

## THE CONCEPT OF THEODICY IN THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK: AFRI- (URHOB0) CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

John Arierhi Ottuh, Ph.D

---

### Abstract

*The concept of theodicy can be found in the book of Habakkuk. The concept expressed the paradox of the God who is good and absolutely powerful at the same time allows evil to coexist amidst good. Using the evaluative model as methodology, this paper aimed at reading the concept of theodicy in Habakkuk as against the understanding of evil in Urhobo cosmology. The work showed that Habakkuk as a man within a cultural milieu struggled with the justice of God amidst the occurrence of evil. Within the human context of natural and moral evils, the justice of God is incontestable in the sense that God cannot totally be understood by mere mortals in God's schemes of operation. Christians being humans must accept as human beings that God is always just, irrespective of evil happenings or occurrences in the world. As a lesson for the Urhobo Christians, this work concludes on the presupposition that human intellectual and spiritual limitations before God cannot make man claim total understand of God and how He operates in the affairs of humans and nature, as such, Christians should recline to unconditional faith in God.*

### 1. Introduction

The issue of evil is not strange to the Urhobo and the world at large. Although, the concept of evil may vary from place to place with some nuances, at least every society has one concept or the other about evil. Here the issue under consideration is the concept of evil in the book of Habakkuk. Prophet Habakkuk was confronted with a double barrelled question which juxtaposed God's justice with evil. This concept is what theologians and Christian philosophers call theodicy. Theodicy seeks to justify God and ways of God to Man, showing that God is in the right and is glorious and worthy of praise despite contrary occurrences in the world. Theodicy asks how we can believe that God is both good and sovereign in the face of the world's evil (Packer, 1988:679). The rhetorical question is: if God is good and righteous why should He allow evil to happen? This question looks difficult to answer. This was the question Habakkuk was trying to struggle with in his time and we are still struggling with the question today. Today Urhoboland and Nigeria at large is faced with moral decadence more than ever before and it appears the evil doers are prospering by the day and those who uphold integrity and holiness seems to suffer more in the society. This is indeed the propelling factor for choosing this topic in our context.

This work may not be able to provide all the answers that theodicy poses to Habakkuk then and the Urhobo today, at least it aims at encouraging the Christians in Urhoboland and sundry in Nigeria not to be discouraged in living righteous and holy lives in a society fool of evils like ours. The methodology that was explored here is the evaluative paradigm. The evaluative model in African biblical study according to Ukpong (2006:59) seeks to understand the biblical message against the background of African life, thought and practice. It is on this resonance that the problem of theodicy posed in Habakkuk's experience will be read in the African Urhobo context.

## 2. Definition of Operational Terms

### 2.1 Concept

Concept can be defined as something conceived in the mind. It can also mean thought or notion. It can also be seen as an abstract idea generalized from particular instances (Gove, 1965:171). Also, the Encarta Dictionary (2008) defines concept as:

- i. Something thought or imagined; something that somebody has thought up, or that somebody might be able to imagine;
- ii. Broad principle affecting perception and behavior: a broad abstract idea or a guiding general principle, e.g. one that determines how a person or culture behaves, or how nature, reality, or events are perceived; and
- iii. Way of doing or perceiving something or a method, plan, or type of product or design.

### 2.2 Theodicy

The term theodicy was coined from two Greek words: *theos* meaning God and *dike* meaning justice. When put together it means the “justice of god” - justification of God in the midst of evil in a good world created by a good and just God. Thus, it tends to answer the question of the justification of the righteous God in the allowance and presence of evil in the cosmos. The term theodicy was taken from the title of a work Leibnitz titled: *Essais de Theodicee sur la bonte de Dieu, la liberte de l’homme, et l’ origine du mal*. It is an aspect of theology or philosophy devoted for to the vindication of God’s goodness and justice despite the existence of evil (Smith, 2004:517).

Theodicy is being referred to by Evans (2002:144) as an answer to the problem of evil that attempts to justify the ways of God to by explaining God’s reasons for allowing. Evans postulates further that there are two important theodicies. One of them is called “soul-making theodicy” which argues that God allows evil so as to make it possible for humans to develop certain desirable virtues. The other one is called, “free will theodicy” which argues that God had to allow for the possibility of evil if He wished to give humans and angelic beings free will. In Habakkuk’s puzzle, the following questions are not out of place. Why does evil exist side by side with good? Why does God allow evil in the world He created? All of these questions were begging for answers in prophet Habakkuk’s puzzle and it is still nagging for more clarification in the minds of the Urhobo Christian today.

## 3. The Concept of Evil: A Perspective from Urhobo Traditional ‘Theologoumenon’

The Concept of evil varies from place to place. This is why some scholars agree that ethics is relative. The concept of evil is beyond ethics in this context. The term evil according to Ubrurhe and Eghwubare (2000:47) is subsumed in the concept of moral values which deals essentially with what is desirable and undesirable in a people’s values system. The weakness of this concept is viewing evil as undesirable occurrence from the perspective of societal value system. Man’s value system is limited to only what is happening in the society of man. Evil could also be seen from cosmic and natural forces which may not be necessarily be control by a societal value system.

Among the Urhobo, armed robbery, incest, homicide, stealing, adultery, witchcraft, cheating are considered as evil (Ubrurhe and Eghwubare, 2000:50). Also among the Urhobo

Erivwo (1991:66) identified that a man would have committed adultery if he held another's man's wife by the hand or prefixed or tapped her buttocks. Moreover, Erivwo (1991:60) enumerates three categories of moral evils in Urhobo land, viz Umuemu (sin), Okon (wickedness) and *Orukuruku* (iniquity). *Umuemu* corresponds with stealing, adultery, removing land marks and murder etc. while *Okon* may be described simply as sin of omission, *Orukuruku* has to do with a situation where a person is involved in multiple evils.

Also among the Urhobo, the manipulation of cosmic forces against nature or one's neighbor is also a form of evil. An example of this phenomenon in Urhobo land is using charms to draw the rain to stop some people's celebration is an example of cosmic manipulation. There is the understanding in the Urhobo land that God almighty knows all things. This could be expressed in Urhobo folklore: *Umu rho sivwohwo Oghene ye rierhe, uwhu ro ghovo hwo Oghene ye rierhe* (the medicine that cure man and the death that kills man can only be known by God). Although, the Urhobo do not accuse God for bad occurrences in the environment, it is believed that God is aware of the good, the bad, and the Ugly. This is what could be called the problem of theodicy in the experience in Habakkuk's Milieus.

#### 4. Some Nuances in the Concept of Evil

Evil is evil no matter what name a philosopher may want to call it. The name does not make any difference. There are some slight differences in the concept of evil. The differences include:

- i. Moral Evil: Moral evil according to Mbiti (1969:213) pertains to what man does against his fellow man. This is a type of evil perpetuated by man to cause pain or discomfort for a fellow man. For example, in Nigeria today, building a house on water channels to cause flooding for the community and one's neighbor can be seen as moral evil. Although flood is a natural but if it is manipulated to cause pain.
- ii. Natural Evil: In Platinga (1974:8) natural evil is that which cannot be ascribed to the free actions of human beings. This includes suffering emanating from natural disasters, accidents, diseases etc. Sometimes natural evil can also be caused by human ignorance or human errors. For example, the issue of climate change in the world today looks natural but the activities of humans also contributed to it. This is why it is plausible to argue that the concept of moral and natural evil is interrelated in some forms.

#### 5. A Brief Background to Habakkuk

##### 5.1 Authorship and Date

Habakkuk was a prophet of the late seventh century B. C. and he was a contemporary of Jeremiah. The Septuagint (LXX) equivalent of his name is Hambakoun which suggest a root meaning "plant" or "vegetable" and also means "embracer" in Hebrew language (Tullock, 1991:590). Much was not known about Habakkuk whose name appears twice in this book (1:1; 3:1). He is not mentioned in any other book of the Bible but a tradition suggests that he was a priest from the tribe of Levi. Also, the book of Bel and the dragon (vss. 33-39) in the Old Testament Apocryphal tells a story about Habakkuk being taken to Babylon by an angel to feed Daniel while he was in the Lion's den. There is also a rabbinical tradition that suggests that Habbakkuk was the boy whom Elisha raised to life in 2 Kings 4:32-36 (Dembele, 2006:1063). These stories were fictitious, because there seems to be no evidence of someone feeding Daniel in the Lion's den or the name Habakkuk being the name of the Shunammite woman's son.

The prediction of the coming Babylonian invasion (1:6) indicates that Habakkuk lived in Judah towards the end of Josiah's reign (640 -609 B.C) or at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign (609-598). The prophecy is generally dated a little before or after the battle of Carcherish (605), when Egyptian forces, which had earlier gone to the aid of the last Assyrian King, were routed by the Babylonians under Nebopolassar and were pursued as far as the Egyptian border (Jer. 46). Habakkuk like Jeremiah probably lived to see the initial fulfilment of his prophesies when Jerusalem was attacked by the Babylonians in 597 B. C (Harrison, 1995:1379).

McCain (2010:339) suggests that the prophecy of Habakkuk is not dated and that a principle of biblical interpretation is that if no information about time is given, apparently the prophecy can be understood properly without it. Moreover, internal evidence suggests a date between the death of King Josiah (609 BC) and the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity (605 BC). Therefore the date 609 B.C. can be probably juxtaposed with 609 B.C.

## 5.2 The Times

At this point in time, Judah had just experienced the exhalation of the glorious days of Josiah, marked by freedom, prosperity and a great religious revival. In the book of Habakkuk, the Babylonians are being referred to as the Chaldeans. Nebuchadnezzar the heir apparent and next of kin to his father's throne, was the leader of the Babylonian armies (Tullock, 1991:590).

Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, fell in 612 B. C. In 609 B. C., Josiah was killed at Megiddo when he attempted to prevent the Egyptians from aiding the Assyrians against the Babylonians. Josiah was replaced by his son Jehoiakim who became a petty tyrant. Jehoiakim reversed the religious and social orders that Josiah his father had put in place (Tullock, 1991:590). The prophet Jeremiah charged him with injustice, covetousness, murder, oppression, and violence (Jer. 22:13-19). This seems to be the state of affairs reflected in Habakkuk (Bruce, 1993:834). Over the next ten years, Jehoiakim tried to play the Babylonian off against Egyptians until he finally exhausted Nebuchadnezzar's patience. In 598 B. C., he laid siege to Jerusalem. That same year, Jehoiakim died, leaving his son, Jehoiachin, to become Nebuchadnezzar's prisoner when Jerusalem fell in 597 B. C. During the ravage of Israel by the Babylonians people from the upper classes and skilled workmen were also among those taken to Babylon as captives (Kitchen, 1986:201).

## 6. Outline of the Book of Habakkuk

This book gives us the best picture of the prophet. After a brief statement identifying the prophet (1:1), the book falls into three distinct divisions:

- i. The prophet's questions and the Lord's Answers (1:2-2:5)
- ii. Habakkuk's Second Question and God's Reply -five woes against tyrants (2:6-20).
- iii. Habakkuk's Prayer (3:1-19)

## 7. The Concept of Theodicy in Habakkuk

**חָמָס (*chamac*):** The Hebrew word חָמָס means violence, wrong, cruelty, injustice, fierceness, malice, destruction, ruthlessness, cruel hatred, damage, oppressor, unrighteous, etc. (Strong, 2001:1389). Its Greek equivalent is *βίαζω* and it means to use force, to inflict injury or destruction, etc. Habakkuk uses the word in the context of injustice. The prophet was bordered about the paradox of how God can be just and at the same time allows injustice to prevail. In this book, Habakkuk can be referred to as the doubting Thomas of the Old Testament because he could not imagine a

righteous God keeping silent over evil as if he was in support of injustice. The most amazing thing to Habakkuk was God's act of using the more wicked Chaldeans (Babylonians) who do not worship Yahweh to punish Judah who at least believed in Yahweh. If the wicked Chaldeans who are cruel than the Israelites will be the ones to chastise God's people, it will look ironical and disastrous. On this note, Bruce (1993:834-835) states:

If this account of the life setting of the prophecy is valid, then the prophet, having first complained to God about the injustice of Jehoiakim's rule and having been told that the Chaldeans are to be the executors of divine judgment against him, complains next that the curse is worse than the disease. If Jehoiakim chastised the people with whips, the Chaldeans are chastising them with Scorpions.

If God's silence about the cruelty of Jehoiakim, posed a problem for faith, greater still was the problem posed by his choosing of the Chaldeans as the instruments of His righteous judgment. The problem of theodicy here is that "If God is a God of righteousness and Justice why should He keep silence over evil? Should it be simply accepted as a fact of life that the weaker should go to the wall" as could be seen in a parallel reading in Ecclesiastic 4:1? This became a problem to Habakkuk in the sense that the powerful and crueler Chaldeans will become more powerful and superior to other nations including God's own nation despite their evils in God's own sight (Kitchen, 1986:201).

Dating from the early years of Jehoiakim's reign, this has the formal marks of a liturgical complaint similar to those found among the passage. The prophet has been burdened by official corruption within the land and by Yahweh's silence over his protest. There seemed to be a situation whereby the less wicked are being overwhelmed by the more wicked. In this case, covenant law was no longer applied. This lack of justice by Jehoiakim's rule resulted in strife, trouble and violence (De Vries, 1971:495). Habakkuk complained to God about this situation for God to prevail with justice.

**רָעָה (*rah*):** This Hebrew word means evil, misery, distress, calamity, bad omen, bad, wicked in ethical quality, mischief, wickedness, noisome, etc. (Strong, 2001: 1455). Habakkuk's concept of evil also referred to the wickedness of the powerful people on the weak. While the powerful people referred to the Chaldeans and all the oppressors of Israel, it also referred to the leaders and the rich people of Israel who oppress the poor and the less privileged in the society.

### **7.1 Habakkuk's First Question: Why do Evil People Prosper? (1:1-4)**

This prophet tackles a question which has troubled people throughout history. How can a righteous God allow wicked (*rasha*) people to prosper? Specifically, how is it that the rapacious Babylonians (Chaldeans) are so much stronger than other less evil peoples? This question is real and important; it is similar to Job's problem or that in Psalm 73. The answer is not an intellectual or philosophical one but simply depends on God Himself to give the real answer (Drane, 1986: 98).

### **7.2 God's Answer (1:5-11)**

God's answer to Habakkuk was a great amazement to him. God's answer was: I will punish Judah's evil through your foes! The foe here means the Babylonians. The Chaldeans were wicked (*rasha*) than Judah. But why should God allow a wicked nation to punish a less wicked

nation? On the feelings of Habakkuk as a limited being, Motyer (1973:452) states: “in response to Habakkuk’s first question (2-4), God presents him with an even greater stumbling block (5-11). How can God who is just and good, who hates evil, send against His people a nation that he openly admits makes a god of its own”? Habakkuk was not satisfied with God’s answer hence the next question.

### **7.3 Habakkuk’s Second Question: How Can God Use a More Wicked Babylonians as Instrument of Justice? (1:12-17)**

The prophet was not satisfied with the first answer from God. He was wondering how God was going to do it. This question seems to pose the problem of using injustice to do justice. The real issue in the book is related to the justice of God. Habakkuk was asking God these questions but he was indirectly accusing God of being unfair and unjust. In the midst of all these questions the prophet still acknowledges the absolute holiness, omniscient, omnipotence and sovereignty of Yaweh (1:12).

### **7.4 God’s Answer (2:5-20): I will judge them also**

The scenario here could be seen as a theophanic experience to Habakkuk. There seems to be an interlocutor (Habakkuk) and a respondent (God). The interlocutor raises question and the respondent answers. One critical question that may come to mind here is: did Habakkuk see God face to face? Whether or not there were answers to his questions. The answer is I will also judge them. God pronounced five woes (2:6, 9, 12,15, and 19) on the wicked plunderer (Babylonians) who continue to rejoice in evil. God instructed Habakkuk to be patient and watch how He will deal with the Babylonians hence he was told to write it down and wait for the appointed time (2:2-3).

### **8. Habakkuk Retreats to Watch in Prayer (3): A Commentary**

At this juncture Habakkuk could be seen as saying: “I rest my case.” The prophet retiring to his watch-tower, when he looks out over the world to see it ruins, receives an oracle which he is bidden to write down on tablets for all to read. This corresponds to the popular saying: “the more you look, the less you see, the less you look, the more you see.” He is told that the purpose of God is hastening to its fullness, and is encouraged to wait for it. The just shall live by faith means that tyranny is self-destructive, and carries within itself the seeds of boom and doom. But while the evil doer passes away, the just man is steadfast in the face of all contradiction and he shall live and cast out the storm of judgment. Hearing this from God; he pronounced five woes against pride, the greed, the cruel building enterprise, the sensuality, the idolatry of the heathen powers (Moulton, 1909:322-323).

Moreover, from God’s answer to the second question which suggests that God will definitely punish evil be it Judah or the more cruel Babylonians show that God is just. What God has in mind to do have a time frame which He alone determines. Hegel’s postulation of theodicy seems to fit into this situation when he says that: “all apparent evil is really good in the making; it looks and feels bad only because its character as good is as yet incomplete.” Hegel statements imply that, whatever man calls evil may not necessarily be evil until its consummation (fulfilment). This seems to be the act of God in this situation. But the problem here is that, the man called Prophet Habakkuk did not understand God’s ways in its entirety hence he felt God was delaying and averting justice. God did not in away throw away justice in this case because He later

punished the Babylonians. Also, one can infer here, that God was just in this because He knew that the pains that the cruelty of the Chaldean will cause Judah will at the long run refine their lives and turn them to Him. In this understanding, the Biblical theists seemed to have put it more explicitly right when they agree that: “pain, though it hurts, is often not really evil. The stab of pain acts as an alarm, and living with pain can purge, refine, and ennoble character. Thus pain may be a gift and mercy (Packer, 1988:679).

Furthermore, we can say here that God is just whatever He does is right or just (Gen. 18:25). Habakkuk seemed to have denied this fact hence his problem of theodicy. In this regard, Bruce (1993:835) opines, thus:

But as it was, God’s character had to be vindicated: “shall not the Judge of the entire earth do what is just?” (Gen. 18:25). Habakkuk is not content to say, “Whatever my God ordains is right,” and leave it there in a spirit of resignation. Like Job, he argues with God and expostulates with Him, and thus reaches a clearer understanding of God’s character and firmer faith in Him.

No matter what man thinks, God is all knowing. At last when Habakkuk realized his mistakes and came to understanding with God he rejoiced in the Lord by his Psalms in Chapter 3. Also, if we agree that evil is evil whether moral or natural, then God is justified when He used evil nation to punish evil nation. In this context, Habakkuk’s nation under the leadership of Jehoiakim was evil and the Chaldeans were also evil. Men may graduate evil with human understanding, hence, Habakkuk saw the Chaldean to be wicked than the Israelites. God reserves the right to punish Israel or the Chaldeans in any way He has chosen to do so. And this is not what man can re-order. God does whatever He wants to do in His own way and time. The duty of man is to live by faith in Yahweh through Christ in every circumstance man may experience in life.

## **9. Some Theological Implications for the Urhobo Christians**

There are some theological thoughts that can be deduced from Habakkuk’s concept of evil as follows:

- i. God is not the inventor of moral evil. God does not support evil but has given opportunity to everyone to repent from evil (Ezekiel 18:20-24). God created the world and allows His creatures to act at will until the consummation of time when the eschatological new earth and heaven shall manifest. For example, it is believed in Urhoboland that the law of boomerang (popularly known as the law of karma) is natural in the sense that when a person plans to do evil to his neighbour or the society and the evil turns out to hit the planner it serves him right. It is also believed in Urhoboland that the deeds of humans and the society can attract omens. While good is capable of attracting good occurrences, evil deeds are also capable of attracting evil. Prophet Habakkuk struggled with the idea of God allowing a wicked nation to punish Israel for their sin. The issue should not be how God brought his people to their senses; the issue should focus on the sovereignty of God. The problem here was that Israel sinned against God and God wants them to repent. He reserves the absolute power to do what He considers good in His infinite wisdom. Being that the ways of God is transcendent man cannot completely comprehend God in entirety (Isaiah 55:9). The Urhobo Christian must understand that God punishes evil and as such it is good to desist from sin.

- ii. Natural evil could be as a result of cause and effects: Cause and effect corresponds with the popular proverbial saying in Urhoboland: “there is no smoke without fire.” While the fire can be seen as the cause, the smoke is the effect. For example, an accident can happen as a result of human errors. At present, the world is experiencing climate change due to global warming and gastric emission to the air which is affecting the environment and the ozonosphere. It must be clear here that Habakkuk’s puzzle about evil does not cover natural evil because the prophet mainly questions the justification of God in using a more wicked nation to punish a lesser wicked nation. This falls within moral evil. Although Habakkuk did not focus on natural evil such as natural disasters, the question of how God can be Omnipotent and Omniscience and yet He allows natural disasters to pose threat to the existence of man can be read into the question of Habakkuk. Does this mean that God is limited? The answer is no. God cannot be limited by natural occurrences. God created everything to function the way He has designed it to be. Sometimes man ignorantly trespasses into things which he could have avoided and when the resultant effect happens it is the fault of man. In most cases, God delivers us from natural disasters and other evils. As time progressively unfolds, man is learning how to relate with his natural environments, hence man is devising high technology in safety measures. Due to high technological knowledge air and voyage travels are safer than before in the sense that high profile ships and aeroplanes are being manufactured and safer routes detected. The Urhobo Christian must understand God has given us knowledge to the things He wants us to know. It is our responsibility to discover and explore them. The Urhobo Christian must also understand that God cannot be limited in any form because He is omniscient and omnipotent. He does not need the opinion and wisdom of mortal man to operate.
- iii. Optimistic View. Leibnitz ((1646-1716) a German philosopher, theologian and mathematician postulated that: God as good cannot will to bring to being a universe less beneficent than any other possible universe. Smith (2004:517) pointed out two errors in Leibniz’s postulation. First, it assumes, without warrant, that the greatest natural good of the creation is God’s highest end in creating. The error is that it limits the power of God. This optimistic view has been abandoned by philosophers for far more sceptical views, either that evil is itself good, or that evil comes from something within God that He is unable to overcome. None of these theodicies is satisfactory (Smith, 2004:517). The Bible makes no attempt to justify God. It is clear that God is absolutely sovereign, and that he has willed the existence of both good and evil, and that all of this is for His own glory (Smith, 2004:517). The Urhobo Christian should understand that the sacrifice of Christ gives the humble believer not solution but a satisfying reply just like Yahweh replied prophet Habakkuk. There must have been some reason for allowing evil, but this does not imply a defect in God or in His benevolence (Dabney,1927). The sending of His son Jesus Christ to the world to save sinners is a true proof of God’s will to deliver man from evil both in the present and eschatological era of the *parousia* (second coming events).
- iv. Accepting the will of God in all things. The will of God is sometimes contradictory to the ways of men. This is where the question of theodicy comes in again. God is absolutely sovereign and if so Christians must learn to follow the will of God in all things. An attempt to question God and get an absolute answer is futile fight. God is not responsible to any man. God loves man but man cannot determine what should do or not do in His own wisdom. It was the will of God for Christ Jesus who knew no sin to die like a criminal. To man, that is crazy but to God it was a perfect plan to save a sinful mankind. It is on this understanding that the Urhobo Christians should relate with God and learn to accept the will of God in all things.



- v. Repentance from Evil is paramount in man's relationship with God (vertical relationship). Both the Babylonians and Israelites were sinners. The paradox of Israel and Babylon could correspond to the proverbial saying in Urhoboland of the dark kettle accusing the dark cooking pot of being dark. Although God used a more wicked Babylonians to chastise (*yasar*) Israel, it was not meant for evil, rather, it was meant as instrument of repentance (*shuwv*). This is why God could allow His beloved son to die a humiliating death for the sins of the world. Christians should live their lives in newness of life in such a way that their moral values can influence the society positively. Rather than questioning God's justice, the Christian should always see God as one who has the absolute power and wisdom to forgive man and at the same chastise man for sinning. He dealt with Israel for adultery but forgave them at last. He replicated this in the New Testament when Christ in His infinite wisdom came to redeem man from sin. One lesson every Christian in Urhoboland must learn from Habakkuk's experience is to learn not to be concerned about "how" God wants to bring the sinner to his senses but the "purpose" for using such measure. Although, the righteous suffers, especially persecution, they are meant to increase the faith of the Christian.

#### 10. Conclusion

From this research, it could be seen that Habakkuk being a man was not pleased that God delayed in carrying out justice on the evil people. Also, he doubted the authenticity of God's personality of righteousness and Justice when God decided to use a more evil inclined nation vis-à-vis, the Chaldeans to punish a lesser evil inclined nation Israel (His chosen people). Moreover, the prophet misunderstood God's ways of doing things. But at last he understood God and praised Him for who He is.

In the light of the above it is plausible to suggest here that every man should be faithful, patient and God fearing in every situation. We must accept as human beings that God is always just, irrespective of evil happenings or occurrences in the world. Indeed, the Just shall live by faith. One lesson man must learn from Habakkuk's experience is the acknowledgement of our intellectual and spiritual limitations before God. By this understand, no man can claim that he can totally understand and predict God.

## References

- Bruce, F. F. (1993). Habakkuk. *The Minor Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books 2, 834.
- Dabney, R. L. (1927). Theology. *Presbyterian Committee of Publication*. Richmond: Va, cited in page 518 in Smith M. H. (2004). Theodicy. In: Harrison, E. F., Bromiley, G. W. and Henry, C. F. (Eds.) *Wycliffe Dictionary of Theology*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers.
- De Vries, S.J (1971). The Book of Habakkuk. *The Interpreter's One –Volume Commentary on The Bible*. Nashville: Abingdom Press.
- Dembele, Y. (2006). Habakkuk. In: Adeyemo, T., Andria, S. Coucibaly, I. Habtu, T. and Ngewa, S. (Eds.) *Africa Bible Commentary*. Nairobi: Word Alive Publishers, 1063-1066.
- Drane, J. W. (1986). Understanding the Bible. *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible*. 98.
- Eriwo, S. U. (1973). The Concept of God among the Urhobo of the Urhobo of the Niger Delta. *Ikenga*, (2), 83-89.
- Eriwo, S. U. (1991). *Traditional Religion and Christianity in Nigeria: The Urhobo People*. Ekpoma: Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Bendel State University.
- Evans, C. S. (2002). *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion*. Downer Groves: InterVarsity Press.
- Gove, P. B. ed. (1965). *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield: G. Sc. Merriam Company, 171.
- Harrison, R. K. and Williams, W. C. (1995). Habakkuk. In: Barker, K. L.; Burdick, D. W.; Stek, J.H.; Wessel, W.W. and Youngblood, R. (Eds.), *The NIV Study Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1379-1385.
- Kitchen, K. (1986). Nations and People of the Bible-Habakkuk. *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Tring: Lion Publishing Plc, 201.
- Marckwaldt, A.H.; Cassidy, G.F.; Hayakawa, S.I. et al, eds. (1970). *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1302.
- Mbiti, J. S. (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann, 213.
- McCain, D. (2010). *Notes on Old Testament Introduction*. Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks, 339-340.
- Microsoft® Encarta® 2008. © 1993-2007 Microsoft Corporation.
- Motyer, A. (1973). The Prophets. *The Lion Handbook to the Bible*. Tring: Lion Publishing, 452.
- Moultn, W. J. (1909). Habakkuk. *Dictionary of the Bible*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 322-323.
- Packer, J. I. (1988). Theodicy. *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downer Grove: Inner-Varsity Press, 679.
- Platinga, A. (1974). *God, Freedom and Evil*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Smith, M. H. (2004). Theodicy. In: In: Harrison, E. F., Bromiley, G. W. and Henry, C. F. (Eds.), *Wycliffe Dictionary of Theology*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 517-518.
- Strong, J. (2001). *The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1389.
- Tullock, J. H. (1991). Habakkuk. *Holman Bible Dictionary*. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 590.
- Ubrurhe, J. O. and Eghwubare, E. F. (2000). The Concept of Evil in Nigerian Indigeneous Religion. In: Uweru, B. C. and Ubrurhe, J. O. (Eds.) *Nigerian Peoples and Culture Abraka*; Dept. of GST, Delta State University 3:46-59.
- Ukpong, J. S. (2006). *African Biblical Interpretation: A Reader* (Unpublished). Uyo: University of Uyo, 59.