

OLD TESTAMENT SERIES

HABAKKUK

By

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Dear Saints in Christ Jesus,

These notes were taken from our Old Testament and New Testament Bible surveys at Koinonia on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. The intention was to give an overview of the entire Bible and see how the two testaments “connect.” Within the notes, practical truths were brought out because we know that the study of Scripture without application is like a vehicle without gas...going nowhere.

If the Holy Spirit can use these simply truths to draw you closer to Jesus Christ and develop a more mature love of God the Father, then this booklet will have accomplished its task.

May the blessing of God be shed upon you as you receive, with meekness, His engrafted Word.

Selah,

Pastor Ray

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- ** A special thanks to Pastor Chuck Smith for notes from his teachings that were used in this study.

HABAKKUK

The name Habakkuk means “Embraced”. There is little known about this prophet. We do see that he writes in the final verse, “To the chief musician upon my instrument.” So it is quite possible that this prophet was one of the Levites that were responsible for the worship in the temple.

From the content of the message it appears that Habakkuk was a contemporary of Jeremiah and Zephaniah. This book is a dialogue between a man of God and His Master concerning the moral condition of the nation.

The book was written before the final Babylonian invasion led by Nebuchadnezzar. Undoubtedly, this burden was written during the reign of wicked king Jehoiakim. Given a scroll by Jeremiah concerning how he should behave, Jehoiakim destroyed it. He took out his knife, cut the scroll into pieces, and tossed them into the fire. Jeremiah wrote another scroll, only this time the message against Jehoiakim was stronger. (**Jer 36:23, 27-31**) Thus, the revival that took place during the reign of Josiah degenerated into a full blown state of apostasy and corruption throughout the land during the reign of Jehoiakim. Habakkuk cries out to God for judgment.

Chapter 1

1:1,2 The “burden”, or heaviness, upon Habakkuk’s heart was due to the decline of morals in the nation. He expresses his concerns to the Lord in prayer.

The word “cry” is mentioned twice in verse two. The first word means a call for help. The second is a scream for justice against the violence. The question, “How long?” actually is implying that the Lord is tolerating the wickedness and choosing to do nothing about it. Can you relate to the prophet in the sense that you are amazed that God doesn’t intervene sooner in dealing with the moral sickness of the world? We must never misunderstand the longsuffering of God. It never means approval of sin, but it does reveal His incredible love for the salvation of sinners, “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (**2 Peter 3:9**)

1:3 Take note of the causes for Habakkuk’s grief:
iniquity – evil, unjustness, wickedness;
grievance – trouble, sorrow, toil, misery, perversity;
plundering – spoiling, robbery;
violence – cruelty, oppression; (Interestingly, the Hebrew word for violence is “Hamas”, which is the name of one of the radical Muslim fundamentalist groups involved in the suicide bombings in Israel.)
strife – controversy, personal and legal battles;
contention – discord, quarreling.

These are the fruit of the Fall in the Garden of Eden. These are the works of the flesh. These are the things that we have been redeemed from, saint. What I find troubling is that these things that grieved Habakkuk are the very themes of the majority of today's television, music, and motion picture industry productions. The world's definition of these things is "entertainment."

- 1:4** The cause of the moral ills within the nation was the lack of upholding the law of God by the people of God. There was indeed a great reformation during the reign of Josiah, the king who preceded Jehoiaquim. However, reformation is not the same as regeneration. You cannot legislate or vote in morality. The liberals out-numbered the righteous in Habakkuk's day, and the closer we get to the end of the age, the more liberal we see our society becoming. Seeing the aggressive and progressive promotion of sexual perversions of all kinds is proof of this tragic reality.
- Note that the moral decline affected the judicial system, and there was corruption in high places. History continues to repeat itself!
- 1:5** God addressed both the prophet and the people. Habakkuk had complained about being made to look at injustice, but the prophet and the people suffered from myopia. They were too nearsighted. God instructed them to get their eyes off the immediate havoc around them and look out on the international scene. The political developments about to be revealed by Habakkuk and the people would stun ("astound, bewilder, or dumbfound") them. In fact, Habakkuk was dumbfounded (**vv. 12,17**). What God was about to perform would be hard for them to believe, even though God would reveal it to them.
- The amazement spoken of in this verse is explained in the next section. Rather than being "asleep on the throne", the Lord was preparing the Babylonians to be an instrument of judgment in His hands against His apostate people.
 - The wheels of God's judgment often grind slowly because He is longsuffering and merciful. Our depravity is revealed by the fact that we are grateful that God is longsuffering and merciful toward us, but upset because He doesn't move more quickly in His dealing with others.
 - Paul uses this verse to declare the amazement with which people would respond to the gospel of the grace of God. Just as the Israelites could not believe that God would raise up the Babylonians to judge them, self-righteous mankind would not believe that the total work of redemption would be accomplished by Jesus Christ, apart from their works or religious practices. (**Acts 13:40-41**)

1:6 Judah's sin would not go unchecked. Justice was not dead, nor did it sleep. Discipline was forthcoming; correction was on the way. But the surprise was not the anticipated discipline but the dispenser of that discipline. It was not the coming correction that was unbelievable but the channel of that correction that seemed so incredible. God had "dropped a bombshell" in raising up the Babylonians. Granted, sin had abounded all too long in Judah, but the sinners of Judah were only soiled saints next to the barbaric Babylonians. Babylon was a nation known for its violent impulses. Its people readily committed atrocities without forethought or remorse. The historical records present the Babylonians as a fierce and pitilessly cruel people.

1:7-11 These verses describe the Babylonians. Note in **verse 11** that they would impute their conquest of Israel to the superiority of their god. (They worshipped the god of power.)

- How often we are guilty of misunderstanding the sovereignty of God in the affairs of planet earth. How often pride takes the credit or misdirects the credit for "our" accomplishments when in reality, it's all of the Lord.

Beginning with **verse 12**, God's amazing disclosure left the prophet even more perplexed and bewildered. Habakkuk was astonished, just as God said he would be. He was appalled the Yahweh would employ so evil an instrument to punish Judah. The prophet expressed his deep concern; he questioned God's plan. Have you ever questioned God's plans or ways?

Isaiah 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

Deut 29:29 The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

1:12 Note the 3 attributes of God mentioned by Habakkuk. God is eternal, holy, and mighty (lit. a Rock).

The undertone here is that the prophet is "reminding" God that He has a covenant with Israel. "We shall not die", but we shall be corrected by the Babylonians. Humanly speaking, of course, Babylon could very easily extinguish the people of Judah (as with the Muslim nations today). But the prophet found it utterly unthinkable the extinction of God's people and thereby the destruction of their covenant relationship with Yahweh.

- The prophet referred to his Lord as the "Rock", a term first applied to Yahweh in **Deuteronomy 32:4** to indicate God's stability and security. (See also **Deut 32:15,18,30-31**.)
- Each of these attributes also identify Jesus Christ – eternal, holy, and the mighty God/our Rock.

1:13 In his first cry (**vv. 2-4**) Habakkuk questioned why he was forced to look on injustice. Now his focus shifts from the sin problems to the sovereign Person in control.

- As bad as Israel was, they were, outwardly anyway, “saints” in comparison to the cruel Babylonians.

1:15-17 The hooks and nets brought food and plenty to the Babylonians. Their conquests provided not only a livelihood, but also luxury. So these barbaric people paid homage to the instruments that contributed to their prosperity. They sacrificed to their nets and burned incense to their dragnets. The metaphor is potent. The Babylonians worshipped the means that brought them military success as well. Already God had declared that the Babylonians saw their might as their god.

Chapter 2

2:1 Note how Habakkuk dealt with the concern that he had – with prayer. He was determined to seek the Lord. He sought a quiet place to be with the Lord, and he expected an answer from God.

The strength of the church is rooted in prayer.

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

- Prayer was the life of the believers both prior to and after Pentecost.

Acts 3:1 Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Acts 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

Acts 6:6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied...

- We could go on and on. Lord, teach us to pray!!

2:2 This is the response to verse one. There is no indication to a time limit between these two verses.

- Many times we say, “The Lord didn’t hear me”, when in reality we should be saying, “The Lord is choosing a better way to deal with this situation.”

- You see, we have this unscriptural mentality that the only time that God truly answers prayer is when He fulfills the request exactly the way we submitted it. However, that is not what prayer is all about. In fact, if that were true, we would often times end up with two problems instead of one. Prayer is going to the Lord with any given situation and asking that He reveal His will in this matter, then, give us the faith and grace to respond to His will with thanksgiving, knowing that Jesus sees the eternal, bigger picture. We also find here a good example of the verbal, plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture as Habakkuk is told to write what God reveals to him. **John was told the same thing.**
Rev 1:19 Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.
So was Jeremiah.
Jer 36:2 Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day.

The Holy Scriptures are God’s Word, not man’s ideas (2 Tim 3:16-17).

2 Peter 1:20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

:21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus quoted and called Scripture the Word of God many times in the gospels.
- 52 out of 53 times that we find the word “Scripture” in God’s Word, it is referring to the Old Testament. Thus, the New Testament is the Old revealed, and the Old Testament is the New concealed. Together they form the total and final Word of God.

2:3 This revelation that came to Habakkuk was in the form of a vision. The word “vision(s)” is found 103 times in Scripture. The first time is in **Gen 15:1**, and the last is in **Rev 9:17**. One way that God reveals His will to us even today is through visions.

Acts 2:17 “And it shall come to pass in the last days,” says God, “that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” (This is a quote from **Joel 2:28**.)

- See also **Job 33:14-17**.
- Ananias had a vision (**Acts 9:10**), as did Cornelius (**Acts 10:3**), and Peter (**Acts 10:9-17**). In each case the vision was not something that added a new revelation to God’s Word, but was a specific revelation to individuals about ministry or direction.

Note that Habakkuk’s vision from God was for “an appointed time”. It would be proven to be the truth. It would surely come to pass. It

would, however, require faith to wait for it to be fulfilled. This is the nature of all visions of God.

God's sovereignty determines the time in which His will shall be brought to pass.

Acts 15:18 Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.

Acts 17:26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings.

Isaiah 46:9 "Remember the former things of old, for I *am* God, and *there is* no other; I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me,

:10 declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.' "

- He makes all things beautiful in His time (**Eccel 3:11**).
- There is nothing that God can learn. He alone governs the universe. He controls the boundaries of the oceans, the expanse of the heavens. And yet, he numbers each and every sparrow and knows when they fall to the ground. How much more valuable are you than many sparrows (**Matt 10:29,31**)!
- We will never understand the absolute sovereignty of God, but we must never doubt within that sovereignty is His plan for my life that He began and has promised to finish (**Phil 1:6**). Thus, all things are working together for good in my life (**Rom 8:28**).

A final observation about this verse (**Hab 2:3**) is made by locating the New Testament cross-reference in **Heb 10:37**, where the word "it" is changed to "He". So, the vision includes prophecy related to the Second Coming of Christ, and it was given to Habakkuk in 626 B.C.

Heb 9:28 So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many, and to those who eagerly wait for Him, He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

- In His first coming Christ dealt with sin once for all (**1 Peter 3:18**). In His second coming He will take redeemed sinners to Himself in the consummation of their salvation (**1 Peter 1:4-5**).

2:4 The soul focused on here, in context, refers to the Babylonians, and in particular, Nebuchadnezzar. However, pride is the anti-Christ state of mind, or we may call it, "the mind of Lucifer".

The second part of the verse is quoted 3 times in the New Testament (**Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38**), and was actually the benchmark that inspired Martin Luther to start the Protestant Reformation.

Salvation is a matter of faith, not works.

There is a curious passage in the Jewish Talmud (the body of Jewish civil and religious law) which notes that in the Law, Moses gave 600

injunctions to Israel. As these might prove too numerous to commit to memory, David brought them down to eleven in **Psalm 15**. Isaiah reduced these eleven to six in **Isaiah 33:15**, and in **Micah 6:8** they are further reduced to three. **Isaiah 56:1** narrowed the three down to two. These two are shaved down to one in **Amos 5:4**. But, lest it might be supposed from this that God could be found in the fulfillment of the Law alone, **Hab 2:4** simply states that “the just shall live by faith.”

- “the just” — **Rom 3:24-26, Gal 2:16**; “shall live” — come to life and continue living eternally (**1 John 5:11**); “by faith” — **Heb 11:1** – the definition of faith, **Heb 11:6** – essential for pleasing and relating to God.

2 Cor 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2:5 To the charge that the Chaldeans were arrogant (v. 4), Habakkuk adds that they are drunk with wine and that their insatiable lust for conquest is compared to death and to hell.

- Their hunger and thirst for power would be their end. The very night that Babylon was conquered they were in a drunken stupor (**Dan 5**). Their pride had blinded them to their own vulnerability. Protected by its huge wall more than 85 feet thick and 11 miles long, Babylon seemed as impregnable and inaccessible as an eagle’s nest (v. 9), but nevertheless it fell to the Medes and Persians under Cyrus in 539 B.C.

Note here also that the Lord describes, not only the Babylonians, but any and every man or woman without Christ as having a desire as large as hell which cannot be satisfied. The “funny” thing about lust (covetousness) is that it never satisfies. It always demands MORE! More money; more power; more drinks; more drugs; more...whatever. **Luke 12:15** And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

The prophet had been amazed that God would allow such iniquity to abound in the nation of Judah without judgment falling. Then, after the Lord revealed to him how He intended to judge the nation through the cruel and barbaric Babylonians, the prophet was even more perplexed.

There is only one concrete answer to any of the “Why?” questions that we at times find ourselves asking, and that is the absolute sovereignty of God. It is especially important to remember this when it seems like everything that is happening could not possibly be serving the ultimate plans and purposes of God. His ultimate plan and purpose will be established in the entire universe. In the remainder of this chapter is God’s indictment against the Babylonians, and we will read about the 5 woes He pronounced against them. In the midst of these woes, however, we will be given a breath of the fresh air of glory as

the Holy Spirit reminds us of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ that is coming soon to planet earth!

2:6 The very nations that they conquered took up this saying against the Babylonians, couched in the question, “How long will this be allowed to last?”

Psalm 94:3 LORD, how long will the wicked, how long will the wicked triumph?

:4 How long will they utter and speak insolent things? And all the workers of iniquity boast in themselves?

- Rather than a triumph, the Babylonians’ increase of material things at the expense of other nations would turn out to be the first woe. All of their acquisitions would amount to the equivalent of thick clay – worthless.
- The only real value of clay is when it is placed into the Potter’s hands (**Isaiah 64:8**) and molded into His image and likeness (**Rom 8:29**).

2:8 The spoiler is spoiled, the plunderer plundered and reduced to disgrace. Indeed, the wages of sin is death. (**Rom 6:23a**)

2:9 The second woe here is similar to the first in that it is an indictment against covetousness relating to material things. There is an extreme camp of the modern church that is actually preaching in the name of Jesus that gain is godliness.

The 10th commandment says:

Exodus 20:17 You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.

Jesus Christ said:

Luke 12:15 And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possess.”

- Covetousness robs you of contentment. It “fogs” your ability to appreciate what you have. How this “spirit” of the Babylonians is very much alive and well in the world today! But, as Paul told Timothy, “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” (**1 Tim 6:6**) Possessions are never a problem as long as you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, “seek(ing) first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (**Matt 6:33**).

2:10,11 Note that the cruel dealings of the Babylonians towards other nations is called sinning against their own soul.

When we walk contrary to the second great commandment to love others as ourselves (**Matt 22:37-39**), we are destroying our own

souls. Jesus is the personification of the “agape” chapter, **1 Cor 13**, in which love is described as being patient and kind, rejoicing with the truth. The rest of the description of agape is what it is not (**vv. 4-6**).

Prov 11:17 The merciful man does good to his own soul, but *he who is cruel* troubles his own flesh.

Prov 27:4 Wrath is cruel.

- May the grace of God enable us to be tender and gentle in all of our dealings with one another.

2:12 The third woe against the Babylonians is because of their building their kingdom with violence and bloodshed, for destroying others in order that they might have gain for themselves. This continues today. Consider, for example, abortion doctors who are building “The Great American Dream” at the expense of the blood of innocent children. One of the signs of the last days is that men would be unloving and brutal (**2 Tim 3:3**). There is so much violence depicted on television and in the movies and video games; and this violence is being carried out in our cities and towns, even in churches and schools. There is a judgment of God connected with violence.

Gen 6:11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

:12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

:13 And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”

- Without wanting to sound like a doomsday preacher, it seems to me that the world is becoming increasingly more violent. Just pick up a newspaper or watch a news broadcast. Consider grammar school children shooting one another. A survey of the occurrence of physical abuse will also testify that we do live in violent times. Prayer is the only appropriate response.

2:13 God causes plans and peoples who are opposed to Him to fail.

2:14 Right in the middle of these woes, the Holy Ghost gives us a breath of fresh air. This great prophecy, to be fulfilled in the millennial Kingdom, is repeated in different wording four other times in the Old Testament: **Num 14:21**, **Psalms 72:19**, **Isaiah 6:3** and **11:9**.

What a Kingdom is coming, saints! We will never regret the choices that we have made to put Jesus first. There will be no violence, substance abuse, corruption in high places, sickness, sorrow, etc. Why? Because the government of the entire world will rest upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ.

2:15 “Your bottle” - in reality, your poison. Isn't it interesting that the words “your bottle”, referring to alcoholic excess, is likened to poison. (The 4th woe is alcohol abuse, and immorality.) They were using alcohol to strip people of their inhibitions, and then taking advantage of them. Have things changed at all?

2:16 God will bring shame on Babylon just as she had done to others. How true God's Word is: “your sin will find you out” (**Num 32:23**) and “whatever a man sows, the he will also reap” (**Gal 6:7**).
Prov 3:35 The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the legacy of fools.

- When we live below the standard of God's moral, holy codes, we turn His glory into shame.

The apostle Paul wrote with tears about this when referring to those who were not walking uprightly according to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Phil 3:18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

:19 whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame, who set their mind on earthly things.

2:18-20 Lifeless idols are contrasted with the living LORD, and those calling to idols to “Awake!” are told to keep quiet before the LORD. Thus, the final woe is against idolatry. Note that all idols are nothing but lies. These idols cannot speak, they don't breathe, and they cannot help in the time of calamity.

Psalms 115:4 Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

:5 They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes they have, but they do not see;

:6 they have ears, but they do not hear; noses they have, but they do not smell;

:7 they have hands, but they do not handle; feet they have, but they do not walk; nor do they mutter through their throat.

:8 Those who make them are like them; *so is* everyone who trusts in them.

But the LORD is in His holy temple.

Psalms 11:4 The LORD *is* in His holy temple, the LORD's throne *is* in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and train of His *robe* filled the temple.

“Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

Oftentimes we question God's judgment or wisdom. We wish that we

could simply rush into His office and set the record straight. Job (**Job 40:3-4**), Isaiah (**Isaiah 6:5**), and the improperly clothed person (**Matt 22:11,12**) had nothing to say to the Lord.

Being still before the Lord is good medicine.

Psalm 46:10 Be still, and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

Chapter 3

The chapter begins by stating that it is a prayer upon Shigionoth. The word “Shigionoth” is actually a song of great emotion and passion. So, we see how worship can be a form of prayer unto the Lord, as well as praise. Habakkuk’s prayer is not going to change the plans of God, but it is going to cause him to desire that God’s plans be executed. His prayer ends up being a Psalm of thanksgiving and praise.

3:2 When Habakkuk heard the Lord declare to him what He was about to do, he was afraid (**v.16**). Jeremiah (**Jer 4:19**), Daniel (**Dan 10:8-10**), and John the Revelator (**Rev 1:17**) had a similar type of reaction when they heard the voice of prophecy.

- How do you respond to prophecy? Does it alter your perspective of what is important in life? Does it effect your priorities? Does it motivate you to share your faith with others?

“Revive Your work” literally is “keep Your work alive”.

Remember that Habakkuk is trembling and perplexed about what the Lord revealed to him, but in prayer he says to His God: “Don’t stop Your work, Lord; continue Your work, even though I don’t understand it or necessarily approve of it. But Lord, when Your judgment is poured out, don’t forget to be merciful.”

- Now this is the language of faith, isn’t it? Trusting God when you don’t understand or approve of what He is doing, and just saying, “Lord, I don’t know what You’re doing but keep doing it! Keep alive Your work in my life. Don’t stop Your work in my life.”

Revival is for the Church. Evangelism is for the lost.

Crusades like Harvest are not revivals, they are just what they are called – a harvest for souls into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. In contrast, Habakkuk is asking the Lord to revive His work within His people. The usage of the word “revive” in Scripture means to refresh to a state of health or to resurrect from the dead.

Judges 15:19 But God split the hollow place that *is* in Lehi, and water came forth; and when he (Samson) had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived.

1 Kings 17:22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

2 Kings 13:21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that,

behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood up on his feet.

Habakkuk is asking the Lord to bring back to life the work of God's Spirit in the lives of His wayward people. Saints, I believe that the Church in general needs a revival desperately.

Psalm 85:6 Will you not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?

Listen to this prayer (promise) from the man after God's own heart:

Psalm 138:7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me.

:8 The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever; do not forsake the works of Your hands.

- What is the attribute of God that is called upon to bring about revival? Mercy.

Regarding verses 3-15, scholars are divided over whether the passages are historical or prophetic.

Historical view interpretation:

Sees this section of Scripture as speaking of God's descent to Mt. Sinai when the Law was given, charting the movement of the Lord in Old Testament history as He came down with the Law for His people. Subsequently, the passages tell about how His people wandered about through Midian, through Teman (Edom), over mountains, through the Red Sea, and eventually to the Promised Land.

Prophetic view interpretation:

Sees these verses as a picture of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In **Isaiah 63**, we read that when the Messiah comes again He will be coming from Teman (Edom), south of Jerusalem, then through Bozrah with His garments dipped in blood (**vv. 1-3**). Then He will move north towards Jerusalem in power and glory (**Rev 19:11-16**).

- Both views may come into play here. The Lord may be telling Habakkuk to look back and see what He has done, and to look into the future and see what He is going to do.
- This double interpretation seems to be something that is found throughout the Scriptures, and can be a real source of personal comfort. Look back at what God did for you 2000 years ago through His Son Jesus (**John 3:16**), and look ahead to that Blessed Hope (**Titus 2:13**) and our citizenship in heaven (**Phil 3:20-21**). He who began a good work in each and every one of His saints will be faithful to complete what He said He would do! (**Phil 1:6, 1 Thess 5:24**)

3:3 Prayer brought the prophet to remembrance of the holiness of God. He speaks of how God's glory covered the earth and how it was full of His praise. This will be ultimately true during the 1,000 year reign

of Jesus Christ.

- “Selah.” Other than in the Book of Psalms, the three uses of this word in this chapter are the only other places where it is found in the Scriptures. It is uncertain as to what it actually means, but it was a musical term that provided for a break or a time of reflection. We might call it in musical terms a “rest”.

3:4,5 At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ His glory will cover the heavens, and the earth will be filled with His praise as He comes to establish God’s Kingdom on earth. But before this comes about, there will be pestilence. Pestilence is mentioned in **Revelation 11:6**, and is implied in **Rev 6:8** since “the beasts of the earth” are very likely microscopic in nature.

Matt 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes in various places.

- A pestilence is a plague or disease.

3:6 This verse speaks of the judgment of God and the cataclysmic changes that will take place geographically upon the earth in the great days of tribulation. Note that God’s ways are everlasting.

Psalms 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in the heavens.

- When the Lord is working in our lives, He is thinking in terms of eternal values. If there is such a thing as reviewing our lives on earth after we get to heaven, we would look with amazement at the grace, goodness, and mercy of God toward each one of us.

3:7 Cushan is Ethiopia.

3:8 The reference to the Lord being displeased with the rivers reminds us of the rivers being turned into blood in Egypt (**Exodus 7:19,20**). This will happen again on a much larger scale during the Great Tribulation (**Rev 16:4**).

3:9-11 All of creation is subject to God’s sovereignty and is affected by His judgments.

3:12 The word indignation here describes judgment. Note that God threshes (tramples) the heathen in His anger, not the righteous.

Isaiah 26:20 Come, My people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. (Picture the Rapture of the Church.)

:21 For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose

her blood, and will no more cover her slain.

27:1 In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; and He will slay the dragon that is in the sea.

3:17 Even though You have shown me that everything around me is going to fall apart..... This is exactly what took place in Habakkuk's life as the result of the siege – starvation. It was a horrible, horrible time. Josephus in his history books recorded the horror of this siege – the starvation among the people, the cannibalism that finally took over because of a total lack of supplies: no figs on the tree, no grapes on the vine, no olives, no grain, no flocks, no herds.

3:18 The word “rejoice” here literally means to “jump up and down”. What a depth of fellowship Habakkuk held with His God, that even in the midst of the worst possible news, he could dance for joy because he knew that he could lose the whole world, but not his soul, for that belonged to his Lord. He knew that he carried nothing into this world and that he would carry nothing out.

Job 1:21 “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

The word for “joy” here means to “spin around or twirl”. In everything we are to give thanks (**1 Thess 5:18**), not for the problems and tragedies per se, but for the fact that we serve the true and living God who turns evil into good (**Gen 50:20**), curses into blessings (**Neh 13:2b**), despair into hope (**Jer 29:11**), death into life (**Rom 4:17b**). Even though you can't praise the Lord for everything, you can praise Him in everything. You can always rejoice in the Lord, but you certainly can't always rejoice in your circumstances. Many times we weep because of circumstances. But yet, even while weeping over the circumstances, we can rejoice in the Lord. If I look at circumstances, I can get discouraged, despondent; I can feel like giving up. But if I keep my eyes focused on the Lord, then I know that the Lord is in control and I can rejoice in Him. He is my Lord, I'm His servant. He's going to watch over me. He's going to take care of me. (**Isaiah 41:9,10**)

3:19 Scripture says again and again: “The just shall live by faith.” (**Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17b, Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38; cp. Heb 11:1,6**) In other words, saints, the Lord is going to continue to work in us and around us and through us in a variety of ways so we will get this living by faith settled in our hearts (**Heb 12:2a**). Our problems, like Habakkuk's, may indeed be great and challenging, but if we will maintain an attitude of seeking His face, and embracing His

grace, then we too can sing, even in the midst of our storms because the storm is not the basis of our song. Our Savior, Jesus Christ is!

This mighty book closes with the prophet giving the lyrics in this chapter to a temple musician! It would be like you getting these great revelations from the Lord and giving them to one of our gifted worship people and asking them to put music to it so it could be memorized and sung by the people to remind them that God reigns and that the purposes of God are established. God's Kingdom will come, and "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord" (2:14).

What a powerful little book this is! Jon Courson also has an encouraging summary of this book.

In chapter 1 we see Habakkuk wondering and wrestling

In chapter 2 we see him watching and waiting.

In chapter 3 we see him worshipping and witnessing.

Habakkuk begins in a valley. He climbs into the tower. He ascends to the maintain. He sighs; he seeks; he sings.

NOTES

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