

When God Seems Silent: A Study of Habakkuk
Lesson Seven: The God Who Cannot Ignore Injustice (1:12-13a)
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Introduction:

- I. What do you do when everything appears hopeless? We often use an expression to describe our response – “Let’s drop back ten and punt!” It refers to a football team whose efforts have not been effective – it is time to start over again. Any further effort at that point appears useless – maybe a beginning point elsewhere on the playing field will offer a better opportunity for success.
1. This phrase described Habakkuk’s maneuver in the text. God has answered the prophet’s earlier questions but God’s answers created more problems for Habakkuk.
 2. Habakkuk had begun by asking God to clarify the apparent inactivity and unconcern of heaven to Judah’s sin. Now he is perplexed about God’s consistency – how could He use such an evil nation?
 3. The text begins Habakkuk’s struggle to resolve the apparent inconsistency. To Habakkuk, God’s plan seemed to compound Judah’s problems, violate Jehovah’s holiness, and encourage the savagery of a brutish nation. Everything he heard about the “work” of God (1:5) only confused him more. It was time to “drop back 10 and punt!” He needed to start all over again.
- II. Habakkuk’s starting point was a renewed look at the character of Jehovah God. If he could clarify God’s character, then he would be able to place all events in perspective.
1. We are thus introduced to a fundamental lesson about God’s character. A “digest” of the Lord God is presented.
 2. In stopping to contemplate Jehovah’s character, Habakkuk reaffirms vital factors of faith. Even though he had trouble accepting that the Chaldean conquest was God’s plan, Habakkuk conceded the Sovereign design (1:12b).
 3. Habakkuk gives us a good lesson – when beset with hard trials, it is common to focus wholly upon the problem and forget God. When this happens, we find faith frustrated and are unable to “walk by faith.” What we need is a calm contemplation of Jehovah God and a re-affirmation of his Sovereignty.
 4. As the perplexed prophet started over trying to understand life’s inequities, he found hope by recalling who God was. Notice how traits of Almighty God help settle a frustrated faith.

Body:

- I. Jehovah God is **ETERNAL** (1:12).
- A. This was the first thing Habakkuk recalled and it is significant – it reminds him that God’s eternity prevents Him from changing.
1. Thus, the way God has behaved in the past mandates how He will behave in the present.
 2. This eternity is expressed in the divine “I Am” (Exodus 3:14). God is always current in time; His values never change; His standard is constant.
 3. Whatever changes in life, one thing always will be the same – God! (Hebrews 13:8; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15-16; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 46:4, 9, 11; Daniel 7:9 – “ancient of days”).
- B. There can be no greater comfort that this fact – God is outside the ever-changing history. God has created history; He reigns over history (Deuteronomy 33:27; Malachi 3:6). His promises and purposes are as eternal as His being. What He has promised is eternal (Hebrews 6:17; Job 23:13).
1. Take comfort – whatever changes come or perils endanger, there is always one constant – God!

2. Although the world's history changes – God will not! 🕊️ Although sin/evil may advance – God will not be moved! His eternity brings stability!
3. When life's problems leave you without explanation, even then 🕊️ God has not moved! (Job 23:8-27, see verses 9-11, 17).

II. 🕊️ Jehovah God is **SELF-EXISTENT** (1:12).

A. Habakkuk addresses God as 🕊️ "O Lord."

1. This is the sacred title "Jehovah."
2. This title refers to the fact that God depends upon no one for existence. He is totally independent of and above all earthly forces.
3. Once again Habakkuk reminds himself that God is absolutely constant – always the same in work and word.

B. In realizing this Habakkuk strengthened his faith.

1. Since God is Jehovah, He is not bound by earthly forces and governments—He is above all!
2. This magnifies His ability to correct all earthly problems! This brings comfort (Proverbs 18:10).
3. Knowing that God was not dependent upon earthly factors eventually enabled Habakkuk to overcome (Habakkuk 3:18).

III. 🕊️ Jehovah God is **ALMIGHTY** (1:12).

A. The second title is 🕊️ ELOHIM and refers to God as the chief, supreme God of all power.

1. This ELOHIM is so powerful that HE created all with a word (Hebrews 11:3). This divine power is amazing (Ephesians 3:20; Revelation 19:1,9).
2. This awesome power gave Habakkuk's frustrated faith hope. He realized that only God could have "appointed" the Chaldeans and hence God was still in control. With God in control "fear" should vanish (Jeremiah 46:28).

B. The power of ELOHIM should bring comfort to Christians today.

1. Whatever happens it cannot defy God's power!
2. Whatever evil arises is under the ultimate control of a benevolent God. "All the most furious fiends in the universe are under His direction... Whatever mischief men design to inflict upon His people, He purposes to bring good out of it and His counsel shall stand" (*Pulpit Commentary*, Vol 14, 198-20).
3. Let us take refuge in the security of this Almighty God (2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 66:7). Those who do so will be able to overcome the crises attacking our faith.

IV. 🕊️ Jehovah God is the **HOLY ONE** (1:12, 13a).

A. The third title assured Habakkuk that 🕊️ righteousness would triumph over evil.

1. God's power is controlled by holiness (Psalm 115:3; 135:6).
2. God cannot look with approval on sin; He cannot behold evil; His eyes are too pure (Isaiah 1:4; 6:3; Psalm 5:4-6).

B. Habakkuk's perplexity can be resolved by asking Abraham's question (Genesis 18:25).

1. This fact kept Habakkuk from utter despair. He knew that God's holiness would not allow Him to sanction evil. He knew that holiness would ultimately vindicate goodness.

2. God is a "holy" God and this guarantees Christians that divine justice will triumph! Scripture validates this fact – justice is always rendered! "Evil may array itself in wit and grandeur, or in villainy and success, but it is always the abominable thing which the Lord hates. Its perpetrators are hated, and will be punished by Him" (Psalm 5:4). (PHC, Vol 20, 493).
3. The challenge to Christians is plain (Leviticus 19:2). We must strive to be holy so judgement does not come upon us!

V. 🕊️ Jehovah God is the **ROCK** (1:12).

A. This final title fittingly 🕊️ summarizes all previous points.

1. The "Rock" is a fitting metaphor for God – it demonstrates His sure stability, a safe resting place, and constant support (Deuteronomy 32:4).
2. This term reflects Habakkuk's conviction that God is perfect – His ways are constant, unchanging, and always reliable. His promises will not change. "As unchanging and as enduring as the rocks, so was the Lord on whom the prophet cast all his cares (Kaiser, 157).

B. God remains a "Rock" for Christians today.

1. His promises are as firm today as in Habakkuk's time.
2. He has "delivered" and will continue to deliver (2 Corinthians 1:10).
3. Whatever changes, God the Rock will never change!
4. Let us take refuge in this Rock! (2 Samuel 22:2-3, 47-51; Psalm 62:6-7). See hymn "*The Rock That Is Higher Than I.*"

Conclusion:

I. Having reminded himself of God's character, Habakkuk confidently says 🕊️ – "We will not die!" (Hosea 11:9).

1. Since Jehovah is God of the Covenant and is independent, absolute, eternal, holy and righteous, He will protect us!
2. His covenant had promised protection and God has no other plans but to keep that covenant. It is inevitable that injustice in Judah and Chaldea would be punished!

II. Like Habakkuk, our faith is founded upon 🕊️ a sure basis. However, at times it, too, cracks and needs shoring up. This confidence of Habakkuk is available to Christians today. We, too, share in a hope that we will not perish. What assures this hope:

1. The fact that Jehovah is Lord God!
2. The fact that He is the Holy One who cannot allow the wicked to go unpunished.
3. Let us take courage with Habakkuk – God is not removed in some far-off place; He is a covenant-keeping God; He has given His Word and will never break it!

III. 🕊️ When our faith is frustrated...

1. Let us never doubt God – He is not being defeated.
2. Let us draw hope from God's holiness.
3. Let us regroup our faith by focusing upon the Names and Character of our great God!

🕊️ Next Lesson: "Honest struggles for honest hearts"