

Habakkuk Chapter 1

Introduction:

Authorship: Habakkuk - “**Embracing**” Some have translated that as “**Wrestler**” because he grappled (**Grappler**) with difficult issues.

- Not much is known of Habakkuk personally, but it appears that he was a Levite serving as a priest in the Temple. The last verse of this book describes:

Habakkuk 3:19 “To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instrument.”

- It was the priests who wrote and sang the songs, and played instruments in the Temple.

Written to: The Southern kingdom warning of impending judgment at the hand of the Babylonians.

Time: The final days of the Southern kingdom of Judah, 605 BC, contemporary with Isaiah, Nahum, Zephaniah and Jeremiah.

- He began his prophesy during the rein of good king Josiah and his reforms, then through the reign of Manasseh, who was the worst king of Judah and took the nation to the lowest place in their history. Manasseh had Isaiah put to death, which is believed to be referenced in the book of Hebrews, having the prophet sawn in half.
- Habakkuk spoke out against the corruption of the nation, government, and people.
- Habakkuk is the last of the minor prophets to preach to Judah prior to their being taken by the Babylonians the first time.

Theme: Lamenting the sin of Judah.

- Habakkuk begins his prophesy questioning God, challenging God, wrestling with God, but in the end embracing God, living up to his name.

Key verse: Habakkuk 2:4 “But the just shall live by faith.”

- Quoted 3X’s in the NT: **Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38.**

V: 1 The “burden” that God put on Habakkuk’s heart, the “oracle” or the prophecy or the vision that the prophet saw.

- Jeremiah's call was similarly compelling:

Jeremiah 1:7-9 “⁷But the LORD said to me: “do not say, I am a youth, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.
⁸Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.
⁹Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: “Behold, I have put My Words in your mouth...”

- Paul was similarly compelled of the Lord:

1 Corinthians 9:16 “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast or, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”

- It's described as a “burden” - as in this is what the Lord has put on my heart, but it's not so much a heavy burden as in difficult to bear - it's a calling, and a privilege.

1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”

- Kind of like, when you love the One you're working for, it's not work.

1 Timothy 1:12 “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”

V: 2-3 We see Habakkuk “grappling, wrestling” with a couple of issues.

V: 2 Habakkuk is expressing a sentiment that we can all relate to in some way, we've all waited on God at times and wondered “what is taking so long...?”

1st Cry: (H-7768) “sawa” - to call out.

2nd Cry: (H-2199) “zaaq” - to scream out.

King David could certainly relate:

Psalms 13:1 “How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?”

- The prophet has been crying out to God and God has yet to respond, he has made the mistake of confusing two things - God hearing - which He does, and God responding or doing something after He's heard.

We know that He hears our prayers:

Psalms 34:15 “The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.”

Psalms 34:17 “The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears,...”

- Hearing is one thing, then doing is another. God is not obligated to do anything. We should be grateful when He does, we should glorify Him when He moves, but He's not obligated - but He is gracious, merciful, and kind!

Exodus 2:23-25 “²³Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of their bondage. ²⁴So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.”

- This was not a 1-2 day process. Do you remember how long Moses was tending sheep before God commissioned him to go back to Egypt to set His people free? (40 yrs.)
- The issue is more His timing and our willingness to wait on the Lord as He does things on His schedule as opposed to ours.

Psalms 69:6 “Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me; Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.”

- Paraphrased: “*Those that wait on the Lord will not be ashamed.*”

V: 3 He's watching the moral decline of the nation, he's seeing the violence, the injustice, all the bad things and asking why are you showing me, revealing these things to me?

- We could ask the same question, and I think that the answer would be pretty much the same. Pray!

Psalms 12:1 “Help LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.”

- There are things we can fix or effect - we should do that. There are things we can't seem to fix or effect. What can we do? We can pray, and call upon the God who can fix it who can impact it. Prayer changes things.

1 Samuel 12:23 “Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17 “Pray without ceasing.”

V: 4 He sees all the bad things happening, and the impotence of the law to correct it, in fact the injustice where the wicked prevail and the un-just are vindicated through the perverse judgments of the legal system.

Psalm 11:3 “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

- Justice doesn't go forth, meaning there is no justice.

Psalm 119:126 “It is time for You to act, O LORD, for they have regarded Your law as void.”

Asaph expressed the same sentiment:

Psalm 73:1-3, 17-18 “¹Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart, ²But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. ³For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” - “¹⁷Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end. ¹⁸Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.”

V: 5 Here the Lord responds, which is the answer to V: 2 “How long...” not too long!

- God doesn't give Habakkuk an explanation, He gives him a revelation. God doesn't owe any of us an explanation, but He does continually reveal Himself and His will through His Word, and through His works.
- Look, watch what is about to happen - you're going to be blown away!
- You wouldn't believe it if I told you - I'm going to raise up the Chaldeans, the Babylonians and use them as My instrument of correction.

Jeremiah 19:3 “... Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle.”

Lamentations 4:12 “The kings of the earth, and all inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy could enter the gates of Jerusalem.”

- God operates in ways that we don't understand, and at a level we can't even imagine:

Isaiah 55:8-9 “⁸For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

V: 6-8 The Chaldeans are coming! The result of their disobedience!

Deuteronomy 28:49 “The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand.”

Jeremiah 25:9 “Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, says the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make then an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations.”

Proverbs 13:13 “He who despises the Word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded.”

V: 9-10 They come for violence - they are literally a blood thirsty lot, ferocious in behavior - faces set like the east wind - stern, fierce in countenance, taking many captives.

Jeremiah 9:25 “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised.”

- Remember the 1st group of captives taken in the first deportation, all the princes like Daniel and company, the craftsmen and artisans, the wise men, then the 2nd deportation, then the 3rd and final destruction of Jerusalem.
- They have no regard for persons, they scoff at kings, women, children, the elderly - all fell to the Babylonian sword.

2 Chronicles 36:17 “Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand.”

V: 11 God is going to use the Babylonians as His instrument of judgment for Israel and also the other nations around Israel - but after that, his heart will be lifted up in pride - which will result with God dealing with them very severely.

- In their arrogance they attributed their military success to the supposed superiority of their pagan god “Marduk” - not knowing that they were being used by the True and Living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as His instrument of correction upon His people.
- Eventually the judgment of God in part triggered by their pride, caught up with them.

Speaking of Belshazzar:

Daniel 5:20 “But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him.”

V: 12-14 More grappling... he's wrestling with the Holiness of God which is indisputable, and the un-holiness of the instrument of His correction, namely the Babylonians.

V: 12 Habakkuk is somewhat in disbelief, God you're eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, You are the Holy One he's acknowledging who God is, as we should.

Psalm 90:2 "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God."

1 Timothy 1:17 "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

- Habakkuk's question, his conundrum: would you really use the unrighteous pagan's, the Babylonians to judge your people? (Errr, yup!)

Jeremiah 9:25 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised."

V: 13 Habakkuk seems to reason - God your eyes are too pure to even look upon this kind of evil, to condone it.

- That is what is meant by this verse, that God's eyes are too pure to look upon evil and condone or approve it - He does see the evil in this world, He would have to be blind not to, but He certainly does not approve of it.
- God the Father in fact sent His only begotten Son as the remedy for what He saw.
- Habakkuk: Lord we're bad, we've been disobedient - but they're worse!
- God will use them, then He will deal with them also.

Isaiah 33:1 "Woe to you who plunder, though you have not been plundered; and you who deal treacherously, though they have not dealt treacherously with you! When you cease plundering, you will be plundered; when you make an end of dealing treacherously, they will deal treacherously with you."

V: 14-17 Lord, why would you allow this? This judgment is more than even Habakkuk had anticipated - in his mind perhaps kind of over the top.

- The people are like fish getting caught up in a gigantic fishing net, they're all being taken captive and the Babylonians are glorying in it.
- They're slaying the nations without any pity. Which is exactly what God said would happen.

- There are those times when we're simply not going to understand what God is doing. When we come to what we don't know, we have to fall back on what we do know.
1. God is good.
 2. God loves us.
 3. God's will is perfect.
 4. God's Word is true.

Jeremiah 25:29 “For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city which is called by My name, and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth, says the LORD of hosts.”

- Nobody gets away with anything!

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”