

The Minor Prophets

Lesson 7

Habakkuk – “How Long Oh Lord?”

Habakkuk was a prophet in Judah working just before the invasion of Babylon in 605 B.C. He preached for repentance during the reign of evil King Jehoiakim (609-597 BC), but received a negative response. Habakkuk observed the injustice, wickedness and violence in Judah and cried out to God with some perplexing questions: Why do the wicked prosper? Why do the righteous suffer? Why doesn't God do something?

Read Hab 1:1-4

1. What question did the prophet ask in v 2? What is his complaint in v 2-4?
2. Make yourself a philosopher and answer the following questions: How can God coexist with evil? Since God hasn't intervened against evil, does He not care? Is He powerless? Is He absentee? (2 Peter 3:9-10)
3. What question did Peter ask Jesus in the boat in Mark 4:38? They had nearly been killed, yet Jesus responded with what question to Peter (Mark 4:40)?
4. What was God's answer in Hab 1:5-11? The Chaldeans were a Semitic people who were dominant in Babylon. Were the Chaldeans merciful and kind? Did they fear the true God and respect His people? Who was their god (1:11)?
5. What was Habakkuk's second problem after he heard what God was getting ready to do (1:13-17)? Habakkuk reminded God that He had promised the Patriarchs that Israel would always be God's chosen nation (1:12). Is it fair that God would use a nation even more evil to destroy Judah?

6. Even though God was going to use the evil Chaldeans to accomplish His purpose, would He later hold them accountable and destroy them (Hab 1:11; Jerem 50:1-2, 29; Daniel 5:22-30)? Comment on this principle: God can use evil in your life and still not be pleased with evil; and yet, God can still use evil to accomplish His intended purpose, but later judge and destroy evil.

7. Habakkuk has played the lawyer and the lobbyist in Hab 1:12-2:1. What arrogant, self-confident statement did he make in 2:1?

8. Did God directly answer Habakkuk's questions (2:2-20)? In spite of Habakkuk's argument, will God's plan come about (2:3)? What is Habakkuk's problem (2:4a)? What does he need to do (2:4b)?

9. Hab 2:5-19 is an indictment of the human race. It always comes back to God's first commandment (Ex 20:3-5). What foolish endeavor does Hab 2:18-19 describe when men give their devotion to anything but the true God? Is it presumptuous for us to question God (Hab 2:20)?

10. Habakkuk began his book complaining and questioning God, but in the end (Ch 3), he praises God and prays for mercy. Chapter 3 is basically a recap of the Exodus from slavery in Egypt to conquering Canaan. God has always been faithful. Therefore, what must Habakkuk (and Judah) do (3:16)? What is his conclusion in 3:17-19?