

Habakkuk 1:1-4 *The burden* [troubling vision] *which Habakkuk the prophet did see.* ²*O LORD, how long shall I cry* [call out], *and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!* ³*Why dost thou shew me iniquity* [Why do I see all this iniquity], *and cause me to behold grievance* [and watch all this misery]? *for spoiling* [destruction] *and violence are before me: and there are* [evil people] *that raise up strife and contention* [arguments]. ⁴*Therefore the law is slacked* [paralyzed], *and judgment doth never go forth* [and justice is never carried out]: *for the wicked doth compass about* [for the wicked outnumber and surround] *the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth* [therefore justice is never the result].

I. Introduction

A. History of the book

1. Book written after death of King Josiah & immediately before Babylonian captivity (God's last judgement on Israel and Judah for their cruelty and idolatry)
2. Habakkuk would have experienced the revival under King Josiah & lived during time of Jeremiah the prophet

B. Overview of this book

1. Name "Habakkuk" means "to embrace"
2. Only book in Bible that is ENTIRELY written as dialogue between God and a man (prophet).
3. Chapter 3 is a prayer-song of decision
4. Book highlights the problem of evil (Job also addresses this issue)

C. Theme of this book written by Habakkuk

1. He wrestles with why God allows evil and suffering
2. He is puzzled about these inconsistencies (from the philosopher Epicurus, circa 330 BC):
 - a. Is God willing to prevent evil, but unable to stop it? Then God is not powerful
 - b. Is God able to prevent evil, but not willing? Then God is not good
 - c. Is God both willing and able to prevent evil? Then how can evil exist?
 - d. Is God neither willing nor able to prevent evil? Then why call Him God?

II. The Problem of Evil (Habakkuk 1:1-4)

A. Evil actions by humans

1. Today's world is filled with evil actions against innocent people
 - a. Personal acts of violence & death, such as Sept. 11, 2001, riots, child abuse, (too many other examples to list)
 - b. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, floods, volcanos and tsunamis
 - c. Human-caused disasters such as wars, starvation, pollution, slavery, and fires
 - d. Diseases from many causes such as COVID, cancers, cholera, malaria (2 million people per year), (too many other examples to list)
 - e. Today many people question God's inaction
2. Habakkuk saw violence, injustice & evil and asked God if why it was happening

B. Man's questions

1. Book of Job records suffering terribly through Job's ordeals
2. Jonah wanted God's judgement on Israel's enemies, particularly Nineveh – Jonah 4:6)
3. Habakkuk questioned God, "How long ...?" (verses 1:2 and 2:6 in Habakkuk, 53 total times in the Bible)
4. Humans impatient with God
 - a. People surrounded by evil
 - b. Humans want judgements on their enemies
 - c. But what about my own personal inner evil? (If God judges the evil in others, then He will also have to judge the evil in us!)

C. God's patience (longsuffering)

1. God's silence is not evidence of His absence

Exodus 2:23 *And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed [groaned, suffered] by reason of the bondage [slavery], and they cried, and **their cry came up unto God** by reason of the bondage [...God because of their slavery].*
2. God has seen all of man's evil

Exodus 3:7 *And the LORD said, **I have surely seen** the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and **have heard their cry** by reason of their taskmasters [slave drivers]; for **I know their sorrows**;*
3. All people benefit from God's patience, a chance to repent

D. Kinds of Evil

1. Natural evil in physical universe

- a. Catastrophic events (often miscalled “acts of God”) such as tragic hurricanes, earthquakes, pestilences (Covid 19)
- Physical universe has Law of Entropy (all systems gradually winding down & getting old)

Isaiah 51:6 *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for **the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax** [become] **old like a garment**, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner [and every person shall die by these same principles]: *but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.**

Hebrews 1:10-11 *And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and **they all shall wax old as doth a garment;***

- b. Personal pain, suffering, & sickness (caused by growing old or disabilities)

2. Moral evils by human actions (Matthew 15:19)

- a. Everyone must contend with existence of evil in the world
- b. Every world-view attempts to answer question of “Why evil?”
- c. Evil contrast to good in the world (Everyone wants the good to continue but everyone blames God for the evil.)
- d. Jesus said that all evil thoughts come out of the inner man

Mark 7:20-23 *And he [Jesus] said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness [lust], an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

- III. The Sovereignty of God (Habakkuk 1:5-6 *Behold ye among the heathen, and regard [Look at the nations around you that worship idols, and think about what you see], and wonder marvelously: for I [God] will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. ⁶For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans [Babylonians], that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land [of Israel], to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs.*)

A. God's views of human questions

1. Why does evil exist under the good God?

- a. Which view do you take:
 - i. Incorrect way: What does this problem say about God?
 - ii. Correct way: What does God say about my problem?

- b. God rules over all (Sovereign, in control of everything)
 - Psalm 103:19 *The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*
 - 2. God is not surprised by sin or evil. God even gives us instructions on what to do about them, if we will follow His ways.
 - a. Jesus was delivered to evil men in His death by God's plan
 - Acts 2:22-23 *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you [while you were watching], as ye yourselves also know: Him, **being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God** [...Him, even though God knew beforehand that you would falsely accuse Jesus], *ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:**
 - b. God's plan was made before the physical universe was created
 - Revelation 13:8 *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [The Beast, Antichrist], whose names are not written in the book of life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.***
 - c. After God considered the cost, God still loved us. God's Son still came down to earth to pay the price of our reconciliation
 - 3. Didn't God see that evil would happen? He did, and He warns us about it.
 - a. God tells Christians in advance to expect evil circumstances
 - John 16:33 *These things I [Jesus] have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. **In the world ye shall have tribulation:** but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*
 - b. Humans do not see God's view point
 - Isaiah 55:8-9 *For my [God's] thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For **as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.***
 - c. Humans (even Christians) see only through the eye of their own experience with a dim vision & only knowing in part
 - 1 Corinthians 13:12 *For now we see through a glass, darkly [a darkened window]; but then [when we are with Christ] face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*
- B. God's response
- 1. God will execute His sovereignty
 - a. God will work & you won't believe it; Habakkuk 1:5.
 - Psalm 111:2 *The works of the LORD are great [amazing], sought out of all them that have pleasure therein [that have pleasure in the works of the LORD].*

- b. God's original design did not include sin

Genesis 1:31 *And **God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.** And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

- 2. Where did evil and sin come from?

- a. Satan brought sin into God's kingdom in heaven

Ezekiel 28:13-17 *Thou [Lucifer, later Satan] **has been in Eden the garden of God; ... Thou art the anointed cherub** [the chosen angel] **that covereth** [that guards the way to the throne of God]; **and I have set thee so thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; ... Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee....** thou hast sinned: **therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up** [Your heart filled with pride] **because of thy beauty,***

Isaiah 14:12-14 *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken [destroy] the nations! For **thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.***

- b. Adam brought sin into God's created universe

Romans 5:12 *Wherefore, as **by one man** [Adam] **sin entered into the world,** and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

- c. Man is given free will: the ability to demonstrate love to God, which includes obedience. You cannot love without the ability to choose.
- d. Entire physical universe groans under the weight of sin. The physical Law of Entropy means that all systems will gradually die from wearing out, all usable energy will be gone.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

- 3. God chose Chaldeans (Babylonians) to execute His judgement on Judah

- a. God will raise the Chaldeans, Habakkuk 1:6
- b. God gave warning through Jeremiah the prophet (Jeremiah 32:3, 36)
- c. God also gave warning through prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 5:10)

4. God works good out of evil

a. Example of Joseph sold into Egypt by his brothers

Genesis 50:20 *But as for you [Joseph's 11 brothers], **ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive** [to save the family of Jacob from starvation].*

b. God can use evil to accomplish good for Christian

Romans 8:28 *And we know that **all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.***

C. God will execute justice and judgement (Habakkuk 2:1, 3, copied below)

1. God in His own time calls all men to repent before He executes judgement

God warned Egypt before He struck them with many plagues; Exodus 12:12 *For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt **I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.***

God is now warning all men everywhere of His coming judgement; Acts 17:29-30 *Forasmuch then as we [Paul speaking to the Athenians on Mars Hill] are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device [don't think that God is like any of these man-made idols you see here]. *And the times of this ignorance God winked at* [God decided to ignore your idolatry in times past]; **but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:***

2. God the Father experienced two evils

a. The rebellion of his greatest creation, mankind, even though He had never offended them

b. The death of His Son to redeem mankind from the punishment they deserve

3. Habakkuk questions God's purpose

a. Habakkuk knows he doesn't understand correctly, so he waits to hear God's response

Habakkuk 2:1 *I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower [I will stand on duty at my guard-post in the tower], and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd [corrected].*

b. God executes His judgement on every human being

Ecclesiastes 12:14 *For God shall bring every [person's] work into judgment, with every secret thing [with all their thoughts], whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

- c. God executes judgement at His appointed time – not man’s timing

Habakkuk 2:3 **For the vision is yet** [For what God has revealed to me must wait] **for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie** [but in the end the vision will happen just as it was told]: **though it tarry** [if it seem to take a long time], **wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry** [it will seem like it happened suddenly].

IV. God’s Hope of Redemption (Habakkuk 2:14, 17)

A. God enters into the world of broken humanity

- 1. God’s plan for redeeming sinful man

Philippians 2:7-8 **But** [Jesus] **made himself of no reputation** [He made Himself so that He didn’t attract attention], **and took upon him the form of a servant** [and chose the life of a servant], **and was made in the likeness of men** [and was born and raised just like all men are]: **And being found in fashion** [appearance] **as a man, ⁸he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**

Hebrews 4:15 **For we have not an high priest** [Jesus] **which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities** [who has felt each one of our weaknesses]; **but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.**

- 2. Why do bad things happen to good people? Remember we are all bad people. Better to ask why good things happen to bad people.

- a. Only once did a “good man” come & He volunteered

Luke 18:18-19 **And a certain ruler asked him** [Jesus], **saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, **Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.****

Isaiah 53:3-5 **He** [Jesus] **is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him** [He was beaten so much we couldn’t even look at Him]; **he was despised, and we esteemed him not** [we didn’t see any value in Him]. **Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted** [we thought what was happening to Him was God’s justice]. **But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.**

- b. Jesus’ cross is God’s response to problem of evil

B. God offers hope in redemption

1. God has taken Christians from the curse of the law to the forgiveness of sin

Galatians 3:13 **Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (Deuteronomy 21:23)**

Colossians 1:14 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

2. God also brings future hope

Habakkuk 2:14 **For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.**

Isaiah 11:1, 6, 9 *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots* [This is poetic language foretelling the coming of Jesus]: ... ⁶*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid [young goat]; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling [yearling calf] together; and a little child shall lead them. ...* ⁹*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: **for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*** (compare Habakkuk 2:14, above)

Hebrews 10:36-37 *For ye have need of patience [endurance], that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise [you will receive what He has promised]. ³⁷For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry* [For soon Jesus will return and you won't be waiting anymore]. (verse 37 is a quote from Isaiah 26:20 and Habakkuk 2:3)

3. Promise to make all things new with no more sin or evil

Revelation 21:5 *And he [Jesus] that sat upon the throne said, "**Behold, I make all things new**". And he said unto me [the Apostle John], "Write: for these words are true and faithful."*

a. Promise of new heaven & new earth without the curse of sin on them

Revelation 21:1 *And I [the Apostle John] **saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.***

b. Promise to remove tears, pain, sorrow, crying & death

Revelation 21:4 *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and **there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.***

c. Promise of future life after this life ends

Job 19:25-27 *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body [after my body is left to decay], yet **in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins [the control I have over my bodies movements] be consumed within me.***

John 5:29 *And [all that are in the graves] shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Revelation 20:6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (The first resurrection is for all believers {Old and New Testament}, the second death is for all unbelievers.)*

V. Conclusion (Habakkuk 3:17-19a)

A. How should the righteous person live?

1. Live by faith

Habakkuk 2:4 *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him [the person of pride is not honest, even with himself]: but **the just shall live by his faith.***

Romans 1:17 *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, "**The just shall live by faith.**"*

Galatians 3:11 *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, "**The just shall live by faith.**"*

Hebrews 10:8 *Now **the just shall live by faith:** but if any man draw back [if any of my people are afraid to testify of me], my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

2. Pray for revival

3. Rejoice in salvation

Habakkuk 3:18 *Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, **I will joy in the God of my salvation.***

4. Confidence in God's strength

Habakkuk 3:17-19a *Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: ¹⁸Yet **I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.** ¹⁹The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet [like the feet of a deer] and he will make me to walk upon mine high places...*

B. God has secured the victory

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.