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by Berni Dymet



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When Will God Finally Show Up?

Discover how God's timing is perfect every time. Absolutely perfect – despite how it may appear.

christianityworks



when will God finally show up?

by berni dymet

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TURNING POINT

Why doesn't God always show up when we want Him to? And when He does, why doesn't He do things the way we planned and the way we wanted? I think we've all been in that place at one time or another, so I thought we'd take a look at this dilemma through the eyes of the prophet Habakkuk. Here's how it unfolds.

There's a terrible injustice going on amongst God's people. In fact it's hard to imagine a less desirable combination of circumstances than wrong doing and trouble, destruction and violence, strife and



contention, and on top of all that, injustice. This is what Habakkuk says:

O Lord how long shall I cry for your help and you will not listen? Or cry to you, 'Violence!' and you will not save? (Habakkuk 1:2)

So God answers poor old Habakkuk, but He promises a solution that Habakkuk just doesn't want. A literal holocaust, one which actually went on to happen in 586-587 BC. He answers Habakkuk by saying this:

God Says, "Look at the nations and see! Be astonished! Be astounded! For a work is being done in your days that you would not believe if you were told. For I'm rousing the Chaldeans, that fierce and impetuous nation who march through the breadth of the earth to seize dwellings not their own." (Habakkuk 1:5-6)

Great! Brilliant! Thanks God! So now what?

Well I'll tell you 'so now what'. Habakkuk does what any self-respecting Old Testament Prophet would do. He does what you or I would do. He says to God, "What, are you nuts? Are you for real? Do you know what



you're saying? You are God and we're your chosen people; You can't possibly use these filthy Chaldeans against us because you're a holy God and we're your people and that's it. You can't do it. We have to rethink this". (My paraphrase!)

You can read about it for yourself in Habak-kuk 1:12–17. Old Habakkuk really gets stuck into God. And why wouldn't he? My hunch is that you or I would have a pretty similar reaction. All this violence is already going on and God's solution is to promise a holocaust? Well, thank you God!

There are two things that really strike me about this story. The first is that God is a sovereign God. He decides, He does it His way and that's it. And secondly, that as Habakkuk chats with this awesome, mighty, loving God, it starts to change Him. It changes Him in ways that maybe he wouldn't have expected.

Think about it. We all go through this. We're in a tight spot!! So we ask God to fly us out of there in air-conditioned, first class comfort,



like now, the quickest way from point A to point B.

So often, most often, He just doesn't do it that way. And so we start thrashing around and kicking and screaming and saying, "God do you realise what you are doing? Here. Maybe you need some help with this. Maybe you need my counsel, my advice, my opinion!" Doh!

But after Habakkuk's had his dummy spit, something extraordinary takes place. Have a read of what Habakkuk has to say to himself and then to God:

I will stand at my watch-post and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. (Habakkuk 2:1)

So often after a dummy spit we go off in a huff, in pride, in arrogance – but that's not what's happening here. Something's changing in Habakkuk's heart. He's poured out his burdens to God; he's listened to God's response. It doesn't seem right this whole holocaust thing,



it just doesn't. So he tells God right to His face, tells Him in no uncertain terms what he thinks of God's plan to send the Chaldeans to wipe out God's very own people.

But then he makes an important decision. He decides to go up to his watch-post up on the rampart, up on the top of the city walls, up high above the day to day pressures and carryon. "Let me get up there and watch and wait expectantly to see what God has to say about my complaint." You know what, it's a good thing that he was honest and open with God. It's a good thing that his heart is starting to turn and to be open to receive what God has to say.

And the moment he gets into that place at his watch-post on the rampart, he keeps watching and waiting on God ... look at what happens.

Then the Lord answered me and said, write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will

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God's saying to Habakkuk: "Trust me child. I see the iniquity; I see the injustice; I see the arrogance ... I see it all and I have a plan."

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surely come, it will not delay. Look at the proud! Their spirit isn't right in them, but the righteous live by their faith. Moreover, wealth is treacherous; the arrogant do not endure. They open their throats as wide as Sheol; like death, they never have enough. They gather all the nations for themselves, and collect all the peoples as their own. (Habakkuk 2:2-5)

What's God saying here to Habakkuk? "I have a vision, I have a plan, write it down. Now it's going to happen. It may take a little while, but it's going to happen just at the right time. Trust me. Have a look around. Look at the proud. Their spirit isn't right in them. But the righteous, they live by faith. And all those people who trust in wealth, well it's treacherous arrogance won't endure, their time is coming..."

God's saying to Habakkuk: "Trust me child. I see the iniquity; I see the injustice; I see the arrogance; I see the wealthy who don't look after the poor; I see the unjust judges; I see it all and I have a plan. And that plan is coming. Wait for it. Wait for it. Trust in me. Just wait for it. I know what I'm doing."



We're going to look more at this coming judgement later, but right now, do you see the change that's happening here in Habakkuk? His heart's open; He's ready to receive God's Word; He's ready to drink it in. Even if God's answer isn't what he'd expected, planned for or hoped for, God's answer comes from the God of love and the God of justice. God's answer is about the big picture. God's answer is God's answer and for Habakkuk it's time just to drink it in.

I don't know where you are or what you're going through right now, but let me encourage you to take your complaint to God. Whatever injustice, whatever unfairness, whatever dilemma that God doesn't seem to have dealt with or righted, (how long O God?) take it to Him and wait for His response. Wait expecting Him to answer because He will. Just at the right time, He will. And when He does, it may not be quite the thing that you were hoping for or expecting. And like Habakkuk you may have something to say to God about that.



Let me encourage you to truly and honestly pour your heart out to the Lord your God and when you're done, when you're spent, when you've taken your complaint to Him, get up into the watch tower on the rampart, get up there and wait for His response. Be ready to hear from Him – in His Word, during prayer, as you see His hand in the things that are unfolding around you in your life. Because when we wait on the Lord, He will answer us. He will show up. He honours us when we honour Him by sharing with Him, like Habakkuk, the deepest burdens of our heart.



My calamity, My plan.

My hunch is that ... well, it's much more than a hunch. I know that God wants you and me to have peace and joy amidst the troubles of life. He does. Because that's what his Word says. So my prayer for you is that as we continue in His Word together, that's exactly what you'll discover. Peace and joy.

But to do that we need to apply the Word of God to our own lives. So, as you've read the story of Habakkuk so far, let me ask you to have a think about some questions – to apply God's Word to your life:

1. What part of your life right now is something of a calamity? What is it that's



- weighing down on you, that seems unfair? What's the one thing that you would have God change if you could?
- 2. Okay, now that you have that pictured in your mind, what's your plan for getting out of it, for overcoming it? If you could tell God how you wanted Him to solve the problem, what would your solution look like?
- 3. But what if God had a different plan? What if His plan involved some hard yards and some sacrifice?
- 4. How open are you to His plan? How prepared are you to get up on the rampart, up in the watchtower and wait for His answer?

Our first reaction can be to do a 'Habakkuk' – to tell God why He has to do it our way. Maybe today's not a bad day for a bit of a wakeup call. The answers came for Habakkuk when he opened His heart to hear God's way.

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Maybe I'm showing my age here, but I'm old enough to remember back to the 1970's hit song from Frank Sinatra "On a Clear Day You Can See Forever". It was one of those iconic hits and it's such a meaningful song on so many levels.

On a clear day –
Rise and look around you
And you'll see who you are.
On a clear day –
How it will astound you
That the glow of your being
Outshines every star.



Of course, life doesn't always feels like that, because it's not always a clear day. So often life is foggy and stormy and we can't see very far. The cares of this world, the cares of today, the worries about tomorrow mean that instead of being able to see forever, our eyes are downcast. We've stopped dreaming, we've stopped hoping. We're just surviving. Sound familiar? It should because that's how most people live their lives, sad to say.

And I guess that's what we've been looking at, seeing the world through the words of the Old Testament prophet, Habakkuk - this man who all around him saw injustice and violence and pain amongst God's very own people. And so he goes to God and effectively says to God, "Lord, what do you think you're up to? Why are you letting these things happen, how long O Lord, how long will you let these things go on?" And in response God blows away the fog and the smog and God makes it a clear day.

Now I'm an optimist, really I am. I'm someone who is always dreaming about the future. Hoping and believing. It's the way I've been



wired. There are of course down sides to my personality type, we all have those. But this is one of my upsides: believing God for His best in my life, believing that God's going to do mighty things in me and through me.

But, even with that sort of wiring inside, there are some days where the cares of today and the worries about tomorrow weigh me down. There just are. We all have those days, some more than others. For me it's pretty rare. I'm not used to living like that. So when those days do come they're pretty hard for me to cope with.

It's so easy to look around at all the injustices. You know, one of the things God had to help me get through was how money is distributed across the church. There's a church not far away from where I live. It has fewer than ten members yet it sits on a piece of land with a large car park that very conservatively is valued at \$15 million, probably much more. I've looked at that over the years and I've thought what a waste. And yet here at the ministry of Christianityworks we reach millions of people



each week – if only we could afford one or two extra staff to lighten the load on a very small overworked team.

Now this is not a pride thing. I look at those two instances and it feels like such an injustice. God, how can you let this go on? See, it's the same with many of the radio stations that broadcast our programs around the world. They're doing it so tough financially, yet the church around the world wastes so much money on assets it doesn't fully utilise.

And I, like Habakkuk, went to God and said, "Why do you let this happen? How long O God will you let it go on?" You see that's our narrow human perspective. The injustice of our circumstances can get us down. I'm just being really honest here. I'm sharing with you from the realities from my own life, because we all have those realities. I don't want you to think that I live in some safe, cloistered environment.

Life is life. You have those realities, I have those realities and sometimes they feel so unjust. That's exactly how Habakkuk felt when He went to God and said, "O Lord, how long



shall I cry for your help and you will not listen?
Or I cry to you 'Violence!' and you will not save?"
And so God comes along and clears the air.

The problem is, we get a pretty distorted view of things from down here among the fog and smog. We lose sight of the big picture. Earlier we saw how, after pouring the burden of his heart out to God, Habakkuk finally finds himself in a position where he can actually listen to God. He says, "I will stand at my watch-post I will station myself on the rampart, I will keep watch to see what He will say to me and what He will answer concerning my complaint. I'm ready now to hear what you have to say God." And listen to what God says to him:

The Lord answered me and said, write the vision, make it plain on the tablets so that a runner may read it for there is still a vision for the appointed time that speaks of the end and it does not lie. If it seems to tarry wait for it, it will surely come, it will not delay. Look at the proud. Their spirit isn't right in them, but the righteous live by their faith. Moreover wealth is treacherous the arrogant do not endure, they open their throats wide as Sheol, like death they

The problem is, we get a pretty distorted view of things from down here among the fog and smog. We lose sight of the big picture.

when will God finally show up?



never have enough, they gather all the nations for themselves and collect all the peoples as their own. (Habakkuk 2:2-5)

See God says, "This is a vision, write it down. There is an appointed time. It's true, it's important, it might seem to tarry but it will come". What God is saying here is: "Listen up! This is really important!" And then God speaks the vision. He paints the picture clear as a bell. He tells Habakkuk - and you and me and anyone else who's prepared to listen - the way things really are. It's a vision that goes from here clear to eternity because on a clear day you can see forever.

1. God says, look at the proud. Their spirit is not right in them but the righteous live by faith. The proud, the arrogant, the powerful, the beautiful people, they always seem to be winning. The big, the successful, they seem to have so much. But listen to what God says: "their spirit is not right within them". The very essence of who they are is puffed up and distorted and crooked. That's the reality. That's



what God sees. That's the way it really is despite outward appearances.

On the outside they might seem confident and successful and happy, but on the inside they can't lie straight in bed at night. That's the truth. And that's the opposite end of the spectrum, the complete opposite of the righteous because the righteous are the ones who live by their faith. The righteous have a right standing before God because they've humbled themselves and accepted their own inner poverty and distortion and so they've put their faith in Jesus Christ whom God sent. The righteous live by faith, a deep, steadfast belief in the God who sees things so clearly.

God almost asks a rhetorical question here. Which one would you rather be? Which life would you rather have? It's a clear day. You can see forever. Which life would you rather have - the proud or the righteous?

2. And then He goes on to say, moreover wealth is treacherous. The wealthy do not endure. They open their throats as wide as Sheol, like death they never have enough, they gather



all the nations for themselves and collect all the peoples as their own. The wealth they have is so fickle.

Wealth is fleeting. It all looks great but when a financial crisis hits all those who appeared to be so wealthy and so successful can come crashing down. Their greed will bring them undone. Stand back and watch. That's exactly what always happens. To Habakkuk it all seems so unfair because the proud and the wealthy and the arrogant seem to be winning. That's his complaint to God. But God calls it the way it really is. On the inside He's saying they're already dead.

In the long run, those who seem to be winning in their pride and their wealth and their arrogance today will lose. In the meantime, He's saying to Habakkuk and you and me, let your faith in Me be steadfast, rock solid. In your thoughts and deeds, and your actions and dreams, be steadfast because that's actually what's going to give you life today, tomorrow and for all eternity. On a clear day you can see forever...



A Changed Heart

Doesn't the clarity of how God sees things blow you away? You listen to Him speaking – and you know something, you get a completely different perspective on things. When God speaks, it's the truth – and it's knowing that truth that sets us free.

Now maybe you're hungering for some answers in the circumstances that you're facing right now. So I really want to encourage you to get into God's Word and have a read for yourself of this very short book towards the end of the Old Testament – Habakkuk. Really, it's only a 15-20 minute read.

And I wonder if, as you hear God speaking to you through the story of Habakkuk, I wonder if you couldn't be asking a few questions of your own:



- What's the core of Habakkuk's complaint? What lies at the heart of it?
- 2. What do you think of Habakkuk's attitude towards God as he sets out his complaint and then challenges God about His answers (Chapter 1)?
- 3. As we saw earlier on, Habakkuk comes to a turning point (Habakkuk 2:1-5) where he decides to wait on God for His answers. Have you reached that turning point?
- 4. What do you think of God's answers? (Habakkuk 2:6-20)? Why do you think they satisfy Habakkuk?
- 5. What does Habakkuk's response look like (Chapter 3)? Why do you think he reacts the way that he does?
- 6. Would God's same answers in your own situation have the same impact on your heart?

God's Word is meant to change us – to have an impact on us. I love how the book of Habakkuk ends – it's fabulous. And my prayer is that as we spend this time together in God's Word, His Spirit will bring exactly the same thing to pass in your life.

.....



I wonder how often you've felt the way Habakkuk does? The sense that life's not fair. Funny how when we're going through tough times in just one part of our lives it feels as though the whole thing's a mess. It isn't really, it just feels that way. And so what happens is, we get a view of things that's completely distorted.

God means for these difficult situations to be times where He prunes us of the things in our lives that shouldn't be there, so that new growth can come. And the thing that follows the new growth is fruit; the fruit of



the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. (Galatians 5:22):

The truth be known, for many of us, me included, they're not things that come particularly naturally. They only come when God prunes off the dead wood. And I don't know about you, but I never particularly enjoy the pruning phase. Who does? What tree or vine sees the gardener coming with the secateurs and thinks to itself, "O goody, he's going to cut off a whole bunch of my branches. This will be fun. I'm really looking forward to this". But unless the tree and the vine are pruned they grow all these useless branches that become gnarled and woody and hard and they stop bearing fruit.

We need to get that revelation today. Everybody goes through injustices, violence, pain, hurts, losses, things that just aren't fair in life. We all go through those things. And our natural human instinct is to protect ourselves, to remove the source of pain and discomfort. So we cry out "God how long are you going to let

We need to get that revelation today. Everybody goes through injustices, violence, pain, hurts, losses, things that just aren't fair in life. We all go through those things.

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this happen?" And God's answer is "When I'm done, in My time".

And this God, I don't know if you've noticed, He doesn't do His work according to my schedule or your schedule. He does it according to His. Have a listen to what James writes in the New Testament. It's something that by and large we'd rather not hear, but it's something we have to hear, because this is what God's up to during the tough times in our lives:

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy because you know the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have it's full effect so that you may be mature and complete and lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)

It may be that you and I hear that and we say, "That's fine, I get the theory, but down here in this mess that my life is in, I can't make sense of it. I can't figure out which way is up or which way is out. I can't figure out what God's doing and what He's trying to achieve and how I should respond. I don't have the wisdom,



I don't have the experience".

That's OK too. Because God has that base covered. In the very next verse in the book of James, this is what he says:

If any of you is lacking in wisdom ask God who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly and it will be given to you. But ask in faith, don't doubt, for the one who doubts is like the waves of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind, for the doubter being double minded is unstable in every way and must not expect to receive anything from the Lord. (James 1:5-7)

And just to make the point that God's ways aren't our ways and God's thoughts aren't our thoughts, James goes on to write:

Let the believer who is lowly boast in being raised up and the rich in being brought low because the rich will disappear like the flowers of the field. (James 1:9-10)

In other words, go with what God's doing, rejoice in your suffering because God's doing a mighty thing.

"How long O God, how long?" Is that your

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go with what God's doing, rejoice in your suffering because God's doing a mighty thing.

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question? The answer is this: in God's time. When He's ready. When He's done. In the mean time He has a plan. Get on with it. Rejoice in that. Rest in Him. Trust in this mighty and sovereign God because He loves you. That's it! That's the plan!



A closing prayer

Awesome stuff isn't it – and it takes some wrapping our minds around. It takes some getting used to. God's thoughts aren't our thoughts and His plans aren't our plans and His ways aren't our ways and as much as we would wish that this weren't so, it is! He sees the big picture. He operates from His position as the God of the most indescribable infinite love and the God of justice – a justice born out of His great love.

So get used to it. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. We can either fight it, or get used to it. We can either go our way, or go His.



Father I pray that You would clear the air for us. Lord I pray that You would help us to see the truth, the reality, the things going on below the surface so clearly through Your eyes. And as we do dear God, change our hearts. Sometimes we see the proud and the arrogant and the wealthy and it seems so unfair. Sometimes, we hunger after the money and the power that they seem to have. But change our hearts dear God to hunger and thirst after righteousness, that we may be satisfied. Build in us a steadfast faith – put our feet on solid ground – so that as we look forward to eternity with you, we will know the joy of the freedom that that brings today. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Berni Dymet is a contemporary Christian communicator with a passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus right into the middle of life. He comes from the perspective that this Christianity thing - it isn't just a faith that lives in our heads or even our hearts, but that it actually works right here in the middle of our lives.

Christianity actually works when we dare to accept Jesus Christ into our lives!! Not just as Saviour, but also as Lord.

Millions of people around the globe tune into Berni's radio programs each week. The Lord has given him a special gift for sharing the Gospel in a truly practical way. In a way that really connects into the hearts and lives of real people in real places, transforming their lives. That's what the ministry of Christianityworks is all about. Leading people into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

But Berni's passion, his enthusiasm and his insights into the day to day realities of life are simply tools in God's hands. The real change agent is God Himself.

And to Him - and Him alone - be all the glory.

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Sometimes when we look around – in our own lives and indeed, across the globe, there are so many things going on that are unfair. Injustices. Violence. The rich and the powerful seem to be winning. The average man or woman in the street, trying to live a good life... what's in it for them? And so we go to God and say – O Lord why do you let these things happen and how long will you let them go on?

In this booklet – When Will God Finally Show Up? – God speaks and clears the air. He provides us with answers that will surprise us.

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