

HABAKKUK: A THEODICY
II: God's Wonderful Plan Amid His Horrible Judgment
(Habakkuk 1:12-2:4)

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 1:12-2:4 addressed the problem of God’s actions that leave us with questions, but how He offers a wonderful plan amid His horrible judgment. We study the passage for insight, application, and edification:

II. God's Wonderful Plan Amid His Horrible Judgment, Habakkuk 1:12-2:4.

- A. When God had given His prophet Habakkuk visions of troubling evils in the people of Judah, and Habakkuk had asked the Lord how He seemed to stand idly by and not punish them, the Lord replied that He was going to send the very wicked, cruel, destructive Babylonians to invade Judah and punish her, Habakkuk 1:1-11.
- B. This divine reply troubled Habakkuk all the more: Babylon had the capacity to eradicate Judah’s people, and Babylon was more wicked than Judah, so Habakkuk wondered about God’s justice in this punishment. (Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 1511) Habakkuk expressed his inner struggle over this matter in Habakkuk 1:12-17:
 - 1. First, though Habakkuk wondered about God’s justice in how He would punish Judah, he reaffirmed his belief in Judah’s God as being everlasting and “holy,” that is, separate from sin in great contrast to the Babylonians who viewed their own strength as their god, Habakkuk 1:12a with 1:11b; *Ibid.* Thus, Judah’s God, being immutable and everlasting, would not break His covenant with Israel that she might survive the invasion and He would not let sin go unpunished, be it sin in His people Judah or in other nations, *Ibid.*
 - 2. Second, Habakkuk reminded himself that God had appointed the Babylonians to execute judgment on Judah, not to annihilate her, Habakkuk 1:12b.
 - 3. Nevertheless, Habakkuk wondered how such a righteous God could idly look at wicked nations like Babylon that invaded and overcame other nations that were more righteous than Babylon, Habakkuk 1:13. God’s prophet dwelt on this question at length in Habakkuk 1:14-17 (as follows):
 - a. Habakkuk likened the nations that Babylon defeated as fish in the sea that were easy prey for invaders as they lacked leadership and the ability to organize themselves for self-protection, Habakkuk 1:14; *Ibid.* The Babylonians thus caught unsuspecting men like fish by way of hooks or nets, Habakkuk 1:15.
 - b. Accordingly, the Babylonians figuratively sacrificed to their net or dragnet as if it were their god, for by it they lived in luxury and their food was rich, Habakkuk 1:16.
 - c. The prophet Habakkuk asked God if the Babylonians were going to keep emptying their net and mercilessly killing more nations of people perpetually, Habakkuk 1:17.
- C. Realizing his question was rather bold to the Lord, and yet earnestly desiring an answer, Habakkuk stationed himself like a watchman on the ramparts to see what God would say that he might convey His answer to other believers, Habakkuk 2:1a. Habakkuk also waited to see what his response to God’s answer might be, v. 1b.
- D. When God spoke, He directed Habakkuk to write His answer down, to make it plain on tablets of baked clay so that a herald could run with it to clarify the answer to God’s people, Habakkuk 2:2. Even if what he had to say would point to a future time, believers were to wait for it to come to pass, for it would surely occur, v. 3.
- E. God’s answer to Habakkuk was that though the Babylonian’s soul was puffed up and not upright, in sharp contrast to the Babylonian, a righteous believer in Judah during the invasion would “live by his faith,” Hab. 2:4 ESV. “To ‘live’ meant to experience God’s blessing by enjoying a life of security, protection, and fullness. Conversely, an apparently victorious but proud and perverse Babylonian would die,” *Ibid.*, p. 1513.

Lesson: *Though God would use a more wicked Babylon to punish wicked Judah, He planned to cause Babylon herself to be destroyed for her sins. However, individually righteous believers amid all the chaotic destruction of sinners around them due to God’s judgment would enjoy security, protection, and fullness by a life of faith in God.*

Application: *(1) Since God’s discipline for sin is so very overwhelming and destructive, may we AVOID sin and/or CONFESS it before God’s discipline falls. (2) However, if God’s punishment falls and wreaks havoc on sinners around us, if we are right with God, we can expect Him to bless us amid all the havoc if we live by faith. (3) May we then live by faith separate from all wickedness in the world or in people around us for God’s blessing.*