

HABAKKUK

LESSON # 7

3:1-15

Your memory verses is Habakkuk 3:17.

Chapter 3 is Habakkuk's prayer, a "Shigionoth," which is a highly emotional poetic form often used in psalms of lament. Written for use in corporate worship, it is full of striking poetic imagery and entrancing lyrics.

Read through the entire book of Habakkuk, reading chapter 3 *out loud* before beginning this lesson. □

1. Having heard from God in chapters 1 and 2 (remember what He revealed about Israel's near future and Babylon's more distant one), what shift do we now see in Habakkuk's tone as he writes chapter 3?
2. In vs. 2 Habakkuk says that he has heard the report about God. Considering what they have just been discussing in chapters 1-2, what kind of "report" has he heard, and what is his response to this report in vs. 2a?
3. When Habakkuk says "I fear," what does he mean? Define *fear* [Strong's #H3372].

4. We tend to think of fear as paralyzing, but Scripture shows that the fear of God is anything but! What does the fear of the Lord lead people to DO according to the following verses?

Genesis 22:12

Exodus 1:17

Exodus 9:20

Exodus 14:31

Leviticus 25:17

Psalms 112:1

Proverbs 14:2

5. If the fear of the Lord can enable His people to do all of this, imagine what it could do in your life! Think of three specific things that a robust fear of the Lord would change in your life.

6. Now that he understands God’s plan, and has been reminded of God’s character, Habakkuk has a threefold petition. What does he ask God to do in vs. 2, and what do these requests tell you about Habakkuk’s understanding of God?

7. When Habakkuk makes his plaintive request, “*In wrath remember mercy,*” he is doing something remarkable: Instead of questioning or challenging God’s justness in bringing judgment upon His people, he simply appeals to God to remember to act in accordance with His own promises and His own character. Read Exodus 34:6–7 and Jeremiah 31:35–37 and note how God describes Himself and His promises.

8. In order to understand just what “work” Habakkuk wants to see the Lord revive, we need to move on to vss. 3–15. Here, in poetic form Habakkuk draws upon the whole spectrum of salvation history. He looks back to reports of the Lord’s marvelous doings, and also looks forward to what the Lord will one day do on His people’s behalf. In one sentence, what kind of action is God seen taking in vss. 3–15? What kind of work does Habakkuk want the Lord to revive?

9. The imagery of vss. 3-15 calls to mind the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and its conquest of the promised land of Canaan 40 years later (vss. 8-15). Why does Habakkuk now allude to these past events? What is he hoping will happen in his own time? See Isaiah 11:16.

10. As he awaited his doom, Habakkuk chose to set his mind on the ways God had rescued Israel in the past. Which of God's past actions do *you* call to mind when your future looks trying or bleak?

11. Habakkuk 3:3-15 also looks forward to a future time of reckoning for Israel's oppressors, in this case the Babylonians. What will their future hold, according to vss. 13-14? How does this compare with Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 14:1-23?

12. How do vs. 13&14 answer the original questions Habakkuk posed to God in chapter 1?
13. Read through Habakkuk 3:3-15 again. This time, note what will happen to “Your people”—God’s chosen people, Israel.
14. While Habakkuk was awaiting invasion by the marauding Chaldeans, at the same time Jeremiah too was prophesying about things to come, adding to our understanding of what the future will hold. Read Jeremiah 23:3-8 and note everything you learn about the final salvation and re-gathering of Israel.
15. It is natural for us to look at the world today and ask, “What on earth is going on with Israel? Has God abandoned His people? Has He replaced them with the church?” To answer these questions, turn to Romans 11.
- a. Several different metaphors are used for Israel and the Gentiles in vss. 16-24. Which ones can you identify?

b. How does the olive-tree-and-branches metaphor help us to understand how the (mostly Gentile) “church age” fits in to God’s overall plan for His people (vss. 17-24)?

c. According to vss. 25-32, what is the ultimate future for Israel?

Behold the kindness and the severity of God!

~Romans 11:22

16. As we read this psalm of Habakkuk, we cannot help but think even farther ahead to the ultimate judgment of evil and the ultimate triumph of Christ. Read Revelation 19:11-21 (just one of many passages foretelling these end times events). Write down the descriptions of who Jesus is and what He does.

17. How can a reminder of Jesus' final victory change the way we cope with the difficulties of life?

18. Habakkuk clearly did not receive the answer that he was hoping for when he went to God in chapter 1, yet he *lives by faith* in the face of calamity by remembering God's character and promises. Specifically, in the midst of judgment, he trusted that God's mercy would not fail. What attribute of God do you cling to most ardently when the world falls apart around you? What Scriptures most clearly remind you of this attribute?

“ . . . the people who know their God will display strength and take action.”
~Daniel 11:32b