

My Favorite Thing About HABAKKUK

Habakkuk 3:17-18

August 28, 2021

Virtually nothing is known about Habakkuk. He was in active ministry in Judah during the final years before the Babylonian Exile and he is the only one specifically identified as a *“prophet”*.

Which brings us to **My Favorite Thing About HABAKKUK** – The candid and open conversation between this prophet and God.

Most of the content of the *“Minors”* flows in one direction – **FROM** God to the people - calling them to account for their faithlessness, infidelity and disobedience.

Habakkuk is different. He complains **TO** God **ABOUT** the people.

Habakkuk knows how much God loves justice and hates oppression, but all around him all he sees is unparalleled apostasy, violence and lawlessness. Wickedness appears to be winning and Habakkuk is completely baffled and angry and is struggling to understand why God doesn't do **SOMETHING**:

- **Habakkuk 1:2-4** - How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save? ³ Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. ⁴ Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.

And you know what? God willingly enters into the conversation:

- **Habakkuk 1:5-11** - "Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. ⁶ **I am raising up the Babylonians**, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own. ⁷ They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor. ⁸ Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like a vulture swooping to devour; ⁹ they all come bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand. ¹⁰ They deride kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; they build earthen ramps and capture them. ¹¹ Then they sweep past like the wind and go on-- guilty men, whose own strength is their god."

God's response creates an even bigger problem in Habakkuk's mind. How can a good and just God use a nation more wicked than Judah as His agent of judgment?

- **Habakkuk 1:13** - Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

But then Habakkuk does something amazing, He says:

- **Habakkuk 2:1** - I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.

There is a certain amount of confidence and boldness in Habakkuk's response. *“I'm going to wait right here to see how God is going to respond to me”*, which, I think, puts a smile on God's face.

God let Habakkuk know that while Babylon will be God's instrument of discipline against Judah for **HER** infidelity and disobedience, that doesn't exempt Babylon from being held accountable for **HER** sins:

- **Habakkuk 2:9** - Woe to him who builds his realm by unjust gain to set his nest on high, to escape the clutches of ruin!
- **Habakkuk 2:12** - Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by crime!
- **Habakkuk 2:15-20** - Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies. ¹⁶ You will be filled with shame instead of glory. Now it is your turn! Drink and be exposed! The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory. ¹⁷ The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, and your destruction of animals will terrify you. For you have shed man's blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them. ¹⁸ "Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that teaches lies? For he who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak. ¹⁹ Woe to him who says to

wood, 'Come to life!' Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!' Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it. ²⁰ But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.

REMEMBER, God is Sovereign over all - those who acknowledge Him **AND** those who don't.

In Habakkuk's final prayer, he recalls all the times in Israel's history when God stepped in to save them.

- **Habakkuk 3:4-6** - 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.
- **Habakkuk 3:13-15** - 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....¹⁵ You trampled the sea with your horses, churning the great waters.

God had proven faithful in the **PAST** and Habakkuk resolves to trust God with the **FUTURE** regardless of how things appear to be in the **PRESENT**. Faith in God includes faith in His timing.....

- **Habakkuk 3:17-19** - 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.

I love the ease with which Habakkuk and God speak to each other. It is clear they have a long and deeply rooted relationship. Habakkuk isn't afraid to ask God the hard questions and God delights in responding. **I. Love. That!!!**

I love that the conversation reveals an important truth regarding the action of God. Habakkuk is irritated because, from his point of view, God isn't working **FAST ENOUGH** to deal with the sin problem. But God reveals, that even though it appears that He is slow, He in fact, has a plan and at the right time He will put that plan into action and it will come in a way Habakkuk does not expect.

An important lesson to be learned:

- **2 Peter 3:9-13** - The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. ¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Finally, I love the faith of Habakkuk. The last words of this little book are one of the finest expressions of faith found in scripture:

- **Habakkuk 3:17-19** - 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.

One of the greatest conversations ever between one man and his God.