



Southwell  
Minster

*The Cathedral and Parish Church  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary*



GROWING  
DISCIPLES  
Wider Younger Deeper

# Habakkuk

James Halstead

## Making the Complaint: Chapter 1

1:1 *The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw.*

- Habakkuk's complaint (1:2-3):  
Why don't you listen?  
Why do I have to look at this violence?
  
- Consequence of the situation? (1:4a):  
The law becomes slack, justice fails
  
- Timid accusation (1:4b):  
The wicked are winning
  
- A God's-eye view in response to the problem (1:5-11)  
It's the Chaldeans (=Babylonians)...  
...and look how awful they are...  
...and see who has sent (?brought) them (1:6)

*The silent, inactive God – has been at work all along*

How can God choose a wicked nation to punish a more righteous one?

Will the wicked triumph for ever?

Q: What's been happening?

Q: When can we be guilty of looking at the world according only with our eyes – and how is that transformed when we see things from God's perspective?

Q: What do you make of Habakkuk's basic problem – that it seems like an even more wicked nation is the unstoppable cause of the judgement on his own people?

## Responding to the Complaint: Chapter 2

2:1 *I will stand at my watchpost... to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer*

2:2 *Then, the LORD answered me and said...*

But first, 2:3 – write it down: for the answer is still **future**.

- ⇒ The wicked will fall, and their wickedness will be the cause of that fall (2:4-5)
  - 1:7 – own forms of justice
  - 1:11 – own power is their god.
- ⇒ But the **righteous live by faith** (2:4) – in this future answer/promise/rescue

'4 Woes' against the Wicked:

1. Woe to you for amassing material gain – it will become your shame (2:9ff)
2. Woe to you for the bloodshed on which you've prospered – *God's* glory will stand (2:12ff)
3. Woe to you for the humiliation you've brought upon your captives – you'll know more (2:15ff)
4. Woe to you for worshipping idols – they have no breath (2:19)

2:20 *But the LORD is in his holy temple;  
let all the earth **hush** before him.*

- ⇒ 'Silence':
  - God? Apparently so at the start, but really working
  - Babylon? Noisy at the start, but will hush...

Q: God's promise is that judgement will come to the wicked. How do we hold on to that when it feels like 'evil' is prospering all around us?

Q: The woes of chapter 2 are awful. How is it right that we should find hope in the promised destruction of the wicked?

## Responding to the Response: Chapter 3

### Seeing

1:1

1:3

1:5

1:13

...

Habakkuk the 'seer'

3:2 *O LORD, I've heard of your renown, I'm in awe of your work... **in our time** revive it.*

3:3-15 An Exodus-style retelling of the mighty acts of God

3:16 *I hear, and I tremble within...*

*I wait quietly for the day of calamity to come upon the people who attack us*

## Conclusions: From Accusation to Acceptance

- ⇒ Acceptance of **past** verdict – this Exile is judgement for their sin
- ⇒ Acceptance of **future** verdict – that their oppressed will one day be surely judged.

*...Which is where the Christian disciple also lives:*

*Our sin has been judged (past – Jesus)*

*But the world is not yet right (though future verdict is sure)*

(Romans 5:8-10 – 'how much more')

Can you pray Habakkuk 3:17-19?

*Though the fig tree does not blossom*

*And no fruit is on the vines;*

*Though the produce of the olive fails*

*And the fields yield no food;*

*Though the flock is cut off from the fold*

*And there is no herd in the stalls*

(in short, though everything is gone, destroyed and hopeless)

*Yet I will rejoice in the LORD;*

*I will exult in the God of my salvation.*

*God, the LORD, is my strength;*

*He makes my feet like the feet of a deer,*

*And makes me tread upon the heights.*

Q: What has challenged you the most from this time reading Habakkuk?

Q: What has helped you the most?

Take a moment to pray for one another, living in a world in which justice often 'comes forth perverted' – that together we'll wait patiently for the world to 'hush' and God's righteousness to be seen.