



TAKE-HOME LESSONS

1. The nation that embraces immorality instead of godliness and who trusts man more than God will devolve into anarchy and then removal!
2. While God's program focuses on the worldwide scope, He is also concerned about the individual!
3. God's Word must be the priority. Those who misplace this will fail!

When you are bewildered by the “unfairness” in the world, remember that ultimately the Bible’s message concerns the entire world, the individual nations, the allowances for sin. The problem with seeking “fairness” is that we look exclusively at our personal issues, but the Bible places every issue within the world’s parameters. The Bible has a profound impact on civilization’s history. History enables us to understand what is happening today in the context of the Divine program. Habakkuk treats the problem of history by focusing attention on how man fails to function within God’s parameters. Consequently he looks only at personal issues and not regional, national, or universal. The simple answer to the issue of “fairness” is the problem of history—understand this and you understand “WHY.”

Our Focus Next Class: “Struggling with the JUSTICE of the Almighty God.” How can righteousness approve evil?



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LESSON 2: AN ANCIENT BOOK WITH A CURRENT QUERY

A Study of Habakkuk

WHEN GOD SEEMS SILENT

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The cure for doubting is knowledge. Once knowledge is obtained, doubt is dispelled. Such is the situation with Habakkuk. The Prophet confessed his doubts about the nature of God. His journey from perplexing doubt to enthusiastic understanding is the basis for a very rewarding study.

Habakkuk is the most obscure prophet on the Old Testament. Historians tell us nothing about Habakkuk. Scripture’s sole reference is 1:1. He “is one of the prophets often lost in the archives of the Old Testament.”

This is a valuable resource for saints. “There is no Old Testament book that is able to do more for the burdened souls of men or to raise them to higher levels of hope and confidence than the brief prophecy of

Habakkuk.”

The book’s introductory matters

The PROPHET introduced

His name is from a verb meaning “to embrace.” Habakkuk is “embracing” two groups: The JEWS who struggled with the question of God’s goodness and the PROPHET who struggled with God’s justice. From 3:19 it is suggested that Habakkuk was a Levite and even the choirmaster in the Temple. His is a “prophet” (1:1; 3:1). This indicates that he was a well-known and prominent citizen of Jerusalem. Above all, Habakkuk was a man of great faith.

The PROPHECY introduced

This book has a contemporary message that is relevant and urgently needed in our present culture. Some unique aspects of this prophecy:

- There is little Messianic messaging
- He is speaking TO God instead of FOR God.
- “He is far more a moral seer and a deep theologian than a herald of the future.”
- This prophecy offers comfort to all struggling with injustices in life.

The TIMES of the prophecy discussed

The culture was chaotic and wicked. Religion had become a pretense and was modified to accommodate any personal whim. Spiritual anarchy reigned. Insensitivity controlled behavior. All was hopelessly out of control.

Habakkuk’s times were so similar to our times. Injustice, immorality, violence, crime and a host of other violent fruits plagued the lives of innocent, God-fearing people. The nation was collapsing from within and a harsh enemy was advancing from without (1:2, 4-6). Gross evil had become “respectable”! (2:4,5,15,16).

The STRUGGLE of Habakkuk discussed

Habakkuk did not lack faith—his faith was strong. His problem was that his faith failed to explain his culture and society. He looked around

and asked why God did not do something. Why did not God do something? How can God continue to tolerate the presence of evil and permit it to become worse?

Habakkuk struggled with three specific questions about God:

- Was God indifferent? (1:2)
- Was God inactive? (1:3-4)
- Was God inconsistent? (1:12-17)

The book’s focus

Significant lessons emerge that have a bearing on Christians today.

- Jehovah is the absolute Sovereign (2:20).
- Faithfulness to Jehovah assures safety (2:4b)
- Divine discipline is guaranteed—judgment IS coming! (3:3-15).
- Tranquility can exist in the midst of distress.
- Habakkuk struggled with the question of “How long?” rather than “Why?”

Habakkuk was a prophet who wrote an ancient book with a current query. Who has never asked God, “How much longer will You wait?” “Why don’t You hear my prayers?” This prophet struggled with serious questions and arrived at an amazing conclusion. Even though all of life falls apart, his heart is fixed. He rests in a trusting hope. He will patiently wait for the Lord to perform His marvelous work!

You need the trusting faith of Habakkuk. Our study and application of this Book of prophecy will help you develop a strong faith!

There is no Old Testament book that is able to do more for the burdened souls of men or to raise them to higher levels of hope and confidence than the brief prophecy of Habakkuk...Search the Bible through and you will find nothing so matchless in concentrated power as these three chapters...here was a man with a soul sensitive to evil, yet firm in his faith in an omnipotent God. And this faith he has uttered with a force, an eloquence, a literary power which has caused his words to become a permanent part of the literature of the soul” (Raymond Caulkins, *The Modern Message of the Minor Prophets*, 92ff).