


prophecy began with doubt and distress but has now proceeded to an unwavering trust in God. It thus closes with notes of triumphant confidence and hope!

### Habakkuk's prophecy is now up-dated.

History has verified the prophet's conclusion! We are thus in a wonderful position to see how everything God revealed was literally fulfilled. The Chaldeans were raised up; they did destroy the Israelites; Israel was carried into exile. But God's judgement fell upon Babylon and the remnant was brought back.

But *our hope rests on historical facts beyond the Exile's restoration*. We can look at the facts of salvation that God has brought through Christ. We can marvel at God's workings to redeem fallen man. We can trust in the Resurrection, the establishment of the Church, the triumph of Christianity over previous persecution and errors. History wonderfully illustrates the principle which buoyed Habakkuk's faith!



### TAKE-HOME LESSONS

In which chapter are you living?

1. Are you **living in worry** about life's injustices, wondering if God is going to do anything?
2. Are you **living waiting** for God to explain life's inequities?
3. Are you **living by faith**, worshipping God's omnipotence and sovereignty?

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## LESSON 13 : The Struggle is Over!

*A Study of Habakkuk*

# WHEN GOD SEEMS SILENT

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### DALRAIDA CHURCH OF CHRIST

One of the greatest blessings is "rest." This is awaiting those who faithfully follow God's will (Revelation 14:13b). Modern man seeks this rest but it is a search in vain because he fails to understand what genuine rest truly is.

Very few are able to find the "rest" of 3:17-19. They still attempt to explain life's problems with mortal wisdom.

Habakkuk had begged God to explain life's perplexities (1:2a). He had struggled to understand and God had revealed that understanding to the prophet. "Out of that experience came an expression of faith that rises like a tower in the annuals of time" (Yoder, 155).

The prophet now reclines in a tranquil rest that God's will is going to be as victorious in the future as it has been in the past. "The coming of God to Habakkuk confirms his belief that the God of Exodus is the living God and gives him strength to remain faithful in spite of anything that may come." (Gowan, 83).

What led Habakkuk to such tranquility so soon after his expressions of perplexity? Look at his knowledge of three facts that provided this wonderful “rest” to him.

### **Material objects do not offer true rest (3:17; 2:5, 6, 9, 13)**

Habakkuk realizes that genuine rest is not in material possessions. “Utter desolation” would come and all material goods would be taken. When Babylon invaded Judah all would be destroyed and life would be left bare (Deuteronomy 20:19; Isaiah 9:10; Jeremiah 6:6 for prophecies of this). Habakkuk understands things would become even worse before they improved.

Even though total ruin was coming, Habakkuk still found joy. How? Because there are two choices one can make in life (2:4, 5) and Habakkuk had chosen wisely!

- Those who are proud of worldly possessions and are joyful only if material goods are secure (Hosea 2:11, 12). The ruin of the material brings an end to their joy! (Revelation 18:7-19).
- Those whose practice a deep devotion to God are secure when the material things vanish. These have an abiding possession that cannot be removed and are able to triumph even in the darkest circumstances (Saints, Hebrews 11:13-16; David, Psalm 42:7-9; Asaph, Psalm 73:25; Paul and Silas, Acts 16:25). The gauge of your devotion to God is your DAILY reading of God’s Word! IF you love God, you want to hear Him speak to you!

Habakkuk said, “Even though I starve to death, I will trust in God!” This confident trust provides great happiness! Let us enjoy it in our lives!

Beware lest your happiness is based upon material things (relationships; finances; health) rather than upon devotion to God and you discover just how empty your joy is! Many pursue the promise of happiness, offered by the world, only to find they are empty!

### **Happiness can exist regardless of your circumstances in life (3:18)**

Habakkuk’s circumstances were not good and the prospect of their improving was a foolish wish. Injustice would continue; the economy would worsen; the national conscience would fail; the government’s corruption would deepen. Everyday living would become a “chore.” There was nothing positive about life. Yet, the prophet found peace. Was he deluded? Did he ignore reality? How could it be?

Habakkuk’s happiness was founded upon God’s power NOT life’s circumstances. Life’s circumstances may be terrible yet we can find joy (Philippians 1:12).

How can we develop this inner happiness?

- It begins with a knowledge of God that instills a trusting confidence in His power (Philippians 1:16; 4:11).
- Knowledge of God brings “peace” to the saint’s heart (John 14:27; 15:11). Many are frustrated because they fail to depend on God.
- One’s peace naturally leads to a trustful focus. Many only focus on their problems instead of looking for the possibilities that God can do (3:18).
- One’s refocus assures inner happiness. We may not rejoice in our circumstances in life, but we can rejoice in who the Lord is; what He has or will do for us! (Isaiah 12:2; Psalm 5:12b).

Earthly life is filled with tribulation and discouragement. Only as we look above earthly trials and hope in God’s power, are we able to find genuine happiness! (Isaiah 54:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Psalm 13:6; 17:14, 15; 31:19).

### **Faith in God provides the only security (3:19)**

Habakkuk’s last words identify him as a mighty man of faith. *His trust in God will remain regardless of circumstances* (like Job 13:15 or the Hebrew children, Daniel 3:18). Habakkuk could face whatever comes in life. “In spite of everything he could rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation. Such a God, he knew, would not forget him, and such a God would certainly bring him through” (Lloyd-Jones, 75).

### **We uncover two questions impacting modern believers:**

How are we to live “by faith”? We are to go on doing the right things in life no matter what happens. If so doing brings persecution or isolation, we must do the right thing because that is what God desires! We are to obey God with a willing heart (Psalm 103:21). We are not to obey as a bitter duty, gritting our teeth with grudging reluctance. No! We serve with joy because we know who the God we serve is and how futile it is to serve the world!

How are we to describe the security that God provides? Two phrases are used. “*Hind’s feet*” (Psalm 18:33). The image tells us that regardless of how difficult life gets, we will not stumble if our trust is kept focused on God (Jeremiah 17:5-8). This metaphor also symbolizes fresh energy and is parallel with rising up with eagle’s wings (Isaiah 40:29-31). “*High Places*” (Deuteronomy 32:13). This metaphor presents the idea of security - high above all danger and victory - in a position of authority (Micah 1:3). The figure denotes the ultimate triumph of God’s people over all oppression.

All possessing this “faith” in God will be blessed with an enduring security! (Nehemiah 8:10b; Psalm 27:1).

### **Conclusion:**

Genuine rest is found when we have a trusting faith in Jehovah God. This