

Habakkuk's Hymn

Habakkuk 3:1-19

INTRO:

Habakkuk lived through trouble like we have never known. He faced the divine promise that the Judah he had always known and loved would be invaded, conquered, and devastated by the Chaldeans. The Chaldeans would come because of God's judgment on His people for their idolatry. Our friend Habakkuk was frustrated with Judah's sin and poured out his heart to God demanding action. But when God answered, Habakkuk did not like the answer he got. He paused to take a reality check and to remind himself about what was really real. It was real that Judah would be invaded, but it was more real who God was and is. God is eternal, God is faithful, God is powerful, and God is holy. Therefore Judah would not cease to exist. Then Habakkuk asks his question, "God, how can you use ungodly people to judge us who are more righteous than them?"

God answers Habakkuk in **Ch 2** of his book. His answer is in the form of five woes divided by three towers of eternal truth. Tower One is ***"the just shall live by faith"*** (vs. 4), Tower Two is ***"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD like the water covers the sea"*** (vs. 14). Finally, the Third Tower assured Habakkuk, ***"The LORD is in His holy Temple, let the earth keep silent before Him"*** (vs. 20). In Habakkuk **Ch 3**, Habakkuk is saying he gets the message and he composes a hymn to God. That Hymn breaks into three parts. He shares first his prayer. Second, he eloquently describes God's power and judgment. Finally, he gives his resolution to be faithful and praise God in the worst kind of situations.

I. Habakkuk's Prayer (v. 1-2)

II. Habakkuk's Vision of Judgment (3-15)

III. Habakkuk's Resolve (v. 16-19)

I. Habakkuk's Prayer (v. 1-2)

A. As a good man of God, he knows how to pour out his heart in prayer to His faithful God. ***"A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth. O LORD, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy"*** (Habakkuk 3:1-2).

B. Habakkuk admits his own fear of what God would do in the first petition of his short prayer. ***"I was afraid."*** We should always be a part of our relationship with God. We must always recognize that we are God's and we are the sheep of His pasture. He can do what He wants with us and with the evil doers around us. We also live in an increasingly godless land and we also may be afraid of what God may do. Let us freely confess that fear to the living God.

C. His second petition should be ours also.

“O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known.”

We also should pray for God’s work on planet earth to be made known to all those who would deny Him. Let us continually pray for a revival in this church and in this land.

D. Lastly, Habakkuk petitions for God to remember mercy when His justice is dispensed. If it wasn’t for God’s mercy we would all be consumed. But because God has chosen to be merciful to the just who live by faith in God, we are spared and we will live forever with Him. Let us pray for our nation that when God acts in righteous wrath that He will remember to be merciful.

II. Habakkuk’s Vision of Judgment (3-15)

A. Having prayed, Habakkuk then poetically describes God’s glory in His judgment of sin.

The first vision is of God’s glory,

“God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise. His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, And there His power was hidden” (Habakkuk 3:3–4).

Our God does not become an ogre when He is going to judge sin. He still is beautiful and worthy of praise. So, that is how Habakkuk pictures Him for us.

B. Beginning with vs. 5 we see God pouring out His wrath on the heathen nations.

C. At vs. 13-15 the picture turns to how God acts toward His own people.

“You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For salvation with Your Anointed. You struck the head from the house of the wicked, by laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah You thrust through with his own arrows The head of his villages. They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me; Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret. You walked through the sea with Your horses, Through the heap of great waters.”

God does judge His own. Many in Judah did not believe this would happen, but it did.

III. Habakkuk’s Resolve (v. 16-19)

A. How does one respond to this prophetic vision? Habakkuk responds with his resolution.

First, he states clearly where he is in all of this.

“I heard and my inward parts trembled, At the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, And in my place I tremble. Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, For the people to arise who will invade us” (Habakkuk 3:16 NASB).

I quote from a different translation so that we get the impact that Habakkuk was communicating. His scares the life out of me, but I know it is your will LORD so all I can do is wait for the invasion to come.

B. In the face of this fear, and because of the realities that God gave Him in the three towers of truth in **Ch. 2**, Habakkuk makes a resolution to God.

“Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer’s feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.”

The first images are the worst possible ones for Habakkuk and the people of his day. No flocks and no crops equaled starvation and hopelessness.

C. So, Habakkuk declares in the worse possible circumstances I will joy in God who delivers me eternally and temporally. Second, I know the LORD is my strength. He is my stability (He makes me to walk with deer’s feet). I can walk in dangerous places and get safely through. When the situation is adverse, God will provide for me.

How do we respond when God allows bad things to come into our lives?