

Habakkuk: Introduction and Background

Habakkuk 1:1, Wednesday, December 20, 2023

What do you think should be the posture we take before God in the face of injustice, doubts, fears, and lack of hope? What fights against this posture?

1. Come before God honestly and humbly.

What happens if we fail to be honest with God? **What prevents honesty with others and what does this do to relationships?**

- Not fooling God when don't tell what thinking; don't get answers; continue in doubt
- Not how relationships work – relationship flounders (breaks communication) – submitting to His will is active – to obey, must make step toward Him
- Seeking own path and not relating to Him (left with our own perspective & missing reassurance of His presence)
- Minimize opportunities for God to work in us to change us
- Leads to our destruction - 2 Peter 3, untaught and unstable, distort.
- Luke 24 Emmaus men had dispositions prepared for correction and insight
- Dishonesty begets dishonesty with God, others; can't be sustained b/c God is truth
- **Fears & insecurities causing us to not want to be known**
- **Shallow/Superficial seems easier, more secure, but therefore not deep relationship**
- **Want “nice” and “safe” outcome, so seek to control perceptions (afraid of letting the “chips fall” where they may) - often subconscious**
- **Leads to little trust because little transparency**

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2. Come seeking to submit to God's Word, but make connections to your life with careful precision.

“Habakkuk’s message is relevant to all times and peoples, as we are taught in the full scope of the canon (II Tim. 3:16-17). But the problem is this: how can we contemporize his words without weakening the meaning they had in their original setting? **It is all too easy to declare that we are under no obligation to discover the meaning Habakkuk’s message had for its original author or first audience. But we do so at the risk of losing the authority and any objective controls over what the text is saying.** After all, it was the prophet who stood in the council of God, not we. And it is the author who must first state what he means to say if we are to gain any sense of what the Spirit of God is saying to our day and generation.”

Walter Kaiser

How would we “declare that we are under no obligation to discover the meaning Habakkuk’s message had for its original author or first audience?”

- Read it and give no thought to the meaning of it
- Don’t read it
- Reading scripture for what pertains to me, now, in this moment without thought for God and His purposes
- By subjugating the OT in our study of God’s word (give me biggest treasure for me now – even Jesus)
- By never thinking we have enough background & study to get implications for my life – endless study (or not) but no personal ramifications
- Too much work , too much discipline required to find what God has for us

What did these men who questioned God have that we might be in danger of forgetting when we confront these topics? **What else do you think we might need?**

- Belief that God is there, knows what is happening, and can handle it
- Context of obedience was already there (we perhaps put God on trial and wonder if God will justify Himself/vindicate Himself)
- They went to Him in prayer and CONTINUED to wait for Him even without an answer—still committed to His existence and working providence Heb. 11:6
- Took time/work to process—continued with what knew while waited
- **Character**
- **Careful thinking**
- **Patience**
- **Greater eternal framework from which to live and work while waiting**

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THEME: The Path of Faith in the Providence of God

What do you think should be the **posture we take before God in the face of injustice, doubts, fears, and lack of hope? What fights against this posture?**

1. Come before God honestly and humbly.
2. Come seeking to submit to God's Word, but make connections to your life with careful precision.
3. Avoid the easy route of venting and taking apart. Come prepared to do the hard work to build up your faith.

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“A faith without some doubts is like a human body without any antibodies in it. People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience of tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic. A person's faith can collapse almost overnight if she has failed over the years to listen patiently to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection. Believers should acknowledge and wrestle with doubts—not only their own but their friends' and neighbors'. It is no longer sufficient to hold beliefs just because you inherited them. Only if you struggle long and hard with objections to your faith will you be able to provide grounds for your beliefs to skeptics, including yourself, that are plausible rather than ridiculous or offensive.” Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*, p. xxiii

Besides the first two points we've covered, what will keep “examining our doubts” from ending with more self-focus and less faith—either in our findings or our failings?

- Watch “confirmation bias” – willing to look at uncomfortable from God or others
- One at a time in presence of God under His Word
- Be careful about what are certainties
- What about God/Christ speaks to this fear/doubt
- Willing to “argue” w/ yourself uncomfortable is a given; next reaction tells much about you (ignore it, let consume, or fly off handle) watch assumptions
- Servant of truth, not arbiter of it – seek what is true, don't judge what is truth
- Take people to logical ends of their presumptions can't just take a part or get out from under, what is true – more pieces than our doubts
- Looking higher, farther, recognizing we are small/broken/under – truth outside of us – faith points to someone/something
- Acknowledge presuppositions
- Here are you willing to acknowledge that God's Word is truth?
- Recognize the weight of what you are doing? Foundational – eternal
- Jeremiah 10
- Keep in mind clearly the goal that goes beyond the issues
- Understand our limitations this gives freedom to grow, trust & live

Habakkuk: Introduction and Background

Habakkuk 1:1

“How did one defend the justice and righteousness of God in a world where God no longer chose to speak or reveal himself or his ways? As Otto notes, ‘In view of the empirical situation of need, Habakkuk’s understanding of God lost its self-evident quality. . . . The idea of God can become totally clear again only when the reality of the experienced world becomes totally clear.’ Habakkuk dared to question all easy theological answers he had learned. He fought through real life situations with God. Only then did he affirm traditional theology, but it is a theology with firm roots in more than other people’s traditions and textbooks.

Habakkuk: Introduction and Background

Habakkuk 1:1

Now he affirmed the justice of God on the basis of personal experience struggling with God and finding God in the midst of worship. 'The prophet's probing of Yahweh's will dispels any thought that the Lord may not judge covenant and cosmic sin equally. The wicked of all nations will be punished.' On the other hand, 'God is so great in His sovereignty He is even able to use human sin for His own purpose. . . . He did not force the Babylonians to assume the role of world conqueror. That was their own goal. . . . God allowed them to do what they themselves wanted to do, but He used it for His purposes.'"

Waylon Bailey

Habakkuk: Introduction and Background

Habakkuk 1:1

“Thus says the LORD, ‘Write this man down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah.’ ”

Jeremiah 22:30

Habakkuk: Introduction and Background

Habakkuk 1:1

Josiah became the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. 12 After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.

Matthew 1:11–12

Habakkuk: Introduction and Background

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Matthew 1:11–12

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. 6 “In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, ‘The LORD our righteousness.’”

Jeremiah 23:5–6

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4. Look for areas to meditate and worship.

Habakkuk: Introduction and Background Habakkuk 1:1

“Positive statements, even statements that do not reflect present reality, share the prophet’s personal confession about the nature of God. God is . . .

Waylon Bailey, NAC, p. 284-285

- The Creator (1:14)
- Eternal (1:12)
- A personal God, related in a personal relationship with the prophet (1:12)
- An awesomely holy God, pure and distinct from all creation (1:12)
- Sovereign over history and all its nations (1:12, 2:13)
- A rock that can never be moved or changed (1:12)
- One who punishes disobedient people (1:12, 2:16)
- One whose purity makes him avoid all appearances of evil (1:13)
- One with no tolerance level for evil and wrongdoing (1:13)
- One who speaks with his prophets and reveals his plans (2:1)
- One who brings woe and destruction on all evil (2:6-19)
- Planning salvation for the earth so that he can fill all his creation with his presence (1:14)
- At home in his temple on earth and in heaven (2:20)
- So awesome that people must be silent when he is present (2:20)

Habakkuk: Introduction and Background Habakkuk 1:1

“God shows that He is . . .

Waylon Bailey, NAC, p. 284-285

- Planning to act in unbelievable ways (1:5)
- Able and willing to use enemies for his purposes even when they are wicked (1:6)
- Able and willing to reveal himself and his purposes to his people (2:2-3)
- Lord over his revelation and will bring it to pass in his own time (2:3)
- The one who always speaks the truth (2:3)
- The God of the righteous who serve him faithfully (2:4)

Meditation on God's past history also reveals much about the divine nature.

He is . . .

Waylon Bailey, NAC, p. 284-285

- Famous so that people talk about what he has done for them (3:2)
- Active with deeds that silence people awestruck (3:2)
- A God of wrath (3:2, 12)
- One who comes to his needy people from his ancient dwelling place (3:3)
- The glorious one who acts bring forth praise that fills the universe (3:3)
- So splendid in appearance that he dims the dawning sun (1:4)
- Powerful (3:4)
- In control of all diseases (3:5)
- In control of all history, all nature, and all people (3:6-7)
- Willing and able to show his anger against sinful peoples as exemplified in the exodus from Egypt (3:8-15)
- In control of all the chaotic waters and deeps (3:8-10)
- Uses even the heavenly bodies for his purposes (3:11)
- Our Savior from the enemy and the protector of our anointed leader (3:13,16)
- The source of all our strength (3:19)

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4, Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

I. I went to the right place with injustice, but there is no action.

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

O God, why have You rejected us forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?

Psalm 74:1

How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? 2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me? 3 Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,

Psalm 13:1–3

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon.

2 Kings 25:7

“Behold, I cry, ‘Violence!’ but I get no answer; I shout for help, but there is no justice. 8 “He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass, And He has put darkness on my paths.

Job 19:7–8

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

Indeed, there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Uriah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim; and he prophesied against this city and against this land words similar to all those of Jeremiah. 21 When King Jehoiakim and all his mighty men and all the officials heard his words, then the king sought to put him to death; but Uriah heard it, and he was afraid and fled and went to Egypt. 22 Then King Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor and certain men with him went into Egypt. 23 And they brought Uriah from Egypt and led him to King Jehoiakim, who slew him with a sword and cast his dead body into the burial place of the common people.

Jeremiah 26:20–23

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. 13 Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. Genesis 6:11–13

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “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.”

Exodus 34:6–7

Bringing Injustice Before God Habakkuk 1:2-4

What happens to our prayer life (or fights against it) in the face of these questions? What does this reveal about our prayer life/relationship with God?

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, 2 saying, “In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. 3 “There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me legal protection from my opponent.’ 4 “For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.’ ” 6 And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge said; 7 now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? 8 “I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

Luke 18:1–8

Bringing Injustice Before God Habakkuk 1:2-4

How would you sum up Luke 18:1-8's call to prayer and what parallels do you see with our situation in Habakkuk?

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

It came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. 28 Then the LORD said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions? Exodus 16:27–28

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

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“Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.” 10 But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel. 11 The LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst? Numbers 14:9–11

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And Jesus answered and said, “You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.” Matthew 17:17

Bringing Injustice Before God Habakkuk 1:2-4

What should THESE “How long” passages do for us?

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

“Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day.”

1 Samuel 8:18

Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

Isaiah 59:1–2

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

Revelation 6:10

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

- I. I went to the right place with injustice, but there is no action.
- II. Because of Your inaction, wickedness proliferates.

Bringing Injustice Before God Habakkuk 1:2-4

What do we naturally DO when we see strife/contention/conflicting wills?

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habakkuk 1:2-4

“He has not observed **misfortune** in Jacob; Nor has He seen **trouble** in Israel; The LORD his God is with him, And the shout of a king is among them.

Numbers 23:21