



## Six sessions in the book of Habbakuk

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Habakkuk offers hope in our dark and chaotic world!

**The Minor Prophets are the hidden gems of the Old Testament.**

“I have heard all about you, Lord. I am filled with awe by Your amazing works. In this time of our deep need, help us again as You did in years gone by.” Habakkuk 3:2

**“Habakkuk looked to God and ceased to look at his difficulty. That is the true basis of spiritual peace.”**

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Circumstances should not dictate whether we are joyful.

**“Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord!” Habakkuk 3:17-18**

“Though our feelings come and go, God’s love for us does not!” CS Lewis



Nothing is known of the author of this book except what we read within. It can be dated between 612BC and 588BC and is set at a time of the downfall of the Assyrian Empire and the emergence of the Babylonians. Assyria, some hundred years earlier, had overwhelmed the northern kingdom of Israel. Judah the southern kingdom would soon suffer the same fate at the hands of the Babylonians.

Habakkuk finds himself in a time of national and international crisis and his nation descended into the depths of moral depravity and pagan worship, which included witchcraft and child sacrifice. Habakkuk offers hope by recognizing how dark and chaotic the world is and inviting us to trust that God will one day remove evil forever.

Habakkuk was a contemporary of Zephaniah, Jeremiah and Nahum and the book is a journal of his wrestling with God. In fact his name, Habakkuk, means to wrestle or embrace and we follow his embracing and wrestling with God over so many issues which are still a problem for us today. What's going on in the world? Why does God not intervene directly? Why does God allow suffering? Why do the wicked prosper? Habakkuk brings these questions to God and records his answers. The answers give a clear understanding of the character and sovereignty of God and our response to him in trust "the righteous person will live by his faithfulness" Hab 2:4 The theme of Habakkuk is faith. He has been called the prophet of faith. This great statement of Habakkuk 2:4, "the just shall live by his faith," has been quoted three times in the New Testament: Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; and Hebrews 10:38.

Habakkuk concludes with a triumphal prayer, an understanding of God's love and purposes. "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my saviour. The sovereign Lord is my strength, He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, it enables me to go on the heights" Habakkuk 3:18-19

Habakkuk signifies an embracer, taking us into his arms. He embraces his people, and takes them in his arms. He comforts them and holds them up, as one embraces a weeping child, to quiet it with the assurance that, if God wills, it shall soon be better. This small book is quoted many times in the New Testament, especially by Paul, as it contains so many fundamental truths about God and our response in faith. It teaches us that God is in control even though evil appears to triumph: we look forward to a time when God will rule with perfect justice. God wants us to come to him with our doubts and worries and He will reveal himself to us, even if the answer is not what we expect. We live by trusting God, not just an act of faith but a life of faith.

### Key verses

- "The righteous shall live by faith" Habakkuk 2:4
- "Lord I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known. In wrath remember mercy." Habakkuk 3:2
- "For the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2:14
- "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crops fail and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stores, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my saviour. The sovereign Lord is my strength, he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, it enables me to go on the heights" Habakkuk 3:17-19
- "O shall not the judge of all the earth do right!" Genesis 18:2
- "God is God and we are not." from Isaiah 45:5

### **Main Themes from the prophet Habakkuk**

1. God is the only one worthy of our worship....2: 18-20
2. God is just and will judge the unrighteous.....1:5,6, 2: 3,4
3. God is a loving God and cares for his people....1:5,6, 2:2,3,
4. God is sovereign over all He creates.....1:12, 3:6,7
5. God is the Saviour of all who have faith in Him... 2:4
6. God has a personal relationship with his children..1:2-5

### **Six Things We Can Learn From Habakkuk:**

- God's ways are not our ways yet He can be trusted
- Even when things seem chaotic God is still in control
- God wants what's best for us even when it's hard
- Understanding how God works is not my job trusting Him is
- Peace and joy don't come from my circumstances but from God
- My timing is just that my timing but God's timing is perfect.

### **Really helpful Bible Project overview:**

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/habakkuk>



Week One - 13th November  
**The paradox of faith...**  
***Habakkuk 1:1-5***

Habakkuk lived during the reign of one of the evil kings of Judah at a time when God's law had been forgotten and evil of all sorts was tolerated. He was one of many prophets and was deeply saddened by the way that God's chosen people had strayed so far from the ways of righteousness. *He cries out to God ... How long...? He expects answers from God and he gets them.*

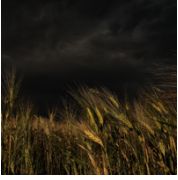
1. Habakkuk questions God. What are his main complaints?
2. Do we identify with any of these situations in today's world.
3. As believers what is our response to a world where wickedness abounds and wrong is tolerated?
4. What do you think the bible teaches about justice ( v4) as opposed to love and forgiveness. Is there a conflict here? (Micah 6:8 and Matthew 22:36-44)
5. Are these questions that non-Christians ask. What answers do we give?
6. Does v5 suggest that God has forgotten his people? Is God always in control or has he laid down rules and expects us to work out the minutiae?
7. Read v5 again. Do we look to see what God is doing in our world today and are we 'utterly amazed'? Do we restrict our view of what God can do to bring about his purposes?
8. Is it right to question what God is doing when we don't understand it?
9. How can this be applied to your life & world today?



Week Two - 20th November  
**Mysterious ways...**  
***Habakkuk 1:5-17***

God's response to Habakkuk's questioning was that He would send the Babylonians to execute judgement. However this raised further questions for him, how could God use such a wicked nation to judge them.

1. What struck you from the passage & Sunday's talk?
2. What does v11 tell us about the Babylonians?
3. When God allows his people to be disciplined, does He set boundaries? See Job 8-12, Acts 4: 27,28 , Hab 1:5
4. God will use the Babylonians in a cruel and bloodthirsty conflict. Does this reflect His real character? Is this the God of love of the New Testament?
5. What does v12,13 teach us about God's character?
6. Warren Wiersbe wrote 'Never doubt in the dark what God has told you in the light'. Discuss this together...
7. In the days that follow who was in control, the Babylonians, the nation of Judah or God?
8. In our own lives can we think of occasions when God worked through unusual circumstances, or when we had to submit to God's plan or timing rather than our own?
9. The church extension here in Hextable didn't go according to "plan." Can we see how God was in control from beginning to end?



Week Three - 27th November  
**Stop, look, listen.**  
***Habakkuk 2:1-4***

Habakkuk is on the ramparts of the city, waiting expectantly for what God will say. He is told to write down God's revelation (see ch 2: 2). *Like Habakkuk we should be expectant for Gods Word, to receive it, to trust it, and like the herald to run with it.*

1. What struck you from the passage & Sunday's talk?
2. Do we wait excitedly to hear what God will say to us? How in practice does God speak to us? Do we read the bible as God's inspired word?
3. V3 Is there a timescale to God's plan? Is God's timing always perfect? Can you give any personal example?
4. In v4 can you explain what is meant by 'the righteous will live by faith'?
5. How is the unrighteousness person described in v 4?
6. Explain how living by faith would be particularly important for Habakkuk
7. Read Romans 1:17. How does Paul use this verse to explain how we are saved?
8. What are the big takeaways from your conversation today?



Week Four - 4th December  
**Judged and the just...**  
**Habakkuk 2: 4-20**

This passage is particularly difficult in the NIV so you may find the Good News Bible or the Living Bible easier to start with. In this passage God pronounces 5 woes in a diatribe against the Babylonians . He had promised that He would judge them too after He had used them in His plan. *He tells Habakkuk that he must be patient and that in God's perfect timing He would put everything to right.*

God gives three promises:-

- The righteous shall live by faith... v4
- The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God ..v14
- The Lord is in His temple ... v20

1. What grabs you from the passage & Sunday's talk?
2. What are the five charges brought against the Babylonians 2: 6-8, 2: 9-11, 2: 12-14, 2: 15-17 & 2: 18-20.
3. How do these relate to the sins of our society and our personal sin?
4. Can you find examples where God does not intervene directly but lets sinful behaviour run its' course so the Babylonians receive their ' just rewards'. Are their examples in today's world where sinful behaviour is self-destructive?
5. Do we accept that in God's sight we are all sinners in need of a Saviour or do we think that we aren't really that bad compared with others?
6. Do we worry that evil is prospering in our world? How do we deal with this in our day to day lives with friends, family or at work?
7. Do the three promises (a trinity of positivity) in verses 4,14 and 20 help us to stand up for our beliefs or push us into a ghetto mentality where we hide away from the world with our nice Christian friends?
8. What can you take away from today's session?



Week Five - 11th December

**A prayer and direction for survival...**

***Habakkuk 3:1-16***

Habakkuk has heard God's reply to his questioning. He understands that God is in control and that evil will not ultimately triumph over good. However we need to trust God and wait for his timing and this will lead us into joy and peace. This final prayer was probably sung in the temple as a hymn of praise, hence the musical terms *shigionoth* and *selah* and the final note to the director of music.

1. What grabs you from the bible passage and what you heard on Sunday?
2. In verse 2 Habakkuk prays that God will act 'in our day' as He stands in awe of His mighty deeds in the past. Do we pray that God will act mightily in our day as He did in the past?
3. Should we pray like Isaiah 64:1-3?
4. In v13 do we find the idea of God punishing evil difficult as we all know God is a God of forgiveness? Where does Jesus come into all this?
5. What do we mean by the term 'mercy'. Can we distinguish between God's mercy and his grace?
6. Verse three and four praise God for the mighty deeds He has performed in history and His splendour and majesty. Do we worship God and acknowledge Him for who he is, the God Almighty or think of Him as the God All-matey? (Steve Brady)
7. What does v6 teach us about who is in control of our world? Read 2 Peter 3: 10-13. The power of God is the basis for our assurance in the future.
8. In v16 what was Habakkuk's response to the vision of God which he saw? He had been told that his country would be overrun by one of the most ferocious people in the ancient world and it was God's plan. How would you feel in such circumstances?
9. How is there greater thriving than just survival because of this bible segment?





Week Six - 18th December  
**Choose joy!**  
**Habakkuk 3: 17-19**

Not just a recession or economic downturn, not a fuel crisis or a terrible war in Europe, but everything would be gone. The nation of Judah, God's chosen people, the land promised to them would be utterly destroyed. God's temple in Jerusalem containing the Ark of the Covenant would be lost forever. And what did Habakkuk say? "I will rejoice in the Lord."

1. How could Habakkuk rejoice at such a time?
2. What are you drawn to in the passage and from Sunday's teaching?
3. Do we rely on our possessions or family or achievements to make us happy? What if they were all taken tomorrow?
4. Mother Teresa said 'You never know God is all you need until God is all you have'. Does the growth and vitality of the church in the third world reflect their reliance on God alone?
5. Read Romans 8:35,27-39, what do they mean for you?
6. God enables us to have the feet like a deer, to jump and leap across the stoney mountaintops. To be fearless and put our faith in Him in the most difficult of circumstances. Are we willing to step out in faith, because He gives us the strength?
7. Jackie Pullinger who worked amongst the drug addicts in Hong Kong would urge us to get off our 'bottoms' and out of our pews' and get on with it... *Are we willing to go ...* Read Matthew 28:19?
8. What are you three big take-aways from this closing series?