

Habakkuk 3:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.

Analysis

Habakkuk describes his physical response to divine revelation: 'When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops' (shamati vattirga'az bni lishmua tzafilu sephatay yavo raqav ba'atzmotay vetachtay erga'ash asher anuach leyom tzarah la'aloth le'am yegudem). His entire body reacts: belly trembling (vattirga'az bni), lips quivering (tzafilu sephatay), bones feeling rotten (yavo raqav ba'atzmotay), trembling in himself (vetachtay erga'ash). This isn't casual acknowledgment but visceral terror at coming judgment. Yet he adds: 'that I might rest in the day of trouble' (asher anuach leyom tzarah). Through trembling comes rest—peaceful submission to God's will. This demonstrates mature faith: feeling appropriate fear at God's judgment yet finding peace in trusting His sovereign purposes.

Historical Context

Habakkuk's physical response to prophetic vision echoes other prophets' experiences (Daniel 8:27, 10:8; Ezekiel 1:28). Encountering divine revelation, especially concerning judgment, produces genuine fear—not intellectual acknowledgment but whole-person terror. Yet through processing this revelation,

submitting to God's will, and trusting His character, Habakkuk arrives at 'rest in the day of trouble.' When Babylon invaded (605, 597, 586 BC), those who had internalized Habakkuk's message could maintain peace even during catastrophe, knowing God remained sovereign. This 'rest in trouble' isn't avoiding difficulty but trusting God through it—the same rest Jesus offers (Matthew 11:28-30) that transcends circumstances.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How can appropriate fear of God's judgment coexist with peaceful trust in His sovereign purposes?
2. What does it mean to find 'rest in the day of trouble'—peace during rather than avoidance of difficulty?
3. How does understanding coming judgment help believers prepare spiritually and emotionally for trials?

Interlinear Text

יב וְ שִׁפְתָּתִי צָלָל וְ שִׁמְעָתִי

When I heard and I trembled my belly at the voice quivered

H8085

H7264

H990

לְקֹל

at the voice

H6963

צָלָל וְ

quivered

H6750

שִׁפְתָּתִי

my lips

H8193

בָּאָן

entered

H935

אָשָׁר אֶרְגָּז בְּעָצָם וְתַחַת בָּבֶן

rottenness into my bones and I trembled

H7538

H6106

H834

H7264

לְעַל וְתַחַת הַלְּיָם אָנָּן וְתַחַת

in myself that I might rest in the day of trouble when he cometh up unto the people

H5117

H3117

H6869

H5927

H5971

וְתַחַת

he will invade them with his troops

H1464

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 23:9 (Parallel theme): Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.

Habakkuk 3:2 (Parallel theme): O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.

Daniel 10:8 (Parallel theme): Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

Psalms 119:120 (Parallel theme): My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.

Psalms 91:15 (Parallel theme): He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

