

Rejoice in the Lord

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[0 : 0 0] Although we will be looking at the chapter as a whole this evening, I'd like us to remember particularly the two out of the last three verses here in this chapter we read in Habakkuk chapter 3.

Verses 17 and 18. Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat. The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation.

In other words, rejoicing in the midst of when almost everything seems to have been taken away. The original context of this chapter is a reference to the captivity in Babylon, where the prophet is looking back at the great works of God and recognising the power of God in the present.

But as things stand, the Israelites have lost everything. They are almost certainly in exile. They have nothing to call their own. Everything has been taken from them in the land of Israel.

Even they themselves have been taken out of it. Why should this have been? Now, this is, as it says, a prayer. A prayer, however, which is designed to be sung. Almost certainly in public worship, albeit not in the temple itself.

[1 : 3 6] And one reason we can say this, that it's designed to be sung, is the musical terms which appear throughout it. For example, the term Selah, which you have frequently scattered throughout the Psalms.

For example, at verse 3, and again at verse 9, and then you've got it again in verse 13. What's unusual about verses 3 and 9 are that the Selah there appears not at the end of a verse.

Now, there's only a couple of instances in the whole of the Bible, apart from these, where the Selah doesn't appear at the end of a verse. Because Selah is, again, a musical term which implies a pause.

It implies a brief stopping, either for an instrumental interlude or simply, as it were, a pause before the next verse or the next stanza takes place.

So you have these musical terms scattered throughout the chapter. You've also got the closing sentence, to the chief singer on my strained instruments. So we have all these terms that indicate that whilst this is, yes, a prayer, it is a prayer designed as praise.

[2 : 4 5] Intended to be sung, intended to be sung publicly, and almost certainly to be taught to the Israelites, to the Jews in exile. A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shagayanoth.

What on earth does Shagayanoth mean? Well, there are two other occasions when that word or similar word appears. The first is in Psalm 7, in the title, where we read Shagayanoth.

The difference between Shagayanoth, Psalm 7, and Shagayanoth in Habakkuk is that the Psalm 7 one is singular, and the Habakkuk one is plural. And again, chapter 9, and verse 16.

The Lord is known by the judgment which he executed. The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Hegayan. A similar term. Not exactly the same, but Hegayan.

Selah. What do these things mean? There are terms which the Hegayan, as we have in Psalm 9, verse 16, implies meditation. A meditation upon a particular situation.

[3 : 52] And the situation described in Psalm 9 is, yes, one of the judgment of the Lord, but also one of sorrow. Where there's a need for mercy.

Where the wicked are attacking and where there's a need for deliverance. A meditation on God's deliverance in time of trouble. The Shagayanoth that we have here in chapter 3 of Habakkuk, and also in Psalm 7, implies a mournful elegy.

A piece of music or song which is mournful. And although the meaning itself is obscure, it comes from a Hebrew root which means to err.

To go astray. To make a mistake. And the context would suggest that this whole chapter is therefore a mournful elegy. Meditatively drawing attention to sins through error by way of ignorance or negligence.

And the context of the whole chapter suggests a previous forgetfulness of the sheer power and greatness of God.

[5 : 00] And this, of course, slots in exactly to the state that Judea, Israel, was in before the exile. They had forgotten the Lord. They had forgotten the sheer power and strength and ability to save of the Lord.

They had made their earthly alliances. They had sought strength in military abilities and in trying to make little plots and plans. And breaking oath on a covenant here with the king of Babylon.

And entering into a treaty with the king of Egypt and so on. It was all earthbound dabbling in politics and scalduggery and behind the scenes trying to work.

They had forgotten the Lord. King after king after king of Judea had set up idols in the temple. They had practiced wickedness. They had shed blood like water in the streets of Jerusalem.

Particularly in the case of Manasseh. They had sunk so low. Because they had forgotten the Lord and his power to save. And this then is a meditative contemplation.

[6 : 07] Through this sins of error, negligence, forgetfulness. Causing the Israelites again to consider the sheer power and strength and terror of the Lord and his ability to save.

And as we'll come to in due course, it is that recognition of how mighty God is and has been for the deliverance of his people in the past.

Which then becomes the context of these seemingly hopelessly optimistic verses at 17 and 18. Whereby although everything seems to be against him.

Everything seems to be taken from Habakkuk or the Israelites. Yet they must rejoice in God who has the power to turn all that around.

And to deliver them from their time of need. In verse 2, you see, I have heard thy speech and was afraid. O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years.

[7 : 12] In the midst of the years, make known in wrath. Remember mercy. It is a recognition of the wrath of God against sin. But reviving of the work. Calvin was apparently of the view which God's work in this instance referred particularly to his people.

They were the work of his hands. Isaiah 45 verse 11. And thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel and his maker. Ask me of things to come concerning my sons and concerning the work of my hands.

Command ye me. Now obviously God has made everything that exists. But those who are his chosen people are the work of his hands in a particular way. In a unique relationship to him.

Likewise, chapter 43 and verse 1. But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee.

I have called thee by thy name. Thou art mine. Now there are other views that the work of God's hands is also his work of deliverance. So his work of creation and providence and so on.

[8 : 27] But Calvin is one certainly who recognised that it can appropriately apply particularly to God's chosen people in this instance.

Reviving of his work in the midst of the years. Now, of course, if we think, well, if God's going to revive his work, then that means presumably reviving his people.

Bringing them back to life again. In their state of forgetfulness. They have sunk low in their state of negligence of the Lord.

They've been dependent on their own strength, which is no strength. And so they are left thus to sink lower and lower. So, Psalm 85, verse 6, is, wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?

Now, as we've said, other people have taken, other Psalms take the work of God to be the judgment on his enemies. Such as Psalm 64, verse 9. But if the psalmist is pleading with the Lord to revive, then to revive his work in the midst of the years.

[9 : 34] Do we trust and believe that the Lord will do so? Well, Jesus says that we should. Jesus points us to, in Luke 11, verse 9, he says, I say to you, ask, and it shall be given you.

Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth. And he that seeketh, findeth.

And to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask any of you that is a father, bread of any of you, will he give him a stone? And if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

And if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Now, you see, this isn't just a recipe for asking bread or fish or material meats or whatever it is. Lord, I'm hungry, give me food. Lord, I'm skint, give me money.

[10 : 36] Lord, I've got nowhere to live, give me a house. Or, Lord, I need this, please provide it. Our prayers to the Lord, the things we need ultimately from the Lord. Yes, we have needed these earthly things.

Now, Jesus says, your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have needed these things. If you who are evil, and we all are sinners, know how to give good gifts, things of this world, to our children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask it?

The Holy Spirit is the means by which we will be revived. It's not by anything we will do ourselves. There's no amount of going to church or reading our Bibles or spending time in our needs.

These are all good things. We need to do these things as well, but they will not make it happen. They will not revive God's people. They will not bring us back to life and newness of strength.

Only the Lord can do that, and only by means of his Holy Spirit. Jesus says, how much more will your Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

[11 : 38] How many of us ask for the Holy Spirit? We ask the Lord for this, this, this, this, and this. We ask the Lord for this thing we need, that thing we need. Practical things, health-bound things. We may pray for the Lord to help us in our spiritual lives, but how many of us actually ask for God's Spirit to come upon us, to revive his work in the midst of the years?

Ask, Jesus says, and it shall be given. Is Jesus a liar? Bold person that was suit that? We know that he is not. He is truth itself. Ask, and it shall be given.

O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years, make known in wrath, remember mercy. And then we have this description that goes on for much of the chapter of God's great power, the ways in which he comes, the ways in which he operates and that he works.

We see him coming, it says, from Timan. Now, Timan is halfway between the end of the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aquaba. If you're wondering where's the Gulf of Aquaba, well, if you've got a Bible, a map at the back of your Bible, you'll see that when the Sinai Peninsula comes down to the Red Sea, there's the left-hand fork, which is the Gulf of Suez, and the right-hand fork is the Gulf of Aquaba.

And at the top of the Gulf of Aquaba, there's two places, Elah, sometimes called Eloth, and Ezion-Geber. And these are at the top of the Gulf of Aquaba. So it's the right-hand arm of the Red Sea.

[13 : 15] And so Timan is midway between the Dead Sea, which cuts down through the middle of the land of Israel, and halfway between that and the top of the Red Sea there on its right-hand arm.

In other words, it's deep in the country of Edom, the Edomites, the traditional enemies of Israel. Likewise, Mount Paran is clearly the most prominent peak in the wilderness of Paran, which is in the northeast of the Sinai Peninsula.

Again, not only wilderness, but deep in the territory of Israel's traditional enemies. If God is coming from there, where it says, you know, God came from Timan and the Holy One from Mount Paran, it doesn't mean, oh, this is where he belongs.

He belongs with the Edomites. But rather, it is, as we find a great deal of similarity in Isaiah 63, you know, the opening of that famous chapter. Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bosra?

This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength. I that speak in righteousness, mighty to say, Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?

[14 : 28] I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me. For I will tread them in my anger, trample them in my fury. Their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help. And I wondered that there was none to uphold. Therefore my own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me.

In that context, in Isaiah 63, God is portrayed as coming from the land of the enemies, staying with the blood of his enemies, having won a phenomenal victory, coming from their very strongholds.

He's coming back. He's coming back in victory. He's coming back in triumph. A triumph of victory, which he has won single-handedly. Whatever were the victories over the enemies of God's people, God won them alone.

Nobody helped him. Nobody delivered them, save himself. If you go on through the rest of that chapter, Isaiah 63, you see it's talking about God's salvation that he brings to his people.

[15 : 42] He is coming from deep in enemy territory, having won this great victory. And as we were to go on through that chapter, you'd see again the kindness of the Lord, verses 7 to 9.

The danger of forgetfulness of God, verses 10 to 14 in Isaiah 63. And again, the danger of erring by forgetting the Lord, verse 17.

Why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? So many parallels with Isaiah 63 and Habakkuk 3 there. Again, it's a similar thing being portrayed. God's immense power, his desire to deliver, but the fact that he does it alone.

We don't help him with it. We are not co-workers with God in that sense. He delivers on him alone. Verse 4, His brightness was as the light.

He had horns coming out of his hand. Oh, thank you. Oh, James, that sounds a bit painful. The word horns sometimes is translated, Anabic translations, as rays, like the rays of the sun coming out of the sun.

[16 : 47] So it's like the rays of power coming out of his hand. Horns is a term that symbolizes power in the Old Testament. Sometimes in the Renaissance times, you find statues of Moses, for example, from the Renaissance period, coming down from the mountains with the tablets in his hand and horns out of his head.

You know, it makes him look a wee bit sort of like the devil, but horns, the symbol of power. And this is because in some of the old Latin translations, when it's said that his face shone, in other words, it was like rays coming out of his face.

That's translated in some old translations as horns coming out from Luke's face. So horns are a symbol of power coming out of his hand. And there was the hiding of his power.

The hiding of his power. But wait a minute. Surely we're talking about God revealing his power. We're talking about God working his power. Is he revealing his power? Is he hiding it? Which is he doing?

Come on. Well, it is both. It is both and. You know, we know, for example, that when God comes in the flesh, in the person of his son, Jesus Christ, it is a revealing of God to the world.

[18 : 03] You know, John 14 and verse 9, Jesus says, you know, he that hath seen me hath seen the father. How sayest thou then? Show us the father. So it is a revealing of what God is like.

And yet, and yet, this human person, even this divine human person, is not all there is.

This isn't all there is of God. When the disciples look upon the person of Jesus Christ, that's not all there is. Even though Jesus says, he that hath seen me hath seen the father, there is more.

And it is more glorious too. Now, in the light of, for example, a couple of verses, 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 6, we have God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And this, taken together with, for example, John 1 verse 14, the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth, seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

[19 : 18] Now, the professor of Pre-Church College in former years, Arnie Whindersen, whom I'm sure most of you know of, put it this way. He said, and I quote, the incarnation is a concealment of the glory of God in order that it might be revealed to us.

A concealment of the glory of God in order that it might be revealed to us. It was God drawing a veil over his uncreated glory that the souls of his people might look and yet live.

That souls might see his glory in the face of Jesus Christ and not be consumed. That is the meaning of it. In the face of an incarnate saviour.

That the appearance of God in the flesh is not just a revealing of God, it is a concealing of his glory. You're like, well, come on. It's a contradiction, surely, isn't it?

Either it's being made known or it's being hidden. Which is it? Okay. If you go out in bright sunny weather, do you put on sunglasses? Are the sunglasses a contradiction?

[20 : 28] Do you go out to lie on a beach in some tropical resort and you start putting on sunblock? What do you want to do? Do you want to block out the sun or do you want to soak it up? Which is it?

Contradiction in terms? You put on your sunblock, you put on your shades. Does that mean you're shutting out the sun? Does that mean you want the sun? Well, of course you want the sun. But by putting on your sunblock, it enables you to soak up more of it without burning.

Without the negative effects of too much exposure to what you can't handle. It enables you to look at the world around you with your eyes literally shaded from the brightness of the sun.

Because the sun is so good, because it's so bright, you put on sunglasses. You put on sunblock. You put on sunblock. Why do you do that? Because the sun is so good that you need to protect yourself from the strength of it.

The revealing and the concealment are both together. They are one and the same thing. The appearance of Jesus Christ in the flesh is not just showing God to the world, it is also concealing his glory from the world so that they can look on the face of God and still not be consumed.

[21 : 52] This is, of course, the way the Lord works in the Old Testament as well. You know, when Moses says to the Lord, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. Exodus 33 at verse 18.

And the Lord says, Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live. Behold, there is a place by me. Thou shalt stand upon a rock. It shall come to pass while my glory passeth by.

I will put thee in a cliff of the rock and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by. I will take away my hand. Thou shalt see my back parts. But my face shall not be seen. Why?

Because if Moses said, show me thy glory. And the Lord showed him all his glory. Moses would just be consumed by it. He would be completely burnt up, destroyed by it. Such is the immensity of the power of God if it was undisclosed.

If it was unprotected. If we were unprotected from us. If it was not concealed to an extent, it would destroy us.

[22 : 53] Such is the power and purity of God's presence. Now throughout this chapter in Habakkuk are descriptions of the absolutely terrifying power of the glory of God.

His power over nature, over the heavens and the earth, over the souls of men. All of it intermingled with remembrances of his mercy. Because these, if you think about it, are all descriptions of things he had already done.

On behalf of and in the deliverance of his own people. He stood and measured the earth. He's done this in creation. He drove asunder the nations when they entered the promised land.

He scattered the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Jebusites. The perpetual hills did bow. You know, the volcanic strength and power of Mount Sinai.

The hills melted, as it were, at God's presence. So the tents of Kushan and affliction. The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers?

[24 : 00] Was thine anger against the rivers? Was thine wrath against the sea? That I was right upon thine horses? Was God displeased with the Red Sea when he tore it apart? So that his people could go through?

Or with the Jordan when he made it stack up? So that Joshua and his rights could cross over into the promised land? Did God have some kind of quarrel with the waters of the earth? No. But he intervened in nature to enable his people to be brought out of slavery.

And to be brought into their inheritance. God is interfering, if you like, with nature. He is using his power over nature, over the heavens and the earth, to make sure his people are not only set free, but brought into their inheritance.

He is literally moving heaven and earth to save his people. The sun and the moon stood still in their habitation. Verse 11.

Remember that instance when Joshua is fighting against one set of Israel's enemies, and he commands the sun to stand still. And God makes it stand still in the heavens.

[25 : 10] And this has actually been scientifically calculated. Because they reckon from the timings and the ages that they think the earth is, they've lost a certain number of hours. They can't understand where these hours have gone until you look at the biblical record.

And you've got 24 hours there where the sun is standing still. And you've got other portions where the sun goes back on the sundial, remember, of Ahaz, where God turns back the sundial.

And when they do up all these calculations, arithmetically, they've got the missing pieces. God has overruled the heavens and the earth to make sure his people are delivered and given victory.

All these descriptions, terrifying and powerful as they are, are also descriptions of things which God has already done in the past to deliver his people.

But they had erred, Shigayanov, forgetfulness, negligence, omission of what God had done.

[26 : 15] They had forgotten the power of God to save. And so they had dabbled in all the things of earth, looking for deliverance that way.

And because they had forgotten, they needed now to be reminded. And here in exile, they had nothing left to lose. They had sinned through forgetfulness, negligence, and thereby ignorance of the glory and power and majesty and fearfulness of the living God.

Because this is a terrifying chapter when you actually read it. It's a terrifying power, a terrifying glory. There is a power, this is a power you really want to have on your side.

And this is what Habakkuk is talking about in verse 16. When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered, at the watch, rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble.

How will he be able to rest only if this kind of power is on his side? You really, really need this strength and power to be on your side.

[27 : 31] But here's the good news. This can be done. God will be on your side. Or rather, to be more accurate, he freely invites you to join him on his side.

In verse 13, we see it in the first part, thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed.

And of course, what does an anointed translate as? Messiah. The anointed one who delivers. Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked by discovering the foundations under the neck.

He wentest forth for the salvation of thy people. He desires to save, destroying their enemies. This is what God seeks to do. And in the context, and from the background of this particular chapter of fearful power and deliverance and the mightiness of God, we come at last then to our verses 17 and 18.

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls.

[28 : 47] Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. When all possible earthly blessing or joy or benefit has been lost, when the devil whispers, there is no God.

It's just an illusion. And don't think for one minute that people who know the Lord or have loved the Lord or served him for many years or whatever are immune from those kind of temptations, those kind of whispers.

Don't think that ministers are immune from that. Have I been in that situation? Of course I've been in that situation. I've been in that situation where the devil has said, look, the reason, the reason you're not getting any answers is because there isn't actually any God.

You know, you're going through your outward motions and you're doing your religion, but you know, there's nobody actually behind it. There's nobody there that isn't actually any God. This is what the devil whispers. This is what he says.

And at such times as that, that not only must we be sustained by how we see the Lord at work in the lives of others because if he's real to them, we know that at least he's real.

[29 : 57] He's real to them, even if he's not speaking to me or to you or whatever the case may be. We know that he is alive and at work at least in the lives of others. But also when we see no evidence in our life, in our experience, when it just doesn't seem to be happening, when all your sorrow-filled experiences are on the one hand and you've got the claims of God's word and the other and the two seem completely disconnected from each other, remember the power of God thus described in this chapter and throughout the scriptures.

Thus unquestionable, that power to save, to deliver, to turn everything around in your life, that must never be forgotten or omitted.

We must never err in this negligence, this shigai enough, this negligence, forgetfulness, to have erred through forgetting the Lord because he is real and he is alive and he is at work in the lives of his people and those whom he would call to follow even if he withdraws for a time, even if he would try and test our faith and withdraw his comfortable presence for a time, remember the power of God.

When Jesus uses his example of how, you know, knock and it shall be open, ask and it shall be given, what he doesn't say is knock once, tap and wheel!

The door opens right away or ask once, yes, you get it right away. It's not a slot machine. Sometimes you have to keep on knocking. Sometimes you have to keep hammering on the door.

[31 : 51] Jesus uses the illustration of somebody who visits his friend and wakes him up in the middle of the night because he needs bread for somebody who has come for his house and he keeps on asking and he keeps on requesting and he keeps on knocking.

Ask and it shall be given. Seek and ye shall find. The very act of seeking implies not just you look down and oh look there it is.

Seeking implies a searching. It implies a time-consuming investigation. Seeking out that which you don't yet have.

Knock and it shall be opened. In the fullness of time it shall be opened. This is the power of God. God's willingness to help us.

We must never forget. You see, it's perhaps possible for us to say, well yeah, okay, I believe what you're saying about the power of God. I can read what it says there and okay, yes, I believe that he made all this universe and heavens and the earth but what I don't actually accept is his willingness to actually help me or to get involved in my life.

[33 : 01] Maybe he is helping all these other people. Maybe he's alive and I'm working their lives but you know, he's not doing it for me and I can't believe that he's interested or wants to help me. That he's interested in my life or my salvation.

First of all then, at least accept the power of God. His power over the heavens and the earth, over all the universe, over every detail of the things in this earth as well as in the heavens.

His willingness to help us. We must believe sometimes perhaps when still we see no sign of it.

This is when I went this forth for the salvation of my people. Verse 30 says, well come on, if you haven't believed in what you don't see any evidence for, you know, what's the use of that? What is faith?

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. You hold fast and you keep on believing.

[34 : 04] This word, this chapter may sum up your experiences perhaps. Yes, the power of God that it always seems to be turned against you.

The emptiness, the fig tree doesn't blossom. There's no fruit in the vines. The labour of the olive seems to be failing. The fields yield no meat. The flock cut off from the foal. There shall be no herd in the stalls.

There's nothing more. There's nothing, nothing at all. My life has nothing in it, we might be saying. We might say, Lord, yes, I may have material blessings, but there's nothing in my life that fulfills, that satisfies, that heals the wounds of my heart.

Yet, will I rejoice in the Lord? I will joy in the God of my salvation. How can you have that joy in the midst of all that sorrow?

Because you believe. You believe in what you do not yet see with your eyes. You take the evidence of God's accumulated work.

[35 : 06] You take the evidence of his reality in the lives of so many that have gone before you and those that you see around you. You take the teaching of Jesus and you wonder, can it all have been false?

Can the devil really be speaking the truth? And he says, actually, there isn't a God at all. It's all just an illusion. Does that really stack up? The resounding answer, surely, with logic, with truthfulness, with any iota of veracity, is, of course, it doesn't stack up.

Of course, there has to be a creator. Of course, there has to be a God. Of course, Jesus must have been speaking the truth. Of course, this chapter describes. Yes, the misery of emptiness without the Lord.

But have we never known the Lord? Have we never had this involvement in our lives? Or have we omitted to cherish and nurture that flame?

Have we perhaps forgotten? Have we perhaps neglected to nurture and cherish and work on that relationship?

[36 : 17] Trust him. Do not trust yourself, but trust him and go forward in faith. When they got to the Red Sea, remember? They got to the Red Sea and Pharaoh's chariots were behind them and they thought, what do we do now?

We're going to die here. And God says, why are you crying to me? Go forward. Nothing ahead of you, but the sea. And they had to go forward and the sea pardoned for that. Not right away. God sent a wind all that night and it opened up the pathway before them.

In the meantime, he became a pillar of fire behind them to protect them from the Egyptians. So what do you do now? After a long, dark night, do you really want to go down into the depths of an ocean bed with a wall of water on this side and a wall of water on that side?

A bit dark, bit scary, bit spooky. Do you want to choose to do that? Not really. But what's the alternative? The alternative is certain death at the hands of the Egyptians. You may be afraid of what the Lord has for you, of what is ahead of you, but what he has for you will, I promise you, be for your good.

I promise you, be for your deliverances. Don't make it my word. His word promises that he desires to do you good. Behind is only certain death and slavery.

[37 : 32] In front, it looks scary. But it's a way of salvation that the Lord has opened up before you. For he is no man's debtor.

Trust and believe. The evidence of what you see around you may be so discouraging. It may be so depressing.

And you may be certain that God has forgotten you. But be honest. Who forgot who first? Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the foal, and there shall be no herd installed.

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation, my saving, my deliverance.

my redeemer, because I seek to return to my God that is praying. Beloved and merciful Father, I will be