

Study Guide - 22 March, 2020

Series: Surprising Prayers in Times of Crisis

Text: Habakkuk 1-3



This guide will help you facilitate a clear understanding of the Bible passage with a focus on applying God's truth to our lives together. You should spend at least half your time discussing questions that are application focused. Look at the Big Idea and What your CG Must Take Away sections at the beginning of the guide to keep the discussion focused.

Context of Habakkuk

Habakkuk is living at the end of the Southern Kingdom, when the nation is given over to much wickedness, and the Babylonians are threatening to attack them. It's a bleak time in the nation's history, and it seems as though God is not active.

Introduction to Habakkuk

The book of Habakkuk presents to us an important theological dilemma in redemptive history and covenant theology. In the midst of the impending Babylonian invasion, Habakkuk prays to God with two questions: how can God allow the wicked to prosper in Israel? and how can he allow an evil nation to punish his own covenant people? God answers Habakkuk by demonstrating His sovereignty and assuring Habakkuk of his eventual judgment of good and evil. In a similar fashion to the Psalms 44 and 77, Habakkuk responds by appealing to the past mercies of God in delivering His people in the Exodus, and remembering God's faithfulness, Habakkuk once again places his faith in God, who has revealed His love, justice and wisdom in redemptive history. For more background, check out the Bible Project video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPMaRqGJPUU>.

Outline of text

1. Habakkuk's Honest and Confused Prayer (1v1-2v1)
 - a. Habakkuk's Honest Complaint (v1-4)
 - b. God's Response (v5-11)
 - c. Habakkuk's Follow up Complaint (v12-2v1)
2. God's Invitation to Live by Faith in His Promises (2v2-20)
 - a. God's invitation to write the vision (v2)
 - b. God's promise that the vision will come to pass though it takes time (v3)
 - c. God's invitation to live by faith (v4)
 - d. God's promise revealed (v5-19)
3. Habakkuk's Prayer of Quiet Confidence in God (3v1-19)
 - a. Habakkuk's Prayer for God to Act Mightily (v1-2)
 - b. God's Actions in the Past and Promise in the Future (v3-16)
 - c. HabHabakkuk's Present Joy in God (v17-19)

Big idea

Because Jesus has died and risen again, we can be a people of faith in the midst of any crisis, and respond in crisis with joy and bold prayers.

What your CG must take away from this study

For your CG to live by faith in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and to respond to God at this time with joy and bold prayers.

Icebreaker

Q. What are some of the common ways you have seen people respond to the Covid-19 crisis?

Read Habakkuk 1v1-4

1 The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

*2 O Lord, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not hear?*

*Or cry to you "Violence!"
and you will not save?*

*3 Why do you make me see iniquity,
and why do you idly look at wrong?*

*Destruction and violence are before me;
strife and contention arise.*

*4 So the law is paralyzed,
and justice never goes forth.*

*For the wicked surround the righteous;
so justice goes forth perverted.*

Q1. What is Habakkuk's first complaint? (v1-4)

Q2a. Skim verses 5-11 for God's answer. How does God answer Habakkuk's complaint?

Q2b. How do you think Habakkuk must have felt about this answer?

Q3a. What is Habakkuk's follow-up complaint? (Skim verses 12 - 2:1)

Q3b. What have been some of your complaints during this season of Covid-19?

Q3c. How does this passage teach us to deal with our confusion, annoyances and complaints?

Q4a. What is God's response to Habakkuk? (2:2-20)

Q4b. Why are these two promises comforting at a time of crisis

Q4c. How have you found these promises comforting in times of crisis?

Habakkuk could not see it at the time, but God was faithful to these promises. Babylon was judged by the Persians, and God was glorified when Cyrus sent God's people back to Israel 70 years after they were exiled. These promises extend beyond Habakkuk's time though, and they are promises we can trust in today.

Q5. How is God bringing about his promises ultimately, so that evil is judged and God is glorified?

Q6. How does knowing God's ultimate plan to end injustice and suffering in the world change the way you respond to crises?

Read Habakkuk 3:1-3 and 17-19

1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.

*2 O Lord, I have heard the report of you,
and your work, O Lord, do I fear.*

*In the midst of the years revive it;
in the midst of the years make it known;
in wrath remember mercy.*

*3 God came from Teman,
and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah
His splendor covered the heavens,
and the earth was full of his praise.*

*17 Though the fig tree should not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail
and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold
and there be no herd in the stalls,*

*18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord;
I will take joy in the God of my salvation.*

*19 God, the Lord, is my strength;
he makes my feet like the deer's;
he makes me tread on my high places.*

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.

Q7. How does Habakkuk respond to God's promises?

Q8. Why can we rejoice in the Lord even at a time like this?

Q9. Why should knowing God's plan lead us to pray?

Apply Practically

Take the Covid-19 crisis and the other crises your group has shared to God in prayer. Bring your complaints and your requests to God, and praise God for his salvation. He is a warrior who goes out for the salvation of his people (3:13), and he is bringing to pass a great plan that he has started in Christ. Pray for your group to live by faith during this season, and for God's glory to spread through the world through this.