

FAITH UNDER FIRE: When God Doesn't Make Sense

(Habakkuk 1:1-2:1)

10.19.08

Background on the book:

The Babylonians were the world-powerhouse of the day. Nineveh (Assyrians) fell in 612 BC.

Date of book: around 609-598 BC or around 626-590 BC; about the same time as Jeremiah

Considered one of the twelve “Minor Prophets” (Hebrew Bible-“The Twelve”)

Unique features: --Habakkuk confronts God on behalf of the people
--Contains one of the most influential verses in the Bible (2:4)
--Other important passages (2:14, 20; 3:17-18)
--Church History Fact: Radically changed Martin Luther's life; influenced the Protestant Reformation

What this book teaches us about salvation-history: God is in control of the world around us and remains true to His promises. Though Jerusalem would be invaded because of their unfaithfulness to Him (Invasion-598BC; Fall of Jerusalem-587 BC), God was still working through His people (remnant) to provide the promised Savior of the world (Messiah) who would overcome all injustices and wickedness.

Habakkuk tells us that when we don't understand God's plan and when we can't see His hand at work in our lives, we are to trust His heart.

What the book tells us about God:

- He is sovereign (1:6)
- He is the one to whom we are to turn when our faith is under fire.
- He is eternal (1:12)
- He uses the “sword” to judge nations (1:12)
- He is the God of salvation (3:18)
- He is the God of our strength (3:19)
- He is holy (1:12; 3:3)
- He keeps his promises (covenant)-even if it means judgment on the people of Israel (1:5-6)
- He brings judgment against the unjust and wicked (2:6-19)
- He is at work in the world, even when we don't “see” Him working (1:5)

1 The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw. 2 O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you Violence! and you will not save? 3 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. 4 So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted. 5 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. 6 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. 7 They are dreaded and fearsome; their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. 8 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. 9 They all come for violence, all their faces forward. They gather captives like sand. 10 At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it. 11 Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men, whose own might is their god! 12 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. 13 You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and are silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he? 14 You make mankind like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler. 15 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. 16 Therefore he sacrifices to his net and makes offerings to his dragnet; for by them he lives in luxury, and his food is rich. 17 Is he then to keep on emptying his net and mercilessly killing nations forever?
2 1 I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

Habakkuk 1:1-2:1 ESV

Explanation:

1:1-4: Habakkuk's First Question: “Why God? You Don't Make Sense.”

“Habakkuk” “oracle” “prophet” v. 4 “wicked” v.4 “righteous”

1:5-11: God's Response: “I'll Tell You What I'm Doing--You Won't Understand.”

v. 6 “Chaldeans”

1:12-2:1: Habakkuk's Second Question: “I Don't Understand. Why?”

v. 16 “sacrifices to his net” v. 16 “dragnet” v. 1 “watchpost,” “tower”

Application from Habakkuk 1:1-2:1: When God doesn't seem to make sense. . .

1. we go to Him with our concerns (1 Pet 5:6-7; Heb 4:16); repentance and faith and “help me!” (Remember Mark 9:24?). If He revealed everything to us, it would probably fail to understand.
2. we must know that as followers of Jesus, He is at work in the world and in our lives for our good and His glory (Rom 8:31-39); we must remember He keeps His promises (Num 23:19); we must remember His past actions; we must remember His consistency (Heb 13:8).
3. we should wait like Habakkuk and trust that He knows best (2:1).

Works Consulted : *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; Paul R. House, *Old Testament Survey*; Carl E. Armerding, “Habakkuk” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, David W. Baker, *Nabum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*; Kenneth L. Barker and Waylon Bailey, *Micah, Nabum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*.