

## Climbing Out of the Dip

**Habakkuk 3:1-2 HCSB** A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. According to Shigionoth. (2)  
LORD, I have heard the report about You; LORD, I stand in awe of Your deeds. Revive *Your work* in these years; make *it* known in these years. In *Your* wrath remember mercy!

If you've ever faced a very difficult situation and you just knew God could have done something about it but didn't, and that confused you, then you very likely will relate to the story of an Old Testament prophet, whose name is Habakkuk.

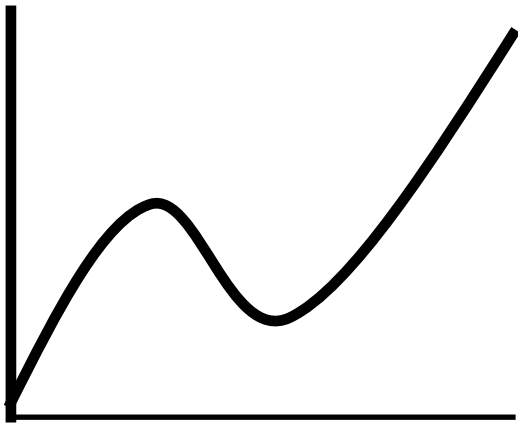
Let me review the basics with you again. The book of Habakkuk was written somewhere around the year 600 B.C. and is one of the twelve Minor Prophets. Now, his story is a little bit different from the other Minor Prophets. The other Minor Prophets would represent God's message to the people, but Habakkuk was the only prophet that actually represented the people's message back to God.

Now, you may wonder why this took place. God spoke to the prophet Habakkuk and said, "Go tell the people that they are corrupt, and that they are sinning, and that I am going to have to judge them for their sins."

And, most likely, Habakkuk would have said, "I don't like that. I don't want to tell my people in Judah that message, but God, You're right. They are corrupt. They are vile. They are violent, and so, I understand."

But here is the part that wiggled him out. God said, "What I am going to do is, I am going to use a group of people, who are much more evil than you, to destroy you." And Habakkuk replies, "Well...uh...er...I don't get that. Okay? I know that we are bad, but why You are going to use these people known as the Babylonians? I mean, they're the meanest, most violent, the most corrupt people around! They are cheaters. You are going to use people who are much, much more horrible than us to destroy us? God, that doesn't seem fair. In fact, God, we protest, and we would like to say we know You are supposed to be just - but that doesn't seem just at all."

If you've ever had an experience like that with God, where you thought, "God, this just doesn't seem fair," very likely, you will relate the story of Habakkuk. Let me show you a diagram that we've been working with.



Look at the very far left of the diagram where the curving line begins at the bottom of the box. This would be a starting point.

This would be a person who has not yet met the love and the grace of God, but one day, the Holy Spirit works in their life and as the Spirit draws them, they call out on the name of God's Son, Jesus, and what they find is absolute new life in Christ. They are born anew spiritually. Their sins are forgiven. They're filled with Holy Spirit, and then all of a sudden, there's just this meteoric spiritual high, where they are changed, and they pray and God

answers their prayers, and there's these "God coincidences" everywhere they go, and there's this spiritual high.

How many of you can relate to a time like that? A bunch of you can, but then what happens is, life goes on and yesterday, God answered our prayer immediately, but today He didn't. And we go, "Wha wha wha wa wait, God, I thought we had this deal. Every time we prayed, You did what I wanted You to do, and this time You didn't. What's going on?"

Or, something bad happens to someone who is innocent and you pray, "That doesn't seem fair. God, I thought it was always going to be good, but it's not so good, and You could do something about it, but You're not. I don't quite understand."

Be honest. How many of you have ever had a time like that with God? A bunch of you would say, "Yeah. I can relate to this type of time." We've called it in our series, as Henry Blackabee called it, a crisis of belief.

So what do we do at this point? A lot of people want to go immediately back to their last point of spiritual high. Others though, say, "Okay, God. If that's how it's going to be, either You're not good or You're not really there, so forget You, God. I want to go back to life without You."

And that's what happens to a lot of different people. They hit a crisis of belief. They start having questions. In fact, if you want to put a little "x" here in your notes, just on the other side of the peak where things start sliding, you might write the word Chapter One right by this, because in Chapter One, that's where Habakkuk is living. "God, I don't understand."

In chapter two, he goes into what we would call a season of waiting. You might write chapter two right about here in the bottom of the dip. In Chapter Two, God says to him, "Be quiet and listen. I want to speak." God says, "Take notes. Write this down, because that way, you can document what I've shown you. And then, wait and keep serving and wait and keep serving. Be faithful! And even though things on the outside aren't getting any better, Habakkuk is waiting on God.

Now in chapter three, we are going to see something very beautiful and powerful. What we see is that, even though the circumstances don't change, Habakkuk's faith and worship of God goes to a new, what I would call "Chapter Three" level. The New Covenant way of actually representing this principle, can be found in the book of James, chapter one. It says this,

- [James 1:2-4 HCSB](#) Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, (3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. (4) But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

A lot of people want to have this very real intimate faith with God, but don't recognize that God will often use the dip to prove His faithfulness and bring it to a "Chapter Three" type of faith.

With that foundation laid, let's dive into Habakkuk chapter three, verse one. Here's what the Bible says.

- [Habakkuk 3:1 HCSB](#) A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. According to Shigionoth.

Huh? What in the world is that weird word in my Bible? Well, most likely, it's simply a musical setting for a song, which Will Smith picked up later on and called it "Get Shiggy With It". Maybe not. I don't know, but it's most likely a musical setting for a song.

Verse 2, here's what Habakkuk says.

- [Habakkuk 3:2 HCSB](#) LORD, I have heard the report about You; LORD, I stand in awe of Your deeds. Revive *Your work* in these years; make *it* known in these years. In *Your* wrath remember mercy!

He says, "Lord, I have heard of your fame". He said, "I stand in awe of your deeds." And then, what does he say? Say it aloud, he says, "Revive Your work in these years; make it known in these years. In your wrath remember mercy."

He's saying, "God, I remember, I've heard about Your miracles. I've heard about Your power. I've heard about Your glory. I remember them, but God, You're not doing it right now." If I was honest, I could tell you that there are seasons in my past where God's presence seemed more real than at other times, and there were seasons where His power seemed more evident. It was like God was doing this, and God was doing that, and God was doing this and then all of a sudden there was a period of dryness. At those times I say, "God, I know You can, but You're not. Renew what You used to do in our day. I know You can. God, do it again," and that's very much what Habakkuk's saying.

In fact, the Hebrew word that's translated renew is the word *ch'ayah*.

**renew: *ch'ayah* (khaw-yaw'); to renew, to revive, to restore.**

Everybody say "ch'aw-yah". This word means "to renew". It means revive. It means restore. "God, I remember when You used to do this. God, do it again. Do it again if You please."

What do you do when you are in the dip? When circumstances aren't changing or improving, how do you by faith climb out of the dip? Today, we are going to look at three things that Habakkuk, the prophet, does that we can apply directly to our lives. The first one, if you are taking notes, is this.

### **CLIMBING OUT OF THE DIP**

#### **1) REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE.**

We are going to learn to remember what God has done. We are going to look back and remember the faithfulness, the character, and the goodness of God. We are going to remember what God has done. And here's what Habakkuk is going to do. He's going to look at some very tangible because those things can trigger memories.

For example, smells can trigger memories. I don't know if you are like this or not, but there's this perfume that Lynn wore when we first met, and every time I smell it, I think, "UMMM – UM!" I smell it and it brings back those memories.

Or maybe for you it's something like apple pie. You may smell apple pie and you might think, "Grandma's house!" Some of you may think, "No, mothballs and lavender. THAT'S Grandma's house."

I don't know what it would be, but there are certain things that could trigger those memories. It could be a song. Some of you who are my age, every time you hear an Air Supply song, you think of your first couples' skate. I don't know what it is, but YOU know. There are those certain things that trigger your memories, and this is what Habakkuk's going to do as he goes down a memory journey with the goodness and of the power of God.

Verse 3, he says this. There was a time when,

- **Habakkuk 3:3 HCSB** God comes from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise.

Now, you might be scratching your head going, "What's this place?" Well, to Adonaic Christians this is very famous place. When God delivered our people out of the Egyptian bondage, He parted the Red Sea. They went through. The sea closed up. The Egyptians drowned, and God took us to this very place. It was this place where our ancestors found refuge and started to become a new people of God again. So Habakkuk's saying, "I remember that place!"

This is why God would often have people build an altar to remember who God is and what He'd done. Or, in the New Covenant, we observe the Passover now, not only to remember what Hashem did on that first Passover but what He did for us at that last one we got to celebrate with the Messiah. That is what Habakkuk is doing.

Verses 4, 5 and 6, he says this.

- **Habakkuk 3:4-6 HCSB** His brilliance is like light; rays are flashing from His hand. This is where His power is hidden. (5) Plague goes before Him, and pestilence follows in His steps. (6) He stands and shakes the earth; He looks and startles the nations. The age-old mountains break apart; the ancient hills sink down. His pathways are ancient.

“Plague went before him; pestilence followed his steps.” Don’t hear that much in Cultural Christian churches today, do you? “He stood, and shook the earth.” I like this verse. “He looked, and made the nations tremble.” He just looked. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed.” God, “His ways are eternal.”

And then here’s what Habakkuk does. You can read in your own Bible verses 7 through 15. He goes through this very detailed explanation of remembering when God displayed His glory and power through nature. In fact, you could almost imagine saying, “God, I remember some important times.

- I remember when You guided Your people by fire and by a cloud
- I remember when You fed us with bread from Heaven
- I remember when the waters parted and we walked through
- I remember when You shook the earth and the walls came tumbling down
- I remember when You used torrential rains to defeat the enemy
- I remember when You used pestilence and plagues

God, I remember what You’re capable of. Renew those deeds in OUR day.” Whenever I am in the dip, sometimes I just have to remember. I just have to remember. I go back to who I know God is. When I don’t see Him, I remember what He’s done for our people in the past.

Now, some of you are going to go, “Dude, I ain’t never had anything like that happen.” It doesn’t have to be that dramatic. For those of you who’ve been believers for any amount of time, I guarantee if you think about it God will show you some things He’s done for you.

It could be the time where you just didn’t know what to do and you came to church, and the message might as well have been a conversation between you and God, because every word that was spoken, it was like it was just divinely inspired just for you. You can remember that.

Or, maybe it was the time where you were hurting and you turned on the radio and there was this song that it was like God’s message to you.

Or, it could have been something as simple as one day, you were reading in the Bible and you came across a verse, and you were like, “Oh, my goodness. If this verse was ever for anyone, it must have been for me,” and you remember what God did.

It could have been as simple as when you were hurting and there was someone there who prayed for you, and you knew, you know God sent that person for you. Go back to that time!

What do you do when you are in the dip? You need to remember what God has done. “God, I remember Your glory and Your deeds and Your power. Renew them in Your day. I know You’ve done it before, God, and I believe You can do it again.” The first thing you do as you are taking notes is, you remember.

The second thing that you do is, you accept what God is doing.

## **CLIMBING OUT OF THE DIP**

### **2) ACCEPT WHAT GOD IS DOING.**

You accept what God is doing. Now, this doesn’t mean that you just have to roll over and play dead and not pray for a miracle, or whatever, but when you are in the dip, it is time to acknowledge you are in the dip.

Or, if God has directly spoken as He did with Habakkuk, if God has spoken and said it is so, then you accept what God has said, because too many Christians don’t. They are what I

call HITS Christian, h-i-t-s. You want to know what a HITS Christians is? HITS stands for “head in the sand.” Too many Christians put their head in the sand.

- When the doctor says, “Hey, your health’s not very good. You need to make some changes.” Instead of facing the truth, they just put their head in the sand.
- When their marriage is in trouble and their spouse says, “Hey, we need counseling,” they go, “Eh, it’ll work out,” and they put their head in the sand.
- Sometimes when finances are bad, people say, “But I WANT the house. I WANT the house.” So, they buy the house on what they call “faith”, but in actuality is putting their head in the sand.

When the storm is coming, some Christians don’t prepare. They don’t face the truth. They just put their head in the sand, and maybe God is saying to you, “Pull your head out.”

Too many people, we just, we deny the reality of what’s going on. That doesn’t mean we can’t pray for a miracle. Yes, we can, and should, but if God has spoken clearly, then we have to accept what God is doing even if we don’t like it, and you can see this come about in Habakkuk’s verse, verse 16, here’s what he said. And, he’s speaking about hearing the message of God.

- **Habakkuk 3:16 HCSB** I heard, and I trembled within; my lips quivered at the sound. Rottenness entered my bones; I trembled where I stood. Now I must quietly wait for the day of distress to come against the people invading us.

God said, “I am going to use the Babylonians to destroy you,” so here’s what Habakkuk said. He said, “I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled.”

I want you to feel this, okay? He says, “My heart bump [pounding on chest], bump, pounded. My lips did this little deal. My legs - they shook. I realized that what God said is going to come to pass, and it’s not going to be pleasant.” And I want you to hear this. God had spoken, and Habakkuk did not go into the HITS phase. He looked truth squarely in the face and said, “This is not going to be a fun season. A lot of innocent people are going to die. Probably me, probably those that I love, there is going to be a lot of bloodshed, and I don’t like it, but I trust God, even though I don’t fully understand.”

It’s not a denial. It’s not a denial, but he says, “The sovereign hand of God is doing something here. God has spoken, and so I’ll accept what He is doing, as difficult as it is for me to accept.”

Sometime, something is going to happen that we don’t like, and it’s already happened, and we have to accept that. You don’t have to like it. It doesn’t mean you can’t do your best to alleviate the consequences. But you also have to remember what God has done. You have to accept what God is doing.

Now, here’s the beauty and the power of whatever you are going through, and it is this. Number three, Habakkuk teaches us to trust what God is going to do.

### **CLIMBING OUT OF THE DIP** **3) TRUST WHAT GOD WILL DO.**

We remember what He did, we accept what He is doing, and we trust what He is going to do, and this is found very, very clearly in verses 16 and 18, some of the richest verses in this whole story. Here is what Habakkuk says.

- **Habakkuk 3:16-18 HCSB** I heard, and I trembled within; my lips quivered at the sound. Rottenness entered my bones; I trembled where I stood. Now I must quietly wait for the day of distress to come against the people invading us. **(17)** Though the fig tree does not bud and there is no fruit 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, **(18)** yet I will triumph in the LORD; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!

He says, "I don't understand and I don't like it, and the Babylonians should get theirs, and we are getting ours, and I still don't like it." Yet, at the end of verse 16 he says, "I must" do what? Help me out. He says, "I must..." That's pathetic. Try again. He said, "I must quietly wait for the day of distress to come against the people invading us."

I am going to wait, and Babylon, they're going to get theirs, because God has said it to be so.

Then, he says in verse seventeen. I love this. He said, "Though the fig tree does not bud and there is no fruit 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,"

...though I've got no reason to rejoice, he says, "yet I will," what? Say it aloud, he said, "yet I will triumph in the LORD; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!" Whom? He said, "I will be joyful in God of my salvation." When he has no reason whatsoever, physically and visibly, to rejoice, he says, "Even though the fig tree doesn't bud, yet I will rejoice in my God. Even though there are no cattle in the barn, yet I will rejoice in my God."

In your life, it may be that

- Even though my spouse said 'til death do us part and didn't live up to the word, I will still rejoice in the Lord my God.
- Even though I raised my kids to know better, and they're making very scary decisions right now, yet will I trust in the Lord my God.
- Even though we've prayed physically for someone to get better and they've actually gotten worse, yet I will trust in the Lord my God.
- Even though our house will not sell and we are on the line, I will yet trust in the Lord my God.
- Even though finances are tough and I'm looking for a job when hundreds of thousands are losing their jobs, yet I will trust in the Lord my God.
- Even though I don't like it, even though I don't understand it, even though I know He could and He should, but He's not, yet will I trust in the Lord my God."

I pray every single one of you would grow to have what I call a Habakkuk Chapter Three type of faith, an "H3 faith". But here's the deal. You can't have a H3 type faith until you've had a Chapter One type of question, and a Chapter Two kind of waiting, because God can do more spiritually in the dip than He does on the mountaintop, and those who are closest to God, they've been through this. Oh and by the way, it's precisely in the low times that God proves His faithfulness and His character and His grace and His goodness.

Watch this last verse. Verse 19, watch this.

- [Habakkuk 3:19 HCSB](#) Yahweh my Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like those of a deer and enables me to walk on mountain heights! For the choir director: on stringed instruments.

He says, "The Sovereign Lord." "I don't understand. I don't like it, yet, "Yahweh the Sovereign Lord is my strength. God is my strength. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer." What does he do? I want you to say it aloud, and I want you to watch up here on the screen. What does he do? Get it in your mind. "He enables me to do," what? "He enables me to ... walk on the mountain heights." Even though the fig tree doesn't bud and there are no animals in the barn, yet the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth stand still before Him. The righteous will live by faith. God's word will be true. I will find my strength and my hope in the Lord my God, and He will take me to new heights.

When you do the Habakkuk, what does his name mean? It means to embrace. It means to wrestle. Even when you are in the dip and you don't understand, you continue to embrace God, even perhaps, wrestle with Him. "I don't understand, God. I'm pushing back. I love You, but I don't understand." You embrace Him, and even though He may or may not change the outward circumstances, He will take you spiritually to a new place of trust, to new heights.