

Habakkuk's Prayer

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Permit me to read a Psalm - Habakkuk 3:1-19
 1. It is a public prayer written by an inspired prophet of God.
 2. It was to be used in worship and intended to be repeated.
 3. It is a prayer psalm (vs. 1) intended to accompanied with an instrument (vs. 19) and calls for responses from the congregation (Selah)
 4. It is in the style of Shigionoth - "a lyrical poem composed under strong mental emotion; a song of impassioned imagination accompanied with suitable music; a dithyrambic ode; an exciting song of victory; see also Psalm 7" (Bible Study Tools)
- B. What can Christians learn from the prayer psalm of an OT minor prophet?

I. HABAKKUK APPROACHED GOD IN RELIANCE

- A. The prophet saw a horrible future for Israel - Hab. 3:2, 5
 1. God showed him that the Chaldeans were going to destroy them. The prophet knew God's judgment was just, but pleaded for His mercy.
- B. God wanted His people's hearts, not just their external compliance.
 1. Israel's heart had turned from God. Their worship was nothing more than empty rituals. They were just going through the motions fulfilling requirements.
 2. Matt. 15:8; Isa. 29:13
- C. Nothing says more of one's faith than how much and how fervently he prays
 1. Habakkuk prayed that their faith will remain strong enough to for them to survive - Hab. 2:4
 2. Their deliverance depended on their having faith in God and calling on Him in prayer.
 3. Is it not the same for us?

II. HABAKKUK APPROACHED GOD IN REMEMBRANCE

- A. Hab. 3:2 - The scriptures give us a record of God's dealings with humankind. He has always been completely consistent. We know what to expect.
- B. God has always dealt with us on the basis of our response toward His word.
 1. God is the Sovereign Ruler of this universe - Dan. 2:21, 3:17, 4:25
- C. We maintain our place in the world by humbling our hearts before God.
 1. Psalm 51:16-17
 2. We may not understand the power and providence of God, but it will always work - Hab. 1:5
- D. Cooperate with the will of God and rest assured He will consistently save

III. HABAKKUK APPROACHED GOD IN REVERENCE

- A. Hab. 3:2 - Free and constant access to the Father does not mean a casual approach to Him - Ex. 20:18-20

1. "Afraid" is yaw-ray' - "to fear; morally to revere; cause to frighten, affright, be made afraid, in dread, put in fear of terribleness" (Strong's)
2. A fear that produces obedience - Joshua 24:14
- B. Americans do not like to fear anyone. We fire leaders, not bow before them
 1. Many pay lip-service to God's sovereignty, but often find it difficult to surrender control of their lives to Him.
 2. We must acknowledge that our destiny is entirely in the hands of God.
 - a. Personally, nationally, congregationally
 - b. We labor, but God gives the increase - 1Cor. 3:6
 - c. God can remove a congregation's lampstand - Rev. 2:5
 - d. The Lord prunes or cuts off branches - John 15:1-8
 3. The Lord will judge His people - Heb. 10:30
 4. The basis of wisdom is to fear God - Prov. 1:7

IV. HABAKKUK APPROACHED GOD FOR RESTORATION

- A. The prophet accepted that the judgment was coming and that it was just.
 1. He prays for mercy in the coming judgment - Hab. 3:2
 2. His prayer is like that of the psalmist, Asaph - Psalm 80:19
- B. Habakkuk calls for revival, not for salvation while still in their sins - Ezra 9:8-9
 1. He prayed that their faith would be rekindled, even if it took captivity to bring it about.
 2. Hardship is designed to refine us, to sort out the remnant from chaff
- C. Our prayers should be for revival - Psalm 85:5-6

Conclusion:

- A. Regardless of what God had planned, Habakkuk believed God was doing what was right and best
- B. Regardless of how shocking and devastating the future of Israel would be, Habakkuk remembered that God is consistent in His word and actions
- C. Regardless of how sad or outraged Habakkuk was over the future, he did not treat God with disrespect.
- D. Regardless of his desire for all Israel to be spared, he was content with God's plan to restore only a few.
- E. As Abraham asked in Gen. 18:25, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"