

THE UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM #33

“When God Seems Unfair”

I. Introduction

Max Dupree

“The first job of a leader is to define reality”

A. The Days of Discouragement Have Come to Our Door

1. These are days of discouragement for Bible- believing Christian patriots.

a. Discouragement from without:

- The final result is not in, but it appears that the Socialist Democrats are poised to take over the Presidency
- Widespread voter fraud has left us not trusting the election results
- We now know the pollsters were lying to us
- We always knew that the mass media was lying to us

b. Discouragement from within:

- 9 out of 10 Christian pastors chose not to preach about politics
- Millions of professing Christians voted for the pro-abortion party
- Some of our most respected theologians (Tim Keller, John Piper) copped out
- Some of our most respected prophets seem to have got it wrong
- And some very high-profile Christian leaders were caught in immorality and fired from their positions (Liberty University President Jerry Falwell, Jr., Hillsong NYC ‘Celebrity’ Pastor Carl Lentz)
- Even our formerly trustworthy media brand, Fox News, seemed to turn against the President

a. Many of us have felt overwhelmed. Deflated. Even horrified, because we know the many woes that a Biden presidency will bring upon our nation.

We feel, in keeping with this year’s sermon theme, *shaken*.

2. So ever since the election night I have been waiting for some good news; and asking the Lord what He would want me to speak to His people if good news didn't come.

a. I found myself asking the Lord for a prophetic word for a time such as this; a time when faith was tested to the point where me when even one of His holy prophets cried out to complain to him.

3. Then He took me to the little Book of Habakkuk in the Old Testament; another time where the forces of darkness seem to hold the upper hand and God seemed to be unfair in how things were going.

II. When God Seems Unfair

A. Who Was Habakkuk?

1. Habakkuk lived and prophesied during the reign of the evil Israelite King Manasseh. There was trouble everywhere.

a. Within Israel, wickedness abounded, many were backslidden

b. From without was an approaching invasion from the mighty army of the Babylonians.

c. The great Puritan Bible scholar **Matthew Henry** sums up the purpose of the Book of Habakkuk...

The book refers particularly to the invasion of the land of Judah by the Chaldeans, which brought spoil upon the people of God, a just punishment of the spoil they had been guilty of among themselves.

2. The Book is only 3 chapters long; it is a series of exchanges between a gracious God and a gracious soul; the Prophet coming to God on behalf of the people and then God giving him a response to speak to the people.

3. The great message of the book for us is how it teaches us to deal with life when life, and even God, seem unfair and everything is going wrong.

Matthew Henry

This book helps us through that great temptation with which good men have in all ages been exercised, when they see the rising power and prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the righteous because of it.

4. The Book begins with the prophet bringing his complaints to God in prayer...

Habakkuk 1:1-4

The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw. O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear? Even cry out to You, "Violence!" and You will not save. Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises.

a. He says, "My prayers seem unanswered; all I see is trouble and You seem not to care". The NIV translation says this...

Habakkuk 1:2-3 NIV

How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong?

b. There is something about seeing injustice that makes our blood boil.

- Good men go to jail while the real colluders get book deals
- The media and the Democrats spent 4 years accusing the President having no evidence; yet they refuse to investigate or even report on the hard evidence that indicates Joe Biden is corrupt

Habakkuk 1:5

Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore, perverse judgment proceeds.

c. Is this how we feel right now? The law is powerless; justice never goes forth; the wicked surround us on every side; the result-perverted judgment goes forward.

Matthew Henry

Here, in these verses, the prophet sadly laments the iniquity of the times, as one sensibly touched with grief for the lamentable decay of religion and righteousness. It is a very melancholy complaint which he here makes to God; that no man could call what he had his own; but, in defiance of the most sacred laws of property and equity, he that had power on his side had not right on his side.

d. It is heartbreaking to see that many Christians seem unmoved by all this-they will not recognize the true evil of what is happening until it comes to their door.

e. But the true people of God are already grieving!

Matthew Henry

It does not appear that the prophet himself had any great wrong done him, but it grieved him to see other people wronged, and he could not but mingle his tears with those of the oppressed. Doing wrong to harmless people is a great grievance to all that are concerned for God's Jerusalem, who sigh and cry for abominations of this kind.

5. Many of us have seen this evil coming for months; and now it is on our doorstep. No wonder the Prophet wondered why God was allowing it to arrive.

Matthew Henry

When God seems to connive at the wickedness of the wicked, nay, and to countenance it, by allowing them to prosper in their wickedness, it shocks the faith of good men, and proves a sore temptation to them to say, We have cleansed our hearts in vain (Ps 73:13), and hardens those in their impiety who say, God has forsaken the earth.

Matthew Henry

We must not think it strange if wickedness be allowed to prevail far and prosper long. God has reasons, and we are sure they are good reasons, both for the reprieves of bad men and the rebukes of good men; and therefore, though we plead with him, and humbly expostulate concerning his judgments, yet we must say, "He is wise, and righteous, and good, in all."

6. So Habakkuk's 1st question, "Why are you allowing all this to happen?"

B. God's 1st Response

1. The first thing God does is to remind us of His sovereignty; that He is in charge of all things, even including the invasion of our enemies.

Habakkuk 1:5-6

"Look among the nations and watch — Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you. For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs.

2. God pulls no punches about the nature of the enemy:

Habakkuk 1:7-8

They are terrible and dreadful; Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; their cavalry comes from afar; they fly as the eagle that hastens to eat.

Habakkuk 1:9-11

They all come for violence; their faces are set like the east wind. They gather captives like sand. They scoff at kings, and princes are scorned by them. They deride every stronghold, for they heap up earthen mounds and seize it. Then his mind changes, and he transgresses; He commits offense, ascribing this power to his god.

3. Review the 1st exchange: Habakkuk complained to the Lord; the Lord assures him that the enemy is terrible but He is in charge of the enemy!

C. The Prophet's Second Question

Habakkuk 1:12-13

Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction. You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he?

1. Notice that he honors God; he acknowledges that God is in charge; He will use the Babylonians to chasten His people but He has already marked them out for judgment.

2. And yet, he still wonders why God will allow it to happen.

3. Isn't this exactly where we find ourselves today? We see the evil approaching and it seems inevitable that they will prevail. We know God is sovereign; but we STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND; it seems so unfair!

4. What he does next is a model for...

D. What We Must Do Now

Habakkuk 2:1 NLT

I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guardpost. There I will wait to see what the Lord says and how he will answer my complaint.

Habakkuk 2:1 NKJV

...watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected.

1. The first thing we must do is to separate ourselves from things 'below'; we must 'climb up to our watchtower'. We must go higher in the Spirit.

Matthew Henry

Those that expect to hear from God must withdraw from the world, and get above it, must raise their attention, fix their thought, study the scriptures, consult experiences and the experienced, continue instant in prayer, and thus set themselves upon the tower.

2. He will 'stand at his guardpost'; this means he will not leave his post until he has his answer from God; not only for his own satisfaction, but to enable him as a prophet to give satisfaction to others.

Matthew Henry

When we are tossed and perplexed with doubts concerning the methods of Providence, are tempted to think that it is fate, or fortune, and not a wise God, that governs the world, or that the church is abandoned, and God's covenant with his people cancelled and laid aside, then we must take pains to furnish ourselves with considerations proper to settle the matter.

Matthew Henry

When we are attacked by such as quarrel with God and his providence as the prophet here seems to have been—beset, besieged, as in a tower, by hosts of objectors—we should consider how to answer them, fetch our instructions from God, hear what he says to us for our satisfaction, and have that ready to say to others to satisfy them, as a reason of the hope that is in us.

3. Now we come to the heart of the message; the word of the Lord to the prophet for living in times like these.

D. God's 2nd Response

Habakkuk 2:2-3

Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

1. The vision God gives him is that even though God is using the Babylonians to chasten the nation, He has also appointed their destruction at an 'appointed time'. I believe this is the word of the Lord to us today. Remember...

a. The Lord declared there would be 400 years of Egyptian bondage; but at the 'appointed time', He brought a glorious deliverance.

b. The Lord delivered His backslidden people into Babylonian captivity for 70 years; but at the 'appointed time' He restored them to the land.

2. And unless there is a miracle, He is going to allow us to endure at least 4 years under a very socialistic President. But at the 'appointed time', He will overthrow them all because they are motivated by the spirit of antichrist.

3. The Lord told Habakkuk to “write the vision-make it plain on tablets”; make it very clear and put it in a place where it can be easily seen; because the fulfilment of the vision is ‘for an appointed time’.

- a. At the appointed time, it will speak.
- b. At the appointed time, it will come to pass.
- c. Though it tarries, wait for it; because when it surely comes it will not tarry.

4. So what will happen while we wait?

E. The Just Shall Live by Faith

Habakkuk 2:4

"Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith."

1. We are entering into a time when there will be a great exposure of the hearts of men.

- a. We will ‘behold the proud’; we will see his soul is not upright
- b. On the other hand, we will see a manifestation of the true sons and daughters of God—the just—who will live by faith!

2. God says that when this Word-Vision is made clear, we will behold the righteous and the unrighteous; the hypocrite and the true believer.

Matthew Henry

There are some who will proudly disdain this vision, whose hearts are so lifted up that they scorn to take notice of it; their hearts are lifted up towards vanity, they think their own hands sufficient for them, and God's promise is to them an insignificant thing. Those that either distrust or despise God's all-sufficiency will not walk uprightly with him.

Matthew Henry

But those who are truly good, and whose hearts are upright with God, will value the promise, and venture their all upon it; and, in confidence of the truth of it, will keep close to God and duty in the most difficult trying times. They will live comfortably in communion with God, dependence on him, and expectation of him.

Matthew Henry

The just shall live by faith; during the captivity good people shall support themselves, and live comfortably, by faith in these precious promises, while the performance of them is deferred. The just shall live by his faith, by that faith which he acts upon the word of God.

4. Review: God has answered the prophet twice: once to remind him of God's sovereignty; that He was in charge of all things. And secondly, to give him a vision of what was going to do when the appointed time came. The final chapter of the book is...

G. The Prophet's Prayer

1. The prophet's prayer is a perfect model for us today; he begins by remembering God's greatness in the past and prays for a revival in his own day.

Habakkuk 3:1-2 NIV

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.

Habakkuk 3:2

O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.

- a. In wrath remember mercy; God can do both at once!
- b. In v. 16, he confesses his fear and his faith in one sentence...

Habakkuk 3:16 NIV

I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us.

2. In verses 17-18, his faith speaks of commitment to praise God in the midst of all problems...

Habakkuk 3:17-18

Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls — Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

3. The book ends with a great statement of faith...

Habakkuk 3:19

The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills.

NIV

The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.

III. Close:

A. Defining Reality: Review

Max Dupree

“The first job of a leader is to define reality.”

1. Unless there is a divine intervention, and there could be, judgment is here. It may seem God is unfair unless we remember...

2. God is sovereign! He is in total control of the situation!

3. The bottom line: The just shall live by faith!

Billy Graham Video

Closing Prayer

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