



February 2, 2020

“When God Doesn’t Make Sense”

Habakkuk 1 – 3

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Have you ever struggled to understand why things happen in life that don’t make sense? Have you ever questioned God about those struggles and felt that he was silent? What are we to do when God doesn’t work in the ways we think he should? The book of Habakkuk has some answers to those questions. We will see how Habakkuk experienced his own confusion about the ways of God. Habakkuk will take us on a progression of faith from confusion to consolation, from being perplexed to being at peace with God. Life is filled with unanswered ‘Why’s?’, and we can either torment ourselves trying to understand what God is up to, or we can learn to rest in the Lord and trust him. Pastor Gary’s message will help us learn more about trusting faith ‘When God Doesn’t Make Sense.’

### Historical Background

1. In Hebrew Habakkuk’s name is Chavakuk, which means embraced by God.
2. Outside of the book that bears his name, Habakkuk appears nowhere else in the Bible.
3. Habakkuk prophesied sometime just prior to the rise of the Babylonian Empire circa 600 B.C.
4. Pastor Gary said, “Habakkuk is unique among all of the other prophets in the entire Bible in that his book does not challenge a nation or a people group. He [was] Jewish, and he [was] not sent by God... to address the Jewish people [or other nations]. Perhaps he did that, but that’s not what his book is about. The book of Habakkuk is atypical among the prophets because it is entirely a dialogue [between Habakkuk and God]. ... [Habakkuk] was perplexed by some things that he [saw] in

his world, and [he was confused, and he had questions] for God about God... particularly as it relates to injustice and evil in the world. Habakkuk wanted to know why God allowed evil to exist, and he wondered, 'If God is Sovereign, why do wicked people prosper?' "

5. God is infinitely superior and wiser and sovereign in every way, and there are things that happen that are perplexing and confusing to us which don't make sense to us, but these things are not perplexing and confusing to God.
  - a. [Isaiah 55:8-9](#) - "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'* "
6. Habakkuk moved from being perplexed and confused to being consoled and at peace.

### The Questioning Stage

7. Pastor Gary said, "When our circumstances don't seem to fit our view of God, at least in terms of how we think that God should respond to [our circumstances], we ask [questions like], 'Why, God? Why did you allow this? Why didn't you fix this? What are you doing... or not doing?... How is this going to work out? Why don't you seem to [see a need] to intervene?'"
8. In [Habakkuk 1:1-4](#), we see that Habakkuk's first question was basically, "How [can it be that] there is so much evil and injustice in Judah, and you don't seem to do anything about [these things]."
9. God's response to Habakkuk indicates he was in fact doing something because he was preparing to raise up the Babylonians as an instrument of his judgement against the people of Judah, which are a people whom God loves.
  - a. [Habakkuk 1:5-11](#) - "*Look among the nations and watch - be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told to you. For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans [another name for the Babylonians], a bitter and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; their cavalry comes from afar; they fly as the eagle that hastens to eat. They all come for violence; their faces are set like the east wind. They gather captives like sand. They scoff at kings, and princes are scorned by them. They deride every stronghold, for they heap up earthen mounds and seize it. Then his mind changes, and he*

*transgresses; he commits offence, ascribing this power to his god.”*

10. God’s response to Habakkuk’s first question didn’t seem to help him, which made him ask a second question, ‘Why would you use a wicked people like the Babylonians to correct a people who are more righteous than they are?’
  - a. **Habakkuk 1:12-13** – *“Are You not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them [people of Judah] for correction. You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked [the Babylonians] devours a person more righteous than he?”*
11. Pastor Gary said, “Asking God a bunch of questions is not an affront to God. It may expose our own child-like lack of understanding of the complexity of our universe... but it’s not wrong to ask questions. He’s a big God. He can take [our] questions. [All] through the Bible [we] see people who questioned God... [including Moses, Jeremiah, and psalm writers].”
  - a. Moses
    - i. **Exodus 5:22-23** – *“So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all.’ ”*
  - b. Jeremiah
    - i. **Jeremiah 12:1-2** – *“Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead with You; yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?”*
  - c. Psalm Writers
    - i. **Psalms 10:1** – *“Why do You stand far off, O LORD? Why do You hide in times of trouble?”*
    - ii. **Psalms 42:9** – *“I will say to God my Rock, ‘Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a breaking of my bones, my enemies reproach me, while they say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’ ”*
    - iii. **Psalms 44:24** – *“Why do You hide Your face, and forget our affliction and our oppression?”*
12. We can ask God questions, but we need to understand that God is not obligated to answer when we ask, nor is he obligated to answer the way we think he should answer, and he didn’t answer Habakkuk.
  - a. Sometimes God knows that we don’t have the capacity to understand the deep things that he’s doing.
  - b. Sometimes God’s silence is his mercy because there are times when his

answer would be burdensome to us.

13. Pastor Gary said, "Life will be full of unanswered 'Why?' questions, and we can either torment ourselves with the unanswered 'Why's?', or we can believe that God is fundamentally good, and we trust him even when things don't make sense to us."

### The Trusting Stage

14. [Habakkuk 2:2-4](#) - *"Then the LORD answered me and said: 'Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; **but the just shall live by his faith.**"* (Emphasis added)
- This verse is quoted in part three different times in the New Testament: [Romans 1:17](#); [Galatians 3:13](#); and [Hebrews 10:38](#), and each time the reference is to salvation and believing faith in Jesus Christ.
  - Pastor Gary said, "In its original context it was about how to live in times when things were difficult. ... The faith we exercise in trusting Christ as our Savior is the same faith we need to exercise in trusting God with everyday life. [Faith] is not just something you exercise in relation to salvation... but faith is trust, and that kind of trust needs to be exercised every single day. When we look at our world, and we look at our lives, and things don't make sense... we have to realize [that *'the just shall live by his faith.'*"]
  - [2 Corinthians 5:7](#) - *"For we walk by faith, not by sight."*
15. Pastor Gary said, "This trusting stage is when you get to the place of realizing that because you can't fix something or change something or necessarily even understand something, that you learn to lean on the Lord and trust him. ... It's okay to say, 'I don't like this, I don't understand it, but I trust in the Lord, that he is on the throne and that he cares about me.' "
- [Psalm 18:2](#) - *"The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust..."*
  - [Psalm 91:2](#) - *"I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.' "*
  - [Psalm 56:3](#) - *"Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You."*

### The Praising Stage

16. [Habakkuk 2:20](#) - *"But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."*
17. David made a correlation between trusting the Lord and rejoicing in the Lord.
- [Psalm 5:11](#) - *"But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever*

*shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You.”*

- b. David didn't rejoice in the circumstances.
- c. David rejoiced in the Lord, and he was trusting the Lord with the circumstances of his situation.

18. The third chapter of Habakkuk is a prayer put to music.

- a. **Habakkuk 3:1, 19** – *“A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet... To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.”*

19. Pastor Gary said, “[Habakkuk praised] his way out of his anguish. ...

- a. **Habakkuk 3:2-3** – *“O LORD, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran [a reference to Mount Sinai, the place God gave the Law to Moses]. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.”*
- b. **Habakkuk 3:17-19a** – *“Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls – yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; **he will make my feet like deer’s feet [a reference to Ibex], and He will make me walk on my high hills.**” (Emphasis added)*

  - i. Habakkuk praised the Lord because he recognized that the Lord was going to help him keep his footing even when life was difficult.

### Discussion Questions

1. Read **Habakkuk 1:1-4** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Provide an overview of the life of Habakkuk. (See #1 through #3 above)
3. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s remarks concerning Habakkuk’s questions and confusion concerning injustice and evil in the world. (See #4 above)
4. Allow the people in your group to share experiences they’ve had when they were troubled by what they perceived as God’s delay or lack of concern about a situation they were dealing with.
5. Read and discuss **Isaiah 55:8-9**. (See #5 through #7 above)
6. Read and discuss **Habakkuk 1:1-11**. (See #8 and #9 above)

7. Read and discuss [Habakkuk 1:12-13](#). (See #10 above)
8. Have there been times when you've seen God use people to be the "instrument" of his judgment on others more righteous than they are? (See #10 above)
9. Read and discuss the Scriptures concerning the biblical examples Pastor Gary shared regarding the "Why?" questions. (See #11 above)
10. Why do you think God should be obligated to answer our questions? (See #12 and #13 above)
11. Read and discuss [Habakkuk 2:2-4](#). (See #14 above)
12. How has the Lord helped you live by faith?
13. Read and discuss [2 Corinthians 5:7](#), [Psalm 18:2](#); [91:2](#); [56:3](#). (See #14c and #15 above)
14. What was the breakthrough to the praising stage like for you? (See #16 through #18 above)
15. Read and discuss [Habakkuk 3:2-3, 17-19a](#). (See #19 above)
16. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)