

## Wolves at Dusk

**Habakkuk 1:5-10 KJV** Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for *I* will work a work in your days, *which* ye will not believe, though it be told *you*. [6] For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, *that* bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces *that are* not theirs. [7] They *are* terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. [8] Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle *that* hasteth to eat. [9] They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up *as* the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. [10] And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it.

**Habakkuk 1:8 NIV** -- Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar.

### I. INTRODUCTION -- WOLVES AT DUSK

-There is a little devotional that I periodically pick up and browse through now and then. It is entitled "Morning and Evening" by Charles Spurgeon. Three or four years ago, Stephen Williams brought this particular text to my attention from Spurgeon's devotional. When he initially brought it to my attention, I thought that there was probably something useful in it and I logged into a small notebook that I carry around and it was not very long before I had forgotten it.

-Then a few weeks ago, I was over at the church late one Saturday night and begin to browse through my scribblings and found this thought and since that time it has continued to pull at me.

-This message is not a "feel-good" sermon. There is not a lot of encouragement or inspiration in it, but there is certainly some of that old-fashioned conviction that we need to envelop our spiritual lives. Those messages that convict us are

those that move us closer to God. It is those sermons that cause us to examine our lives and take notice of what direction that we are progressing in.

-There truly are “wolves at dusk” even now.

## **II. THE AREA OF THE TEXT**

### **A. The Prophet -- Habakkuk**

-When you begin to try to understand a book in the Bible, it is always best to take a look at it's writer. Not a lot is known about Habakkuk. His background is not a pedigreed background.

-From his historical references in his writings, one can understand that he was a contemporary of Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zephaniah. Because he is in the company of those men, he is considered to be one of the prophets during the Exile, when Israel was under the ruler-ship of the Babylonians and the Medes and Persians.

-Habakkuk was a prophet who was had a heavy heart for this people during his lifetime. He was consumed with a burden for his people and for those whom he was attempting to reach. That is one of the greatest weights for any preacher to have to bear. . . . Serving God and serving people who are attempting to live without their God. He betrays his burden in verse 2 of chapter one when he cries out, “I cry out to You but You will not hear, I cry out to You and You will not save!”

### **B. The Times of Habakkuk**

-Notice some of the conditions of this people who were wayward in their hearts and in their actions that Habakkuk describes:

- **1:3** -- I am shown iniquity and trouble. I notice plundering and violence. There is constant strife and contention.
- **1:4** -- The Law has no power whatsoever. Justice is never delivered and the wicked choke the righteous and because the wicked have the law in their venues, twisted judgment is delivered.

-During this time era, there were also two other prophets who described the waywardness of Israel and Judah. Amos and Micah also give us an indication of what the spiritual landscape looks like:

- [Amos 2:4](#) -- They have despised the law and not kept the commandments. They have followed the lies of their fathers.
- [Amos 2:6](#) -- They pursue insignificant debts because of their greed. The righteous have their silver taken and the poor have their sandals taken to satisfy this debt.
- [Amos 2:7](#) -- There exists unbridled lust that causes fathers and sons to corrupt themselves with their passions.
- [Amos 2:8](#) -- Idolatrous altars are honored and wine is exalted in temples of idols.
- [Amos 4:1](#) -- The poor are oppressed and the needy are crushed. They cry, "Bring on the wine."
- [Amos 6:1](#) -- There is too much ease in Zion. Laziness has consumed your passion for God and righteousness.
- [Amos 6:3](#) -- You scoff at and put off the day of reckoning.
- [Amos 6:4](#) -- You lay around on beds of ivory and stretch out on the couches of ease. You take the best from the flocks of sheep and cattle and eat the prime cuts and take no thought of tomorrow.
- [Amos 6:5](#) -- Music is perverted and the instruments meant for worship are used for vain entertainments.
- [Amos 6:6](#) -- Wine is consumed from bowls instead of glasses because there is an insatiable thirst in the soul for something more than what they have. The body is pampered in the salons and spas.
- [Amos 6:7](#) -- The call of banqueting consumes the day.

-Micah's description of Israel is very similar in much of his speaking on behalf of God. When we read the words of these two minor prophets, their words very much describe our own times that exist today. Amazingly enough there are still a few who want to claim the Bible is outdated and outmoded. This word is going to stand forever!!!

### **C. God's Solution for Habakkuk**

-When Habakkuk turned to God for answers, he became even more troubled by the solution that God was going to resort to.

-God gave similar revelations to Amos. Amos was allowed to have a series of visions, in fact there were five visions that came to Amos:

- A vision of Locusts -- 7:1-3
- A vision of Fire -- 7:4-6
- A vision of the Plumb Line -- 7:7-9
- A vision of a Basket of Summer Fruit -- 8:1-14
- A vision of the Lord -- 9:1-10

-The first two visions that Amos received proved that the Lord was willing to save a remnant and the last three announced that judgment was inevitable.

-You owe it to yourself to sit down and read Amos, Micah, and Habakkuk sometime in the coming days. There are incredible word pictures that God speaks through these prophets.

-Habakkuk's dilemma occurs when God informs him that He is going to send the Chaldeans to purge Judah. This creates, in the mind of Habakkuk, a great problem. How and why is God going to use wickedness to bring chastisement to His own people?

-The writer of Hebrews reminds that one of the tests and privileges of sonship is chastisement:

**Hebrews 12:6-8 KJV** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. [7] If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? [8] But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

-God judges because He loves. . . . not because He is trying to destroy but rather to redeem.

## II. WOLVES AT DUSK

-So God gives Habakkuk a description of what is about to happen. Notice the description of the Chaldeans:

- Their horses are swifter than leopards.
- They are more fierce than evening wolves.
- Their horsemen spread themselves and come from far.
- They will fly as eagles ready to eat.
- They are coming for violence.
- They are going to eat with the intensity as strong as the east wind.
- They are going to gather captives like a child would scoop up sand.
- They will scoff at the kings and laugh at the princes.
- They will breakdown every stronghold and leave it's ruins in the dust.

-But there is a phrase that stands out more than any in this setting to me and that is found in 1:8, "they are more fierce than evening wolves."

-The wolves are now caught with darkness descending. They have run their territory all day long and not found a single thing to eat. Their hunger has turned them into a ravenous beast. They are about to descend on anything that they can find.

-The wolves are not only hungry but they have been infuriated by a day of empty hunting. So under the cover of the approaching darkness they find their element.

### **A. A Dance of Death**

The National Geographic Magazine (May 2004) had an article with a series of pictures describing an attack by some Alaskan wolves. A pack of wolves had attacked a moose a week earlier and were unable to bring him down for the kill. A young bull had been attacked and wounded with a deep gash to his right thigh and for a week had bled into the snow and had limped along with the pack of wolves in stealthy pursuit.

It was the scent of blood that lured several bears to come to the fight and compete with the six wolves for the final kill of the moose. Running, leaping, pawing, pacing, snapping—all the animals were tense and hyper alert and could have killed one another. It appeared that even the wounded moose was just as

dangerous as he lashed out with his hooves and antlers. Yet killing him would mean the ultimate payoff for the pack.

The hundreds of pounds of flesh and organs would provide life-sustaining calories in Denali's cold and barren mountains.

This is how wolves usually kill: One experienced hunter jumps on the moose's rump and gouges the thigh muscles. Another wolf sinks its teeth into the moose's bulbous nose. Others in the pack rip and clench whatever parts of the body they can manage to hang onto with their razor sharp teeth. Remarkably this moose had survived the initial attack, battered but not yet beaten.

All day the wolves stalked the moose, repeatedly forcing him into the freezing river, which sapped his strength. He no longer shook his antlers at his pursuers. His protruding ribs rose and fell in shallow breaths. His eyes were sunken and hollow.

In the late afternoon, the moose scrambled back up the bank again to escape the icy water. When a wolf closed in, hunter and prey locked eyes in what writer Barry Lopez has called the conversation of death. "It is a ceremonial exchange," he writes, "the flesh of the hunted for respect of its spirit."

Standing nearby, it was sensed that a shift came from the moose from defense to acceptance. The wolf rushed the moose and he backed into the river and collapsed. The current carried him a hundred feet downstream before two wolves hauled the immobile bull to the shallows. The wolves fed hungrily. (National Geographics, May 2004, pp. 98-111, Dance of Death)

## **B. Lot, A Man Lured by the Wolves**

-There is a man in the Old Testament who found himself lured by the wolves and in the end, he lost everything but his own soul. He lost his wife and his daughters to a spirit of the age.

-If Abraham is called the "Father of the Faithful" then Lot can be called the "Father of the Scarcely Saved."

-Not every man is called to be a pioneer or explorer in life. Not every man is called to achieve greatness in his life. There are great, powerful men such as Abraham and then there are those who are to follow along in the roles that these men play. Lot was such a man, if only Lot would have ended as he had began.

-If Lot would have been content to share the prospects, the peace, and the prosperity of Abraham, his life would have turned out far less tragic than it did. He would have escaped many trials and sorrows by doing so.

- Instead of being scarcely saved he would have been abundantly saved.
- Instead of having to deal with the smell of fire and brimstone in his clothes he would have only watched from a distance.
- Instead of being lost in the mountains in some unmarked grave he would have been given the honor of a patriarch's burial.

-The Bible declares to us that Lot lifted up his eyes and looked to the well-watered plains of Jordan. It was a beautiful place. It had the vast meadows for grazing flocks. It had the Jordan River basin to supply the right amounts of water. Everything about Jordan was perfect, except that it contained two wicked cities, Sodom and Gomorrah.

-The choices that he made in life were to mark and mar him. What a man chooses and how a man chooses proves a lot about his character. Opportunities, alternatives, and choices placed before a man will allow certain discoveries to come to light.

-Lot chose the good ground, the good water, the good pasture, at the very cost of disgrace, shamelessness, and a host of other avenues of self-centeredness. Lot knew quite well both the name and the character of the city in the rain and sunshine of the Jordan Valley. He had heard too many times his uncle praying and plotting with God with all his might for Sodom. But Lot did not care.

-The important thing is that Lot's cattle are up to their bellies in grass and the herd is growing by leaps and bounds. All of this was around Sodom which was heaven on earth to Lot.

-One of the most crucial times in a young man or young woman's life is when they are trying to choose which city toward which they will pitch the direction of their tent. Too many times those choices are made as if the history of Lot had never been written.

-Lot was allowing his whole life to be lured by the wolves.

### **C. Hunting Traits of Wolves**

-Wolves are very characteristic in the way that they hunt.

#### **1. It is a work of isolation.**

-Lot allowed himself to get caught in the isolation of the men of Sodom. Those around him begin to influence the way he felt and acted.

-Lot was always in pace with his world. Therefore because he carried no burden in his heart he carried no weight of concern in his soul. Just “business as usual.” Lot’s relatives were the brethren in lukewarm Laodicea, a lukewarm Demas, and a lukewarm Judas.

-Lot was locked in the disastrous world of shallowness and half-heartedness.

#### **2. It is a work of the pack.**

-Read in Genesis 19 and you will find that came to his door an awful pack who was intent on destroying the angels who had been sent by God.

-It is never just one or two that works in the pack, wolves can run from as few as four to some rare packs have as many as twenty wolves who are vying for the food.

#### **3. It is driven by blood hunger and destruction.**

-The wolves are driven by a taste for blood and that is the only thing that will satisfy.

-There is something called “meat drunk” that is described by those who study the traits of wolves. This occurs when a wolf will gorge himself on a kill that he eats so much that he actually becomes “drunk” on the blood and raw flesh of the kill.



-He will stagger away and only a few yards from the conflict will collapse in an apparent fainting state and lie there for sometimes as long as six hours before he awakens.

#### **4. Very few actually recover.**

-Once the pack gets after the prey there are very few that make it through the slaughter.

### **III. CONCLUSION -- STAY IN THE HOUSE OF GOD**

-Over the course of years of living for God, there comes a valuable piece of advice. Stay in the church no matter what. There will be ups and downs in our walk with God but cannot afford to leave the safety of the fold.

Some years ago, I heard Bro. Anthony Mangun tell a story about a young man named William White. He started the story by saying that William was a young man who grew up in the church in Alexandria but as sometimes is during his teen years there was some drifting that occurred in his life. One Wednesday night after service, Bro. and Sis. Mangun went to the Dairy Queen after church with another couple and through the parking lot, comes William White riding on a bicycle. Bro. Mangun said he could tell that William was about three sheets to the wind and he told him, "William, come to church. I want you to know that I am praying for you. We love you and God has plan for your life." William slurred back to Bro. Mangun, "Yeah sure! I'll come back to church when I feel like it."

That day never came. . . . in fact the wolves would get to William before he found the church. Time passed and days went by and then Bro. Mangun received a call that William had been involved in a diving accident at the river and that he was in the ER with a broken neck and was paralyzed from his neck down. Bro. Mangun told about the days of going to see William in the hospital and how that he saw a young man with a strong body literally waste away in the bed because of the paralysis. It was not long before he had been moved to a nursing home where he would spend the rest of his young life among the aged and confined to a bed and possibly a recliner at his bedside.

More time passed and one day the call came to Bro. Mangun that William wanted to see him. Bro. Mangun got to the nursing home and when he did, William started asking him to get rid of all of his drugs and other things that he

was seeking solace in. He repented and prayed through that day and his spiritual life began to turn around even if his physical life did not.

It was not too long after that until William asked for a home Bible study chart and he would teach Bible studies. With a stick in his mouth, he would turn the pages and in over time ended up winning some of his friends. More time passed and life carried on but William, because of his paralysis was continually struggling with pneumonia and he died a very premature death.

-I wonder what would have happened in his life if the wolves had not partially destroyed his body. In the end, his story turned out right. There is a plaque on the wall in Alexandria and it encases William's stick. But not everyone gets that opportunity to have a second chance after the wolves have begun to work.

-School is about to start back and there will be all sorts of opportunities to make the right choices . . . but there will also come the opportunity to make the wrong ones too. . . Remember this. . . there are wolves at dusk. . .