

12 Prophets - Habakkuk Part 7

“Prophets distilled the 613 mitzvot into a list of primary commandments.....”

Chavakuk came and established the mitzvot on a single one:

A righteous person shall live by his faith” (Chavakuk 2:4)

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.

[Habakkuk 3:1 \(ESV\)](#)

Chapter 3 is largely a complete song or psalm that the prophet is speaking/praying in response to the words of the Holy One which we have been studying over the last few weeks in chapter 2.

The opening line when read in the KJV looks as though a Shigionoth is a form of musical instrument.

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.

[Habakkuk 3:1 \(KJV\)](#)

However, the Hebrew writers interpret this in a different way. The word is related to the idea of being overtaken by our thoughts and fears. It could be understood as a prayer in response to being overwhelmed by our thoughts that have forgotten who we are and who the Creator is, therefore, the response is to reaffirm and acknowledge the Sovereignty of the Creator and our full reliance upon Him in the knowledge and remembrance of His actions and faithfulness in the past which will determine the things of the future.

Shigionoth only appears in one other place in Tanakh, at the beginning of Psalm 7.

A Shiggaion of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning the words of Cush, a Benjaminite. O LORD my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me,

[Psalms 7:1](#)

The context of Psalm 7 is composed in the light of 2 Samuel 16:1-23 where David is cursed by Shimei the Benjamite. The psalms of both David and Habakkuk are psalms of supplication, where they humble themselves before the Holy One, in response to, in Habakkuk’s case, not trusting that Father has all things in hand, and in David’s case, questioning his own judgment in light of the accusation brought by Shimei and seeking Father’s favour to correct whatever error there may be and not to fall into the hands of his enemies.

My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day. If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow; he has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts. Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made. His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends. I will give to the LORD the thanks due to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the LORD, the Most High.

[Psalms 7:10-17](#)

Shigionoth (H7692) is rooted in the word Shagah (H7686).

The first time we see this word is in the book of Vayikra (Leviticus).

"If the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance/unintentionally and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do any one of the things that by the LORD's commandments ought not to be done, and they realize their guilt,

Leviticus 4:13

The implication here is that shagah, going astray through ignorance, then requires us to fall upon the mercy of Heaven. In Leviticus 4, Father makes provision for repair of this transgression through the sacrifice of a young bull. This is interesting as it is akin to the sacrifice that Aaron is required to make for himself after the golden calf incident. The implication if this is that the sin of the golden calf in its creation and worship was done "in ignorance".

And Moses said, "This is the thing that the LORD commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD may appear to you." Then Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded." So Aaron drew near to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself.

Leviticus 9:6-8

This is contrast to the fact that the people continued to worship the golden calf even after Moses appeared, where he called the Levites to himself and those worshipping the calf were killed. Again we see the connection with these actions and Psalm 7.

*"If a man does not repent, **God will whet his sword**; he has bent and readied his bow; he has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts. Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies"*

If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.

Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.

If you say, "Behold, we did not know this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?

Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?

Proverbs 24:10-12

H7692

שגינה / שגירון

shiggâyôn / shiggâyônâh

BDB Definition:

1) song?

1a) used in title of Ps 7

1b) meaning doubtful

Part of Speech: noun proper masculine

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: from [H7686](#)

H7686

שגה

shâgâh

BDB Definition:

1) to go astray, stray, err

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to err, stray

1a2) to swerve, meander, reel, roll, be intoxicated, err (in drunkenness)

1a3) to go astray (morally)

1a4) to commit sin of ignorance or inadvertence, err (ignorantly)

1b) (Hiphil)

1b1) to lead astray

1b2) to lead astray, mislead (mentally)

1b3) to lead astray (morally)

Part of Speech: verb

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: a primitive root

Habakkuk's recalibration

Within the context of Habakkuk's prayer we see reference to the time of the Exodus and the giving of the Torah at Sinai. These references are not specific, but rather poetic in their nature in the overall theme. These events are the hope that Habakkuk is looking to in the next redemption that will come for the nation of Israel.

The clear implication to us from this passage is that we should not doubt the intention of the Creator and that our understanding of events around us need to be grounded in the events of the past and the words/promises of the future.

We are not to be people of an apocalyptic bent where we only see good triumphing over evil. In many ways, this has already been achieved through the death and resurrection of Messiah. The word apocalypse can be interpreted in the following manner:

apocalypse [uh-pok-uh-lips] [SHOW IPA](#)  

[See synonyms for apocalypse on Thesaurus.com](#)

 **High School
Level**

noun

- 1 (initial capital letter) revelation (def. 4).
- 2 any of a class of Jewish or Christian writings that appeared from about 200 b.c. to a.d. 350 and were assumed to make revelations of the ultimate divine purpose.
- 3 a prophetic revelation, especially concerning a cataclysm in which the forces of good permanently triumph over the forces of evil.
- 4 any revelation or prophecy.
- 5 any universal or widespread destruction or disaster:
the apocalypse of nuclear war.

Our tendency toward apocalyptic events needs to be balanced. Habakkuk is seeing events in their true light; the light of the Sovereign One who does not desire that any be destroyed or lost, but will also not tolerate those who will not repent.

The restoration of the sacrifices and the worship that we see in Ezekiel 45 shows us that the "destruction of the world" is not a true doctrine of scripture. It is a false narrative used to discredit the Creator, His Messiah and His people. Here is Habakkuk's response:

*O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear.
In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath
remember mercy.*

[Habakkuk 3:2](#)

The key to this now is that the mercy of the Creator is sought, because the willful sin of the people has brought them to this stage where the Holy One is using the destructive and arrogant nature of men who have no knowledge or desire to know the One True God become His instrument in cleansing the lands and taking into exile those who have been in error, in order to bring them back through repentance rather than perish. But alongside this also is the Name of the Holy One which has and continues to be profaned by men because of their ignorance and the false message that is conveyed but much of the believing community.

"Therefore, say to the house of Israel, thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land.

Ezekiel 36:22-24

Just as we see the Holy One declare His intention here in Ezekiel, we see the prophet Habakkuk looking back at the time of the giving of the Torah and how the glory of the Holy One was declared throughout the Land. But there is a twist that needs to be understood.

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah.

His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

Habakkuk 3:3

The first part of the verse makes a statement about which direction the Holy One is coming from. Some of the commentators speak of Teman as meaning the South, but then it separates GOD coming from Teman from the Holy One who comes from Mount Paran.

The general understanding here is that Teman is referring directly to Esau and that Mount Paran, the Ishmaelites.

The following extracts are from Talmud Avodah Zarah 2b

אומרים לפניו רבש"ע כלום נתת לנו ולא קיבלנוה ומי מצי למימר
הכי והכתי' (דברים לג, ב) ויאמר ה' מסיני בא וזרח משעיר למו
וכתיב (חבקוק ג, ג) אלוה מתימן יבוא וגו' מאי בעי בשעיר ומאי בעי
בפארן

The nations will say before God: **Master of the Universe, did You give us the Torah and we did not accept it?** Since we never received the Torah, why are we being judged for not fulfilling its mitzvot? The Gemara asks: **And can one say that they were never offered the Torah? But isn't it written in the description of the giving of the Torah: "And he said: The Lord came from Sinai, and rose from Seir unto them" (Deuteronomy 33:2), and it is written: "God comes from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran" (Habakkuk 3:3).** And the Sages asked: **What did God require in Seir and what did He require in Paran?** The Torah was not given in those locations.

א"ר יוחנן מלמד שהחזירה הקב"ה על כל אומה ולשון ולא קבלוה
עד שבא אצל ישראל וקבלוה

And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, took the Torah around to every nation and those who speak every language, such as the Edomites in Seir and the Ishmaelites in Paran, but they did not accept it, until He came to the Jewish people and they accepted it. If the other nations all rejected the Torah, how can they excuse themselves by claiming that it was never offered to them?

אלא הכי אמרי כלום קיבלנוה ולא קיימנוה ועל דא תברתהון אמאי
לא קבלתוה אלא כך אומרים לפניו רבש"ע כלום כפית עלינו הר
כגיגית ולא קבלנוה כמו שעשית לישראל

Rather, this is what they say: Did we accept the Torah and then not fulfill its mitzvot? The Gemara asks: But this itself serves as the refutation of their own claim, as one can respond: Why didn't you accept it? Rather, this is what the nations of the world say before Him: Master of the Universe, did You overturn the mountain above us like a basin, and we still did not accept the Torah, as You did for the Jewish people?

דכתיב (שמות יט, יז) ויציצבו בתחתית ההר ואמר רב דימי בר חמא
מלמד שכפה הקב"ה הר כגיגית על ישראל ואמר להם אם אתם
מקבלין את התורה מוטב ואם לאו שם תהא קבורתכם

The Gemara provides the background for this claim: As it is written: "And they stood at the nether part of the mount" (Exodus 19:17), and Rav Dimi bar Ḥama says: The verse teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, overturned the mountain, i.e., Mount Sinai, above the Jews like a basin, and He said to them: If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, there, under the mountain, will be your burial. The nations of the world will claim that they too could have been coerced to accept the Torah.

This is not something generally considered by the Christian commentators as they will not touch the Talmud as being relevant, but this extract gives us some interesting insight.

The Sages identify an issue with the verses in Habakkuk which they seek to understand. In the first instance they note that the Torah speaks to the fact that the Torah was given from Sinai and not Seir. The discussion continues regarding the rejection of the Torah by the nations but the acceptance of the Torah by the Jewish people. But then another aspect is presented in that the nations say that if they had been coerced in the same way that the Jewish people were, when the Holy One held the mountain over them to either cause them to accept or bury them, then the nations would have accepted the Torah also.

This argument is interesting in that it reflects a similar claim that is made to HaShem by the Adversary regarding Job, suggesting that Job's loyalty and devotion to HaShem was only because HaShem showed him favour.

The passage in Habakkuk creates us to pause to consider an important aspect of our faith walk, which is:
Why do we follow Messiah?

Is it because we are coerced? If you believe you will go to heaven but if not, you are condemned to hell!

Or is it because the Holy One is the source of our life and His Messiah has given us the ability to live in the fullness of it no matter what befalls us?

Again this comes to the nature of our message and whether we are seeking to coerce people by the apocalyptic nature of the message, or to reassure them that despite all that might be thrown at us, the Creator of the Universe, Our Heavenly Father is producing something far greater than we can imagine.

We are not coerced or to coerce. We follow out of love and devotion for the Holy One and His Messiah, the living Torah. So just as the Gemara speaks in terms of the Torah being rejected by the nations, now the same principle is being applied regarding the Living Torah in Yeshua the Messiah.

Is there a willing acceptance?

If we apply this argument to the passage in Habakkuk, then maybe we get a glance at something which speaks to the future arrival of Messiah.

Will Israel accept the Living Torah in Yeshua, or reject Him?

Will the nations accept the Living Torah in Yeshua, or reject Him?

Concerning Edom. Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Is wisdom no more in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished?"

Jeremiah 49:7

Therefore, hear the plan that the LORD has made against Edom and the purposes that he has formed against the inhabitants of Teman: Even the little ones of the flock shall be dragged away. Surely their fold shall be appalled at their fate. At the sound of their fall the earth shall tremble; the sound of their cry shall be heard at the Red Sea.

Jeremiah 49:20-21

The principal applies across the whole earth and to all generations. Only through the wisdom of repentance and acceptance of the Holy One of Israel can salvation be achieved.

From verse 4 onward we see a glorious rising prayer speaking of the power of the Holy One.

As we conclude next week, we'll look at the glory of these verses that speak of a time to come.