

## Habakkuk 3:1-19: Rejoicing in Suffering

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Tommy Meador / General Adult

Habakkuk / Habakkuk 3:1–19

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### Introduction

- Old Gospel Song - Through It All - How do you get to the place where you can sing “Through It All?” How can you get to the place that you can rejoice in your suffering?
- It’s easy to say “Through It All” when you’re on the other side of the struggles, but what about when you’re IN the struggles?
- Habakkuk ends with a powerful song of praise where Habakkuk is essentially singing, “Through It All” as he looks toward suffering that is even greater than the suffering he lamented about in the opening verses of this book.
- You will not go through life without experiencing tremendous suffering. The suffering could be a disease that ends up taking your life. The suffering could be the overwhelming grief you experience when you lose a spouse or child. The suffering could be the tragic loss of everything you own due to a natural disaster. The suffering could be a difficult marriage or financial distress.
- How can you rejoice in your suffering? [Habakkuk 3](#) is not calling us to rejoice FOR our suffering. Suffering in this broken world is not something we enjoy. However, we can rejoice IN our suffering.
- Reality: Suffering will either make you a better person or worse person. You will either allow God to grow you into Christlikeness in your suffering OR you will resist the work of God in your life as you suffer and become bitter and resentful.

- This morning: Three ways you can rejoice in your suffering.

## Choose to have a God-ward perspective.

- God has revealed His plan to Habakkuk - He would use Babylon as a tool of judgment against Judah. However, God's justice would prevail. Babylon would fall - five woes.
- [Hab. 2:20](#) - God is on His throne - be silent and stand in amazement.
- [Hab. 3](#) - Habakkuk responds to what He has heard. Habakkuk at the end of the book is completely different than the beginning of the book. He has gone from lamenting to praise.
- Habakkuk's circumstances have not changed. In fact, his circumstances are going to get worse. For the next few years, Habakkuk will wait for the destruction of his nation. While his circumstances had not changed, his perspective had. He KNEW that God was on his throne (2:20), and he KNEW that God's glory would fill the earth.
- vs. 1 - "Shigionoth" - Not sure - but a musical term. A prayer meant to be sung.
- vs. 2 - Habakkuk praised God because He heard God speak. Habakkuk didn't hear God's plan according to Habakkuk's will. He heard God's plan according to God's will. God would judge Babylon AND be faithful to His people
- You've heard God speak to you as well - every time you open His Word, you are hearing Him speak to you - He's revealing His plan to you, and that's worth praising Him for.
- vs. 2 - stand in awe of the Lord who speaks, who reveals Himself to us, and who shows us His ways are higher than our ways.

- “Revive your work in these years...” Habakkuk’s response to the promise of 2:14 - “Come, Lord... Make it happen.” Habakkuk longs for the glory of the Lord to fill the earth.
- “In your wrath remember your mercy.” God actually promised mercy - exile would only be 70 years. Habakkuk leaning on that promise. Habakkuk knows his people deserve judgment just like Babylon does. He’s asking God to be faithful to what He promised.
- This is NOT a lament - this is praise because Habakkuk’s perspective has changed - He’s beginning to see from God’s perspective.
- How do you know if you’re seeing life from God’s perspective?
  - **You’re constantly saying to God, even in your lament, “Help me to see from your perspective.”** Habakkuk never gave up. He stood watch until God revealed Himself. [Isaiah 55](#) - You need that constant reminder that God’s plans are higher than yours.
  - **You want God’s work to move forward more than you want relief from temporal suffering.** You don’t know how God is at work IN your suffering to accomplish His plan. Instead of assuming the worst (I’m not going to get through, God could never use this, my family is going to never be the same because of this, etc.) assume the best. (We’re really good at assuming the worst.)

## Choose to stay grounded in God’s proven track-record.

- Vs. 3 - “God comes from Teman, the Holy One from Mt. Paran” - Selah - Pause - Stop and think about what happened at Teman.
- Teman - Southern area where God revealed Himself to His people in the Book of Exodus. Paran - the place where the Hebrew people camped out after they left Sinai. From the wilderness of Paran, God sent the 12 spies into Canaan to show them the land.

- The point - God was with His people, delivering them from Egypt, leading them through the wilderness, into the Promised Land. God was on the move in Egypt, fulfilling His promise to Abraham to make his descendants a great nation.
- vs. 3b-15 - A recounting of the faithfulness of the God who was WITH Israel making them into a great nation. God as a Divine Warrior - no worldpower can stop God. God's people seemed small and insignificant on a global scale, but Egypt could not destroy them. Nor would Babylon ultimately destroy Judah. God would fulfill His promise to Abraham.
- Note all the ways the power of God put on display in these verses -
- vs. 4 - His brilliance like light - rays flashing from His hand- This is where His power is hidden. The Lord's power is not perceived until He is ready to display His powerful works - and according to His timetable - God revealed His power to the Hebrews and the Egyptians in the Book of Exodus.
- He sent plagues - He shook the earth- split the sea - came down on Sinai, etc. The people witness earthquakes...
- vs. 7 - the enemies trembled as God marched His people through the wilderness.
- Vs. 8-9 - Rhetorical questions - The God who shook the earth - was he mad at His creation? NO... He was mad at the Babylons and Egypts of the world that trusted in their idols and warred against His people.
- vs. 10-13 - God marches throughout the earth - the weapons of the warring nations cannot prevail against the God who even causes the sun to stand still in order to bring about victory for His people ([Joshua 10](#))
- God will save His people - He comes to save His anointed (vs.13). God would not let Babylon ultimately wipe out Judah - one day an Anointed

One would come from Judah who would reign and rule and usher in God's Kingdom.

- vs. 13b - "You crush the leader of the house" vs. 14 "You pierce his head"- A preview of what Jesus would do at the cross? Crush the head of the serpent? ([Gen.3:15](#))
- vs. 15 - God's people saw how He stirred up the Sea - a great act of salvation (The Red Sea) that points to an even greater act of salvation - the anointed one coming.
- What's the point? Habakkuk looks forward by looking back. While Judah will be judged, ultimately, God has not given up on Judah. God will fulfill His promise to Adam and Eve ([Gen. 3:15](#)). God will fulfill His promise to Abraham ([Genesis 12](#)).
- God will fulfill His promise to you. He has a proven track-record! Two questions to help you know if you are staying grounded in God's proven track-record:
  - **Are you constantly telling your "woe" story?** We like to focus on our woes, and we like to tell others our woes. I know you have your woes - you have your challenging circumstances. However, when you constantly tell your woe story, you end up complaining far more than you end up praising.
  - **Or, are you constantly telling your rescue story?** God didn't bring you into a challenging season just to leave you there. He will rescue you. He will bring you through, and He will bring you through with a better understanding of who He is.
    - If you doubt that God will bring you through, become overly familiar with the biblical story - it's a story of rescue. Do you know the story? Do you know how God worked through biblical history to fulfill His promises to His people?

- If you doubt that God will bring you through, become overly familiar with your own story. If you are a follower of Jesus, God has already rescued you from sin and death. If He is able to rescue you from hell, isn't he also able to bring you through whatever sufferings you are currently undergoing?

## **Choose to have joy even if more suffering is coming.**

- God does not promise to take the suffering away. Instead, God has revealed to Habakkuk that more suffering is coming - Babylon IS coming to judge - that will result in much suffering for God's people. It's through the suffering that God would ultimately bring victory for His people.
- vs. 16 - Habakkuk is honest - he trembled. While he praises God, the prospect of the Babylonians coming as a tool of God's judgment left him trembling.
- He trembles as he "waits for the day of distress."
- He considers what's going to happen - Judah is going to have nothing. The southern kingdom will be destroyed when the Babylonians take God's people into exile. Destruction - crops will fail - flocks will disappear - there will be no herds in the stalls.
- The discipline of God - it was a terrifying thought. It might be a terrifying thought for you as well to consider life might get harder before it gets better. Sometimes life gets harder because we are under the discipline of God. He allows us to experience the consequences of our own sin to wake us up. Sometimes life gets harder because we live in a broken world. Knowing that life gets harder causes us to tremble before God.

- vs. 18 - “Yet I will celebrate... I will rejoice... The LORD my Lord is my strength...” Habakkuk knows that Babylon is not his end. Habakkuk knows the story will end in salvation.
- Reality - Habakkuk would not see the end of the story. He would not see the fall of Babylon - but he praised God for what he knew was coming. His eyes were set on the future. Habakkuk chose joy.
- More suffering may be coming for you too. Will you choose resentment? Bitterness? Anger? Or, will you choose joy because you know that God is at work?
- Joy = a deep delight in God and His saving work independent of your circumstances. No matter the situation, you can delight in God.
- How can I have joy even if I know more suffering is coming?
- **Focus on what’s right.** Instead of focusing on what’s wrong - there’s plenty that’s wrong. But, there’s also plenty that’s right - the gift of salvation, a church family that cares for you, daily evidences of God’s grace, the blessings that he has given you, etc.
- **Seek the joy of others.** Being other-centered is joy giving, and you’re story of perseverance and faith even through the hardest times may be what God uses to deliver joy in the heart of someone else.
- **Make a Though the/Yet I will list.** Joy = a disciplined choice. You need to make the choice today to delight in the Lord no matter what life throws at you. “Though I get cancer, yet I will rejoice. Though I struggle financially, yet I will rejoice. Though I grieve the loss of a loved one, yet I will rejoice. etc.”
- It’s difficult to have joy when you face suffering, but that’s exactly what Jesus did. The Anointed One who came to crush the head of serpent found joy in knowing that His suffering would bring you into a saving relationship with the God of all creation ([Hebrews 12:2](#)). Jesus knew that His death and resurrection would result in our eternal joy.

- Have you placed your faith in the One who suffered and died for you to secure your eternal joy? Repent and turn to Him today.

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