

Hope that Transcends Despair
Habakkuk 3

Introduction

Please turn in your Bible's once again to the book of Habakkuk. We have examined the first two chapters over the last two weeks. Today we will look at the prophet's final prayer and response in chapter 3.

The prophet Habakkuk (pronounced hăbăq-qûq in Hebrew), was written in the early years of the reign of evil king Jehoiakim of Judah. He had lived during the reform period of good king Josiah's reign, but now things were rapidly declining as the new king and people turned their hearts and actions back to the evil that had existed in the nation during the reigns of wicked kings Ammon and Manasseh. The prophet is grieved over the violence, iniquity, wickedness, destruction, strife, contention and injustice that existed and was perplexed that God had not yet answered his prayers and stopped it (Hab. 1:1-4).

His petition and perplexity is something that we can understand very well because we have pleaded with God in a similar way as we have watched the moral decline of our nation for many decades accompanied by the very things that were grievous to Habakkuk. The slide into evil and depravity has continued the last few years even though there was a reformed minded president pushing back against it. The decision last year by the U.S. Supreme Court that forces employers to acquiesce to the mental malady of gender dysphoria even at the cost of their own business was simply the latest in the cesspool of depraved decisions by our courts. It is now politically incorrect (PC) to acknowledge biological reality that men are men and women are women and cannot change into the other. It is PC to mutilate the bodies of these tragically confused people.

Media fueled riots over false accusations of racism destroyed businesses, maimed and murdered people. The response of liberal cities in removing or restricting law enforcement to politically correct ideas has resulted in murder rates in 2020 increasing by 20-30% or more. Those suffering the most in all of this have been the minority communities in which the rioting took place.

We also saw the destruction of basic civil liberties as state after state and city after city shut down businesses and quarantined healthy people out of fear of a virus that has proven to be less dangerous than the flu for the vast majority of people and for which there are inexpensive, effective and safe treatments available. I know because I got a very bad case of it and recovered relatively quickly by doing my own research of the science of the disease and possible treatments and getting help from out of state. If I had followed what our state and local government wanted, I would have been hospitalized at minimum with an unknown outcome. The slogans, "Trust / Believe Science," used by all sorts of government and medical agencies would be more accurate if they said, "Trust / Believe Science Fiction." The claim that the spread of a viral respiratory disease that has reached pandemic levels can be stopped is contrary to biological reality. At best, the rate of spread might be slowed. Their claims about the need and safety for the vaccines are also science fiction. Why? 1) The risk factors for dying or serious illness by the vast majority of the population is extremely low. 2) The risk factor of the vaccines is unknown for both short and long term effects because normal testing on animals was never done. They are EUA (Emergency Use Authorization) drugs. To be succinct and blunt, you become the lab rat. If you already got the vaccine, thank you for being the lab rat. Unless you are in a high risk group with co-morbidity factors, the unknown risks of the vaccines and lack of benefit make getting them irrational. Tragically, the fear that has been generated over the science fiction surrounding COVID-19 makes what is irrational seem reasonable.

We understand Habakkuk's prayer and perplexity for we have also prayed and petitioned God for His intervention and a change back to when times were more moral and sane.

God was answering Habakkuk's prayer, but the answer was not what Habakkuk wanted. God had judged the nation and was going to send the Chaldeans as the means of chastening Judah (Hab. 1:5-11). This perplexes Habakkuk even more for the Chaldeans were very wicked (Hab. 1:12-17). How can a God who is so pure and holy use such wicked people to chasten Judah which was bad, but not as bad as the Chaldeans? Habakkuk should have known the answer since God's warnings about what He would do if His people would not obey Him go back to the law of Moses, and it was also revealed specifically by prophets (Isaiah 39).

We understand the perplexity in this as well. We have prayed for relief and wonder why God has instead answered with judgment on our nation. At this point it is by having those with utterly depraved minds in the key positions of national authority. It was bad before, but this is by far the most immoral and anti-god regime we have had, and they may only be the beginning. I have pointed out before that the policies this regime is implementing will quickly make us an easy target for our enemies. We could become a vassal state of a foreign empire.

Habakkuk was honest about his thoughts and emotions in presenting his questions before God. He was also humble to quickly accept God's answer to his first perplexity and committed to actively await for God's answer to the second one even though he knows it will involve correction to his thoughts and understanding (Hab. 2:1). The humble desire truth so that they can walk closely with the LORD.

The LORD answered quickly and told the prophet to write it all down. This prophecy was a warning to those hearing it then, and after its fulfillment it has been a confidence builder in the LORD's faithfulness. He does what He says He will do. He keeps His promises. He is God.

A short summary of the answer in Habakkuk 2:4-20 is twofold. First, the righteous will live by faith. The righteous will continue to trust God even when they do not understand what is happening or why because their faith is in God Himself according to His character and attributes. Second, God is holy and just so He will punish nations that do evil. Judah would be chastened by Babylon just as warned and prophesied. Babylon would be destroyed because of its manifold evils. History records that Babylon was destroyed just as prophesied. Daniel 5 records its sudden end at Belshazzar's feast.

History is a record of God's judgment upon nations as they turn to evil, and all eventually do because evil people seek power, and once they have gained it, they turn the people of that nation to that evil. America has lasted longer than most nations because of our strong Christian heritage that shaped our culture to seek and fulfill God's purpose for government in giving praise to those who do good and bringing wrath upon those who do evil (Rom. 13:3-4). The nation as a whole has rejected that heritage, and with it we have become an illegitimate nation that praises those who do evil and brings wrath on those who do good, and as Isaiah 5:20 warns, *"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"* How are the godly to respond to this? Habakkuk 3 gives us the answer as the prophet faces with confidence a future that should cause despair.

Structure - Habakkuk 3:1

Habakkuk 3:1 begins, ¹ *"A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth,"* and it ends in verse 19 with the instruction, *"For the choir director, on my stringed instruments."* Shigionoth comes from a root word that means to reel "to and fro" and refers to a song or poem done with great excitement or rapid changes of emotion. The musical notation "selah" occurs three times in this prayer (3,9,13) indicating where there would be a musical crescendo or pause for reflection. This chapter is a poetic prayer set to music to be used for worship in the temple.

It is a good example of Hebrew thought and expression being both majestic and sublime and in using many poetic descriptions and historical references to express the point. The Hebrew scriptures tend to be

full of word pictures and stories and are even more so in poetic literature. This prayer is a psalm that not only expresses Habakkuk's petition to God (vs. 2), but then portrays God's majesty displayed in a theophany (vs. 3-7) and power exhibited in past historical events (vs. 8-15) before concluding with affirmation of his trust in God regardless of the coming desolation (vs. 16-19).

Habakkuk's Petition - Habakkuk 3:2

The prophet lays his heart bare in his opening petition with an honest expression of his emotion and his plea. *"LORD, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy."* As the prophet considered what he had heard about God concerning His actions in the past and what He had revealed to Habakkuk that He was going to do, it caused him to fear. In the context here this would be a combination of feelings of dread, veneration and wonder. But such proper fear is good as Proverbs 9:10 states that *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."*

He knows the work God has done in the past, and his first plea is for God to revive and do such work again in *the midst of years* - a reference to the prophet's own time. The specific work to be done would be the prophecies God had given to Habakkuk concerning the chastening of Judah by the Chaldeans followed by the destruction of the Chaldeans. Related to this is his second plea that God would also make that work known in that same time frame which is an indication of Habakkuk's desire for God to be known and proclaimed. A common theme throughout the Psalms are declarations of the works of the LORD.

The final plea is that God would remember mercy in the midst of His coming wrath that would be poured out. God had specifically revealed to Habakkuk that His wrath was coming against both Judah and then the Chaldeans, but the prophet would have also known that the LORD is compassionate since that is one of the attributes the LORD declared about Himself to Moses in Exodus 34:6-7 - ⁶ *"The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; ⁷ who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."* Or perhaps more directly applicable to what Habakkuk was about to face is Deuteronomy 4:31 - *"For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them."*

While the promises made to Israel do not belong to us as a nation, the character of the LORD remains the same and the promises God has made to those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as their LORD and Savior enable us to pray the same way. Like Habakkuk, we know the awesome nature of the LORD from what is written in the Scriptures, and like Habakkuk we desire to see God's work made known in our own time. And like Habakkuk, we can be confident in the LORD's compassion upon those who belong to Him. Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us, and if we are persecuted for our faith, we are blessed for our reward in heaven will be great (Matthew 5:11-12). And according to Hebrews 13, even when God chastens us it is because He loves us to correct us. Jesus said that His followers would have tribulation in this world (John 16:33), and believers will suffer for many reasons including the sins of others against us and the general curse upon this world, but it will not be directly due to God's wrath.

Remember, according to Romans 1:18-32, the display of God's wrath on the unrighteous is a downward spiral into greater sin and their consequences. As those who seek and follow God, we will avoid those sins and the depravity that are part of them. In addition, as we saw in our previous study of 1 Thessalonians, we are not destined for wrath for Jesus rescues us from the wrath to come (1:10; 5:9). We can also pray with confidence for God to grant mercy in the midst of His wrath coming against a nation that has turned to evil.

God's Majesty Declared - Habakkuk 3:3-7

In the next section of this prayer psalm, Habakkuk declares God's majesty in a theophany - a physical manifestation of God displaying His power and glory. Notice that this section is all done in the third person except verse 7. It is a declaration of the majesty of God to all who hear.

³ *God comes from Teman, And the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, And the earth is full of His praise.* ⁴ *His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand, And there is the hiding of His power.* ⁵ *Before Him goes pestilence, And plague comes after Him.* ⁶ *He stood and surveyed the earth; He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered, The ancient hills collapsed. His ways are everlasting.* ⁷ *I saw the tents of Cushan under distress, The tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling.*

Without a knowledge of Jewish history, this sounds like poetic exaggeration, however these are references to God's actions in the past. Mount Paran was the desert area south of Judah extending down to the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula, and Teman was the southern part of Edom (also known as Seir) due east of Paran on the other side of the Aravah. Both locations are important in the wilderness wanderings when Israel came out from bondage in Egypt.

Moses wrote in the opening verse of his blessing in Deuteronomy 33:2, *"The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones; At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them."* Similar statements are made in the song of Deborah and Barak in Judges 5:4-5, ⁴ *"LORD, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth quaked, the heavens also dripped, Even the clouds dripped water.* ⁵ *"The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD, This Sinai, at the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel."* Similar language occurs in the Psalms and Isaiah. God led the children of Israel by a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21). Exodus 19 and 20 record the LORD manifesting Himself on Mt. Sinai by descending on it in fire and smoke along with thunder, lightning and earthquakes. Throughout the wilderness wandering which were in Paran and Edom, God manifested Himself in such phenomena. Psalm 114:3 describes the earthquakes as *"The mountains skipped like rams, The hills, like lambs"* The selah here allows the music to heighten the contemplation of what has just been said.

The rest of verse 3 expands on the majesty of the LORD to encompass the whole earth resulting in people filling it with praise. This majesty of God displayed in the heavens, both atmospheric in clouds and storms, and celestial in the sun and stars occurs in many Scriptures such as Psalm 19:1, *"The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands,"* and Psalm 8:1 & 3-4, which prompts man to be humble, ¹ *"O LORD, our LORD, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!"* ³ *When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;* ⁴ *What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him?"*

The Hebrew in verse 4 is literally *"and brightness like the light is."* It is a simile describing the LORD's glory. That may also refer to the scenes at Sinai in which the brightness of God's glory caused Moses' face to continue to shine even when he came down from the mountain (Exod. 34:29). When Jesus was transfigured, He shone like the sun (Matthew 17:2). 1 John 1:5 even declares that *"God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."* The rays or horns coming from His hands probably refer to lighting which was an aspect of God's manifestation at Sinai and occurs when He is associated with a storm (Psalm 18:14; 97:4). The last phrase describes light as the hiding place of God's power. Psalm 104:2 describes the LORD covering Himself with light like a cloak and 1 Timothy 6:16 states that God *"dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see."*

The pestilence and plague are probably references to the plagues God sent on Egypt that caused the children of Israel to be freed from slavery, but God would send plagues as punishment on nations for their evil and on Israel to chasten them (Deut. 28:59f). Plague and pestilence were also a common consequences of war, and both are under God's control.

Verse 6 is a slight pause as God stands and looks over the nations and then shakes them causing the mountains of old to be shattered and the hills to collapse. Mountains appear solid and unchanging from man's perspective and therefore continuing or perpetual. But they are not. Whatever mountains existed at creation were destroyed by the world-wide flood during Noah's time, and those that rose during it and after have been eroding. Revelation 6 and 16 tell us that in the future they will all be moved out of their places and then after an earthquake of unimaginable power, they will no longer be found. By contrast, Habakkuk points out here that the ways of the LORD are everlasting.

In verse 7 the Prophet returns to the first person reporting his own vision of Cushan and Midian, nomadic peoples who lived in the areas around the Gulf of Aqaba, in distress and trembling. It is not clear if this vision is looking back at a past event such as their miraculous defeat by Gideon (Judges 7-8) or forward to a future one. Either way, the presence of God causes people to fear.

Habakkuk's Questions - Habakkuk 3:8

Verse 8 is an interlude to his description of God's manifestations of Himself to ask rhetorical questions of motive that all look back to events in the Israelites leaving Egypt and coming to the promised land. ⁸ *Did the LORD rage against the rivers, Or was Your anger against the rivers, Or was Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your horses, On Your chariots of salvation?*

Habakkuk changes to the second person to ask these rhetorical questions of God. It was not anger, burning anger (rage) or overflowing anger (wrath) that caused the LORD to part the Red Sea or stack up the waters of the Jordan river. The actions that caused these events are described as an army - horses and chariots - coming against them. The Red Sea was parted by a strong east wind that blew all night that even dried up the sea floor to be dry land (Exodus 14:21). The flood waters of the Jordan River were caused to rise up on a heap at Adam so that the Israelites could cross a now dry river bed opposite of Jericho (Joshua 3:15-17). The motive is alluded to here and then stated in verse 13. These were chariots of salvation for God's people.

God's Power Remembered - Habakkuk 3:9-15

In verses 9-15 the prophet continues to describe the LORD's manifestations of Himself by looking back at what He has done in the past. However, instead of using the third person as he did in verses 3-7 to talk about the LORD, he continues here in the second person in talking to the LORD.

Verse 9 describes the preparation of a warrior for action. ⁹ *Your bow was made bare, The rods of chastisement were sworn. Selah.* The bow is removed from its sheath and made ready for the arrows it will launch. God's takes action by His word for He speaks and it is done (Psalm 33:6,9), and He has sworn to take vengeance on His adversaries with flashing sword and arrows (Duet. 32:40-42). The Selah gives a musical emphasis to God being prepared for action which is then described in what follows.

^{9c} *"You cleaved the earth with rivers. ¹⁰ The mountains saw You and quaked; The downpour of waters swept by. The deep uttered forth its voice, It lifted high its hands."* It is not clear what particular event this refers to, but it is a vivid description of a massive rain storm and an earthquake that result in the earth being divided by rivers and the sea being pushed upward. Perhaps it refers back to the great flood, or it could be of an earthquake and severe more local storm with widespread flash floods that are normal to desert environments, and the sea being whipped up by the wind into roaring waves.

The next description is of a well known event. ¹¹ *Sun and moon stood in their places; They went away at the light of Your arrows, At the radiance of Your gleaming spear. ¹² In indignation You marched through the earth; In anger You trampled the nations. ¹³ You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For the salvation of Your anointed. You struck the head of the house of the evil To lay him open from thigh to neck. Selah.*

Joshua 10 records the conquest of the southern nations in Canaan after their alliance attacked the Gibeonites who had made an alliance with Joshua. In verse 12 Joshua prays the LORD would halt the

progression of the Sun and Moon so that the conquest could be completed that same day, and the LORD granted the request. The Sun stood still and the moon stopped (vs. 13). Just prior to this as the Canaanites fled from Joshua down the descent of Beth-horon, the LORD sent a storm with large hailstones that killed more of the enemy than Israel had killed with the sword (vs. 11). Hailstones are only formed in severe storms which also produce thunder and lightning. Those events match well Habakkuk 3:11. Joshua 11 then records the conquest of the northern nations of Canaan including capturing their kings and putting them to death. The conquests of all the Canaanite nations match Habakkuk 3:12-13. The LORD went forth for the salvation of His people. The Selah notes a musical change that would emphasize these events.

Of course verses 12-13 could also fit other military campaigns in Israel's history as does vers 14. ¹⁴ *"You pierced with his own spears The head of his thrones. They stormed in to scatter us; Their exultation was like those Who devour the oppressed in secret."* This could easily fit either Judges 7 when the LORD turned the swords of the army of the Midianites against each other when Gideon's men blew their trumpets, or the Philistines attacking one another in 1 Samuel 14:20, or 2 Chronicles 20:23-24 when a coalition army that was going to fight Jehoshaphat of Judah turned against each other. That text states: ²³ *For the sons of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying them completely; and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.* ²⁴ *When Judah came to the lookout of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude, and behold, they were corpses lying on the ground, and no one had escaped."*

Habakkuk closes this section with a return to a reference to the Red Sea crossing. ¹⁵ *"You trampled on the sea with Your horses, On the surge of many waters."* As expressed in the Song of Moses in Exodus 15:3,6,11,13 & 18, ³ *"The LORD is a warrior, The LORD is His name" . . .* ⁶ *"Your right hand, O LORD, is majestic in power, Your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy" . . .* ¹¹ *"Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?" . . .* ¹³ *"In Your lovingkindness You have led the people whom You have redeemed; In Your strength You have guided them to Your holy habitation" . . .* ¹⁸ *"The LORD shall reign forever and ever."*

The Response - Habakkuk 3:16-19

Habakkuk's response is honest in describing how disturbed He was at what God had revealed to Him and what he expected to happen in the near future. At the same time, he has found a reason to hope that transcends the despair that would otherwise set in.

¹⁶ *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."* Knowing that God was sending the Chaldeans to invade and conquer Judah caused Habakkuk genuine fear that caused his body to react. His belly shakes, his lips quiver, his bones become weak and his whole body trembles. Yet all he could do was wait for the fulfillment of what God had revealed.

Verses 17 expresses his expectation of what would happen once the Chaldeans invaded. ¹⁷ *Though the fig tree should not blossom And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls,"* This is stated as a hyperbole in a worst case scenario, for an invading army cannot keep plants from doing what plants do - blossom, set and produce fruit. But the invaders can cut down the trees and vines or strip off the fruit that is produced. They can steal or slaughter the flocks and the cattle so that none are left for the people of the land. When Nebuchadnezzar had to invade the third time in 586 B.C., he did ravage the land as he laid siege to Jerusalem. This is a description of despair, but it is not cynical for Habakkuk states it as the first part of a "Though - yet" statement. Though this should happen, yet Habakkuk would respond in a different way than expected.

¹⁸ *Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.* ¹⁹ *The LORD God is my strength, And He has made my feet like hinds' feet, And makes me walk on my high places. For the choir director, on my stringed instruments.*”

No doubt in recounting the LORD's working in the past, Habakkuk was encouraged that the LORD would work in similar ways in the future. The LORD has promised destruction by the Chaldeans, but He had also promised destruction of the Chaldeans in the future, and more importantly, God would keep His covenant with Abraham. As the prophet has said back in 1:12, “*We will not die.*” There would be a remnant to fulfill God's promises. God was going to chasten His people, not annihilate them.

The result is that instead of despair, Habakkuk will exult in the LORD expressing that rejoicing in God who is His savior. That is only possible because the LORD is His strength. God enables him to do it.

The next phrase comes from Psalm 18:33 and expresses the stability God would give him though the circumstances were precarious. A hind is a doe, and because of the description of it being in high places, this would be the Ibex which easily climbs rocky crags and cliff faces. The situation would be dangerous, but God would equip him to be sure footed and not slip.

Habakkuk ends with a notation on how this was to be used within temple worship. That means that this prayer psalm became something more than a personal expression by Habakkuk, it would be used by all who shared his trust in God - and that would include us.

Conclusions

I have pointed out many times that our nation is under God's wrath as described in Romans 1. It is obvious by what has happened in the last year that our prayers to God for mercy and intervention to stop the blatant evils that have filled our nation have been met with an answer we did not want. He is judging our nation for its failure to uphold the basic reasons for nations to exist - give praise to those who do good and bring wrath on those who do evil. The woes of flipping those and calling good evil and evil good have come upon us.

I cannot tell you how long the nation can stumble onward, but I can tell you that the policies of the current national regime will quickly destroy the nation's character, cohesion and ability to function normally, reduce our ability to defend ourselves, and bring about increasing persecution of anyone who upholds Biblical morality.

I cannot tell you whether God has removed all hope for this nation or could He yet grant to this nation a reform as happened under Josiah in ancient Judah, or even better, a revival as has occurred in our past history, but I can tell you we are to both pray for God's mercy and stand up and do what we know is right before God regardless of any personal cost in doing so. James 4:17 tells us that to fail to do so is sin.

I cannot tell you whether your own circumstances will remain safe or not as society as a whole dives deeper into the cesspool of wickedness, but I can tell you that the LORD will strengthen those who wait on Him (Isaiah 40:31), He will guide those who trust Him (Proverbs. 3:5-6), He will provide what is needed for those who seek first His kingdom and righteousness (Matthew 6:33), and He will make you secure even in precarious situations like a hind in high places if you are among the righteous that walk by faith in Him (Habakkuk 2:4; 3:19). If you get nothing else from this study in Habakkuk, that is what I want you to get. The righteous walk by their faith in God because they know and trust Him. They do not have to understand what God is doing in the present time or why He is doing it for their trust is built on the character and nature of God seen throughout the pages of the Bible and throughout His intervention into human history. The LORD is holy, righteous, just and good, as well as loving, merciful, longsuffering and gracious, and He keeps His promises.

Our hope is not in God doing something to change our present circumstances so that we can have easy and peaceful lives. If that was our hope, we would have every reason to be in despair. Our hope is

in God Himself who changes us so that we are reconciled to Him and can live in righteousness in the present with eternity in view.

Jesus Christ is the Savior, and He redeems and grants forgiveness of sins to those who have faith in Him so that you are adopted into God's family, made a citizen of heaven which will be your future home, and become His ambassador to this world to proclaim His message of how to be reconciled with God.

The hope of a Christian transcends the circumstances of this world, even those that would otherwise cause despair, because it is not based in anything in this world. It is based in Jesus Christ Himself and His promises. And as we will be celebrating next Sunday, Jesus Christ conquered sin and death rising physically from the grave proving all of His claims and promises are true. My citizenship is in Heaven, and one day Jesus will return to take me there. Until then, I am to live to the best of my ability to glorify Him, serve Him, and try to take as many other people to heaven with me as possible. If that makes the devil and his followers mad, so be it. I live to please the LORD God who created me and loves me, not the devil who hates me or the world that wants to exploit me. What is your purpose in life? Are you walking by faith in the LORD or by sight on your circumstances?

Sermon Notes - March 21, 2021
Hope that Transcends Despair - Habakkuk 3:1-19

Introduction

Habakkuk was _____ about the rise of wickedness during the early years of the reign of Jehoiakim
We have pleaded with God over the increasing _____ of our own nation
God's answer that He would send the even more _____ Chaldeans perplexed Habakkuk even more
We are perplexed in God allowing those of _____ minds to gain the key positions of authority
Habakkuk was honest and _____ in his questions, seeking God for answers, and accepting them
God's twofold answer is that the righteous will live by _____, and He is holy & will punish evil nations
_____ is a record of God's judgment upon nations as they became evil

Structure - Habakkuk 3:1

Habakkuk 3 is a _____ prayer set to music to be used for worship in the temple.
It presents his petition (2), the majesty of God (3-7), the power of God (8-15), his trust in God (16-19)

Habakkuk's Petition - Habakkuk 3:2

God's answers caused him _____ - but fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10)
He wants God to do such work _____ in his own time that God's work would be made known
He wants God to remember to be _____ in the midst of the wrath that was to come (Deut. 4:31)
Promises made to Israel do not belong to our nation, but promises made to the church belong to _____
We have tribulation in this world & believers suffer for many reasons, but not _____ from God's wrath
Walking with God _____ the sins and depravity that bring God's wrath (Romans 1:18-32)

God's Majesty Declared - Habakkuk 3:3-7

These are references to God's actions in coming with His people from the _____ (Deut. 33:2; Judges 5:4-5)
Exodus 19-20: The Lord manifested Himself on _____ in fire, smoke, thunder, lightning & earthquakes
The _____ and earth declare God's glory - Psalm 8; 19
God is associated with _____ - Exod. 34:29; Matt. 17:2; 1 John 1:5; Psalm 18:14; 97:4; 104:2, 1 Tim. 6:16
God sent pestilence and plagues upon _____ (Exodus 4-12) and other evil nations (Deut. 28:59f)
The mountains were _____ in the flood & will be again in the future (Rev. 16). Only God is eternal

Habakkuk's Questions - Habakkuk 3:8

Rhetorical questions - God was _____ against rivers or the sea when He brought salvation to Israel

God's Power Remembered - Habakkuk 3:9-15

vs. 9 - God is a _____ ready for action which He takes by His word (Psalm 33:6,9).
vs. 9c-10 - a vivid description of a massive _____ & an earthquake - the great flood or ?

vs. 11-13 - Joshua 10 - the _____ & hailstones at Beth-horon. Joshua 11 - the conquest of the north
vs. 14 - The defeat of Midian (Judges 7) or Ammon, Moab & Edom destroying _____ (2 Chron. 20)
vs. 15 - the Red Sea crossing? See the Song of Moses in Exodus 15

The Response - Habakkuk 3:16-19

vs. 16 - Knowing what God was going to do makes Habakkuk _____
vs. 17 - _____ of a worst case scenario for plants bloom & fruit, but they can be destroyed & fruit stolen
God keeps His promises, so Habakkuk can be encouraged by God's _____ actions to save & leave a remnant
vs. 18 - instead of despair, he can _____ in the God who saves the righteous
vs. 19 - The Lord strengthens making him as surefooted as an _____ in rocky crags - safe in precarious places

Conclusions

We have pleaded with God about evil in our land, and He is now _____ us
The nations' length of days is unknown, but current regime polices is quickly _____ it
Whether God grants revival or not, we are to pray for mercy & _____ for righteousness regardless of cost
God _____ those who wait on Him (Isaiah 40:31). He _____ those who trust Him (Proverbs. 3:5-6)
He _____ what is needed for those who seek first His kingdom & righteousness (Matthew 6:33)
He makes those who walk with Him _____ even in precarious situations (Habakkuk)
The righteous walk by their _____ in God because they know & trust Him even when they don't understand
Our hope is in _____ Himself who changes us to become His children through faith in Jesus Christ
A Christian's hope _____ the circumstances of the world because it is based in Jesus & His promises

KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – count how many references are made to the Habakkuk. Talk with your parents about why Habakkuk could trust God even though he was very afraid of what was coming.

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. Review Habakkuk 1 & 2. What was his initial prayer? What was God's answer? Why did that perplex Him? What was God's answer? How can you relate in your own life to the dilemmas Habakkuk faced? What genre of literature is Habakkuk 3? Why was he afraid? What is his petition in 3:2? What mercy did he want in the midst of wrath? The promises to Israel do not belong to either our nation or the church? What principles and promises can apply to the church? Where is Teman and Mount Paran? What role do they play in the Israel's wilderness wanderings? Describe how God manifested Himself in Exodus 19 & 20. How do the heavens and the earth declare God's glory? How does God use pestilence and plagues to fulfill His own will? What is the meaning of the questions in vs. 8? How has God used weather to accomplish His will? Read Joshua 10 & 11. How did God intervene to help Joshua conquer the promised land? Read Judge 7 and 2 Chronicles 20:23-24. What role did God play in the defeat of Israel's / Judah's enemies? Why was Habakkuk so afraid? Why is it important to be honest with God? In what ways is verse 17 hyperbole? What could an enemy do to a nation's fruit trees and vines? What did Nebuchadnezzar do to the land in his third invasion? Why does Habakkuk exult and rejoice in God? How was the Lord his strength. What kind of hind lives in high places in Israel? What does this metaphor mean? How can the principles learned in Habakkuk apply to the United States and to your own life? The security of your hope is only as strong as its basis. In what have you placed your hope? How secure is it?