

as he concludes his conversation with God.

His boldness was similar to Job's (42:1-6) and the Psalmist (Psalm 73:21-28).


Regardless of the chaos and crisis in life, Habakkuk was going to trust God. Even though all appeared to be lost, Habakkuk confidently trusted that God would triumph. We need to share his boldness (Romans 8:31-39).

Concluding Thoughts

Habakkuk arises from obscurity to prominence. Here is a man with whom all can identify. His struggles with God's justice are common to all who seek righteousness. Let us use Habakkuk as a pattern for our lives. May we face life's struggles with his bold confidence knowing that the future holds blessings for all who fear and obey God!

Let all seek first to emulate Habakkuk by following his ability "to see" God's will (Psalm 119:18).

Are you of this disposition? (Psalm 119:33, 34)



TAKE-HOME LESSONS

1. Let us "see" God's Truth and boldly teach it!
2. Let us become prominent in our service to God through the Church!
3. Let us cling to a faith that is confident and trusting God!
4. Let us realize we are "more than conquerors"!

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LESSON 3 : STRUGGLING WITH GOD'S JUSTICE

A Study of Habakkuk

WHEN GOD SEEMS SILENT

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The path from obscurity to prominence is one seldom trod. Most remain unseen and unobserved. Habakkuk is a prophet who refuses to remain obscure in our Bibles. He is bold and demands our attention. Most are unaware of him but they are delighted once they have discovered him. In all accounts he is just like us except he may be more honest than most!

We actually know very little about Habakkuk. His name is surrounded with controversy. The root word could come from the Akkadian name for a plant (Hambakuku) or from a Hebrew term meaning "embrace." The name is found only in this book. He is identified with respect as "the prophet." He may have been among the unnamed prophets who announced Jerusalem's destruction (2 Kings 21:10-16; 2 Chronicles 33:10). His contemporaries include Zephaniah and Jeremiah.

Even though little is known about Habakkuk, human curiosity has tried to fill-in the blanks. Many legends abound about this man. Rabbinical tradition claims that Habakkuk was a disciple of Nahum. Others identify him as the "watchman" sent to look toward Babylon (2:1). Some have tried to make him

the son of the Shunamite woman because she “embraced” her son (2 Kings 4:16). The Apocrypha alludes to Habakkuk in the legend of “Bel and the dragon.”

There is reason to believe that Habakkuk was a Levite and involved in the Temple activities. Habakkuk 3:19 indicates that he was officially qualified to take part in directing the Temple’s music.

Here is a great prophet whose obscurity is about to vanish. You may have never known this man and his message. After this study you will view Habakkuk entirely different than before.

“Search the Bible through and you will find nothing so matchless in concentrated power as these three chapters of the Book of Habakkuk...here is a man with a soul sensitive to evil, yet firm in his faith in an omnipotent God.”

Habakkuk’s Character

A man with a BURDEN (1:1)

“Burden” refers to the prophetic message. When the message announced doom, it was associated with the burden of the prophet declaring it (Nahum 1:1). Habakkuk’s “burden” was made greater because it applied to Judah and Babylon.

The term established the inspiration of Habakkuk. God had given him this oracle to announce. Instead of God’s Word bringing joy and gladness, it brought a burden! What a tragic thought! He was given a message from God that burdened his heart.

- *This reveals his sensitivity* because he felt Judah’s sin and Babylon’s evil.
- *This reveals his devotion*, he was going to present the Oracle even if it was a grievous task.
- *This reveals his humility* because God had opened his eyes “to see” this oracle.

Are we as concerned as Habakkuk? We also have a “burden” for the culture and citizens in our nation who are damned because of sin (Acts 26:18). Are we as faithful as Habakkuk in discharging our duty?

A man with QUESTIONS (1:2,13)

Habakkuk echoes the perplexities of many who do not understand the presence of evil and the justice of God (Psalm 44:24; 74:10; 79:5; 80:4; 85:5; 89:46; Lamentations 5:20). His questions are actually complaints that God is not doing “right.” “How can a just God allow such reprehensible injustice?” All he could see was wickedness, sin, turmoil, tragedy and terror!

Habakkuk’s questions mirror our own struggles as we try to understand God’s ways.

Sin is out of control; society is disintegrating; people are not listening to God; the law is ineffective; and, it seems that God is not listening to those who seek His help with these matters.

A man with FRUSTRATIONS (1:12)

Questions that have no answers fuel frustrations—especially regarding spiritual concerns of what is right and what is wrong. Frustration often conquers our patience and we demand a “right now” answer.

Habakkuk was totally frustrated with everyday living.

- Those who tried to do right were swept away by social, commercial, political, and religious evil (1:4).
- Earnest prayers but Habakkuk felt that God did not hear prayers (1:2).
- Everything was about to be taken by a godless nation; and God arranged the loss! (1:12).

Habakkuk’s frustration resulted from his firm faith in an omnipotent God. But his faith did not work with the undeniable reality that “God didn’t work!” His heart told him one thing but his eyes told him another thing. And both could not be correct!

A man with PATIENCE (2:1)

Here is possibly the most significant fact about Habakkuk—even though his questions were unanswered and he was thoroughly frustrated, he knew God had a reason and he was going to wait for that answer!

This same patience is urged upon all saints (Psalm 85:8; 5:3). “Bind unbelief is sure to err and scan His work in van; God is His own interpreter and He will make it plain” (William Cowper).

A man with FAITH (3:1-7)

This is the reason he could be patient and he could expect God to explain matters. Habakkuk’s faith is the key trait of his character and his prophecy. Habakkuk clung to a faith that was confident and absolute.

Habakkuk’s faith is needed by all saints. Even though burdened with a tragic message, even though his questions led only to frustration, he could be confident and patient because he clung to a sure and strong faith.

His faith led him to take the problem to God. He did not turn to worldly wisdom and vain philosophy. He simply laid the matter before God, knowing that an answer would ultimately come.

A man with a BOLD FUTURE (3:17-19)

His book begins with perplexity but ends with triumphant acclaim. The closing verses have been called “From tragedy to triumph,” “From worry to worship,” “From fear to faith.” All of these phrases express the bold faith of Habakkuk