

Why Does God Permit Evil in the World?

by Charles E. Fuller

In this sermon, Charles E. Fuller explores the profound question of why God permits evil in the world, using the prophet Habakkuk's struggles as a framework for understanding faith amidst adversity.

Duration: 41:05

Scripture: Isaiah 1:18, Habakkuk 1:12-13, Habakkuk 2:1, Habakkuk 2:5-19, Matthew 6:6, Luke 13:3

Topics: "Evil"

Description

In this sermon, Dr. Charles E. discusses the book of Habakkuk in the Bible. He begins by referencing the familiar song 'Jesus Saves' and asks the audience if they have heard it. He then leads the audience in singing another song called 'Heavenly Sunshine.' Dr. Charles E. goes on to explain the themes and messages found in the book of Habakkuk, including the problem of evil and the triumph of faith. He emphasizes the importance of repentance and warns that God will judge those who continue in sin.

Transcript

We have heard the joyful sound, Jesus saves, Jesus saves. Spread the tidings all around, Jesus saves, Jesus saves. Christian Heritage Ministry, in cooperation with Fuller Seminary, proudly presents the Old Fashioned Revival Hour, a broadcast of the Gospel with Dr. Charles E. King.

Jesus saves. Without further ado, let's join the broadcast. How many of the visible audience has ever heard that familiar song? Put your hand up.

Oh, everybody's raised. Oh, I think there's just one down here in the audience who hasn't raised his hand. Well, I'll teach it to him at the close of the broadcast.

Let's all stand and sing Heavenly Sunshine. Do your good act. You know, turn around, shake hands.

Now you sing through the first time. Come on. Turn right around.

Heavenly sunshine, wonderful victory line. Heavenly sunshine, heavenly sunshine. Hallelujah, Jesus is mine.

Trial's dark on every hand, and we cannot undo that blessed promised land. But he'll guide us with his eye, and we'll follow till we die, and we'll understand it better by and by. By and by, when the morning comes, the story how we've overcome, and we'll understand it better by and by.

Temptations, hidden snares often take us unawares, and our hearts are made to bleed for each thoughtless word or deed. And we wonder why the test when we try to do our best, but we'll understand it better by and by. By and by, when the morning comes, the story how we've overcome, and we'll understand it better by and by.

Our heads again in prayer. Our Father, we are so thankful for our high priest, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmity. And we thank thee for our companion.

At thy right hand, ever living to make intercession for us, and he's our representative up in glory with the marks of Calvary. Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And, O God, today speak to the unsaved, for we ask it in Christ's name.

Amen. Encamped along the hills of life, ye Christian soldiers rise, and press the battle e'er the night shall veil the glowing skies. Against the foe in vales below, let all our strength be heard.

Faith is the victory we know that overcomes the world. Faith is the victory. Faith is the victory.

O glorious victory that overcomes the world. To him that overcomes the foe white raiment shall be given. Before the angels he shall know his name confessed in heaven.

Then onward from the hills of light, our hearts with love aflame, we'll vanquish all the hosts of night in Jesus' conquering name. Faith is the victory. Faith is the victory.

O glorious victory that overcomes the world. And now Mrs. Fuller with the letters. Go right ahead, honey.

Greetings, friends. We've been having some very interesting and appreciative letters from persons in England and Germany and Russia. I'll probably read you some of those letters next week.

In fact, we'd like to hear from all of you if the broadcast has carried blessing to you. Here is a good letter from South Carolina. One of the radio listeners who was a drunkard and who wrote us of his serious problem months ago writes again very encouragingly.

Dear Dr. Fuller, I just wanted you to know that I haven't taken a drink of anything alcoholic in nearly a year. After writing to you last year for advice, I became more and more interested in your broadcasts and have been listening and have been praying daily that the Lord will help me to keep sober. My wife, a devoted born-again Christian, has joined me in these prayers and God is giving us the victory.

Your radio sermons are a great blessing to us and we hope they may continue. From Ohio, dear Reverend Fuller, I want to thank you for the comfort that your broadcasts have brought us. You know I wrote you about my brother missing in action September the 4th.

But last week my mother got another telegram saying that he was killed in action on the 5th. Believe me, Reverend Fuller, it was terribly hard for us to take this, but we are thankful that he was a Christian. My brother wrote my parents just an hour before he went on guard duty when he lost his life.

The letter said that when he got out of the army, he was going to devote his whole life to God and would be happy if God would permit him to return to Korea to preach the gospel there. To quote from his letter, he wrote, I am praying a lot not only for myself but for the rest of the fellows here. The artillery and planes bombing and strafing is terrible, shells whistling overhead.

I'm not scared and I'm trying to take everything just as it comes. Well, it is about time for me to go on guard now, so I am closing this letter with love to you all. And then the sister closes by saying how thankful they are that he was ready to go and they are asking the prayers of God's people for the comfort that their mother needs.

From Minnesota, a lady writes, Just recently a friend told me that she'd been praying over 20 years for her sister and she had just had a letter saying that her sister was saved through hearing this broadcast. There was much rejoicing over this answer to prayer which seemed so delayed. That is all I shall have time for today, friends.

You are listening to the Old Fashioned Revival Hour with Dr. Charles E. Fuller. The message today is titled, Why Does God Permit Evil in the World? Open your Bibles to the book of Habakkuk found in the Old Testament as we rejoin the broadcast. I'll provide additional information at the close of the broadcast.

I shall not want he makes me down. He leadeth me but quiet waters by. His yoke is easy, his burden is light.

I found it so, I found it so. He leadeth me by day and by night. Where living waters flock the valley of death.

Yet why should I fear from him? And by rod and stand be comfort still. His yoke is easy, his burden is light. I found it so, I found it so.

He leadeth me by day and by night. Where living waters flock the valley of death. Quickly take your Bibles and turn to Habakkuk.

That's quite a name, isn't it? In the Old Testament, one of the minor prophets. It's page 955 in my Bible. Maybe that will give you a hint what kind of a Bible I have.

Now the word Habakkuk, his name means a wrestler. And he wrestled with God about the double problems. First, of God permitting violence and injustice to run riot amidst his covenant related people, Israel.

Second, of the problem of God using wicked nations such as the Chaldeans to chastise Israel. And we see this prophet in simple childlike faith, placing his problems before God. And the key word is why, why, why.

Why does God permit so much evil in the world? Why doesn't God do something when evil is in the land? Habakkuk lives certainly in evil days. And we too are living in perilous times. Evil days when evil is blackest night, darkest death.

And we with the prophet of old ask the same questions today. Why? Why doesn't God do something? Why is God so silent permitting the forces of unrighteousness, ungodliness to run riot over the world? Why? Nothing is known, or very little is known rather, of this prophet Habakkuk outside of the book which bears his name. And this much that we learn.

Not only was he a prophet, but one of the Levitical choristers in the temple worship. And this book or this prophet was familiar with the Psalms. Hence his prophecy is molded in that form.

And the word Sela, a musical pause by the way, is used frequently in the Psalms. Occurs three times in this minor prophet, especially in the third chapter. Now quickly the three chapters.

In chapter one we have the problem of faith. For this is the book of faith. Second we have the attitude of faith.

And third the triumph of faith. And Habakkuk the minor prophet of the Old Testament had his faith tried as though gold that perishes. He had the trial of his faith.

And he talks in simplicity of childlike faith with God in reference to these great problems. Why? First of all the problem of faith. Other prophets had spoken for God to Israel, warning them, rebuking them, reproofing them.

Attacking evil and proclaiming God's sure retribution and judgment against sin. But in this prophet, the prophet speaks to God on behalf of Israel. And he cries out, why? Why dost thou, Jehovah, permit evil to flood the land? And so this prophet is the first of the minor prophets to raise the problem that evil presents to the man of faith.

Chapter one, the question is asked, why does God do nothing when evil is in the land? Will you notice chapter one? And in the first chapter, first four verses, we have an outline of some of the evils of Habakkuk's day. First of all, the law is slack, that is, benumbed, ineffective, not enforced. On the books, but ignored.

Sounds like present day in some cases. Justice, justice to never go forth. Wickedness, that is, the lawless, the disobedient ones, compass and overpower and overrun the righteous.

Wrong judgment, perverted justice is the order of the day in his day. And then in the second verse, we find these words, O Lord, how long shall I cry? That is, cry for help, relief in our deep distress, like the psalmist of old. For he said, in my distress, I called upon the Lord, cried unto my God.

He heard my voice out of his temple. And Habakkuk had faith that God would hear, but he was becoming somewhat weary. How long, how long must he cry out? And that means to cry with a loud voice, implying complaint in the Hebrew.

Why, says this prophet, do the wicked, are they constantly stirring up strife and contention? Why do the godless elements overrun the world at the present moment? Why all of this wickedness? Isn't God going to do something? When will the righteous be vindicated? And then in verses 5 to 1 of chapter 1, God answers this prophet. And his ear is ever open, as the psalmist says, to the cry of the righteous. And if we lack wisdom, present our problems, our solutions before him, and God will answer.

Will you notice it? In that answer in verses 5 to 11, we find these words. God says, now listen, Habakkuk, I'm not idle. I will work.

And I love that reference in Exodus regarding the children of Israel as they were pressed by Pharaoh's army into the desert, the Red Sea and the mountain and the desert, and the army encompassing them. And we have these words all through the night. God worked.

God is still on the throne. And he's accomplishing all after the counsels of his own will. And so, God will answer your question.

And he said to Habakkuk in verse 6, be patient. I am raising up a nation which will be my instrument to punish Israel for her sins. The Chaldeans will see to it that the wickedness of God's people will receive its just desserts.

And then Jehovah describes the Chaldeans. A bitter and a hasty nation will march through the breadth of the land. And chastisement will be thorough and complete.

And listen, children of God, unless we're in right fellowship with God, God may permit a godless nation to walk through the breadth and length of our land until we receive just punishment for our sin. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He goes on in verse 7 and speaks of the Chaldean nation as terrible and dreadful.

In verse 8, their horses also are swifter than the leopard. And in verse 9, they shall come with all violence. And in verse 10, they shall scoff at kings.

And it goes on and gives a further description of the Chaldeans. This reply from Jehovah raises additional difficulties in the prophet's mind. For the prophet could not believe, according to verses 12 and 13, that the eternal God, holy, sinless, would chasten a sinful people by a people more wicked, more sinful, permitting the Chaldeans to catch men as fishes.

To this Jehovah replies in chapter 2. You see, God says, come now, let us reason together. What's your problem? Talk it over with me, God says. If you lack wisdom, come with a little child.

I'll give you wisdom. I'll answer your questions. And so in chapter 2, we see the prophet's attitude of faith.

Notice the first verse, it's so sweet, of chapter 2. I will take my stand upon my watchtower, station myself upon the ramparts, and watch to see what Jehovah will say unto me and what answer I will get back to my plea. Note in passing, the prophet sets himself to listen in a watchtower, above the level of the common everyday events, in an attitude, or altitude is better, an altitude removed from the confusing and conflicting happenings of the day. Read your daily newspaper if you want the confusing things.

And so I say to you, to your closets, away from the rush and hustle of the common everyday confusing, conflicting happenings, wars, murders, divorces, what not. Or Matthew tells us, for when thou prayest, enter into thy closet. And when thou hast shut thy door, shut away the things that are temporal, and soon pass away.

Pray to the Father which is in secret, and thy Father which is in secret, shall reward thee openly and answer your questions. Jehovah will answer your problems of faith if you are in the right attitude of faith, that is quiet, willing, separated, open heart, ready to receive Jehovah's answer. God can't speak to you when you're tied up with the things of the world.

What reply then did Habakkuk receive from Jehovah? Verses 3 and 4 of chapter 2, now notice this. Oh, tremendous teaching. Here it is.

The Lord answered me and said, write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that read it. Get busy. God has an appointed time.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time. This is it. Evil is marked for overthrow in God's appointed time.

Be patient therefore unto the coming of the Lord. And I say to you upon the authority of God's word, that this present evil world system in which we are now ornered, this system over which Satan is the god of this world system, this world system is coming to an end in God's appointed time. Coming under the wire.

So what profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And the forces of wickedness will be overthrown, and righteousness will cover the earth as waters cover the sea. Habakkuk, don't be impatient. You lack a perspective, a long-range view.

My plan, said Jehovah, will never fail. My plans from your viewpoint seem to be hindered, parted, diverted. But Habakkuk, I know the end from the beginning.

So take heart. Be patient. This world system that we're now living in is marked for destruction.

A time is set in my counsel when the evil will be overthrown. And you, Habakkuk, may not see the how or the when, but I promise you that the wickedness and evil men and their deeds will be punished. And I say to you, sinning friend outside of Christ, unless you repent, you likewise will perish and be punished.

God's no respecter of persons. And then in verses 5 to 19 of the second chapter, Jehovah describes the wicked Chaldeans. Again, that nation which he used to chastise Israel.

Their lust for world power sounds very common, doesn't it? Now notice, their lust for wealth, their gross idolatry, godlessness. Habakkuk, bear in mind that I have given liberty of action to man. He's a free will agent, but I will hold him responsible.

Those that abuse that liberty, I will judge whether they be my covenant related people or the heathen nation. Go on, sinning. Go on.

God will meet you in judgment unless you repent. God has given you the liberty, free will, moral agency, but he's going to hold you responsible. And then in the third chapter, oh, how I'd love to go into this a little deeper with you.

We have the triumph of faith. We have the prophet's questions answered. And may I say this? God's word never ends with a question mark.

God's word always ends with a period. Men of this earth, with their natural wisdom, raise countless questions and have no solution. But God asks questions and then gives you the answer and never lets you down.

God's word always ends in a period, never in a question mark. And the reason that you don't know the answer to your question is that you have not come to the book, God's book, God-inspired word. And so in chapter 3, we have the triumph of faith, the song of faith.

And oh, how this song, first of all, in verses 3 to 5, record God's coming. Notice it. His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of His praise.

And then in verses 6 to 11, we have God's doing. He stood and measured the earth. He beheld and drove asunder the nations.

The everlasting mountains were shattered. The perpetual hills did fall. His ways are everlasting.

And Habakkuk looks away from the condemned world system to the everlasting God. Set your affections on things above, not upon things of earth. And then in the 13th verse, he speaks of God's going.

Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people, even for salvation with Thine anointed. Goes on, speaks of God's doing. And then in verse 16, here is faith concluded.

Well, you'll notice it. 16th verse, when I heard, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word. My innermost beings trembled, my lips quivered at the voice.

I trembled in myself that I might rest in the day of trouble. In other words, Habakkuk says, even though the Chaldeans come with all of their violence and war wreckage, I may rest in God. And although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vine, and the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice.

In who? In the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. Let the wicked nations come.

Evil is going to be taken care of. God says, I will punish. The thing for every believer to do is to have a perfect peace of mind stayed upon him, and though the atomic bombs and other things may kill him, his faith is the everlasting, eternal hope.

Pray with me now as I deal with the friends of the radio audience. Listen to me and the physical audience, too. Faith trusts God in the darkest hours and in the sharpest trials.

Be patient. But to you who are outside of Christ, without whom my heart goes out to you, and outside of Christ, for you are tilting upon a sandstone gate, and when the storm and the wind and the wave come against your poor little community, or town, the grace will be the destruction of you, and if your life is built upon that, I have to bow to the splendid, visible audience of Long Beach today. It's about me.

How many will place their hand up and put their hand up quickly and say, Brother Paul, pray for me. I here now want to accept God bless you back there. God bless you.

I here now want to accept Christ as my personal Savior and be remembered in prayer. No one leaving, please. Quiet before him.

Quiet before him. Anyone else on the lower floor before we close? God bless you. Is there another God bless you lady over there? Up in the balconies to my right.

Put your hand up. God bless you. God bless you.

Balconies to the rear. Anyone there? Yes. God bless you.

God bless you. Back there in the balconies to the left. God bless you.

God bless you. Oh, hands are going up all over this audience. Pray with us in Radio Land.

We'll have a short altar service at the close of the hour. No one leaving. No one stirring.

Quiet before him. God says I'm not willing that you should parry. Come now.

Come all you labored, heavy laden. I'll give you rest. Is there just one more before we close? Put up his or her hand and say pray for me.

I want to accept Christ. Anyone else just before we close? Any place? Anywhere. God bless you.

God bless you. Continue in prayer as we leave the old-fashioned revival.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID12490.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/charles-e-fuller/why-does-god-permit-evil-in-the-world/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net