
Why do we suffer?

Habakkuk the prophet of God

Bill

Holdstock

Why must good people suffer? Why has suffering taken from us some good men and women, good preachers and teachers good pastors and pillars in the church, home to be with the Lord. Why is there so much suffering everywhere? Where is God in all this suffering? Why does He allow it if He has everything under control and is a good God? These are the questions being asked by everyone today, those with no faith or Christian conviction and even those that are true believers. There are books written on the subject, CD's and TV programme made about the subject, studies and preaching's all doing their best to give us an answer. I don't propose to have the answer either, but I would like to offer my thoughts based on my experience with suffering over the past 21 years.

We have all heard these things said and maybe, just maybe, said them ourselves! "Oh no I believe God is in control! He knows, He understands!" We say still racked in pain and reaching for the painkillers! We dare not let the side down or let other Christians see we are weakening in our faith or show signs of questioning the Word of God. I know these are the questions my friends ask, and I've asked them myself, I just want to be honest!

Habakkuk had the same problem and he was a Prophet of God! The words "**The burden which Habakkuk did see**" in verse one tells us Habakkuk was able to intercede on behalf of the Jews but for him it was a burden of a different kind. The Chaldeans were a constant threat, apart from what he saw in his nation and round about him Habakkuk knew that difficult times were coming for Judah, and this problem was serious to the Prophet, but he heard nothing from God, absolutely nothing.

Verse 2.

O Lord, how long shall I cry, and you will not hear! Even cry out unto you of violence and you will not save!

This is the Lord God of heaven and earth he is speaking to and surely, he should show more respect. But Habakkuk was so frustrated at God's silence, inactivity and lack of help he tells the Lord as it is, or at least as Habakkuk thinks it is. Why was God so silent in view of all the oppression, robberies, violence, strife, lack of discipline and corrupt administration of justice? He never thought God's silence may be because of all the rebellion toward God at that time.

Verse 6

They shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs.

Why did the Lord want to raise up the Chaldeans and let them march through the land and steal the possessions of its inhabitants? God recognised they were a terrible and dreadful people, and they had ignored the laws of Moses which were created to provide and keep God's children protected by their God. But they rebelled against their creator, His laws and His ways

Genesis 11:4.

Eight people remained after the flood who were friends of God and He sent the flood to destroy the sin of the people. Right at the beginning God wanted to correct mankind's ways and stop them from making their biggest mistake of all time, which was rebellion against God. A mistake that would affect all the coming nations and billions upon billions of people from that day forward and will even affect us today. But no! man has always thought he could do without God, even now 3500 years later the European Union has built their Head Offices in Strasbourg in the image of the Tower of Babel, based on the 16th century painting by Pieter Bruegel (1563) shown here. The logo on their posters and promotional literature is "Many tongues, one voice" almost taken word for word from Genesis 11 in the Bible. When asked by a friend of mine why they built the European Parliament in the image of The Tower of Babel? The answer came back "to complete what we failed to do back then" This is absolute rebellion in the face of God. In view of the fact that God came down from heaven to destroy the Tower of Babel to stop man's rebellion I have no doubt He is very displeased with the plans of the EU today. My website has the full story and its consequences. See the study (The Most High God, www.wordlightmypath.com)

This tower was built in absolute rebellion against God.

Verse 3

Why do you show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are before me: and there are those who raise up strife and contention.

It disturbed Habakkuk to the point he complained to God about it in no uncertain terms. He became very disturbed and frustrated and God allowed him to be in the middle of all this violence and rebellion, he saw it all first-hand. What Habakkuk seemed to forget was that all that he saw, God saw and was well aware of. God knew the Chaldeans would march through the land and take their houses



and lands, their Temple would be destroyed, and the best of the nation taken captive. Even more trouble and bad times were coming, and this trouble was to involve whole Empires like the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans, all chasing their own selfish desires and ignoring God altogether. All their big ambitions, and their big achievements were without thought of



God. No wonder this concerned Habakkuk and disturbed his spirit, he knew his God was the answer but only if He was worshipped and obeyed, but He wasn't.

Verse 6

I will raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation,

Verse 7

They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves.

For the Lord to say they are a terrible and dreadful, bitter and hasty nation is saying something. He always tells the truth, so the Chaldeans were to be feared and avoided at all costs.

Verse 12

You have ordained them for judgment and, almighty God, you have established them for correction.

Believe it or not, as we suggested in our website study, the rebellious spirit behind the building of The Tower of Babel that Nimrod built and indeed the city of Babylon which Nimrod also built, and the sin behind both of these manmade ventures, God would have to deal with, but again, in His own time. God was ignored, and this has grown to become "The Spirit of Babylon" and it is in all of us, which is the Spirit of rebellion towards God. God created us with a will of our own we can choose what we believe, choose what we do and say, we can choose Jesus or Satan. You know, following Jesus based on all He has done for mankind there is peace, happiness, goodness and blessing and eternal life if we accept Him as Saviour. Following Satan has produced the world we live in now, full of war, strife and contention, instability, mistrust, selfishness and everything that upset Habakkuk and brought him to his knees before God. Yes, God said there would rise up people of strife and contention, for our judgement and correction, why is that if not to draw our attention to the results of such behaviour and make us as frustrated as Habakkuk was so that we call upon the Lord like Habakkuk did but with repentance at the cross.

The Babylonians who were of the Gentile dominion and introduced the "Spirit of Babylon" onto the world and that wicked spirit is very much alive today. This "Spirit of Babylon" is born of Satan using the Chaldeans and then Nimrod, then the City of Babylon to promote sin in the hearts and lives of God's creation. That Spirit has spread world-wide. The Bible says, "**there are those who raise up strife and contention.**" Why do they do that? What makes a man or woman want to spoil, destroy, kill, pull down and not build up and create? Because we have allowed that spirit of Babylon to take hold of us and rebel against Almighty God. Have you seen those on the Television News being stirred up by the few until the whole crowd has become a frenzy, braking windows, setting fire to cars, tires, buildings, throwing stones even bombs into crowds of people? The day before some of that crowd probably were polite waiters serving you lunch, helping you choose a pair of shoes in the local shoe shop or serving you vegetables in Sainsburys! That bad Spirit is just below the surface in most of us and it belongs to Satan and it will take the power of the Holy Spirit to combat it.

What we suffer today is the result of past and present rebellion towards God and has brought our families, our neighborhood, our nation to almost destruction and as the Bible says is established for our correction. To bring us to our knees not only to sanctify us but bring us closer to Him, and to save us from ourselves. And sometimes even then, we ignore Him. I am astounded that after 2 years of

fighting Covid and Omicron, and the billions of pounds spent, the lost businesses, lost jobs and so on, not even the church has united to give a lead and point the world to Christ, who is the answer.

People I talk to do not believe me when I say things that are outside our control like Covid 19, or the Omicron viruses, the floods and fires that devastate mankind today, but were unheard of when I was a lad at school, may well be allowed by the Lord to correct us and turn us back to God in repentance, and call on His name. "If He is a God of Love why doesn't He stop these floods or these fires or this virus". "And what about these poor children who are starving all over the world" We are quick to blame Him when these things affect us and inconvenience us. Has the church unitedly ever brought to the world the Bible verse in?

2 Chronicles 7:14

If My people, which are called by My Name shall humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Read that verse again, say each word slowly, pronounce each word clearly and let it get into your spirit. "Oh, don't treat us like children Bill". Why not, we all act like children when we ignore God's word staring us in the face with the answer we keep asking for. And note He is talking to us as believers, **My People. God's people! Called by My Name! Christians!**

Just like God tried to correct the people in Noah's day, and in the days of Nimrod and again in the days of Pharaoh and the plagues or the time of the Children of Israel. God commissioned Prophets like Samuel, Elijah, Jonah and others to bring Israel back to God. But "no thanks" they said! "God is a God of love He would not punish us we are His people"! That's what they might have said in the days of Noah, and probably they did but continued to sin and reject God anyway. Man has removed himself so far from his God that whether we like it or not desperate measures are sometimes needed to bring us to our knees in repentance. Sometimes even then...

No wonder Habakkuk was pleading with God to answer his prayers, and no wonder God was so disappointed with His people He did not answer. He gets frustrated too you know!

Take a look at something written long before our time.

"The history of man invariably shows moral failure and never shows the opposite. This is a fact denied by fashionable religious teachers. God, in order to maintain relationship with his people, set up Priests, but they defiled His courts; He rose up Judges, but they became idolaters; He commissioned prophets but they, apart from Samuel, Elijah and Jonah showed partiality, self-will or rebellion. He introduced Kings and they nailed Him to a cross. As a result, Israel remains under wrath until the day when with broken and contrite heart they shall look on Him whom they have pierced. In that day a Government will be founded impossible of failure," (Williams)

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it.

With a heart that is deceitful and not just wicked but desperately wicked what chance has man got without turning to God for help? Most men and women in the towns and cities being incited to violence are given over to Satan and the Lord is the last person on their minds.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober (mentally self-controlled) **be vigilant** (awake and watchful;) **because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.**

He is a very powerful enemy. We need the Holy Spirit to help and guide us, and fight with us but we have to ask him to fight with us, He won't do it on His own.

Let me tell you a little about myself so that you know I speak from experience about suffering and not from hearsay or what I have read in books. I retired from work in 1999 after some 44 years in Advertising when I began to get twinges of pain in my back. I am a graphic designer, so I did no heavy lifting or anything strenuous, I worked in London and know London well and I walked from the station through the back streets to the studio to save a lot of time, (and bus fare!). Gradually my back pains got worse but bearable. Some years later I left London and started my own Studio in Worthing on the South Coast and after 18 years of business in Worthing I retired and looked forward to retirement with my lovely wife Pauline, but my back was now more painful.

Pauline and I went to the Doctor who said, "your spine is very weak, but I can give you some painkillers to help you with the pain". He also referred me to the hospital where I had a scan on my back and was told by the consultant that my spine was crumbling, and he showed us the pictures on his computer.

Pauline asked the consultant "that white line from the back of his head running down and stops partway down the back but doesn't go all the way down, what is it and why has it stopped halfway down Bill's back"? The consultant paused and said "that's Bill's spine and it is caught up and squashed in the middle of that lot" pointing to a black solid mess almost at the base of my back. He warned me of more pain, being unable to walk properly, walking sticks, then wheelchairs, then not being able to walk at all. We had been taught in our church to reject that sort of talk as it was from Satan himself, so we did, unknown to each other Pauline and I rejected what the consultant was saying to us in the name of Jesus right there in his office. That was over 25 years ago and guess what my pain and walking got worse.

It was about this time I started to study Ezekiel. There are 14 studies of Ezekiel and I did them for myself and I learned a lot. I showed them to a Bible teacher in my church and he said these should be available to the church and even on the Web. I talked with my Grandson who is a wizard at all things computer, and he designed a website and has put up 89 studies so far. There were times when I sat at my desk and cried with pain and called out to the Lord for relief, there were times when, like Habakkuk I got no response from Him at all. Pauline often came up to my study and prayed with me. There were other times when I could not understand the meaning of a verse and I said, "Lord unless you show me what you want to say here, I will have to leave it out". The next morning as I sat at my desk again that verse jumped out at me, I was able to understand it and I was able to continue, thank you Jesus that was the favour of the Lord. His Word is going around the world to help people understand the Bible.

I've got several walking sticks, I bought a push chair and when my wife found it too heavy to push me, I bought an electric wheelchair! The consultant was right I am now in a great deal of pain, got lots of walking sticks from the hospital, 1 pushchair, 2 electric chairs, one given to a needy gentleman in the church. Am I disappointed? Yes! Am I frustrated? Yes! Do I question God's word? yes! (In these circumstances). Do I still love Jesus! after 76 years a Christian and 25 years in pain and suffering, oh yes indeed I still love Him! Something is wrong and in spite of everything I have experienced I know it's not the fault of Jesus. He warned us this sort of trouble would happen because of rebellion and sin. Can you imagine the numbers of suffering people you and I know and the people we have lost and gone to be with Jesus and left this earth in great pain? When, if we all worshipped and truly loved the Lord as we should without this history of rebellion. All that the consultants and the doctors said and indeed the results that followed tempted me to become negative. You see I am a black or white person, if I say I will do something I will do it even if it costs me. Don't say you will help, give, or be somewhere, if you are unable to keep your word. When I read the Bible and it says "ask anything in my name and I will do it" I expect Him to keep His word too. If He doesn't there has got to be a very good reason why known only to Him. I still believe my healing will come and bring glory to His Name in His time. When I am asked about my healing, I refer them to Jesus. I cannot heal myself, the Doctor cannot do it, the consultant cannot do it, but I know Jesus can, my faith is in Him, He will do it in His time, and that might be in heaven but then I shall be able to walk and run... catch me if you can!

To big for our boots

God has given us a free will. We are able to think for ourselves, have our own opinions and make our own decisions. We are an educated people, we are able to walk on the moon, build offices and homes way up in the sky, the tallest building at the time of writing is 2,717 feet or 828m high. We have built an airplane that can fly over 1400 miles an hour, think about that! That is round the earth, almost 25,000 miles in 60 minutes! Man has invented a car that can reach over 316 mph. Not long ago a man had to walk in front of a car with a red flag for safety reasons, seems silly doesn't it? A country continually bombed by its enemies with over 22,000 missiles directed against them in the last 15 years, has created a defense system call the Iron Dome. They are placed all-round the nation, in open fields, in busy shopping areas and as soon as it detects a foreign rocket attack, they automatically send up a rocket that blasts the foreign body from the sky. Try telling that to Moses or David, or Noah! Can you imagine talking to Noah as he was building the Ark (which was half the size of the Titanic, but a lot more seaworthy!) and telling him that one day man will walk on the moon. Can you imagine what he would say? But to you and I that is now history.

Job's friends

The book of Job is reckoned to be the oldest book in the world written by Moses (Luke 24:27,44) It explains why good men are afflicted which is to bring about their Sanctification. An interesting point is that this question of suffering should be the first to be dealt with in the Bible.

Job was commended by God himself for his uprightness, his fear of the Lord, and hatred of evil. He had done nothing to warrant what happened to him, in fact Job's troubles started when God introduced him to Satan the man of sin. In the Hebrew the definite article comes before Satan, so it reads "The Satan" this implies the "top man" the "Master of evil" stood talking to God. If you want to know more about this troublemaker look up the study "Satan's Ambition" on the web site.

www.wordlightmypath.com

1 Peter 5:8 says **Satan searches the whole earth like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.** So, he wants to deceive all of us, in any way he can to rebel against God and put ourselves first and not God. And the trouble is we let him do it! We rebel, we go our own way, do our own thing and not involve God at all. Yes, I know sometimes we can do somethings on our own, going 316 mph in a car is no small matter, but maybe God has something bigger and more important for us, but we don't ask Him and when we do, we don't meet His conditions. After all He can turn water into wine and get water out of a rock, and He can feed 5000 people with only 5 small loaves and 2 small fish!

Habakkuk 2.:1

I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

In Habakkuk's day it was common to have a watch tower on or near your house from which a man would look out to see the enemy approach. The prophet would also use the tower to pray and listen for the Lord to speak. Unlike the prophets of today a conversation with the Lord was much more common. God said to Habakkuk **write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run who reads it.** In other words, treat the Word of God with all seriousness, write it down use all haste in making it known.

Verse 3

For the vision is yet for an appointed time but at the end it shall speak, and not lie, though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

This vision God speaks of is the Second Coming of Christ (Heb: 10:37) However this verse can also pertain to a promised thing by the Lord for our lives, but it may be long delayed. I have suffered pain for 26 years now, many others have suffered much longer. Often, in this world of ours we expect our answer Now! Immediately! If not sooner! Jesus said. **At the end it shall speak and not lie, though it tarry wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.**

This verse tells us that, though we are in pain the answer to a contrite prayer is on the way! Jesus said so. **At the end it shall speak.** The original says it shall *breathe*, it is His Word, it has life and in the fulness of time, which is in God's hands not ours, it will fulfil its purpose, fulfil His promise and make all things whole. In the meantime, God requires of us Faith. Faith to believe His Word, Faith to believe He really is in control and we must exercise our faith and work with Him to bring His word to pass. **It shall be at the end when it shall speak and not lie. God says He will not lie. He says if we want it, we must wait for it. He says it will surely come. He says it will not tarry.** Here again is the full answer, it may not be when *we* want it, it may not come immediately with the laying on of hands, it may tarry for God's time, but He said it will surely come!

Unfortunately, God's timing is not ours, I want relief from pain now! Oh, how I want it, now then He reminds me "that's nothing to the pain and suffering I took for you Bill and together for the whole world" We forget we must work with Him, join in His suffering, be a part of it, to endure and encourage fellow sufferers who are also in pain, and in the middle of our pain still give Him all the glory and praise.

So, I trust the Holy Spirit has shown you our suffering stems from the wicked one Satan, not from God. God may well be able to deal with it, but He watches us to see how we will deal with it, after all He has given us the Power to do just that. Satan wants us to rebel against the Lord. If we rebel, we

criticise, blame, condemn, we become spiteful and negative, we become blind to what God is doing and deaf to what He is saying, and that is just what Satan wants confusion and rebellion. I trust that somehow this study will encourage you who suffer to fight and have faith. Let us fight together, when you are in great pain remember me struggling with pain as well and we will both muster up our faith and fight Satan together. We will know the whys and the wherefores when we get to glory, don't let's wait until we are there and wish we had used our suffering in a better way while on earth. I don't understand why or how the Lord uses our suffering to His glory that is up to Him, or how He uses our Sunday School teacher and the children to pray for me in their class because they see me in pain and in a wheelchair. How, I am told, I am watched to see how I handle the pain and be prayed for regularly, oh how we must walk circumspectly before the Lord, I hope I don't let Him down.

Chapter 2:1

I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

Habakkuk was so sincere in his prayer to the Lord that he stood in the watchtower to wait for the answer and he realized his questions to the Lord may not have been presented in a proper manner he expected reproof but instead he was given the instructions from the Lord. The Lord saw a contrite sincere desperate heart so gave him the book of Habakkuk to tell the world what happens when He is ignored, with the instructions for us who read it and to run with it. The Lord requires us to have faith. And when we get to heaven, we will wish we had kept our faith to get that "well done good and faithful servant".

So, keep your faith. Hold fast to the Father He loves you and has great things in store for you. I pray for you all who are in pain that we together will keep the faith and overcome and be worthy of that Crown.

Be blessed

Bill Holdstock

billholdstock@icloud.com

