

## I Will Rejoice Part Two

**Introduction:** Last week we looked at the first two of three chapters in this small little book of Habakkuk

**Primary Focus**—It is a book that primarily deals with the questions, perplexities, confusion, and struggle experienced by God’s people in days that are so very uncertain. In this manner it is very applicable to us today.

### The Context of Habakkuk

1. He prophesied during the fall of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria which fell in 612 BC
2. The last godly king in Judah dies in 609 BC
3. The power of Babylon is getting greater and the wickedness of Judah is become more fatal
4. His prophecy is a dialogue between He and God
5. Ultimately he prophesies the utter destruction of his own people

### Four Issues of Concern Last Week (Chapters 1 and 2)

#### — The Perplexity of the Faithful (sometimes the world does not make sense)

- How long, Habakkuk wants to know, will it be before God brings the wickedness of Judah to judgement?
- It made no sense to him and he was asking God for relief
- Many of us feel this way—tough questions in life. Why? How long?

#### — The Sovereign Plan of God (His ways are not our ways)

- God tells Habakkuk He will use the more wicked Babylon to judge Judah
- They are cruel people that treat their captives horribly
- But while God says He will use Babylon, He also promises their destruction

#### — The Struggle of the Godly (Why do the righteous suffer?)

- This plan makes no sense to Habakkuk
- God is good, how could He use the evil Babylon to judge His own people, the favored of God?

— The Quiet Trust of the Just (We submit to a God who is in His Holy temple)

- Though he expects to be rebuked God does not do that at all
- Instead He points out that Babylon is proud and haughty and though He will use them to chasten Judah, ultimately he will destroy them
- In the meantime, the declared righteous people of God (the just) shall live by their faith in God's faithfulness

Finally—God invites us to hush before His presence and allow Him to speak to us in our confusion—He is a speaking God that we must stand before and fear.

Today—We move toward the climax of this book and we learn why, in the midst of such confusion and turmoil, Habakkuk can rejoice.

Four Reasons:

**I. He rejoiced in the hope of God's merciful character. (3:1,2)**

*"A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth."*

*"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."*  
Habakkuk 3:1,2 NKJV

A. Chapter 3 is a song composed and sung by Habakkuk (a musical prophecy)

1. This is an old form of prophetic activity
2. Moses was told to do this when God expected Israel to fail

*"Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel."*  
Deuteronomy 31:19 NKJV

B. Now that God has spoken and Habakkuk knows the course that is before Him, he asks God to sustain him.

1. Babylon will bring devastation and judgement to Judah
2. But Habakkuk prays that God will reveal His mercy to them as well

C. "Revive Your work in the midst of the years"

1. Many suggestions but likely He is asking God to revive them in between the day He judges Israel and the day He avenges all of His enemies in the final judgement

2. Bring us back God—use this judgment to restore us
3. What an applicable prayer for today

D. “In the midst of the years, make it known.”

1. Make it clear to others too
2. Let others see your work among us

E. “In wrath remember mercy.”

1. Wrath (rogan)=agitation, fury, anger, disturbance
2. Show us mercy as well

F. This whole prayer and cry for mercy is based on Habakkuk’s confidence in the character of God—He is merciful

1. Jonah knew this—the reason why he did not want to go to Nineveh
2. Habakkuk knew that judgment was coming but he also knew God was merciful

*“For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.”  
Psalms 100:5 NKJV*

*“This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:21-23 NKJV*

(ILL)

*His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. The English word new is the Hebrew word hadas . . . It means never before experienced. Today's mercy is different from yesterday or the day before or the day before the day before. Just as the seasonal flu vaccine changes from year to year, God's mercy changes from day to day. It's a new strain of mercy. Why? Because you didn't sin today the way you did yesterday!*

*Try this little exercise: Figure out how old you are—not in years but in days. That's the sum total of different kinds of mercy you've received life-to-date. By the time you're twenty-one, you've experienced 7,665 unique mercies. When you hit midlife, it numbers 14,600. And by the time you hit retirement, God has mercied you 23,725 times. — Mark Batterson in “If”*

We can rejoice in the merciful character of God

## II. He rejoiced in the eternal faithfulness of God. (3-15)

### A. The prayer (song) continues with a description of Christ's coming

*"God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise. His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, And there His power was hidden. Before Him went pestilence, And fever followed at His feet. He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, The perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; The curtains of the land of Midian trembled." Habakkuk 3:3-7 NKJV*

1. Only when Christ comes is real hope available
2. The locations mentioned are the places that Israel experienced in the wilderness
3. This is as they are moving toward Canaan to claim their promise
4. He came to them and met them in the wilderness—showed His glory!
5. He fought off their enemies

TRUTH: His coming in the past is a basis for assurance in His future intervention

NOTE: He will judge Israel first but then he will strike down her enemies

### B. God's past victories anticipate His action in the future

*"O LORD, were You displeased with the rivers, Was Your anger against the rivers, Was Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your horses, Your chariots of salvation?" Habakkuk 3:8 NKJV*

1. The Red Sea
2. The Jordan
3. Psalm 20:7
4. Elijah after fighting with Baal prophets swept away by God's chariot
5. As Babylon threatens God promises that ultimately His chariots will rescue His people

*"Your bow was made quite ready; Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah You divided the earth with rivers. The mountains saw You and trembled; The overflowing of the water passed by. The deep uttered its voice, And lifted its hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; At the light of Your arrows they went, At the shining of Your glittering spear." Habakkuk 3:9-11 NKJV*

6. God is ready to act (bow made ready) Captain of the Lord's host
7. Oath was given (Hebrews—His oath—He will perform His Word)
8. Sovereign God made sun stand still so Joshua could finish his judgment
9. Note: The mountains saw YOU (it was God behind it all)
10. God can be trusted to perform on behalf of Israel, even after He judges them

*"You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger. You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For salvation with Your Anointed. You struck the head from the house of the wicked, By laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah" Habakkuk 3:12-13 NKJV*

11. Clearly allusion to the Messiah and coming Christ
12. You struck (crushed) the head (chief) of the house of the wicked
13. Picture of Genesis 3:15—You will bruise His head—He will crush your head

*"You thrust through with his own arrows The head of his villages. They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me; Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret. You walked through the sea with Your horses, Through the heap of great waters." Habakkuk 3:14-15 NKJV*

14. The very powers that rise up against God will perish in their own deceit
  - a. Daniel's adversaries in the lions den
  - b. Pharaoh in the Red Sea
  - c. Haman in his own gallows
15. The victory of the Red Sea can be turned to again and gain and again

God's faithfulness can be trusted. He will bring Babylon down—destruction will come but first judgment will come.

*"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" 1 Peter 4:17 NKJV*

(ILL)

*President Mobutu reigned as the dictator and President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1965 to 1997. But after global political changes, Mobutu was forced out of power and the country collapsed and descended into conflict and chaos. British pastor Mark Meynell tells the story of his good friend Emma, who witnessed many atrocities committed against his friends and family members. He and his wife and three daughters fled east on foot. Weeks later they arrived in Uganda as refugees, with nothing. After a few months of a miserable existence, he walked past a local seminary*

*and sensed that the Lord was calling him to ministry. The family had been living in one room, without water or electricity, and enough to pay for one meal every two days.*

*Meynell said that one evening they met in the seminary's tiny library and started talking. As Emma opened his heart and shared the story of the violence and injustice he had witnessed, he started to openly weep, despite the fact that African men never cry in public. Then Emma said these sobering words, "You know Mark, I could never believe the gospel if it were not for the judgment of God. Because I will never get justice in this world. But I couldn't cope if I was NEVER going to see justice done."*

*Meynell commented, "We in the West often recoil from God's justice for a very simple reason: We've hardly had to suffer injustice. But most people around the globe recognize that God's justice is praiseworthy and great. Of course his mercy and redemption are even greater, but we need his perfect justice as well."*

**We can rejoice in the eternal faithfulness of God**

### **III. He rejoiced in the presence of God.**

NOTE: We often talk about the presence of God as if it was a feeling or an aura or mist but it is Him BEING present—He doesn't leave us alone.

***"When I heard, my body trembled; My lips quivered at the voice; Rottiness entered my bones; And I trembled in myself, That I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people, He will invade them with his troops." Habakkuk 3:16 NKJV***

- A. I must wait while God executes his judgment on us so we can be saved ultimately
- B. He caused my heart to tremble as he wrestled with the impending judgment
- C. God would save His remnant and rescue His own after the judgment

(ILL)

*At a later date when the remnant was reduced to ONE—in Gethsemane that One would wrestle—I know you will not leave my soul in Hell so your presence can enable me to bear this cross until the day of salvation comes.*

**We can rejoice in the presence of God**

#### IV. He rejoiced in the promise of God.

*“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, And He will make me walk on my high hills. To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.”  
Habakkuk 3:17-19 NKJV*

- A. The coming judgment would be devastating (v.17)
- B. But I will rejoice (from complaining prophet to rejoicing prophet)
- C. He is the God of my salvation (clearly will restore)
- D. His promise

##### 1. Will make me surefooted

*“He makes me as surefooted as a deer, enabling me to stand on mountain heights.” Psalms 18:33 NLT*

##### 2. He will seat me in heavenly places (make me walk on my high hills)

- a. Reigning
- b. Perspective

**Conclusion:** The greatest setback cannot stop God’s ultimate victory

- Habakkuk had begun his prophecy afraid, nervous, unsettled about the world
- Had become worse with the promise of impending invasion
- Now he can say—“I will rejoice!”
- We too can rejoice in the midst of our adversity

*Margaret Sangster Phippen wrote that in the mid 1950s her father, British minister W. E. Sangster, began to notice some uneasiness in his throat and a dragging in his leg. When he went to the doctor, he found that he had an incurable disease that caused progressive muscular atrophy. His muscles would gradually waste away, his voice would fail, his throat would soon become unable to swallow.*

*Sangster threw himself into his work in British home missions, figuring he could still write and he would have even more time for prayer. "Let me stay in the struggle Lord," he pleaded. "I don't mind if I can no longer be a general, but give me just a regiment to lead." He wrote articles and books, and helped organize prayer cells throughout England. "I'm only in the kindergarten of suffering," he told people who pitied him.*

*Gradually Sangster's legs became useless. His voice went completely. But he could still hold a pen, shakily. On Easter morning, just a few weeks before he died, he wrote a letter to his daughter. In it, he said, "It is terrible to wake up on Easter morning and have no voice to shout, 'He is risen!'—but it would be still more terrible to have a voice and not want to shout."*