

GENESIS ROAD PRESENTS...



a look at the picture of God  
in every chapter of  
the 35th book of the Bible

# Chapter 1

## GOD IS UNBELIEVABLE.

Isn't the complaint of Habakkuk *so relevant* to the general mood of the country at present? I'm not sure if it should be comforting or distressing to realize that the problem of living with evil was as prevalent 2600 years ago as it is today, but at the very least, it should give us a certain measure of confidence to know that the God that Habakkuk cried out to is definitely not a stranger to dealing with wickedness.

Habakkuk didn't care for the evil he saw around him any more than we do: "How long, O Lord, must I call for help? But you do not listen! *'Violence is everywhere!'* I cry, *but you do not come to save.* Must I forever see these evil deeds? Why must I watch all this misery? *Wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight.* The law has become paralyzed, and there is no justice in the courts. The wicked far outnumber the righteous, so that justice has become perverted." (vs 2-4)

Wow, it could almost make you think Habakkuk was living in the 21st century! But what's even more incredible than the passion of his complaint is the response of his God: "The Lord replied, 'Look around at the nations; look and be amazed! For I am doing something in your own day, *something you wouldn't believe even if I told you about it.*'" (vs 5)

There are so many things I love about this. For one, God doesn't even respond to the complaint

about the evil. Perhaps we might take issue with that. After all, evil is distressing to us, and isn't it God's job to make things better, or at least to make us feel better?

But that's what is so great about this. God *is* making things better. He is in the business of making things better! And He is doing it in such an incredible way that even if He told us exactly what He's doing, *we wouldn't believe Him.* What He's doing is so far beyond our ability to perceive and comprehend it—and is likely so wonderful!—that we would say He was crazy if He tried to tell us about it.

This is a promise I have held onto in life, and I continue to hold onto it. For I know for sure that there is a God and that He is more wonderful than any of us can begin to imagine—the very well-spring of love and life. And when I look around this world, I feel *a lot* like Habakkuk. I'm outraged at the violence, the evil, the callous disregard for life.

And the more I get distressed about that, the more God reminds me—as He did Habakkuk—that *His* perspective is totally different from *mine*. He is also upset about evil, but He sees it from the perspective of His ability to deal with it, and that's exactly what He's doing.

Evil is not overwhelming to God. Evil does not have the last laugh or the final say or the upper hand. So look around at your world and be

amazed, for God is doing something in *your* life and in *my* life and in this world that *we would not believe*—even if He told us exactly what it was. Instead of hearing about it, you’re going to *see* it with your own eyes.

Awesome.

## Chapter 2

### GOD IS NOT PROUD.

It actually took me quite a while to formulate what I was going to say in today's blog because pride is a tricky subject, but I think it's all in your understanding of what pride is. For instance, the Bible speaks heavily *against* pride, but that's usually a definition of pride with connotations of arrogance, haughtiness, and the like. On the other hand, when I tell my daughter that I am "proud" of her, I don't think I'm doing anything out of harmony with Scripture.

Today's chapter includes one of the most famous verses in the Bible on pride: "Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by faith." (vs 4) The last part of that verse is one of the most quoted Old Testament Scriptures in the New Testament, but I think it's even more powerful to read it in the original context which includes its comparison to those who are proud.

Once again, it really matters how you define *proud*. I think the New Living Translation of this verse gives a little more insight into the Bible's definition of pride: "Look at the proud! *They trust in themselves*, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God."

I think this is the crux of sinful pride—looking to and trusting in oneself instead of looking to and trusting in God. When you think about *pride* in this way, it's easy to see how this is a sin that affects nearly everything and everyone. Here's how Bible commentator David Guzik put it:

- Here is the rich man, proud of what he has.
- There is the poor man, proud of his "honor" in having less.
- Here is the talented man, proud of what he can do.
- There is the man of few talents, proud of his hard work.
- Here is the religious man, proud of his religion.
- There is the unbeliever, proud of his unbelief.
- Here is the establishment man, proud of his place in society.
- There is the counter-cultural man, proud of his "outcast" status.
- Here is the learned man, proud of his intelligence and learning.
- There is the simple man, proud of his simplicity.

It seems no one is immune to the temptation of pride. All of us—regardless of race, gender, class, or creed—are tempted to trust in ourselves instead of trusting God. Christians aren't immune from this temptation. We profess faith in God, but many of us are no better at trusting Him in difficult circumstances than our unbelieving brothers and sisters. I know few Christians who aren't concerned about trying to control outcomes in their lives.

And *faith* is the opposite of *trying to control outcomes*.

You can't have faith, or trust, in God while at the same time trying to control the circumstances of your life. You can't have faith, or trust, in God when you are focused solely on what you have, what you don't have, what you want, what you

need, what your rights are, what you've lost, what you've gained, or what you're entitled to. You can't have faith, or trust, in God when you are more concerned about yourself than you are about others.

C.S. Lewis once said, "True humility is *not* thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself *less*." The opposite of pride is not to think about what a worthless person you are; the opposite of pride is to not be obsessed with yourself one way or the other in the first place.

The opposite of pride is to consider *others first*. That's why Paul said, "Love is not proud." (1 Cor 13:4) Love sees *others* as its primary object of concern. Thus, love is not proud, and therefore, God—who is Love—is not proud. For if there is anyone in the universe who thinks of Himself less, *it is God!* He thinks about and acts on behalf of His creation *first*, even when it means personal pain and discomfort for Himself.

I don't know about you, but I want to be more like that. Instead of giving into the temptation of considering myself and my needs first, I want to think about others. Instead of giving into the temptation of trying to control the outcomes of my life for my best good, I want to trust that *God knows what He's doing* and that *He is working the outcomes of my life together for my best good*.

I think that's why He ended His conversation with Habakkuk by saying, "But the Lord is in his holy Temple. Let all the earth be silent before him." (vs 20) Instead of running around in a frenzy, trying to make everything "work out," what we need to do is stop, be still, be silent, and remember that *God is fighting our battles for us*.

Habakkuk began his dialogue with God by saying, "Hey, God! Where are you? Didn't you notice that it's a bit chaotic down here? How come you're not doing anything about it?" And in response, God said, "I am. Now be quiet and watch me work."

God is not proud, and that is very good news for us. *Because* He is not proud, because He thinks of others before Himself, we can be assured that everything He's doing is for *our* benefit. He is working out every circumstance in our life for our best good. And that's why we now have *three* options to choose from when we face a crisis in life: *fight*, *flight*, or . . . *faith*.

I think I'll go with faith. I hope you will, too

## Chapter 3

### GOD IS LARGER THAN LIFE.

I absolutely *loved* this chapter. And I loved it all the more when I realized it came on the heels of Habakkuk 2:20—"The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him." It's incredible—*isn't it?*—the perspective we gain when we slow down, quiet down, and give God our full attention.

I was struck by the things this chapter revealed about Him:

- God's glory fills the entire earth. (vs 3)
- The sun can't hold a candle to God. (vs 4)
- Where God is, there is health. (vs 5)
- God's very presence is earth-shaking. (vs 6)
- All is temporary except God. (vs 6)
- God is more powerful than nature. (vs 11)

What *incredible* thoughts about God! I think Habakkuk's experience here was not unlike Job's experience. You might remember that when Job encountered God at the end of his story, all of a sudden, he saw how *small* he was in relation to God and the rest of the universe, and it made him speechless.

God is larger than life—in more ways than one. Obviously, He is larger than life in the sense that He created and controls the whole universe. But He is also larger than life in the sense that He can be trusted with *everything* that is going on in our personal lives. He can be trusted with the highs and the lows, the joys and the sorrows. Everything.

It was *after* Habakkuk stopped in silence to consider the Lord in His holy temple that he came to this conclusion: "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." (vs 17-18)

Did you stop to think about what an amazing declaration this is? Habakkuk says that, even when he has *nothing*, he will rejoice in God. Even when life is the hardest it can be, he will be joyful in the midst of his circumstances. Habakkuk had already decided to do what Paul would encourage his own audience to do several hundred years later—to "give thanks in *all* things." (1 Thess 5:18)

Because of *who God is*, we can have peace and assurance in the very worst of times. When we slow down, quiet down, and put our eyes on Him, He will remind us once again that—no matter what is going on in our lives—He is more than able to handle it.

God is indeed larger than life. *Nothing* will ever get the best of Him, but *everything* will be used by Him to give us what's best.

Amen.