

HIGHER GROUND

1. I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

chorus:

Lord, lift me up and let me stand
By faith on heaven's tableland,
A higher plane than I have found:
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

2. My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Though some may dwell where these abound,
My prayer, my aim is higher ground.

3. I want to live above the world,
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled;
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
The song of saints on higher ground.

4. I want to scale the utmost height
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray, 'til heaven I've found,
"Lord, lead me on to higher ground."

35-03-01 --The Worship of the Waiting
worship, waiting, praise, God-centeredness
Hab.3

The high notes of praise are reached by a God-centered gaze.

INTRODUCTION:

--Ch.1, on the watchtower with why questions: "Whys . . ."

--Ch.2, in the heavenly temple with woes pronounced: "Woes . . ."

--Ch.3, after a time of silence: The Worship of the Waiting

--"Habakkuk's main motive: "I want Babylon over with: now!"

--Sometimes our prayers turn into lessons God wants us to learn:
God-centered worship is the key to waiting on the salvation that comes from Him.

--Ch.3 a "wild" song (shigionoth) about waiting on God.

--The focus of our worship is the God of salvation and not the benefits of salvation.

I. The Habits of Pre-school Prayer (v.2-moving thru GRADES)

A. Focus on God's past fame (the GOOD OLD DAYS)

B. Focus on "deeds" (fear of "what God can do," the beginning of wisdom: from fear of WRATH to fear of RELATIONSHIP)

C. Focus on "revival" (in BABYLONIAN wrath remember the mercy of JOSIAH's Reform)

TRANS: Prayer is a mysterious realm, because it is divine communication. It leads us beyond where we think we're going. Habakkuk had started with a Pre-school focus in prayer, but God was about to take him on a visionary journey to learn the lesson of worship: The high notes of praise are reached by a God-centered gaze.

II. The Help of a Present Protector

A. The God who comes down! (Theophany) (HISTORY and supraHISTORY) (what if He showed us ours? read v.3-15)

1. Poetry: moving descriptions of feelings behind facts (tell-tale words & symbolism)

- a. The emotional strings of our heart are God-given (We are in God's IMAGE)
- b. Words in verse set to music paint mental impressions that outdo intellectual arguments.
- 2. Allusions to past appearances:
 - a. Example: deliverance from moral darkness at Sinai (read Ex.19:16-19)
 - b. Other interventions of power: Egyptian Plagues, Joshua's Long Day, the Red Sea, etc.)
- B. The God who comes out to deliver (v.13)
(the "Creator-Warrior-Deliverer" theme in other songs throughout the Bible: Moses' Song, Deborah's, Hannah's, Mary's, Zechariah's)
- C.

TRANS: What was it like to be a seer? Habakkuk said he was in awe of the fame of God's deeds. Now he had seen in vision the God behind salvation history. It shook him up! God wanted to get Habakkuk's eyes off the benefits of salvation and onto the Source of those benefits. Habakkuk's lesson: The high notes of praise are reached by a God-centered gaze.

III. The Heights of Patient Praise (How do we reach it?)

- A. Shaking the focus of our vision (v.16a) (2 views of JESUS)
(read Rev.1:10-18)
- B. Shaping the focus of our energy (v.16b, leaving Babylon's fall in God's hands by "patient waiting")
- C. Sharpening the focus of our praise (v.17)
 - 1. Enjoying all in God, or enjoying God in all (not by bread alone...)

Though the pocketbook is empty,
And there be no food in the fridge,
The bank account is in the red,
And the credit cards are maxed,
Though the juice is cut off from the house
And the car just ran out of gas,
Yet will I rejoice in the Lord (x2)
I will joy in the God who's my Provider,
God the Lord is my Strength!

- 2. WHO do we enjoy, not WHAT ("The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I want...")
- 3. Focus on where we're going, not where we've been (HIND's feet)
 - a. The upward look gets us in sync.
 - b. The upward look gives us the heights. (**Higher Ground**)

CONCLUSION:

--The high notes of praise are reached by a God-centered gaze.
--We need to learn about proper praise to be properly prepared for Heaven.
--The only redeeming feature in the wrath of Babylon: learning to wait in worship.
--God is the God who appears, comes down, came down in Christ.
--God wants to deliver us, but our object is not Heaven:, it's Him!
And Heaven is Heaven, because He is there.