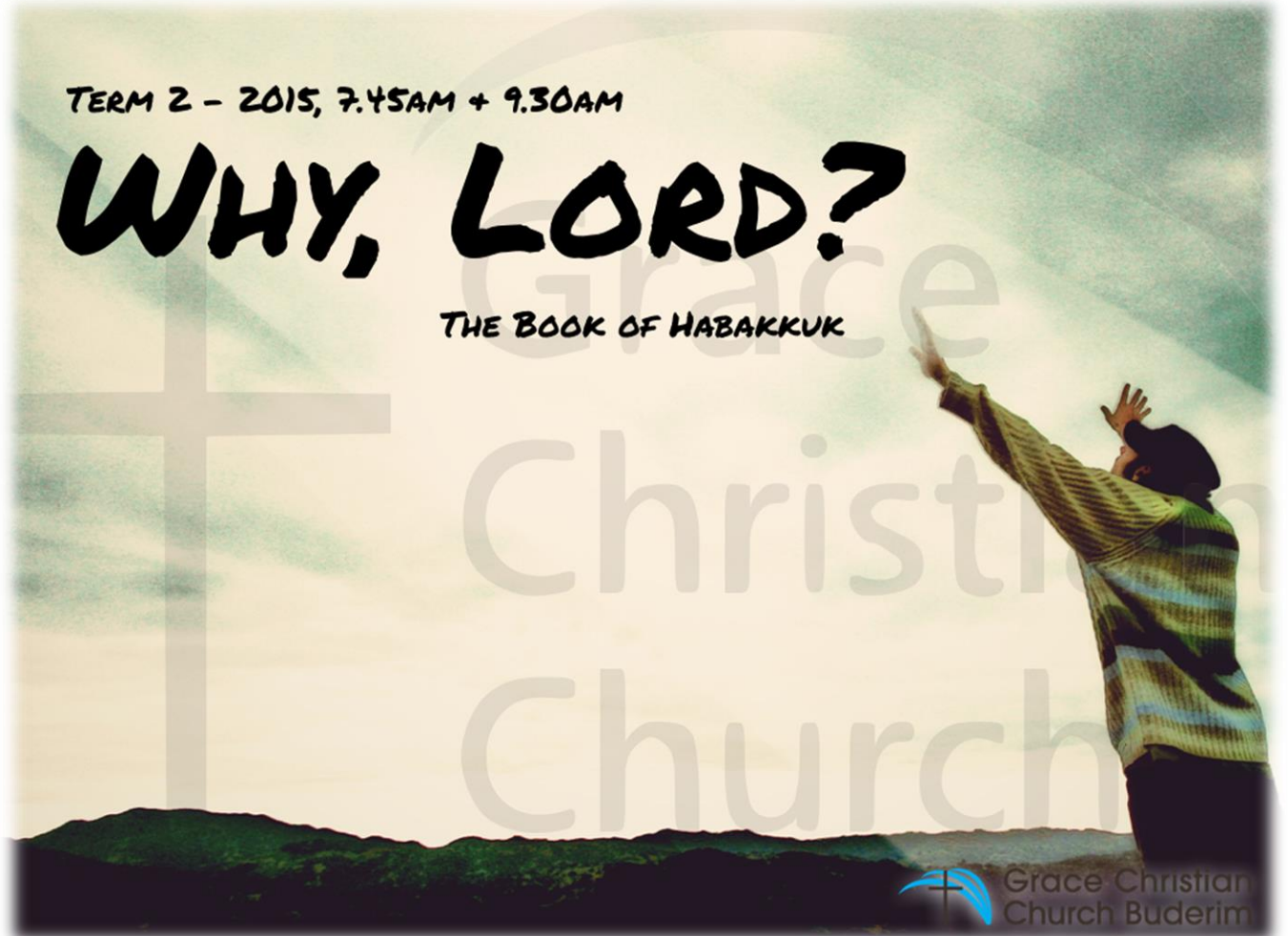


TERM 2 - 2015, 7.45AM + 9.30AM

WHY, LORD?

THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK



Habakkuk Bible Study Booklet

Studies 1-4

Leaders Copy

During the week @ Grace Christian Church

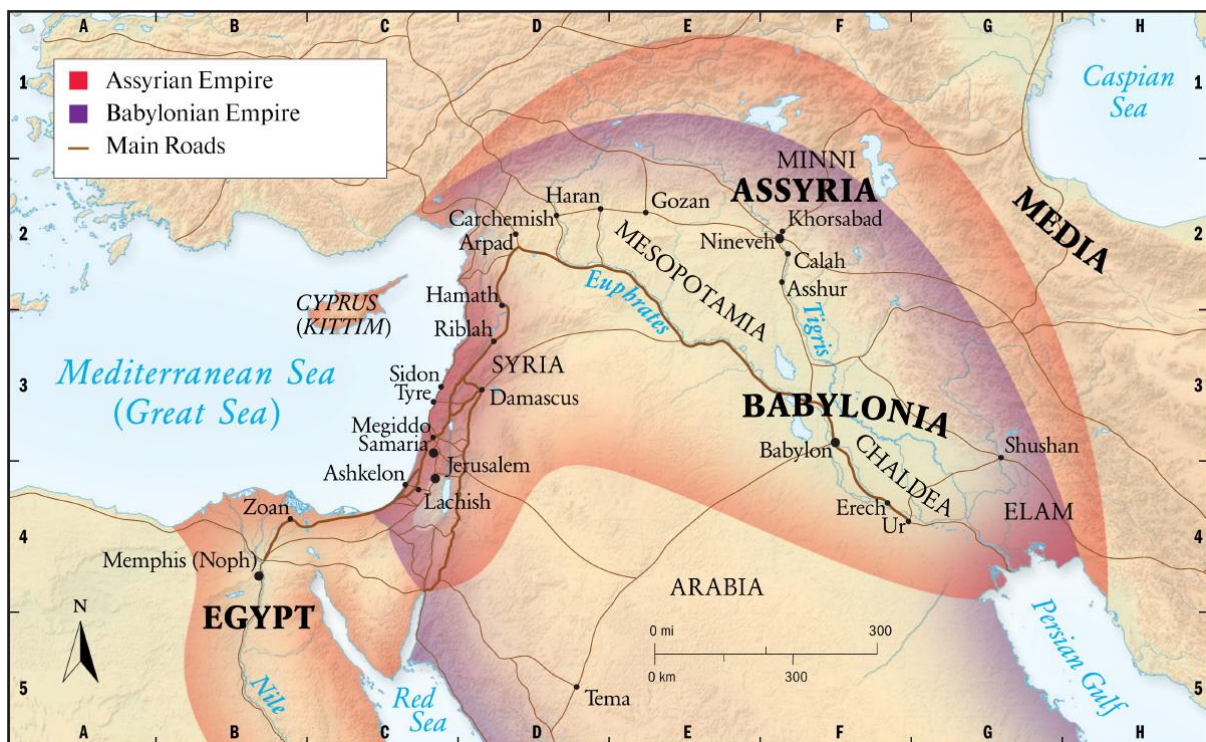
When		What	Who		Where
Day	Time	Ministry	Leader/ Contact	Phone No	Location
MON	6:30pm	Little Mountain Bible Study - fortnightly	Tim Richards	54382201	Phil Rapy
	7:00pm	Buderim Home Group	Colin Weston	5476 9648	Colin & Sybil Weston 9 Baimsdale St East, Buderim
TUE	10:30am	New Mum's Bible Study	Jean Bowen-Jones	0402 746 533	church
	7:00pm	Chancellor Park Bible Study	Callum Lewis	0421 230 119	Callum & Anna Lewis 603/25 Chancellor Village Blvd, Chancellor Park
WED	7:00pm	Bli Bli Home Group	John Baird	5448 4040	John & Audrey Baird 50 Gallery Drive, Bli Bli
	7:00pm	Caloundra Home Group	Roger Anderson	5491 9442	Roger & Anne Anderson 72/242 Parklands Blvd, Curimundi
THU	9:45am	Ladies Bible Study	Alison Sheldon	5477 1895	church
	7:00pm	Diddillabah Home Group—Held on the 1st & 3rd Thursday each month	Cameron & Jane Blue	5442 3103	Cameron & Jane Blue 22 Brookfield Crt, Diddillabah
	7:00pm	Hinterland Home Group (Palmwoods)	Mark & Glorienne Porter	5445 0940	Mark & Glorienne Porter 23 Rimmel Pl, Palmwoods
	7:30pm	Sippy Downs/Buderim Bible Study	Pr Clint Lombard	0478 578 152	church

Habakkuk Bible Study Booklet

Habakkuk is a little Old Testament book discreetly located between Nahum and Zephaniah. Along with 11 other Bible books it belongs to the group known as the Minor Prophets. This title doesn't mean that these books are less important or less inspired than the Major Prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah etc... it simply refers to their size and their scope.

Habakkuk was a prophet who lived around 600 BC during some incredibly turbulent times for the nation of Israel. His book centres on God using the wicked Chaldeans as a tool by which to discipline Judah.

Although this might seem a long way removed from us today, this little book is packed full of wonderful truth about how we can have faith in our sovereign God, even when we don't completely understand what He is doing.



This Bible study booklet is designed to be used alongside the sermon series "Why Lord?" that will be preached throughout the second school term of 2015 at Grace Christian Church Buderim.

Sermon Notes

Week 1 - When Trials Come

Habakkuk 1:1-4

Study 1 – When Trials Come

Please read Habakkuk 1:1-4

- 1) Using these four verses, and any sermon notes you may have taken on Sunday, describe life in Israel at the time of Habakkuk?

The North Kingdom had been dragged off into captivity, which meant that only the Southern Kingdom remained. Apart from good king Josiah they had had a string of wicked Kings, and as such the nation was spiralling into wickedness. They were accepting of pagan religion; they were engaging in pagan religion (including child sacrifice and witchcraft); they had rejected God's word; they were rejecting God's prophets; there was violence and crime; the legal system was falling apart and no one could get justice.

- 2) What parallels are there between Israel then and Australia now? Do any words or sentences in these verses stand out?

Australia is led by many leaders who don't love God; we are becoming more tolerant of false religion while becoming less tolerant of Christianity; God's word is ignored; those who stand on God's word are often labelled narrow minded or biased; there is crime; there is violence; justice is often perverted.

- 3) In verse 2 we discover that Habakkuk had been praying about the state of Israel. What sorts of things do you think he might have been praying for, and how do you think he may have been expecting God to answer his prayer?

It seems highly probably that Habakkuk would have been praying for godly kings to rule; for God's word to be more highly regarded; for people to be convicted of their sin; for people to actively repent of their sin; for criminals to be justly punished; for people's hearts to be filled with love for God etc...

Perhaps Habakkuk was expecting that God's Spirit would work an amazing work of revival in hearts all over the nation. Perhaps Habakkuk was expecting that God would give Israel a strong leader who would condemn pagan religion and deal justly with criminals. Perhaps Habakkuk was expecting that God would work some sort of miracle against those practicing pagan religion in the land.

- 4) **Try to summarise Habakkuk's "complaint" in a single sentence. Have you ever been able to relate to this "complaint"? Be specific, and if appropriate, share with the group.**

Habakkuk's complaint was simply that he had been praying and praying for God to do something about the terrible state of Israel, but for some reason God had just not answered his prayer.

Most Christians can probably remember times when they have been praying earnestly for something good, but God is apparently not answering their prayers.

It would be good if people could be specific about issues they have wrestled with.

- 5) **What words might you use to describe how Habakkuk was feeling in these four verses? Have you ever been able to relate to these sorts of feelings?**

Confused; disillusioned; discouraged; doubting; upset etc...

Although we might not verbalise that we feel this way, most Christians probably do have these feelings from time to time, particularly when they feel that their prayers are not being answered.

- 6) **Do you think it is wrong for us to feel like this? If "yes" why? If "no" why? If "sometimes" where do you think the line is?**

*The answers to this question will vary slightly depending on the answers to question 5, but try and move your group towards **SOMETIMES**. While it would always be morally wrong to be angry with God, it's not morally wrong to be confused about what God is doing, or to be a little discouraged, or a little upset by the current circumstances remaining unchanged. After all, we are human! This said, our confusion at what God is doing, can easily become frustration with God. Or our discouragement can easily turn into bitterness. Or our doubts and fears can easily turn into faithlessness. As such, we need to be very careful about moving from "Father, I don't understand what you're doing", to "Father, I don't trust what you're doing".*

7) How do you think we should respond when we feel like Habakkuk felt? How do the following verses apply?

Mark 9:24: We should admit that we have doubts and concerns. *Ironically we should actually pray about our struggles to pray. This is exactly what Habakkuk is doing in the opening verses of his book.*

Luke 18:1-5: *We should keep on praying and not give up. Again, this is what Habakkuk is doing in verse 2 of our passage. He is essentially saying, "I have been praying, and I plan to continue praying, but O Lord, HOW LONG am I going to have to do it for.*

Psalm 33:13-14: *We should remember that God knows exactly what is going on, even if doesn't seem to be answering our prayers. Habakkuk never questions whether God is aware of what is going on, he is sure that He does!*

Psalm 135:6: *We should remember that God is all-powerful and sovereignly in control. And therefore, even if He doesn't appear to be answering our prayer, it is not because he is impotent, it is because He is working things together as he pleases. Habakkuk never questions God's sovereignty, in fact, if we look at the text closely we see that Habakkuk's complaint is anchored in the fact that he knows God is sovereign. "Why aren't you doing something Lord, when I know that you can?" (Don't spend too long on this fourth point – because in the next study we will think more about God's sovereignty.)*

8) In light of Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 how do you think that we can help our Christian brothers and sisters who are currently feeling like Habakkuk.

We could remind them of the answers to question 7. We could draw their attention to the promises of God. We could offer to pray with them and for them. We could offer to hold them accountable by regularly asking if their doubts are turning into bitterness etc. We could encourage them to come to church for this sermon series because there is so much encouragement in Habakkuk. We could meet with them regularly to study the Bible together.

9) Finish your Bible Study by particularly praying for any who might be struggling like Habakkuk and by committing their particular burdens to the Lord.

Sermon Notes

Week 2 – Absolute Sovereignty

Habakkuk 1:5-11

Study 2 – Absolute Sovereignty

1) Discuss the word “sovereign”. What’s it mean generally? What’s it mean in relation to God?

It often refers to royalty, or to someone with absolute power. When it is in relation to God, it means that He is the King with absolute and complete control over everything, with nothing being left to chance.

2) What do each of the following verses teach us about the sovereignty of God?

Psalm 33:11 – *God HAS concrete plans.*

Isaiah 46:10 - *God WILL accomplish all of His plans and purposes.*

Acts 5:38-39 – *No one can overthrow any of God’s plans.*

Psalm 139:16 – *God’s plan includes the details of your life.*

Job 14:1-5 – *God’s plan includes the precise length of your life.*

Ephesians 1:11 – *God’s plan includes the salvation of His people.*

Acts 2:22-23 – *God’s plan even includes bad things that happen.*

Proverbs 16:33 – *God is even in complete control of seemingly random events.*

Please read Habakkuk 1:1-4

3) In a sentence or two, as a quick refresher, explain what is going on in the first four verses of Habakkuk?

Israel is in a terrible place spiritually and morally and Habakkuk has been earnestly praying to God, asking Him to do something. God however, seems to be ignoring Habakkuk’s prayers and Habakkuk just can’t understand why.

Please read Habakkuk 1:5-11 where God gives an answer to Habakkuk.

4) What phrases in these verses give us a glimpse God's sovereignty? What is amazing about the extent of His sovereignty revealed here? See also Proverbs 21:1, Amos 3:6 and Isaiah 45:1-7

V5 - "I am doing a work in your days". V6 - "I am raising up the Chaldeans".

It is amazing to think that God is able to use anyone or anything to fulfil His purposes – even those who hate Him. The Chaldeans were incredibly ungodly and rough and cruel and yet God was going to use them. The verses in Isaiah 45 make it particularly clear, that God can and does use anyone whom He chooses to fulfil His plans.

5) Why do you think some people object to the concept a sovereign God? What aspects of God's sovereignty do you struggle with?

Some people object to it because they want to be masters of their own destiny. Others object to it because it seems logically impossible: How can God be sovereign and humans simultaneously be responsible? How can God be sovereign and yet give us FREE wills? If God chooses who is going to be saved how is fair that unbelievers are sent to Hell? Etc...

6) Consider the following verses and discuss how they help give us a balanced view of God's sovereignty. Can you think of any other relevant verses?

James 1:13-15 – *Just because God is sovereign over everything doesn't mean that we can blame him for our sin. He doesn't do the tempting and He doesn't coerce us to sin. When we sin it is OUR fault for failing to obey His commands, and choosing to run after our own sinful desires.*

Joshua 24:15 and Romans 10:9 – *Regardless of God's sovereignty over everything we have a responsibility to CHOOSE whom we will serve. We can't sit on our hands waiting for God to choose us, while He is commanding us to choose Him. God's offer of salvation is completely genuine. Anyone who repents of their sin and places their faith in Jesus WILL be saved!*

Obviously God's sovereignty and our responsibility are truths that are held in constant tension and that are difficult to understand, but John Calvin has a helpful comment here. He says, in matters such as these "our duty is not to apprehend, but to adore". In other words, we say, "Lord, I don't get how it all works, but I believe it, and I am amazed by your greatness."

7) What aspects of God's sovereignty do you find comforting?

It's comforting to know that a good and wonderful God is absolutely and completely in control. It's comforting to know that no details are left to chance. It's comforting to know that God is sovereign over terrorists and criminals etc... It's comforting to know that His eye is on the sparrow and we are far more valuable than sparrows. (Matthew 10: 29-31) It's comforting to know that God knows us so intimately that the hairs on our heads are numbered. (Luke 12:7) It's comforting to know that my eternal security is based on Him hanging on to me, and not on my hanging on to Him.

Please read Romans 8:28-29

8) What does our sovereign God promise for his children? What does this mean?

He promises that all things work together for good. This is not a subjective "what I want" kind of good. This is a "big picture" good. Verse 28 and verse 29 must be read together because verse 29 explains that God's good purpose for His children is that through "all things" they become more like Jesus (conformed to the image of his Son).

As such, when we read these verses together we see that Paul is teaching us that "all things", whether good or bad, work together for the good of making us more and more like Jesus.

9) Often it's not until we look back that we can see how God sovereignly brought "good" from a "bad" situation. Can you think of any times in your life when God has done this? If appropriate share with the group.

Try to get the group to open up here about how God has sovereignly used a tough situation or season of life for their greater spiritual good. Perhaps ask how they felt in the middle of the tough patch, versus how they feel about it now. Perhaps they felt like Habakkuk felt at the beginning of his book.

10) Spend some time praying together, particularly praising God for His sovereignty and asking for faith to trust Him even when we don't understand his plan.

Sermon Notes

Week 3 – When Bad Gets Worse

Habakkuk 1:12-2:1

Study 3 - When Bad Gets Worse

- 1) Most of us are probably familiar with the expression “when it rains it pours”. What do we mean by this expression? Have you ever felt this way? Share with the group if appropriate.**

This expression is obviously a little pessimistic but when people use it they are referring to a bunch of bad things happening in quick succession or simultaneously.

Even Christians can often feel as though this is the case. Sickness followed by a tragedy, followed by a pay cut etc...

Use wisdom in getting people to share their experiences. The idea of this question is not to get people “moping” but to get them prepared to feel some empathy with Habakkuk, and to get them thinking about those times in their lives when they really need to trust in God’s character and promises.

- 2) In Habakkuk 1:1-4 we saw that Habakkuk was pretty miserable about the state of affairs in Israel. In a sentence or two explain how God had responded to Habakkuk’s concerns in verses 5-11.**

God had told Habakkuk that He was going to do something and that He had it all planned out. God was raising up the Chaldeans to come and invade Israel, in order to bring them to their knees. This was probably a very different plan to that which Habakkuk was hoping and praying for.

Please read Habakkuk 1:12-2:1

- 3) How does Habakkuk feel about God’s plan? In what ways does Habakkuk feel that the rain is about to begin pouring? Pay particular attention to verses 13 and 16.**

Habakkuk feels confused and uncertain about God’s plan. He has been praying about the “rain” of Judah’s sin and godlessness, but now he has discovered that national sin is going to be accompanied by national invasion. It’s about to pour!

Habakkuk is particularly concerned in verse 13 that a nation WORSE than Israel is going to be used to discipline Israel. If he thought there was wickedness in Israel before, he was about to see a whole lot more wickedness.

In verse 16 he is particularly concerned that God won't even get the glory, but the enemies "nets" will! If he thought that there was godlessness in Israel before... he was about to see a whole lot more.

4) What attributes of God does Habakkuk clearly mention in 1:12-14? What attributes of God does Habakkuk hint at?

V12- He clearly mentions God's eternal nature.

V12 – He clearly mentions God holy nature.

V12 – He hints as God's just nature

V14 – He hints at God's sovereign nature.

5) Discuss the following statement: "When we don't understand what God is doing we must focus on what God is like". If you have time, skim read Job 38 and 39 to see God reminding Job of this principle.

This is a very useful principle for Christians to remember, because it always gives a solid reference point. In the words of Malachi 3:6 "I the LORD do not change". From our perspective everything might be changing all around us but God's character never changes. And so rather than always trying to figure out what God is doing, we do better to focus on what God is like. He is always wise, always good, always just etc... and therefore we can always have confidence in the One who is in control of our circumstances, even if our circumstances don't make a whole lot of sense to us.

The context behind Job 38 and 39 is that Job just doesn't understand why God has done what He has done. And so God comes to Job and essentially says, "This is what I am like! I am the all-powerful Creator God". Stop asking WHY? And trust in the WHO!

6) List as many attributes of God as possible.

Eternal, unchangeable, omnipresent, wise, all-powerful, all-knowing, holy, just, good, honest, loving, merciful etc...

7) Once your above list is complete, consider how each attribute might be a comfort to you when you don't understand what God is doing?

God being eternal is comforting because it reminds us that long after our problems have completely disappeared God will still remain, and if we are Christians, we will be with Him.

God being unchangeable is comforting because regardless of what might be changing all around us, God is not! And therefore, we can absolutely confident that the God of the Bible is still the God of 2015.

God being omnipresent is comforting because it means that God isn't just aware of what is going on but he is actually right there with us, as we are going through it.

God being wise is comforting because it means that he has got good reasons for putting me through whatever it is that I am going through.

God being all powerful is comforting because it means that nothing can thwart God's plan from unfolding exactly as he wants it to unfold, and it means that He is more than able to answer our prayers.

- 8) In light of God's covenant promises to Israel Habakkuk is confident that the nation of Israel "will not die" (v12) List as many of God's promises as you can think of. If you have time find a Bible verse that speaks about each promise.**

God promises salvation to all who trust in Jesus (Romans 1:16–17)

God promises that all things will work out for good for His children (Romans 8:28)

God promises to comfort us in our trials (2 Corinthians 1:3–4)

God promises to finish the work He started in us (Philippians 1:6).

God promises us peace when we pray (Philippians 4:6–7)

God promises to supply our needs (Matthew 6:33)

God promises that we won't be tempted beyond what we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13)

God promises that Jesus will one day return (John 14:2–3)

God promises that no one can snatch a Christian out of His hands. (John 10:28)

- 9) Once your above list is complete, consider how each promise might be a comfort to you when you don't understand what God is doing?**

The answers to these should be fairly obvious.

- 10) Spend some time in prayer thanking and praising God for His character and His promises and ask Him for strength to remember them in the difficult times.**

Sermon Notes

Week 4 – Living by Faith

Habakkuk 2:2-5

Study 4 - Living By Faith

In Habakkuk 2:4 we read these amazing words; *“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.”* These words are so wonderful that the New Testament echoes them in several places:

- 1) Please read Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38. What is the recurring phrase in each of these verses?**

The recurring phrase is simply that “the righteous shall live by faith”. Some people may have Bibles that use the word “just” instead of “righteous” but the meaning is the same. Try to emphasise to the group that the two key words in these verses are Righteous and Faith.

- 2) What do you think of when you hear the word “righteous”? How would you define the word “righteous”?**

The word righteous means “morally good, morally right, just, blameless innocent” etc...

- 3) Why do you think righteousness matters so much? See Isaiah 45:21, Psalm 37:27-29, Romans 1:18, Matthew 13:43**

- a) It matters because God is perfectly righteous*
- b) It matters because God commands us to be righteous*
- c) It matters because all unrighteousness rightly deserves God’s wrath*
- d) It matters because only those whom God regards as righteous will enter into Heaven.*

- 4) In light of these truths what are some people tempted to do? Why is this futile? See Isaiah 64:6 & Rom 3:10-12.**

Some people are tempted to try and show God that they are righteous enough to deserve Heaven by doing good works. This is futile because even the best we have to offer is tainted with sin. God’s moral standard is perfection, and we fall short of that standard each and every day, because nothing we do is perfectly pure and blameless.

This said, it is good and proper to strive to be righteous, provided that we are not doing so in an attempt to earn salvation.

In contrast to becoming righteous through attempting good works, in Habakkuk 2:4 we are told that the righteous are actually those who live by their “faith”.

5) How would you define “faith”? How does Hebrews 11:1-4 define faith?

People might give some different answers to this, but basically “faith” means having complete trust or confidence in someone or something.

Hebrews 11:1-4 isn’t about faith in general, it is specifically about faith in God. It defines faith as the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen. Ask the group what they think about the words “assurance” and “conviction”.

6) Discuss the difference between blind faith and well placed faith. Can you think of any examples of each?

Blind Faith is placing your confidence or trust in someone or something when there is no good reason to do so. In this regard “faith” isn’t always a good thing, in that it can be naïve and foolish. Well placed faith is placing your confidence or trust in someone or something because you have a good reason to do so. Ie... it might be blind faith to let your child sleep over at a friend’s house when you have never met their parents, or it might be blind faith to dive into a river without first checking the depth, but if you are friends with your child’s parents and have confidence in their characters, and if you know that the river is deep, then your faith is much more likely to be well placed faith.

If you feel that you have time you could get the group to work through Hebrews 11 and discuss why the individuals mentioned weren’t stepping out in blind faith.

The big idea of the question is to emphasise that placing our faith in God is always well-placed faith.

7) Re-read Habakkuk 2:4. What exactly do we need to have faith in to gain eternal life and be regarded as righteous in God’s eyes? See Acts 20:21, Romans 3:21-22

It’s all good and well to know what faith is in a general sense, but in order to be saved, we need to know what it is that we are to have faith in. It’s not enough to simply have faith in a higher power. It’s not enough to have a general faith in the God of the Bible. (After all – Satan and his demons believe this – James 2:19) The above verses tell us that we need to have faith IN JESUS.

This said, it's not enough to have faith that Jesus truly lived and died and rose again. Again, Satan believes this. Rather, we need to have faith that Jesus' life, death and resurrection have personally accomplished salvation for us.

Acts 20:21 mentions repentance alongside faith. This is important to mention.

If you have any Non-Christians in your group, make sure that clearly grasp what saving faith is.

8) Do you think that our salvation is dependent on the strength of our faith? Why or why not? Can you think of any relevant Bible verses?

It's not the strength of our faith that determines our salvation, it is the strength of the God whom our faith is placed in that matters. In Matthew 17:20 Jesus talks about tiny faith (the size of a mustard seed) being enough to see massive displays of God's power. Mark 9:24 is another relevant verse.

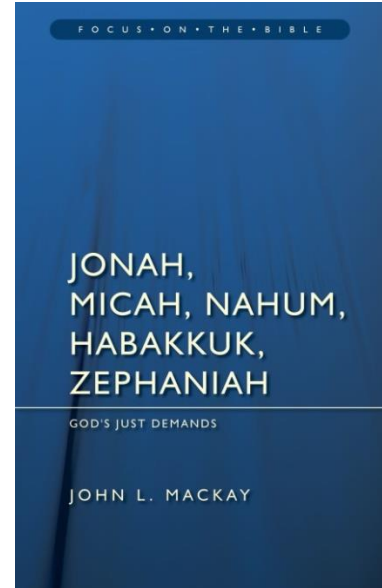
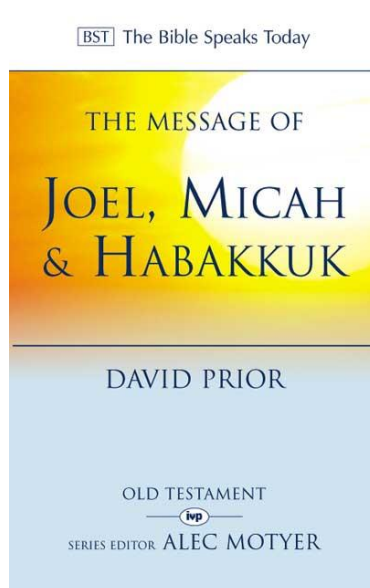
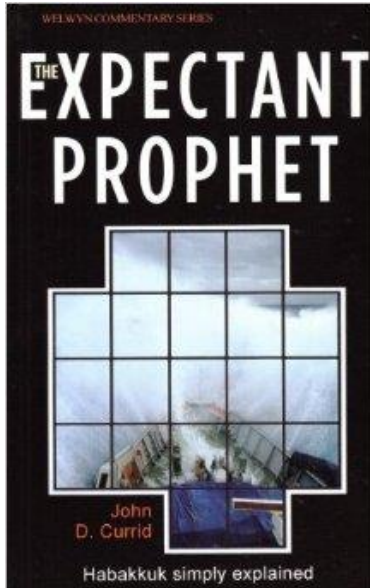
Our faith must always be sincere but it is so encouraging to know that God is merciful to those who even a small and sometimes wavering faith.

9) Moving on from our initial salvation, what do you think it means to "live by faith" in a day to day sense?

Living by faith each day means that we're not just relying on God for eternal salvation, but we are also relying on Him for all of our day to day needs. Living by faith means that we will be prayerful, trusting children, who are continually resting in our Father's provision. (Matthew 6:25-34) It means that we are not trusting in our own strength, intelligence and ingenuity (WORKS) for our daily security, but in God's grace. This is really an outworking of the realities of our salvation.

10) Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and then spend some time in prayer thanking God that we are saved by grace through faith and not by works.

Extra Resources



**The Expectant
Prophet**

John D. Currid

**Evangelical Press
2009**

**The Message of Joel,
Micah and Habakkuk**

David Prior

**IVP
1999**

**Jonah, Micah,
Nahum, Habakkuk,
Zephaniah**

John L. Mackay

**Christian Focus
2008**