

# Habakkuk 3 – Coping with God’s Plan (when you don’t much like it)

**Hook** (1005-1007) – My (seemingly) disastrous professional year.

Jun 2014 - TSG removed me from my slot as Army National Guard Chief Surgeon.

Feb 2015 – I was nominated for Chief Surgeon of Army Central Command and accepted by the CENTCOM Commander. TSG blocked my filling that position.

May 2015 – I was nominated to be the Chair of the Department of Global Health at USUHS. TSG didn’t even send my name forward to compete.

My record is clean. I never did anything to her. Why does she do these things to me?

Remember His glory Remember to trust in Him	<b>What to do when you don’t like what God is doing</b>	Remember His justice
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**Book** (1007-1010) – Habakkuk 3

**Look** (1010-1040)

Remember His glory

**V1** – Habakkuk had completed his struggle with God. He neither understood nor liked God’s plan to rid Israel of idolatry by having them carried away into Babylonian captivity, but he knew God. He had also completed his task of pronouncing destruction upon the Babylonians and writing down the words of the Lord.

Now he waited, and that was probably the hardest part. Habakkuk had done what he could do; he obeyed as best he could. It was time to leave the situation in the hands of his Lord. The following verses are a prayer of poetry that comforted Habakkuk in these trying days.

**V2** – Having heard God’s plan, Habakkuk was afraid. He prayed that God would revive His work, the wonders of the Exodus, and the glories of the unified kingdom under David, in the present day. Despite the sin of the Israelites, and despite the inevitable judgment, Habakkuk wanted the Lord to temper His wrath with mercy.

Notice that the prophet never stopped asking God for what he wanted. He knew that the road to restoration for Israel was through disaster, but he persisted. God provided the rough outline of what He would do, but did not reveal the details. In those details Habakkuk knew he could make a difference. Each faithful prayer may have saved one, or ten, or a hundred of his countrymen from sin and eternal death. Many may have been saved from an untimely physical death. Habakkuk could not know the precise effect of each prayer, but he did know that by his faithful words, God would bless others.

Habakkuk asked the Lord for mercy, and the Lord provided it.

**VV 3-4** – Teman was a mountain stronghold in Edom and Mount Paran a mountain situated in a large wilderness area to the south. The allusion may harken back to God bringing the Law from Mount Sinai. If so, Habakkuk is God to return the Law to His people. As He walks, the Almighty is pictured with power beyond Habakkuk’s wildest imagination. The prophet strains to describe what he sees, and words fail him.

**V5** – Disease, injury and death, not just beauty and joy, flowed from God. The Holy One has the power to heal and to destroy.

**Illustration** – Max McLean Fellowship for Performing Arts dinner last Monday night – reading the Bible and overwhelmed by its message. He was awed by Jesus’ person, in tears at His crucifixion and overjoyed by His resurrection. He has the emotions and the imagination of an actor.

### Discussion Questions/Application

What do you do when you have asked the Lord for help and He promised something you never wanted?

What have you done, in your better days, when you continue serving, and then it is time to wait?

Do you spend time basking in the glory of God? Do you sit back and enjoy and His goodness? When you are outside admiring nature, or inside appreciating music, do you give the glory to Him?

What do we miss when we lack imagination and emotion?

### Remember His justice

**V6** – God can be judged by no one, as He is the ultimate standard of good. The forces of nature cannot stand before Him, and instead bow in reverence to their Creator. God Himself has all power and glory. Though it is tempting to regard this as a vision or at least a metaphor, perhaps one day the mountains and hills actually will bow before their Master?

**V7** – Cushan may be from Cush or may be another name for Midian. Facing God’s power, the evil of the world, represented by two people groups who consistently opposed Israel, trembled.

**VV 8-15** – This is an evocative picture of the glory of God; the sea and the mountains trembling before the Almighty. It is possible that this is also a reference to the land between the rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, which was the land of Babylon.

Having contemplated the glory of God, Habakkuk reflected upon His righteousness. The evil doer will pay for what he has done.

**V16** – Seeing the mighty power of God, Habakkuk trembles. He hoped that he would not live to see the day of Israelite distress. In the event, he probably did not.

### Illustration "PICTURES"

### Discussion Questions/Application

Do you believe that God is just? Are you willing to wait for His plan to work out?

How does our culture make it harder for us to wait?

What about the William Gladstone quote and American civil rights saying “justice delayed is justice denied”? Does God violate this precept? Is His definition of “delayed” different from ours?

### Remember to trust in Him

**V17** – Concluding his poem, and determining to place faith in God, Habakkuk paints a bleak picture of the most likely condition of Israel. As an agricultural land, Israel would falter, and its primary resources, figs, grapes, olives, grains, wool, meat and milk, would fail. It is an image of economic calamity.

**V18** – Despite external circumstances, Habakkuk would choose to trust, and rejoice, in God.

**V19** – The prophet completed his prayer of commitment, and recommitment. No matter what the external situation, the Lord was his joy and strength. God would protect His people, and restore them to a close and beautiful relationship with Him. .

**Illustration** "PICTURES"

**Discussion Questions/Application**

When have we made the decision to trust God, despite our circumstances?

How do we maintain that decision in “the bitter watches of the night”? How do we control our thoughts? By filling our minds and hearts with His Word, His goodness and His glory.

Like eating, sleeping and exercise, our need for the Lord never goes away. We must renew our lives with Him every day.

**Took** (1040-1045)

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**Verdict – What do you want them to DO as a result of the truths they have just received?**

1. Ponder the lesson and the questions that the Spirit has asked you today. Think about what you need to change in your life as a result.
2. Reread the Scripture that we discussed three times, and then take these questions before God in prayer. Ask Him to reveal the special message that He has for you, and what you must do about it.
3. Go to a trusted friend and spiritual mentor with these questions. Tell him or her what you think about them, and what you believe the Lord has shared with you. Get his or her feedback.
4. Make the changes that God has led you to make. Tell your Christian friends so that they can help hold you accountable.

**Additional Reading** – MDHarrisMD.com.

**Closing prayer**