

Daily Bible Study

*“The Burden Habakkuk Saw – Chapter 1”*

*Habakkuk 1*

*January 1– 7, 2012*

**THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY** – As we enter this new year of 2012 we are going to take a few weeks and look at the book of the minor prophet Habakkuk before returning Lord willing to our study of Mark. The name “Habakkuk” is likely from a Hebrew root word meaning to “embrace,” which may denote his closeness to God and his struggle for his country’s obedience and good. A very brief, mind you, VERY BRIEF and practical summary of the book could be as follows: Habakkuk explores among other things the questions of why—and whether—God permits evil to exist and go unpunished. This particular prophet is unknown except through this book which was most likely written in the days of Josiah and or his son Jehoiachin roughly in the years 639–597 B.C. The prophet was troubled by both the sins he saw in Judah among God’s people along with a seeming indifference to these horrid conditions on the part of God. God shows Habakkuk He is sovereign over history and not detached or indifferent and as a matter of fact He is about to bring the Babylonians down on His people as a punishment. This then raises further questions as the prophet wonders how can the holy God use such a wicked people like the Babylonians as a tool against His people? God answers not with specific detail concerning all of men’s questions concerning His involvement and orchestration of human events but instead reminds Habakkuk that His purposes are faithful and consistent; He will fulfill His covenant promises to His people for both their good and His eternal glory. This small book has great value for us as the people of God today. We also see wickedness and wicked men apparently flourish, and we also often have questions about God’s justice as well. We are reminded that we live this life by faith and in the period of the “already” (a time of an initial fulfillment of God’s promises) and the “not yet” (the final and full realization of those promises). Read **Habakkuk 1**.

*(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?*

---

---

---

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, teach me from Your Word this week and help me to know You and trust You regardless of how things may look to me like they are unfolding. Help me live by faith.*

**TUESDAY** – **Habakkuk 1:1-4** *“The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw. O LORD, how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.”* We are told no more in **verse 1** than that the penman was a *prophet*, a man divinely inspired and

commissioned by God. The book itself is *the oracle (burden) which he saw*; he was as sure of this truth as if he was seeing it with his physical eyes. Now as the text continues we see that the prophet sadly cries out to The Lord. This is a serious complaint and it was twofold; why God seemed so indifferent (why doesn't God hear?) and insensitive (why doesn't God help?). We see his concern over the "delay" in God's response from the words *how long...* We as God's people today experience the same frustrations. We wonder why God seems silent when we pray. Men of old had the same concerns (**Psalm 13:1-4; 22:1, 11, 19-20, 74:1-2, 10-11, 88**). Interesting is the fact that God's people can bring everything, including "complaints" to god in prayer and this is even God's design for us in the worship of him; to pray and seek and ask of Him. Habakkuk sadly laments the iniquity of his day as he looks at the decay of religion and righteousness among God's people. He cries the land was *full of violence*, reminiscent of **Genesis 6:11**. The prophet cries out that everywhere and in every relationship he sees problems. Habakkuk emphasized the opposing principles of evil and justice and his frustration that not only is the lawlessness rampant, but it has seemed to paralyze the very mechanisms of law by which it should be curbed and restrained. Only God's intervention could correct this. The rampant, seeming unchecked evils of his day including those done against *the righteous* had even brought division and suspicion among and between the people of God. God had and has reasons for everything He does and although we plead with Him for answers we ultimately must say, "He is wise, and righteous, and does all things well and for our good".

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

---

---

---

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, help me trust, and believe You in all circumstances. Help me to understand You have a perfect plan for everything and that You always do what is best.*

**WEDNESDAY** – **Habakkuk 1:5-11** *“Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own. They are dreaded and fearsome; their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves; their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swift to devour. They all come for violence, all their faces forward. They gather captives like sand. At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it. Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men, whose own might is their god!”* In this next portion we read that God has an answer to the prophet's complaint. God assures him that it may appear He does not see or care but in fact a day of judgment and vengeance was coming. Even in this we can understand that God is warning His people through the prophet that they might repent, and be spared from judgment. In **verse 5** we read *Look at the nations and see...* This is God's reply. The verbs *look* and *see* in Hebrew include the plural "you." God is addressing both the prophet and the people. Habakkuk complained about being made to

look at injustice but in fact both the people of God and the prophet are too nearsighted. They are consumed at looking at merely what they can see up close and personal. God instructs them to get their eyes off the immediate havoc and look up and out. They need a world view that included other, in this case, “the nations.” God says when they did this they will be *astounded*. In fact Habakkuk *was astounded* (v. 12, 17). What God was about to perform would be hard for them to believe, even though God is telling them of it. The sin of the people would not go unchecked. Justice was in fact not dead. The discipline of God was coming. What would be hard to accept for God’s people is who would carry out the discipline for God upon His people. Surely God would not use these wicked Chaldeans (Babylonians) to bring correction would He? Not only would He do that, He says He is *raising up the Chaldeans*. History tells us that the Chaldeans or Babylonians were a nation known for fierce, cruel, violent acts without remorse. God calls them so in the following verses describing them as *bitter, hasty, dreaded, fearsome, etc...* All these facts are what Habakkuk was informed would cause him to *not believe if told* (v.5).

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

---

---

---

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, Help me to have an eternal perspective, to see above my immediate circumstances, and to trust Your sovereign, wise hand regardless of what I may think or feel.*

**THURSDAY – Habakkuk 1:5-11** *“Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own. They are dreaded and fearsome; their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves; their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swift to devour. They all come for violence, all their faces forward. They gather captives like sand. At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it. Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men, whose own might is their god!”* We need to let this description sink into our minds in order to appreciate the reaction of Habakkuk. These Chaldeans were a ruthless and powerful people that God raised up and controlled and they were powerful enough to *march through the breadth of the earth*. There was no apparent hope for the people of God, the tiny speck of dust before this giant world power. Read again the description of this God empowered “superpower” and you will feel like the vulture is swooping down onto a piece of “deadmeat”. This horrible picture is what causes more crying out from Habakkuk which we will see tomorrow. For now let us remember that our God, The Sovereign God of Israel, is in full control and in fact controls all and every power, king, and kingdom in and through world history (**Proverbs 21:1**), no matter how ruthless and “unchristian”

they may seem. He does this all for His glory and for His perfect ends (**Isaiah 46:8-13, Daniel 4:34-37**).

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

---

---

---

Suggestion for Prayer: Lord, thanks for being all powerful and for being my God and Father.

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Habakkuk 1:12-17** “Are you not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, you have ordained them as a judgment, and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof. You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he? You make mankind like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler. He brings all of them up with a hook; he drags them out with his net; he gathers them in his dragnet; so he rejoices and is glad. Therefore he sacrifices to his net and makes offerings to his dragnet; for by them he lives in luxury, and his food is rich. Is he then to keep on emptying his net and mercilessly killing nations forever? In these verses we find that God’s amazing plan left Habakkuk even more perplexed and bewildered than he was originally. He had complained about the sin and lawlessness he saw among the people of God and God informed him that He was not ignorant of it all and His discipline was on its way. Soon, the Babylonians would be taking God’s people captive. Habakkuk is astonished, as God said he would be (**v. 5**) and he is also appalled that God would use such an evil nation to punish His people. Habakkuk now expresses his deep concern and he also questions God’s plan. In these verses Habakkuk’s complaint is that in using the wicked Chaldeans God seems to be acting directly opposite to His own holiness and righteous character. How could God *who’s eyes are to pure to see evil and look at wrong* sit by idly and *watch traitors, the wicked swallow up men more righteous than them?* (**v. 13**) How could God tolerate and seemingly excuse this wickedness, idolatry and injustice in His plan?

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

---

---

---

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to walk close enough to You to trust You completely.