# Habakkuk

Trusting God when you don't understand Him

Meditations,
prayers,
scripture, and
recorded new hymns
for
public worship and
personal devotions

from the series:

Fresh Views of Timeless Truths

Ken Bible

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#### Introduction

As I write this, in late 2021,

the church and our society are going through divisive times.

I am feeling that division keenly and personally.

More than at any other period in my 70+ years,

I have sharp differences of opinion

with many of my brothers and sisters in Christ.

These differences cause me pain.

The situation reminds me of Acts 15:36-40.

Paul and Barnabas had shared all the triumphs and hard times of the first missionary journey.

But when it came time for the second journey,

they disagreed on whether to take Mark with them,

who had quit midway through their first journey.

Their disagreement was so sharp that

these old partners separated,

each taking new partners and going their own way.

I am not at that separation point,

but the differences are sharp and discomforting.

Specifically, I disagree with many believers on

what God is doing in our world right now and

what part He wants us to play in all this.

Our differences have caused me to wrestle with God's ways

in a desire to know Him better.

And in this wrestling, He has directed me back to the little book of Habakkuk.

Habakkuk also wrestled with what God was doing in the world.

He trusted God enough to

engage Him in honest, open dialog.

Habakkuk asked the hard questions,

then waited for answers.

That dialog led him into a faith that was

deeper,

stronger, and

more joyful.

Come...join Habakkuk on his journey of faith.

--Ken Bible

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#### Inscrutable God

Unsearchable...
mysterious...
unfathomable...
beyond investigation or scrutiny –
He is the
inscrutable God.

No human effort can
search Him out or
penetrate His mystery.
But He longs to be fully known by
those He created from Himself.
He works tirelessly to reveal Himself
clearly and completely.

As we actively trust Him,
we come to know Him.
But trusting and knowing God
are a gradual, growing process.
Our immature faith,
our lingering self-centeredness,
our smallness and
fearfulness
sometimes blind us to His
goodness and
rightness.

When we don't understand what God is
doing or not doing,
know that it is because
His wisdom and
power and
love
are greater than we can possibly comprehend.
We can find perfect peace in
trusting Him,
even when we don't understand Him.

**Hymn recording: Inscrutable God** 

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### Inscrutable God



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5.4.6.5.4.6.8.6.5.5.

### Keep Your Eyes on God's Love

```
All-wise Creator,
      loving Father,
You do not cause the many
horrendous events that plague
      our individual lives and
      our troubled race.
Death was never Your will for us.
      We separated ourselves from You,
      the only source of life.
Death is our doing,
      not Yours.
Yet for all those who trust You.
You gently, faithfully lead us through
      our worst nightmares,
      even the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4).
You are always true to Your promise:
      You work all things for good
      for those who love and trust You (Romans 8:28).
You redeem even our
      deepest griefs and
      most profound losses
to bless Your people.
But Your ways are
      more subtle,
      more nuanced.
      more intricate
than our frantic and simplistic prayers -
      "Lord, do it all, and
      do it RIGHT NOW!"
You work and wait to do everything
      in exactly the right way
      at exactly the right time.
There is no substitute for
      simply
      trusting
      You.
```

no matter what.

Loving Father, we gladly leave Your work in Your hands to happen in Your time.

**Hymn recording:** A Hymn for Loss and Disappointment

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# A Hymn for Loss and Disappointment



### Habakkuk 1:1-4

(NASB)

The pronouncement which Habakkuk the prophet saw:

How long, Lord, have I called for help,
And You do not hear?
I cry out to You, "Violence!"
Yet You do not save.
Why do You make me see disaster,
And make me look at destitution?
Yes, devastation and violence are before me;
Strife exists and contention arises.
Therefore the Law is ignored,
And justice is never upheld.
For the wicked surround the righteous;
Therefore justice comes out confused.

#### Reflection on Habakkuk 1:1-4

```
How long, Lord?
You see our situation, and
      we cry out to You for Your help.
But we see no evidence that You are
      listening or
      doing anything.
Why, Lord?
You are holy,
      completely pure, and
You say You want us to be holy.
But we are immersed in evil!
Destruction.
violence,
arguing and fighting on every level,
      from personal relationships
      to nation against nation.
This strife is always with us,
      day after day,
      everywhere we look, and
nothing
ever
changes.
You are holy, and
      You want us to be holy, so
why, Lord?
Why?
Truth,
light,
justice,
goodness
       are completely ignored.
      It's like they don't exist.
Evil routinely abuses the good,
      often with no consequences.
The only version of "justice" we ever get is
      twisted to serve someone's
             ignorance and
             selfishness.
```

Why, Lord? How long do we have to wait?

Hymn recording: Watch and Wait

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### Watch and Wait

Inspired by Habakkuk 1:5-11 with Matthew 24:42-51



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#### Habakkuk 1:5-11

(NASB)

"Look among the nations! Watch!

Be horrified! Be frightened speechless!

For I am accomplishing a work in your days—

You would not believe it even if you were told!

For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans,

That grim and impetuous people

Who march throughout the earth,

To take possession of dwelling places that are not theirs.

They are terrifying and feared;

Their justice and authority originate with themselves.

Their horses are faster than leopards,

And quicker than wolves in the evening.

Their horsemen charge along,

Their horsemen come from afar;

They fly like an eagle swooping down to devour.

All of them come for violence.

Their horde of faces moves forward.

They gather captives like sand.

They make fun of kings,

And dignitaries are an object of laughter to them.

They laugh at every fortress,

Then heap up dirt and capture it.

Then they fly along like the wind and pass on.

But they will be held guilty,

They whose strength is their god."

#### Reflection on Habakkuk 1:5-11

Skilled crafts people know that to get a job done right, you need the right tool.

God always uses the right tool.

For some tasks, a pure vessel is the right tool.

For some, an impure vessel.

Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver implements, but also implements of wood and of earthenware, and some are for honor while others are for dishonor. (2 Timothy 2:20, NASB)

In each situation, God deals with people as they allow Him:

To the faithful you show yourself faithful,
to the blameless you show yourself blameless,
to the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the devious you show yourself shrewd. (Psalm 18:25-26, NIV)
For example, read 2 Chronicles 18:18-22.

When God promised David that

his descendants would rule on the throne forever, He said:

I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he does wrong, I will discipline him with a rod of men. (2 Samuel 7:14, NASB)

Habakkuk 1:5-11 is one example of such discipline.

Judah's persistent sinning had left God with no choice but to severely chastise them.

So in Habakkuk 1:5-11, God went into great detail to explain that the vicious Babylonians were the right tool for such discipline.

But God promised that justice would fall on the wicked Babylonians as well. They will be held guilty (Habakkuk 1:11; see also Habakkuk 2). Only a few years later, they would be conquered by the Persians.

Our God – holy, mysterious, and inscrutable – uses evil against itself to bring about good.

Hymn recording: Psalm 93

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# Psalm 93



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#### Habakkuk 1:12 - 2:1

(NASB)

Are You not from time everlasting, Lord, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, Lord, have appointed them to deliver judgment; And You, O Rock, have destined them to punish.

Your eyes are too pure to look at evil, And You cannot look at harm favorably. Why do You look favorably At those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they? Why have You made people like the fish of the sea, Like crawling things that have no ruler over them? The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook, Drag them away with their net, And gather them together in their fishing net. Therefore they rejoice and are joyful. Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net And burn incense to their fishing net, Because through these things their catch is large, And their food is plentiful. Will they therefore empty their net, And continually slay nations without sparing?

I will stand at my guard post And station myself on the watchtower; And I will keep watch to see what He will say to me, And how I may reply when I am reprimanded.

## Reflection on Habakkuk 1:12 - 2:1

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```
Holy, loving God,
      how can You do it?
How can You use
      vicious,
      treacherous,
      ruthless people
to accomplish Your
      loving,
      holy,
      perfect will?
How can You use
      THEM as tools for
      YOUR purposes?
How can You use
      pure evil
to bring about
      pure good?
How can You bring
      truth and
      love and
      blessing
```

out of any of this?

How, Lord?

#### Habakkuk 2:2-4

(NASB)

Then the Lord answered me and said, "Write down the vision
And inscribe it clearly on tablets,
So that one who reads it may run.
For the vision is yet for the appointed time;
It hurries toward the goal and it will not fail.
Though it delays, wait for it;
For it will certainly come, it will not delay long.

"Behold, as for the impudent one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous one will live by his faith."

Hymn recording: Live by Faith

# Live by Faith

TUNE: Lord, I Want to Be a Christian (alt.)

Habakkuk 2:2-11
with Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: African-American Spiritual and Ken Bible I WANT TO BE A CHRISTIAN 2 8.6.8.3.w. Ref.

#### Habakkuk 2:5-14

(NASB)

Furthermore, wine betrays an arrogant man, So that he does not achieve his objective. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, And he is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all the nations And collects to himself all the peoples.

"Will all of these not take up a song of ridicule against him, Even a saying and insinuations against him And say, 'Woe to him who increases what is not his—For how long—And makes himself rich with debts!'
7 Will your creditors not rise up suddenly, And those who collect from you awaken? Indeed, you will become plunder for them. Since you have looted many nations, All the rest of the peoples will loot you—Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, To the town and all its inhabitants.

"Woe to him who makes evil profit for his household, To put his nest on high,
To be saved from the hand of catastrophe!
You have planned a shameful thing for your house
By bringing many peoples to an end;
So you are sinning against yourself.
For the stone will cry out from the wall,
And the rafter will answer it from the framework.

"Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed, And founds a town with violence! Is it not indeed from the Lord of armies That peoples labor merely for fire, And nations become weary for nothing? For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea."

#### Reflection on Habakkuk 2:5-14

The earth will be filled
With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,
As the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:14, NASB)
Scriptural context: God will cleanse away all the evil of this world.

They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
As the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9, NASB)
Scriptural context: Messiah will come, filled with God's Spirit, and will bring justice and peace to all creation.

```
Lies and violence,
lust and greed
      flood the earth.
They are plagues running
      rampant,
      unchecked,
      driven by
selfishness and fear.
But the Holy Son of
      Almighty God,
who is
      all power and
      all love,
the Great Healer,
the Victor over
      sin and
      death.
will return to earth
      at the perfect time,
      to finish all that He started.
Then justice,
      the rightness of holy love, and
peace,
      the absence of all conflict and
      the deep well-being of God Himself,
```

will flood this world.

rich and

All creation will be blanketed with a

unbounded knowing of God.

Now we see in a mirror dimly,

but then face to face;

now I know in part,

but then I will know fully,

just as I also have been fully known.

(1 Corinthians 13:12, NASB)

And that complete knowing,

warm,

intimate, and

all-encompassing,

will be life itself,

eternal life in all its

joy and fullness.

This is eternal life,

that they may know

You, the only true God, and

Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

(John 17:3, NASB)

Come, Lord Jesus!

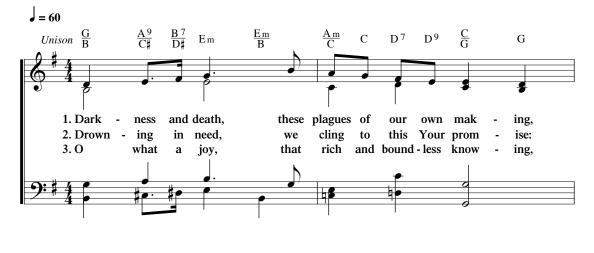
Hymn recording: Full Knowing

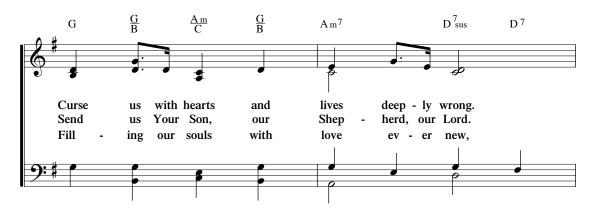
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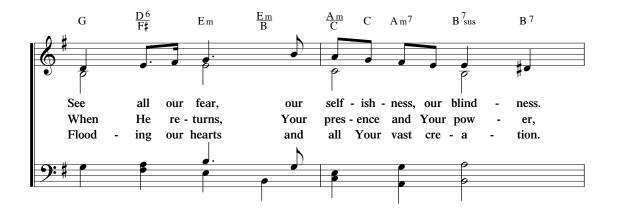
# **Full Knowing**

Habakkuk 2:5-14

with Isaiah 11:1-9; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 13:12; Hebrews 2:11







WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) and Ken Bible MENDELSSOHN OPUS 102 No. 6 11.9.11.5.5.9.



#### **Habakkuk 2:15-20**

(NIV)

"Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies!

You will be filled with shame instead of glory.

Now it is your turn! Drink and let your nakedness be exposed!

The cup from the Lord's right hand is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory.

The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, and your destruction of animals will terrify you.

For you have shed human blood;

you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.

"Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman?
Or an image that teaches lies?
For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation;
he makes idols that cannot speak.
Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come to life!'
Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!'
Can it give guidance?
It is covered with gold and silver;
there is no breath in it."

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.

### God Is in His Temple and on His Throne

Father, when life seems hopelessly unjust, You remind us:

The Lord is in His holy temple.

Let all the earth be silent before Him. (Habakkuk 2:20, NASB)

Your temple reminds us that You are holy – perfect in all Your words,

Your actions.

Your wisdom,

Your timing.

Your temple reminds us of Your presence

with us and

in us.

We are Your temple.

No matter how viciously evil threatens us, Almighty God, You never leave us alone.

So even when our world seems so very wrong, we remember:

The Lord is in His holy temple.

When our lives fill with problems and turmoil, Father, You remind us:

The Lord has established His throne in the heavens,

And His sovereignty rules over all. (Psalm 103:19, NASB)

Your throne suggests

Your power,

Your control,

Your unfailing goodness.

You are our stability.

You are our unshakable certainty

in this sea of change.

You are perfect strength

in all our weakness.

All reality bows to You, our Savior, our King, our loving Father.

So in this wicked, unstable world, we look to You and remember:

The Lord is in His holy temple;

the Lord's throne is in heaven. (Psalm 11:4, NASB)

#### **Hymn recordings:**

God Is in His Temple
You Are Holy; I Come in Silence

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# God Is in His Temple



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# You Are Holy; I Come in Silence



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YOU ARE HOLY

Irregular

#### Habakkuk 3:1-15

(NASB)

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.

Lord, I have heard the report about You, and I was afraid. Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make it known. In anger remember mercy.

God comes from Teman, And the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His splendor covers the heavens, And the earth is full of His praise. His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand, And the hiding of His might is there. Before Him goes plague, And plague comes forth after Him. He stood and caused the earth to shudder; He looked and caused the nations to jump. Yes, the everlasting mountains were shattered, The ancient hills collapsed. His paths are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan under distress. The tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling.

Did the Lord rage against the rivers, Or was Your anger against the rivers, Or was Your rage against the sea, That You rode on Your horses. On Your chariots of salvation? You removed Your bow from its holder. The arrows of Your word were sworn. Selah You divided the earth with rivers. The mountains saw You and quaked; The downpour of waters swept by. The deep raised its voice, It lifted high its hands. Sun and moon stood in their lofty places; They went away at the light of Your arrows, At the radiance of Your flashing spear. In indignation You marched through the earth; In anger You trampled the nations.
You went forth for the salvation of Your people,
For the salvation of Your anointed.
You smashed the head of the house of evil
To uncover him from foot to neck. Selah
You pierced with his own arrows
The head of his leaders.
They stormed in to scatter us;
Their arrogance was like those
Who devour the oppressed in secret.
You trampled on the sea with Your horses,
On the foam of many waters.

#### Reflection on Habakkuk 3:1-15

```
Almighty God,
I am a speck of dust compared to the
mighty elements of Your creation -
      the mountains,
      the oceans.
      the uncharted vastness of space.
And all this sprawling creation is merely
      the fringes of Your robe.
Its majestic symphony is only
      a faint whisper of You (Job 26:14).
You are awesome beyond my comprehension,
      wise beyond my understanding,
       magnificent beyond any earthly comparison, and
      infinite in time,
             in mystery, and
             in goodness.
What's more, You are not confined to
      theories,
      books, and
      imaginations.
You are
      living,
      active, and
      powerful,
sovereign in all
      time and space,
the central player on the
      stage of history.
You conceive,
      You plan,
      You work
      on behalf of those who trust You.
I cannot grasp You
      or explain You, and
I dare not limit You to
      my small, self-centered viewpoint.
I stand, I bow in
      awe of You!
I simply, humbly believe that
```

You will always be who You have always been, You will always do what You have always done, and You will finish all You have started.

Day by day,
in darkness and in light,
I confess that You are
Almighty God.
I look to You.
I wait on You.
I long for You.
I hope in You.

Hymn recording: <u>I Look to You</u>

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## I Look to You

Psalm 25:1-5; 27:14; 33:20-22; 39:7; 130:5-7; 145:15; John 15:11; 17:13; 2 Peter 3:3-15a



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#### **Habakkuk 3:16-19**

(NASB)

I heard, and my inner parts trembled;
At the sound, my lips quivered.
Decay enters my bones,
And in my place I tremble;
Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress,
For the people to arise who will attack us.

Even if the fig tree does not blossom,
And there is no fruit on the vines,
If the yield of the olive fails,
And the fields produce no food,
Even if the flock disappears from the fold,
And there are no cattle in the stalls,
Yet I will triumph in the Lord,
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.
The Lord God is my strength,
And He has made my feet like deer's feet,
And has me walk on my high places.

For the choir director, on my stringed instruments.

#### Reflection on Habakkuk 3:16-19

```
Almighty God,
as I begin to see You for
      all You are,
I bow here with
      a quiet spirit and
      a smiling heart,
patiently waiting
      Your will in
      Your time
I begin to trust You
      because I know Your heart,
      even when I don't fully understand Your actions.
I begin to realize that
      my joy
is not dependent on
      my circumstance.
I can always be joyful because You are
      always God,
      always here,
      always the same, and
      always, always, always
             right and
             good.
I want my circumstances and
      this entire world
to be right as well, Lord,
      and I know they will be.
      You have promised to make them right!
But for now,
I live in
      joy and
      settled peace
as I live and trust in
      You.
```

Hymn recording: Joy in You

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# Joy in You



WORDS & MUSIC: Ken Bible

JOY IN YOU 8.8.8.6.5.

#### Do What Pleases You

Father, sovereign Creator,
Source, Sustainer, and
Ruler of all that is,
Your power is unlimited.
You are in command of all reality.
You do whatever pleases You.

And since You are perfect wisdom and perfect love, all You do is perfect, right, and good.

O Father, what a comfort!
In all my weakness and
all my ignorance,
with all my wavering motives,
I dare not trust myself.
But I know that You will always act in
perfect wisdom and
perfect love.

Father, I praise You!
I trust You!
Be Lord of All in every aspect of my life!
Do whatever pleases You!

Father, in so much of my life
I feel I am flying blind.
I cannot see the future.
I cannot know what is best.
But to the extent that I walk in Your Spirit,
I am guided by Your love and wisdom, and
I am enabled by Your power.

Hymn recording: My Father, Do What Pleases You

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# My Father, Do What Pleases You

Psalm 33:11; 62:11-12; 115:3; 135:6; 147:5; Isaiah 46:8-10; Daniel 4:35; Matthew 6:9-10; 26:42; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38



WORDS: Ken Bible
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