

# Waiting for God's judgement

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[ 0 : 00 ] What, where, um, it was great. We had a great time. Um, uh, anyone want to help us? What,! What have we seen from Habakkuk so far? Um, we spent maybe three some days in Habakkuk so far.

I think we've had a lot. Oh, our summer. Sorry, I didn't see you. The microphone was covering you up. Oh, you're volunteering someone. We don't want to force anyone to speak, please. Um, what did we say? Um, we, we basically recapped that, that Habakkuk sort of starts out, um, bringing before God all the, all the violence and evil that's going around and doesn't understand why, sort of how long, why God doesn't do something about it. God replies by saying, well, I'm going to send the Babylonians in judgment, basically, and which is a bit of a shock to Habakkuk.

Um, so then he, he comes, that really pushes Habakkuk to realize that, that God is everlasting. God is God and we are not. And it's going to happen and God is sovereign and he sort of reflects on that a bit.

Yeah. Yeah. He still doesn't understand the answer to why. Yeah. Or how long it's going to go on for. Yeah. Yeah. We spent a lot of time in verse 12 last week, didn't we? So, so rich, such a rich verse. Um, yeah. Thank you, Brenda. That, that's really great. Thanks. Thanks, Osema for passing the microphone to Brenda.

Um, anybody, anybody else want to add, um, anything? Um, no. Um, that's, that's okay if you don't, but.

[ 2 : 11 ] Phil, Phil, and then we'll, uh, press on. Your answer is so good, Brenda. Um, be encouraged. I'm just remembering that, um, now you mentioned it, that bit about ordaining in verse 12.

My rock you have ordained them to punish. So the fact that God can ordain things in his sovereignty and decide this is what's going to happen, that doesn't make it easy for us to, um, digest it because he goes on to be quite, what's the word, conflicted about it, if that's the right word. Your eyes are too pure to look on evil. You cannot tolerate wrongdoing. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? So that, that, that fact that God can be sovereign, but it isn't always easy for us to just, just to say, well, that's the answer. There we go. We can have all sorts of, um, stresses and concerns, although God is in charge. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Habakkuk's really wrestling there, isn't he? Uh, Jerape. Yeah. Just to, uh, kind of continue on that theme, really, we were thinking of kind of the, the, the kind of bigger themes of kind of God's providence and the, the, the whole matter of how God uses a wicked nation to fulfill his purposes and, um, and just thinking about how God uses those kind of secondary causes. Um, and you know, you, it just made me think about how we can look around and see what's going on. And it's so easy, isn't it? So look at the chaos, look at the kind of all that rails against the church and look at it purely as on a horizontal level. Yeah. But actually God is sovereign over those things. But as Phil said, it doesn't make it, you know, it's, it's hard, isn't it? It's really hard. Yeah. Yeah. Definitely hard for Habakkuk. They were sort of summarized his questions to God. If God is good, why then will you allow, why then will he allow evil?

Um, and I, I think, uh, if my memory serves me right, we, we answer by two ways by saying he is everlasting. He sees beginning to the end. He knows the bigger picture and he's also the holy one and sin must be judged. And he's judging his people's sins by raising up the Babylonian army. But as we'll see this week and next week, uh, next week, uh, a lot more. Um, he also sees the evil of the Babylonians. So that won't go unpunished either. Um, lots of big things, um, to get our minds around. Um, let, let's, um, get into some of, uh, chapter two and, and we'll hopefully have one, one more discussion bit in a bit. Um, but we see a few things. So first we see waiting, uh, Steve sermon last week started with waiting. Uh, this sermon starts with waiting. Um, I wonder how you find it.

Um, I, I'm not entirely sure we're very good at waiting now. Um, I think everything seems so instant, doesn't it? Amazon order a pass and you could get it on the same day or the next day. Uh, and if, if, if it's, if it's running late, if it's a delayed somehow, um, I don't know about you, but I panic, will it ever arrive? Uh, or you tap your card on a machine and you're expected just to work instantly. If you have to put your card in now, trying to remember your pin is, uh, what is it? I haven't used it for years. Um, it's outdated.

[ 5 : 57 ] Um, everything's so instant, isn't it? Um, I'm not sure we're very good at waiting. Uh, what about when we're waiting for God to answer our prayers? How do we find that? Um, it's not very easy actually at times. Uh, God's timing is, is very different to us. Um, we've been praying about David's DBS situation for a while. It's only just comes through after months and months of us praying. Um, God's not on our time timetable, is he? Um, and we wonder why, why, why would he delay? Why would he not do that now? Habakkuk is waiting here in verse one. He says that very clearly, doesn't he? I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts. I will look to see what he will say to me and what answer I am to give to this complaint. Habakkuk's waiting isn't like me when I once tried to wait for a bus in snowy Hirstwood Point. I knew it probably won't come, but I decided to wait for it anyway. Habakkuk's waiting is expectant uh, Habakkuk is waiting here at the start of chapter two and he knows how God's waiting is expectant.

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uh, Habakkuk is waiting here at the start of chapter two and he knows how great God is. He also knows how terrifying the Babylonian army, um, is that, that God is raising up and sending him. He knows that, but, but he leaves his question with questions with God. He's, he's asked lots of questions with God. We saw that last time and now he's content to wait. It's like he's drawn a circle on the ground and say, I'm going to stand in here and I'm going to wait. I'm not going to leave until he answers because I know he will. Um, as in Portsmouth a few weeks ago, I think I shared that this morning. Um, but, but as we were in Portsmouth, we, we were on this boat tour and, um, there was, uh, a sort of tower on the shore that was pointed out to us where, where people would have waited and watched, looked out, I guess for enemy ships coming in to invade. Um, and that's new, new thing. Um, we, we read about watchmen in that Psalm, Psalm 130, the watchmen of the night. They, they wait because they know, they know morning will come and they know it's good to watch and wait and, um, make sure the city is secure. Uh, they wait expectantly. They know something will happen. They, they know at least morning will come. Uh, and I wonder when we pray, do, do we watch and wait expectantly? Watch and wait for the Lord to answer. I've been thinking more and more how I need to to write down, um, prayers that I'm praying and, and coming back to them at some point and saying, uh, has the Lord answered this? How's the Lord answered this? Do I need to keep praying and keep trusting that he will answer? Uh, how can I keep, uh, watching and waiting for the Lord to answer?

Because surely he will somehow. I don't know how. Habakkuk doesn't know how. Habakkuk doesn't know what he's going to hear from the Lord, but he knows he can wait for him.

[ 10 : 08 ] And secondly, timing, similar to waiting, um, timing is a big thing here. Verse two and three, then the Lord replied, write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it for the revelation awaits an appointed time. It speaks of the end and it will not prove false though. It lingers, wait for it more waiting. It will certainly come and will not delay.

The Lord begins his answer here in verse two. And it's such an important answer, uh, that he says, write it down, write it down on tablets. Um, can, can you think where else tablets are used for writing on in the Bible? Moses, um, the 10 commandments? Yeah. Yeah. Uh, really significant stuff that Moses writes on it.

The 10 commandments. It's important. This is God's words. Listen up to them. And now Habakkuk is told to write this down, write this down, write this down on tablets. It's important. This is God's words.

It's important to hear what God has to say to us. You might be here this evening, eagerly, um, coming here this evening because you know, you're going to hear from the Bible. You're going to hear from God's words. Maybe the sermon is even your favorite part of church life. Or you might be here thinking, do we have to sit through another sermon? Do we have to hear Daniel's voice again? Um, can't we just sing some more? Can't we just pray some more? Can't we just chat some more?

Whatever you think, it's important that we open the scriptures. This is God speaking to us. This should be a real highlight for us. That this is God, the way he's communicating to us. So we need to listen up, not, not to me and just my voice, but, but to the Lord. And we trust that the Lord speaks through, um, his servants. And we're grateful for those who serve us, uh, in preaching God's word in different ways. It's important. This is God's word. Anyway, coming back to what Habakkuk says here, um, he says towards the end of verse two, so that a herald may run with it. Um, tricky in terms of translating that it could mean that a herald, someone who proclaims God's word, um, takes it, um, with great excitement to the people, uh, speaks the message of God clearly.

[13:10] But, but, but actually I think, um, that the Hebrew text doesn't seem to use the word herald. Um, rather it, it, it says something more along the lines of those who may read it and may run.

In other words, the message God is speaking here, uh, is, is a message of judgment. And should a Babylonian read it, because he's mainly going to be speaking to the Babylonians here, they may run in fear of God's judgment.

Someone in, in Judah who, who's just not following the Lord at all, uh, was one of the people that Habakkuk may have had in mind as he started the book. They may read it and read of God's judgment and they may run, they want, they want, they want to flee from it. Um, that, that's what it, it seems to be saying here. This is a message of judgment.

Uh, and the timing of it, well, it may seem slow, God says. Uh, verse three, um, uh, Habakkuk's been waiting. He's been waiting long for the Lord's answer. Uh, when will he do something about this? Uh, Habakkuk is told by the Lord, it might linger, uh, though it linger, wait for it. It will certainly come and will not delay, but it might linger. A few weeks ago, I was waiting at the doctor's surgery for a doctor's appointment at 1140 in the morning. 10 minutes went by and nothing. Another 10 minutes went by nothing. And in fact, those who were in the waiting room when I arrived there, they weren't there anymore. A whole new people had come. Um, another 10 minutes went on nothing and yet another and another 50 minutes later, the doctor called me through to my relief. Though he lingered, the appointment came and he got to me and he listened to me. Though God's judgment on the Babylonians may linger, though it may seem slow, though God may seem slow in, in allowing evil to happen, God's judgment will come.

Habakkuk, you may cry how long, but I am going to do something. I have seen the evil going on and I will do something about it. Remember the Lord's timing is not our timing. Remember the Lord's ways are not our ways or his thoughts are thoughts. It will come.

[16:09] And we ourselves, we find ourselves waiting too, as God's people. Verse three says, for the revelation awaits in a point of time. It speaks of the end.

I think for Habakkuk, the end of the Babylonian invasion and taking into captivity, et cetera, of Judah. Um, but, but we're also waiting. We're waiting for the end. We're waiting for the Lord Jesus to return. We're waiting for that great and glorious day of the Lord that we heard about this morning, but it's not here yet. Uh, maybe at times we wonder, will he come? It seems to linger, but remember the encouragement we heard from 2 Peter chapter three a little while ago at our Sunday evening services. Don't forget this one thing, dear friends with the Lord. A day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. The day is coming. It is coming soon. We are living in the last days, but God is not on our timetable. His timing is not our timing. We can rest in that though. Though it lingers, God acknowledges it may linger. You may need to wait a bit more Habakkuk. You're already waiting. You're going to have to wait a bit more, but there is no delay to it for the Lord has set the day. And it is right in his time. So Habakkuk waits. He's got to wait again for the Lord's judgments.

But there's more to the Lord's answer than that. You see, Habakkuk asked the Lord some serious questions in chapter one, verse 13 that we saw last week. Habakkuk complained to the Lord that he thought people were like fish without a ruler, doing just as they please, not listening to the Lord. And so there's more to the Lord's answer here. We see just how the Lord views the Babylonians, the enemies, those causing, those who are behaving in evil ways.

[18:49] Just for a few minutes to get you guys thinking again, have a look at verses four to five and see, what is the Lord thinking about the enemies? What is the Lord's verdict on them? Habakkuk said his, but what does the Lord say? And then we'll come back.

What did you spot in the passage? I think the microphone is on my dreams there.

How does God see the enemies here? They're really nasty people. Absolutely. Insatiable. Insatiable. Just wanting more to, to, um, increase their boundaries more and more. Greedy as the grave, never satisfied. Probably like the rolling stones. Like the rolling stones, did you say? Can you explain? Can't get no satisfaction. Absolutely. [ 20 : 11 ] Yes. As greedy as the grave and like death is never satisfied. Absolutely. Yeah. It's arrogance. Arrogance. Kind of a haughtiness and arrogance and being given to much pleasure as well.

Assuming we've been talking about wine, wine being a traitor. I think that they, they think they're God. Um, I think we've kind of seen that a little bit, um, in, in these, uh, verses in Habakkuk. They're incredibly successful. Yeah. Um, we, we saw the picture of the net last week and how, how that was a picture of, of world dominion in these times. And, and, and, uh, the net was becoming very full. Um, I just, I'm sorry. I just may share with my friends here that, um, there's a terrible paradox involved here. Mm. A terrible existential paradox. Mm. That points out they're never at rest. Yeah. And that is, that is, ooh. Yeah. Yeah.

[ 21 : 24 ] Thank you. Um, that's, uh, sort of, um, don't know what the word is, but move on. Um, uh, puffer fish are quite amazing. Um, I haven't got a picture, but would have normally. Um, they, they defeat their enemies apparently by blowing themselves up into a huge ball that releases lethal gases to kill off their predators. And I think God's enemies here. Uh, that's a good description of them. See, the enemy is puffed up. His desires are not upright.

He is as greedy as the grave and like death is neither satisfied. He gathers himself all the nations and takes captive all the, all the peoples. Dangerous, dangerous enemy puffed up. Very ready to destroy. And we see verses, uh, in the Bible that speak of the proud and the puffed up and the arrogant, don't we?

[ 22 : 31 ] Um, Proverbs 3, 34 says he, he mocks proud mockers. This is the Lord, but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.

Proverbs 29, 23, one's pride will bring him low, but he is, he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor. Psalm 138, verse 6.

For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar. And in Mary's song in Luke chapter 1, verse 52, He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate.

God opposes the proud and the puffed up. And God does for the Babylonians. He opposes them. Those proud, puffed up people thinking they themselves are gods. The Lord God of Israel hates that. The Babylonians are not gods.

[ 23 : 34 ] They have been used by God for his purposes in the world, but they have not bowed the knee to him. And God will have the final say. But what about people like Habakkuk?

What about the righteous? Can anyone spot? They live by faith. Yeah.

Verse 4. That line, there should be an encouragement to us, I think. That the righteous person will live by his faithfulness. What does God say to those who cry out to him for help?

For those who are crying out to him, how long? Lord, what are you doing? If you are good, why are you allowing evil? What about those like Habakkuk who trust in him as their everlasting God, their rock in changing times?

The righteous person will live by his faithfulness. And in three places, certainly three places that I know of, in Romans 1.17, Galatians 3.11, and Hebrews 10.38, they all quote this verse from Habakkuk.

[ 24 : 53 ] Significant verse. Martin Luther, as the sort of Reformation started, he loved this verse. It's key to the gospel. The Babylonians, they were considered puffed up and greedy and arrogant, but Habakkuk, he's not one of them.

He is someone who knows God as his God. Someone who looks to him by faith. He has questions, serious questions. But ones that are ones from someone who is looking to God by faith.

He does not see, but he trusts that God does. And so God says, the righteous live by faith.

You, Habakkuk, you live by faith. That's the slide we need. There are those who don't face the condemnation, the judgment of the Lord, that the Babylonians are going to face if they don't turn to

him.

There are those who are safe, but it is not by our works. That's the point of Paul quoting these words from Habakkuk, really.

[ 26 : 13 ] It means we're forgiven for all our sins because they were laid on Jesus. No longer are we guilty.

No longer do we need to face his condemnation. But it goes deeper than that. The righteous live by faith.

They are righteous because they are declared righteous, completely justified. Because God now looks at us just as if we had not sinned.

because we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Puffed up people, like the Babylonians, cannot find salvation if they remain puffed up.

If they're too proud, if they're too full of self, they won't have the humility and grace to say, I am not righteous, but I look to the one who is and I trust him.

[ 27 : 21 ] And that needs God to change people's hearts. I guess naturally, we're all a bit like these Babylonians.

Maybe not to the same extreme as them, but we think we can save ourselves by our own works. We think we don't need to bow the knee to the Lord.

But God is at work and he changes hearts by his mercy, by his grace. And so most or many of us, all of us even, can say that the Lord has helped us to respond to him by faith, to in humility put our trust in the Lord Almighty to save us.

And so no longer are we full of greed to gain all we can in this world like the Babylonians.

For by faith, we live by faith in Jesus. And if we do, we know we have more than this world can offer.

[ 28 : 32 ] We have Jesus, Saviour. whilst we still may have questions of the Lord, and that's okay, Habakkuk shows us that's okay to have those questions, we know that in him we will not die.

That's what Habakkuk said, didn't he, in verse 12 of chapter 1. My God, my Holy One, maybe your NIVs translate it, you will never die, but it should be we will never die because we are confident in the Lord and his salvation, his work for us on our behalf.

In him we are safe from judgment, we are safe from death and hell. We began this evening seeing Habakkuk stand defiantly and wait.

and that's really something those who are living by faith should be doing. Hebrews 10, let's turn to it.

Hebrews 10, 36 to 38. this is all in the context of sort of persevering by faith.

[ 30 : 08 ] The writer to the Hebrews says this, you need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God you will receive what he has promised for in just a little while he who is coming will come and will not delay.

That's a quote taken both from a verse in Isaiah and also a verse that we've seen in Habakkuk but he goes on and says and here's more verses from Habakkuk but my righteous one will live by faith and I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back but we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed but we belong to those who have faith and are saved.

we don't belong to those who shrink back in fear maybe we could very easily with the circumstances that we face in life but by faith God will help us to persevere to keep looking to him we may have doubts we may cry at how long but be honest with the Lord but ultimately we stand on the rock that is Christ we cling to him who is our righteousness and we look to him by faith even when the world around us may seem to crumble and fall the righteous live by faith we pray we wait we trust that the Lord does hear our

Christ and that he'll answer our prayers in the right way there may be tears there may be questions but he will and so we stand confidently by faith in him let's pray father god we thank you for the encouragement amidst your word of judgment on the babylonians for those who are righteous will live by faith and father we thank you for your work in us here this evening who know saving faith in you thank you for the gift you've given us of faith and we pray that encouragement that we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed but to those who have faith and are saved we pray that there will be an encouragement this week to us to keep holding on to you and Lord as we'll sing in a moment we know that you are the one who will keep us you will hold us fast help us to keep looking to you by faith we so need you help us to cling to the

Lord Jesus our rock in a changing and troubling world and lead us at last to our home our eternal home in heaven help us we pray and we ask this in Jesus name Amen got two songs