

Bringing Injustice Before God

Habbakuk 1:2-4, CBC December 27, 2023 The Unbelievable

1:1 oracle—burden—often speaks of judgment/doom, here, focus on divine revelation in dialogue b/n Habakkuk and God; book includes injustice, doubt, questioning, fears, suffering, looking for hope, but Elizabeth Achtemeier “shows that Habakkuk is not primarily about (1) the justice of God, a theme the prophet assumes rather than debates; (2) human doubt since the prophet maintains strong communion with God and expects the right answers from God; (3) human suffering and helplessness before the world’s evil powers, that being the setting of the book not the theme.” Bailey, p. 276 instead, she says “Habakkuk is ‘above all else a book about the purposes of God and about the realization of his will for his world.’” Bailey, P. 276 perhaps could say, **THEME of Habakkuk: The Path of Faith in the Providence of God**, Look at this book to humbly learn about God’s providence; how do we do this? **Key is posture**, you had good answers/refer to last week’s slides, but sum up--**1. Come before God honestly and humbly** this means honesty must have boundaries—not just free for all when torn up with brokenness **2. Come seeking to submit to God’s Word, but make connections to your life with careful precision** about God—then look for Him, His values, what He is doing even as go to Him with where you are, not where you should be; to do this, posture must **3. Avoid the easy route of venting and taking apart. Come prepared to do the hard work to build up your faith.** need faith in something/One more sure than you—true faith grows IN struggle—in allowing the inadequacy of what you have to help you follow thoughts to roots, to see in new light AS look again at God and what He has said/done; process is messy, takes work; need not to KNOW all, but to know HE knows all; b/c God is eternal—look beyond you to His eternal timing and His justice/forgiveness will be seen as righteous; when faith NOT in perfect understanding, seeing how YOUR situation “fixed/restored,” then have hope in God’s trustworthy word and plan that goes beyond your life; believing this, Habakkuk freed to live and faith to grow even through torturous times to glory of God AND ability to be thankful and worship; **4. Look for areas to meditate and worship**—2:1 wait, 3 ends w worship—supreme value—what? God’s presence and works; **Why?** posture prepared to see God! clear evidence of Habakkuk’s faith in God (ie. 1:12, 2:4, 3:2, 17-19) in face of bewilderment, still has assumptions about nature of God that set him up to grow, to receive from God—**Bailey pp. 284-285 Faith’s path in the providence of God includes both problems and certainties**; so look humbly to learn about God’s providence and note God’s trustworthiness to keep His promises to Israel and therefore to us--May God continue to work this posture in us so we too can grow through doubts, injustices, and periods of suffering;

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

2 How long, O LORD, will I call for help, And You will not hear? I cry out to You, “Violence!” Yet You do not save. fits w lament—**Ps. 74:1** (group) **Ps. 13:1-3** (individual)—Habakkuk calls to God; “how long” implies been doing it for long time—not hear b/c seemingly no expected response; **cry out**—shout, roar, scream b/c of distress or horror, (emotions of one who can’t get away, Zedekiah **II Ki. 25:7**) **Job 19:7-8** what brings this response from you? here **violence**—society falling apart—also v. 3, 9, 2:8, 17 2x (6x in book), violence used more only in Psalms 14x and Proverbs 7x; couple sources defined it as flagrant violation of moral law by which man injures primarily his fellowman; physical brutality only one possible expression; ie. Jehoiakim—ruthless and merciless—cut up scroll and threatened lives of Baruch and Jeremiah—Jer. 36:20-26; only king mentioned to have killed a prophet **Jer. 26:20-23**—don’t know what you think of when think of prophets, but Jeremiah had tough job to OBEY God—Habakkuk as well if during this time (which is why must recognize that you put through pressures not only to make you scream or fall apart, but to help your faith get roots—THIS wrestling of Habakkuk IS part of being servant of God); reminiscent of **Gen. 6:11-13**; Habakkuk KNOWS God is holy and righteous **Ex. 34:6-7** Baker comments, Habakkuk’s theological understanding of God as just/righteous not matched by experience of God—Amerding—I call, you will not hear? failure to act calls into question the righteousness of either the petitioner or the one addressed; **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?** surprising for how much talk about God, how quickly stop crying to Him, stay before Him; easier to complain about Him than talk to Him; must pick through pithy statements not only for false, but for where live them—“God helps those who help themselves” perhaps figure He will do what He will do whether pray or not, so we just try to do right thing ourselves; ie. Abraham w Hagar OR figure He not present, so find god who is present--Israelites begging Aaron to make image; **Luke 18:1-8** how would you sum up this call to prayer & what parallels with our situation in Habakkuk?

Genesis 6:11-13 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.
Exodus 16:27-28 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 34:6-7 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.”
Numbers 14:9-11 “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?
Deuteronomy 28:15, 29 “But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: 29 and you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you will not prosper in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you.
1 Samuel 8:18 “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.”
2 Kings 25:7 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.
Job 19:7-8 “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.
Psalms 13:1-3 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,
Psalms 74:1 O God, why have You rejected us forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?
Proverbs 17:14 The beginning of strife is like letting out water, So abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.
Isaiah 59:1-2 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.
Jeremiah 26:20-23 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: Elathan 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.
Matthew 17:17 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.”
Luke 18:1-8 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?”
Romans 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,
James 5:1-6 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! 4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you.
Revelation 6:10 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?”