

Minor Prophets
Habakkuk
Lesson 2

Text: **Habakkuk 1:1-2:1**

Intro: the subject of injustice and God's silence is a major problem with most everyone. If you have ever asked questions like, God why the Holocaust, or 9/11. God why does it appear that good people suffer, and wicked people seem to get by with their wickedness. If you ever asked questions like that, you are not alone. After all the Proverbs tell about the righteous being blessed, and the wicked will be judged. Habakkuk struggled with this same thing, he sees wickedness all around, but he does believe God is just and fair. He knew the God of Israel is a good God. So He had this question, Why?

Setting: (around the date of 605B.C.) in the century preceding this event the Assyrians dominated the world with ruthless violence and demonstration of power. It was the Assyrians that God used around 722B.C to invade, conquer, and discipline the Northern Kingdom of Israel. They would have entered into the Southern Kingdom if it weren't for the Angel of the Lord killing 185,000 (**II Kings 19:35**). After the Assyrians, the Babylonians rose to power, the Assyrians lost their capitol to Babylon in 612 B.C. The capitol was moved to Haran, but in 610B.C. The Babylonians defeated it as well. This forced the Assyrians to set up another capitol at Carchemish. So the Babylonians headed toward Carchemish. **II Chronicles 35:20** , At that time Assyria formed alliance with Egypt, (Pharo Neceho). So Egypt was traveling north through Israel to help Assyria to defend their land. King Josiah of Judah went out to oppose Egypt (Josiah went against the word of God, but generally he was a good king). This resulted in the delay of Egypt getting to Carchemish, and Babylon defeated Assyria. Because Egypt was going to help, Babylon turned to Egypt defeating them as well. This secured Babylon's place as the world power. This is the surrounding events of Habakkuk's ministry.

- I. **Silence and Injustice**, (one thing we will want to keep an eye on here is where Habakkuk stops talking and God starts, it makes a big difference)
 - A. Habakkuk's Cry
 - i. **How Long?**
 - a) One of the messages we should get form Habakkuk is God's time is not our time.
 - God does things as they please Him.
 - b) We need to remember, Habakkuk had a right understand of who God is:
 - He understood that God is righteous, and just.
 - He knew God was not only good, but a judge of sin and injustice.
 - We know this as well, however when we are in the mist of the circumstances we want to see an answer right now. God may not be ready to give the answer at that time.
 - c) We see the same question repeated later in chapter one,
 - **vs.12-17** Habakkuk points out the fact that God is just, but he also points out the wicked, and in not so many words he is asking again, How long
 - **Chapter 2vs.1** once again, it is a time issue, I will wait....
 - ii. **I Cry Out**,
 - a) Habakkuk does have the wrong idea here,
 - He thinks God is not hearing him,
 - it is easy to think God doesn't hear when our prayers are not being answered.
 - This must have been what Daniel went through when He prayed 21days and

the angel of the lord was delayed in His coming (**Daniel 10**)

- but the angel let him know I heard you the first time you prayed.
- Also the nation of Israel in their Egyptian captivity cried out with no answer, but God told Moses I have heard the cries of my people.
- David understood in the 40th Psalm that God was inclined to him, that is bent toward him, ready to hear.
- Just because we do not get an answer right away doesn't mean God doesn't hear us.

iii. I'm in the mist of Wickedness,

a) **Vs.3** “why do you let me see this?”

- Cause me to behold it?
- Habakkuk was asking God, Why do I have to be a witness to what I see?
 - I think in part, **Lamentations 3:51** “ Mine eye affecteth mine heart”
 - When we see the problems, then we are affected by them,
 - there is a commercial that was produced by a church that a man went to get coffee, and all along the way people cut him off, was rude, blocked him. And he was visibly upset, but then someone gave him a set of glasses, and when he put them on, he started to see the problems over the person. Divorce, loss job, need money, frustrated, etc...
 - When we see, then our heart is affected by it.

b) What did Habakkuk see?

- Grievance- troubles or toils/ worry/ wearing effort
- Spoiling- ravage, oppression, robbery
- Violence-cruelty
- The Law is slack-sluggish
- Strife and Contention
- Judgment fails- judgment is paralyzed
- Wicked surrounds-
- wrong judgment passes-

c) is there any reason why he would question God?

- Note also Habakkuk is reverent to God during all this, never making accusations or defaming his character.
 - We can ask questions of God, but just as Habakkuk, we must accept God is just and righteous.

B. God's response, **Vs.5-11**

i. **You Will Not Believe,**

a) God responds to Habakkuk, with this statement.

b) I Both hear you, and I will do something about it.

- In the mist of other nations, God hears.
- Even tho it may look hopeless, and like there is nothing that can be done, God is about to do something.
- And that that is about to be done is simply unbelievable,

c) What is unbelievable?

- Is it only unbelievable if it is something on a gigantic scale that is beyond what we can comprehend?
- Or is it unbelievable on a negative sense, what you mean you can take the basic fuel for fire Oxygen and take a unstable and flammable gas such as Hydrogen

combine them and make something that will put out fire?

- See unbelievable can come in different ways, and this is one of the things Habakkuk is going to learn.
 - For instance is it unbelievable that the Babylonian empire could take control of the Southern Nation of Israel? It is completely understandable
 - Is it believable that the nation of Babylon would divide the people, enslave them, punish them and exile them from their own land? Yes, this is what they did to other nations.
 - What God is about to tell Habakkuk is not unbelievable is the details of what is going to take place, but it is unbelievable that God would use that to bring justice to Israel.

ii. The Chaldeans,

a) the Babylonians

- they were called the Chaldeans for a short time because of the rise of power of 4 of their leaders that came from that region.

b) The Babylonians were a very fierce people,

- God described them as:
 - Bitter-
 - Hasty-
 - Terrible (vs.7)
 - Dreadful-
 - That would:
 - march through the land taking it
 - living in the homes of the people there
 - their judgment shall come from themselves,
 - there is no pretense that they are seeking the council of God

c) God describes their way of warfare,

- their horses are fast,
- fiercer than wolves
- their riders shall charge ahead,
- and they shall go into battle like an eagle heading to eat.
- They come for the purpose of violence
- they shall gather the people like picking up sand (9)
- they shall scoff at the kings and princes (give no honor)

d) Vs.11 His "Mind" change,

- this is saying his thought pattern changes, the word here for mind can also be Spirit or Wind, (Ruwach)
 - it is the same word, and concept as something moving something with no apparent power pushing it, all we know is that it started moving
- But the way he moves is going to be to:
 - Pass over- transgress and Offend.
 - That is he is going to run over the people and claim it to his god "g"

C. Habakkuk' Concern, Vs.12-2:1

i. Don't you know who You are?

a) You are everlasting,

- surely you know what will happen if you do this

- My “God” My “Holy One”
 - I love that Habakkuk employs the name and Character of God at this point.
- b) You Have Pure eyes that don't want or need to see evil
 - Habakkuk is asking how is this possible?
 - Is my understanding of you wrong?
- c) **Vs.13**, this is what happens when we compare the life of others to our own life,
 - are you going to be favorable to them that do wicked, and hold your tongue when they afflict the more righteous than they?
 - As if saying God I know Israel is not perfect, but we are better than they are.
- ii. Habakkuk acknowledges the Wickedness of Babylon,
 - a) He furthers the argument of how the nation of Israel is more righteous that they are by pointing out what they do:
 - they make men as common beast,
 - killing fish or game is the same to them.
 - They take them with no discrimination,
 - like a fisherman taking a haul of fish,
 - it is not like the net is designed to only take the male of certain ages
 - and when they do, they are happy for it.
 - A soldier may have to fight and even kill, and that is their duty, but when it becomes enjoyable there is a problem.
 - They give thanks (**vs16**) to a false god
 - back to the fish analogy, they empty their nets with no pity or compassion on any that are caught in them.
 - Even a fisherman has the decency to cast the small ones back in the water.
 - b) Habakkuk tried to make the comparison that the people of Babylon was more wicked than the people of Israel, and God should stand on the side of the less wicked.
 - The problem with this comparison is the less wicked is still wicked.
 - Keep in mind why all this was taking place to Israel?
 - They failed to keep the covenant with God.
 - He clearly told them, if they would keep it, they would be blessed, but if not God would not be bound to bless them.
 - The argument of Habakkuk was the less wicked deserve the protection of the Lord, then what if the standard for wickedness went up across the board?
 - If another nation more wicked than Babylon rose up against them would God be bound to protect Babylon?
 - What about the surrounding nations, such as Egypt, they were “less wicked” than Babylon, did Habakkuk cry out for them?
 - When we compare ourselves to others we can justify anything,
 - it is only when we compare ourselves to the Holiness of God that we see and understand that we fall very short of God's standard.
- iii. I will wait and see, **2:1**
 - a) I will watch and see if this comes to pass,
 - I will see if God would really allow this to happen, and if He will answer me or not.