I WILL BE JOYFUL IN GOD MY SAVIOR

Habakkuk 3:18 “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.”

Setting

After the temporary stay in judgment brought about by Josiah’s humbling himself before God:

2 Kings 22:19&20 “Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people – that they would become a curse and be laid waste- and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I also have heard you declares the LORD. Therefore I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.”

2 Kings 23:26 Nevertheless, the LORD did not turn away from the heat of his fierce anger, which burned against Judah because of all that Manasseh had done to arouse his anger.

2 Kings 21:6 He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced divination, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger.

2 Kings 21:16a Moreover, Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end…

During the reign of one of his three sons or his grandson. Before the invasion of Judah by the Babylonians.

Habakkuk’s Complaint

Habakkuk 1:1&2 The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet received. How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, “Violence!” but you do not save.

Many Christians have been asking God for years to do something to bring our nation back to Him. Many of us are appalled by violent demonstrations and by increasing violent crime. Yet God seems to not hear.

Habakkuk 1:3 “Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife and conflict abounds.”

We see people arrested for standing for truth and wrongdoers getting away with it. We see looting and the destruction of property casually ignored. I cannot remember a time when there was such strife and conflict in this country.

Habakkuk 1:4 “Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.”

The people who want to do the right thing are surrounded by and overwhelmed by those who want to do wrong so that real justice rarely happens.

God’s Answer

Habakkuk 1:5-7 “Look at the nations and watch – and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings not their own. They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.”

God’s answer is that He is going to answer Habakkuk’s complaint (prayer) by doing something that Habakkuk would not believe even if someone told him.

Habakkuk’s Second Complaint

Habakkuk 1:12&13 (ESV) “Are you not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, you have ordained them as a judgment, and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof. You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?”

Habakkuk 1:13 (Msg) “But you can’t be serious! You can’t condone evil! So why don’t you do something about this? Why are you silent now? This outrage. Evil men swallow up the righteous and you stand around and watch!”

God’s Second Answer Paraphrased

Habakkuk chapter 2: After I have used the Babylonians to punish those you wanted Me to punish, I will punish the Babylonians.

Habakkuk’s Final Response

Habakkuk 3:2 LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.

Paraphrase: I have heard of all the awesome things you have done in the past. Do them in our day. As you punish sin in your wrath, remember mercy.

Habakkuk 3:16-18 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. Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails, and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

Paraphrase: Although you may answer my prayer to do something about the evil and violence and injustice and conflict that surround me by doing something that leaves me in an extremely difficult situation, “yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.”

I Kings 17:5-7 So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. Sometime later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

I Kings 17:8&9 Then the word of the LORD came to him: “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow there to supply you with food.”

I Kings 16:29-31 …Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel…he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him.

Habakkuk chose to rejoice in the LORD and be joyful in God his Savior.

Philippians 4:4-7 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Application

Like Habakkuk, many of us have looked around at our nation, been distressed at what we see, and asked God to do something about it.

Since God promised to send the Israelites rain when needed and to withhold it if they disobeyed, and warned them that he would send plagues upon them if they disobeyed, it is hard to escape the conclusion that drought in the west and way too much rain in the east and covid-19 has not been sent by or permitted by God to get our attention and cause us to follow the instructions in 2 Chronicles 7:13&14.

When we ask God to do something about sin, what He chooses to do is often something we do not expect.

Habakkuk asked God to “in wrath remember mercy.”

God spared Elijah when he prayed that it would not rain, but life became very inconvenient, and he needed to rely on God daily.

Habakkuk chose to rejoice in the Lord and be joyful in God his Savior.

As we approach Thanksgiving, and as the difficulties around us may increase, we need to choose to rejoice in the Lord, be anxious for nothing and pray about everything with thanksgiving, because no matter how difficult life gets, Jesus died on the cross and made full payment for our sins and if we have accepted Him, our loving Heavenly Father will not allow anything to happen to us that He cannot use for our good and we will spend eternity in Heaven with God.