

Trusting God: A Study in Habakkuk
Lord, How Long?
 Habakkuk 1:1-11

Why is this happening?

Do you have hope this morning? Joy? Peace? Love?

Is it even possible to have peace? Is it ok to express joy? Where do we turn for hope amid this world?

We do have hope this morning! God wants to remind us of the hope we have, although maybe not in ways we would expect it. The prophet Habakkuk finds himself led by God to ask questions we are still asking today. Lord, how long? Lord, why? In what can I hope?

This short oracle of Habakkuk takes place in the southern kingdom of Judah before Babylon comes and defeats them and takes them away into exile. Yet news of Babylon is out. God’s people have heard about Babylon and what kind of nation this is.

Habakkuk is a very unusual prophet in that he never directly addresses the people of God. Rather his oracle depicts a back and forth dialogue he has with God as he wrestles with what is happening in his world.

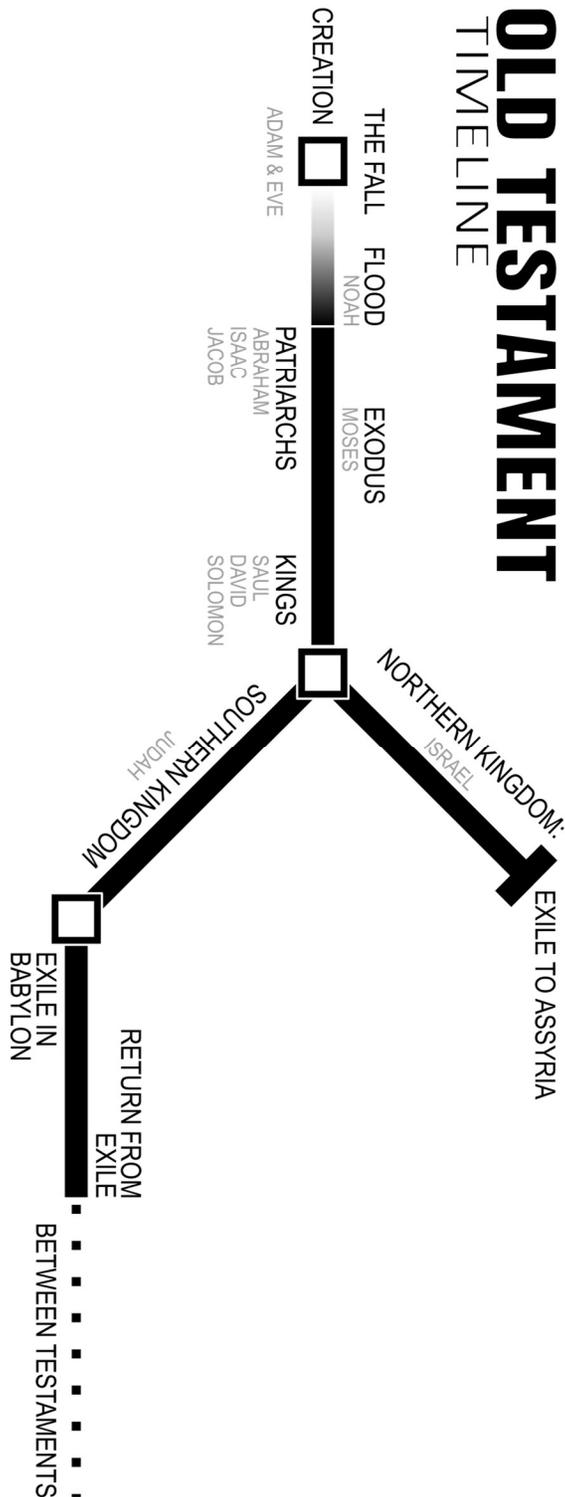
Lessons from Questioning God

1. God _____ our questions (1).

This “oracle” is a message given to Habakkuk by God. God allowed Him to see it. We need to remember this because immediately in the following verses we read about Habakkuk questioning God and we might forget this is the vision God gave. God gives Habakkuk the vision of himself questioning God.

Let’s put it this way. God leads His prophet to ask the questions. God wants the questions to be asked. We should wonder why?

I hope you’ll see for yourself throughout this study: **God wants to answer Habakkuk.** God wants to reveal another component of who He is and how He is working to Habakkuk. But not only to Habakkuk but to His people Judah. And thankfully not only to His people Judah but to His people today, us, His church.



2. God wants our _____ heart cries (2-4).

Habakkuk looks around at his people Judah, and all he sees is corruption, violence, wrong-doing, fighting back and forth, and rising despair. Habakkuk is filled with grief and despair, intense crying. God, it's as though you're not listening.

Do we ever feel like that? Like we're yelling, crying out for help and understanding, blowing the whistle on the violence and oppression that's all around, "but God, will You not save? It's like You put this wrong in front of us to stare at, but it seems You do nothing to address this wrong." **How can this be?**

Habakkuk's questioning is a proclamation or a confession of who God is. He knows the character of Yahweh. God does hear. God will save. God does not idly look at wrong. So the prophet is wrestling in reconciling these two realities. I see all of this happening around me and yet I know this to be true of God, how can these two realities co-exist. God help me understand.

3. God's response might _____ us (5-6a).

In the case of Judah, God will use nations as a judgment against His people. He is not looking idly at the evil wrong-doing of Judah. He is not deaf. He is doing something far beyond what you can believe. God is accomplishing something here even when you Habakkuk don't see it, even when you don't expect it, you will wonder and be astounded at what God is doing.

God is raising up the Chaldeans. Do you get a vision of God here? He works on a global scale, working His purposes and will through the nations. If you're looking horizontally and discouraged or disheartened come back to Habakkuk's message this morning and look up. God is doing something even now in the nations. Are you focused on the news of the nations and filled with worry and anxiety? Or instead, are you allowing that news to direct your heart and mind in prayer to God and His will and purpose at work in the nations?

4. God's response might not _____ us (6b-10).

The Chaldeans are a military nation, hostile and reckless, covering the face of the earth, marching, and everywhere they go consuming the houses and villages, taking them by force. They cause dread and fear wherever they go. They define justice on their terms. They esteem and exalt themselves in all places. Their military might is compared to the speed of leopards, the predatory instincts of wolves, their horsemen are like eagles flying in to devour their prey. Physical aggression pulses through them.

"Wait! God is using these guys?"

What are we to do with this? Dismiss God as a bully and walk away? That's what many in our world today are doing. We can't justify or reconcile that God works even in such evil and treacherous nations like the Chaldeans here in Habakkuk, or the Chaldeans we see of our day. So they dismiss God and turn away.

Yet often those who judge God this way quickly forget we too were once numbered among the Chaldeans ourselves. Rather than judging and turning from God, shouldn't we be overflowing with praise and gratitude that He worked in our awful sin to pull us to Himself?

5. God's response is not _____ (11).

The New American Standard translation says it this way:

"Then they fly along like the wind and pass on. But they will be held guilty, They whose strength is their god."

God's response is not blind. God is not uninformed. He knows all and has tested all. The nation He is using to bring judgment against His people will themselves be found guilty. They have no regard for God, they worship their own might as god. God knows. God sees. God's judgment and actions are good and true even when our little human minds and hearts wrestle to understand. God's response is not blind or naïve. Nothing will get by Him unnoticed.

Trust God

Do you see already how the stage is set for us to learn once again to trust God with whatever is happening in our lives or the world around us? This trust is not one without questions and wrestling. This trust is not without lament and prayer. But through the questions and wrestling, the lament, and crying out in prayer, we today focus our eyes on the truth of who God is and the work that He has already accomplished through His Son Jesus Christ.

What struggle are you trying to figure out on your own? What sorrow are you carrying in silence? What questions weigh on your heart. Don't leave them there. Allow the struggle you're facing, the sorrow you feel, the questions that fill your mind about life and all that surrounds us to lead us before the feet of Jesus.

Bring Him your questions.

"God, help us to more fully know we can trust You."