

A Prayer for Justice

Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14
SS Lesson for 03/08/2020

Devotional Scripture: Psalm 73:1-3, 21-28

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Hab 1:13

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

PRAYERS FOR JUSTICE NOT HEARD (HAB 1:1-2)

Not heard at desired time (1-2)

- Because God's timing is not man's timing (Isa 55:8-9)
- Because God sometimes delays to display His faithfulness (Heb 10:23)
- Because God sometimes delays because He is patient (Ps 86:15)
- Because God only does things at the proper time (Eccl 8:6)
- Because God acts when it is His time of favor (Isa 49:8)
- Because it is not for us to know God's timing (Acts 1:6-7)

Not heard concerning violence (2)

- Violence of the wicked (Ps 7:9)
- Violence that recoils (Ps 7:16)
- Violence through refusing to do what is right (Prov 21:7)
- Violence plotted in the heart (Prov 24:1-2)
- Violence breeds violence (Matt 26:52)

PRAYERS FOR JUSTICE NOT SEEN (HAB 1:3-4)

Not seeing sin (3)

- God does see because His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole world (2 Chron 16:9)
- God does see because His eyes are upon the righteous (Ps 34:15)
- God does see because the ways of man are before God's eyes (Prov 5:21)
- God does see because God's eyes are in every place (Prov 15:3)
- God does see because He sees through His seven Spirits (Rev 5:6)

Not seeing troubles (3)

- Trouble that man is born into (Job 5:6-7)
- Trouble from man's work (Eccl 2:22-23)
- Trouble that come even from birth, (Jer 20:18)
- Trouble that come each day (Matt 6:34)
- Trouble that requires protection (Nahum 1:7)
- Trouble that has been prayed about (James 5:13)

Not seeing lawlessness (4)

- Lawless because there are none who are righteous (Rom 3:9-12)
- Lawless because all have sinned against God (Rom 3:23)
- Lawless because sin came in the world through one man (Rom 5:12-13)
- Lawless so that God can have mercy on them (Rom 11:32)
- Lawless because the law is weakened by the sinful nature (Rom 8:3)
- Lawlessness that identifies the ungodly and sinful (1 Tim 1:8-10)

Not seeing wickedness (4)

- The wicked who are intent on cruelty (Ps 71:4-5)
- The wicked who prey on the weak and needy (Ps 82:4-5)
- The wicked who should be expelled (1 Cor 5:13)
- The wicked who are unbelievers (Rom 15:31)
- The wicked who resents rebuke (Prov 15:12)
- The wicked who resists the wisdom of rebuke (Prov 24:7-9)
- The wicked who ignores rebuke (Prov 1:25-26)

PRAYERS FOR JUSTICE NOT PUNISHED (HAB 1:12-14)

Punishment through judgment (12)

- Judgment of pride (Luke 20:45-47)
- Judgment of not understanding what we say or teach (1 Tim 1:5-7)
- Judgment of not teaching sound doctrine (2 Tim 4:3-4)

Judgment of not maturing in the Word (Heb 5:12)

Judgment of being a false teacher (2 Peter 2:1)

Judgment of being a stumbling block (Matt 23:15)

Punishment for wickedness (13)

Punishment for doing evil (John 5:28-29)

Punishment because of not being obedient to God (2 Thess 1:7-9)

Punishment for being a hypocrite (Matt 23:13)

Punishment for the disobedient (Heb 2:2)

Punishment for the wicked through their own sin (Jer 2:19)

Punishment applied when the wicked reap what they sow (Gal 6:7)

Punishment for no leadership (14)

Punishment of leaders because of destructive values and practices (2 Kings 21:9)

Punishment of leaders who are wicked (Prov 28:15)

Punishment of leaders who oppresses the helpless (Isa 1:23-24)

Punishment of leaders that practices bribery (Mic 3:11)

Punishment of leaders that tries to stand and fight against God (Ps 2:2-5)

Punishment of leaders that relies on their own earthly wisdom (1 Cor 2:6)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

Habakkuk's Protest: "Why is God silent when there is no justice?" (Habakkuk 1:1-4)

God's Response (Habakkuk 1:5-11)

Habakkuk's Rebuttal (Habakkuk 1:12-2:1)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Years ago the great jazz musician Louis Armstrong popularized a song entitled "What a Wonderful World." With his trademark raspy voice, Armstrong sang of the beauty of creation. Most would agree with Mr. Armstrong's sentiments—there is much about this world that makes it wonderful indeed: the people we love and the sights and sounds that add so much to our lives on a daily basis. At the same time, there is much in this world that causes us great sorrow and pain. Some things are not wonderful in the least. As followers of God and readers of His Word, we understand that this heartache is the result of the curse brought about by humanity's sin. That does not ease the hurt we feel. It can even cause us to question God and His purpose for the difficult circumstances that we or those we love endure. Our faith can be shaken to the very core.

Habakkuk is another of the 12 books at the end of our Old Testament, which we call the Minor Prophets (see Lesson Context in lesson 1). Unlike the prophet Amos (see lesson 1), Habakkuk mentions no kings of either Israel or Judah in his book. One benefit of this decision is to make the book more universal. Instead of being very obviously tied to a situation concerning this or that king, the book can be applied more generally to any similar situation. Habakkuk is a challenging book to date. A key to placing this prophet historically is found in Habakkuk 1:6. There we read of God's promise to raise up the Chaldeans from Babylon (compare Ezra 5:12; Isaiah 13:19) to inflict judgment on the wayward nation of Judah (the southern kingdom). The Chaldeans are described as a cruel and vicious people who let nothing stand in their way as they swallow up peoples and territories (Habakkuk 1:6-11, not in today's text). Since the northern kingdom of Israel had been conquered by Assyria in 722 BC, Habakkuk's complaints and God's responses must concern the southern kingdom of Judah. The Chaldeans had replaced the Assyrians on the center stage of world history by first gaining independence from the Assyrians in 626 BC and then eventually dismantling Assyria's remaining control in a series of battles from 615 to 612 BC. Thus Habakkuk's prophecy should likely be dated within the latter years of the seventh century BC as the Chaldeans' growing dominance over the ancient Near East became clear. This puts his ministry in the same time frame as Jeremiah's (see lessons 12 and 13). Both prophets interpreted the Chaldeans' rising to power as ordained by God, to be used to judge Judah for its wickedness (compare Jeremiah 22:25).

Key Verse: Hab 1:13

You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

The prophet was perplexed. Wickedness and violence seemed to go unchecked. Would there be no end to the rising tide of sin? Habakkuk took his complaint to God. “Why don’t You do something?” God answered, “I am doing something. Judah will be punished by Babylon.” Then the prophet was *more* perplexed. Habakkuk’s distress deepened to a profound dilemma. So he continued his conversation with God. “Why would You use those wretched Babylonian barbarians to judge Judah?”

1:1. Little wonder the book was titled **The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received.** The prophet called his writing a *maśśā’*, a “burden.” This Hebrew noun is derived from a verb meaning “to lift up,” and consequently signifies “what is lifted up,” and thus “a burden.” The message Habakkuk presented is indeed a weighty one. However, *maśśā’* was not always used to preface a burdensome message. It was used, for example, as a title for the rather nonthreatening sayings recorded in Proverbs 30 and 31 (where the NIV renders *maśśā’* “oracle” in 30:1; 31:1). Nonetheless, if there ever was a heavy message, Habakkuk had one. The title here might be more literally translated, “The burden that Habakkuk the prophet saw.” The same two Hebrew words, “burden” and “saw,” are used in Isaiah 13:1. The word “saw” (*hāzāh*), when used of the prophets, often means to see in a vision (cf. Isa. 1:1; 2:1; Ezek. 12:27; Amos 1:1; Micah 1:1). Receiving glimpses from God into the future (i.e., “visions,” *hāzôn*) the prophets were sometimes called God’s “seers” (*hōzeh*).

1:2. The prophet’s long-standing concern which finally erupted into a volcanic complaint was twofold. First, he wanted to know why God seemed so indifferent: Why doesn’t God hear? Second, he wanted to know why God seemed so insensitive: Why doesn’t God help? Habakkuk’s words **How long** show his agony over God’s seeming delay in responding to the prophet’s concerns. Many Christians today sense the same problem. They wonder why God seems silent when they pray. Like several psalmists (David, Pss. 13:1-4; 22:1, 11, 19-20; Asaph, Ps. 74:1-2, 10-11; the sons of Korah, Ps. 88), Habakkuk went to God to complain about his troubles and the troubles of his people. He described the injustice that was rampant around him and then asked “How long?” (Hab. 1:2) and “Why?” (v. 3) Later he used these same words again: “Why?” (twice in v. 13) and “How long?” (2:6). This prophet sounded more like a singer than a seer. Part of Israel’s worship involved making impassioned pleas to God for help in times of desperate trouble. Israel did not normally complain about its troubles in “letters to the editor.” They took their pleas directly to God in worship. Habakkuk’s concern was not only that his cries went unheeded but that the corruption continued unchecked. He cried out to God, **Violence!** but God seemed to do nothing. The stark word “violence” sums up all the chaos Habakkuk witnessed around him. The word is sprinkled throughout the book (1:2-3, 9; 2:17) like inkblots on a crumpled page in history.

1:3. Sin was abounding and God seemed both indifferent and idle. Habakkuk put the blame on God with his penetrating question, **Why do You make me look at injustice?** Then he asked an even greater question: **Why do You tolerate wrong?** God caused Habakkuk to witness injustice (lit., “iniquity”), but He Himself also tolerated (lit., “beholds”), the very same wrong. It is bad enough that a weak *sinner* should have to behold wickedness. But to have a righteous *God* see the evil and do nothing about it seemed beyond comprehension (cf. v. 13). The picture was bleak indeed. **Destruction and violence** were coupled with **strife and conflict** (cf. “violence” in vv. 2, 9; 2:17). “Destruction” (*šōd*, “violent treatment causing desolation”) and “violence” (*hāmās*, “malicious conduct intended to injure another”) frequently appear together (e.g., Jer. 6:7; 20:8; Ezek. 45:9, “violence and oppression”; Amos 3:10, “plunder and loot”; in each case here the two words in Heb. are in the reverse order from their order in Hab. 1:3). Habakkuk described the scene well.

1:4. The greatest tragedy, however, was the people’s neglect of God’s Law. Habakkuk described the consequence: **Therefore the Law is paralyzed** (lit., “becomes cool, numbed”). The divine Law appeared to have suffered a knockout; also civic **justice**, Habakkuk said, **never prevails**, or never came forth to fight (cf. “injustice,” v. 3). It appears that wickedness was the uncontested victor. **The wicked hem in the righteous.** The righteous were locked up and the wicked vigilantes had thrown away the key. Therefore **justice was perverted** (from *āqal*, “to bend or twist out of shape,” a word used only here in the OT). With wicked men in power, justice was twisted and turned till it came out injustice! The situation in Habakkuk’s day was perilous. Though the prophet was engaged in a typical Jewish lament and was asking essentially rhetorical questions, God answered his complaint. The Lord was neither indifferent nor insensitive. God was not idle; He was already at work on specific plans to discipline erring Judah. He revealed those plans to the distressed prophet.

1:5. **Look at the nations and watch** was God’s reply. The change in speakers is apparent from the verbs “look” and “watch,” which in Hebrew include the plural “you.” God addressed both the prophet and the

people. Habakkuk had complained about being made to look at injustice. But the prophet and people suffered from myopia. They were too nearsighted. God instructed them to get their eyes off the immediate havoc and look out on the international horizons. They needed to develop a world view that included “the nations.” As they did so, they would **be utterly amazed**. The political developments about to be revealed to Habakkuk and the people would stun them (the verb *tāmāh* means “to be astounded, bewildered, or dumbfounded”). In fact Habakkuk *was* dumbfounded (vv. 12, 17). What God was about to perform would be hard for them to **believe, even** though God would reveal it to them. Judah’s sin would not go unchecked. Justice was not dead, nor did it sleep. Discipline was forthcoming; correction was on the way. But the surprise was not the anticipated discipline but the dispenser of that discipline. It was not coming correction that was unbelievable but the channel of correction that seemed so incredible.

1:6. God dropped a bombshell: **I am raising up the Babylonians**. Granted, sin had abounded all too long in Judah. But the sinners of Judah were but soiled saints next to the barbaric Babylonians. Babylon was a nation known for its violent impulses. Its people readily committed atrocities without forethought or remorse. The historical records present the Babylonians as a fierce and pitilessly cruel people. And God affirmed it to Habakkuk by calling them **that ruthless** (mar, “bitter,” i.e., bitter in temper, or fierce) **and impetuous** (lit., “swift”) **people**. Ezekiel too called Babylon a ruthless nation (though he used the Heb. word *’arš*, meaning “terror-striking,” Ezek. 28:7; 30:11; 31:12; 32:12). Furthermore, their conduct matched their character. They swept **across the whole earth** to plunder and possess. No doubt “the whole earth” meant much of the then-known world, for Babylon did conquer many of the nations including Assyria, Judah, Egypt, and Edom. Judah was just a speck of loose dust before this gigantic vacuum cleaner. The Babylonians, also known as Chaldeans, lived in southern Mesopotamia and were called “an ancient... nation” (Jer. 5:15), a primeval people. Abram, of course, migrated from Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan. God had called a people out of this increasingly savage populace. Now this nation had burst out of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley and like some awesome lava flow it spilled across the world. Its quiet little cousin, Judah, would soon lie in its wake.

1:7. Babylon apparently was without rival. This terrible and dreadful people were **a law to themselves**. **They promoted their own honor**, that is, they lifted themselves up. They recognized no law or judge but themselves and their superiority and authority was gained by their own ruthless conquests.

1:8. In vivid and awesome imagery, the Lord further described the foe as a people with **horses... swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk**. Both leopards and wolves are fierce, fast, and excellent hunters. At dusk, wolves are hungry and ready to pounce on prey. The Babylonians’ voracious speed in conquest was also likened to **a vulture swooping to devour**. This “vulture” (*nešer*) may have been the great griffon vulture, a majestic bird often seen in Palestine circling higher and higher and then rapidly swooping down on its prey. Jeremiah wrote about the Babylonians devouring everything in their path, including fields, people, animals, trees, and cities (Jer. 5:17; also cf. Lam. 4:19). Certainly the Babylonians, likened to ferocious beasts and birds, were a terrible enemy.

1:9. There was no hope of stopping the Babylonians. Collectively **they all came bent on violence**. The nation’s entire military force would be engaged in the invasion and would be irresistibly victorious. The second line in this verse, **their hordes advance like a desert wind**, consists of three words in Hebrew and is variously interpreted. The first word in the clause occurs nowhere else and is variously rendered “resisting,” “striving,” “eagerness,” “assembling,” and a “gathering host,” “troops,” or “horde.” The last Hebrew word “desert wind” is also the word for the East. Here it means a wind that comes from the East. Such fierce scorching winds moving across the desert from the East often devastated vegetation (cf. Jer. 18:17; Ezek. 17:10; 19:12; Jonah 4:8). The enemy was coming like a whirlwind and would **gather prisoners like sand**, a figure expressing numbers too vast to calculate.

1:10. Confident in their strength, the Babylonians scoffed at **kings** and ridiculed **rulers**. It was their custom to exhibit captive rulers as public spectacles. Their brutality is seen in the way they treated Zedekiah after Jerusalem fell. They killed his sons before his eyes and then, with that awesome sight burned into his memory, they put out his eyes, bound him in shackles, and took him prisoner to Babylon (2 Kings 25:7). But not only did the Babylonians scoff at their foes; **they also laughed at all fortified cities** (lit., “every fortress”). They poured derision on the strongholds which their victims considered impregnable. **They** simply built **earthen ramps** (lit., “heaped up earth”) against the walls of cities built on mounds, and raged up those ramps, attacked the cities easily, and seized the fortified strongholds. This practice was fairly common in ancient warfare, but the “siege ramp” (2 Kings 19:32; cf. Ezek. 4:2) was more developed by the Babylonians.

1:11. The first part of this verse is difficult to translate. The KJV has, “Then shall his mind (*rûah*, ‘spirit’ or ‘wind’) change, and he shall pass over.” That is, the Babylonians changed their minds and went beyond all restraint to their own destruction. However, it is unlikely that *rûah* is the subject; the verb “change” can better be translated in its normal sense “to pass through.” The NIV has a more likely rendering, **Then they sweep past like the wind** (cf. “desert wind,” v. 9). Their major offense was clearly recorded. They considered their **own strength as their god**. They treated their might as their master. For them, “might was right” became “might was divine.” It is little wonder that God declared them **guilty** for such sacrilege. God’s amazing disclosure left the prophet even more perplexed and bewildered. Habakkuk’s complaint about the sin and lawlessness in Judah (vv. 2-4) was met by God’s response that He was not ignorant of His people’s conduct. Judgment was on its way. The Babylonians would soon take these erring people captive. The prophet was astonished, just as God said he would be (v. 5). He was appalled that Yahweh would employ so evil an instrument to punish Judah. Habakkuk expressed his deep concern; he questioned God’s plan. However devastating the divine judgment may sound, the prophet drew consolation and hope from God’s holiness and faithfulness. In a sea of confusion, Habakkuk clung to the life buoy of God’s holy character. In a chaotic storm, the prophet grasped the rock of his steadfast Lord.

1:12. In Hebrew, the form of the question—**O LORD, are You not from everlasting?**—requires an affirmative reply. It is as much a declaration as an interrogation. The prophet’s confidence in the living, eternal God, Yahweh, contrasts starkly with the previous verse in which the Babylonians considered their own strength to be their god. Humanly speaking, of course, Babylon could very easily extinguish the people of Judah. But the prophet found utterly unthinkable the extinction of God’s people and thereby the destruction of their covenant relationship with Yahweh. Habakkuk based his conclusion on two truths: (a) the immutable and everlasting Lord (cf. 3:6) who will not break His covenant with Israel, and (b) the holy (cf. 3:3) and righteous God who will not allow sin to go unpunished in Israel or in her foes. The prophet rightly concluded, **My God, my Holy One, we will not die**. Habakkuk reminded himself that the **LORD** had **appointed** the Babylonians **to execute judgment** (i.e., discipline), not total destruction on Judah. The enemy was God’s instrument **to punish**, not to demolish. The prophet referred to his Lord as the **Rock** (*šûr*), a term first applied to Yahweh in Deuteronomy 32:4 to indicate the Almighty’s stability and security (cf. Deut. 32:15, 18, 30-31).

1:13. A burning question remained in Habakkuk’s heart. Why would the everlastingly preeminent Yahweh, the absolutely Holy One, the immutably permanent Rock, utilize so wicked a people to administer discipline on Judah? **Your eyes are too pure to look on evil**, complained the prophet. **You cannot tolerate wrong**. In his first address Habakkuk questioned why he was forced to look on injustice and why God seemed to be less contentious and more comprehensive than the thought he expressed in verses 2-4. His focus seemed to be shifting from the sin problems to the sovereign Person in control. In light of Yahweh’s character, however, it seemed fair to Habakkuk to ask, **Why** (cf. v. 3) **do You tolerate the treacherous? Why** would God allow such a **wicked** nation to devour **those** who were **more righteous**? That seemed like a perversion of justice. Sinful though Judah had been, her wickedness was dwarfed by the atrocities committed by the Babylonians. Habakkuk was in a dilemma. Certainly his concern over God’s seeming silence has concerned many of God’s people (cf. Job 19:7).

1:14. Habakkuk said that God **made men like fish in the sea, like sea creatures that have no ruler**. Helpless as fish, Judah’s people were easy prey for powerful invaders. So helpless were they that they lacked the ability to organize themselves for self-protection. They were like sea creatures that are on their own, with no leader to guide them.

1:15. The wicked (cf. v. 13) Babylonians were pictured catching unsuspecting men, like fish, **with hooks**, sweeping them into a **net**, and gathering them in a large seine or **dragnet** (cf. v. 16). The imagery is vivid. Jeremiah used a similar analogy of fishermen, coupling it with that of hunters (Jer. 16:16). The evil Babylonians had as little regard for the welfare of humanity as fishermen have for unprotesting fish. The victorious Babylon foe rejoiced and was **glad**. It was hard to understand why God would permit such blatant injustice. Habakkuk was in a dilemma.

1:16. The hooks and nets brought **food** and plenty to the Babylonians. Their conquests provided not only a livelihood but also **luxury**. So these barbaric people paid homage to the instruments that contributed to their prosperity. The enemy sacrificed to their nets and burned **incense to** their dragnets. (This word for **dragnet** occurs in the OT only here and in v. 15). The metaphor is potent. The Babylonians worshiped the means that brought them military success. Already God had declared that the Babylonians saw their might as their god (v. 11). Now Habakkuk added that their military power brought monetary profit. Idolatry is not limited to those who bring sacrifices or burn incense to inanimate objects. People of position, power, or

prosperity often pay homage to the business or agency that provided them their coveted status. It becomes their constant obsession, even their “god.”

1:17. The prophet asked the fat fisherman Babylon if **he was to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations** (cf. 2:8, 17) **without mercy?** The action depicted signified a seemingly perpetual operation. They emptied their net so they could fill it again, again, and again. When would God put a stop to the Babylonians’ greed for conquest? How could He let a people continue in power when they so openly worshiped that very power as their god? Habakkuk was confused.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Prayers for Justice not Heard (Hab 1:1-2)

1 The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw.

2 O Lord, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, "Violence!" And You will not save.

Not heard at desired time (1-2)

Because God's timing is not man's timing (Isa 55:8-9)

8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Because God sometimes delays to display His faithfulness (Heb 10:23)

23 Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Because God sometimes delays because He is patient (Ps 86:15)

15 But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

Because God only does things at the proper time (Eccl 8:6)

6 For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a man's misery weighs heavily upon him.

Because God acts when it is His time of favor (Isa 49:8)

8 This is what the Lord says: "In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances,

Because it is not for us to know God's timing (Acts 1:6-7)

6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

Not heard concerning violence (2)

Violence of the wicked (Ps 7:9)

9 O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure.

Violence that recoils (Ps 7:16)

16 The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head.

Violence through refusing to do what is right (Prov 21:7)

7 The violence of the wicked will drag them away, for they refuse to do what is right.

Violence plotted in the heart (Prov 24:1-2)

1 Do not envy wicked men, do not desire their company; 2 for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble.

Violence breeds violence (Matt 26:52)

52 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."

Prayers for Justice not Seen (Hab 1:3-4)

3 Why do You show me iniquity, And cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; There is strife, and contention arises.

4 Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.

Not seeing sin (3)

God does see because His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole world (2 Chron 16:9)

9 For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war."

God does see because His eyes are upon the righteous (Ps 34:15)

15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry;

God does see because the ways of man are before God's eyes (Prov 5:21)

21 For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths.

God does see because God's eyes are in every place (Prov 15:3)

3 The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

God does see because He sees through His seven Spirits (Rev 5:6)

6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Not seeing troubles (3)

Trouble that man is born into (Job 5:6-7)

6 For hardship does not spring from the soil, nor does trouble sprout from the ground. 7 Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.

Trouble from man's work (Eccl 2:22-23)

22 What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? 23 All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.

Trouble that come even from birth, (Jer 20:18)

18 Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?

Trouble that come each day (Matt 6:34)

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Trouble that requires protection (Nahum 1:7)

7 The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him,

Trouble that has been prayed about (James 5:13)

13 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.

Not seeing lawlessness (4)

Lawless because there are none who are righteous (Rom 3:9-12)

9 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Lawless because all have sinned against God (Rom 3:23)

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Lawless because sin came in the world through one man (Rom 5:12-13)

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— 13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law.

Lawless so that God can have mercy on them (Rom 11:32)

32 For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Lawless because the law is weakened by the sinful nature (Rom 8:3)

3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,

Lawlessness that identifies the ungodly and sinful (1 Tim 1:8-10)

8 We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. 9 We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, 10 for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers — and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine

Not seeing wickedness (4)

The wicked who are intent on cruelty (Ps 71:4-5)

4 Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of evil and cruel men. 5 For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth.

The wicked who prey on the weak and needy (Ps 82:4-5)

4 Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. 5 "They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

The wicked who should be expelled (1 Cor 5:13)

13 God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

The wicked who are unbelievers (Rom 15:31)

31 Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there,

The wicked who resents rebuke (Prov 15:12)

12 A mocker resents correction; he will not consult the wise.

The wicked who resists the wisdom of rebuke (Prov 24:7-9)

7 Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the assembly at the gate he has nothing to say. 8 He who plots evil will be known as a schemer. 9 The schemes of folly are sin, and men detest a mocker

The wicked who ignores rebuke (Prov 1:25-26)

25 since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, 26 I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you —

Prayers for Justice not Punished (Hab 1:12-14)

12 Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction.

13 You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

14 Why do You make men like fish of the sea, Like creeping things that have no ruler over them?

Punishment through judgment (12)

Judgment of pride (Luke 20:45-47)

45 While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, 46 "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 47 They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

Judgment of not understanding what we say or teach (1 Tim 1:5-7)

5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith 6 Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. 7 They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

Judgment of not teaching sound doctrine (2 Tim 4:3-4)

3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,

Judgment of not maturing in the Word (Heb 5:12)

12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

Judgment of being a false teacher (2 Peter 2:1)

1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves.

Judgment of being a stumbling block (Matt 23:15)

15 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

Punishment for wickedness (13)

Punishment for doing evil (John 5:28-29)

28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

Punishment because of not being obedient to God (2 Thess 1:7-9)

7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

Punishment for being a hypocrite (Matt 23:13)

13 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

Punishment for the disobedient (Heb 2:2)

2 For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment,

Punishment for the wicked through their own sin (Jer 2:19)

19 Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the Lord your God and have no awe of me," declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty.

Punishment applied when the wicked reap what they sow (Gal 6:7)

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Punishment for no leadership (14)

Punishment of leaders because of destructive values and practices (2 Kings 21:9)

9 But the people did not listen. Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed before the Israelites.

Punishment of leaders who are wicked (Prov 28:15)

15 Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked man ruling over a helpless people.

Punishment of leaders who oppresses the helpless (Isa 1:23-24)

23 Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them. 24 Therefore the Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: "Ah, I will get relief from my foes and avenge myself on my enemies.

Punishment of leaders that practices bribery (Mic 3:11)

11 Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they lean upon the Lord and say, "Is not the Lord among us? No disaster will come upon us."

Punishment of leaders that tries to stand and fight against God (Ps 2:2-5)

2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. 3 "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." 4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

Punishment of leaders that relies on their own earthly wisdom (1 Cor 2:6)

6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Habakkuk's Protest: "Why is God silent when there is no justice?" (Habakkuk 1:1-4)

Imagine for a moment that you are walking down the street and you see an elderly woman being attacked by a gang of thugs. Then you notice a policeman, sitting on a park bench nearby. You shout to the policeman, pointing to the woman in distress. The policeman refuses to lift a finger to come to her aid and goes right on reading his newspaper. Wouldn't you be angry with the policeman?

This is how Habakkuk felt. He lived during the final dark days of Judah, just before her captivity. The prophet rightly assesses the spiritual state of the nation, and he agonizes because the sins of his day are rampant. Most of all, Habakkuk fumes with anger because God appears to be doing nothing about it, and that is His job! That is the essence of the prophet's protest: "God, I have persisted at urging you to deal with the sins of this people, and you have been strangely silent? Don't you care?" "God, if you are a just God, why is there no justice?"

God's Response (Habakkuk 1:5-11)

We might paraphrase the first part of God's response this way: "Take a good look around you, Habakkuk, and you keep your eyes open. I am already at work, raising up the Chaldeans (the Babylonians).²⁹⁶ The problem is not that I am doing nothing, but that what I am doing is so beyond your grasp you would not even believe it if I revealed it to you."

Did Habakkuk think that God had been "asleep at the wheel," that He either did not know or did not care that His people were acting wickedly? Well, contrary to Habakkuk's perception, God was at work. God informs Habakkuk that He is raising up the Babylonians as His rod of judgment upon Judah. These were an arrogant, powerful, and wicked people, who loved to terrorize their victims. Judgment, when it came, would be swift and devastating.

Verse 11 is crucial.²⁹⁷ God was in the process of raising up a very violent and cruel nation to judge His people. Let it not be thought that God is going to let them get away with their sins, however. These people had made their own strength into a god.²⁹⁸ They were cruel and vicious, and they worshipped themselves and they would be judged for it.

Habakkuk's Rebuttal (Habakkuk 1:12-2:1)

On the surface, Habakkuk's rebuttal is based upon three impressive arguments. In the final half of chapter 1, the Habakkuk sounds more like a lawyer than a prophet. He attempts to reason with God on the basis of His character. He **first argues** in verse 12 that since God is eternal, God's chosen people are indestructible. God is eternal, and thus His promises must also be eternal. God made a covenant with His people, Israel. He promised Abraham that he would become a great nation (Genesis 12:1-3, etc.) and David that he would have an eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7:14). Therefore, Israel cannot cease to exist as a nation. Habakkuk appears to have assumed that if the Babylonians were allowed to prevail, they would completely wipe out Judah entirely. Thus, God could not allow the Babylonians to prevail.

The prophet's logic is far from flawless, however. Habakkuk seems to have overlooked God's promise to preserve a remnant of his people (Isaiah 1:9; 10:20-22; 11:11; Jeremiah 23:3; Micah 2:12; Zephaniah 2:7). Habakkuk was wrong. God could use the Babylonians to chasten His people, and yet preserve a remnant, through whom His covenant promises could be fulfilled.

Habakkuk's **second argument** is also based upon God's character. God is righteous, and He abhors evil. God cannot approve of evil; therefore, God cannot approve of an evil nation destroying His people. The way the prophet sees it, God's plan to use the Babylonians as a chastening rod is inconsistent with God's character. A righteous God cannot achieve His purposes through unrighteous means. God will simply have to change His plans, or so the prophet supposes.

But Habakkuk's logic is wrong. The use of foreign nations as a chastening rod was not inconsistent with His character, and it was not something new. God had foretold this in the Mosaic Covenant:

36 The Lord will force you and your king whom you will appoint over you to go to a people whom you and your ancestors have not known and you will serve other gods of wood and stone there. 37 You will become an occasion of horror, a proverb, and an object of ridicule to all the people among whom the Lord will drive you... . 49 The Lord will raise up a distant nation against you, one from the other side of the earth as the eagle flies, a

nation whose language you will not understand, 50 a nation of stern appearance that will have no regard for the elderly or consideration for the young (Deuteronomy 28:36-37, 49-50).

The Book of Judges is filled with examples of God's use of foreign nations as His chastening rod:

13 They [Israel] abandoned the Lord and worshiped Baal and the Ashtars. 14 The Lord was furious with Israel and handed them over to robbers who plundered them. He turned them over to their enemies who lived around them. They could not withstand their enemies' attacks (Judges 2:13-14),

God is morally just in using the wicked to achieve His purposes:

For the wrath of man shall praise You;
With a remnant of wrath You will gird Yourself (Psalms 76:10, NAU).

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose (Romans 8:28, NAU).

God is righteous, and He is also sovereign. He is able to use the wicked, and even their wicked deeds to accomplish His purposes. For the moment, I will cite only one example – Pharaoh:

For the scripture says to Pharaoh: “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may demonstrate my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth” (Romans 9:17).

Pharaoh's oppression of God's people, and his refusal to let God's people go, became an occasion of blessing for the Israelite nation. It resulted in their release from slavery and their possession of the land of Canaan. Nevertheless, they did suffer under the hand of Pharaoh for a number of years. God used the wicked to accomplish His purposes. God used Pharaoh to bring Himself glory and to produce good for His people, Israel. Habakkuk was wrong. A righteous God can use The wicked to achieve His purposes.

I believe that Habakkuk's second argument is further flawed in that it is based upon the very questionable assumption that the people of Judah are *more righteous* than the Chaldeans.

You are too just to tolerate evil;
you are unable to condone wrongdoing.
So why do you put up with such treacherous people?
Why do you say nothing **when the wicked devour those who are relatively innocent?**
(Habakkuk 1:13, emphasis mine)

The NAU translates the last part of verse 13 quite literally,

Why do You look with favor
On those who deal treacherously?
Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up
Those more righteous than they? (NAU, emphasis mine)

This is a very dangerous argument, in my opinion, and one that almost all of us have employed at one time or another. We know that certain things are sin, but we generally have different categories of sin. The Jews of Jesus' day found Jesus guilty of blasphemy, an unpardonable sin to them, and yet they were self-righteous and greedy. They found ways to avoid their responsibilities to their parents and, according to Jesus, they stole widows' houses. They oppressed the poor in the process of making themselves rich.

I would agree with you that some sins are certainly worse than others in terms of their effects. A murderer or a rapist may cause untold suffering, while one who is proud and arrogant may merely prove offensive to others. But at their root, all sins are against God, are abhorrent to God, and are worthy of God's eternal wrath. Showing partiality or favoritism may not appear to be a terrible sin in our eyes, but James puts this sin in a different light:

1 My brothers and sisters, do not show prejudice if you possess faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. 2 For if someone comes into your assembly wearing a gold ring and fine clothing, and a poor person enters in filthy clothes, 3 do you pay attention to the one finely dressed and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and to the poor person, “You stand over there,” or “Sit under my feet”? 4 If so, have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil motives? 5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters! Did not God choose the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor! Are not the rich oppressing you and dragging you into the courts? 7 Do they not blaspheme the good name of the one you belong to? 8 But if you fulfill the royal law as expressed in this scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. 9 But if you show prejudice, you are

committing sin and are convicted by the law as violators. 10 For the one who obeys the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. 11 For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery but you commit murder, you have become a violator of the law. 12 Speak and act as those who will be judged by a law that gives freedom. 13 For judgment is merciless for the one who has shown no mercy. But mercy triumphs over judgment ([James 2:1-13](#)).²⁹⁹

Habakkuk’s argument falls on its face in the light of Israel’s sins and in the light of statements such as this:

7 He [Manasseh] put an idol of Asherah he had made in the temple, about which the Lord had said to David and to his son Solomon, “This temple in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will be my permanent home. 8 I will not make Israel again leave the land I gave to their ancestors, provided that they carefully obey all I commanded them, the whole law my servant Moses ordered them to obey.” 9 But they did not obey and Manasseh misled them so that **they sinned more than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed from before the Israelites.** 10 So the Lord announced through his servants the prophets: 11 “King Manasseh of Judah has committed horrible sins. **He has sinned more than the Amorites before him and has encouraged Judah to sin by worshiping his disgusting idols.** 12 So this is what the Lord God of Israel says, **‘I am about to bring disaster on Jerusalem and Judah.** The news will reverberate in the ears of those who hear about it” ([2 Kings 21:7-12](#), emphasis mine).³⁰⁰

I believe the fatal flaw in Habakkuk’s second argument is exposed by his own words in 1:14-17 and by God’s words to the prophet in chapter 2. But for the moment, let those who would justify or minimize their sins by pointing to the “greater” sins of others beware.

Habakkuk has yet a **third argument**, one which I am sure he felt was the clincher. Habakkuk must have consoled himself with the thought that God could certainly not deny the force of his logic in this argument. This argument is put forward in verses 14-17 of chapter 1:

If the law was clear on any point, it was surely clear that God hates and forbids idolatry. Habakkuk uses this as the basis for his third argument. The Babylonians are idolaters, so surely God cannot allow them to prosper against His people. Habakkuk describes the people of Judah as defenseless victims of abuse, like a swarm of fish in the sea. He portrays the victory of the Babylonians over God’s people as that of fishermen casting out nets, capturing many fish. Worst of all, these heathen fishermen worship their own nets as their gods, giving their nets praise and worship for a good catch. Surely this imagery should get God’s attention. Why would God grant the Babylonians success if they are only going to worship idols as a result? “God, you hate idolatry,” Habakkuk argues, “Can you honestly allow the idolatrous Babylonians to prevail over the people of Judah, and then worship the god of their own strength?”

This argument is a double-edged sword. God does not have a double standard. If God should judge the Babylonians for their cruelty and idolatry, then why should He not also judge Judah for its cruelty and idolatry? After all, God has already sent Israel into captivity, at the hands of cruel oppressors, because of their sins. Are the Babylonians wicked and cruel and worthy of divine judgment? So are the people of Judah ([Micah 3:1-4](#), 9-12)

Habakkuk wants to know how God can allow the wickedness of the Babylonians to go unpunished. Ironically, the answer to this question is the very thing that made Habakkuk angry in the first place. God is “**slow to anger;**” He is “**long suffering.**”³⁰¹ His judgment often does not come as quickly as we would like. As God allowed time to pass before He brought judgment upon Israel, and soon upon Judah, He would allow some time to pass before bringing judgment upon the Babylonians.

Habakkuk seems very satisfied with the force of his rebuttal. He now will wait for God’s answers, and they had better be good. Even then, Habakkuk plans to dispute them, if God persists with His plan ([Habakkuk 2:1](#)).

There is a question that must be raised here: “Was Habakkuk right to speak to God as he has up till now?” Strangely, there are many who would seek to sanctify Habakkuk’s attitudes and actions in these verses. They make him an example for all of us to follow. I find this impossible to do. Prophets are not perfect, as we should know from folks like Balaam and Jonah. Every word of his prophecy is the inspired word of God, but I believe that we are to learn from the early words of Habakkuk how we should not respond to God when He acts in a way we don’t like. Habakkuk is a bad example, up till now. In chapter 3, it is a completely different story. Let me summarize the reasons why I cannot justify Habakkuk’s attitudes and actions in the first part of his prophecy.

- (1) Habakkuk is angry with God. He does not question God in humility, but in rebuke. In Habakkuk’s mind, God has not acted promptly enough in judgment, and thus He is rebuked for being passive.

- (2) Habakkuk is arrogant. His words sound like a man with his hands on his hips, rebuking his God.
- (3) Habakkuk is wrong for assuming that God is doing nothing about Judah's sins. The prophets had spoken of it, and it was only a matter of time. Habakkuk assumes that God is doing nothing because he is unable to see or to grasp what God is doing.
- (4) Every one of Habakkuk's arguments against God's use of the Babylonians is flawed. How can a man who is wrong be right in his protest?
- (5) There is a dramatic change in chapter 3. Habakkuk repents and humbles himself before God. He accepts the coming judgment, and he praises God. The words of chapter 3 are a psalm, recorded for Judah's use in worship. Here, at last, is a Habakkuk whom we can follow.

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/41-just-shall-live-faith-habakkuk>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Habakkuk's nation, Judah, was in a spiritual free fall, ripe for the judgment of almighty God. God's method for providing that judgment was not at all wonderful in Habakkuk's eyes. The prophet did not view it as an acceptable solution to the problem. Habakkuk struggled to reconcile his understanding of God with the uncertain world around him. Habakkuk's concern has been voiced repeatedly through the years. For example, Asaph, the author of Psalm 73, was deeply troubled over what he saw as God's unfair treatment of the wicked. They appear to prosper and live carefree lives while completely oblivious to God and His ways. Psalm 10 begins by expressing similar disappointment in God's seemingly uncaring attitude about injustices in the world. The wicked do just as they please and benefit from their evil while their victims suffer. Doesn't God see? And if He does, doesn't He care? This is a struggle with which nearly all of us can readily identify. When we find ourselves questioning God or His purpose for the circumstances we are confronting, we are in good company. Prophets like Habakkuk and righteous people like Job were some of the most outspoken in their questions and accusations directed toward the one who called them to His service (compare Numbers 11:10-15; 1 Kings 19:4; Psalm 13:1-4; Jeremiah 20:7, 8; Matthew 11:1-3). God is not caught off guard with such language. Indeed, sometimes He even chooses to engage our questions, though the answers may not be what we hope to hear. With Habakkuk, our knowledge of the Lord can lead us to conclusions that seem correct but in the end require correction from God (compare Job 38:1-40:2). In all of life's circumstances, but especially in times of discipline, let us rest in the knowledge that God does not change (James 1:17). He is working in our world to accomplish His purposes for us and through us.

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

What About Questions - You may have been told, "Do not question God." But the prophet Habakkuk questioned God and His actions, or lack of action. The Bible refers to Habakkuk's prophecy as a burden, something heavy; it has to be picked up and carried. This message predicting future calamities from the Babylonian army proved to be a weighty word from the Lord. The prophet observed all the violence and inequities by the people within his nation. Year after year, Habakkuk cried out to the Lord, pouring out his deeply disturbed heart and begging God to act and set the nation in order. However, God refused to intervene. The violence, stealing, and strife extended from the family home to the business conducted at the city gate. The upright man suffered exploitation while immoral individuals prospered.

God's Strange Plan - God's silence and inactivity troubled Habakkuk. Why would He allow sin to run rampant? God finally said He planned to punish the nation, but Habakkuk was puzzled by God's methods. Why would God choose to use an idolatrous, wicked, Gentile nation like Babylon to bring judgment on Judah? God saw the matter in a different light. He had given His people the Law, so their idolatrous and evil behavior was inexcusable. On the other hand, the heathen Gentile nations knew nothing of Jehovah's expectations; they behaved out of ignorance. Israel knew God's regulations and flat-out disobeyed.

Troubles Today - In our society, like in Habakkuk's time, God's standards are being violated. As a result, people are discontented, confused, and lack peace. This internal rumbling leads to fighting, mistreating others, and legal and criminal injustices. Many Christians ask God the same "why/ when" questions and cry out in anguish. How much longer do we have to witness all of this ungodliness and chaos in society? Eventually, Habakkuk accepted that God's ways and timing were best. But the hard questions were valid to put before the Almighty. God always says, "Talk to Me. Don't be afraid to ask Me questions."