



LIVING
by
FAITH

in difficult times

3 studies in the book of
Habakkuk

Welcome to Habakkuk - Living by Faith in Difficult Times

You might be using these studies in a **Bible Study Group**. If so, try to make sure you've read the passage and done your preparation before you meet. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but also to the other members of your group.

If you're a **Bible Study Group Leader** please don't feel that your group needs to answer every question in every study, especially as some of these studies have lots of questions. There are different types of questions, including some which reflect on the same points from slightly different perspectives. Please choose the questions most appropriate for your group.

If you're doing these studies **individually**, why not let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even as you go) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

Recommended Reading:

Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah - Tyndale OT Commentary. David Baker.
Joel, Micah & Habakkuk - The Bible Speaks Today. David Prior.
The Minor Prophets. Vol. 2. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed).

Recommended Watching

Habakkuk. The Bible Project (6:49) bibleproject.com/explore/habakkuk

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1. What sort of situation makes you want to cry out, “That’s not fair!”?

2. If you were God, where in your local community or the world would you intervene to stop violence and injustice right now?

3. What events have you witnessed or experienced that have caused you, however briefly, to wonder how God can possibly be in control?

Read through the book of Habakkuk

4. What seems to be the nature of Habakkuk’s complaint against God?

5. How is this book different to other prophetic books in the Old Testament that you have read or with which you are familiar?

6. Which sections of Habakkuk's book fall into each of the categories below?

- Complaint

- Petition

- Divine Perspective

Some Historical Background

Israel was divided into 2 kingdoms during the reign of Rehoboam (circa 931 BC). The northern kingdom, which kept the name Israel, was wiped out by the Assyrians in around 722 BC. By the time of Habakkuk's writing, Babylon is growing in power and threatening to destroy Judah, the southern kingdom, with its capital, Jerusalem.

Habakkuk probably lived before, during and after the reign of King Josiah. Josiah instigated reforms to return the nation to obedience and faithfulness to God, but the kings both before and after him generally led the nation into immorality and idolatry.

It is likely that Habakkuk lived to see the ultimate fulfilment of his prophecy, the Babylonian invasions of Judah, climaxing in 586 BC.

Re-read Habakkuk 1:1 - 2:1

7. Habakkuk is lamenting, not only the presence of evil and wickedness, but that, as it turns out, this wickedness is among God's own people Judah. How does he describe the situation?

- 8.** What is God's answer to Habakkuk in verses 5 - 11?

- 9.** What is it about God's plan that Habakkuk struggles to come to terms with?

- 10.** Despite his difficulty in accepting God's plan to bring judgment, what is Habakkuk still convinced of in regard to God's character and action?

- 11.** What seeds of hope can you find in Habakkuk's complaints and God's answers?

- 12.** The cross of Jesus is the ultimate example of God using the actions evil people to achieve his own ends. And like Habakkuk's experience, some people find God's work there offensive.
What do people find offensive about the judgment of sin in the cross of Christ?

- 13.** Do you think humans have a right to question the way that God punishes sin or provides atonement for it?

14. What do we as Christians know about God's character (ie holiness, etc.) that Habakkuk did not?

15. How does understanding God's response to Habakkuk's complaint help us as we see and experience aspects of life that seem unfair or unjust to us?

Read Acts 13:13 - 41

16. The climax of Paul's speech in Pisidian Antioch is a quote from Habakkuk 1:5. What are the things done "in your days that you would never believe" (verse 41)?

17. What are the situations facing our church, local community, or the world, in which we need to remember that God is sovereign?

18. Can you think of a time when God didn't seem to be answering your prayers, only to discover much later that God was already working towards his answer at the time you were praying?

Habakkuk 2:2 - 20 The Righteous Shall Live By Faith

1. How good are you at waiting for something that you really want?
2. Have you ever had to take medicine or undergo a medical procedure that seemed worse than the illness it was treating?
3. If you asked your friends to describe the difference between a “good” person and an “evil” person, what do you think they would say?

Read Habakkuk 2:2 - 20

4. What is God’s answer to Habakkuk’s complaint?
5. Think back to what we know of the context of Habakkuk. Against whom are the woes of verses 6 - 20 being prophesied?
6. In what ways are they described?

7. List the five woes God speaks and the outcomes for each that he promises.

- 1

- 2

- 3

- 4

- 5

8. What do we learn about God from these woes and the promised outcomes?

9. To whom in Habakkuk's day could the label "righteous" be applied?

10. What will it look like for them to live by faith (v 4)?

11. Why do you think this section ends as it does in verse 20?

12. When people trust in their own creation (v 18) today, how is that expressed?

Read Isaiah 11:1 - 9

13. According to God's Word through Isaiah, when will the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord?

14. How does God's similar promise through Isaiah help us understand the prophecy against the Babylonians in Habakkuk 2?

15. Read the following passages. How is the author making use of the quotation from Habakkuk 2:4?
Note: The NT authors are relying on the LXX the Greek translation of the Old Testament, while our Bibles use the Hebrew texts, hence the slightly different wording when quoted in the NT.

- Romans 1:16 - 17

- 6.** Why does Habakkuk draw these parallels?

- 7.** If you had to choose a summary verse or sentence from this chapter, what would it be?

- 8.** Make a list of all Habakkuk's statements about:
 - God's character

 - God's action

- 9.** How can Habakkuk rejoice in his experiences of verse 18?

- 10.** What kind of future deliverance by God's hand do you think Habakkuk expects for Judah?

- 11.** How is Habakkuk demonstrating his faith despite his difficult times?

- 12.** What do we learn in this section about the way God brings salvation?

- 13.** How does God's promise of salvation here help us understand the salvation won for us by Jesus?

- 14.** How is this section an answer the questions raised earlier in the book?

- 15.** How has Habakkuk's understanding or perspective changed since chapter 1?

- 16.** What common misconceptions about God are corrected by this passage?

- 17.** If you asked Habakkuk his questions of 1:1 - 2 after he'd written chapter 3, how do you think he would answer them?

- 18.** Have you ever had an experience similar to Habakkuk's; initially wanting to tell God how he can run his world better, only to come to a deeper trust of God and his ways?
- 19.** If you wanted to stir up your local Christian community to greater reliance upon God and deeper trust in him in order to move forward in faith, what acts of God would you remind them of?
- 20.** How is a Christian person's understanding of the twin ideas of God's wrath and mercy different to Habakkuk's?
- 21.** How does Habakkuk 3 help you care for someone who is finding the trials of life almost overwhelming?
- 22.** In which difficult times is it most difficult for you to live by faith?

