

## FROM COMPLAINT TO PRAISE: A MESSAGE FROM THE PROPHET HABAKKUK

Have you ever complained to God or to others about your circumstances or the situation you may find yourself or your community in? When you open your mouth, all people hear is one complaint or a grouch after another? People start avoiding you, you feel negative, speak negatively and generally feel and sound down? Well, guess what, you are not alone.

The prophet of God, Habakkuk, also complained to God and not only once but on two occasions he complained. Habakkuk's name means to *EMBRACE*. That's an interesting meaning because it begs the question, "*WHAT ARE YOU EMBRACING?*"

*SCRIPTURE READING:* Habakkuk 1:2-4  
also Chapter 3:

When Habakkuk complained to God he had valid reasons. You see, you and I could also have valid reasons to complain and bring our complaints to God. He knew that God hears and for this reason he cried out to God. He

calls out verse 2 of chapter one, “How long shall I cry out, and you will not hear?” There is a sense of disappointment when he says “HOW LONG, O LORD, MUST I CALL FOR HELP?” His complaint is about the violence, and it seems that God does not save. In verse 3 he asks God why he allows the injustice; he also asks why God tolerates wrong. He continues his complaint and mentions the DESTRUCTION and VIOLENCE. He mentions the strife and conflict. He says that the LAW IS PARALYSED and JUSTICE DOES NOT PREVAIL (V4) the wicked hem in the righteous. This sounds like South Africa today: VIOLENCE and CORRUPTION also A LAWLESSNESS THAT ABOUNDS, (READ THE BIBLE AND YOU GET THE NEWS) Have you called out to God for your country, for your home, for your personal life?

The best part of this book is that God answers. God answers our prayers too. The problem is that 1. We may not be listening 2. It's not the answer we want to hear 3. We're too busy talking (praying) to hear the voice of

God when He answers. But God does answer. Listen to God's answer: Hab. 1:5 – it's scary to think that this may not have been the answer Habakkuk was expecting or that he wanted to hear. Then God says in verse 6 – 11, He would send the Chaldeans or Babylonians – a ruthless and impetuous people. They were a feared people, promoting their own honour – PRIDE. These people would be sent by God to destroy God's own people??? Sounds contradictory to the God of Love whom we are told about. God warns Habakkuk of the coming danger. What was Habakkuk's response: ANOTHER COMPLAINT!!! How much like me (us) that is?

Chapter 1:12 – 2:1 (READ) Habakkuk acknowledges that God is sovereign and everlasting. He compares men to fish in the sea, where instinct and lawlessness abound, and a case of the survival of the fittest. He refers to an ancient method of fishing still used today in some places, even on the West Coast, where they pull in a net with all the fish in that area. The pagans would

sacrifice to their net and the people of Israel were like the fish in that net. Habakkuk says in 2:1 – he will stand on the ramparts to see what God would say to him; what answer God would give to his complaint.

Once again God is faithful and answers:

- Habakkuk was to write down the vision God gives (Do we take time to write down what God has told us? The weakest ink is better than the best memory. What God tells you in the light you need to remember in the dark – take time to write down what God has told you, and then you can remind yourself and take it back to Him when you doubt or when tempted. Jesus, when tempted, told Satan that “IT IS WRITTEN . . . “
- The revelation was for an appointed time – there is a time as set out by God, not our time, waits on Him. At the right time He does fulfil His word but you and I must be in the place where He wants us to be, speaks of being POSITIONED.
- V4 The Lord says: The righteous SHALL live by FAITH, not by their wit or skills or

bank balance! How do live? In what is your faith?

- God addresses the problem of Greed!!!
- Then the problem of EXTORTION (V6) And God asks the question “How long must this go on?” WARNINGS: V8; 9; 10; 11; 12 and V15 is as bad with V16 and 17 a warning I think applies to our time as well.
- God asks the question, What value is and idol, carved by man that teaches lies? V19 - The same question reverberates through the ages to where you and I are today, “WHAT IDOL HAVE WE PLACED AS OUR FOCUS OR REPLACED GOD WITH?” Introspection.
- V20 brings us back to reality that God is GOD, that all the earth should be silent before Him.

Chapter 3: Habakkuk does not complain any more but now prays to God – somewhere while God was speaking Habakkuk must have had a change of heart. So MUST you and I reach a point where we, like Habakkuk,

change our minds and hearts, this starts with the change of our thinking – Rom 12:1

Hab. 3:2 Do you and I stand in awe of the GREAT DEEDS of Our God? You testimony of His goodness to you.

V 16 of Chapter 3 He accepts the judgement of God. His legs trembled, yet he waited patiently (HOW PATIENT ARE YOU AND I – LORD TEACH ME PATIENTCE, BUT HURRY – THIS DOES NOT WORK.)

MY FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCRIPTURE – WELL KNOWN and quoted by many “THOUGH THE FIG TREE DOES NOT BUD AND NO GRAPES ON THE VINES, THOUGH THE OLIVE CROP FAILS AND THE FIELDS PRODUCE NO FOOD, THOUGH THERE ARE NO SHEEP IN THE PEN AND NO CATTLE IN THE STALLS *YET YET YET* I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD, I WILL BE JOYFUL IN GOD MY SAVIOUR!!!

Are you able to join the Prophet and proclaim – yes to PROCLAIM – is to make known – LOUDLY!!! Are you able to proclaim that regardless of your current or present circumstances are you able to say “I WILL

REJOICE IN THE LORD!” The last verse of the chapter – v19 THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH; HE MAKES MY FEET LIKE THE FEET OF A DEER, HE ENABLES ME TO GO ON THE HEIGHTS.”

YOU MAY HAVE COMPLAINED LIKE HABAKKUK AND MAY HAVE HEARD OR NOT HEARD GOD ANSWER, BUT I TELL YOU THIS MORNING – IT IS TIME TO REJOICE IN THE LORD YOUR STRENGTH.

LET US PRAY: