

# Hard Questions Hard Answers | Habakkuk 1-2 |

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- Introduction
  - This book was written by Habakkuk as he served as a prophet for Judah the southern kingdom in the years of 609 B.C to 598 B.C.
    - This was in-between the time of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires.
  - The Book of Habakkuk differs from the other minor prophet books of the Bible in that instead of being a direct Word from God regarding an oracle for either His people or their enemies directly. We have a conversation much like the Book of Job
  - Habakkuk is a prophet of God who is very close to God we can see this in how he refers to God when he speaks.
  - Habakkuk at this time is witnessing the evil that is going on within the people of Israel. They had just had a king that had turned them to God (Josiah) however the king at this time who was his son did not follow in his footsteps.
    - King Jehoiakim
  - The Israelites have once again returned to their evil ways.
    - Habakkuk being a prophet is well versed in God's Scripture and he knew that God stated that He would not allow His people to go unpunished.
    - **However Habakkuk had some hard questions for God regarding their situation. He wondered why God seemed to be silent.** Why was God not doing anything with the evil that was going on amongst the people.
  - Habakkuk was looking for revival to weed out the ones that were evil and to lift up those that were obedient as God had done before.
  - So we will see a back and forth conversation between Habakkuk and God much like we see in the Book of Job
  - Habakkuk will ask God some hard questions, but God will response with seemingly tougher answers.
- Why God are you silent? | Habakkuk 1:1-4
  - **Read Habakkuk 1:1-4**
  - Habakkuk prays to God and asks a question that many other Christians have asked...Why?
    - **Have you ever asked God why?**
  - Why God are you silent is his prayer.
    - Habakkuk says he has been waiting for God to respond but God is seemingly not listening He is silent.
    - There is much going on in the lives of the people of Judah that the Prophet know is wrong and they are being disobedient to God.
    - Habakkuk knows that they people cannot continue on this path of destruction that they are on, they are not following the covenant life that God had established for them.
      - Exodus 19:3-8
    - He knew that the people must turn back to God and he had been asking God for help, please God help your people to return to you.
    - Habakkuk desires revival
      - Habakkuk desired revival within the people like that had happened so many times before and even just recently under the rule of King Josiah.

- But Habakkuk apparently felt that God was perhaps being indifferent because God seemed to be silent.
- **The Prophet had not witnessed revival nor had he witnesses punishment.**
  - He was just witnessing the continual falling away and disobedience of the people of Judah.
- Why God are you tolerant?
  - Habakkuk wants to know why God seems to be tolerant of the evil of His people.
  - Why God do you allow this evil to go unchecked?
  - He says I see this going on right in front of me, I'm sure he was seeing it every day. The people showing their disregard for God and in turn seeming to get by without punishment.
  - In fact it was escalating the violence and sin in the people was getting worse day by day.
  - Habakkuk knew what God said about disobeying Him.
    - Deuteronomy 28:15
- Why is the law ineffective? Why is there no justice?
  - Habakkuk is referring to the Law of the Old Testament from the Torah which is the first 5 books.
  - The Law of course was to be a guide for the people, to give them very specific instructions on how to live their lives in obedience to God and what He expected of them.
  - The Law of course had consequences for not obeying it as we have previously discussed.
  - So Habakkuk is stating that if there are no consequences for the law then what good is it?
    - The law is seeming ineffective because people are disobeying it and there are seemingly no consequences.
      - This is no different that today even in society with mans laws where we have people who break the law and seem to get away with it.
  - The law to some seems ineffective because there is no justice
    - We all know how important justice is. Justice is when the law works as it was designed to bring about justice for a wrong that was committed.
      - In our society today if someone breaks the law we lean on our justice system to bring about justice. So the one who did wrong gets punishment.
    - Habakkuk in view of the people of Judah there was seeming no justice because people were getting away with everything.
    - There was no visible punishment for them turning there backs on God and following the evil desires that were in their hearts.
  - Justice is perverted
    - Instead of the bad guys being punished and the good guys getting justice it was the opposite.
    - The bad guys were getting away with it and the good guys were being punished.
    - The world seemed to be upside down in the eyes of Habakkuk.
- Hard Questions that we ask God.
  - Now all of these questions that were asked by Habakkuk should not sound so unfamiliar.
  - Christians and non-Christians alike ask these very same questions searching for the answers.
  - We to wonder why God may be silent, why He is tolerant with the evil in the world and why justice doesn't seem to prevail.

- We too ask these questions which is why we need to reflect on Scripture for the answers.
  - **What are the hard questions that we ask of God? Do you find that you get answers to some but others you do not? How does this make you feel?**
- God's unexpected answer | Habakkuk 1:5-11
  - **Read Habakkuk 1:5-11**
  - God now answers Habakkuk however this is not the response that he was expecting.
  - God tells Habakkuk that He is going to bring up the Chaldeans (Babylonians) against the people of Judah.
  - So instead of some sort of revival that had happened previously we see that God is going to use the Babylonians to punish the people of Judah.
  - The Babylonians were not God fearing or righteous people.
    - God describes these people and it is clear that they are ruthless, violent and there only God is themselves.
    - They seize territories that are not there own.
    - Their views of justice and sovereignty stem from themselves.
    - They mock kings and have no respect for others.
    - They are guilty; their strength is their God.
  - This of course was not the expected answer that Habakkuk was thinking he was going to hear from God.
  - In fact this answer just spawned more questions from Habakkuk.
- Why God do allow the wicked to punish those who are more righteous? | Habakkuk 1:12-13
  - **Read Habakkuk 1:12-13**
  - After hearing God's response Habakkuk begins his second prayer by reflecting and acknowledging who God is.
    - He recognizes that God is from eternity that God is the ultimate in authority.
    - Habakkuk's faith and trust in God remained strong even though he could not fully comprehend the workings of a righteous God.
    - That God can and will choose His methods of punishment for His people.
    - However that doesn't meant that Habakkuk understood them.
  - Habakkuk questions God's decision
    - While Habakkuk does not question God's authority or who His is, he does question God's choice in who He is using as punishment against the people of Judah.
    - To Habakkuk he thought that God's decision to use a sinful and evil people (who were obviously worse than God's people of Judah) as a method of punishment was hard to understand.
      - In fact that method and choice seemed to be contrary to God's character.
    - Why would God use people who God said himself looked upon themselves as gods, they were not believers in Yahweh. Why would God use the wicked to swallow up the righteous?
  - **Has God's answers or His decisions ever left you with more questions?**
- Habakkuk stands guard awaiting God's response | Habakkuk 2:1
  - Read Habakkuk 2:1
  - Now Habakkuk again being seemingly perplexed again at God's answers patiently waits for God's response.
- The righteous one will live by his faith | Habakkuk 2:2-4
  - **Read Habakkuk 2:2-4**
  - In God's response we learn to important things.

- There are 2 categories of people
- There are those that are wicked and proud who trust in themselves.
  - These are the Babylonians who do not believe in God and rely solely on themselves.
  - There are those in Judah who have no respect for God either, as we have seen from even their kings who have done evil in the eyes of God.
  - This is also those in the world today who are also proud and reject God. Those who believe that man is everything and that God is a myth.
- There are those who are just and live their lives by faith.
  - These would be the people like Habakkuk, the other prophets and the remnant of Judah who still kept their faith in God.
  - This is also all true Christians today. We are all to be those who live our lives in faith.
- The path of the wicked and proud will lead to death and defeat
  - God makes it clear to Habakkuk that the Babylonians and the evil portion of Judah would not go unpunished.
  - That while God is using them to discipline the people of Judah they would not escape their fate.
  - We as Christians must always remember that God will never allow the wicked to go unpunished even if we might think that they seem to have a free pass to live an evil and sinful life.
  - In our questions that we bring to God it is not uncommon of course for us to ask the question that Habakkuk asked because we do not understand why evil can seem to prevail.
  - However God has stated and promised that evil will not go unpunished however the timing for that punishment is up to God and not man.
- The righteous will live by faith.
  - Habakkuk verse 4 is a very significant and important verse in Scripture.
    - In fact this verse answers all of Habakkuk's questions.
  - This single verse sums up the Christian life in one simple sentence.
    - The righteous will live by faith.
  - The simplicity of faith
    - Mankind is full of questions we always want to know the why.
    - We are constantly trying to answer these questions and many people have spent their entire lives trying to answer a "why" question.
    - **However God tells us something different that faith is all that is needed and the "why" does not always need to be answered.**
    - This of course is a stumbling block for many and why there are those in the world who are not saved because their "why" and "how" questions do not get answered.
      - Faith to them is ignorant.
  - You see God did not directly answer the questions of Habakkuk. He had asked God why on several things however God did not answer them directly.
    - This is not to say that God will never provide us with answers because at times he most certainly does. But there are other times when He will not.
    - This was much the same as it was for Job.
      - Job asked God why he was going through his trial and God never answered him directly.

- God made it clear who He was and **that Job needed to trust God no matter what happened.**
- However in Job's case we did know the "why", God desired to see and prove the true faith that Job expressed.
  - This truth should open all of our eyes to how significant and important it is to God that we have faith in Him and His promises.
  - **If God gave us all the answers and told us His exact plans what need would there be for faith?**
- God has given Habakkuk a different directive and truth.
  - **That our focus must not be on justice, the punishment of those who are evil or all the "why" questions. But instead we must live by faith.**
  - We can very easily get caught up in all of the "why" questions however we must put those desires aside and simply trust in God.
  - Solomon gives us his wisdom and perspective on these.
    - Sinners may seem to prevail but ultimately it will not go well for them, however for those that are God-fearing things will come together.
      - Ecclesiastes 8:12-13
    - There will be injustice
      - Ecclesiastes 8:14
    - Enjoy what God has given you
      - Ecclesiastes 8:15
    - Man will never be able to fully understand God.
      - Ecclesiastes 8:16-17
  - **We must therefore live by faith.**
- Faith is the way of life for the believer.
  - **Faith is not something that is only expressed at Salvation, but it is the way of life for the believer.**
  - There is nothing more important in the life of a believer than their faith in God.
  - It is this very faith in God that allows us become a Christian.
    - Ephesians 2:8
      - "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift"
    - John 3:16
      - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."
    - We cannot become a Christian without true faith in Jesus Christ in who He is and what He did for us on the cross.
    - **2 Doors?**
      - If he opened the doors there would be no need for faith.
      - Man would make decisions based on his desires and what was best for him.
  - But our faith does not end at Salvation, instead it is only the beginning.
    - We must have faith in God at every step and every moment in our lives.
    - Because we will have questions like that of Habakkuk and God in many cases will not answer them.
    - **We instead are to have faith in all of the divine attributes of God.**

- **He is Holy, He is just, He is eternal, He is sovereign, He is omniscient (knowledge), He is righteous, He is Love, He is omnipresent (everywhere), He is omnipotent (powerful), He is immutable (unchanging) and God is veracity (truth).**
    - These are all attributes of God that we must have faith to believe so that we put our full trust into the hands of God and the decisions that He makes are always righteous and just.
    - If we live out our lives in faith and believing in the attributes of God we will be able to preserve no matter what we might face in life.
  - We must live out faith everyday in our life even when we do not know the “why”
    - Abraham had this faith.
      - Hebrews 11:8-10
      - Abraham had to have faith at every step of His life. If you go back to Genesis and study His life you will see that he had to have faith every step of the way.
      - And when he did God opened up the doors for him.
      - Abraham didn’t fully understand the “why” but he had faith in God and that faith carried him through and God never left him.
      - This faith was credited to him for righteousness
        - Genesis 15:6
          - “Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.”
  - If we live out everyday of our life in faith we will be able to persevere and live out our lives trusting God in everything.
    - This is the Christian life to trust God and have faith in God regardless of the circumstances.
    - This is what God desires from us.
- **God works on faith, He desires that we trust Him in everything even when we do not understand the “why” to what we are going through. When we exercise unwavering faith regardless of our circumstances and personal desires we put our trust in Him. This shows God how much we love and believe in Him. Love is not shown by us picking the path of least resistance, or the one that makes us feel better or looks to be less painful. Love to God is shown in our unwavering faith in who He is, His promises and being obedient to His commands even when we cannot see what is on the other side of the door.**