

HABAKKUK 3

REVIEW...

- **Habakkuk** – the 35th book of the Old Testament - 8th of what is known as the 12 Minor Prophets
 - o He prophesied to the Southern Kingdom leading up to the Babylonian captivity: 609–586 B.C.
 - o The book of Habakkuk is broken up into 2 sections...
 - o Chapter 1–2 - Two questions for God – and two answers from God...
 - o Chapter 3 – The final chapter concludes with the prayer of Habakkuk to God!
- Habakkuk opened the book by asking his first question - How long Lord...
 - o God answered – LOOK to the nations - He was going to do something astounding...
 - o God was going to use the Chaldeans / Babylonians to deal with the sin of Judah!
 - o Habakkuk then asked his 2nd question – should the wicked devour the righteous...
 - o Habakkuk had fresh in his mind the destruction of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC
 - o Surely God would not allow pagan Babylon to destroy those who were Godly!
- The 2nd answer from God...
 - o What God was about to share with Habakkuk would not come to pass quickly...
 - So God was asked Habakkuk to – trust Him – things would work out as God intended...
 - Habakkuk was to live by faith – believe what God said – He would also do!
 - o God would give **5 WOES** to the Kingdom of Babylon – signaling their destruction...
 - Woe to him that increases wealth – he will end up in debt striving for the things of the world!
 - Woe to him that teaches others to covet – he will destroy his family with wicked counsel!
 - Woe to him that seeks a worldly legacy – nothing in this world lasts forever!
 - Woe to him that mocks others – trying to look more righteous by tearing others down!
 - Woe to him that trusts in anyone but the Lord – they will not find help in the day of trouble!

THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK... (3 POINTS)

- **1ST – A PRAYER FOR MERCY... VS. 1-2**
 - o 1st – A prayer of passion... vs. 1
 - This closing chapter of Habakkuk is a prayer / song (*psalm*)...
 - The meaning of Shigionoth is uncertain – translators just transliterated the word...
 - But most commentators think it is a musical term - carried the idea of strong emotion...
 - Likely referring to the content of the song / its accompanying instruments / and tone!
 - Shigionoth is the plural word *of the Hebrew* – *shiggaion* - each appears once in the Bible...
 - Here in **Habakkuk 3:1** and in **Psalms 7** where it is mentioned in the title...
 - Comparing the two occurrences we do find similar themes....
 - Both Psalms paint a picture of Israel in dire straits – in times of seeming hopelessness...
 - Both songs end with praise to the Lord in the hope of His deliverance from trouble!
 - Habakkuk was hurt – afraid – worried for his people / unsure of the future...
 - He knew the Lord was the answer – but He also knew that answer would not come today...
 - So this was not a calm prayer – this was not a song for a Sunday service...
 - This ‘Psalm’ of Habakkuk was a passionate / even violent prayer!
 - Often when we pray we feel the need to be polite – even plastic – before the Lord...
 - Our life is in turmoil – we are desperate – but our prayers are rehearsed...
 - God knows our hearts – and He will not be offended by the truth...
 - There have been days when I just wanted to scream – cry – slam my fists...
 - And it felt like there was no one who would listen – no where to turn...

- God is there to hear our hurts / doubts / fears – He will not turn away from our pain!

o 2nd – A prayer to remember mercy... vs. 2

- Habakkuk heard the word of the Lord and was in fear / awe...
 - He had asked two questions – and the Lord had given him two terrifying answers...
 - God would use Babylon to judge Judah – then He would judge Babylon!
- Habakkuk asked the Lord to revive His work – do what God had done before!
 - God had redeemed Israel before – saved them against insurmountable odds...
 - Habakkuk had heard the stories – but He wanted to see God do it in his day!
 - In the midst of His wrath poured out on Judah / Babylon – remember mercy...
 - It was not that Judah deserved to be saved – but mercy triumphs over judgment!
 - **James 2:10** – we are told it only takes on sin to miss out on heaven...
 - So all of us deserve judgment – **Romans 3:23** – all of us have earned death – **Romans 6:23**
 - But James goes on to say mercy has triumphed over judgment – **James 2:13**
 - What Jesus did on the cross of Calvary opened up the way for us to be forgiven...
 - As God has done countless times in the past – He CAN still make sinners into saints...
 - Just like the prayer of Habakkuk – God can redeem us against all odds!

▪ 2ND – REMEMBERING THE PAST – SELAH... vs. 3-15

o The Selah (3 total) – taking a moment to contemplate...

- Habakkuk turns his prayer towards reflection – remembering what God had done...
 - How He had taken a rag tag group of slaves – and freed them from bondage in Egypt...
 - God did not need to be reminded of the Exodus – He had not forgotten...
 - But it gave Habakkuk perspective – God had redeemed / and He could do it again!
 - Sometimes it seems like the trials of life are going to overwhelm us...
 - Yet when we remember the faithfulness of God - we find our perspective changes...
 - We no longer see our problems - instead our God who is greater than any problem!
- This reflection of the Exodus is broken up into 3 sections...
 - Each section contains a poetic phrase called a Selah...
 - It is thought to refer to a break in a psalm – a time to stop and reflect / listen...
 - In other words Habakkuk did not just reflect on the Lord – he stopped to listen to Him!
 - Rarely do we take the time in prayer to listen – it tends to be a one way conversation...
 - It makes you wonder - if no one is answering - is anyone listening - **Luke 18:11**
 - How can we have a relationship with God - if we never give him a chance to speak...
 - We need to take the time to listen to the wisdom / comfort He has for our lives!
- Habakkuk will use poetic language to describe the Exodus...
 - The wording upon first reading can seem to be a bit confusing / garbled...
 - But they are illustrative – and the key is to connect them to the events of the Exodus!

o 1st – Reflecting on the Holiness / power of God... vs. 3-7

- God (*Eloah*) came from Teman (*Edom*) - in the southern dessert near the Judean wilderness...
 - The Holy One from Mount Paran - another name for Mount Sinai – **Deuteronomy 33:2**
 - His glory covered the heavens – and the earth was full of praise!
 - Rays of brilliant light flashed from His hands – speaking of lighting!
 - 2 months to the day after Israel had left Egypt - Israel arrived at the mountain of God...
 - Traditionally Mt. Sinai is located on the Sinai Peninsula between Egypt and Israel...
 - But Mt. Sinai / Mt Horeb was located in the Land of Midian (*Saudi Arabia*) - **Exodus 3:1**
 - According to the historian Josephus it was the tallest mountain around...
 - Best guess - 'Mt. Jebel el Lawz' which is one of the tallest mountains in Saudi Arabia...
 - The top 200' of the mountain is scorched black to this day..

- There are even ancient boundary markers every 400 yards in a semi-circle!
- **Exodus 19** – God told Israel no one was allowed on the mountain...
 - No one could even approach - boundaries were put all around - ‘do not enter’!
 - If any man of animal crossed over and touched the mountain - they were to be killed...
 - Because God would be on the mountain - making the mountain holy...
 - To an un-holy person – sinner – even the mountain was too holy to be touched...
 - They had to be put to death – but even they then could not be touched...
 - They had to be stoned or shot with an arrow from a distance!
- God is unapproachable by sinful men – we cannot touch a Holy God...
 - The world has lost a fear / reverence of the Holiness of God...
 - People mock God today - make Jesus a curse word - as if there is no consequence!
 - The world scoffs at the Bible – because they do not fear the Lord...
 - They do not understand the Holiness of God – and the terror of His presence...
 - They do not fear the judgment seat – they do not fear the Lake of fire...
 - But there are only two kinds of people when it comes to God...
 - Wise sinners who feared the Lord and saw their need for Jesus - and those who did not...
 - For those who reject Jesus - all that waits them is certain and terrifying judgment!
 - **Psalm 111:10** – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...”
- Before God went pestilence / and fever (*burning coals*) followed after Him... vs. 5
 - Those who disobeyed the Lord – paid a heavy price for their rebellion...
 - God left a trail of destruction (*burning coals*) behind him – 10 plagues of Egypt...
 - And as Israel moved forward in the Exodus – pestilence was their reward for rebellion...
 - The golden calf – **Exodus 32** / serpents – **Numbers 21** / rebellion of Balaam – **Numbers 25**
 - We might not understand the list of the 10 plagues - a peculiar assortment of maladies...
 - But the Egyptians would have understood the message God was giving to them...
 - Each one of the plagues corresponded to an Egyptian deity (*God is greater*)!
 - And every time Israel rebelled – they were trusting in something other than God!
 - God loves us too much to ever let us put our faith in anything but Him...
 - He will allow pestilence and burning coals – till we learn He is the ONLY answer!
- God measured the earth – and scattered the mountains... vs. 6-7
 - When Israel followed the Lord – He startled the nations before them...
 - He measured the earth – and scattered the everlasting mountains...
 - The tents of Cush afflicted / the curtains of Midian trembled – the inhabitants of the Land...
 - Speaking of the victory and division of the Promised Land when God fought for Israel!
 - You never want to be on the wrong side with God – He does not fight fair...
 - In **Joshua 10:11** God sent hail to wipe out the armies fighting Israel...
 - In **Isaiah 37:36** God sent an angel to wipe out 185,000 man Assyrian army...
 - It is no wonder Paul says - ‘If God is for us, who can be against us...’ - **Romans 8:31**
- o 2nd – Reflecting victory in trials... vs. 8-10
 - Was God upset with the River / Sea – is that why He parted the waters...
 - The parting of the Red Sea – **Exodus 14:21** / and Jordan River – **Joshua 3:15**
 - Pharaoh had chariots as weapons - but the weapon of God was the Sea!
 - His bow (*weapon*) was ready (*naked*) – He was the one who made the rivers!
 - Why did God fight for Israel – because of the Oath he swore over His arrows (*people*)!
 - God had made a covenant with Abraham / Isaac / and Jacob – and He would not break it!
 - The mountains saw the Lord and trembled... vs. 10
 - The waters were swept away – the deep cried out - they lifted up their hands the God...

- A very poetic picture of the division of the Red Sea – as a problem became a solution!
- The Red Sea must have seemed to be an impossible problem to overcome...
- I am sure the Children of Israel looked at the Red Sea - and trembled...
- Yet the Red Sea looked at God - and trembled - it was a tool in the hands of God!
- **Psalms 77: 16,19** - “When the Red Sea saw you, O God, its waters looked and trembled! The sea quaked to its very depths... Your road led through the sea, your pathway through the mighty waters—a pathway no one knew was there!”
- Often we look at our trials/problems in life - and we tremble in fear...
- Yet our problems look at the Lord - and they tremble - they are USED BY God...
- He parts the ocean of our difficulties - stacks them up on both sides of us...
- He leads us on the path no one even knew was there - through the trials...
- The Lord does not take away our problems - He uses them in our lives!

o 3rd – Reflecting on the power of prayer... vs. 11-15

- The sun and the moon stood still...
 - God marched through the Land in anger – trampled the nations in fury!
 - God went forth (*fought*) for the salvation of His people – with your Anointed (*Joshua*)...
 - Striking the wicked from head to foundation (*toe*) – no one was spared the wrath!
 - A reference to the wars fought by Joshua when Israel came into the Promised Land...
 - When they fought the 5 kings of the south – Joshua asked for more time to defeat them...
 - So God had the sun and moon stand still for a day - **Joshua 10:13**
 - An audacious prayer – you have to wonder if Joshua doubted God would answer!
 - **Joshua 10:14** – “The LORD fought for Israel that day. Never before or since has there been a day like that one...”
 - If we wonder if you are praying for the ‘right thing’ - we just need to ask one question...
 - Why are we praying - if our motive is right - our prayer is right on!
 - We cannot have a bad prayer - if you have the right heart...
 - **James 4:3** - “When you ask, you do not get it because your whole motive is wrong - you want only what will give you pleasure.”
 - If our motive is selfish – if our heart is not right - our prayer will not be answered...
 - But when we ask for those things that God has given us a desire for - **Psalms 37:4**
 - Asking God to save a lost friend / family member - that is a prayer God WILL answer!
- God killed the enemies of Israel with their own arrows... vs. 14-15
 - Those who rushed out like a whirlwind to scatter Israel – feast on the poor (*slaves*)...
 - Instead God walked through the sea with His horses – through the piled up waters!
 - Again a reference to the parting of the Red Sea – when Moses prayed...
 - Moses told Israel that God would fight for them – wipe out the Egyptians...
 - But God told Moses – prayer time is over – GET MOVING!
 - **Exodus 14:15** – “Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving!”
 - There is a time for prayer – and there is a time for action!
 - Not that we should not pray – we are to be a people of prayer – **II Thessalonians 5:17**
 - But we are also called to action – we are called to walk by faith – **II Corinthians 5:7**

▪ 3rd – **HOPING FOR THE FUTURE... vs. 16-19**

o 1st - As Habakkuk remembered the faithfulness of the Lord – he was overcome... vs. 16

- His body trembled / his lips quivered / his legs buckled (*rottenness*)...
 - Not in fatigue – but in relief – because now he could finally rest in the day of trouble...
 - Just as the Lord had redeemed Israel in the Exodus – God would surely do so again!

- He would fulfill His Word and bring judgment to the Babylonians!
- We tend to spend much of our time worrying about problems...
 - The problem is worrying about our problems does not help – it makes things worse
 - It can even make us physically sick – upset stomach / high blood pressure...
 - **Proverbs 12:25** – “Worry weighs a person down...”
 - But when we remember Jesus – our worries melt away in perfect peace – **Philippians 4:7**
 - Even though we might not understand WHEN God is going to work...
 - We may not know HOW God is going to handle the problem we are facing...
 - We trust THAT He is going to be faithful – and work everything out!
 - Like little kids never question if there is going to be food – or clothes...
 - They have perfect trust in their parents to take care of ALL their needs!
- o 2nd - Even though the fig tree / vineyard / and olive trees had no fruit... vs. 17-19
 - Even though the fields were empty and the pastures had no sheep...
 - Speaking of the devastation of the Land – the destruction brought by Babylon...
 - Habakkuk would rejoice in the Lord – the God of his salvation...
 - Because he walked by faith – and the Lord gave him strength...
 - His feet became like the feet of deer – so he could walk on the High Places!
 - The mourning of Habakkuk over the dire state of His people – had turned to joy!
 - If we look to the circumstances in the world around us...
 - We are going to be sad / upset / worried frustrated...
 - We are not going to walk on the high places – we are not going to be a happy people...
 - Because happiness depends on our circumstances...
 - But Joy is far deeper - it is not based on your circumstances - it is based on Jesus...
 - Jesus never changes - the same Yesterday / Today / and Forever - **Hebrews 13:8**...
 - So no matter what our circumstances - we can ALWAYS have Joy because of Jesus!
 - **Psalm 16:11** - “In Your presence is fullness of joy...”