

Mid Week • Habakkuk

INTRODUCTION

Habakkuk was a troubled man.

He was a deep thinker who wrestled with some ideas he just couldn't reconcile.

On one hand, he knew that God was holy & just.

On the other hand he knew that the nation of Judah, where he lived and served as a worship leader in the temple in Jerusalem was supposed to be the focus of God's attention.

Yet Judah was corrupt to the core!

His turmoil came from the tension between these two disparate facts:

- 1) God is holy.
- 2) His people are evil.

This book recounts his dilemma and what he learned.

There's some question as to when Habakkuk lived and ministered.

Some scholars think he lived during the reign of the incredibly wicked Manasseh.

The nation was almost wholly given over to sin and some of the most abominable practices every practiced on the face of the earth were being carried out.

Others would place Habakkuk a few decades later, during the reign of Josiah and on in to the reign of his sons, Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim.

This would place him in the range of 640 to about 598 BC.

From what we find in Chapter 3, we get a clue that Habakkuk was a priest who was part of the contingent charged with leading worship in the temple.

He composed a psalm and gave instructions for how it was to be played.

As a worship leader and composer of worship songs, he would have been a *theologian*; one who understood the nature and character of God.

As Jesus said in John 4 when speaking to the Samaritan woman at

the well, genuine worship is done in the Spirit and in *truth*. In order for our worship to be something that truly honors God, it must be based on *His* revelation, not just our own ideas and desires.

So as a composer and leader of worship, Habakkuk would have been a diligent student of the scriptures.

This book makes it clear that he was.

And the more he learned about God, the more disturbed he was by what he saw taking place around him in the temple and in the daily life of the nation.

His turmoil grew so great, he took it to God and God showed Habakkuk what He was doing behind the scenes to make things right.

But God's solution bothered Habakkuk even more than the original problem, so Habakkuk again expressed his dismay – and again God once more came to comfort him with an explanation.

The name Habakkuk is an unusual one, even for Hebrew.

It means to “embrace” or to “cling.”

It can even carry the connotation of “wrestling” or “grappling” when used in certain contexts.

As we'll see, this was a perfect moniker for Habakkuk because he starts out *grappling* with the seeming contradiction of God's holiness and the nation's corruption, and ends up *clinging* to God despite all the evidence he sees with his eyes.

CHAPTER 1

1 The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw.

The word “burden” is variously translated as “prophecy” and “oracle” in different translations.

The main idea is that this was a message Habakkuk was given by God.

But the Hebrew word “mas-saw” literally means “portage.”

Now, that's not a word we use too much any more so let me use a modern equivalent of the word “portage” = “baggage!”

If you've been to LAX and seen a skycap, you have a perfect

picture of what this word “oracle” means.

You pull up to the curb and pop the trunk on your vehicle.

You pull out your bags and a skycap comes over with a cart and asks if you need assistance.

He loads your bags on the cart and asks where you’re going.

Then he takes your bags to the appropriate place while you check in.

The luggage the skycap carries isn’t his; it belongs to someone else – he merely carries it for them.

Habakkuk was given a message for the nation.

It came out of his own concerns expressed to God, but the answer he received was meant for anyone who would listen.

Here’s another picture of what an oracle is.

A courier will sometimes be given an attaché case with highly important papers in it.

In order to make sure the case and its contents aren’t lost, the case is chained to the courier’s wrist.

The prophet who is given an oracle is like one of those trust couriers.

He is given a precious and important message that he must carry responsibly.

For Habakkuk, it all begins with his inner turmoil . . .

**2 O LORD, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear?
Even cry out to You, “Violence!” And You will not save.**

**3 Why do You show me iniquity, And cause *me* to see
trouble? For plundering and violence *are* before me;
There is strife, and contention arises.**

**4 Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes
forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore
perverse judgment proceeds.**

Habakkuk cannot understand why God seems to be ignoring the gross corruption and violence that is going on around him.

He’s cried out to God before, but it seems God has done nothing.

His prayers seem to go unanswered.

Does God not care?

Are Habakkuk’s prayers falling on deaf ears?

Is *he* somehow wrong and so out of fellowship with God?
Let me briefly recap the historical setting in which Habakkuk
expresses his dismay here.

Josiah came to the throne of Judah at the age of 8.

At 16 he began to seek the Lord and by 20 had purged the nation
of Judah of all evidence of idolatry.

The temple, which had fallen into a sad state of disrepair was
refurbished.

While clearing rubbish out of the rooms of the temple, Hilkiah the
priest discovered a book.

It was the Bible, the 5 books of Moses!

Until this moment, all copies of the scriptures had been
misplaced.

When this copy of the Law was found and read by the priests,
they brought it to the King.

Josiah read it and when he got to the book of Deuteronomy,
realized that the nation had committed every one of the sins
God warned them about.

The curses proclaimed in the law were sure to come as a result
of their forsaking God and Josiah was terrified.

So he commanded the entire nation join him in repentance.

He re-instituted the Passover for the first time in generations.

Being a priest, Habakkuk began to study one of the new copies that
were made of the Law.

The more he read, the more aware of the holiness and justice of
God he became.

But the more he read, the more aware he became of the corruption
of the people around him too.

Habakkuk could see that while King Josiah was seeking to lead the
nation in reform, the people weren't genuinely revived!

They were going along with the social *reforms* but their hearts
weren't right.

When the king was looking, they were compliant and looked holy.
But when he wasn't looking, they were still lying, cheating, and
stealing from one another.

The land may have been swept clear of idols, but the streets were
still marked by violence and the courts were still staffed by

unjust judges who were easily swayed by a bribe.
Actually, the court system was pretty easily corrupted in that time.
It worked like this:

While the King ruled over Jerusalem and its immediate district,
the rest of the nation was administered by local laws.

Since the Law of God had been lost and only recently found, the
legal code that was used in most outlying areas were arbitrary
rules made up by city elders.

These elders spent their day sitting in the porch by the gate of the
city.

When someone had a legal case to be heard, he would assemble
witnesses and go to the elders.

Both sides would present their evidence, and the elders would
make a decision.

It turned out that the one who won the case was the one who was
the best friend of the elders.

And since the elders were the richest men in the city, if one of
them brought a case against anyone else, guess who was the
automatic winner.

So the rich got richer while the poor and disenfranchised lost
ground.

Hebrew is a picture language and the words Habakkuk employs
throughout his book are highly graphic.

These verses paint a picture of malicious viciousness and a
complete upheaval of justice.

Oppression, strife, and contention ruled the day.

This stands in stark contrast to what we would expect in light of
Josiah's reforms.

If the land had been cleared of the many idols set up during his
grandfather Manasseh's day, and if the abominable rituals
practiced at the bases of those idols were now banned, we
might think priests like Habakkuk would be rejoicing.

But Habakkuk looked beyond the surface to see that while the sins of
his generation might not have been a *religiously* impure – they
were just as bad spiritually and morally as before.

In other words Josiah had brought reform, but not revival.

And the more the prophet read of God's holiness and His selection

of the Jews to be His covenant people, representing Him to the rest of the world, the more sickened he became. He cried out to God again and again on why it seemed He was doing NOTHING about combating the corruption and evil of the day.

Let's note something important here – Josiah, as the political leader was a godly man and sought the Lord with all his heart.

Using his position as king, he enacted legislation to bring reform to the religion of the nation.

But reform neither equals nor produces revival; and without revival, reforms are doomed!

It's not a change of form we need but a change of heart!

We must be careful of falling in to the trap of thinking if we can just get our guy elected to office, then everything will be okay.

The spiritual and moral condition of our elected officials is important.

But we must be cautious about thinking if we could just get enough Christians into positions of influence then we could turn this thing around.

Such a strategy might work a dramatic reform of our culture, but it would not produce revival.

Revival will only come as God's people get serious about their personal relationship with Him, and earnestly seek Him to show mercy to their land.

Revival begins with me and you right now!

Habakkuk had experienced a personal revival, and was perplexed on why the rest of his generation was so wicked and it seemed God was not doing anything about it.

Now we get God's answer . . .

5 “Look among the nations and watch—Be utterly astounded! For *I will* work a work in your days *Which* you would not believe, though it were told you.

God tells him, “Habakkuk, though you cannot see it right now, I have been at work and will shortly bring to pass the plot I have been weaving.”

“When it comes, it will stagger you in its scope.”

- 6 For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places *that are* not theirs.**
- 7 They are terrible and dreadful; Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves.**
- 8 Their horses also are swifter than leopards, And more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; Their cavalry comes from afar; They fly as the eagle *that* hastens to eat.**
- 9 “They all come for violence; Their faces are set *like* the east wind. They gather captives like sand.**
- 10 They scoff at kings, And princes are scorned by them. They deride every stronghold, For they heap up earthen *mounds* and seize it.**
- 11 Then *his* mind changes, and he transgresses; He commits offense, *Ascribing* this power to his god.”**

God tells Habakkuk that He is raising up the Babylonians, here called the Chaldeans, to come and execute His judgment on wicked Judah.

The prophet has been unaware of what was going on in Babylon because he lived hundreds of miles away, but God had been at work in the nations of the world preparing the Babylonians for world conquest.

He had been working for generations in their culture, language, arts, and science to produce an armed force that would be unstoppable.

They would roll over the nations bordering them and then would lay claim to kingdoms far and wide, including the land of Judah.

But once they had conquered the bulk of their empire, their leader would grow proud and arrogant and fail to give honor to the One who had in truth empowered them – God.

He and his people would think that it was their idol that had given

them dominion, and the pride that felled Judah would eventually cut down the ruler of Babylon.

Habakkuk now responds to God . . .

12 Are You not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction.

God is right – Habakkuk does not understand what the Lord is doing.

God is eternal; the prophets is locked in time.

God sees all, Habakkuk sees only what's around him.

And though Habakkuk may not be able to figure out what God is doing, he's confident that in His time, God will vindicate His justice.

13 You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

God's use of the Babylonians as the agent of His judgment doesn't make any sense to the prophet.

God is holy – so how can he uses such an unholy instrument?

Why in comparison to Babylon, Judah is doing pretty well!

So how could God use such a seemingly wicked nation as the Babylonians to affect His judgment?

Habakkuk goes on in this inquiry . . .

14 Why do You make men like fish of the sea, Like creeping things that have no ruler over them?

15 They take up all of them with a hook, They catch them in their net, And gather them in their dragnet. Therefore they rejoice and are glad.

16 Therefore they sacrifice to their net, And burn incense to their dragnet; Because by them their share is sumptuous And their food plentiful.

17 Shall they therefore empty their net, And continue to slay nations without pity?

In describing just how wicked Babylon was, Habakkuk uses some of the same words to describe her sins that are used to describe Judah's sins.

He says that if the Babylonians are allowed to run amuck through the area, then Judah and her neighbors will become like defenseless fish and the Babylonians will be like fishermen who give all the credit for their conquest to their net, rather than to God.

This unnerves the prophet – to think that God's people would be defeated by rank pagans, who will only give the credit to their false gods.

The bottom line for Habakkuk is this: If Judah is to be judged, she needs to know that it was because of their corruption and because they had forsaken God.

If the Babylonians are the instrument God uses to judge Judah, then how will Judah recognize it as God's chastening hand?

Let me use an analogy:

A young child has badly disobeyed his mother and must be disciplined.

She tells him to go to his room and follow him.

He gets on his bed and lies on his back.

She picks up a glow in the dark paddle and then turns off the light.

He sees the paddle come close to the bed and rolls over to take it's application to his backside.

In the dark, he cannot see his mother, only the glow in the dark paddle.

Babylon was the paddle, God was the ultimate wielder of the paddle.

But Habakkuk felt that God was too much in the dark and that the Jews would not be able to "see" Him as the one who was ultimately behind their defeat at the hands of the Babylonians.

Plus, he was gravely concerned about the "paddle" getting a big head because it had been used to spank so many nations.

This first chapter reminds us that even when we are unaware of it, God is at work moving things forward in His time and according to His plan – not ours.

Like Habakkuk, we may look around at our nation and world and wonder how long God is going to put up with it.

As in his day, violence fills the streets, the court system is becoming increasingly corrupt, and the arrogance of the common person grows more intense.

Like Habakkuk, we cry out to God to make things right, and often it seems nothing happens. More kids are shot and killed in school, more and more young girls end up missing, serial killers grow more numerous and their crimes more bizarre. The righteous are persecuted while the wicked seem to prosper. “How long oh Lord?” we ask with tears streaming down our cheeks.

And God’s answer is – “I am here and have not forsaken my people or my plan. I am at work in ways you do not see. You are on earth and I am in heaven. Trust Me – I know what I’m doing. I know the end from the beginning and it’s all going to turn out okay.”

The words of the Apostle Paul are appropriate at this point.

In Romans 11 he writes . . . (33-36)

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has become His counselor?

Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?

For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

CHAPTER TWO

**1 I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart,
And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will
answer when I am corrected.**

Habakkuk makes a declaration about what he will now do.

In his frustration, he had poured out some heated words to God about His seeming lack of attention to justice.

God said, “Look and watch” in v. 5 of chapter 1, so now

Habakkuk takes up his position to wait and see what the Lord will do and what He will say to the prophet.

2 Then the LORD answered me and said: “Write the

vision And make *it* plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it.

- 3 For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.**

God tells him to make sure he records the prophecy he's given so that others may read it and take direction for their lives.

Though it seems like time is passing and nothing is happening, the faithful are to wait for God's timing.

When all the bases have been covered and each player is in his or her assigned place, then things will happen and the people of God will see them come to pass.

In the meantime, they need to be patient.

- 4 “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.**

There were prideful and arrogant people both in Judah and in Babylon.

It doesn't matter where pride is found, whether it's in those who are called the people of God or those who are lost – pride is evidence of a wrong heart.

The man or woman who knows God and is in fellowship with Him cannot be proud.

So while the proud person is out of touch with God, the just person is one who lives by faith, not pride.

The prophet's statement, “The just shall live by his faith” is quoted 3 times in the New Testament; in Romans, Galatians, and in Hebrews. (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38).

The emphasis in Romans is on *the just*, in Galatians on how they should *live*, and in Hebrews on “*by faith.*”

It takes three books to explain and apply this one verse!

This verse, quoted by Paul in Romans and Galatians became the critical turning point for Martin Luther.

All his life, Luther had endeavored to obtain a place of righteousness before God based on his own merit and works.

He had become a monk, thinking a religious life of study would endear him to God.

Like Habakkuk, he was overwhelmed by the holiness and righteousness of God and thought that God was frowning on him for his spiritual and moral incompetence.

The more Luther tried to curry God's favor and appease the sense of guilt in his own soul, the more aware of his own failure he became.

Luther got to the point where he loathed God because of his own inability to measure up to the divine standard.

Then as he was studying the words of Habakkuk, quoted by Paul – “The just shall live by faith,” it was like a sudden light burst upon him and he realized that what God demands is faith in the finished work of Christ.

“This text,” said Luther, “was to me the true gate of Paradise.” Those who are just, those whom God declares right and righteous are not those who earn it, but those who receive it by faith.

To be just – to be right, one must believe! Believe in God's provision of forgiveness in Christ's work on the Cross.

This truth sparked the Reformation!

As this verse sits here in Habakkuk, it tells us that faith and pride stand in *opposition* to each other.

Either we come to God in our own merits – and so in ourselves;
Or we come to God by faith in Him, and so find ourselves declared just and right.

Pride or faith – it's one or the other.

Where there is pride, faith is absent.

Where there is faith, pride is not!

The just shall live by his faith

We are not only *saved* by faith but we *live* by faith.

Habakkuk knew that difficult times were coming to the people of Judah, and their only resource was to trust God's Word and rest in His will.

- 5 “Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, *He is a proud man, And he does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as hell, And he *is* like death, and cannot be satisfied, He gathers to himself all nations And heaps up for himself all peoples.***

Pride leads to restlessness and a lack of satisfaction.

Even if the proud person accumulates the possessions of the entire world, he or she won't be satisfied.

- 6 “Will not all these take up a proverb against him, And a taunting riddle against him, and say, ‘Woe to him who increases *What* is not his—how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges’?**
- 7 Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty.**
- 8 Because you have plundered many nations, All the remnant of the people shall plunder you, Because of men’s blood And the violence of the land *and* the city, And of all who dwell in it.**

Habakkuk thought God wasn't doing anything in terms of opposing the wicked of his day.

But here God reminds him that evil always produces bitter fruit. All Habakkuk could see was the seeming prosperity of the corrupt – he didn't see how lonely and unsatisfied they were.

And he didn't see when years later all the evil seeds they had planted would come to full fruit and they would have to pay the piper for their years of debauchery.

Now we get several pronouncements of “woe.”

All of these are aimed at the Babylonians.

Habakkuk has been shocked at God's use of them as the instrument of His judgment.

Here God informs him that the Babylonians will not go without seeing their own judgment too.

- 9 “Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, That he may set his nest on high, That he may be delivered from the power of disaster!**
- 10 You give shameful counsel to your house, Cutting off many peoples, And sin *against* your soul.**
- 11 For the stone will cry out from the wall, And the beam**

from the timbers will answer it.

God pronounces a curse on greed.

Greed drives people to apply whatever means are needed to acquire whatever it is they think they need.

But God says that ill-gotten gain is no foundation to build a life on.

When the day of testing comes, it will be swept away, because in God's economy, we only get to keep that which is acquired through faithfulness.

- 12 “Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed, Who establishes a city by iniquity!**
- 13 Behold, *is it* not of the LORD of hosts That the peoples labor to feed the fire, And nations weary themselves in vain?**
- 14 For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.**

God pronounces another woe on violence.

Anyone who thinks that might makes right is in for a rude awakening because the Judge of all the earth will sweep away all authority and power when He comes to judge.

History is steadfastly moving to the day when it is God's Kingdom that shall cover the face of the Earth.

Again, only that which is done in faithfulness to Him will last.

- 15 “Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing *him* to your bottle, Even to make *him* drunk, That you may look on his nakedness!**
- 16 You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also—drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the LORD's right hand *will be* turned against you, And utter shame will be on your glory.**
- 17 For the violence *done to* Lebanon will cover you, And the plunder of beasts *which* made them afraid, Because of men's blood And the violence of the land *and* the city, And of all who dwell in it.**

God now pronounces a woe on perversion and moral seduction.

The picture here is of an immoral person who seeks to pollute others with his or her perversions.

The motive behind the spread of much sin is monetary profit.

So the brewer would offer free drinks, just to get the innocent hooked.

The drug dealer gives out free bags of dope, to get kids hooked.

The pornographer covertly drops some dirty magazines in school yards.

Advertisers produce racy commercials and place them on youth oriented cable channels.

God is keeping track of all this and will repay each for their corruption and hold them responsible for the souls they damn.

18 “What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, The molded image, a teacher of lies, That the maker of its mold should trust in it, To make mute idols?”

19 Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Awake!’ To silent stone, ‘Arise! It shall teach!’ Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, Yet in it there is no breath at all.

The final woe is pronounced on idol-making and worship.

The land of Babylon was filled with idols and people could pick and chose which deity they wanted to worship.

There was a god of war, a god of power, a god of influence and position.

There was a goddess of sexual pleasure, and goddess of prosperity and sensuality, there was a god or goddess for every taste and desire.

And that in essence is what Idolatry is – an attempt to formalize and sanctify my selfish, carnal desires and make them respectable.

Blind, bald-faced greed is hideous and repugnant to people.

But if I turn my greed into religious devotion, then I can make my lust for *more* respectable – even to the point where others might think I’m a deeply religious person!

Idolatry is offering ourselves to any pursuit that does not center on the knowledge and glory of God.

Albert Schweitzer once said, “Anything you have that you cannot give away, you do not really own; it owns you.”

God ended His reply to Habakkuk by giving a this assurance:

20 “But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

God is on the throne and has everything under control.

So we shouldn’t complain or question what He’s doing.

Like faithful servants, we must simply stand and listen for His commands.

Psalms 46:10 says, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

God’s reply in Chapter 2 made a huge difference in Habakkuk’s perception.

He was transformed from being a worrier and a watcher to being a worshiper!

In the closing chapter of his book, he shares with us the vision he had of God and the difference it made in his life.

CHAPTER 3

1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.

2 O LORD, I have heard Your speech *and* was afraid; O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make *it* known; In wrath remember mercy.

When Habakkuk first heard of God’s plan, it frightened him.

But once God explained things, he realized God’s wisdom was far beyond his limited understanding.

And though both Judah and Babylon are more than deserving of righteous judgment, Habakkuk asks for mercy.

He prays, “O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years.”

He is simply praying for revival; real, heart-felt revival; not just the religious reforms the people had been pretending under Josiah.

This prayer of Habakkuk shows us that revival is a sovereign work of God.

It's not manufactured or programmed by man.

There is something man can and must do for revival and that is to simply cry out to God and plead for Him to bring it.

He prayed, "In wrath remember mercy."

Habakkuk now knew judgment was coming.

But he also knew that along with the majority who were wicked, there was a minority of the just who were living by faith and for these he requests that God would remember to show mercy.

God will one day judge our nation.

Let this be our prayer – "O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make *it* known; In wrath remember mercy."

3 God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah*

His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise.

4 *His* brightness was like the light; He had rays *flashing* from His hand, And there His power was hidden.

5 Before Him went pestilence, And fever followed at His feet.

6 He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, The perpetual hills bowed. His ways *are* everlasting.

7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; The curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

8 O LORD, were *You* displeased with the rivers, Was Your anger against the rivers, Was Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your horses, Your chariots of salvation?

9 Your bow was made quite ready; Oaths were sworn over *Your* arrows. *Selah*

You divided the earth with rivers.

- 10 The mountains saw You *and* trembled; The overflowing of the water passed by. The deep uttered its voice, *And* lifted its hands on high.**
- 11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; At the light of Your arrows they went, At the shining of Your glittering spear.**
- 12 You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger.**
- 13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For salvation with Your Anointed. You struck the head from the house of the wicked, By laying bare from foundation to neck. *Selah***
- 14 You thrust through with his own arrows The head of his villages. They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me; Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret.**
- 15 You walked through the sea with Your horses, Through the heap of great waters.**

As I said, Habakkuk was a worship leader in the temple and here is one of the songs he composed to be used in the worship.

It is a psalm of praise – declaring God’s mighty acts on behalf on His people.

- 16 When I heard, my body trembled; My lips quivered at *the* voice; Rottenness entered my bones; And I trembled in myself, That I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people, He will invade them with his troops.**

Habakkuk began with a cry of demand that God answer him.

When God did finally come to him the revelation wiped him out and left him so weak he felt sick.

- 17 Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls—**

18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.

To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

These verse are the perfect end to the book, for they declare Habakkuk's faith in God.

He has moved from wrestling with God over how God works and instead clings to Him in simple faith.

He says that even if all evidences of the goodness of God are missing, still he will cling to the Lord and trust that in the end it will all work out right.

Friends, this is faith at it's purest and best – when a man or woman has lost all other evidence of the love and grace of God and has nothing left other than His bare Word.

When we hold on to God like that – that is faith's real test.

That's the lesson of the book of Job. That's the lesson of Habakkuk. And that's the lesson all of us must learn one way or another – at some point in our lives.