

Habakkuk

Introduction

A. History

1. In 722 BC the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and carried the people off into exile
2. In 586 BC the Babylonians (aka Chaldeans) conquered the southern kingdom of Judah and carried the people off into exile
3. Habakkuk writing around 610 BC to the southern kingdom before its destruction

Habakkuk never speaks directly to the people
He enters into dialogue with God

The Passage

I. Habakkuk first complaint: 1:1-4

- A. The problem: God's chosen people in Judah are thoroughly wicked and disobedient
- B. The complaint: God isn't doing anything about it: "how long?"

II. God's first reponse: 1:5-11

- A. "You're not going to believe what I'm about to do" 1:5
- B. "I'm raising up the Chaldeans to punish and discipline my people"
 1. They are evil: v. 6-7
 2. They are unstoppable: v. 8-9
 3. They are arrogant: v. 10-11

Imagine what happens when an evil barbaric army destroys a city full of men, women, children, and elderly!

III. Habakkuk's second complaint: 1:12-2:1

- A. "How can you use such an evil instrument (Chaldeans) as part of your plan?" v.12-13
 1. The solution seems even worse than the problem
v. 13: Judah is more righteous than the Chaldeans
 2. A description of God's character
v. 12: "from everlasting," "Holy One," "O Rock"
v. 13: "You are of purer eyes than to see evil"
 3. God's choice of the Chaldeans
-v. 12: you "ordained them" you "have established them"
-v. 6: "I am raising them up"
 3. How can a God who is eternal, holy, pure use an instrument that is so evil, wicked, and godless?
- B. Our questions of God's use of evil
 1. God uses evil events and people in ways that are messier than we'd like
 2. Scripture says: God himself is righteous, holy, good and yet he chooses evil events as part of his plan
 - a. The ultimate example is the cross
 - b. This is disconcerting but also comforting (God can use anything)

- C. Chaldeans personified as a fisherman gathering all these fish to kill: 1:14-17
- D. Habakkuk will wait to see how God will respond: 2:1

IV. God's second response: 2:2-20

Summary of Response: "Don't worry, I will punish the Chaldeans some day, there will be justice. Things will all be made right in the end."

- A. God prepares Habakkuk for the message
 - 1. Write this down: 2:2
 - 2. Be patient. This will happen in My timing: 2:3
- B. God's answer: the destiny of two types of people
 - 1. Arrogant, wicked people will be destroyed: 4:4-5
 - 2. "The righteous shall live by faith" 4:4
 - 1. Quoted in Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38
 - 2. Even though Chaldeans will destroy Judah, people who put have a humble, confident trust in God will ultimately live
- C. Judgment and Justice on the arrogant Chaldeans: 2:6-20
 - 1. 5 songs of woe about the Chaldeans
 - v. 6-8, v. 9-11, v. 12-14, v. 15-17, v. 18-19
 - 2. God's justice will win and God will be victorious
 - v. 14, v. 20

V. Habakkuk's final response: chapter 3

He's satisfied with God's answer and he writes a song to God in respon

- A. A prayer that God would renew his deeds of old and remember mercy: 3:2
- B. A poetic description of God as mighty warrior king who saves his people: 3:3-15
- C. Habakkuk's response to the vision
 - 1. Humility: Fear and reverence in the presence of one so great: v. 16a
 - 2. Commitment to wait patiently in the midst of calamity: v. 16b
 - 3. Faith and praise: v. 17-19
 - a. Even though there may not be any visible or external signs of God's presence, I will rejoice in God
 - b. Habakkuk's circumstances haven't changed at all, but he has changed because his perspective has changed: He knows God will ultimately punish the wicked and save those who trust in Him

Application

- I. We are to trust in God's timing which may not be our timing
 - A. Habakkuk: God promised to judge the Chaldeans, but that wouldn't happen in Habakkuk's lifetime
 - Just like other biblical characters (Abraham, Moses, etc)
 - Hebrews 11:13: these all died in faith, not having received the things promised . . .
 - B. Us: God may be asking us to trust Him for something that we won't receive in this lifetime
 - That's really hard for us because we want everything now

- II. We may need to change the object of our trust
 - A. Habakkuk: the Chaldeans were going to destroy Jerusalem and many righteous people who trusted God probably got killed in that battle
 - there were many people who trusted God whose life circumstances didn't work out the way they wanted them to
 - B. Us: We need a trust that goes beyond life's circumstances
Trust in God's character and ability to see us through to eternal life
 - 1. How do you measure God's faithfulness?
Usually by circumstances: whether he provides \$, job, wife, good school for kids, health, friends, etc
 - 2. Message of Habakkuk: God may not provide those circumstances
In fact, our greatest fears may come true in this life
 - loosing a spouse, going bankrupt, etcGod is saying: "trust me anyways"
 - C. So, what's the good news?
 - 1. No one is righteous: All sinful and deserve justice like Chaldeans
 - 2. God sent his son (righteous): he died and paid the necessary penalty
 - 3. When we put our faith in him
 - a. our sin is paid for by Christ
 - b. Christ's righteousness is given to us
 - 4. We will live for eternity with God
= "the righteous shall live by faith"
 - D. What can we put our trust in even in the midst of hard circumstances
 - 1. Eternal life: Hebrews 10: 34-39
 - 2. God's presence with us through all circumstances (Mt 28:20)
 - 3. Peace with God, no condemnation (Romans 8:1)
 - 4. Fruit in the world (John 15) and in us (Galatians 5:22-23)
 - 5. God will work all things work for our good (Romans 8:28)

When we cling to those promises, then we can sing Habakkuk's song (3:17-19)

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. What do you think of God's choice to use the evil Chaldeans to discipline His people? How would you articulate the relationship between God and evil? For instance, how do you react to events like Hurricane Katrina? Would you say, "God had nothing to do with Katrina?" or would you say "Katrina was God's judgment of sin?" or would you say something else?
3. How might accepting God's timing on his plans change the way you are currently living?
4. If we can't count on God to make our circumstances go well in this life 100% of the time, what (biblically speaking) can we count on him for in this lifetime? What promises can we claim with full confidence?
5. What is a difficult circumstance that you're going through right now? How would changing the promises you're clinging to affect how you walk through this circumstance? What specific promises might you need to cling to in this time?
6. What was your emotional reaction to the message of Habakkuk?