

## The Prophet's Objection

1  **Habakkuk**

Why would you use an evil people to judge us?

2  **A book with a lot of unknowns**

- No mention elsewhere in the Bible of Habakkuk; no record of his lineage or place of birth
  - One reference to him in the apocryphal (i.e. fictional) book *Bel and the Dragon* where Habakkuk is transported by an angel to bring Daniel stew in the lion's den
- No real knowledge of the time in which he writes
  - Wide variety from 701-330 B.C. suggested. Depends on identity of the "oppressors" referred to in 1:5-6. If *kasdim*, then the Chaldeans (earlier date). If *ketim*, then Greeks (later date).
  - Most scholars believe that Habakkuk likely wrote during the reign of Jehoiakim (609-597 B.C.) during the rise of the Chaldeans and Assyrians as a threat to Judah.
- No real information about audience (cf. Amos 1:1, Micah 1:1; Isaiah 1:1)

3  **Proposed timeline**4  **Q&A #1**

- Habakkuk's question -- *Why do I have to look at all this evil corruption around me? God, why are you not doing something about it?*
- God's answer – *I am bringing chastisement and judgment upon your nation by using the wicked Chaldeans*
  - The Chaldeans were a nomadic people – the *Kasdim* – a near-relative of Abraham. They intermarried with people around Babylon. When Nebopalassar (a Chaldean) became king and established a ruling dynasty, the term "Chaldeans" became synonymous with "Babylonians."

5  **Corruption in the news this week**6  **The Game Stop fiasco**

- A struggling video games retailer hit hard by the pandemic
- Melvin Capital (and major investor Citadel) decided to make money by shorting the stock (betting it would go down)
- They shorted 140% of all the stock in existence (which should be illegal since it is impossible to buy enough stock to cover their short if their "bet" failed). Strangely this behavior is allowed for hedge funds but not for individuals.

7  **Game Stop fiasco (2)**

- A short seller pays a small fee to borrow shares. This entity or person then sells the shares at a market rate. Later, after the stock has plummeted in price, they buy the shares back again and return to their original owner.
- Game Stop stock cost \$18.84/share on 12/31/20. Melvin Capital/Citadel borrowed the shares at this price and sold them. The price plummeted.
- But Reddit users decided to take advantage of the stock at a discount price and started buying shares. The stock price rose overnight to \$350.

8  **Game Stop fiasco (3)**

- So, if you had been able to purchase 1000 shares of Game Stop at \$18.48 / share, your \$18,480 investment would have been worth \$350,000 the next morning! That means that for your 1000 shares, Melvin Capital would have lost \$331,520.
  - Bear in mind that there were 69,750,000 shares of Game Stop on the market.
  - Melvin Capital's total loss would have been \$23,123,520,000 (\$23.123 trillion) if they had just

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shorted existing shares. But since they shorted 140% of shares, their loss would have been \$32,372,928,000 (\$32 trillion) . There was no way to cover this kind of loss.

9  **Game Stop fiasco (4)**

- Robinhood trading has close ties with Citadel (who gave them \$39 million in revenue from trades)
- Robinhood, seeing Citadel would go out of business, just stopped trading so that individual investors could no longer buy or sell their securities. Other firms followed suit.

10  **What should have happened with Game Stop**

- Citadel should have gone out of business and declared bankruptcy.
- The Secretary of the Treasury should have let the free market run and dictate the consequences.
- Officials at Melvin Capital and Citadel should be jailed for not being able to cover their shorts in the market.
- It should be made illegal for any hedge fund to short more shares of a stock than exist.

11  **Why Janet Yellen did not intervene**

- Citadel LLC, one of the hedge funds that along with Point72 Asset Management invested \$2.75 billion to bail out Melvin Capital, one of the main Wall Street losers in the GameStop snafu, paid Yellen a total of \$810,000 in speaking fees in 2019 and 2020.
- In fact, Yellen's financial disclosures reveal the new secretary has been paid **\$7 million** in speaking fees from financial firms over just the past two years, **raising** questions about her loyalties to Wall Street.

12  **And just in case you missed it....AMC**

- 123% of all outstanding shares shorted by hedge funds (again, should be illegal)
- Stock went up 300% overnight due to Reddit users buying the stock after it started going down in price
- Again, hedge funds would have lost \$trillions
- Again, trading was stopped and those responsible are not held accountable.
- Again, Janet Yellen and Biden administration allowed this to happen on their watch

13  **And in other news...**

- Efforts underway to:
  - Add D.C. and Puerto Rico as states, increasing Democrat Senators by 4
  - Increase # of Supreme Court Justices to between 12-24 (meaning Biden would appoint more judges than any other President and would ensure liberal court for the next 50 years)
  - Continued efforts to open borders
  - Decimate oil and gas industry in the U.S. (which was an exporter of these products under Trump) and resume sending money to the Middle East for these resources (thus, financing terrorism against the U.S.)

14  **HR 127 – the end to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment**

- Each gun owner must furnish all information about every firearm they have; information goes into a national database of registered firearms
- Each gun owner must pay an annual \$800 license fee to continue to own their firearms or to purchase ammo; failure to pay causes guns to be confiscated. The license requires: background check, psychological evaluation, a 24-hour training course, and insurance.
- License must be renewed annually with eight hours of ongoing education each year.
- Anything that can hold more than ten rounds of ammunition requires an additional special license

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with an even higher cost which if not renewed causes your firearms to be confiscated

15  **To the ever-relevant Word!**16  **Habakkuk 1:12-15**

*Are you not from of old, O Yahweh my God, my Holy One? You shall not die. O Yahweh, you have marked them for judgment; O Rock, you have established them for reproof. Your eyes are too pure to see evil, and you are not able to look at wrongdoing. Why do you look at the treacherous? Why are you silent when the wicked swallows up someone more righteous than him? You make humankind like fish of the sea, like crawling creatures that have no ruler among them. He brings up all of them with a fishhook; he drags them up with his fishnet, and he gathers them in his dragnet. Therefore, he rejoices and exults.*

17  **Habakkuk 1:16-2:1**

*Therefore he sacrifices to his fishnet and makes offerings to his dragnet, for by them he makes a good living and his food is rich. Will he therefore empty his fishnet and continually kill nations without showing mercy? I will stand at my post, and station myself on the rampart. And I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. (LEB)*

18  **Habakkuk 2:2-5**

► *Then Yahweh answered me and said, "Write the vision and make it plain on the tablet so that it might be read quickly. For there is yet a vision for the appointed time; it will give witness to the end, and it will not lie. If it tarries, wait for it, for it will surely come and not delay. Look! His spirit within him is puffed up; it is not upright. But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness. How much less the defiant; the arrogant, treacherous man? He who broadens his throat like Sheol, and who, like death, is not satisfied, and who gathers to himself all the nations, and harvested for himself all the peoples, will not succeed. (Habakkuk 2:2-5, LEB)*

►

19  **Habakkuk's praise**20  **Confidence expressed in a rhetorical question (1:12)**

- *O Lord, are You not from everlasting?*
  - This is a declaration rather than an interrogation
  - The prophet had confidence in the living, eternal God, Yahweh, which contrasts strongly with the previous verse in which the Babylonians considered their own strength to be their god.
- Habakkuk refused to believe that Babylon would utterly destroy the people of Judah – even though they were capable of doing so. He based his conclusion on two truths:
  - the immutable and everlasting Lord who will not break his covenant with Israel
  - the holy and righteous God who will not allow sin to go unpunished in Israel or her foes
- He rightly concludes *My God, my Holy One, we will not die.*

21  **Our eternal and Holy God**

- *He stood and measured the earth; he looked and made the nations tremble. Then the mountains of old were shattered; the hills of old collapsed. The ways of old belong to Him. (Habakkuk 3:6, LEB)*
- *God came from Teman; the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His splendor covers the heavens, and his praise fills the earth. (Habakkuk 3:3, LEB)*

22  **The purpose of the enemy**

- The prophet reminds himself in 1:12 that the Lord appointed the Babylonians to execute judgment or discipline – not to bring destruction on Judah. The enemy was God's instrument to punish but

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not to demolish.

- In this time of uncertainty, Habakkuk refers to Yahweh as the Rock.
  - *The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; He is a faithful God, and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.* (Deuteronomy 32:4, LEB)

23  **Habakkuk's question**24  **Habakkuk's second question (1:13)**

- *Your eyes are too pure to see evil, and you are not able to look at wrongdoing. Why do you look at the treacherous? Why are you silent when the wicked swallows up someone more righteous than him?* (Habakkuk 1:13, LEB)
- Why would a holy God use a wicked people to administer discipline upon Judah?
  - God is too pure to look on evil.
  - God cannot tolerate wrong.

25  **It just isn't fair!**

- In 1:2-4, Habakkuk cannot understand why God seems to be less concerned about the sin of Judah than he is personally.
- But with the new information that the Chaldeans will come to wreak havoc in Judah, Habakkuk looks at the righteous and holy God and asks why he would tolerate the treacherous.
  - His focus shifts from the problems of sin to the sovereign God in control.
  - It seems a perversion of justice for God to allow wicked nation to devour a nation which is more righteous. Though Judah had been sinful, her wickedness was dwarfed by the atrocities committed by the Babylonians. This poses a dilemma for Habakkuk. (We have a similar dilemma today.)

26  **Fairness vs justice**

- God is just meaning that His ways are always right and always in line with His holiness
- But He is not fair because fairness means "what men think is equitable"

27 28  **Judah is helpless before the Babylonians (1:14-15)**

- *You make humankind like fish of the sea, like crawling creatures that have no ruler among them. He brings up all of them with a fishhook; he drags them up with his fishnet, and he gathers them in his dragnet. Therefore, he rejoices and exults.* (Habakkuk 1:14-15, LEB)
  - Judah is like a large school of fish that have no leader or ruler. They are helpless pray for the powerful invader of Babylon. They lack the ability to organize themselves for self-protection.
  - The wicked Babylonians are pictured catching men like fish with hooks and nets. They easily gather their enemies into large dragnets (1:16). The Babylonians have as little regard for the welfare of humanity as fishermen do for unprotesting fish. Instead, they simply rejoiced over their catch.

29  **Why would God excuse a people of idolatry? (1:16-17)**

- *Therefore he sacrifices to his fishnet and makes offerings to his dragnet, for by them he makes a good living and his food is rich. Will he therefore empty his fishnet and continually kill nations without showing mercy?* (Habakkuk 1:16-17, LEB)
  - Habakkuk describes the Babylonians as worshiping their nets and burning incense to their dragnets. This metaphor shows that the Babylonians worshiped the means that brought them military success. God already declared that the Babylonians saw their own might and strength as

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their god. Now Habakkuk adds that their military power brought monetary profit.

- ▀ Idolatry is not limited to those who bring sacrifices or burn incense to inanimate objects. People of position, power, or prosperity often pay homage to the business or agency that provides them their coveted status. It becomes their obsession, even their god.

30  **Habakkuk waits for an answer**

- ▀ *I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, And will watch to see what he will say unto me, And what I shall answer when I am reproved.* (Habakkuk 2:1, KJV 1900)
- ▀ He positions himself to wait for God to show him the answer to his question. He has the attitude of expectation that God will answer him.
- ▀ The complaint to which Habakkuk referred could be his own complaint against God who seems to be operating in ways that Habakkuk cannot endorse. However, it is also likely that it is the complaint of the people against the prophet. He wants an answer when people complain to him about why God isn't doing anything about the evil around them or what they will say when God allows evil enemy to attack them.

31  **God's answer**32  **It is time to take dictation!**

- ▀ *Then Yahweh answered me and said, "Write the vision and make it plain on the tablet so that it might be read quickly.* (Habakkuk 2:2, LEB)
  - ▀ God is going to answer Habakkuk's question but once to make sure that Habakkuk shares what he learns with others.
  - ▀ God really doesn't answer our questions for our own satisfaction of curiosity. Rather, he answers our questions in order for us to be able to minister to others.

33  **God gives a clear revelation (2:2)**

- ▀ God does not mumble. He speaks with clarity and forthrightness.
  - ▀ He tells Habakkuk to make sure that his writing is *plain* on tablets.
  - ▀ This revelation was recorded on tablets of baked clay so that God's word would be preserved and so that a herald could run with the publicized word of God to share with others. In other words, God's word should be spread to others.

34  **God gives a certain revelation (2:3)**

- ▀ *For there is yet a vision for the appointed time; it will give witness to the end, and it will not lie. If it tarries, wait for it, for it will surely come and not delay.* (Habakkuk 2:3, LEB)
- ▀ Prophecies demand patience. The prophecy pointed toward a future goal. "It pants for the end" (like a runner near the end of the race).
  - ▀ God will tell Habakkuk in a moment that he will also judge the Babylonians.
  - ▀ That portion of the prophecy had a fulfillment in ancient history but still another future fulfillment in the fall of "Babylon the Great" at the close of the Tribulation (Revelation 17-18).

35  **Guaranteed delivery**

- ▀ One thing is certain. God's revelation will never prove false. Its fulfillment might be delayed but it will come to pass with His perfect plan. The nation of Judah could take comfort in the fact that their barbaric captors would themselves suffer divine judgment in God's due time.

36  **Delayed but delivered (spoiler alert)**

- ▀ Tom Hanks' character in the 2000 movie *Castaway* works for Fedex, resolving productivity

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problems

- Is in crash and stranded on island for 4 years
  - Opens various packages but resolves to not open one package so he can complete delivery of it when he is rescued
  - Spends 4 years talking to "Wilson" – a volleyball that becomes stained with his own bloody handprint.
- Is finally rescued and delivers the one unopened package. He asks the contents of the package and it was...a satellite phone.

### 37 God gives a condemning revelation (2:4-5)

- *Look! His spirit within him is puffed up; it is not upright. But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness. How much less the defiant; the arrogant, treacherous man? He who broadens his throat like Sheol, and who, like death, is not satisfied, and who gathers to himself all the nations, and harvested for himself all the peoples, will not succeed.* (Habakkuk 2:4–5, LEB)
- God agrees that the Chaldeans / Babylonians are arrogant and greedy and says that they will not succeed.
- Meanwhile, the righteous shall live by faith. *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: But the just shall live by his faith.* (Habakkuk 2:4, KJV 1900) – the verse that changed Martin Luther forever!
- Quoted three times in the New Testament (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38)

### 38 Habakkuk 2:4 in the New Testament

- *For the righteousness of God is revealed in it from faith to faith, just as it is written, "But the one who is righteous by faith will live."* (Romans 1:17, LEB)
- *Now it is clear that no one is justified in the sight of God by the law, because "the one who is righteous will live by faith."* (Galatians 3:11, LEB)
- *But my righteous one will live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul is not well pleased with him.* (Hebrews 10:38, LEB)
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### 39 A diamond on a pile of soot

- The soot – the Chaldeans are puffed up and headed for destruction
- The diamond – God's people live (experience God's blessing by enjoying a life of security, protection, and fullness) by faith (steadfastness or faithfulness).
  - Relating faith to faithfulness -- One who trusts in the Lord is one who relies on Him and is faithful to Him
  - A righteous Israelite who remained loyal to God's moral precepts and was humbled before the Award enjoyed God's abundant life.

### 40 Relationship of wine to wickedness (2:5)

- *Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, He is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, Who enlargeth his desire as hell, And is as death, and cannot be satisfied, But gathereth unto him all nations, And heapeth unto him all people:* (Habakkuk 2:5)
  - They were betrayed by wine. (They also used wine to betray others, v. 15.) *Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, That putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, That thou mayest look on their nakedness!* (Habakkuk 2:15)
  - The Babylonians were said to be very addicted to wine. For example, Babylon was conquered while Belshazzar and his leaders were feasting at a riotous banquet (Dan. 5).
  - The treachery of wine is described in Proverbs 23:31–32. *Look not thou upon the wine when it is*

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*red, When it giveth his color in the cup, When it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, And stingeth like an adder.*

41  **Judgment is coming!**

- As God continued His condemnation, He said the typical Babylonian is arrogant (yāhîr, "haughty," occurs only here and in Prov. 21:24) and never at rest.
- These proud, restless people were as greedy as the grave. Just as death and the grave are not satisfied till all come into their grasp, so the Babylonians sought to take captive all the peoples (cf. Hab. 1:17).
  - Like some hideous monster, the grave devours the nations. Likewise, Babylon opened wide her insatiable jaws to devour all peoples. But this evil nation would not continue unpunished. God's judgment would fall!

42  **Next time...**

- There are several specific woes that will come to the nation of Babylon
- God is thorough in his judgment against the ungodly

43  **What did we learn?**

- We should follow the example of Habakkuk who has just learned that God will use an extremely evil and wicked nation to judge the corruption of his own nation. His reaction begins with extolling the virtues of God including His holiness and righteousness.
- No matter what we think is happening around us, God has not changed in His character. nor has He yielded his control over all creation.
  - He is always worthy of praise.
  - He is always worthy of adoration.
  - And His promises never fail.
- In an unstable and corrupt world, we have one certain surety on which we can base our lives – the ever-faithful God and His inerrant and infallible Word!

44  **What should we now do?**

- Worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness
- Acknowledge to Him the wonder of his character and our marveling at His ways
- Determine to praise God no matter what happens around us
- Determine that more of our speech will be dedicated to the praise of God than to the criticism of our fellow men