

Lesson 3: Habakkuk 3

Review of Ch. 1, 2

Habakkuk 2:4 “Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, **but the righteous shall live by his faith.**”

1. **Cry out to God with our earnest pleas:** 1:1-4 (How long, why, don't you see...)
2. **Rehearse the truth (negatively)**...of God's hatred of wickedness 1:5-11 (God calls the Chaldeans bitter, hasty, violent, guilty, etc.)
3. **Rehearse the truth (positively)**....1:12 “Are you not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One?”
4. **Be Patient-2:3** For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

Chapter 3:

¹ A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. On “shigionoth.” ² LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy. ³ God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth.

⁴ His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand, where his power was hidden. ⁵ Plague went before him; pestilence followed his steps. ⁶ He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed. His ways are eternal. ⁷ I saw the tents of Cushan in distress, the dwellings of Midian in anguish.

⁸ Were you angry with the rivers, O LORD? Was your wrath against the streams? Did you rage against the sea when you rode with your horses and your victorious chariots? ⁹ You uncovered your bow, you called for many arrows. You split the earth with rivers; ¹⁰ the mountains saw you and writhed. Torrents of water swept by; the deep roared and lifted its waves on high.

¹¹ Sun and moon stood still in the heavens at the glint of your flying arrows, at the lightning of your flashing spear. ¹² In wrath you strode through the earth and in anger you threshed the nations. ¹³ You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, you stripped him from head to foot.

¹⁴ With his own spear you pierced his head when his warriors stormed out to scatter us, gloating as though about to devour the wretched who were in hiding. ¹⁵ You trampled the sea with your horses, churning the great waters. ¹⁶ I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us.

¹⁷ Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. ¹⁹ The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.

3: 13-16: God's mighty deeds recalled:

Habakkuk's prayer portrays a theophany, or visible self-manifestation of God, using imagery found in the traditional descriptions of God's appearances at the exodus from Egypt, at the giving of the covenant law at Sinai, and during the conquest of Canaan (Ex. 15:1–18; Deut. 33:2, 3; Judg. 5:4, 5; Pss. 18:10; 68:7, 8, 24; 77:16–20).¹

Result: Verse 16 I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us.

Why is Habakkuk so fearful?

Why is he so afraid? Is it because of the coming Chaldeans? Yes, but only to a degree. Habakkuk is rather more awestruck by the reality that the Chaldeans are coming to deal with the wicked in Judah *by the hand of Yahweh!* And, so, he recognizes that God is working and he is bringing judgement on the wicked in Judah, and he will bring judgement on the wicked of Babylon. The prophet truly fears the Lord.

But what is the fear of the Lord? 'It is that affectionate reverence, by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father's law.' And that is why Habakkuk can proclaim in the final part of the verse that he '**will quietly wait**' for the Babylonians to invade Judah and then for trouble to come upon the Babylonians. That verb in Hebrew bears the idea of repose and rest; its basic sense is to find a place to land and roost. After all is said and done, this is where Habakkuk has landed theologically: he is in greater awe of God than he is of the Babylonians.²

¹ Sproul, R. C. (Ed.). (2015). *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition)* (p. 1604). Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust.

² Currid, J. D. (2009). *The Expectant Prophet: Habakkuk Simply Explained* (p. 130). Darlington, England: EP Books.

3:2 Habakkuk's approach to prayer:

2 O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.

Informal Vs Formal Prayer-

If prayer is not a simple thing for you yet, do not be led astray by the truth that it can also be more complex. Still, if you are one who prays naturally and if you know that you can come to God at any place and at any time, you can learn something additional from this prayer of Habakkuk. There is also room for composed prayer in which we put down in writing the deepest expression and clearest insights of our hearts and minds.³

Elements:

1. Humility-

Lloyd-Jones puts it this way: "How was Habakkuk brought to such a position? It would seem that it was when he stopped thinking of his own nation, or of the Chaldeans, and contemplated only the holiness and justice of God against the dark background of sin in the world. Our problems can nearly all be traced to our persistence in looking at the immediate problems themselves, instead of looking at them in the light of God. So long as Habakkuk was looking at Israel and the Chaldeans, he was troubled. Now he has forgotten Israel as such, and the Chaldeans, and his eyes are on God. He has returned to the realm of spiritual truth—the holiness of God, sin in man and in the world—and so he is able to see things in an entirely new light. He is now concerned for the glory of God and for nothing else. He had to stop thinking in terms of the fact that the Chaldeans were worse sinners than the Jews and that yet God was going to use them, perplexing though this problem was. That attitude made him forget the sin of his own nation through concentrating on the sin of others, which happened to be greater. As long as he remained in this attitude he remained in perplexity, unhappy in heart and mind. But the prophet came to the place where he was lifted entirely out of that state, to see only the wonderful vision of the Lord in His holy temple, with sinful mankind and the universe beneath Him. The distinction between the Israelites and the Chaldeans became relatively unimportant when things were seen like that. It was no longer possible to be exalted either as an individual or as a nation. When things are seen from a spiritual viewpoint, there can only be an

³ Boice, J. M. (2002). *The Minor Prophets: an expositional commentary* (p. 418). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

acknowledgment that ‘All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,’ and ‘The whole world lieth in the evil one.’ The holiness of God and the sin of man are the only things that matter.”⁴

2. Adoration

Worship is acknowledging God’s true worth, his “worth-ship.” It is rehearsing his attributes so that we might have a true mental image of him...

We rush through the first part of our prayer (“Oh, Lord, we thank you that you are a wonderful God and that you sent Jesus to die for us ...”) but then settle down on the requests (“Lord, here are sixteen things I want from you”). This is how Habakkuk prayed at the beginning. It is not very effective. Our requests will not be God’s desires for us and most will go unanswered. On the other hand, if we focus first on God’s great characteristics and his acts in past and present history, then our requests will change—they will be more in line with God’s desires—and we will receive what we are praying for now quite properly.⁵

3. Petition

a. For Revival of His work

b. For Mercy

Conclusion: Point 5, Rejoice!

17 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,

18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

19 GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer’s; he makes me tread on my high places.

Genesis 18:25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! **Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”**

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⁴ Boice, J. M. (2002). *The Minor Prophets: an expositional commentary* (pp. 419–420). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

⁵ Boice, J. M. (2002). *The Minor Prophets: an expositional commentary* (p. 422). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.