

## ***Sure Confidence in God During Difficult Times***

February 14, 2021

**Overarching theme:** John 20:21, Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' In 2021, as DISCIPLES, we are SENT with the peace of Christ to share with others!

**Instructions:** When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

**Core Passage:** Habakkuk 3:17-19 (NRSV)

*Though the fig tree does not blossom,  
and no fruit is on the vines;  
though the produce of the olive fails,  
and the fields yield no food;  
though the flock is cut off from the fold,  
and there is no herd in the stalls,  
<sup>18</sup> yet I will rejoice in the LORD;  
I will exult in the God of my salvation.  
<sup>19</sup> GOD, the Lord, is my strength;  
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,  
and makes me tread upon the heights.*

### **Commentary:**

This section of the prophet Habakkuk is considered by some scholars to be an addition by editors from the prophetic tradition of Habakkuk. By adding such a poem to the text and by reading it as a description of the coming apocalypse, the editors of Habakkuk raised the prophet's hope for justice to another dimension, a new dimension of reality that entered biblical thought with the dawn of the apocalyptic consciousness in the post-exilic era.

Habakkuk's confidence in the trustworthiness of God's promises (2:2-4) and the nation's wisdom about the suicidal forces within tyranny (2:5-20) were linked to the ordinary world of human politics and affirmed the reality of God's rule in this realm. The poem in Habakkuk 3, however, takes this affirmation one step further. Read as an apocalyptic hymn, it asserts that

the future will bring the end of historical evil and the inauguration of God's cosmic reign.

Understood in this light, Habakkuk 3 adds an apocalyptic resolution to the problem of injustice, raised by the prophet. This chapter states that not only does the vision of God's justice sustain the righteous (2:2-4), not only does the self-destructive character of injustice give the righteous hope (2:5-20), but also the hope of the righteous is strengthened by the confidence that God is bringing the world's affairs to a decisive conclusion, a conclusion in which God's just rule – for which Habakkuk longed and struggled - will be unconditionally established. Therefore in our time of struggle, we can look to God and can put our confidence in God and God's just rule.

– adapted from the New Interpreter's Bible, Vol VII, p 654.

### **Questions to Ponder for accountability in the group:**

1. Most of us don't have fig trees or vineyards or olive trees or the other agriculture references of verse 17, but we still have those parts of our life that aren't blossoming. How would you re-write verse 17 for your life now?
2. In this difficult season, how do you express your confidence in God? How is your confidence seen by others?
3. The prophet is calling us to "rejoice, rejoice in the God of your salvation". In what ways is your joy seen? How can you share your joy with others?

### **Activity for the life of a disciple:**

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional and spend time pondering and meditating on the challenge.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: *Habakkuk 3: 19 GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and makes me tread upon the heights.*
3. Prayerfully consider how in the midst of our difficult season you can put your confidence in God, practically speaking, in everyday life.