

Historians have dubbed Attila, leader of the Huns who overran Europe in the Fifth Century, the “scourge of God” (this historic nickname is “*Flagellum Dei*” in Latin). He was seen as God’s instrument for punishing a society gone mad. Why have modern minds forgotten that an Almighty God is still at work in our history? (Isaiah 40:15; Psalm 33:10).


God is working even when evil appears triumphant (Habakkuk 1:5, 6).

Whenever evil seems triumphant we must not despair. Let us hope in our majestic God whose sovereignty will judge all (Psalm 2:4).

Habakkuk’s first question has been answered. God will not tolerate evil.

God knows what He is doing. He is not indifferent. He is using whatever instruments He can to achieve His purposes, and His purposes will be accomplished (Deuteronomy 28:49).

Thus, Habakkuk should not lose heart, never compromise, and remain confident in trusting God! We need to do exactly as Habakkuk did!



TAKE-HOME LESSONS

1. The “problem of history” principle offers great comfort to Christians.
2. When anarchy rules, destruction is assured (personal & national).
3. When knowledge of God is absent, violence is visible (Hosea 4:1-3).
4. God will not be mocked; His justice will not be evaded (Galatians 6:7).

Our Next Lesson: “The God who cannot ignore injustice”

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LESSON 6 : THE PERVERTED JUSTICE OF IMMORALITY!

A Study of Habakkuk

WHEN GOD SEEMS SILENT

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Life is filled with injustice (Job 14:1). When injustice arises, we blame God. This is where Habakkuk was in 1:7-11. He expected God to cure the injustice in Judah (1:2-4). God would address the injustice but His response was far from what Habakkuk expected! God’s solution to the perverted justice in Judah was the strengthening of the Babylonian nation.

Judah had broken treaties with Babylon in favor of gaining protection from Assyria/Egypt. With the defeat of Assyria/Egypt at Carchemish, Judah fell to Babylonian domination. In response to Habakkuk’s first question, God replied that He was preparing the Chaldeans (who ruled the Babylonian Empire) to punish Judah’s injustice.

The “problem of history”—Deuteronomy 28:49 - God warned Israel about this and now it was too late to avoid it. Judah turned from God (Jeremiah 23:16, 21, 26-29, 36). She despised God’s Word, refused God’s prophets, and now she had to pay the penalty. Judgement was certain. This nation reveals the corrupt standard that governs all who have rejected God’s righteousness.

Consider the facts that surround this nation that was being used by God.

Its basis of AUTHORITY - “themselves” (1:7)

This nation was self-directed. “Their character was rooted in self-sufficiency that acknowledged no superior authority and no dependency, which was tantamount to self-deification.”

They held a “dignity” (NASB, “authority” verse 7). These thought they were independent of God. They did not need God to be important or powerful! (Daniel 4:30).

Their “justice” originated with themselves - they were the law. They governed by a self-determined law that rejected God (Daniel 11:36; 2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Within this anarchy was the germ for the future ruin of Babylon. We need to beware lest we share this guilt and find the wrath and destruction of God upon us! (1 Chronicles 29:11, 12; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Isaiah 33:22, 13:11; Proverbs 8:13).

Its STRENGTH - mortal power (1:8, 11b).

Babylon’s strength was fierce (Jeremiah 4:29; 6:23; 8:16; 50:37; 51:21; Ezekiel 23:23, 24; 26:7-10; Isaiah 14:13-14).

Those who share this attitude presume they have no use for God. Some view dependence upon God as a “weakness”! These share this blasphemous trait of Babylon.

Only the ignorant believes he possesses a strength that is greater than the LORD God (Job 4:19; 35:2; Psalm 144:4; Jeremiah 17:5). “The arm of flesh will fail you, you dare not trust your own!”

When people trust in their own strength, disaster soon strikes. Violence is visible and leads to anarchy and chaos. There will be no stability because God’s Laws have been banned!

Modern America sits uncomfortably in a similar posture. National leaders decry violence yet pursue policies of gross violence worshipping at the altar of “Self.” Babylon warns us about the danger of rejecting God for Self (Habakkuk 1:10; Hosea 4:1-6). Violence rapidly increases for there will be no stopping without authority!

Its FRUITS - “violence” (1:9)

When a nation lives by its ungodly laws, despises God, and rejects Heaven’s standards *it invites and embraces brutal violence* (2 Kings 21:9-16; Hosea 4:1-3). The explanation for the presence of a violent culture is: “There is no knowledge of God in the land.”

Nations reap the harvest their government sows - Judah had acted violently and now she would reap violence (Hosea 4:1-3, 6). The prophet Ezekiel spoke

of this perverted justice in the devolving nation (Ezekiel 34:4).

It’s END - “guilty” (1:11)

The nation was condemned—even with her arrogance, strength, might, wealth, and worldly prestige, no one could defend her (Isaiah 14:5, 6, 15). The Chaldeans would be used by God for punishing Judah but ultimately the evil Babylonians would perish—the Babylonian Empire lasted only 89 years.

There is a great historical irony—Babylon failed to realize she was being used by God and thus attributed success to herself. Suddenly her power was inadequate! (Daniel 5:27)

This point should not be lost on modern minds. No cruelty, crime, or injustice ever escapes God. He is aware of all injustices. He may utilize evil men to achieve eternal purposes, *but* they will be held accountable. Great world powers have been raised up and reigned worldwide, but they eventually became drunk with success and forgot God and then found themselves destroyed and dissolved!

“Nations and people who have founded a culture that is established on human reason and modified by human wants and desires, without taking into account the higher laws of God, have always sooner or later fallen under the weight of their own devising...The earth is a vast burial ground where nations that were born and grew mightily in power lie buried.”

The destiny of any godless nation will be as Babylon—it will be “like the wind and pass on.” That nation will have no permanence. When a nation forsakes the Rule of Law that has established righteousness, it will quickly devolve and ultimately disappear! This is the “problem of history” (Deuteronomy 4).

A nation is only as “great” as its devotion to the Almighty God (4:7).

- National greatness is guarded by “statutes and judgments” of righteousness (4:8).
- National greatness is dependent upon education in righteousness (4:9-10).
- When the nation “forgets” God, its national greatness devolves and the nation eventually disappears (4:23).
- When a nation exists “a long time” it forgets God’s commands, acts corruptly, and does evil (4:25).
- The great nation that provokes God, will not continue long, and will quickly perish (4:25-26).

National sins bring ruin and divine wrath (Numbers 35:34; Proverbs 14:34). There is a moral imperative that nations must follow if they are to remain. If the nation perverts the righteous decrees of the Almighty God, it cannot succeed.