bible Reader’s Companion, note on Habakkuk 2:12-14).

The fourth stanza (verses 15-17) describes the inhumanity of the evil Babylonian system, which seeks to make others drunk in order to molest them. Ancient Babylon’s captives suffered a condition comparable to drunkenness—swooning, humiliation and utter incapacitation. And this prophecy certainly ties to Revelation 17, where Babylon, the great false church of the end time, is described: “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (verses 1-2). This system is pictured with “a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication” (verse 4). Horrifyingly, it is drunk

with the blood of God's saints (verse 6). God says he has a new cup for this system to drink (Habakkuk 2:16)—one of retribution (verse 17). Babylon itself will be attacked and defiled and ultimately revealed as uncircumcised—despite its claim to being the spiritually circumcised church of God. The “Lebanon” of verse 17 most likely refers to Jerusalem (see again the highlights on Jeremiah 22:10-17). What Babylon has done to God's people will be done to Babylon in return.

The fifth stanza (verses 18-20) condemns the idolatry of Babylon. Even today, the system of worship descended from ancient Babylon still venerates idolatrous images. In contrast to lifeless idols, God is very much alive in His holy temple in heaven—from where He sees everything and hears the constant din of billions of false prayers to false concepts of divinity. God orders everyone to just “shut up” (see verse 20)—for judgment is about to fall (compare Zephaniah 1:7; Zechariah 2:13).

The Psalm of Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3)

Habakkuk 3 is a prayer of Habakkuk arranged as a psalm. Observe, for instance, the musical term *Selah* in verses 3, 9 and 13 (which may denote a musical rest or interlude) and the liturgical note at the end of verse 19, “To the Chief Musician,” which occurs in the heading of 55 psalms, and “With my stringed instruments,” which essentially appears in the heading of several psalms. In verse 1, *Shigionoth* is apparently the plural of *Shiggaion*, which occurs in the heading of Psalm 7. “The word *shiggayon* comes from *shagah*, ‘to wander,’ a wandering song” (Adam Clarke's Commentary, note on Psalm 7; see note on Habakkuk 3:1). It is “apparently an indication of the musical setting to be employed for this poem. It may derive from a verbal root meaning ‘to reel’ or ‘to err,’ and if so points to some irregular rhythmic mode.

At all events, as when such words occur in Psalm titles, it points to the use of this hymn in Temple worship” (New Bible Commentary, note on verse 1).

Having heard the details of God's coming judgment, Habakkuk is sobered and states his concern (verse 2)—apparently for his own people but perhaps also for the rest of mankind, even including the Babylonians. While he asks that God revive His mighty works of old “in these years” (same verse, Tanakh)—that He would act soon to set things right—He pleads with God to exercise mercy in the dealing out of His judgment.

Habakkuk then reviews some of God's awesome works of the past: His appearance in great power and might at Mount Sinai and His judgments through the wilderness wanderings (verses 3-7), His division of the Red Sea to save His people and destroy the Egyptians and perhaps His division of the Jordan River so the Israelites could invade Canaan (verses 8-10), His judgment on other nations when He intervened for Israel in battle (verses 11-15). “These poetic descriptions are intended to pull away the veil of space and time and look beyond the material universe to sense God's elemental power unleashed in judgment.... The specific incidents in which God's anger flared are only hinted at.... What we are to realize is that the historical events, as terrible as they are...pale when compared to the burning anger of God which the

material universe currently conceals. How awful it will be for those who one day experience that anger face-to-face” (Bible Reader’s Companion, note on verses 3-15).

The prophet trembles at the prospect of people having to face the unleashed power of the Creator (verse 16). But he then states that he will stand through whatever may come—making him an example to others of living faith (verses 17-19). Habakkuk “now trembles and melts with fear as he seems to hear the on-coming march of...God. The end of the verse [i.e., 16] seems full of paradox. How can he tremble and totter and at the same time quietly wait with an apparently assured calm? [Continuing in verses] 17-18 His assurance is born of the living faith which these verses so beautifully express. Though everything which, humanly speaking, supports life may fail, yet he can now rejoice in the Lord. Personal faith is the practical answer to life’s discontents. The contemplation of the history of God with His people, that all His deeds are ‘for the salvation of thy people’ (v. 13), now leads the prophet to rejoice in the God of my salvation. [Concluding in verse] 19 Thus Habakkuk has discovered the answer to his initial questioning, and his deep contentment with the answer is expressed in the testimony that he makes my feet like hinds’ feet. He feels as if he is ‘walking on air,’ so light-hearted and surefooted is he. Not even the most trying high places (cf. Dt. 32:13) through which life’s path may lead can daunt the man of faith” (New Bible Commentary, notes on verses 16-18).

Let us all keep this focus as we face the difficult times ahead. For beyond them lie better days than mankind has ever seen.

2 Corinthians 12

The apostle’s revelations. (1-6) Which were improved to his spiritual advantage. (7-10) The signs of an apostle were in him, His purpose of making them a visit; but he expresses his fear lest he should have to be severe with some. (11-21)

Commentary on 2 Corinthians 12:1-6

There can be no doubt the apostle speaks of himself. Whether heavenly things were brought down to him, while his body was in a trance, as in the case of ancient prophets; or whether his soul was dislodged from the body for a time, and taken up into heaven, or whether he was taken up, body and soul together, he knew not. We are not capable, nor is it fit we should yet know, the particulars of that glorious place and state. He did not attempt to publish to the world what he had heard there, but he set forth the doctrine of Messiah. On that foundation His Assembly is built, and on that we must build our faith and hope. And while this teaches us to enlarge our expectations of the glory that shall be revealed, it should render us contented with the usual methods of learning the truth and will of Elohim.

Commentary on 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

The apostle gives an account of the method Yehovah took to keep him humble, and to prevent his being lifted up above measure, on account of the visions and revelations he had. We are not told what this thorn in the flesh was, whether some great trouble, or some great temptation.

But Yehovah often brings this good out of evil, that the reproaches of our enemies help to hide pride from us. If Elohim loves us, he will keep us from being exalted above measure; and spiritual burdens are ordered to cure spiritual pride. This thorn in the flesh is said to be a messenger of Satan which he sent for evil; but Yehovah designed it, and overruled it for good. Prayer is a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady; and when we are afflicted with thorns in the flesh, we should give ourselves to prayer. If an answer be not given to the first prayer, nor to the second, we are to continue praying.

Troubles are sent to teach us to pray; and are continued, to teach us to continue instant in prayer. Though Elohim accepts the prayer of faith, yet he does not always give what is asked for: as he sometimes grants in wrath, so he sometimes denies in love. When Yehovah does not take away our troubles and temptations, yet, if he gives grace enough for us, we have no reason to complain. Grace signifies the good-will of Yehovah towards us, and that is enough to enlighten and enliven us, sufficient to strengthen and comfort in all afflictions and distresses. His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Thus his grace is manifested and magnified. When we are weak in ourselves, then we are strong in the grace of our Master Yeshua Messiah; when we feel that we are weak in ourselves, then we go to Yeshua, receive strength from him, and enjoy most the supplies of Divine strength and grace.

Commentary on 2 Corinthians 12:11-21

We owe it to good men, to stand up in the defense of their reputation; and we are under special obligations to those from whom we have received benefit, especially spiritual benefit, to own them as instruments in Yehovah's hand of good to us. Here is an account of the apostle's behavior and kind intentions; in which see the character of a faithful minister of the gospel. This was his great aim and design, to do good. Here are noticed several sins commonly found among professors of religion. Falls and misdeeds are humbling to a minister; and Yehovah sometimes takes this way to humble those who might be tempted to be lifted up. These vast verses show to what excesses the false teachers had drawn aside their deluded followers. How grievous it is that such evils should be found among professors of the gospel! Yet thus it is, and has been too often, and it was so even in the days of the apostles.

2 Corinthians 13

The apostle threatens obstinate offenders. (1-6) He prays for their reformation. (7-10) And ends the epistle with a salutation and blessing. (11-14) Commentary on 2 Corinthians 13:1-6

Though it is Yehovah's gracious method to bear long with sinners, yet he will not bear always; at length he will come, and will not spare those who remain obstinate and impenitent. Messiah at his crucifixion, appeared as only a weak and helpless man, but his resurrection and life showed his Divine power. So the apostles, how mean and contemptible they appeared to the world, yet, as instruments, they manifested the power of Elohim. Let them prove their tempers, conduct, and experience, as gold is assayed or proved by the touchstone. If they could prove themselves

not to be reprobates, not to be rejected of Messiah, he trusted they would know that he was not a reprobate, not disowned by Yeshua. They ought to know if Yeshua Messiah was in them, by the influences, graces, and indwelling of his Spirit, by his kingdom set up in their hearts. Let us question our own souls; either we are true believers, or we are deceivers. Unless Yeshua be in us by his Spirit, and power of his love, our faith is dead, and we are yet disapproved by our Judge.

Commentary on 2 Corinthians 13:7-10

The most desirable thing we can ask of Yehovah, for ourselves and our friends, is to be kept from sin, that we and they may not do evil. We have far more need to pray that we may not do evil, than that we may not suffer evil. The apostle not only desired that they might be kept from sin, but also that they might grow in grace, and increase in holiness. We are earnestly to pray to Yehovah for those we caution, that they may cease to do evil, and learn to do well; and we should be glad for others to be strong in the grace of Yeshua, though it may be the means of showing our own weakness. let us also pray that we may be enabled to make a proper use of all our talents.

Commentary on 2 Corinthians 13:11-14

Here are several good exhortations. Yehovah is the Author of peace and Lover of concord; he hath loved us, and is willing to be at peace with us. And let it be our constant aim so to walk, that separation from our friends may be only for a time, and that we may meet in that happy world where parting will be unknown. He wishes that they may partake all the benefits which Yeshua of his free grace and favor has purchased; the Father out of his free love has purposed; and the Set Apart Spirit applies and bestows.