



**The Oaks  
Baptist Church  
Grand Prairie, Texas**



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**Conviction to  
Live by Faith  
A Study in Habakkuk**

Date	Lesson	Text
11/02	Introduction	
11/09	Faith in a Just God	1:1-17
11/16	Faith thru Listening	2:1-20
11/23	Living in Faith	3:1-19
11/30	Giving Thanks	
12/07	<b>Review &amp; Summary</b>	

**Food for Thought**

**Season of Blessings**

*“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow”*

**James 1:17 (NIV)**

*(shared by a Class Member)*

## REVIEW AND SUMMARY HABAKKUK

As we conclude, I am reminded of the words of the writer to the Hebrews in Hebrews 11:13-16 and Hebrews 11:32-40, especially verse 39.

39 And these all were commended for their faith, yet they did not receive what was promised. (Hebrews 11:39).

As we now look back on the Book of Habakkuk, how do we explain the prophet’s change of heart? What happened to Habakkuk between chapter 1 and chapter 3? We must first point out that **this change was not instant, but the result of a process, a somewhat painful process.** Habakkuk did not understand what God was doing. He was angry with God for apparently failing to deal with the sins of His people. He could not understand how God could use the Chaldeans to judge the people of Judah. Through a sequence of events, God changed the heart of Habakkuk.

God changed Habakkuk’s perspective. Habakkuk had been looking at his circumstances and even His God through the eyes of man. The prophet rightly abhorred the wickedness and injustice that was rampant in Judah, but he wrongly accused God of “sleeping at the wheel,” of failing to act justly and in a timely way. **The change came when he viewed himself and his circumstances from a divine perspective.** Did Habakkuk think that God was doing nothing about Judah’s sin? He was wrong! God was already at work, raising up the Babylonians as His chastening rod. They would bring swift and strong justice by punishing the people of Judah.

When God revealed what He was about to do, Habakkuk protested that the Chaldeans were not the ones to be bringing judgment upon the people of God. Habakkuk felt that the people of Judah were more righteous than the Chaldeans. God’s revelation of Himself in chapters 2 and 3 set the record straight, and it set Habakkuk’s thinking straight as well. God did not take any sin lightly. Eventually, He would judge the Babylonians for their sins, just as He was about to judge the people of Judah and Jerusalem for their sins. Habakkuk was wrong to think of the people of Judah as “more righteous” than the Babylonians. If it is true that judgment is proportional to the degree of revelation one has received (and it surely is - See Matthew 12:41-42; Luke 12:47-48; Romans 1-3. This is very clearly emphasized in prophets like Jeremiah, who finds Judah more guilty than Israel, because the people of Judah looked on as God judged Israel, but they did not learn from her judgment (see Jeremiah 3:6-11; Ezekiel 16:44-52)), then the people of Judah were even more culpable than the Babylonians. They had the Law, and they were the benefactors of God’s faithfulness to His people. They were well aware of the judgment God had brought upon the northern kingdom of Israel, and yet they persisted in the very sins for which the Babylonians would eventually be judged.

It is my opinion that as God pronounced woes upon the wicked in chapter 2, **it dawned upon Habakkuk that he was at least guilty of pride, which God despised.** It would not take much reflection for Habakkuk to realize that all of the sins that merited God’s judgment were true of the people of Judah, as much as it was true for the Babylonians. Judah was no better than the Babylonians. I believe Habakkuk began to think beyond his own times, and as he did so, he remembered that God had promised to use the surrounding nations to discipline His disobedient people. Israel’s history was ample evidence of this, especially in the Book of Judges. Habakkuk began to look upon his times in the light of Israel’s history. As a result, I believe that Habakkuk had second thoughts about the arguments he had raised against God’s use of the Babylonians in 1:12-17. It was not God who was wrong; it was Judah, and even their prophet, Habakkuk. The prophet now views Judah’s future in the light of her past. God had previously judged His people, but He had also preserved a remnant; He had always accomplished their salvation. So He would do once again. And so the prophet humbly pleads, **“In judgment remember mercy”** (3:2).

*(Excerpts from "The Just Shall Live By Faith" by Bob Deffinbaugh)*

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

James Montgomery Boice shares some principles that Martin Lloyd-Jones included in a commentary on the Book of Habakkuk entitled, *From Fear to Faith*. I would like to call attention to some of these principles as I conclude (I will indicate the principles mentioned by Martin Lloyd-Jones with an \*). Consider, then, the lessons that we can learn from the Book of Habakkuk.

1. **History is under God's control.\*** In the light of the tragedy our nation underwent this past week, let modify the words of Martin Lloyd-Jones: **All history is under God's control.** God is sovereign, in complete control of all things, including every event in human history. Nothing happens that catches God by surprise. Nothing happens that is outside His control. I have heard a number of comments this past week by well-meaning Christians that go something like this: "God allowed this to happen, and He is able to use it for good." I do not pretend to know why tragedy has come upon our nation, nor do I know how God will use it. I do know this with great certainty:
2. **History follows a divine plan.\*** History is the outworking of God's eternal plan. History has a goal toward which God is moving it. We know that the goal of God's plan is to fulfill His purposes and His covenant promises. We likewise know that God's plan is all-inclusive, and that it will not be thwarted or altered. God's plan includes calamity and blessing, prosperity and pain. When men sin and when wicked men cause others great pain and agony, they do so out of the corruption and evil of their own hearts. Nevertheless, God has purposed to incorporate the sinful acts of men into His eternal plan, to accomplish His purposes in a way that brings Him glory (see Romans 9:17).
3. **God's divine plan is often not apparent, because we are unable (and sometimes unwilling) to comprehend it even when we are told in advance.** God does have a plan, but it often does not appear so to us. God is at work, though we may not recognize it as such. Who would have thought that the rapid rise to power of the Babylonian empire was God's hand in human history? God's ways are above our ways, and thus we must leave the future in His hands. When the Israelites came to the Red Sea, trapped between the sea and Pharaoh's army, it appeared that God had miscalculated, that God had led them to destruction. The truth was that God was preparing to destroy Pharaoh's army, while at the same time saving His people. God's plan to save His people through a Messiah was not even clear to the prophets who wrote of His coming (1 Peter 1:10-12). Who would ever have believed that God was going to save sinners by sending His Son to this world, to be rejected by sinners, who would crucify Him as a criminal on a hill outside Jerusalem?
4. **God employs the deeds of wicked men to further His purposes.** This does not mean that God approves of sin. God will ultimately punish the wicked for their sin. But what a reassuring truth it is to know that the wicked deeds of men cannot thwart the purposes of God; indeed these very deeds are ordained of God to fulfill His plans and promises. God is not limited to using the obedient deeds of faithful saints. If He were, we would be in a great deal of trouble. Nothing can keep us from the love of God toward His saints – nothing (see Romans 8:31-39).
5. **History follows a divine timetable.\*** God has a timetable for all of His plans, and since God is in no hurry, He often seems to act too late for our satisfaction. God is not in any hurry, though we often are. Divine delays are not an indication of His lack of concern or resolve, but of His mercy (see 2 Peter 3:3-13 - key verse is 9)
6. **God's ways are not our ways.** When we seek to grasp what God is doing from our present circumstances, we will surely be puzzled and perplexed. Abram was told he was to become a father of a great nation, but he and Sarah did not have a son for 25 years. He was told he was going to possess the Land of Canaan, but he had to buy a burial place for his family from the Canaanites. God chose to give us eternal life through the death of His Son. Who can ever anticipate how God will accomplish His purposes?
7. **The righteous must live by faith.** Since we cannot anticipate how God will accomplish His purposes and promises, and since we most often cannot understand what He is doing, we are obligated to live by faith, if we are looking to Him for salvation. Having come to faith in Jesus Christ by faith, apart from human works, Luther not only grasped the glorious truth of Habakkuk 2:4, but he rejoiced in the greatness of the God in whom he came to trust. He was then delivered from his fear of divine judgment and able to pen the words of the great hymn "**A mighty fortress is our God**".

*(Excerpts from "The Just Shall Live By Faith" by Bob Deffinbaugh)*