

## God's Astonishing Answer to Injustice Pt. 2 Habakkuk 1:5-11, CBC February 1, 2024 ????

Habakkuk pours out heart **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. **Question—When?** How Long? I've been crying to You AND You should notice; **II. Because of your inaction, wickedness proliferates** 3 Why do You make me see iniquity, And cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; strife exists and contention arises **III. It has infiltrated even the institutions set up to bring justice** 4 Therefore the law is ignored And justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore justice comes out perverted. **Question: Why?** how could a righteous/compassionate God NOT ANSWER/act when I cry to Him for help in these twisted unrighteous SITUATIONS? desires deliverance, God responds **I. Pay attention and you will see my work** 5 "Look among the nations! Observe! plural meaning not merely for Habakkuk, but he is to tell all those others who fear the Lord; **Result of careful looking at world picture around in light of Habakkuk's longing for God to bring justice to His twisted people?** Emotion—**Be astonished!** Startled & Amazed!!! no room for analyzing because happening! that happening command attentions; brings another emotion--**Wonder!** incredulity, disbelief, **Because I am doing something in your days—You would not believe if you were told.** **Why? What?** 6 "For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, NOT where you are looking—not in Judah, not Assyria, not Egypt, I am addressing problem of injustice and perversion among my people with the Chaldeans; LOOK at the Chaldeans and see MY HAND **II. Study the object of My work to learn more of My ways** v. 6 **That fierce and impetuous people** Character—**fierce** (bitter, irritated, ill-tempered) & **impetuous** (irrational—don't think through things; act impulsively to achieve their ends--lash out at all around them); **Who march throughout the earth To seize dwelling places which are not theirs.** 7 "They are dreaded and feared; Their justice and authority originate with themselves. v. 8 military machine **Their horses are swifter than leopards** covering amazing distance swiftly **And keener than wolves in the evening.** Hungry—focused on prey—when others falling asleep, their keen senses will sniff out their prey **Their horsemen come galloping, Their horsemen come from afar;** spread out, not worried about their flank b/c SO powerful (ie. Tanks, submarines, jets) nothing stand against; **They fly like an eagle swooping down to devour.** Vulture—quick, keen eye, greedy to get prey and RIP it apart 9 "All of them come for violence. Their horde of faces moves forward. They collect captives like sand. idea seems to be front flank assembles and moves forward—NOTHING STOPS their violent purpose—**captives like sand**—little sympathy for individual— 10 "They mock at kings And rulers are a laughing matter to them. They laugh at every fortress And heap up rubble to capture it. No rank, asset, power, defense stops them; "everyone should fear one in whom no fear exists" Bailey, p. 307 **ever** felt that any position you had just erased w look/word? (boss, parent, teacher, babysitting siblings) v. 11 machine that moves through like the wind—tornado—destruction and total life change are left; **Be astonished!** Startled & Amazed!!! **Wonder!** incredulity, disbelief, **Sum up what you would see, think of, feel, value if you saw what was just described** **what holds attention?** Tend to be the fierceness, swiftness, violence, destruction, hopelessness; **but what SHOULD they be astonished at?** **III. Trust My Word to Bring Justice to All** I AM DOING SOMETHING —so thought of similarity b/n Chaldeans v. 6 **Who march throughout the earth To seize dwelling places which are not theirs.** And God enabling Israelites to do same; **Deut. 6:10-12** people of God promised the land, given it from Canaanites will give fruit of their work, years of roots to Chaldeans; 7 "They are dreaded not merely wild animals, now Chaldeans, but word referring to presence/work of God (**Gen. 15:10-12**); and feared; not merely terrible wilderness/ scorpions/fiery serpents/thirsty ground--but word used when confronted w God Himself—**Zeph. 2:10-11, Mal. 1:13-14, Ex. 34:10, Deut. 7:21, Jacob Gen. 28:17**; HERE, Chaldeans dreaded/feared! and they fear/listen to NO ONE; **Their justice and authority originate with themselves.** can't believe how hard these Israelites were on Jeremiah, other prophets (most recently Jer. 43???) Please pray for us, should we go to Egypt—already made up mind to go AND feel justified in doing it b/c seems place of blessing—no reason to think that were nicer to Habakkuk; v. 7 "Judah has rejected God's mishpat [word for justice in verse] or order in its society (v. 4); therefore Babylonia's order (mishpat, v. 7) will be imposed upon it. Judah has opted for violence among its inhabitants (v. 2), therefor Babylonia's violence will be its punishment (v. 9). . . . The punishment fits the sin." E. Achtemeier, Nahum-Malachi, p. 38 in Bailey p. 304 8 "Their horses are swifter than leopards And keener than wolves in the evening. Their horsemen come galloping, Their horsemen come from afar; They fly like an eagle swooping down to devour. Seems impossible to stop—so quick, so devoted, so powerful, so comprehensive, like vulture—quick, keen eye, greedy to get prey and RIP it apart—remember the blessings/curses Mt. Ebal/Gerizim perhaps some 800 years before? God said **Deut. 28:15, 49, 9** "All of them come for violence. Their horde of faces moves forward. They collect captives like sand. **Irony here that Habakkuk concerned about injustice/violence among the people of God, now bigger players with BIGGER violence; prison—you did something wrong,** but bigger/badder often chew you up; **we don't know** what playing w when build relationships around self—nurse comfort, desires (Gal. 5—bite/devour); **when you/I stop being the salt** (preserving influence, the one who acts differently than what is "normal" b/c answering to God—I Cor. 7 even w unbelieving spouse) **affects society;** **captives like sand**—Abraham, descendants like sand (but now, little sympathy for individual—ALL affected); **Deut. 28:41-45** 10 "They mock at kings And rulers are a laughing matter to them. They laugh at every fortress And heap up rubble to capture it. NO rank, NO power, NO defense stops them—seem to be unstoppable; 11 "Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on. forgetting that GOD is One who is unstoppable—**Psalm 2 THIS** is the heart of rest of v. 11 **But they will be held guilty, They whose strength is their god.**" I AM DOING SOMETHING—process what we've heard; God is using violence to stop violence, wickedness to judge wickedness—come to more of what this looks like in rest of book, but this passage in the context of these other Scriptures showing God's word and work in Israel's history should change our perspective about God's presence and actions in situations of injustice and suffering; **What does looking at Habakkuk 1:5-11 in the context of these other Scriptures showing God's word and work in Israel's history do for our response to God in times of injustice and suffering?** We could tend to focus on what we can see/hear/feel/fear/desire—MISS God's work and deliverance--if truly looking to God, then must widen scope of handling injustice to include? Who might this

be/include in your life—can you think of any injustice against you, something twisted—God could be using for you/for all of us? **let's push this point farther:** v. 5 quoted in **Acts 13:41** (LXX notes w Acts ref.—treacherous people/scoffers contra “among the nations” Masoretic Text & some Gk. translations—one letter different in Hebrew, perish/vanish away (perhaps idea of hiding away in fear) **To whom was Paul speaking?** vv. **14-16**; yet while some very glad to hear, look at response of Jews in **Acts 13:50, 14:2-5** Fear God, studied the Scriptures, then **why couldn't they see it?** yet convinced that how they interpreted was correct; it is so much easier to speak ascribe blessings to God than judgment—and yet, same good word that promised blessing, promised judgment; **Failure to see God rightly concerning judgment leads to self-righteous judgment of others and looking to God to eliminate our fears rather than looking to Him to speak truth to us IN our fears; Failure to listen to God through His appointed means leads to lying about God and His will, misleading yourself and others.** look what people of day said that countered what God's men and God's Word said; **Jer. 5:12, 6:14, 7:8-10, 8:11-12; Lam. 4:12**; yet God says differently **But they will be held guilty, They whose strength is their god.”** For those in Acts, God's Word speaks clearly for insisting that seeing correctly and not listening to God's Word and messengers; I Thess. 2:14-16—this is SAME word of judgment for those confident in own power and hand in OT; for Assyria (**Is. 10:12-17**), now compare w **Dan. 4:30-34**, same for Chaldeans Jer. 50-51, same for Cyrus in 539

**Genesis 15:10-12** Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. 11 The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him.

**Genesis 28:17** He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

**Deuteronomy 6:10-12** “Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, 12 then watch yourself, that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

**Deuteronomy 7:21** “You shall not dread them, for the LORD your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God.

**Deuteronomy 8:15** “He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint.

**Deuteronomy 28:15** “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:

**Deuteronomy 28:41-45** “You shall have sons and daughters but they will not be yours, for they will go into captivity. 42 “The cricket shall possess all your trees and the produce of your ground. 43 “The alien who is among you shall rise above you higher and higher, but you will go down lower and lower. 44 “He shall lend to you, but you will not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you will be the tail. 45 “So all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the LORD your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you.

**Deuteronomy 28:49** “The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand,

**Jeremiah 5:12** They have lied about the LORD And said, “Not He; Misfortune will not come on us, And we will not see sword or famine.

**Jeremiah 6:14** “They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ But there is no peace.

**Jeremiah 6:22-23, 30** Thus says the LORD, “Behold, a people is coming from the north land, And a great nation will be aroused from the remote parts of the earth. 23 “They seize bow and spear; They are cruel and have no mercy; Their voice roars like the sea, And they ride on horses, Arrayed as a man for the battle Against you, O daughter of Zion!” 30 They call them rejected silver, Because the LORD has rejected them.

**Jeremiah 7:8-10** “Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail. 9 “Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery and swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal and walk after other gods that you have not known, 10 then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’—that you may do all these abominations?

**Jeremiah 8:11-12** “They heal the brokenness of the daughter of My people superficially, Saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ But there is no peace. 12 “Were they ashamed because of the abomination they had done? They certainly were not ashamed, And they did not know how to blush; Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time of their punishment they shall be brought down,” Says the LORD.

**Lamentations 4:12** The kings of the earth did not believe, Nor did any of the inhabitants of the world, That the adversary and the enemy Could enter the gates of Jerusalem.

**Zephaniah 2:10-11** This they will have in return for their pride, because they have taunted and become arrogant against the people of the LORD of hosts. 11 The LORD will be terrifying to them, for He will starve all the gods of the earth; and all the coastlands of the nations will bow down to Him, everyone from his own place.

**Malachi 1:13-14** “You also say, ‘My, how tiresome it is!’ And you disdainfully sniff at it,” says the LORD of hosts, “and you bring what was taken by robbery and what is lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand?” says the LORD. 14 “But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a great King,” says the LORD of hosts, “and My name is feared among the nations.”

**Galatians 5:13** For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.