

1  **The Prophet's Petitions**

Habakkuk 3

2  **Where we have been**

- Habakkuk's 1<sup>st</sup> protest – God, why aren't you doing anything about all the evil corruption going on around me in my own nation?
- Habakkuk's 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

3  **To the ever-relevant Word!**

4  **The petitions of Habakkuk**

Habakkuk 3:1-2

5  **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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6  **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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7  **The praise of Habakkuk**

Habakkuk 3:3-19

Habakkuk's Prayer to God (3:1-2)

Habakkuk's Portrait of God (3:3-15)

Habakkuk's Praise of God (3:16-19)

8  **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 ( ,יְרֵמֶן; Φαράν). 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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9  **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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10  **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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11  **3. Praise for God's Actions**

Habakkuk 3:8-19

12  **Habakkuk 3:8-12**

*Was the anger of Yahweh against the rivers? Was your wrath against the rivers, or your fury against the sea, when you mounted upon your horses, upon your victory chariot? You laid bare the nakedness of your bow, swearing oaths with the arrows of your word. You split the earth with rivers. When the mountains saw you they writhed; a torrent of waters swept by; the deep gave its voice; it raised its hands on high. Sun and moon stood still in their place; at the light of your arrows they moved about; at the gleam of the flashing of your spear. In fury you marched through the earth; in anger you trampled the nations.*

13  **Habakkuk 3:13-16**

*You went forth for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of wickedness, laying bare from the foundation to the top. You pierced the head of his warriors with his own arrows; they came like a whirlwind to scatter me, their exultation like one who devours the afflicted in ambush. You trampled upon the sea with your horses, the churning of many waters. I hear and my stomach shakes; my lips quiver at the sound; infection enters my bones; that which is beneath me trembles; I wait quietly for the day of trouble to come upon the people attacking us.*

14  **Habakkuk 3:17-19**

*Though the fig tree does not blossom, nor there be fruit on the vines; the yield of the olive tree fails, and the cultivated fields do not yield food; the flock is cut off from the animal pen, and there is no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will rejoice in Yahweh; I will exult in the God of my salvation. Yahweh, my Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer; he causes me to walk on my high places. To the choirmaster with stringed instruments. (Habakkuk 3:8-19, LEB)*

15  **Praise for God's Actions**

In Nature

16  **The Motives of God**

- 3 rhetorical questions
  - Was God showing His wrath at the rivers?
  - Was God showing His wrath at the streams?
  - Was God showing His wrath at the sea?
  - In other words, was God mad at nature?
- God demonstrated His power over nature by:
  - Turning the Nile river into blood (Exodus 7:20-21)
  - Parting the Red Sea (Exodus 14:15-28; 15:8-10; Psalm 78:13)
  - He stood the waters of the Jordan river on a heap and dried up the river bed (Joshua 3:14-17)

17  **God's real motive**

- To glorify Himself by:
  - Destroying His enemies
  - Delivering His people
- *You trampled upon the sea with your horses, the churning of many waters.* (Habakkuk 3:15, LEB)
  - God is pictured as the victorious hero who rides in to save the day!
  - This is in stark contrast to the Babylonian horses (1:8-9) who once traveled "as swift as leopards" but stopped in 539 B.C. when Babylon falls in just a few decades after Habakkuk is likely written.

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19  **God's majestic action**

- *Thy bow was made quite naked, According to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.* (Habakkuk 3:9, KJV 1900)
- God uncovered His bow
  - Removed His bow from its sheath to make it ready for war
- God vows upon His own faithfulness to take action with His bow by sending multiple arrows of judgment upon His enemies.
- God's majestic action is seen in nature (formation of rivers), among the nations, and against His enemies.
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20  **Deuteronomy 32 parallels**

- *For a fire was kindled by my anger, and it burned up to the depths of Sheol, and it devoured the earth and its produce, and it set afire the foundation of the mountains.* (Deuteronomy 32:22, LEB)
- *They will become weakened by famine, and consumed by plague and bitter pestilence; and the teeth of wild animals I will send against them, with the poison of the creeping things in the dust;* (Deuteronomy 32:24, LEB)

21  **Deuteronomy 32 parallels (2)**

- *I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh with the blood of the slain, and captives from the heads of the leaders of the enemy.* (Deuteronomy 32:42, LEB)
- *When I sharpen my flashing sword, and my hand takes hold of it in judgment, I will take reprisals against my foes, and my haters I will repay.* (Deuteronomy 32:41, LEB) – vows to bring judgment

22  **Nature personified recognizes God's majesty**

- In personifying the mountains, Habakkuk said they added their reaction to God's presence and power, for they saw God and writhed.
  - Hebrew verb translated "writhed" depicts a person twisting or turning while seized with pangs like a woman in childbirth.
  - To the witness of rivers (Hab. 3:9) and mountains (v. 10a), flooding waters moved in recognition of God's power.
  - Underground waters of the abyss (the deep) were personified as speaking (roared is lit., "gave their voice"), and its high waves were personified as having hands: the deep lifted its waves (lit., "hands") on high.
- God's power can cause tremendous upheaval in nature! The Red Sea and the Jordan River had both responded to God's command (cf. Psalms 77:16,19; 114:3,5).

### 23 **The sun and moon stood still in awe of God's glory**

- *Then Joshua spoke to Yahweh, on the day Yahweh gave the Amorites over to the Israelites, and he said in the sight of Israel, "Sun in Gibeon, stand still, and moon, in the valley of Aijalon." And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on its enemies. Is it not written in the scroll of Jashar? The sun stood still in the middle of the heaven and was not in haste to set for about a full day.* (Joshua 10:12-13, LEB)
- Basically, the brightest lights of the heavens pale before the brilliance of the dazzling majesty of God.

### 24 **Habakkuk 3:11**

- *Sun and moon stood still in their place; at the light of your arrows they moved about; at the gleam of the flashing of your spear.* (Habakkuk 3:11, LEB)
- Habakkuk describes the lightning on top of Mount Sinai and in the venting of His wrath upon His enemies to be brighter and hotter than the sun and moon. Basically he says that sun and moon "can't hold a candle to God's lightning."
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### 25 **The lightning arrows and spears of God's wrath**

- While all nature shook, the arrows and spears of God's wrath (His flashes of lightning (cf. Psalms 18:14; 77:17) sped to their targets.
  - Sun and moon paled before the brilliance of the lightning flashes, which perhaps accompanied the hail that destroyed Israel's enemies near Gilgal (Josh. 10:11).
  - In His wrath God often used and controlled the forces of nature.
- Lightning is four times hotter than the sun.
  - A return stroke of lightning, that is, a bolt shooting up from the ground to a cloud (after a stream of electricity came downward from a cloud) can peak at 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit (F).
  - The surface of the sun is around 11-13,000 degrees F.

### 26 **Praise for God's Actions**

Among the Nations

### 27 **God walking in judgment (3:12)**

- *In fury you marched through the earth; in anger you trampled the nations.* (Habakkuk 3:12, LEB)
  - No "tip toe thru the tulips" God here
  - Instead, God pictured as mighty thundering giant strolling through the earth and threshing the nations in wrath.
- God marches through earth to crush His enemies and bring deliverance to His people.

- God had done so in the past and Habakkuk trusts that God will do it again.

28  **His motive restated (3:13)**

- *Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, Even for salvation with thine Anointed; Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, By discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.* (Habakkuk 3:13, KJV 1900)
- The motive of God's judgment is clear.
  - His anger was not vented toward nature (cf. v. 8) or against everybody.
  - His purpose was to crush wickedness and deliver His own.
  - Special deliverance was the goal behind God's destruction. Salvation was for God's people, but it was also for the anointed One, a term never used in the Old Testament for the nation Israel.
    - The term probably refers to the coming Messiah (cf. Ps. 2:2; Dan. 9:26).
    - By preserving the people of Israel (delivering them from Egypt and then later from Babylonian Captivity), God maintained the line for the Messiah.
- Key idea: God always has the "long game" in mind, even in the smallest details of "now."

29  **God crushes enemy leaders (3:13b)**

- *...Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, By discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.* (Habakkuk 3:13, KJV 1900)
- He crushes the leader of the land and strips him
  - Language of stripping off a roof and then demolishing a structure
  - God destroyed Pharaoh's horsemen (Exodus 14:23-28)
  - God destroyed other leaders (Numbers 21:23-25)
- The third and final Selah occurs.

30  **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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31  **The Selahs of Habakkuk 3**

- God appears on Mount Sinai in an unmistakable manifestation of His awesome and terrible Majesty (3:3)
- God vows to destroy His enemies (3:9)
- God destroys the leaders of the wicked and demolishes their house (3:13)

32  **Exodus 14:23-28**

- *And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And the LORD*

*said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. (Exodus 14:23–28, KJV 1900)*

33  **Numbers 21:23-25**

► *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, Neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: The LORD his God is with him, And the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; He hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, Neither is there any divination against Israel: According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, And lift up himself as a young lion: He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, And drink the blood of the slain. And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. (Numbers 23:21–25, KJV 1900)*

34  **Joshua**

► *And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. (Joshua 6:2, KJV 1900)*

► *And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day. And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day. (Joshua 8:28–29, KJV 1900)*

35  **Daniel 5:26-31 – God will do it again!**

► *This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.*

► *In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old. (Daniel 5:26–31, KJV 1900)*

36  **God's enemies – from pride to panic**

► *Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: They came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly. (Habakkuk 3:14, KJV 1900)*

► These final two verses of this ode on God's awesome self-revelation speak of the ultimate destruction of the enemy.

- Thrown into panic, those who sought to destroy Israel would destroy each other with their own weapons, as the warriors (lit., "village hoards") stormed into battle.
- Apparently the prophet had identified himself with those the Babylonians sought to scatter, for he referred to the enemies' target (Judah) as us (lit., "me").

► The barbaric hordes were also described as bandits who were gloating (over the helpless, wretched victims they were about to rob).

- Their gloating would turn to gore, their pride to panic, and they would suddenly attack one another in deadly confusion.

37  **2 Chronicles 20:22-24**

► *And when they began with singing and praise, Yahweh set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir who were coming against Judah. And they were defeated when the people of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to destroy and demolish them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, each helped to destroy his comrade. And*

*Judah came against the watchtower of the wilderness. And they looked at the crowd, and behold, corpses were lying on the ground. There was none who had escaped. (2 Chronicles 20:22–24, LEB)*

- Habakkuk knew of this victory for King Jehoshaphat that took place in 2 Chronicles 20 (853 B.C.). Habakkuk knew God could do something similar again. God in His sovereignty can use one of His enemies to destroy others of His enemies.

38  **God's power on display**

- Perhaps the biggest miracle in Israel's history was the parting of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army
  - He took His people through the Red Sea and then delivered the pursuing Egyptians to their watery grave (Ex. 14:15–18; 15:8–10).
  - God's victory over Egypt's horsemen was pictured figuratively as if He Himself had trampled the sea with His own horses and chariots (cf. Hab. 3:8). In this victory God had churned the great waters (cf. v. 10).

39  **Habakkuk's peace for ministry**

In a world of turmoil and corruption  
(Habakkuk 3:16-19)

40  **Awestruck by God's majesty (3:16)**

- *I hear and my stomach shakes; my lips quiver at the sound; infection enters my bones; that which is beneath me trembles; I wait quietly for the day of trouble to come upon the people attacking us.* (Habakkuk 3:16, LEB)
  - Sees God's majesty and is awestruck
    - Heart pounds ("stomach shakes")
    - Lips quiver
    - Legs tremble
    - Felt as though his bones would melt
  - But waits quietly and confidently on God

41  **Habakkuk's new purpose**

- *For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: ....(Isaiah 30:15, KJV 1900)*
- A view of God's majesty should do 2 things for us:
  - Make us quiet
  - Put our trust and confidence in His unparalleled strength
- Habakkuk adapts a new purpose in his life that we should all emulate – to wait patiently on the Lord and His timing.
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42  **God's past displays of power give us present confidence to wait upon the Lord.**

- The prophet was determined to wait for that day which would be filled with destruction and yet be a day of victory and vindication over wicked Babylon.
- God's past history -- God's deeds on Israel's behalf in Egypt, at the Red Sea, at Mount Sinai, at the Jordan River, and in the Conquest of Canaan were unquestionably awe-invoking.
  - This review of God's power in the past assured the prophet that God would provide a similar deliverance for Israel from Babylon.
  - Habakkuk was confident that someday God would again "renew" (v. 2) those acts of power, with "wrath" on Babylon and "mercy" (v. 2) on Judah.



43

44  **Habakkuk's resolve to rejoice**

- *Though the fig tree does not blossom, nor there be fruit on the vines; the yield of the olive tree fails, and the cultivated fields do not yield food; the flock is cut off from the animal pen, and there is no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will rejoice in Yahweh; I will exult in the God of my salvation.* (Habakkuk 3:17–18, LEB)
- While Habakkuk felt weak physically, he makes a strong physical resolve.
  - He outlines the worst possible consequences: complete failure of crops (figs, grapes, olives, and grain-on which the nation depended for food) and total loss of sheep and cattle.
  - Even in the midst of absolute ruin and abject famine (which came when the Babylonians captured Jerusalem, Lam. 2:12, 20, 4:4, 9–10; 5:17–18), the prophet was prepared to trust God.
  - Habakkuk realized that inner peace did not depend on outward prosperity.

45  **And bad things did happen....**

- *To their mothers they say, "Where is the bread and wine?" as they faint like the wounded in the public squares of a city, as their life is being poured out onto the bosom of their mothers.* (Lamentations 2:12, LEB)
- *See, Yahweh, and take note! With whom have you dealt thus? Should women eat their young children of tender care? Should priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?* (Lamentations 2:20, LEB)
- *The tongue of the nursling cleaves to its palate in thirst. Children beg for food, no one lays it out before them.* (Lamentations 4:4, LEB)
- *Happier were the victims of the sword than the victims of famine; they have pined away, very hungry for the crops of my field. The hands of compassionate women, have cooked their children; they became as something to eat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.* (Lamentations 4:9–10, LEB)
- *Because of this, our heart has become faint, because of these, our eyes have become dim. Because of Mount Zion, which lies desolate, foxes tread on it.* (Lamentations 5:17–18, LEB)
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46  **Not to endure, but to rejoice!**

- Habakkuk did not state that he would merely endure in the hour of distress. He said he would rejoice in the LORD and be joyful.
- God is the inexhaustible source and infinite supply of joy. God my Savior is literally, "the God of my salvation" also used in:
  - *The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; And let the God of my salvation be exalted.* (Psalm 18:46, KJV 1900)
  - *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: For thou art the God of my salvation; On thee do I wait all the day.* (Psalm 25:5, KJV 1900)
- Far too many people keep trying to buy joy, but happiness is not found in circumstances.
  - Joy is available to everyone, even to those stripped of every material possession, for joy is to be found in a Person.
  - It comes through an intimate and personal relationship with the Lord, so that even those in the worst circumstances can smile.

47  **The strength for a resolution to joy**

- *The LORD God is my strength, And he will make my feet like hinds' feet, And he will make me to*



*walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.* (Habakkuk 3:19, KJV 1900)

- The unfailing source of strength and confidence necessary to satisfaction and contentment is the Sovereign ('ādōnāy) LORD (Yahweh) Himself.
  - The strength He gives is like the power found in the feet of a deer, a gazelle, or any active, swift-footed animal. Much as a deer can quickly bound through a dark forest, so the prophet said he could move joyfully through difficult circumstances.
  - Though his legs trembled (v. 16) at the awesome theophany of God, that same Lord was His joy (v. 18), strength (v. 19), and assurance.
  - Furthermore, God enabled the prophet to walk on the heights. Not only would he bound through trials; he would also climb to the mountaintops of victory and triumph. A deer or gazelle pictures strength, surefootedness, beauty, and speed.

48  **What have we learned...**

1. God's motive in anything He does is twofold: (1) His own glory; and (2) putting His power on display by demonstrating deliverance and love for His people.
2. God's past displays of power are evidence that He is worthy of our faith in the present and for the future.
3. All throughout nature are reasons to glorify God. Are you looking?
4. We should adopt a purpose of waiting on God to see what He will do.

49  **What have we learned... (2)**

5. We can resolve to do more than merely endure the circumstances. We can resolve to exalt the Creator.
6. God is worthy of praise even when everything seems to be going wrong.
7. An attitude of praise comes from an intentional resolve to praise God no matter what happens
8. Habakkuk started this book "about to go under" because his focus was on destruction, corruption, violence, conflict, injustice, and wickedness.

50  **What have we learned (3)**

9. Habakkuk only made it to the "high ground of praise" by focusing on God's marvelous works, His incomparable majesty, and His unending faithfulness.
10. The basis for a life-habit of praise is the Lord Himself and walking in a close relationship with Him.

51  **What can we do?**

- Check our focus
  - If we despairing, we are looking at the corruption and evil around us.
  - If we are rejoicing, we are keeping our eyes on the Occupied Throne and the Sovereign God who sits upon it.
- Commit / Resolve to live a life of praise to God.
  - My friend, Christine (Candy)