

More Thoughts from Habakkuk

Note: These thoughts have been gleaned from the book *From Fear to Faith: Studies in the Book of Habakkuk*, by David Martyn Lloyd-Jones. I have occasionally put in some thought of my own and some pertinent Scriptures. I will place Lloyd-Jones' words in quotation marks. Mine, I will not.

“There is an adversary of our souls who is ever active. His great object is always to discourage us, and if possible to get us even to deny the faith. Various temptations are presented by him to our minds—anything, indeed, that may undermine our faith.”

“We all tend to prescribe the answers to our prayers. We think that God can come in only one way. But Scripture teaches us that God sometimes answers our prayers by allowing things to become much worse before they become better. He may sometimes do the opposite of what we anticipate. He may overwhelm us by confronting us with a Chaldean army. Yet it is a fundamental principle in the life and walk of faith that we must always be prepared for the unexpected when we are dealing with God... We must hold on to the hope that He has allowed things to become worse before they finally become better.”

“The plain teaching of the prophet is that God may use very strange instruments indeed [the Chaldeans], and sometimes the very last instrument that we would have expected.”

“God controls not only Israel, but also His enemies, the Chaldeans. Every nation on earth is under the hand of God, for there is no power in this world that is not ultimately controlled by Him... God is the Lord of history... He started the historical process, He is controlling it, and He is going to end it.”

Daniel 4:34-35, "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

Proverbs 8:15, "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice."

Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

“So, in spiritual problems, you must return to eternal and absolute principles. The psychology of this is obvious, for the moment you turn to basic principles, you immediately begin to lose your sense of panic. It is a great thing to reassure your soul with those things that are beyond dispute.”

An example of the basic principles is found in Hebrews 13:5-6, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

“There is nothing more consoling or reassuring when oppressed by the problems of history, and when wondering what is to happen in the world, than to remember that the God whom we worship is outside the flux of history. He has preceded history; He has created history. His throne is above the world and outside time. He reigns in eternity, the everlasting God.”

Lloyd-Jones draws five comforting principles about God from Habakkuk 1:12, "Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for

judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction." This verse teaches us that God is eternal; self-existent ("Lord" here is Jehovah or I Am); holy; almighty; faithful (when Habakkuk says "we shall not die" he is referring to the covenant promises God made to His people).

"The truth stated is that there are only two possible attitudes to life in this world: that of faith and that of unbelief...living by faith means basing the whole of our life upon faith in God...Is my life based upon the faith principle? Am I submitting myself to the fact that what I read in the Bible is the Word of God and is true? And am I willing to stake everything, my life included, upon this fact? For 'the just shall live by faith.'"

Lloyd-Jones writes that walking by faith includes "The Absolute Certainty of the Destruction of Evil and the Triumph of God...Woe is declared upon the ways of all opposed to God. They are doomed. They may have great temporary success, and we must be prepared for that; they may apparently bestride the universe, but as certainly as their star arose it will go down. The woe, the judgment, the doom of God upon the unrighteous is certain."

Discussing Habakkuk 3: 2, Lloyd-Jones writes: "What is described in the Epistle to the Hebrews as an attitude of 'reverence and godly fear' is an attribute strangely lacking amongst us, even among evangelicals. There is far too much easy familiarity with the Most High. Thank God, we can come into His presence with holy boldness through the blood of Christ. But that should never lessen our reverence and godly fear."

Lloyd-Jones observes that, as Habakkuk did, we must come to the point where we are more interested in the glory of God than in our own temporal well-being. This is illustrated in the following quote:

"What is it that is chiefly worrying us as Christians? Is it events in the world around us? Or is it the name and the glory of our Almighty God, the health and the condition of His Church, and the future of His cause among men?"

Considering the fact that God was using the ungodly Chaldeans to punish Israel and that Habakkuk at first was troubled by that, Lloyd-Jones makes the following comment:

"The message of this book is that until we truly humble ourselves, forgetting other people, and those who are worse than we are, until we see ourselves as we are in the sight of God, and confess our sins and commit ourselves into His Almighty hands, we have no right to look for peace and happiness."

It is true that Habakkuk expressed fear on occasion. Commenting on this Lloyd-Jones writes:

"We should thank God for this distinction between lack of faith and the weakness of the flesh. God's greatest men of faith often quailed physically at certain prospects which confronted them. To see the truth and understand the doctrines [of God's sovereignty e. g.] is most important, but despite this clear understanding we may still tremble physically. To do so under certain terrible conditions does not necessarily mean that you have no faith, though the devil will try to persuade you so."

Even though the immediate future looked bleak for Habakkuk and his people, God reminded him in 3: 3-15 of His mighty deliverances in the past. Thinking of this, Habakkuk began to rejoice in those wonderful passages in 3: 17-19. Commenting on this Lloyd-Jones writes:

"We now see clearly the divinely provided way to deal with the fear which we cannot control ourselves. We look back and think about God. When the prophet did this, he began to feel better. He forgot his nerves and, in contemplation of the mighty, miracle-working God, he was so filled with wonder that he began to rejoice. In spite of everything he could rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation. Such a God, he knew, would not forget him, and such a God would certainly bring him through."

When all else was dark and dismal, Habakkuk said that he would “joy in the God of my salvation.” We must do the same and not put our trust in circumstances, but in Him. This is so well-expressed in this beloved hymn:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust my sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus' Name.

When darkness seems to veil His face
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant and blood
Support me in the 'whelming flood.
When all around my soul gives way
He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand.