

Chapter 3

3:1-2

1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth. When take with the last sentence of the chapter, this seems like it is a musical term of some kind.¹

2 O LORD, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; A lot of war; a lot of bloodshed for both sides. If I “saw” these things (1:1), I too would be much 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. The only request in the chapter. It appears to build off the promised “work” of 1:5 and the promised, widespread “knowledge” in 2:14. But what do we make of this twice-said **in the midst of years?** It is used no other place in the entirety of the Old Testament, and the NET Bible surmises that it means “here in our time”—although they admit they are guessing.

3:3

God came from Teman,

*Jeremiah 49:20 Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD that He has taken against Edom,
And His purposes that He has proposed against the inhabitants of Teman...*

The Holy One Habakkuk has me wondering, now, if he is an appreciator of Isaiah. This is a reaffirmation of his belief that God is **Holy** (1:12). It’s as if he is saying “I knew you were Holy and now I see it is so! You took down unholy Judah and then crushed their unholy foe. **from Mount Paran.**

“Paran was a mountainous area southwest of Judah in the Sinai Peninsula and west of the Gulf of Aqaba.”²

Before discussing what this place is, let’s recognize that “parallelism” is a way of saying one thing in two ways. Sometimes parallelism is “additive” or “elaborative.” That is, the second line of a couplet builds in intensity on the first phrase of the couplet—as in the last half of this verse.

Selah Sometimes this could be seen as a sort of “now think about that” statement.

His glory covered the heavens, One becomes aware about right here that this “prayer of Habakkuk” is the vision of the fulfillment of 2:14. **And the earth was full of His praise.**

3:6

He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains Here is a good understanding of how **everlasting** can be poetically used from the perspective of the prophets. Moreover, this is another example (after 1:12 and its footnote) of the prophet’s awareness of Moses’ writings:

Deuteronomy 33:15 With the best things of the ancient mountains, With the precious things of the everlasting hills,

were scattered, The perpetual hills bowed. Mountains and hills being in parallel with **nations** leads one to believe that **mountains** are poetically mentioned in place of **nations** from time to time. Again, very useful information when reading prophecy in the New Testament (“every island and hill moved out of its place”, and so forth).

When one realizes that this vision need not necessarily be of the future actions of God in the end times, but may also be poetic descriptions of either the Exodus and wilderness wanderings under Moses or the

¹Ibid., 354.

²Ibid., 360.

vanquishing of the ungodly within Judah under the hand of the Babylonians, they see that this repeated language in Revelation 6 and a myriad of other places need not be dogmatically deemed as conclusively literal in their future fulfillment.

His ways *are* everlasting. What is happening with his use of **everlasting**?

7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; The curtains of the land of Midian trembled. As stated under 3:6, this may be a rehearsal of the Exodus and Northern movement toward Canaan. Of course, it could be him flashing out of a vision of the future to remember a vision of the past and thereby reassuring himself of God's just dealings in the future...but it could also simply be a description of the past under Moses reassuring him that the impending doom of Judah will be thus justly dealt by Jehovah.

3:8-11

...That You rode on Your horses, How does this impact the way we understand Revelation 19 when we know this has immediate reference to the Babylonians being judged by the Medo-Persian people?...**9 Your bow was made quite ready; Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah** Only used here these three times and in the Psalms.

10 The mountains saw You *and* trembled; See notes under 3:6 about **mountains...The deep uttered its voice,** Not the only time **deep** speaks (Psalm 19).

11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; Another reference to the Exodus/Conquest drama (Joshua 10). Here, of course, it refers to the response of the heavenly lights to the frightening Lord.

3:13-15

13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people, With the reference to Joshua in verse 11, one has no issue recognizing the almost sure reference here to the ark of the Covenant.

For salvation with Your Anointed. All of this for the salvation of His people.³

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. This is a special level of gore: "laid them open neck to base and thrust a spear through their heads." Although it probably speaks, once again, poetically of political reality ("attacking every level of the enemies' kingdom"), the poetry means nothing unless it has physical imagery with which the reader (2:2) is to be aghast!

15 You walked through the sea with Your horses, Through the heap of great waters. Naturally, with the two Joshua references, here's another good one—perhaps making reference to the crossing of the Jordan River. On the other hand, given the **heap** reference, this could be the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15:8).

3:17-19

17 Though the fig tree may not blossom, If you ignore my prayer (3:2)... "Here the prophet accepts God's program, thus resolving his contention with God expressed so strongly in chaps. 1–2."⁴ Does this not go with the "cup" reference of 2:16? Is this not Christ in the O.T. saying "Not my will, but thine" of Matthew 26 or the "strong crying and tears to the one Who could save Him from death" of Hebrews 5? **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—** These six things of verse 17 crescendo in severity as if to "raise

³In light of all of this talk about Jehovah bringing the Chaldeans (2:13), it seems fitting to remember that even Cyrus is known as God's "Anointed" (Isaiah 45:1).

⁴Barker, 375.

the bar,”⁵ and to say “even if _____; even if _____; even, yet, if _____; even so, yea, if even this _____ **18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.** Is not this “the joy that was set before our Lord” (Hebrews 12:2)? **19 The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like ^gdeer’s feet, And He will make me ^hwalk on my high hills.** Can there be any **higher hills** than Heaven at God’s right hand (Hebrews 12:2)?

⁵ Ibid., 375.

^g 2 Sam. 22:34; Ps. 18:33

^h Deut. 32:13; 33:29