

Habakkuk 1v1-2v1 - Why?



Out of Control...

John Simpson, BBC World Affairs Correspondent, writing in 2008 said this: *"Sometimes it seems there are so many threats to our life and prosperity that it's hard to choose which of them to concentrate on."*

16 years later have things improved or got worse? Can you think of issues that heighten the sense of uncertainty amongst those close to you, at work, church, or home?

Context:

- Habakkuk was living in Jerusalem in the final days of the seventh century BC - after the reign of King Josiah
- King Josiah was the great king who introduced all kinds of reforms - he'd had a conversion experience as a young man - had discovered the law - pulled down the pagan altars and restored the temple. And there was a period of prosperity and blessing from God
- But Josiah was followed by King Jehoiakim - who quickly set about reversing all the good things Josiah had achieved
- Under Jehoiakim - the people ignored God's laws - yet still expected him to bless them
- A gradual, terrible decline set in - morally and spiritually - which had devastating consequences for the nation

Habakkuk's Burden... (v1-4)

The word prophecy in v1 is better translated as 'burden' - How would you summarise Habakkuk's 'burden' v2-4? Why is burden a helpful word to understand how he's feeling?

What is his tone as he confronts God with his questions? Is that surprising to you?

Habakkuk 1v1-2v1 - Why?



Can you think of other examples in the Bible of Christians who bring their questions and confusion to God and experience the 'strange providence' of God?

- *Psalms expressing questions:*
 - *Why? Psalm 10:1; Psalm 22:1; Psalm 43:2, Psalm 44:24*
 - *How long? Psalm 6:3; Psalm 74:10; Psalm 80:4; Psalm 90:13; Psalm 94:3*
 - *When? Psalm 101:2; Psalm 119:82, 84*

There is something profoundly Biblical about coming to God with our confusion and doubts and anger even. On Sunday Tim said as Christians we should be people who are:

- Confronting Reality
- Praying honestly
- Affirming certainty

What do you think that means? Does that characterise you? How could you grow in each of these areas?

The Lord's answer... (v5-11)

What is the Lord going to do? (v6) What's shocking or surprising about it?

How are the Babylonians described?

More questions! (v12-17)

Read verse 13 - What are Habakkuk's questions and confusion now? What is the tension he feels?

Do you feel a point of tension between what we believe as Christians and what is happening in the world around us? Where do you feel this tension most acutely? Why do some Christians prefer to deny or ignore this tension?

Habakkuk 1v1-2v1 - Why?



Affirming Certainty: (v12)

Read v12 - in the midst of the burden he feels, the tension he's experiencing and the doubts, confusion and contradictions - he's laying hold of certainties he knows to be true - From v12 what are they? How does he describe God's nature? His actions?

What strikes you most from these things? What can you learn from Habakkuk's example?

Read Acts 4:24-30 - What are the key elements in this prayer that guide us in those moments when circumstances make it hard to retain the conviction that God is in control?