

# HABAKKUK

*just living by faith*

March 1, 2009



We look over his shoulder as Habakkuk gripes this first of two prayer complaints to God, "Why do you tolerate so much wrong around me?"

## Habakkuk 1:1-4

*1 The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received. 2 How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save? 3 Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. 4 Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.*

### The Times

- Major prophets wrote longer books. Minor prophets wrote shorter books.
- The Major Prophets are from Isaiah to Daniel in roughly chronological order.
- The Minor Prophets are from Hosea to Malachi in roughly chronological order.
- Habakkuk, and many of the Minor Prophets, assumes we know the historic setting.
- *divided kingdom*      northern.... southern  
*name*                      Israel ..... Judah  
*conquered by*        Assyria ..... Babylon  
*when*                     721 B.C.... 586 B.C.
- Evil leadership of kings & priests. Evil people.  
 2 Chronicles 35:18; 36:14-16
- Mistreatment of the poor and the land.  
 2 Chronicles 36:21

### The Text

#### 1:1-4, First Complaint—Unpunished Wicked Title

- *oracle*.....
- *Habakkuk* .....
- *prophet*.....

#### Topic

- About the *wicked & righteous (vs 4)*.....

#### God, why so long? (four questions)

- *How long* .....
- Is God concerned? .....

Is God just?.....

.....

Is God in charge? .....

.....

#### God, why does injustice expand?

- *injustice* (synonyms) .....
- wrong*.....
- destruction* .....
- violence*.....
- strife*.....
- conflict*.....

#### God, why does justice shrink?

- *Therefore* .....
- [1] *law paralyzed*.....
- [so] *justice never prevails* .....
- .....
- [2] *wicked hem in the righteous*.....
- so justice is perverted*.....
- .....

### The Take-Home

- How do our times square, compare with those of Habakkuk's?
- About what might God be concerned?
- Should we feel similarly about the evil around us? Am I justifying sin because "everyone" else is doing it? Do we take our faith and God's righteousness so seriously that sin around us is distressing?
- **Pray the Lord's Prayer each day of this week.** "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

## Where Do I Grow from Here? (Personal and Growth Group Questions)

Consider recording your answers below in advance of your Growth Group meeting

### Growth Group Questions

#### Interact

- 1) It's been a "long time, no hear" from your friend. What's the first thing you ask your friend? The second?
- 2) What is something that really bothers you as evil these days? Why does it bother you?

#### Observe and Interpret

- 3) Read through Habakkuk. Who is speaking in which verses?.....  
.....  
.....
- 4) In 1:1-4, what is evident about Habakkuk, his historical situation and current crisis? Specify facts, viewpoints or feelings.  
Historic Facts .....  
Viewpoints.....  
Feelings.....
- 5) Where are you crying out, but unheeded? What then do you say? Feel? Act? .....  
.....  
.....
- 6) To whom is Habakkuk complaining? Why? Is he concerned about compassion? justice? or both? .....  
.....  
.....
- 7) What indications are there that Habakkuk had been praying for a long time?.....  
.....  
.....
- 8) In verses 2-4, do you think Habakkuk is expressing doubt or faith or both? Explain.....  
.....  
.....
- 9) Imagine yourself as a Jew hearing this complaint in verses 1-4 about you and your country. How would you respond thus far? .....  
.....  
.....
- 10) What if you heard such a complaint today against your own country? .....  
.....  
.....
- 11) How do our times compare with Habakkuk's?
- 12) About what might God be concerned today?
- 13) Should we feel similarly about the evil around us?
- 14) Why is it easier to justify sin because "everyone" else is doing it?

- 15) When have you taken your faith and God's righteousness so seriously that sin around you is distressing?
- 16) Do you feel confident enough to confront and complain to God?
- 17) Do you ever **not** want an answer from God?

#### Apply

- 18) Ask God to give you (1) His eyes to **see** evil for what it is and (2) His heart to have **compassion** on those trapped in evil or victimized by evil.
- 19) Pray this part of the Lord's Prayer each of the next seven days: "*Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" Matthew 6:10

### Even Further Optional Reading

#### Leadership of Judah

- Which kings are in 2 Chronicles 33-36. What kinds of info are given for each king?
- What nations are mentioned (33:11; 25:20-36:23)?
- What relationship does the Chronicler perceive between these nations and God (cf. 33:9-13; 35:20-24; 36:17,22-23)?
- What seems to have been the normal spiritual state of the kings, priests, and people of Judah during this time?

#### Note a parallel text in 2 Kings 21-25

#### Failure to Observe Sabbath Year

- Look at why it was important to honor the Sabbath Year for the land (Exodus 23:10-11. See also Leviticus 25:4; 26:34)
- **Treatment of the Poor:** By inference from 36:21, how did they observe the Sabbath Year for the land? What might the violation of the Sabbath Year indicate about the people's treatment of the poor in general?
- **Power and Sovereignty of God** See Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10; Daniel 9:2; Zechariah 1:12; 7:5. What was important to God and what power did he exercise to enforce it? Then see Jeremiah 1:1; 27:22; 40:1.

Some questions are derived from *Serendipity Bible*, (Zondervan) and *Just Living by Faith, A Study Guide to Habakkuk* (LePeau, LePeau, and Stewart. IVP Press).