



Habakkuk

FROM THE BIBLE'S PROPHETIC BOOKS

Habakkuk

a prophet with a problem

A problem on earth that leads to a
problem with heaven



-Habakkuk 1:1-4

- Four Problems -

“The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet received. How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.”



Habakkuk felt deeply
distressed
in a very personal way
by the
dark and desperate
circumstances of the nation
where he lived.



1. Persevering prayer - “How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ but you do not save?”

2. Problem of evil - “Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.”

3. Protest and lament in prayer –

“Questions and lament are part of the believer’s burden, and honest dialogue with God is a necessary form of relationship with him.”

“Lamentation and questioning are God’s gift to the believer. They provide a pathway of honest faith and faithful conversation with him in horrible times.” (James Bruckner)

4. Problem of Theodicy – a defense of God's goodness (and power) in view of the presence and *apparent* rule of evil.

- If God is good and God is great...Why?...
 - **How long Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen?**
 - **Why do you make me look at injustice?**
 - **Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?**

Habakkuk

A man deeply committed to the will of God and profoundly perplexed about why God doesn't seem to be as concerned about His will as he is.

His struggle - why the wicked are free to do their wickedness without God's intervention and punishment.



Theodicy

**An intensification of
the problem
in the way
God answered
Habakkuk's prayer.**

Habakkuk 1:5-7

“Look at the nations and watch — and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. *I am raising up the Babylonians*, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings not their own. They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.”



**Habakkuk
intensifies
his**

protest

and

Lament

(Habakkuk 1:12-17)

Habakkuk 1:12-13

(NLT)

“O Lord my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal - surely you do not plan to wipe us out?

O Lord, our Rock, you have sent these Babylonians to correct us, to punish us for our many sins. But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil. Will you wink at their treachery?

Should you be silent while the wicked swallow up people more righteous than they?”

Habakkuk 1:14-17

(NLT)

“Are we only fish to be caught and killed? Are we only sea creatures that have no leader? Must we be strung up on their hooks and caught in their nets while they rejoice and celebrate? Then they will worship their nets and burn incense in front of them. ‘These nets are the gods who have made us rich!’ they will claim.

Will you let them get away with this forever? Will they succeed forever in their heartless conquests?”

Protest and lament can be *faithful* and *unfaithful*

- **The faithful protest** begins with an attitude that continues to address God as God (“God, how could you allow...?”)
- **The unfaithful protest** begins with the impersonal (and judging) abstraction (“How could God allow...?”)
(J. Bruckner)

Five dangers

1. You cannot grow in spiritually maturity without honesty and transparency.
2. You pretend everything is Ok when it's not.
3. Your worship becomes a heartless, dry and empty routine.
4. Your change in belief leads to change in lifestyle.
5. Your vitality, energy and effort will be drained by the effort it takes to subdue and hide your struggle.



Romans 9:14-19

What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?”

Romans 9:20-24

But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?

What if God, although *willing* to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory — even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Habakkuk 1:8-11

“Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like an eagle swooping to devour; they all come intent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand. They mock kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; by building earthen ramps they capture them. Then they sweep past like the wind and go on — guilty people, whose own strength is their god.”



Habakkuk

**The struggles of a servant
of God with the ways of God.**

**Dedicated servants of God
sometimes doubt and question God.**



Habakkuk

Jonah

Job

Ecclesiastes 8:11

“When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people’s hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong.”

Jonah

Jonah

A man deeply committed to the will of God but resentful toward those who don't live according to God's will.

His struggle – Why God would forgive wicked and violent people.



Jonah 4:2

“I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.”

Job

Job

A man deeply committed to the will of God but suffers greatly despite (or because of) his obedience.

His struggle - why the righteous suffer and he defends his innocence before God.



Three questions

1. How long Lord, must I call for help,
but you do not listen?

2. Why do you make me look at injustice?

3. Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?



Job 23:1-7

Then Job replied: “Even today my complaint is bitter, his hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say to me.”

“Would he vigorously oppose me? No, he would not press charges against me. There the upright can establish their innocence before him, and there I would be delivered forever from my judge.”

Job 23:8-10

“But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.”

Common struggles for godly people in a fallen world



Habakkuk's

two

problems

with

God

Problem # 1

When God *seems to* ignore
our prayers about our
circumstances

(Habakkuk 1:1-4)



Problem # 2

When God seems to give the
“wrong” answer to our prayers

(Habakkuk 1:5-11)



Habakkuk's response (1:12-13)

“Lord, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, you will never die. You, Lord, have appointed them to execute judgment; you, my Rock, have ordained them to punish.”

“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?”

**A common struggle of
a godly person
in a fallen world**



**The
teaching
of
Jesus**

Luke 13:1-5

“Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.””

John 9:1-3

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.



**Five dangers
when we hit a wall
and refuse to be honest
with
God and others**



**What was so deeply
distressing to this
servant of God?**



Habakkuk 1:1-4

“The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails.

**The wicked hem in the righteous,
so that justice is perverted.”**



The Romans 11:33 marker on the path of spiritual maturity

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!”



**Watch your attitude in
your questions**



Foolish wisdom

Wise ignorance



HABAKKUK

WHEN GOD SEEMS UNFAIR