



Habakkuk: God who Repsonds

Memory Verse: Habakkuk 2:20-3:2 "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him. A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. On *shigionoth*. Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy."

Background

Habakkuk is the 35th book of the Bible and the 8th book of minor prophets in the Old Testament. Habakkuk, whose name means "One Who Embraces", was likely a professional prophet or priest involved with temple worship. This is deduced by his reference of himself as "Habakkuk the prophet" (1:1 & 3:1) and the psalm-like instruction given at the end of the book: "For the director of music. On my stringed instruments." (3:19). Habakkuk's description of Judah's violence and injustice along with his mention of the approaching Babylonian invasion (1:6 & 3:16) indicate that the date of his ministry occurred around 609-605 BC. At this time, Jehoiakim was king of Judah, and was leading the people into wickedness and evil. In addition, the Babylonians had risen to become the undisputed world power and were moving westward towards Judah (1:6). In 605 BC, the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and the first deportation of the Jewish nobles (which included Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) occurred.

The Short Story

Habakkuk questions God about Judah's sin and injustice while ultimately trusting in the Lord and submitting to His authority.

What's the Big Idea?

Habakkuk, unlike other prophets who received a message initiated by God for His people, approaches the Lord and begins a dialogue. Habakkuk doesn't directly address the people of Judah in his writings, but instead imparts to them what He has learned from his conversation with God. Habakkuk, living in a dark and evil time in Judah's history, questions the Lord on His seemingly lack of action over Judah's sins. "How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, 'Violence!' but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds" (1:2-3). The Lord answers Habakkuk, sharing that He is raising up the Babylonians (aka Chaldeans) to use in His judgment against Judah (1:5-11), which is coming soon. This only distressed Habakkuk more because the Babylonians were far more wicked than the people of Judah. God responds again to Habakkuk, letting him know that He is aware of the sins of the Babylonians and they, too, will come under His judgment in time. Habakkuk, through his dialogue with God, comes to better understand the person, power, and plan of God. Standing in awe of the Lord's deeds (3:2), Habakkuk closes His book with a psalm of trust and praise, proclaiming that no matter what comes, "I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior" (3:18).

So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

Habakkuk asks God the questions that so many of us have probably wondered, "Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?" (1:3). When we look around at the sin, injustice, and evil in the world, it may seem that God is silent and inactive. However, the Lord is still sovereign and in His holy temple (2:20). The more we fix our eyes on God, His character, and mighty power, the more we will trust in Him and His plan for the world. Habakkuk learned that "the just shall live by his faith" (2:4). Believers, living in faith, can know that God is actively working on our behalf "...for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28). No matter how dark the world may seem, there is no doubt that there is a glorious future for God's people. A future when "...the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (2:14). God is sovereign and God is good. Just like Habakkuk, we can rejoice and be joyful in God, our Savior, no matter what our circumstances are.

Teaching Text

Habakkuk 2:1-3 “I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint. Then the Lord replied: ‘Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.’ ”

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- What did you think of Habakkuk's frankness & honesty with God? What does it say about God?
- What did Habakkuk do to position himself to receive an answer from God?
- Why is this phrase “**Then the Lord replied**” one of the more important phases in the Bible?
- Why was he told to write the revelation down? How important is it to dictate exactly what He says?
- What is the Lord’s “Revelation”? Why is it tied to time and certainty? Can we trust God to deliver?

Practical Application

- How hard is it to be open and honest with God about your feelings and frustrations? Why?
- Where do you really need to hear from God about something? What are you doing about it?
- How hard is it to wait for an answer from God before you take action? Where do you need patience?
- Do you struggle with God’s timing in your life? Do you get annoyed with His timetable?
- What do you hear God saying to you about your next step in life? How are you responding?

Hitting the Highpoints

- 1:2-4 “Why do you make me look at injustice. Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?”
- 1:12 LORD, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, you will never die. “
- 2:4 ““See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright— but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness.”
- 3:17-19 “The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer...”

Bonus Features: Where is Jesus?

Habakkuk 3:13-14 has the redemptive act of Salvation beautifully hidden. ¹³ *You came out to deliver your people, (Jesus’ birth) to save your anointed one (Jesus on the Cross) You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, (Satan crushed) you stripped him from head to foot. Selah* ¹⁴ *With his own spear [weapon or staves] you pierced his head* The Cross and Golgotha was Satan’s weapons against Jesus. With Satan’s own weapons (the cross), which looking like an inverted sword, wielded into Golgotha, Satan’s head was crushed as prophesied in Genesis 3:15. In Habakkuk, Jesus is the one who embraces us and clings on to us, the one who is the everlasting God, the Holy One, the God of our Salvation. *Excerpted from Hidden Treasures by Mano Paul.*

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Personal Takeaways and Notes