

The Prayer of Habakkuk

Habakkuk Chapter 3

I. The Prophet's formal prayer. Vss. 1-2

Habakkuk's prayer comes after the fearful report of chapter 2 concerning the Judah's coming destruction. The prophet's prayer is a plea that God will keep His covenant promise with Israel when the ruthless Babylonians come against Judah to chasten them. It is a reference back to 1:5.

Revive: does not have to do with our modern day "revival meetings." Rather Habakkuk is saying, I know that you are working. Please keep it up." He knows judgment is coming, but prays that God will remember mercy.

The imagery in the vision is based upon the accounts of God's might works of deliverance on behalf of His people in ancient times and His judgments upon their enemies in Egypt, at the Red Sea, at Sinai and in the conquest under Joshua in Canaan.

He recalls the ten plagues upon Egypt.

To measure was a sign that God owns the earth.

An interesting question in verse 8, was God displeased with the rivers, and against the sea? The answers in found in that they were the instruments used to bring salvation to His people

Verse 9 portrays the various battles that the nation of Israel fought en route to the Promise Land. Battles that the Lord won for them when they trusted and obeyed His commands.

Verse 10 describes the victory given to the Judge Deborah and Barak over the Sisera when a sudden rain storm turn the battle field into a muddy swamp leaving the chariots useless.

Verse 11 describes the day the Lord caused the day to prolong until Joshua had completed his victory.

III. The Prophet's Fear Vss. 16-17

The prophet's contemplation of divine judgment produced at first fear at the prospect of God's chastisement of Judah. Habakkuk expresses faith in the ultimate salvation of God for His people after the period of chastisement is over.

IV. The Prophet Praises Vss. 18-19

These verse represent one of the greatest confessions of faith ever uttered in the Bible. Habakkuk knew in his heart that he did not have the strength he needed but that God would supply the strength needed to endure the trials which lie ahead.

1. A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.
2. O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, **revive** thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.
3. God came from **Teman**, and the Holy One from mount **Paran**. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.
4. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.
5. **Before him went the pestilence**, and burning coals went forth at his feet.
6. **He stood, and measured the earth:** he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.
7. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.
8. Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? was thine **anger against the rivers?** was thy wrath **against the sea**, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation?
9. Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.
10. The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.
11. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.
12. Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.
13. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.
14. Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly.
15. Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters.
16. When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.
17. Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:
18. Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.
19. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.

Shigionoth: a song, an Ode or Rhapsody, indicating a rhythm in which the ode is to be sung (in this case a song of triumph).

What a changed man Habakkuk has become. Instead of complaining, he is praising the Lord. His sighing has turned to singing. If we like Habakkuk will take time to wait on the Lord in prayer and in His word our hearts will be turned from sighing to singing.

Teman: the name of two Edomites, and of the region and descendants of one of them: - south.
Paran: a desert of Arabia

II. The Prophet's reviews Israel's past history. Vss. 3-15

This psalm was intended to be sung by the captives during the Exile, which was near. In Hab 3:3-15 there is a recital of the great events in the past. First Sinai, then the victories and deliverances of the book of Judges, the passage of the Red Sea and Jordan, the divine vengeance on the oppressors. But the prophet could not contemplate the future of the Chosen People without dismay. He longed to be at rest before those terrible Chaldean hosts burst upon the land. At the close he breaks into a sublime refrain which has been the solace and song of myriads of believers. If all God's gifts failed he would still possess the Giver. He could still triumph in God. Indeed, the divine Savior and Friend is often more apparent when the fields and the farmsteads are bare.

In Verse 12 Habakkuk pictures the Lord marching Canaan like a farmer threshing his grain, and his people claiming their inheritance.

Scholars have differing opinions of the historical events described how God intervened in delivering His people in verses 13-16.

A summary of the three mains views:

1. Habakkuk may have the time that God delivered Israel from the hands of the Egyptians. If so I think he would have mentioned it earlier.
2. Habakkuk could be referring to the various times in the book of Judges that God used various judges.
3. Habakkuk may have been looking forward to the deliverance of God's people from the Babylonians captivity.
4. Some believe that Habakkuk may have both the past and future deliverances in view.

Whatever Habakkuk had in mind, his focus was rooted in God would keep His covenant with His people.