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The prophet Habakkuk has voiced his questions and complaints to God. First, "Why do the sins of Your people go unpunished? Why aren't You acting? Why are You silent?" Later, "How can You, a holy God, use an unholy instrument? I don't understand. I don't like Your answer. It seems Your answer contradicts Your character." Habakkuk has received God's clear answers: "In terms of the sins of My people, I'm raising up the Chaldeans to judge Judah. In terms of Me using an unholy instrument like the Chaldeans; trust Me; you live by faith. I'll deal with the Chaldeans. Woe to them!"

How is Habakkuk going to respond to God's word once he knows it? How are *we* going to respond to God's word once *we* know it? Habakkuk is so moved by what God has done and is going to do that he prays a prayer and writes a song. No more questions, no more complaints, he simply prays a two-petition prayer, based on God's actions in the past with the Israeli people. The God that we trust is the God who has acted in time and space, who has done something. Habakkuk now knows that God will destroy the enemy and save His people; why? God's character and words and His work in the past prove it. How do we know God will deal with what we are going through? His character and words and work in the past prove it. **Read 3:1-15.** "I have been faithful in the past. I will be faithful in the future."

Read :1-2. HABAKKUK PRAYS FOR YAHWEH'S WORK TO BE REVIVED AND HIS MERCY TO BE REMEMBERED. :1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth. :2 Yahweh, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O Yahweh, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.

According to Shigionoth—the precise meaning is uncertain, but the Hebrew root SGN means to reel, with emotion. In this book we've seen Habakkuk indignant, horrified, doubting, fearing, adoring, disappointed, confident. Deep emotions roll over the prophet until he finally finds peace, contentment, joy in Yahweh alone. Here's what he prays.

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Habakkuk knew God had not changed, that He was still a punisher of evil and a deliverer of the righteous. He knew justice would be done. When he

took his eyes off himself and the Judeans and the Chaldeans, and placed them on Yahweh, he broke out in song, rejoicing. Habakkuk based his thinking and actions upon the facts he knew of God and upon what God had said and done. These were the reasons he could pray as he did.

:2 Yahweh, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O Yahweh, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. Yahweh, the unchangeable 'I Am who I Am', the all-sufficient One, who is always there, the One who is everything we need, the personal God. "I've gotten to know You better by Your words; I'm now aware of what You're going to do, and **I fear!**"—both a sense of awe in the presence of God, 'You're awesome!', and there's also the sense of fear as to what is going to happen (later he trembles!).

"**O Yahweh**, (here's the first of his two requests in this verse), **revive Your work**, bring it back to life and even create it if it's best." No longer does he doubt the wisdom or justice of God's actions. He knows Yahweh's work is right, even if it passes beyond his understanding. SO, "Bring into life Your work; nothing else matters." He does not pray that God will change His plan. "Your way, not mine, however hard it is. Do it **in the midst of the years**—whatever Your time, **make Your work known.** **Rom. 11:33-36 read.**

Now his second request: "But please, **in wrath remember mercy.**" Habakkuk began the book with a cry for divine judgment; he ends with a plea for divine mercy. At the first of the prophecy, Habakkuk was asking, "Yahweh, why don't You DO something?" Now he prays, "Yahweh, be careful, don't DO too much! Yes, Your wrath, Your anger, is absolutely necessary. You wouldn't be a just and holy God without punishing evil and sin. But also remember, You're also a God of mercy! As You've acted in the past with us, please do the same again." So yes, punish the guilty but please remember that mercy is part of Your character too." **Ex. 34:6-7a** says, "**Then Yahweh passed by in front of him (Moses) and proclaimed, 'Yahweh, Yahweh God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished....'**"

Habakkuk's two petitions were based on facts of what God had done in the past. This is the basis of the way we can pray also. Study the Word, believe the Word, act on the Word. It leads us to praying in line with God's will. Walk in line with God's Word, by the power of God's Spirit, for the purpose of God's glory.

In **:3-15**, the prophet now pictures the vision which moved him to pray as he did. Habakkuk stopped focusing on the sins of his own nation, he stopped focusing on the fact that the Chaldeans were worse sinners than the Jews. He now focuses on Yahweh and His past works. The distinction between the Judeans and the Chaldeans became relatively unimportant when things were seen from God's perspective. First, Habakkuk focuses on who God is in **:3-7**, then on what God has done in the past in **:8-15**. After reviewing who God

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Evil will be punished! His people will be delivered! Yahweh will keep His word! **Selah**—Wake up, think about that, play the music louder!

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And we today are in a position to see how everything that God revealed to Habakkuk was literally fulfilled. Within 20 years Judah was judged and corrected; they were either killed or enslaved, the captives taken to Babylon. The Chaldeans were used by Yahweh as His divine instrument of punishment. But within 70 years, the five woes against the Chaldeans for their aggression, greed, coveting, cruelty, injustice, violence, inhumanity, and idolatry were carried out by God. The Chaldeans were destroyed, just as they had destroyed others. And, God did save His own, bringing a trusting remnant of Judah back to Jerusalem. "Yahweh, You will judge Your enemies; You will deliver Your people. Past history proves it." It is good to look back at God's character, words, and works. His actions provoke awe and wonder. Let us realize this God keeps His promises. We are to trust the God of history, the God who acts in judgment and mercy, the God who is present in our everyday lives.

Let's wrap up the lessons from these verses. God will do what He's done in the past. God will do what He's promised. God will do what is best. The Judge of all the earth will do right! Yahweh is in His heavens, let all the earth (including us) be silent before Him (**2:20**). Let us wait, watch, trust, and be silent. He knows what He's about!

What an encouraging passage for those of us who have misgivings about God's lack of action or the way He's carrying out His plans. What a reassuring passage for those of us who think our family situation or our national situation or our world situation is absolutely hopeless. We know the God who has acted, who is acting, and who will act. He's worthy to be trusted. God will give life to those who trust Him. God will punish sin. God is ruling over the proceedings of individuals and nations. Hush! Be still! Know He is God!

Get to know Him, the Biblical God. Know who He is. Know what He has done in the past. Know His words. Only when we have come to know Him, what He's about, and what He has done in the past, can we come to the point of praying, "Your will be done". Let's close by reading **3:16-19**.

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