

HABAKKUK: A THEODICY
I: Handling God's Seeming Indifference To His People's Sins
(Habakkuk 1:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. Habakkuk trusted in the Lord, but he struggled to understand how God Who was good and all-powerful would function at times seemingly indifferent to the existence of great evil in the world.
- B. The book of Habakkuk is thus a theodicy, a “defense of God’s goodness and power in view of the existence of evil,” Ryrie Study Bib., KJV, 1978, p. 1296, “Introduction to the Book of Habakkuk: Habakkuk’s Questions.”
- C. Habakkuk 1:1-11 addressed the problem of God’s seeming indifference to the sins of His own people in Judah, what we study for our insight, application, and edification (as follows):

II. Handling God's Seeming Indifference To His People's Sins, Habakkuk 1:1-11.

- A. The Hebrew word rendered “burden” (KJV) in Habakkuk 1:1a is *massa*, a noun that is derived from a verb that means “to lift up,” hence the meaning of “a burden” for the noun, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1508.
- B. This “burden” was certainly a troubling problem for the prophet because of what the Lord directed him to see in his prophetic visions, the word for “see” (KJV) in Habakkuk 1:1b is *hazah*, what often means to see in a prophetic vision (cf. Isaiah 1:1; 2:1; Ezekiel 12:27; Amos 1:1; Micah 1:1), *Ibid*.
- C. What God caused Habakkuk to see in his prophetic vision(s) was great evil in his people in Judah, Hab. 1:2-4:
 - 1. Habakkuk was so troubled at what God let him see in his visions that he asked the Lord how long would he cry for God’s help but He not seem to hear or cry out about “violence”, but God not save, Hab. 1:2.
 - 2. The prophet asked why God made him see iniquity while the Lord seemingly looked idly at it, for Habakkuk saw destruction and violence right in front of him, strife, and contention rising so that the law was paralyzed, justice never went forth and the wicked surrounded the righteous, perverting justice, v. 3-4.
- D. God responded to His prophet, informing Habakkuk that He was planning to bring the overwhelmingly wicked, cruel Babylonians to attack and punish the wicked people of Judah, Habakkuk 1:5-11:
 - 1. In response to Habakkuk’s presumption that the Lord was not sensitive to the wickedness in Judah, God replied that He had a plan to punish Judah with such a great judgment that Habakkuk would wonder and be astounded, that the prophet would not believe it even if he were told, Habakkuk 1:5.
 - 2. Specifically, the Lord informed Habakkuk that He would raise up the Babylonians, a “bitter and hasty nation,” whose army marched through the lands seizing dwellings that were not their own, Hab. 1:6 ESV.
 - 3. They were “dreaded and fearsome,” “a law to themselves,” Hab. 1:7 ESV; *Ibid.*, Ryrie, fn. to Hab. 1:7.
 - 4. Their horses were swift and fierce, their horsemen pressed proudly on, coming from afar quickly to devour with great violence and courage, men who gathered captives like sand, Habakkuk 1:8-9 ESV.
 - 5. God added that these Babylonian soldiers scoffed at the kings they attacked, they laughed at rulers and every fortress they encountered, for they piled up dirt mounds in order to besiege or bridge the walls of the cities they defeated and invaded, Habakkuk 1:10; *Ibid*, fn. to Habakkuk 1:10.
 - 6. These Babylonian soldiers tended to sweep by like the wind and go on to capture other nations, soldiers who were guilty of great sins, but whose own might was their god since they did not view themselves as being accountable even to Judah’s God, Habakkuk 1:11 ESV.
- E. In other words, God was not unaffected by the violence, sin, strife, contention, lawlessness, and the perversion of justice in His own people of Judah, for He planned to respond to all their sin by bringing a nation against them that was even more violent, more sinful, more given to strife, more contentious, more lawless, more guilty of perverting justice and even more fearless of Judah’s God than the Lord’s own sinful people!

Lesson: *When God’s prophet Habakkuk was shown prophetic visions of the great sinfulness of his people in Judah when God seemed to stand idly by, not dealing with the wickedness, and he complained about it to the Lord, God revealed that He was not only aware of Judah’s sin, but that He Himself was so concerned that He was about to bring an invading force that was more wicked than the people of Judah to punish His people in great judgment!*

Application: *(1) May we not think that God is unmoved by the evils we see and that concern us, for His attributes are infinite, so He is infinitely more aware and concerned about these evils than we are, and He plans to address them with far more precision and force than we would! (2) So, if we are aware of sin in ourselves, may we face it and confess it lest God Who is far more upset at it than we are might severely punish us for it! (3) May we also relax in realizing that God is very aware of the sins we see about us, knowing that He will fully address them!*