

Habakkuk 1-2:4**1-30-03***“Wrestling – Watching - Waiting!”***1. Intro:**

- 1.1. **Q:** Do you ever have problems that vex, annoy, or irritate your soul?
 - 1.1.1. **Ex:** Maybe when God seems to be **indifferent** to your prayers or to evil around you? - Why do good people suffer? - Why do evil people prosper? - When I’m doing my best for God, why do experience the worst from others?
 - 1.1.2. Some Christians claim to be w/o problems!
 - 1.1.2.1. **That means:**
 - a) They are not telling the truth.
 - b) They are not growing & experiencing real life.
 - c) They are not thinking at all. (they’ve blocked out reality & stifled honest feelings) [they are like Jobs uncomfortable comforters]
 - 1.1.3. **Some** choose to deal w/it by: **living w/**their doubts, **ignoring** them & **moving on** with life as best they can.
 - 1.1.4. **Others** become cynical & hardened.
 - 1.1.5. **Then others...**climb in the ring & wrestle it through w/God.
 - 1.1.5.1. Habakkuk found himself center ring struggling with some hard issues & serious problems with God!
 - 1.1.5.2. But note...that’s where to take these problems! **To Him!!!**
- 1.2. Habakkuk’s writing is right at Judah’s 11th hour.
 - 1.2.1. We have only 3 more Minor Prophets left (see notes at end of OT)
- 1.3. **Habakkuk** – means “embrace”(“one who embraces[or clings]”)
 - 1.3.1. At the end of the book you’ll see him **cling** tightly to the Lord.
 - 1.3.2. **Some have called him the OT Socrates!** (i.e. Q & A)
 - 1.3.3. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah.
 - 1.3.4. This book begins with a **sob** & ends w/a **song!**
- 1.4. **Outline:** Wrestling – Watching - Waiting.

2. WRESTLING! (ch.1)

- 2.1. **Question:** Why is God so indifferent toward evil? (1:1-4)
- 2.2. Jehoiakim had been leading the nation closer to disaster.

- 2.2.1. Jeremiah said & prophesied of him, "...your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness, For shedding innocent blood, And practicing oppression and violence...He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem." (22:17,19)
- 2.3. Habakkuk prays, "why don't you do something about the violence, strife, & injustice in the land"?
- 2.3.1. But God didn't seem to hear...so he cries out louder(see 2 diff Heb. words)
- 2.4. (4) The biggest problem in Judah was their **leadership** wouldn't obey God's law.
- 2.5. **Answer: God says I will deal w/evil...the Babylonians are coming to punish your evil?** (5-11)
- 2.6. (5) God answers & assures him that He is at work among the nations even though he couldn't see it.
- 2.6.1. So God gives Habakkuk a **revelation**, not an **explanation!**
- 2.6.2. The Lord never owes us any explanations, but He graciously reveals Himself & His work to those who seek Him!
- 2.6.3. And this is what we need in times of doubt...**a fresh view of God!**
- 2.7. (6,7) Habakkuk's country would become like **sitting ducks** before the **Babylonian duck hunters**.
- 2.8. (8-10a) Their **horses** are as fast as leopards; they are more ferocious than **wolves** that hadn't eaten all day; their troops swoop down on their prey like **vultures**; they sweep across the desert like **wind**; they **collect captives** as we would gather shells on the beach; they captured **royalty & put them on humiliating public display**(often put them in cages).
- 2.8.1. When **Nebuchadnezzar** captured **Zedekiah**(Judah's last king) & put his sons to death in front of him, then put his eyes out! (2 Kings 25:5-7)
- 2.9. (10b) **heap up earthen mounds** – They laughed at gates & walls for no fortress could w/stand them. They were skilled at building earthen siege ramps.

- 2.10. (11) Though they were **appointed by God**, they would still be **held accountable** for their **ruthlessness**(we'll see in 2:5-20).
- 2.11. **Question: How could God be so inconsistent?** (12-17)
- 2.12. God's 1st answer wasn't an answer at all...in fact it stirred up new problems! – **God seemed to show inconsistency.**
- 2.12.1. **Q:** How could God, whose eyes were "**too pure than to behold evil**", choose such a wicked, merciless, & idolatrous nation to punish His own people?
- 2.12.2. **Habakkuk** seemed to be stumped like **Job** by God's apparent distortion of justice!
- 2.12.3. (12,13a) He focuses in on Gods **holiness!**
- 2.13. (12) Note "**my**"(2 times)
- 2.13.1. This isn't simply a **national** problem, nor a **theological** problem, but this is a **personal** problem!
- 2.13.2. Wrestling w/problems like this help our faith muscles to grow!
- 2.14. (13b-15) We move from a **Holy** God to a **helpless** people!
- 2.14.1. **Q:** Ok, your people deserved punishment, but couldn't you have used a better instrument?
- 2.14.1.1. But...when we deserve correction, how can we complain about the **kind of rod** God uses on us?
- 2.14.2. **But by the way he had tried other ways 1st:** Wars; natural calamities; the preaching of many prophets(eg. Jer. for 40 yrs.); & can you say "Assyria"?
- 2.14.2.1. *The greater the **light** the greater the **responsibility!***
- 2.14.2.2. The sin in the life of a **believer** is far greater than that of a **non-believer!**
- 2.14.2.3. "When God's people deliberately disobey Him, they sin against a **flood of light** & an **ocean of love!**" (www)
- 2.15. (16,17) Their god was "power"! (**see** vs.11)
- 2.15.1. They trusted in their military might, their magnet, it's here called, "**their net**"!

- 2.15.2. They were puffed up w/pride, self-confidence.
- 2.15.3. **Habakkuk could have added**...but Lord they worship **Bel**(the head of their pantheon of gods); **Anu** god of the sky; **Nebo** god of literature & wisdom; **Nergal** the sun god; **Ea** god of magic.
- 2.15.4. **Habakkuk finished his defense & waited for God to speak.**
- 2.16. **Q: Do you just let tough questions go by? Do you settle for ½ truths? Are you fine w/pat answers?** If so, you will remain spiritually immature!
- 2.16.1. I think it is a lazy excuse to say, “that’s for pastors/scholars to figure out”!
- 2.16.2. Face questions honestly; talk them through w/the Lord.
- 2.16.3. We are called to “**grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**”
- 2.17. Habakkuk cries out, “*God say something, do something*”...but God was silent & seemingly inactive!
- 2.17.1. **David** had this same problem in Ps.37; **Asaph** did in Ps.73.

3. **WATCHING! (2:1)**

- 3.1. So he waited, as a **sentinel** standing watch, for the Lord to answer & untangle this knotty dilemma.¹
- 3.1.1. Of course the watchman in the watchtower was responsible to warn the city of approaching danger.
- 3.1.2. Just as we are to be watchmen today! **What is our warning?**
- 3.1.2.1. As John said, “**flee from the wrath to come!**” – Jesus said, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**”
- 3.2. It is good to wrestle w/God about the questions that perplex you – just be sure to **stop talking long enough to listen!**
- 3.2.1. “**Be still, and know that** [he is] **God**”. Ps.46:10
- 3.3. Habakkuk picked the city watchtower for his sanctuary, to listen to the Lord...**where’s yours?**

¹ Chuck Swindoll; pg.75

4. **WAITING! (2:2-4)**

- 4.1. **Answer: The Babylonians will be punished also?** (2-4; to end of ch.)
- 4.2. The Lord graciously answers him & gave him the vision he needed to turn his **worrying** into **worship**(ch.3)
- 4.3. (2) 1st God's response was for him to **write** it down. 2nd make it **plain** on tablets. 3rd make it for **easy reading**.
 - 4.3.1. **It was to be Permanent, Plain, & Public!** (this message wasn't only for him...he was to share it)
- 4.4. (3) This vision was given **for** a future time & **about** a future time.
 - 4.4.1. Babylon & the 2nd coming of Christ.
 - 4.4.2. **Though it tarries wait for it** (i.e. Babylon)
 - 4.4.3. The writer of Hebrews interprets it to refer to the return of Christ. **"For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry."** Heb.10:37
 - 4.4.4. Where is the promise of His coming? - Wait for it! It will surely come!
- 4.5. (4) **The just shall live by his faith** – (interesting, it takes 3 NT epistles to explain 1 OT text)²
 - 4.5.1. **Rom. 1:17** the theme is "**the just**" & how to be justified before God.
 - 4.5.2. **Gal. 3:11** show us how the just "**shall live**".
 - 4.5.3. **Heb. 10:38** the emphasis is on living "**by faith**".
 - 4.5.3.1. **Faith is learning to live by insight rather than by sight.**
 - 4.5.4. This was of course the watch word for the reformation. As one put it "**the 7 most important monosyllables in all of church history!**"
 - 4.5.4.1. It was this verse quoted in Rom.1:17 that ignited Martin Luther's spirit & set him on fire!
 - 4.5.4.2. It was to him as he said, "**the true gate to paradise!**"
 - 4.5.4.3. Understanding for the 1st time the **depth & understanding** of "justification by faith alone"[sola fide/faith alone] (i.e. not works)
- 4.6. We are not only to be **saved** by faith but we are to **live** by faith!
 - 4.6.1. To **live by faith** means to: **believe** God's Word & **obey it** no matter how we feel, what we see, or what the consequences may be.
 - 4.6.2. 1 Jn.5:4 "**this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith.**"

² Warren Wiersbe

- 4.6.3. When **Michael Faraday**, the great English physicist, was dying, friends gathered at his bedside. As was often the case in the nineteenth century, they sought some final words from the dying man. "What are your speculations?" they asked. His answer was firm: "Speculations! I have none. I am resting on certainties."