

## Habakkuk 3

### *Praying in Faith*

**Leaders' Note:** In this study, we will read through chapter 3 of Habakkuk and wrap up the entirety of the book. While up to this point, the rest of the book has been a lament regarding the oppression, violence, and injustice of the time and God's response to the lament, Habakkuk 3 is regarded as a hymn of confidence in God's expected victory. As the book comes to a close, the author resolves to wait patiently for God's coming.

#### Learning Objectives

- To think about the imagery of God and past actions of God in helping us focus on the future
- To discuss the role of prayer in the life of faith

**Pray for your time together today.**

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#### Habakkuk 3

##### Habakkuk's Prayer

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.

Shigionoth likely refers to a musical instrument, setting the stage for Habakkuk's prayer, which is a hymn meant to be sung.

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.

The Bible is almost  $\frac{1}{3}$  poetry, and with  
 that poetry comes a lot of imagery,  
 which can help the reader understand  
 the scene in descriptive ways. Habakkuk  
 uses imagery here in his picture of God,  
 which also recalls the deeds and  
 character of the LORD as seen elsewhere  
 as the Scriptures recount God's actions in  
 history for his people. This imagery helps  
 us understand the character and actions  
 of God more clearly.

## Part One: Worthy of Praise

? Consider the context as we get to chapter 3 of this letter. How do chapters 1-2 lead Habakkuk to this prayer and praise?

*Possible Answers: Chapters 1-2 have shown us that God is attentive to the prayers of his people even in the most dire of circumstances. God has revealed the greater depth of his plan to Habakkuk, and reminded Habakkuk that, ultimately, evil will be judged and the righteous will live by faith. Habakkuk has come to a place of confidence that he can trust in the work of the LORD.*

? Habakkuk 3:2 asks of God: “in wrath remember mercy”. What is the significance of this verse? Why is it challenging to think about the wrath of God?

*Possible Answers: Habakkuk’s context is one in which there seems to be no alleviation from suffering and injustice. He understands God is good and just and that He judges the wicked. Habakkuk appeals to God’s mercy despite God’s judgment, asking Him to remember mercy and to be merciful. Wrath is scary and hard to reckon with. We don’t like seeing ourselves in a light that is deserving of God’s wrath.*

? What strikes you about the poetic imagery of God in verses 3-15? How do the descriptors cause God to be characterized?

*Possible Answers: We see God having splendor like the sunrise. With one look he makes the nations tremble and ancient mountains collapse, but he marches on forever. God is shown to be eternal, to possess a wrath and anger that are earth-shaking. God is portrayed as victorious and powerful.*

## Part Two: A Big God to Worship

? Let’s focus on verse 13. How does this foreshadow Jesus’ victory?

*Possible Answers: Genesis 3:15 talks about how the seed of the woman will crush the head of the seed of the serpent. This verse foreshadows how Jesus is victorious at the moment of death, when Satan thinks he has won. Jesus triumphs through the cross, and his resurrection is the guarantee of his final defeat of Satan and evil. God works redemptive purposes even through evil, which enables us to trust in faith in his ultimate deliverance. Jesus is the ultimate savior of God’s people and He has defeated and will ultimately defeat Satan.*

? How does the portrayal of God contrast with the imagery of Habakkuk in verses 16-19? What is Habakkuk’s response to those images of God?

*Possible Answers: God is almighty, powerful, full of wrath and will bring justice and judgment. Habakkuk is responding to who and what God is and does.*

? In v. 18, Habakkuk prays and declares that he will rejoice in the LORD. Does your prayer life resemble rejoicing in the LORD? How is prayer impacting your life of faith?

*Possible Answers: Prayer continually reminds us of God and keeps us dependent upon God for our day to day needs, as well as asking him to do more work in the lives and communities around us.*

? What role does worship play in your walk with Jesus?

*Possible Answers: Worship re-centers us on God, reminds us of who he is, and takes the focus off of ourselves. Worship encourages us to continue following and trusting God in the midst of our circumstances.*

? How does pausing and reflecting on the work of God in your life encourage you onward in the life of faith? How do we see Habakkuk doing that?

*Possible Answers: Answers may vary. Habakkuk's focus on water imagery seems to recall the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. As he remembers God's previous deliverance, it enables him to trust in God's future deliverance.*

### **Habakkuk Wrap Up**

**Leaders' Note:** Habakkuk's letter and prayer show us how to seek God as we live the life of faith. The New Testament writers declare Habakkuk's words, "The righteous will live by faith." Let's read Jesus' teaching the disciples to pray and consider the similarities with Habakkuk.

### **Matthew 6:9-13**

9 "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
10 your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
11 Give us today our daily bread.  
12 And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
13 And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.

? How does praying in this way encourage us to seek God as we live in faith?

*Possible answer: We seek God to work in the world, as we want to see his kingdom come. We pray that God's will would be done in our lives and the world. We seek God to meet our needs and we ask him to forgive our sins and guide us forward. This is how we pray in faith.*

#### **For Discussion And Accountability**

? Habakkuk ends this prayer by declaring, "The Sovereign LORD is my strength." What area of your life do you need God to be *your* strength this week? Is there something challenging in your life right now that you need to trust that God is in control?

? How can you make praying in faith a priority this week?