

A small, vibrant green plant with several leaves is growing out of a dark, cracked, and parched piece of earth. The background is a blurred, light-colored, textured surface, possibly sand or dry soil, with a prominent crack running across it. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the plant's green against the dark, cracked ground.

Habakkuk

A Conversation with God

Introduction

- Habakkuk: unknown
- Date: 612 (Nineveh) – 597/586 B.C. (Judah)
- Setting: Judah's last days



How is the style/form of Habakkuk different from other writing prophets?

Most prophets speak to the people about God, Habakkuk speaks to God about the people!



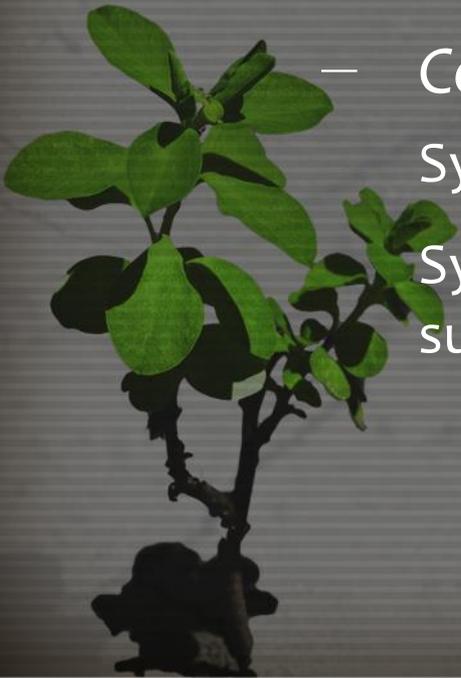
Two Cycles of Dialogue

- Cycle #1
 - Habakkuk's Complaint (1:2-4)
 - YHWH's Answer (1:5-11)
- Cycle #2
 - Habakkuk's Complaint (1:12-2:1)
 - YHWH's Answer (2:2-20)
 - Habakkuk's Response (3:1-19)



Cycle #1: Habakkuk (1:2-4)

- Complaint: Where is the justice, God?
 - *Character*: ‘How long, O LORD will I cry for help?’ (2)
[*Emotion is unleashed, uncensored! Should we cry out to God with such raw authenticity? Do you feel free to?*]
 - *Content*: ‘Why do you make me see injustice?’
Synonym: iniquity, wrong, destruction, strife, injustice
Symbol: Law powerless to govern (*ineffective*), wicked surround just (*hedges in*), justice perverted (*crooked*)



Cycle #1: YHWH (1:5-11)

○ Answer: No worries, justice is coming!

– *Vision*: ‘Look among the nations, and see!’ (5)

He asks why YHWH makes him look at injustice, YHWH tells him to look for coming justice!

[*Our expectations often limit our vision of God!*]

– *Violent*: ‘I am raising up the Chaldeans’ (6-11)

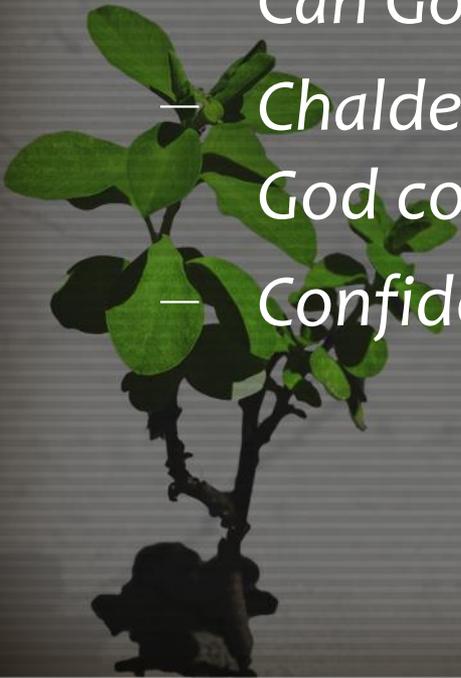
Bitter, hasty, stealing, dreaded, fearsome, lawless, fierce, swift to devour, violent, scoff at enemies, god is their strength

[*Violence, thievery, and injustice of the Babylonians was appropriate punishment for Judah!*]



Cycle #2: Habakkuk (1:12-2:1)

- Complaint: Is that really just?
 - *Correction*: ‘O YHWH, You will not die’ (12)
 - *Conflict*: ‘Purer eyes than to look at evil...’ (13)
Can God be just & use unjust instruments? Norm?
 - *Chaldeans*: ‘Continue to mercilessly kill’ (14-17)
God condone self-worship & self-indulgence?
 - *Confidence*: ‘I’ll look out for what He’ll say’ (2:1)



Cycle #2: YHWH (2:2-20)

- Answer: Yes, justice will prevail in due time!
 - *Wait*: ‘It will surely come; it will not delay’ (2-3)
God confirms justice is coming! (cf. continually, 1:17)
 - *Works*: ‘Righteous shall live by his faithfulness’ (4)
Faith in God produces faithful deeds, Heb. 10:38



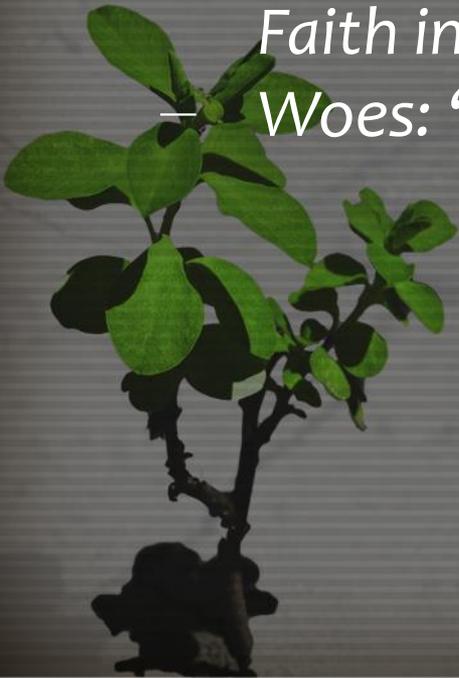
“To understand the New Testament concept of faith, one is spared from grave error and a very one-sided perception if he studies the Old Testament concept along with the New. In the Old Testament, faith is consistently used objectively, and could be translated ‘faithful’. ‘My righteous one shall live by his faithfulness’ (Hab. 2:4). Since Paul quoted that passage twice, and the author of Hebrews once, it is of crucial importance to know that they did not set aside the Old Testament usage, but expanded it with the additional Greek nuance of the subjective – reliance on God. If however, the understanding of faith in the New Testament is limited to the subjective attitude, the interpreter has gone astray on one of the key theological concepts, and he has done so by ignoring the Old Testament.”

McQuilkin, *Understanding & Applying the Bible*, 140)



Cycle #2: YHWH (2:2-20)

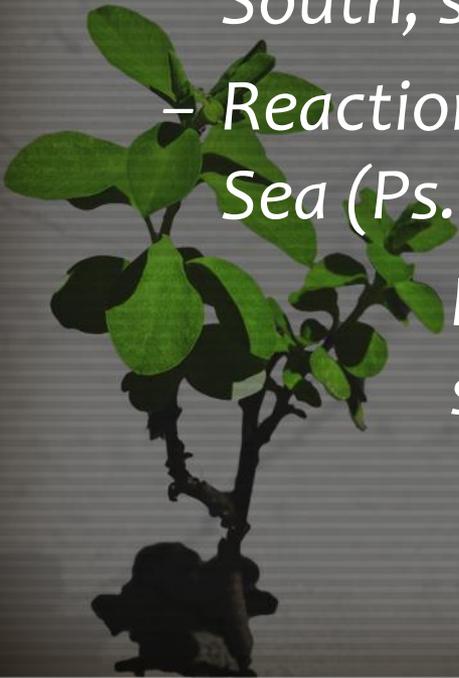
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Faith in God produces faithful deeds, Heb. 10:38
 - *Woes*: ‘The cup will come around to you’ (5-19)
 - (1) *stealing... plunderer plundered (6-8)*
 - (2) *exploitation... you have forfeited life (9-11)*
 - (3) *violence... effort will be for nothing (12-14)*
 - (4) *debauchery... cup will come around (15-17)*
 - (5) *idols... YHWH is in His holy temple (18-20)*



Cycle #2: Habakkuk (3:1-19)

- Response: 'I have heard . . . yet I rejoice' (2-19)
 - *Renew*: 'Revive it... in wrath, remember mercy' (2)
 - *Report*: 'God came from Teman , Mt. Paran' (3-7)
South, splendor, shake (Deut 33:2, Jdg 5:4, Ex 15:14)
 - *Reaction*: 'Mountains saw you & writhed' (8-15)
Sea (Ps. 68:7f), *sun* (Josh. 10:12f), *strode* (Jdg. 5:4)

Does Habakkuk recount past deeds or see the future vindication of the faithful?



Cycle #2: Habakkuk (3:1-19)

- Response: 'I have heard . . . yet I rejoice' (2-19)

- *Real*: 'I'll quietly wait' for God's justice (16-19)

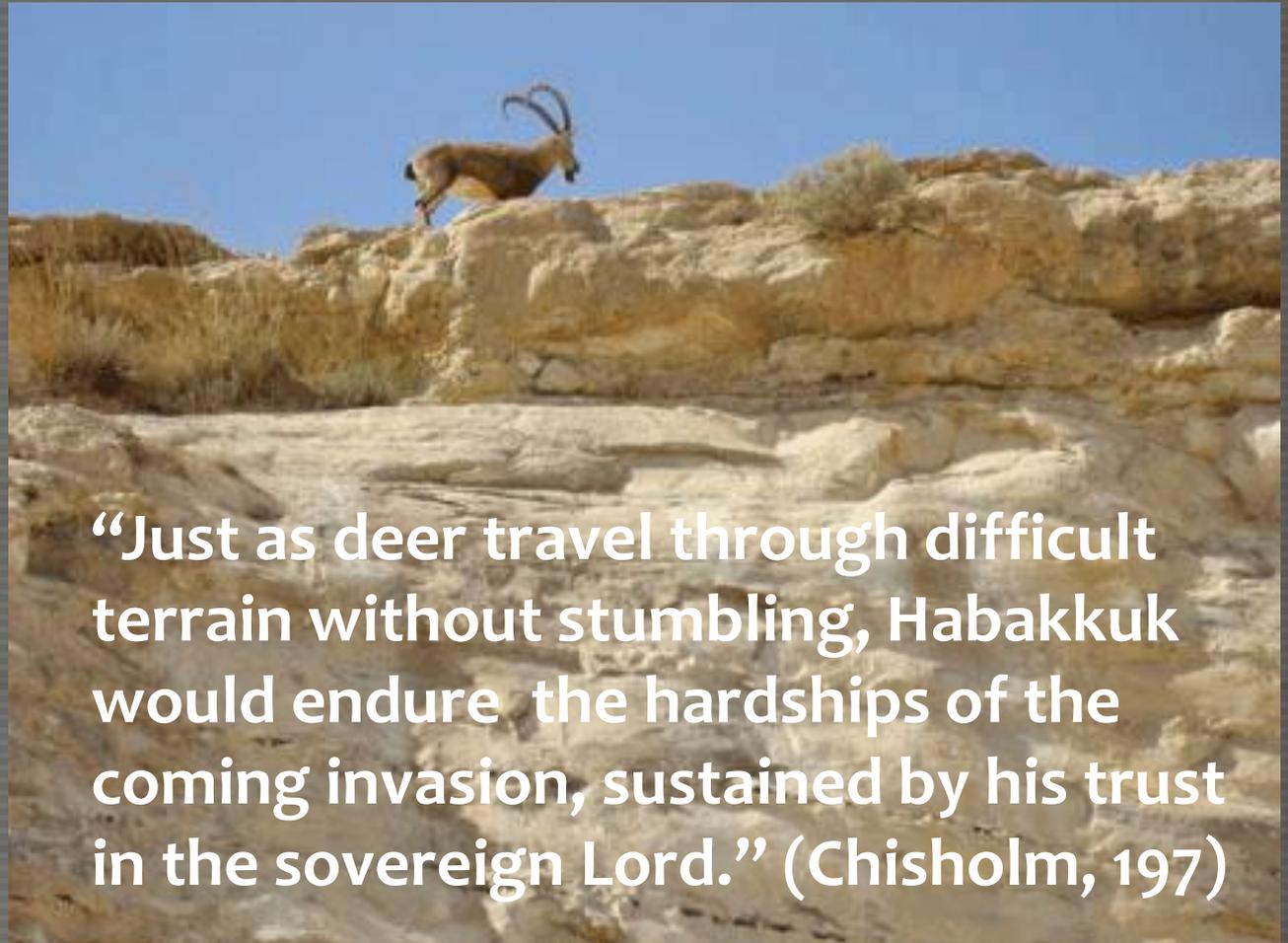
- Acknowledging that things will get worse before better, Habakkuk expresses his trust in YHWH!*

- If all is taken, Habakkuk will still trust in God.*

From 1:2-4 to 3:16-19, what changed in Habakkuk's circumstances?
Anything in his perspective?



“God, the Lord, is my strength. He makes my feet like the deer’s. He makes me tread on my high places.”



“Just as deer travel through difficult terrain without stumbling, Habakkuk would endure the hardships of the coming invasion, sustained by his trust in the sovereign Lord.” (Chisholm, 197)



Summary

Habakkuk laments God's silence in the face of rampant injustice in Judah's last days. God assures His prophet that He is bringing justice on Judah through the Babylonians. Habakkuk does not understand how a just God could use an unjust instrument. God assures him that the Babylonians will also be judged for their evil. Though everything is stripped away, Habakkuk will wait for God's justice, trusting in His sovereign plan!





Habakkuk

Trusting God (regardless)