

Habakkuk 1

A CONVERSATION WITH GOD

THE PROPHET (v1-4)

v2

“O Lord, how long shall I cry for help and You will not hear? Or cry out to You of violence and You will not save?”

- There will be times in our life when The Lord will be silent. There are many of this in scripture that we can take comfort and encouragement from. But The Lord's silence is not the removal of His blessing. It is often in these times that He does His most precious work in His children.

- *Job 23:8-12 Behold, I go forward [and to the east], but He is not there; I go backward [and to the west], but I cannot perceive Him; [9] On the left hand [and to the north] where He works [I seek Him], but I cannot behold Him; He turns Himself to the right hand [and to the south], but I cannot see Him. [10] But He knows the way that I take [He has concern for it, appreciates, and pays attention to it]. When He has tried me, I shall come forth as refined gold [pure and luminous].*

- *Luke 2:7 ... and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room or place for them in the inn.*

v3-4

“Why do You show me iniquity and wrong, and Yourself look upon or cause me to see perverseness and trouble?”

“for the wicked surrounds the [uncompromisingly] righteous; therefore justice goes forth perverted.”

- Habakkuk could just as well be describing society in our current day.

- We could well ask The Lord: Why? Why do you allow your name to be blasphemed? Why do you allow your name/testimony to become powerless?

Why can I do nothing but look on and watch as the evil grows and men move further from truth, light and life?

- The most heartbreaking revelation is that the “church” has become powerless. There are none who understand. There are so few who are preaching The Gospel with a heart after God. *Psalms 14:2-3 The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any who understood, dealt wisely, and sought after God, inquiring for and of Him and requiring Him [of vital necessity]. [3] They are all gone aside, they have all together become filthy; there is none that does good or right, no, not one.*

- Truly justice is perverted. The foolishness and wickedness of man is in full display in the courtrooms and political debating halls. They have no sound logic, they have no concept of repercussion and consequence. Concerned only with their own name and power and immediate praise and comfort.

THE LORD (v5-11)

v5

“Look around [you, Habakkuk, replied the Lord] among the nations and see! And be astonished! Astounded! For I am putting into effect a work in your days [such] that you would not believe it if it were told you.”

- The Lord foretells and describes a dreadful day of judgement. Judgement against Israel, His people.

- The Lord also makes clear that He is doing it! He is raising up and empowering the enemy to come. It is His sovereign plan. There is no evil, no enemy no power that acts without His sovereign knowledge, will and purpose!

- Neglecting The Lord's Salvation has consequences. Walking outside of communion with God has dire and severe consequences. God HATES sin! God HATES disobedience! We seem to have forgotten this.

- *Exodus 32:9-10 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, they are a stiffnecked people: [10] Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them, and that I may consume them...*

- *Psalms 7:11 God judges the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*

- God will sift His people. He is coming back for a glorious bride. Not a partial bride, not a polluted bride, not a false, self-centred bride...

- *Revelation 19:7-8 Let us rejoice and shout for joy [exulting and triumphant]! Let us celebrate and ascribe to Him glory and honor, for the marriage of the Lamb [at last] has come, and His bride has prepared herself. [8] She has been permitted to dress in fine (radiant) linen, dazzling and white-for the fine linen is (signifies, represents) the righteousness (the upright, just, and godly living, deeds, and conduct, and right standing with God) of the saints (God's holy people).*

v6-7

“bitter and impetuous nation who march through the breadth of the earth to take possession of dwelling places that do not belong to them.”

“terrible and dreadful; their justice and dignity proceed [only] from themselves.”

- This would describe most nations/governments today. It is the nature and way of man.

- The nations have forsaken God. There is no fear of God before them. Their “justice and dignity” are of their own imagination and understanding. Their understanding of man, morality and morals is backward, nonsensical and completely opposed to God's law and rule.

- *Jeremiah 9:13-14 And the LORD says, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; [14] But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:*

v11

“they load themselves with guilt, [as do all men] whose own power is their god.”

- Day after day, action after action, choice after choice they heap up guilt upon themselves.

- *Romans 2:5-6 But by your callous stubbornness and impenitence of heart you are storing up wrath and indignation for yourself on the day of wrath and indignation, when God's righteous judgment (just doom) will be revealed. [6] For He will render to every man according to his works [justly, as his deeds deserve]:*

THE PROPHET (12-17)

v12

“Are not You from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One?.”

- Despite the circumstance Habakkuk seeks for comfort in The Lord. He is not looking to anyone or anything else except the Person of God. He worships and reverences The Lord. He says “my God” and “my Holy One” Despite the promise of terrible judgement and oppression Habakkuk does not lose sight of HIS God. The one to whom he is praying and seeking and hoping. He knows that he is going to be lead into very difficult days, a darkness and trial that he could not imagine... But the prophet talks to HIS God. He could have stopped short at “Are you not from everlasting?” but he speaks with submission and humility.
- He looks to remind God of being eternal. Eternally holy, eternally good, eternally loving, eternally sovereign, eternal in His promises... etc. Meaning to remind God of His promises and relationship to Israel.
- Habakkuk addresses God with his question. He seems to say, ‘Surely not Lord!’. He is shocked and dismayed and struggles to comprehend the vision that The Lord has revealed to him.

“We shall not die”

- Habakkuk believes that there will be life. More than that he believes that there will be life and hope after the Chaldeans; after the wrath.
- We could argue here that he is opposing The Lord and in disbelief... This would confirm and fulfil what God said in verse 5. He questions God and makes a bold statement in opposition to what The Lord has said.

“O Lord, You have appointed [the Chaldean] to execute [Your] judgment, and You, O Rock, have established him for chastisement and correction.”

- Habakkuk is in disbelief. He is repeating what he has heard as if to question God like... Really God? You’re really doing this??
- He seeks to remind God that the Chaldeans are appointed unto judgement and that they have been raised up so that their wickedness be judged as a testimony unto The Lord’s holiness.

v13

“You are of purer eyes than to behold evil and can not look [inactively] upon injustice.”

- Habakkuk continues with a purpose to remind The Lord of His character. God, how can you observe the Chaldeans with anything other than hatred and disdain?
- We should stop here to understand that Habakkuk knows His God. He is not merely throwing a childish tantrum. He’s not annoyed that His fields are going to be taken. Habakkuk’s heart is breaking for the people of God. His faith and knowledge of God’s sovereignty is being tested. His understanding is being shaken and perhaps His own comfort/complacency. Whatever my perspective or understanding about this chapter I must remember that Habakkuk is a prophet of Almighty God. A chosen vessel for this very purpose. He is just a man and yes this may be his flesh talk, but he is a prophet of God, a man who knows his God, seeks His God and is dedicated to Him. Let me be careful to respect Habakkuk and revere him above myself.

“Why are you silent when the wicked one destroys him who is more righteous than [the Chaldean oppressor] is?”

- It is interesting that Habakkuk believes that Israel is “more righteous” than the Chaldeans. We could argue that Israel with all that God has done for them, with all that God has revealed to them, are far more wicked than the heathen. To know the light but not walk in it is surely far more wicked than to have only known darkness. But to have walked in the light even a little is more righteous than to have never walked in it.
- Israel’s righteousness, like ours, is in their faith. They believe God exists. Even as disobedient children they are still more righteous than the wicked heathen who are completely unrelated and cut off. So why would God use such a people??
- It’s not easy when God is silent.
- Oswald Chambers: *Has God trusted you with a silence, one that is full of meaning? God’s silences are his answers. Think of those days of absolute silence in the home at Bethany, as Lazarus lay sick and dying, tended by Mary and Martha (John 11). Is there anything similar to those days in your life? Can God trust you as he trusted Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, or are you still asking for a visible answer? If you refuse to go on without certain blessings, God will give them to you. But his silence is the sign that he is bringing you into a marvellous understanding of himself. Are you mourning before God because you have not had an audible response? You will find that God has trusted you in the most intimate way possible—with a silence that is not of despair but of pleasure, because he saw that you could handle a bigger revelation.*
- For those who keep their hearts fixed and their eyes on Jesus, the greater trial will result in the greater testimony/blessing. Mary & Martha had to go through the greater trial to gain the later but greater blessing/testimony/witness (John 11).
- Even in His wrath and punishment God is working all things together for good.