

Kingdom Hope

Habakkuk 3:1-19

By Scott Huckaby

12/8/2024



Habakkuk 3:1-19

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. On shigionoth. ² Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy. ³ God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth. ⁴ His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand, where his power was hidden. ⁵ Plague went before him; pestilence followed his steps. ⁶ He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed— but he marches on forever. ⁷ I saw the tents of Cushan in distress, the dwellings of Midian in anguish. ⁸ Were you angry with the rivers, Lord? Was your wrath against the streams? Did you rage against the sea when you rode your horses and your chariots to victory? ⁹ You uncovered your bow, you called for many arrows. You split the earth with rivers; ¹⁰ the mountains saw you and writhed. Torrents of water swept by; the deep roared and lifted its waves on high. ¹¹ Sun and moon stood still in the heavens at the glint of your flying arrows, at the lightning of your flashing spear. ¹² In wrath you strode through the earth and in anger you threshed the nations. ¹³ You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, you stripped him from head to foot. ¹⁴ With his own spear you pierced his head when his warriors stormed out to scatter us, gloating as though about to devour the wretched who were in hiding. ¹⁵ You trampled the sea with your horses, churning the great waters. ¹⁶ I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us. ¹⁷ Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. ¹⁹ The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights. For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.

v1 – How did Habakkuk respond to the Lord’s answer?

The first two chapters of Habakkuk presented the prophet’s question and answer time with God. Now that God had answered Habakkuk, the prophet brought a prayer to close the book.

- The Hebrew word *shigionoth* is a musical term that refers to a style of music to be sung with impassioned triumph and a sense of victory.

v2 – Why was Habakkuk afraid (in awe, NIV)?

God used the wicked nation of Babylon to discipline Judah.

What did Habakkuk want God to repeat?

O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years: Habakkuk simply prayed for *revival*. He knew how God once worked and how His people once responded, and Habakkuk wanted to see that again.

- This shows that revival is a work of God, not the achievement of man. There is something man can and must do for revival — simply cry out to God and plead for His reviving work.

What did Habakkuk want to be made known?

Habakkuk longed for God to do a work that was *evident* to everyone as a work of God. He prayed that revival would be **known** at a definite *time and place (in the midst of the years)*, not just as an idea in someone’s head.

What does *in wrath remember mercy* mean?

Habakkuk prayed knowing well that they didn’t *deserve* revival, so he prayed for **mercy**. The idea is, “LORD, I know that we deserve your **wrath**, but in the midst of your **wrath remember mercy** and send revival among us.”

Is revival something we should be praying for today?

Certainly... but even more importantly for our own personal revival diligently searching ourselves:

- Check your conduct — does your walk glorify the LORD as it should? How about your *private* conduct, which only the LORD sees?
- Check your conversation — is your speech profane or impure? Do you talk about Jesus with others?
- Check your communion — are you living a growing, abiding life with Jesus?

v3 – What does it mean that God came from Teman?

This speaks of God as appearing out of the East; that is, He is shining over His people like the rising sun. God breaks the darkness and initiates a new day.

- Teman was a place in southern Edom, to the east of Israel (see gotquestions.org for references)
- Likewise, Mount Paran, a mountain opposite of Teman (Deuteronomy 33:2-4), was also east of Israel (Genesis 21:21).

What was Habakkuk looking forward to in praising God for the earth being full of His praise?

This would only happen during the Millennial Kingdom... Habakkuk was looking forward to that time. This is another aspect of God's glory from the east...

Matthew 24:27 – *For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

This recognizing Habakkuk's longing for the Millennial Kingdom sheds light on the verses to follow that the David Guzik commentary totally missed.

- This Blue Letter Bible commentary is good on historical context but weak on prophetic perspective.

Why is it good to praise God in our prayers?

- It gives appropriate honor and glory to God.
- It reminds us of who God is and what He has done.
- It puts man in the proper perspective under God.
- It builds our confidence in the power of God.

v4 – What does it mean God's power was hidden?

Prior to the Millennial Kingdom, people could only know the Lord through the spiritual discernment that comes from a personal relationship with Him...

1 Corinthians 2:14 – *the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

During the Millennial Kingdom there will be more awareness of the Lord, but a personal relationship through being born again will still be necessary to know Him rather than just know about Him (big difference).

v5 – To what does the mention of plague and pestilence going before the Lord refer?

This has to be the Tribulation that will precede the Millennial Kingdom.

v6 – When will nations tremble & mountains crumble?

Again, during the Tribulation when God prepares Israel and the nations for the Millennial Kingdom. The mountains will literally crumble from the final Bowl Judgment...

Revelation 16:18-20 – *there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth... Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

v7 – What is represented by the reference to Cushan and Midian being in distress and anguish?

Cush and Midian were the same people also known as Ethiopia representative of the people of Africa and by extension, Gentiles in general.

- The Gentile nations would be in distress & anguish

- The Tribulation would not just be the time of Jacob's Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), it would be the time of trouble for all nations.

v8 – When would God's wrath be visited on the rivers, streams and sea?

This has to be referring to the second and third bowl judgments during the Tribulation...

Revelation 16:3-4 – *Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.*

v9 – What does the bow and arrows refer to?

Peace is taken from the earth during the Tribulation... terrible weapons will be used and many people will die.

How would the earth be split with rivers?

During the Millennial Kingdom...

Zechariah 14:8 – *in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea*

v10 – Why would the mountains writhe at God's judgment?

Mountains are symbolic of rulers in prophetic literature:

Revelation 6:15 – *the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains*

When would the deep roar and lift its waves on high?

Again, during the Tribulation...

Luke 21:25 – *there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring*

v11 – To what could the flying arrows in the heavens be a reference?

This sounds a lot like the use of ICBMs during the Tribulation's sixth seal...

Revelation 6:13 – *And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.*

v12 – How is the Tribulation described by God threshing the nations in wrath?

Threshing is done at harvest time when the wheat and the chaff are separated during God's time of judgment. God's anger with humanity reaches a boiling point resulting in the Tribulation.

Genesis 6:3 – *And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh*

v13 – Who would be delivered by whom in the context of the Tribulation?

Israel would be delivered from *the leader of the land of wickedness* (the Antichrist) by *your anointed one* (the Messiah Jesus).

Why is the Antichrist's domain referred to as the land of wickedness?

The Antichrist's kingdom is called Mystery Babylon in Revelation... the description in Revelation 17 is a land of wickedness.

How would the leader of the land of wickedness be stripped from head to foot?

At the end of the Tribulation, the spirit behind the Antichrist would be exposed for what he is...

Isaiah 14:16-17 – *Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities?'*

v14 – Who would go into hiding from the leader of the land of wickedness?

Israel would at the midpoint of the Tribulation upon seeing the Abomination of Desolation. The Messiah would deliver a mortal wound to Satan, the spirit behind in the Antichrist as prophesied... *He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel* (Genesis 3:15).

v15 – How will the Lord trample the sea with His horses?

The sea is often used as a symbol of the Gentile nations in prophetic literature. The nations will certainly be subdued at the end of the Tribulation when the Lord returns...

Rev 19:14 – *And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.*

v16 – How did Habakkuk respond to recalling his vision of God's judgment?

When I heard, my body trembled: Habakkuk showed the proper response of man under the sovereign power of God. He recognized his own weakness and low standing before this God of all majesty and power.

What was the application of this vision of the Tribulation to Habakkuk?

The same end of mankind's national rebellion would apply to the Babylonians as well.

- The prophet remembered that the Babylonians were coming, and that this God of sovereign power and majesty would direct their work against Judah.

v17-18 – What was the vision Habakkuk had of the aftermath of the Babylonian invasion?

Habakkuk saw the Judean countryside desolate from the invading Babylonian army.

- With the desolate circumstances like he just described, Habakkuk could find no joy in the **fig tree** or in the **vines** or in the **fields** or **flock**.
- Habakkuk saw those problems for what they were and remembered that God was greater than them all.
- In the midst of this almost complete loss, Habakkuk could still **rejoice in the LORD**.

How could Habakkuk praise God even though he knew what God's people would have to face?

He knew that this God of majesty and power is not *diminished* because man faces difficult trials.

- He also knew Judah faced desolate circumstances it was deserved.

v19 – How could Habakkuk conclude with the LORD God is my strength?

Habakkuk could only properly declare this after he prayed the prayer of faith in the previous verses. He rightly declared that his strength was *not* in fig trees or vines or fields or flocks, but only in the **LORD God**.

- *What we praise is our strength.* If by his words, life, or heart a man lives to praise his own achievements and resources, then that is his (weaker) *strength*.

What picture did Habakkuk have for illustrating having God as his strength?

He will make my feet like deer's feet: Habakkuk thought of the deer running about on the **high hills**, never losing a step and never falling.

- More than that, the deer positively dance and leap on the hills — they are full of life and joy.
- As I trust in Him, He will not allow me to slip or fall, and I will do more than merely plod along — I will skip about with life and joy.

What applications come to mind from this passage?

- Revival is worth praying for but it should begin with ourselves.
- We should praise God even in the midst of uncomfortable circumstances.
- God fulfills His promises to Israel in the Millennial Kingdom. Get this wrong and you'll miss a lot in prophecy.