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**(All Scriptures cited in this study are taken from the NIV translation unless otherwise noted)**

* **Bill Cullen**

**Heilsgeschichte: The Development and Unfolding of Covenant Theology**

**Galatians 3:17 (NIV) 17What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.**

**Pre-Patriarchal Period**

* God created everything good—in Genesis 1 we see the power of God, in Genesis 2 we see God as one who is intimately and lovingly involved with His creation.
* People were created in the image of God, namely, with the capacity to experience and enjoy a love/trust relationship with God in a way that no other aspect of creation can.
* God’s one criticism of His creation was that “it is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). God created us to experience and enjoy a love/trust relationship not only with Him, but also with each other.
* So love would be real and not forced, God gave people free will. This meant people could reject or deny His love and in distrust of His love commit overt acts of sin. Such distrust broke the specialness of our being created in His image and it broke our relationship with Him.
* Thus Adam and Eve’s first sin was not trusting in God’s love (listening to the serpent’s suggestion that God was holding out on them). This distrust then resulted in a more overt act of disobedience (eating the forbidden fruit). But it was distrust in God’s love that was the original sin; eating the fruit was merely the consequence of this sin (Genesis 3).
* Sin had its consequence (death, pain in childbirth, hard work, leaving the Garden), but God in His love would not let sin be the last word (Genesis 3). He in loving grace would come to people and give them a new opportunity to trust in His demonstrated love, and thus their love/trust relationship with Him that had been broken would be restored. Distrust in God’s love breaks relationship with God; only by trusting in God’s love, as fully revealed to us and demonstrated in Jesus, is that relationship restored (John 3:16; John 14:6; Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 14:23; Hebrews 11:6; 1 John 5:3-5).
* Thus we get the promise of One, the Seed of the woman, who would crush the serpent’s head, although the serpent would bruise His heel (the first Divine Covenant and promise of a Savior which would be realized in Jesus—Genesis 3:15).
* From Adam and Eve sin (distrust in God and His love that resulted in acts of disobedience) spread. It spread first to their offspring Cain (Genesis 4) and eventually to the total corruption of the whole world during the time of Noah (Genesis 6) and again at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). God’s justice could not ignore sin, but His mercy would not let sin be the last word. God would eventually pay the penalty for all sin through the sufferings and death of Jesus (Romans 3:24-25; 1 John 2:2). In the meantime, He would discipline sinners. Discipline is God responding to sin a way that teaches His human creations, whom He dearly loved, the seriousness of their disobedience and the wisdom of trusting Him and His loving and perfect ways (John 14:15; John 15:9-11; Romans 1:5; Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 John 4:19).

**Patriarchal Period**

* God put His plan for people’s eternal well-being (heilsgeschichte) in motion with the call of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). God called Abraham not because Abraham was good. Abraham was a sinner like everyone else, and all indications are that he was probably an idolater like everyone else when God called him (Joshua 24:2-3). God’s call of Abraham tells us more about the character of God, than it does about the character of Abraham. God is loving and faithful, desiring “all people to be saved” (2 Peter 1:4; 1 Timothy 2:4). God needed someone to work out His plan of salvation and Abraham was as good as anyone, no better and no worse.
* God took the initiative and made a Covenant of Divine Commitment with Abraham. He came to Abraham, rather than Abraham coming to Him. Abraham responded to God’s communication and revelation. It needs to be firmly understood that Abraham’s faith was a response to God’s revelation and act of love/grace in coming to Abraham. We need to further recognize that it was a weak response/a weak faith at best.
* For somewhere between 25 and 40 years Abraham continually demonstrated a shallow and struggling faith. Twice he tried to pass his wife off as his sister to save his own hide (Genesis 12 & 20). He complained to God about having to adopt a son (Genesis 15). He had an illegitimate son (Genesis 16). And in Genesis 17 he outright laughed at God at the thought of having a son in his old age. But God faithfully and persistently in love for Abraham and for all humanity (for through Abraham’s descendants would come the savior for all humankind) continued to demonstrate His love and faithfulness. God thus won Abraham trust—a response of faith which resulted in obedience (Genesis 22; Romans 1:5).
* For Isaac everything seemed to come pretty easy, and although we do not get a long narrative of his life in Scripture, we do find that he learned mixed messages at his father’s knee. He learned faith (Genesis 22). However, he also learned *self*-preservation rather than complete trust in God, as he too tried to pass his wife off as his sister (Genesis 26).
* God would not be deterred from His heilsgeschichte and continued in loving faithfulness to His Divine Commitment through Isaac’s son Jacob. Jacob, like all our supposed Biblical heroes and heroines, experienced his own struggles, a slow growth in faith in God’s love and faithfulness, and a slow growth in his own faith-filled responses to our loving God.
* Jacob as an opportunist took advantage of his brother’s hunger (Genesis 25) and later deceived his father to get his brother’s blessing (Genesis 27) resulting in his having to flee for his life (sin has its natural consequences or price, leaving its scars). Jacob with his struggle to learn faith-filled obedience also has trouble instilling loving and obedient behavior in his wife and children. Rachel stole her father’s household gods—suggesting she still had some faith in them (Genesis 31). Simeon and Levi slaughtered a whole town of men because one man raped their sister Dinah (Genesis 34). Reuben slept with his father’s concubine (Genesis 35). Nine of Joseph’s ten older brothers sold him into slavery (Genesis 37). And Judah (from whose line Jesus would eventually be born) unknowingly slept with his daughter-in-law while thinking she is a temple prostitute—suggesting he worshipped other gods (Genesis 38). Yet God in love remained faithful/trustworthy to His Covenant of Divine Commitment, continuing to care for Jacob and his family and to work out His heilsgeschichte.

**The Exodus & Wilderness Wanderings**

* God’s chosen people (chosen to be a blessing to the nations—Genesis 12:3) began to suffer in Egypt and cried out for help (Exodus 1). God in loving faithfulness heard and responded to their cry. God responded to their cries even though they may not have specifically cried to Him. During their sojourn in Egypt they had come to believe not only in the God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but also had come to acknowledge some of the gods of the Egyptians (Exodus 32:1).
* God prepared and called Moses to be His instrument of deliverance (Exodus 2). Again, God does this not because of how good Moses was. When God first came to Moses, Moses it would appear wasn’t even sure which god it was that had called him (Exodus 3:13). And Moses presented numerous excuses as to why God should get someone else (Exodus 4:1; Exodus 4:10; Exodus 4:13). God called Moses because He (God) is loving and faithful, because of His Divine Commitment (Genesis 12:3).
* Through a series of plagues God demonstrated His superiority over the supposed Egyptian gods and that He alone is the true God of the universe (Exodus 7-12).
* In the final plague of Passover, God delivered Israel from the hand of Pharaoh (Exodus 11-12). This preambles the painful way that He would eventually deliver humanity from all sin, death and the power of the devil, namely, through the paschal lamb, the sacrificial suffering and death of His own Son (John 1:29).
* Moses assisted by his brother and sister Aaron and Miriam, and his right-hand-man Joshua led the children of Israel (and others—demonstrating God’s love for all people—Exodus 12:37-37) out of Egypt, and experienced again God’s love, faithfulness and deliverance at the Red Sea (Exodus 14).
* God now asked His people to covenant back to Him in light of His demonstrated love and faithfulness to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants for the past 430 years (Galatians 3:17) and in light of their deliverance from Egypt. This covenant of responsive trust is reflected in the Sinai Covenant, a covenant of Human Obligation. They would demonstrate their trust in Him—in His love, His wisdom and His power—through their obedience to this covenant. Obedience to the covenant would result in blessings and disobedience would result in discipline. (Note: Discipline is not punishment. Punishment is making people pay. Jesus would do the paying for all sin. Discipline, which although frequently involves many of the same acts as punishment, and is painful, is not done to make people pay but to help them become. It is to be seen as training or correction done in love: in order that we might learn, continue to become, and thus be better able to enjoy the ways of our loving God (Leviticus 26; John 15:9-11; Hebrews 12:5-11).
* The Israelites, as are most of us, were slow learners and demonstrated struggles in faith and faith-filled obedience throughout their wilderness wanderings (Exodus 14:10-12; Exodus 16:2-3; Exodus 17:2-3; Exodus 32:1-8; Numbers 11:1; Numbers 11:4-6; Numbers 13:30-14:4; Numbers 20:2-4; Numbers 21:4-5; Numbers 25:1-3). Yet, God remained faithful, disciplined His people as was necessary for their good, but brought them safely to the promised land (Deuteronomy 8:3-4,17-18).

**The Conquest and Period of the Judges**

* Joshua led the Children of Israel into the Promised Land, and at Jericho was assisted by Rahab, a Gentile prostitute, an ancestor of Jesus, demonstrating again God’s love for all people.
* God, knowing the Israelites shallowness of faith and that foreigners who worship pagan gods would be a snare to them, ordered the complete annihilation of the inhabitants of the land. This ordering was to enable the Israelites to mature in faith unhindered, and that God’s heilsgeschichte for all humanity might best and most easily be accomplished.
* The Israelites, resulting from their partial obedience (not annihilating all the inhabitants and therefore not becoming firmly rooted and established in their faith) would continue to be led astray by the pagan gods of those inhabitants throughout their history.
* This set up the cycle in Judges of: rebellion against God, retribution (discipline) by God, repentance of the people, and restoration by God. This cycle continued throughout Judges, throughout Israel’s history, and throughout the history of the church and even throughout our own lives as we struggle with being in the world, but not of the world (John 17:15-18).
* In Judges God raised up charismatic (spirit-filled) leaders to deliver His people (notably: Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson) only to have the people revert to pagan practices when the charismatic leader died.

**The United Kingdom**

* Israel’s last judge, who also serviced as a prophet and priest, was Samuel (1 Samuel 3:20; 1 Samuel 7:15; 1 Chronicles 6:27).
* The Israelites continued to demonstrate their childishness and lack of maturity by asking Samuel for a king like the other nations, thus rejecting God as their king (1 Samuel 8:4-7).
* Samuel at God’s instructions grudgingly gave them a king, but warned them that having such a king would be more than they had bargained for (1 Samuel 8:9-20).
* Saul, the first king, upon becoming king increasingly lost sight of God, God’s will and God’s ways (1 Samuel 13:8-14; 1 Samuel 15:3-11; 1 Samuel 18:8-11; 1 Samuel 19-10; 1 Samuel 20:32-33; 1 Samuel 28:5-19).
* David, Saul’s successor, God described as *“a man after My own heart,”* (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22) even though David too was a flagrant sinner (2 Samuel 11; 1 Kings 2:2-9). God’s heart is a heart of mercy, of love (Hosea 6:6; Luke 6:36). David was a man after God’s own heart even though he was as sinful as any, because rather than despairing of God’s love and mercy, or trying to win God’s love and mercy; he simply trusted in/had faith in God’s love, His mercy, His heart and he threw himself upon it. This attitude, faith and confidence delights God as in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15).
* Solomon, David’s son, although being blessed by God with wisdom, fame and wealth, allowed himself to become distracted and led astray through his wives and his involvement with the people and the ways of the world, even to the point of building high places to foreign gods (1 Kings 11:1-8). Yet, God in His unceasing love would not allow even this sin to deter Him from remaining faithful to His heilsgeschichte and Covenant of Divine Commitment (Jeremiah 31:3; Hebrews 12:2).

**Divided Kingdom & Judah Alone**

* After Solomon died his son Rehoboam rather than seeking the counsel of God, sought the counsel of his friends. His friends advised him to use his power as king for his personal ends and increase the abuse of the Children of Israel through taxation and forced labor, even beyond what Rehoboam’s father Solomon had imposed (fulfilling the warning of Samuel concerning kings – 1 Samuel 8). This led the ten northern tribes to rebel under the leadership of Jeroboam (1 Kings 12).
* Jeroboam, in order to keep the people of the Northern Kingdom from going to Jerusalem to worship, led them astray by building high places with golden calves at Dan and Bethel (1Kings 12). This confused the worship of God with that of pagan gods, thus consciously or unconsciously promoting idolatry. All of the succeeding kings of Israel (the Northern Kingdom/Israel/Samaria) in 1st and 2nd Kings are labeled as evil because they continued this practice “walking in the sins of Jeroboam.”
* God, time and again through the prophets, tried to get Israel to repent (in faith to turn back to Him, trusting in His love/mercy, wisdom and power, and demonstrating that trust through obedience to the Covenant of Human Obligation—e.g. Jeremiah 3:12-15, 22). Israel/the Northern Kingdom, however, refused to repent and finally was destroyed as a kingdom by the Assyrians in 722 BC. It would never again rise as a kingdom separate from the Jews. Chief among the kings of the Northern Kingdom were Jeroboam I, Omri, Ahab, and Jeroboam II. The main prophets to the Northern Kingdom were Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, Amos and Micah.
* The Southern Kingdom/Judah had a mixture of good and bad kings. God who was fully committed to His Covenant of Divine Commitment for all humanity through Abraham’s, Judah’s and David’s line continued to work out His heilsgeschichte as promised (Genesis 12:3; Luke 2:32; 1 Timothy 2:4). As He had with Israel, God sent prophets to Judah. Although Judah did not respond a whole lot better than Israel did, God would not let go of His commitment and heilsgeschichte for all—Jew, Israelite, and Gentile. God would discipline His people through the Babylonian exile and captivity which began in 597 BC, but He also would remain their God and He would bring His promise to fruition (Leviticus 26; Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 53; Jeremiah 29:11-14; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Jeremiah 46:27-28; Micah 4:2-5; Micah 5:2-5). Chief among the good kings of Judah were Hezekiah and Josiah who sought to bring about extensive reforms. The chief prophets to the Southern Kingdom were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.
* The chief message of the prophets during 1st and 2nd Kings was a call to repentance. It was a call for obedience to the Sinai Covenant, an obedience that stemmed from faith in God’s Divine Covenant of love and mercy (Romans 1:5; 1 John 5:3-5). It was a call to return to the God who had demonstrated Himself to be faithful in the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the Exodus, and in the life of David (Jeremiah 3:12-15,22; Hosea 6:1-6; Hosea 7:13-14; Hosea 11:8-9; Hosea 12:6; Hosea 14:1-4, Joel 2:12-14; Micah 6:8; Micah 7:18-20; Romans 1:5; Romans 12:1; Galatians 5:6).

**Exilic and Post-Exilic**

* Ezekiel and Daniel were God’s main prophets of the exile, each with his own special message to a people who were experiencing the Lord’s discipline.
* Ezekiel was at first concerned that the people understood the seriousness of their behavior and lack of trust, and that they took responsibility for the consequences they were experiencing (Ezekiel 2:3-7; Ezekiel 3:7-8; Ezekiel 16; Ezekiel 18:18-32; Ezekiel 22:7-12,26-29; Ezekiel 24:13-14; Ezekiel 33:23-32).
* Ezekiel was concerned the people understood God was not interested in punishment, but merely in the people’s repentance (Ezekiel 18:21-24; Ezekiel 33:11-16).
* Finally, Ezekiel was concerned the people understood that God was anxious to restore, and He would restore when they turned to Him with an obedience that stemmed from faith in God’s love, wisdom and power (Ezekiel 34; Ezekiel 36:24-38; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Romans 1:5).
* Daniel was concerned that the people remain faithful and not compromise in the face of adversity (Daniel 3; Daniel 6). He also demonstrated the fruits of obedience that stems from faith.
* For seventy years the Jews experienced God’s discipline in exile. During this time they learned the seriousness with which God took the Sinai Covenant and people’s obedience to it, and they learned the oneness of God. After these seventy years of learning God moved Cyrus the King of Persia to allow the Jews who wished to return to Jerusalem to do so under the leadership of Zerubbabel, who became the governor of the Jews.
* Following Zerubbabel as governor was Nehemiah. Ezra was a scribe and priest during this time. Under Nehemiah’s leadership the walls of Jerusalem were restored and various reforms were introduced in keeping with the Book of Moses (the Pentateuch).
* Ezra was concerned with the rebuilding of the temple and also with teaching the people the law and with the people’s strict obedience to it. The Babylonian exile and the renewed focus on the law and the temple after the exile began to set the stage for the rise of the two dominate Jewish sects found in the Gospels—the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
* The chief prophets of the post-exilic period were Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

**The Message of the New Testament in Relationship with the Old**

1. Distrust in God’s love breaks our relationship with God. Trust in God’s love allows us to once again experience and enjoy that relationship (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 14:23; Hebrews 11:6).
2. God loves everyone unconditionally (Covenant of Divine Commitment), however, we do not always trust in this love, and without trust we are unable to experience the full joy and benefits of God’s love (John 15:9-11; 1 John 2:1-2; 1 John 5:3-5). Without trust, the relationship is still broken and the purpose for which we were specially created in His image in unrealized.
3. Because of our situation, namely that we are sinners and the consequence of sin is death, and because we distrust God’s love; God being both just and merciful had to do two things—both of which He accomplishes through Jesus. First, He had to settle accounts, not by ignoring our sin, but by Himself paying for it (Exodus 34:6; 2 Corinthians 5:21), thus satisfying both His justice and His mercy (Romans 3:23-25; Jeremiah 31:3). Secondly, He has to be able to communicate that love to us in such a way that we would no longer deny it, thus awaking in us a faith in Him and in His love (John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 12:2). We don’t come to faith in a vacuum. We come to faith through God’s clear communication and the demonstration of His love (John 1:1,14-18; Romans 10:14-17; Romans 5:6-8; Hebrews 1:1-3). Just as it was with Abraham, faith is like a reflex response to God’s stimulating communication—for us this stimulation comes through Word and Sacrament ministry.
4. Our faith response to God, as we trust in His love, His wisdom and His power, is obedience—a Covenant of Human Obligation (John 14:15; Romans 1:5; Galatians 5:6; Romans 12:1-2; James 1:27; James 2:26; 1 John 4:19). This faith response is not like the righteousness of the Pharisees who sought to earn their place with God, which can never be done. Rather, it is a righteousness (being in a right relationship with God) that stems from who He is and what He has done (Matthew 5:17-20; 1 Corinthians 1:29-31; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 12:2; 2 Peter 1:3). We do, not in order to receive; rather we do, because we have already received so very much.
5. The will of God, which we now pursue, is a life of love—loving Him and others even as He has loved us. In this world this means we most fully love Him by loving others (1 John 4:19-21; Matthew 22:37-40; Matthew 25:34-40; Mark 10:42-45; John 13:12-17; John 13:34-35; Galatians 5:6,13-14; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10; James 1:27; James 2:26; 1 John 3:16-18).
6. It also means being His ambassadors of reconciliation one to others. As His ambassadors we communicate to all we meet God’s unconditional love for them in and through the person of Jesus. And we communicate how through this unconditional love of Christ they too can be transformed into His precious and loving disciples and the inheritors of eternal life (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:14-17; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Colossians 1:24; 1 John 1:1-4).
7. Only through faith in God’s demonstrated love in the person of Jesus do we become His new creation and have our relationship restored with Him—to what it was with Adam and Eve before the fall. By His grace (the work of Christ) which we experience and enjoy through faith (the work of the Spirit), we are this day and each new day recreated and fully restored (John 14:6; Romans 6:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Amen.

**Chuck Swindoll on Habakkuk**

https://www.insight.org/resources/bible/the-minor-prophets/habakkuk

Habakkuk’s prophecy was directed to a world that, through the eyes of God’s people, must have seemed on the edge of disaster. Even when the northern kingdom had been destroyed in 722 BC, God’s people remained in Judah. However, with another powerful foreign army on the rampage, faithful people like Habakkuk were wondering what God was doing. Hadn’t He given the land to His people? Would He now take it away? Habakkuk’s prayer of faith for the remainder of God’s people in the face of such destruction still stands today as a remarkable witness of true faith and undying hope.

Habakkuk provides us one of the most remarkable sections in all of Scripture, as it contains an extended dialogue between Habakkuk and God ([Habakkuk 1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/nlt/Hab%201%E2%80%932)). The prophet initiated this conversation based on his distress about God’s “inaction” in the world. He wanted to see God do something more, particularly in the area of justice for evildoers. The book of Habakkuk pictures a frustrated prophet, much like Jonah, though Habakkuk channeled his frustration into prayers and eventually praise to God, rather than trying to run from the Lord as Jonah did.

As the prophet Habakkuk stood in Jerusalem and pondered the state of his nation, Judah, he must have been dumbfounded. So much evil thrived, completely in the open, but God remained strangely silent. Where was He? How long would He allow this mess to continue? Not long, according to the Lord ([Habakkuk 2:2–3](https://biblia.com/bible/nlt/Hab%202.2%E2%80%933)). Another nation, the Babylonians, would come and execute justice on the Lord’s behalf. The wicked in Judah, those who thought they would get away with their evil deeds forever, were soon to be punished.

The book of Habakkuk offers us a picture of a prideful people being humbled, while the righteous live by faith in God (2:4). It reminds us that while God may seem silent and uninvolved in our world, He always has a plan to deal with evil and always works out justice . . . eventually. The example of the prophet Habakkuk encourages believers to wait on the Lord, expecting that He will indeed work out all things for our good ([Romans 8:28](https://biblia.com/bible/nlt/Rom%208.28)).

***Questions for Reflection:* In and From each era…**

* **What do we see and learn about God – His law, His justice, His mercy, His grace, His will, His heart? What words would you use to describe God? Why?**
* **What do we see and learn about humankind – human nature, inclinations/tendencies, attitudes, etc.? What words would you use to describe humankind? Why?**
* **How do you see God’s plan unfolding, and what hiccups, if any, do you notice? What does God do with the hiccups? How does God handle or respond to the hiccups?**
* **What parallels do you see between what Scripture says and/or suggests (the events, people, challenges, hopes, fears, etc.) and what our world today says and/or suggests? What does Scripture have to say to decisions you/we have to make today?**
* **How are you a part of God’s plan (God’s heilsgeschichte – “holy history/story” – His restoration story)? How is God seeking to incorporate you into His plan/story? What does it mean to be a citizen of the Kingdom, and some significant verses? What are the expectations, responsibilities, resources and benefits of citizenship?**

**Check out the You Tube video**

**Produced by the Bible Project**

**https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/habakkuk/**

**Kings of Israel and Judah –**

<http://www.vtaide.com/gleanings/Kings-of-Israel/kings.html>

*All Dates are approximate – Scholars offer slightly varying viewpoints – Overlaps are explained in terms of periods of co-regencies*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Kings of the United Kingdom ( 1025-925 BC)** | | | |
| **King** | **Date** | **Relationship to Previous King** | **God’s Judgement** |
| Saul | 1025 | None | Good early – turned evil |
| Ishbosheth\* | 1010 | Son | Did evil |
| David | 1003 | None | Did right |
| Solomon (AKA Jedidiah) | 970 | Son | Did right in youth –  evil in old age |

\*The Kingdom was divided during Ishbosheth reign; David was King over the tribe of Judah

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Kings of Judah (925-586 BC)** | **Kings of Israel (925-721 BC)** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **King** | **Date** | **Relationship to Previous** | **God’s Judgment** | |
| Rehoboam | 931 | Son | Did evil | |
| Abijam | 914 | Son | Did evil | |
| Asa | 911 | Son | Did right | |
| Jehoshaphat | 870 | Son | Did right | |
| Jehoram (AKA Joram) | 850 | Son | Did evil | |
| Ahaziah (AKA Jehoahaz) | 843 | Son | Did evil | |
| Athaliah | 842 | Mother | Did evil | |
| Joash (AKA Jehoash) | 835 | Son of Ahaziah | Right – youth  Evil – old age | |
| Amaziah | 802 | Son | Right – youth  Evil – old age | |
| Uzziah (AKA Azariah) | 788-736 | Son | Did right | |
| Jotham | 758 | Son | Did right | |
| Ahaz | 742 | Son | Did evil | |
| Hezekiah | 726 | Son | Did right | |
| Manasseh | 697 | Son | Evil – Youth  Right – Old | |
| Amon | 642 | Son | Did evil | |
| Josiah | 640 | Son | Did right | |
| Jehoahaz | 609 | Son | Did evil | |
| Jehoiakim | 609 | Son of Josiah | Did evil | |
| Jehoiachin | 598 | Son | Did evil | |
| Zedekiah | 597 | Son of Josiah | Did evil | |
| **King** | **Date** | **Relationship to Previous** | **God’s Judgment** |
| Jeroboam | 931 | Servant | Did evil |
| Nadab | 911 | Son | Did evil |
| Baasha | 910 | None | Did evil |
| Elah | 887 | Son | Did evil |
| Zimri | 886 | Captain | Did evil |
| Omri | 886 | Captain | Did evil |
| Ahab | 875 | Son | Did evil |
| Ahaziah | 853 | Son | Did evil |
| Jehoram | 852 | Son of Ahab | Did evil |
| Jehu | 841 | Son of Jehoshaphat | Mixed |
| Jehoahaz | 814 | Son | Did evil |
| Joash | 806 | Son | Did evil |
| Jereboam II | 791 | Son | Did evil |
| Zachariah | 750 | Son | Did evil |
| Shallum | 749 | None | Did evil  (surmised) |
| Menahem | 749 | None | Did evil |
| Pekahiah | 739 | Son | Did evil |
| Pekah | 737 | Captain | Did evil |
| Hoshea | 732 | None | Did evil |
| Assyria – 721 BC – Tiglath Pileser III | | | |

**Yellow = Did right Off-Blue = Did Evil Light Grey = Mixed**

**Prophets of Israel and Judah**

*All Dates are approximate – Scholars offer slightly varying viewpoints*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Prophet** | **Date** |
| Samuel | 1020-1000 |
| Nathan | 975-960 |
| Elijah | 870-850 |
| Elisha | 850-800 |
| Amos | 750-745 |
| Hosea | 750-745 |
| Jonah | 740-730??? |
| Micah | 755-715 |
| Isaiah | 742-700 |
| Zephaniah | 628-622 |
| **Prophet** | **Date** |
| Jeremiah | 626-586 |
| Daniel (a statesman, not a prophet) | 620-538 |
| Nahum | 612 |
| Habakkuk | 605 |
| Ezekiel | 593-573 |
| Obadiah | 586-585 |
| Haggai | 520-515 |
| Zechariah | 520-515 |
| Joel | 500-350??? |
| Malachi | 500-450 |

**God Reveals**

**Revelation**

**Holy Spirit**

**Inspires**

**Scripture**

**Holy Spirit**

**Inspires**

**Dogma**

**Holy Spirit**

**Inspires**

**Doctrine**

**Holy Spirit**

**Inspires**

**Local Preaching**

**and Teaching Holy Spirit**

**Inspires**

**Personal Belief**

While “I BELIEVE” Scripture is infallible; all that follow (interpretations) are not. The further removed from Scripture, the more room there is for error and distortions. It is *possible*, however, on any given point, a “personal belief” of an individual, based on and flowing out of Scripture, might be more accurate than a particular local teaching, doctrinal statement of a denomination, or even a dogma. Thus, it is *possible* a “personal belief” could be a correcting influence on a teaching, doctrine or dogma (e.g. from a Protestant perspective, Luther and the Reformation).

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**God Seeks to Make a *CASE* – Through Scripture God Seeks to…**

**CASE = C**onvict us of our sin

**A**ssure us of grace and forgiveness

**S**tretch us for growth

**E**mpower us for action

**2 Timothy 3:15-17**

***“Make Us Wise for Salvation” – “Teach, Rebuke, Correct, Train” – “Thoroughly Equipped for Every Good Work”***

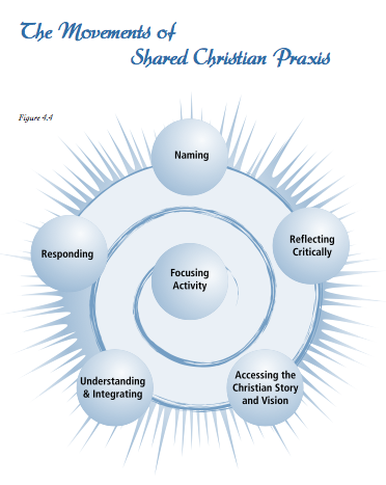
(**TEACH** – God’s objective will; **REBUKE** – expose where we’re out of alignment;

**CORRECT** – show us how to get into alignment; **TRAIN** – develop Jesus’ character in us through repetition)

***(LAW—God Expects/Requires***: As **Curb** = Guardrail; As **Mirror** = Reveals sin; As **Map** = Guide

***GOSPEL—God Does***: As **Invitation** = Promise Made; As **Assurance** = Promise Confirmed; As **Empowerment** = Promise Experienced**)**

**In discussion it can be helpful to do five things:**

* **Name** (identify) our current biases, that is, our particular slant or perspective on the issue being discussed.
* Do **Critical reflection** – personally identify why each of us has the bias we hold.
* Hear the **Christian** **Story** – the Church’s bias (includes Scripture, Church history and traditions) on the issue being discussed. (Scripture is inerrant, the Church’s story isn’t equally so as the Church’s story involves human interpretation.)
* Seek to **Understand, Integrate, & Grow** – in a respectful way bring our various biases into dialogue with each other. Thus, we allow our biases to respectfully challenge one another, affirm one another, correct one another, etc. (frequently involves *assimilation* [reinterpreting or ignoring experience or data in light of the scheme] and/or *accommodation* [modifying the scheme or developing a new scheme in order to accommodate the data].
* **Vision & Respond** – identify our new, revised or renewed bias which will shape our beliefs, values, decisions, and behaviors.

Christian Shared Praxis Developed by Dr. Thomas Groome

* *"A teacher’s/facilitator’s first responsibility is not to answer questions but to help students identify and articulate their questions so that they the students choose to actively seek answers and have something upon which to attach answers." –* Bill Cullen
* *"In education, especially in the education of senior high youth and adults, it is not our purpose to tell people what they 'should' think, feel, believe, value or do. Rather, our purpose is to give people data or information that 'makes' them think or rethink about what they think, feel, believe, value and do."* – Bill Cullen

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**A Generic Bible Study Guide**

***"The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me;***

***it has hands, it lays hold of me." – Martin Luther***



**“Speak Lord, Your Servant Is Listening” (1 Samuel 3:10).**

***Underline or highlight words you find particularly significant in the passages.***

***As they apply, complete the sentence stems below: (feel free to be selective)***

1. The audience addressed & the context of the passage(s), both historically and within the chapter, suggest…
2. A common denominator that seems to run through many of the passages is….
3. A related or some related Scripture passage(s) that come to mind are….
4. These passages seem to align or not align with the historical teaching of church of or in…
5. These passages seem to align or not align with contemporary society’s thinking of or in…
6. These passages would have me understand my vocation of loving my neighbor to mean….
7. A new or renewed thought for me is….
8. In at least one verse, something I found to be unique, surprising and/or challenging is….
9. As I reflect upon these passages, a question I have is….
10. If God is serious here and means for me to take these passages seriously,….
11. In light of these passages “living a life worthy of my calling/vocation” means….
12. In the light of what God is telling/showing me in these passages I think, feel, and/or believe….
13. In and by the empowering grace of God I will….

***If through a passage you feel God… (explain).***

* + 1. convicting you, --------------------------------------------------------------- mark it “C”.
    2. disturbing you, --------------------------------------------------------------- mark it “D”.
    3. inspiring or challenging you, ---------------------------------------------- mark it “I”.
    4. forgiving and/or comforting you, ---------------------------------------- mark it “F.”
    5. guiding you, giving you direction, --------------------------------------- mark it “G”.
    6. sending or commissioning you for mission or service, ------------- mark it “S”.
* To/for whom or what are you being sent \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + 1. empowering you, ------------------------------------------------------------ mark it “E”.
    2. The passage that is the most meaningful for you today------------ mark it \*.

***God Seeks to Make a CASE***

***Through Scripture God Seeks to…* (2 Tim 3:15-17)**

**(*make/birth*—*teach*—*rebuke*—*correct*—train)**

**CASE = C**onvict us of our sin

**A**ssure us of His grace and forgiveness

**S**tretch us for growth (transformation)

**E**mpower us for action

**Bill Cullen’s Goals in and for Bible study:**

1. Participants experience the presence and touch of God.
2. Participants leave wanting to return.
3. Participants leave wanting to respond to God’s touch.
4. Participants experience being a part of the Body of Christ.
5. Participants gain some sort of Biblical knowledge and/or insight.

**Habakkuk**

***Habakkuk’s name means “He who embraces, a wrestler.” In Habakkuk, Habakkuk in essences verbally wrestles with God in conversation and complaint. In the first two chapters Habakkuk lodges two complaints and God gives two answers. In the final chapter in Habakkuk’s prayer his demeanor changes from one of complaint to one of faith. The main theme of Habakkuk in found in 2:4 “the righteous will live by faith.”***

**Habakkuk 1:1-17 (NIV)**

**Habakkuk’s Complaint**

**\_\_\_**1  The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received.   
**\_\_\_**2  How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save?   
**\_\_\_**3  Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.   
**\_\_\_**4  Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.

**The Lord’s Answer**

**\_\_\_**5  "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.

**\_\_\_**6  I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own.

**\_\_\_**7  They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.

**\_\_\_**8  Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like a vulture swooping to devour;

**\_\_\_**9  they all come bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand.   
**\_\_\_**10  They deride kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; they build earthen ramps and capture them.

**\_\_\_**11  Then they sweep past like the wind and go on-- guilty men, whose own strength is their god."

**Habakkuk’s Second Complaint**

**\_\_\_**12  O LORD, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, we will not die. O LORD, you have appointed them to execute judgment; O Rock, you have ordained them to punish.

**\_\_\_**13  Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the

treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

**REFLECT & DISCUSS**

1. **“How long, O Lord….” To what extent have you shared Habakkuk’s words in *vs 2-3*, if not in actual words, at least in thought? Explain.**

* **Make a list of things (injustices) that might cause you to think and feel what Habakkuk seems to be thinking and feeling.**
* **How would you describe our current world? What is our world do you find most disturbing? Explain.**

1. **Why do you think God allows and tolerates injustice?**

* **If you were God, how would you deal with the injustices you see? Why? Explain.**

**REFLECT & DISCUSS**

1. **What is your understanding of *vs. 5-11*?**

* **Why would God raise up Babylon against Judah? (*see Ro 3:9-23*)**

1. **Did God cause Babylon to be “ruthless and impetuous” or did He simply use the fact that they were “ruthless and impetuous”? (*see Jas 1:13-15*)**

* **What is the difference between “causing” and “using”? Can you give examples of the difference?**

**REFLECT & DISCUSS**

1. **According to *vs. 12-17*, what is Habakkuk’s perception of what is going on?**
2. **What confuses Habakkuk and causes him great consternation?**
3. **What, if anything, confuses you about God, His sense of justice, and how He appears to deal with injustice?**
4. **Is there anything you would change about God if you could? If so, what? Why? How? If not, why not?**

14  You have made men like fish in the sea, like sea creatures that have no ruler.

**\_\_\_**15  The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad.

**\_\_\_**16  Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food.

**\_\_\_**17  Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy?

**Habakkuk 2:1-20 (NIV)**

**\_\_\_**1  I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.

**The Lord’s Answer**

2  Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.

**\_\_\_**3  For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.   
**\_\_\_**4  "See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright-- but the righteous will live by his faith—

**\_\_\_**5  indeed, wine betrays him; he is arrogant and never at rest. Because he is as greedy as the grave and like death is never satisfied, he gathers to himself all the nations and takes captive all the peoples.

**\_\_\_**6  "Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn, saying, "'Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion! How long must this go on?'

**\_\_\_**7  Will not your debtors suddenly arise? Will they not wake up and make you tremble? Then you will become their victim.

**\_\_\_**8  Because you have plundered many nations, the peoples who are left will plunder you. For you have shed man's blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.

**\_\_\_**9  "Woe to him who builds his realm by unjust gain to set his nest on high, to escape the clutches of ruin!   
**\_\_\_**10  You have plotted the ruin of many peoples, shaming your own house and forfeiting your life.   
**\_\_\_**11  The stones of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it.

**\_\_\_**12  "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by crime!

1. **What is your understand of *Hab 2:1*? What position does Habakkuk seem to be taking?**

* **With whom or towards whom have you taken a similar position or are you tempted to take a similar position? Explain.**

1. **To you does Habakkuk appear to portray a sense of “self-righteousness"? Explain why or why not.**
2. **In what way(s) is Habakkuk like Job? (*see Job 3,6,9-10,12,16,19,23-24,26-31*) …unlike Job? …like Thomas? (*see Jn 20:24-29*) …unlike Thomas**

**REFLECT & DISCUSS**

1. **What position does God take as He responds to Habakkuk’s complaint? What is the nature of His argument?**

* **Compare and contrast this with the response He makes to Job in *Job 38-41*. What is similar? What is different? Why the difference?**

1. ***V. 3* – What do you make of the phrase “appointed time”? (*see Ro 5:6; Gal 4:4-5; 2 Pe 2:9)***

* **What do you make of God’s timing? Explain.**

1. **What is to be the fate of Babylon and of those who employ unjust means to achieve their goals or objectives?**
2. ***V. 4* – How do you understand the phrase “the righteous will live by faith”? (*see Gen 15:6; Ro 4:5; Heb 11:6*)**

* **How would you define, describe and/or explain faith as Scripture talks about it, particularly in the verses listed above.?**

1. ***V. 20* – Who is to be silent or silenced? Why?**

* **How would you describe this silence? (*see Rev 8:1*)**

**\_\_\_**13  Has not the LORD Almighty determined that the people's labor is only fuel for the fire, that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing?

**\_\_\_**14  For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

**\_\_\_**15  "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies.

**\_\_\_**16  You will be filled with shame instead of glory. Now it is your turn! Drink and be exposed! The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory.

**\_\_\_**17  The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, and your destruction of animals will terrify you. For you have shed man's blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.   
**\_\_\_**18  "Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that teaches lies? For he who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak.   
**\_\_\_**19  Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come to life!' Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!' Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it.   
**\_\_\_**20  But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him."

**Habakkuk 3:1-19 (NIV)**

**Habakkuk’s Prayer**

**\_\_\_**1  A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet.

**\_\_\_**2  LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.   
**\_\_\_**3  God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah* His glory covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth.

**\_\_\_**4  His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand, where his power was hidden.

**\_\_\_**5  Plague went before him; pestilence followed his steps.   
**\_\_\_**6  He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed. His ways are eternal.   
**\_\_\_**7  I saw the tents of Cushan in distress, the dwellings of Midian in anguish.

**\_\_\_**8  Were you angry with the rivers, O LORD? Was your wrath against the streams? Did you rage against the sea when you rode with your horses and your victorious chariots?

**\_\_\_**9  You uncovered your bow, you called for many

arrows. *Selah* You split the earth with rivers;

**REFLECT & DISCUSS**

1. **What has Habakkuk come to know and understand about God and His ways? What have you come to know? (*Ex 34:5-7; Num 14:18; Neh 9:16-25; Job 42:1-6; Ps 86:15; Ps 103:8-12; Ps 145:8-12; Joel 2:12-13*)**
2. **What questions remain? Why mysteries remain unanswered for Habakkuk? …for you?**

* **How comfortable are you with unanswered questions and unresolved mysteries regarding God?**
* **Should we seek to know and understand more than we do? Why or why not? (*see Jer 29:11-13; Mt 5:6; Jn 20:30-31; Jn 21:25; 2 Cor 3:18; Gal 4:19; Eph 4:11-13; Col 1:28-29; Heb 6:1-3; 1 Jn 3:1-2; 1 Jn 4:7-8*)**

**\_\_\_**10  the mountains saw you and writhed. Torrents of

water swept by; the deep roared and lifted its waves on high.   
**\_\_\_**11  Sun and moon stood still in the heavens at the glint of your flying arrows, at the lightning of your flashing spear.

**\_\_\_**12  In wrath you strode through the earth and in anger you threshed the nations.

**\_\_\_**13  You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, you stripped him from head to foot. **\_\_\_**14  With his own spear you pierced his head when his warriors stormed out to scatter us, gloating as though about to devour the wretched who were in hiding.   
**\_\_\_**15  You trampled the sea with your horses, churning the great waters.

**\_\_\_**16  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.

**\_\_\_**17  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,

**\_\_\_**18  yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

**\_\_\_**19  The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights. For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.