

Considering the Culture

TODAY'S PASSAGE:

Habakkuk 3:17-19

TIME COMMITMENT:

30 minutes

When you study any portion of the Word of God make sure you study the background. Re-create the culture. Because then and only then will the text come alive.

It is possible that you grow grapes or olives for a living. Or you just may happen to be a shepherd. But if not, you'll have to put yourself in the place of a farmer many centuries ago as you again examine Habakkuk 3:17-19.

The passage describes someone waiting "fruitlessly" to see figs and olives bud out on trees and grapes spring forth from vines. But in order for his produce to be at this stage of growth, what things would a farmer have already done to prepare his crops? List all the things you can think of.

Now suppose you defined your job as "herdsperson." However, under the present circumstances you "have no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls" (v 17 NIV). How do you think you would feel about yourself? How might you feel about God?

In the culture of Habakkuk's time, crops and animals were equivalent of today's bank accounts. That's where the money was. People who had neither vineyards, herbs, nor olive groves had no means of income. Yet what was the attitude of the writer?

TRUTH THAT TRANSFORMS

Suppose Habakkuk were writing from your job and culture. Rather than using the imagery of olives, grapes, sheep, and cattle, what terms and comparisons might he have used? Try to rewrite verses 17 and 18 to make the same point, but from the perspective of your own culture.
