

The Prophet's Petitions and Praise

1 **The Prophet's Petitions**

Habakkuk 3

2 **Proposed timeline**3 **Where we have been**

- Habakkuk's 1st protest – God, why aren't you doing anything about all the evil corruption going on around me in my own nation?
- Habakkuk's 2nd protest – God, how can you use the wicked Chaldeans (Babylonians) to persecute your people who are not nearly as wicked as these barbarians?
- God's certain and woeful judgment upon the Chaldeans. God uses the Chaldeans but will also judge this wicked people.
- Interwoven through chapters 1-2 is a confident praise in the eternal glory of God.

4 5 **A reminder that false gods cannot help**

- We took a photographic tour in Taiwan showing that people today still worship false gods
- America is practicing more and more idolatry
 - Actual idols
 - But an idol is anything that takes the place of God in our hearts
 - Money
 - Fame
 - Personalities

6 7 8 9 **To the ever-relevant Word!**10 **The petitions of Habakkuk**

Habakkuk 3:1-2

11 **Habakkuk 3:1-2**

- *A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth. O Yahweh, I have heard the report of you; O Yahweh, I stand in awe of your works. In the midst of the years, revive it! In the midst of the years, make it known! In wrath, may you remember to show compassion. (Habakkuk 3:1-2, LEB)*
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- *A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth. O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make known; In wrath remember mercy. (Habakkuk 3:1-2, KJV 1900)*
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12 **No more protests**

- Habakkuk had twice protested to God
 - Why aren't you doing anything about the evil corruption all around me?
 - God answered that he would use the Chaldeans to bring judgment upon Judah.
 - How can you use such wicked people (the Chaldeans) to accomplish your will?

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- Then he waited on God's reply. God answered with a series of "woes" that would come upon the Chaldeans
- But now there is no more protesting but Habakkuk offers a simple petition to the Lord.

13 **An irregular song**

- Habakkuk prays his prayer "upon Shigionoth"
 - This term used elsewhere only in the superscription to Psalm 7 -- *A Shiggaion of David which he sang to Yahweh on account of Cush, a Benjaminite.*
 - It was an erratic song with an irregular beat. It comes from a verb meaning "to reel and fro."
 - It is usually used in songs of triumph or victory with an atmosphere of ecstatic celebration.
- Habakkuk focuses his attention on the majesty of God.
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14 **The prophet's awe-full reaction**

- *O Yahweh, I have heard the report of you; O Yahweh, I stand in awe of your works. In the midst of the years, revive it! In the midst of the years, make it known! In wrath, may you remember to show compassion.* (Habakkuk 3:2, LEB)
 - Having heard God's plans to discipline Judah and later destroy Babylon, Habakkuk is filled with awe at the awesome Sovereignty of God.
 - God's plans are beyond human understanding
 - God's preeminence is beyond our comprehension.
 - Habakkuk heard God and was afraid.
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15 **Habakkuk's first petition**

- *...O Yahweh, I stand in awe of your works. In the midst of the years, revive it! In the midst of the years, make it known!...* (Habakkuk 3:2, LEB)
 - God, show a fresh manifestation of your power – "Renew your deeds." And do so now ("in the midst of years" = "in our time").
 - Having heard God's plan, Habakkuk wanted God to get on with it. He wanted to see God's power on display in his lifetime. God had promised the chastisement of Judah and the destruction of Babylon. Habakkuk wanted a prompt fulfillment of that promise.
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16 **Habakkuk's second petition**

- *... In wrath, may you remember to show compassion.* (Habakkuk 3:2, LEB)
- God, please show mercy and pardon to those who repent.
- While showing your might, also put your mercy on display.
 - God's wrath is also mentioned in 3:8 and 3:12. The wrath of man is never righteous -- *for human anger does not accomplish the righteousness of God.* (James 1:20, LEB)
 - But God's wrath is just and righteous and glorifies His awesome Sovereignty. It also serves as the backdrop for the display of His mercy and lovingkindness.
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17 **The praise of Habakkuk**

Habakkuk 3:3-19

18 **Habakkuk remembers**

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- Habakkuk recalls the awesome deeds that the Lord had done in bringing His people out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and into the Promised Land.
- Remembering these deeds helped Habakkuk have confidence that God would deliver His people from Babylon.
 - Habakkuk is recalling deeds that happened centuries before his time.
 - Key idea: We need to build a "book of remembrance" so that future generations can remember the faithful acts of God.

19 **A book of remembrance**

- *And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.* (Exodus 17:14, KJV 1900)
- *Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: And the LORD hearkened, and heard it, And a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name.* (Malachi 3:16, KJV 1900)
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20 **1. Praise for God's arrival (3:3a)**

- *God came from Teman, And the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of his praise.* (Habakkuk 3:3, KJV 1900)
 - EL-PARAN (,יְרֵחוֹ עֵיל פָּרָן; Φαράν, Pharan). A wilderness area enclosed by Palestine on the north, the Arabah Valley on the east, the Sinai Desert on the south, and Etham on the west
- Just as God came down to Mount Sinai to establish a covenant with Israel, so He would come to liberate Judah from the hands of the Chaldeans.
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21 **Selah**

- Selah (Hab. 3:3, 9, 13), probably indicates a pause in the song.
 - "Selah" is used elsewhere only in the Psalms, where it occurs 71 times.
 - The Hebrew verb from which the term comes means "to exalt, to lift up." It may mean:
 - a pause (a) to elevate to a higher key or increase the volume,
 - (b) to reflect on what has been sung and exalt the Lord in praise, or
 - (c) to lift up certain instruments for something like a trumpet fanfare.
 - Whatever its meaning, an obvious break was intended in the middle of Habakkuk 3:3.
 - God arrives. Pause in silent wonder. Then sound a fanfare. Then praise His glory!
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22 **2. Praise for God's appearance (3:3b-7)**

- *...His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of his hand: And there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, And burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth: He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; And the everlasting mountains were scattered, The perpetual hills did bow: His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: And the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.* (Habakkuk 3:3-7, KJV 1900)
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23 **The astonishing splendor of God**

- When God descended upon Mount Sinai like an awesome thunderstorm, His glory "covered the heavens"

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- The sun appeared pale in comparison
- His praise filled the earth
 - There were thunderings heard by the people while Moses spoke with God.
 - These were not only heard in the skies, but rattled the whole earth.

24 **God's glory makes the sun pale**25 **The shining of God's glory (3:4)**

- *And his brightness was like the light; flashing rays came from his hand for him; And there is the covering of his strength.* (Habakkuk 3:4, LEB)
- *And his brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of his hand: And there was the hiding of his power.* (Habakkuk 3:4, KJV 1900)
- God's appearance like a sunrise.
 - The heavens are first tinted with early rays of the hidden sun, then the earth is illuminated as the ball of fire appears over the horizon, and finally everything is flooded with brilliant, glorious light.
 - Just as rays of light streak across the morning sky, so rays flashed from God's hand. As God advanced, the all-pervading light was traced to its source, the hand of the Lord. The rays (lit., "horns") emanated from God as they do from the sun.

26 **Moses affected by the Glory of God**

- *And when Moses came down from Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony were in the hand of Moses at his coming down from the mountain; and Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with him. And Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, and, to their amazement, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid of coming near to him.* (Exodus 34:29–30, LEB)
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27 **Quick art lesson**

- Interestingly the Hebrew verb "to send out rays," related to the Hebrew noun for "horns," was used to describe Moses' countenance after he had come down from Mount Sinai.
- This accounts for the strange horns emanating from Michelangelo's famed statue of Moses.
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28 **The dual nature of God's glory**

- God's radiance is both emanating and concealing.
 - It reveals His glory but veils His power.
 - It is easy to forget that the light and warmth which showers the earth with blessing comes from a ball of fire that could consume the globe in a moment.
 - So, God's power is hidden in His glory. His revelation is restrained lest it consume its beholders.
 - *For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.* (Deuteronomy 4:24, KJV 1900)
 - *For our God is a consuming fire.* (Hebrews 12:29, KJV 1900)

29 **The terrifying might of God**

- God is fully capable of exercising His might.
- He is a terrifying God to those who oppose Him.
 - Habakkuk saw that as God moved across the land, plague preceded Him and pestilence (lit.,

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"burning heat" or "bolts of fire") lay in His wake.

► At His will God can strike down His enemies with plagues (as in the 10 plagues on Egypt, Ex. 7:14–11:10 or the 185,000 slain in one night in 2 Chronicles 32) or with pestilence (cf. Deut. 32:24).

► The pestilence here may refer to some disease that is accompanied with a burning fever or to the charring of the earth by lightning bolts.

► God is not a little old man upstairs who dotes on people with sweetness and light. He is all-powerful as He is all-loving. His grace and glory are coupled with might and majesty.

30 **Exodus 19:16-19**

And on the third day, when it was morning, there was thunder and lightning, and a heavy cloud over the mountain and a very loud ram's horn sound, and all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out from the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. And Mount Sinai was all wrapped in smoke because Yahweh went down on it in the fire, and its smoke went up like the smoke of a smelting furnace, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And the sound of the ram's horn became louder and louder, and Moses would speak, and God would answer him with a voice. (Exodus 19:16–19, LEB)

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31 **Honor the Creator rather than the creation**

► Habakkuk's vision of God coming from the distance and marching across the land rose to a climax. Having reached the place from which He would execute judgment, God stopped, stood, and shook the earth.

► His very presence caused the earth to shake.

► Furthermore, by a mere glance at the nations He caused them to tremble (lit., "leap in terror") and even the framework of nature was shattered.

► The primeval mountains and age-old hills, the firmest constituents of the globe, crumbled into dust. He came down on Mount Sinai with thunder, lightning, and fire amidst shaking mountains (Ex. 19:16–19). Though the age-old hills collapsed, God's everlasting ways go on.

► Here is a stark warning to those who honor the creation over the Creator! (Cf. Hab. 2:19–20.)

32 **The hopeless state of those without God (3:7)**

► *Under affliction I saw the tents of Cushan; the tent curtains of the land of Midian trembled. (Habakkuk 3:7, LEB)*

► Witnesses to God's appearance at the Exodus and in the wilderness wanderings were Cushan and Midian, nations that lay on either side of the Red Sea.

► God's wondrous acts at the Red Sea (when He led His people from Egyptian captivity) threw neighboring nations into terror and they experienced distress (fear) and anguish.

► Other nations too heard of God's mighty acts and were in fear (Ex. 15:14–16; Deut. 2:25; Josh. 2:9; 5:1).

► Reference to the people's tents and dwellings (lit., "tent hangings") seems to emphasize their precarious state. If the mountains melted away, what hope was there for those who huddled under canvas?

33 **What we should have learned...**

► God is merciful to the repentant, but vents His mighty wrath upon the ungodly. Both truths are elements of the Gospel.

► We have grown too comfortable in our perception of the merciful and loving God and have forgotten that He is also a God of terrible might and power who vents His righteous wrath upon

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the ungodly.

- This is why we MUST share the Gospel with others!

34 **What we should have learned (2)**

- We need to remember to Whom we are praying
 - Not "the man upstairs"
 - But to the One:
 - Whose presence causes mountains to crumble into dust
 - Whose voice shakes the whole earth
 - Whose glory makes the sun seem pale
 - Whose wrath is righteous
 - Who has all power over life and death
 - Who offers only one escape from His wrath – to accept forgiveness and pardon purchased by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross
- God's nature demands our reverence
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35 **3. Praise for God's Actions**

For next time...