

Your Notes

How are we to deal with situations when the character of God seems to be contradicted by His silence or by His actions?

1. **Stop to think.**
2. Apply the **Biblical facts** to the problem.
3. Take it to God **in prayer and leave it there** with Him.

1:1-4 Habakkuk's first question: "Why do the sins of Your people go unpunished?"

1:5-11 Yahweh's answer: "The Chaldeans will discipline Judah."

1:12-2:1 HABAKKUK'S SECOND QUESTION: "HOW CAN YOU, A HOLY GOD, USE AN UNHOLY INSTRUMENT?"

2:2-4 GOD'S ANSWER: "THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH (AND, 2:5-20, THE PROUD WILL BE PUNISHED!)."

Faith is not a one-time act but **a way of life.**

God knows what He is doing. "Will you trust Me with your life, dreams, plans, families, house, finances, questions, complaints, heartaches, relationships, enemies, heart, soul? I'm everlasting, personal, supreme, holy, faithful, mighty, all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving. You can trust Me. Please do so! My promise to you is that I will use it for good."

When someone asks why God doesn't do something about evil, we can answer, "God has done something about it! Around 2000 years ago, He gave His Son Jesus to die for our sins and for us as sinners." Stop to reflect on that fact! Apply that fact to the issues of sins and sinners. Talk to our God in prayer and sit at Jesus' feet and listen. Also keep in mind, there is coming a day of wrath for unbelievers (Rom. 2:5).

What we need to ask when something happens is, "Yahweh, what do You want us to learn about You during this time? Will we walk by faith in You, no matter what is happening to us or around us? May our focus be fixed on You, Yahweh, the great I AM!"

FOR NEXT WEEK: Please read Habakkuk 2:4-20. In 2:4-5, what is God's message to the proud? Ask the same question about each section: :6-8? :9-11? :12-14? :15-17? :18-20? What conclusions do you reach? Notice especially :14 and :20. What do you learn from these two verses? What about these verses cause you to tremble before, exult in, and trust Yahweh?

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2. Apply the _____ to the problem.
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1:12-2:1 H A B A K K U K ' S S E C O N D Q U E S T I O N : " H O W C A N Y O U , A H O L Y G O D , U S E A N U N H O L Y I N S T R U M E N T ? "

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An OT prophet was trying to reconcile what he heard from God with what he believed. **How are we to deal with situations when the character of God seems to be contradicted by His silence or by His actions?** I'm confused about Your ways!

Martyn Lloyd-Jones gives us three steps: (1) **STOP TO THINK**. Back away from the problem and begin with God. What do you know about His character? What are you certain of? (2) **APPLY THE BIBLICAL FACTS TO THE PROBLEM**. Put your problem into the context of God and His character. (3) If you still have not come to an answer or you're still in doubt, commit the problem to God in faith. **TAKE IT TO GOD IN PRAYER AND LEAVE IT THERE WITH HIM**. Think, review, wait, listen. This is a portrait of faith. When we trust Him, He is displayed through us!

Read **1:12-2:1**. **HABAKKUK'S SECOND QUESTION: "HOW CAN YOU, A HOLY GOD, USE AN UNHOLY INSTRUMENT?"** God's words in :5-11 sound like the Supreme Judge's death sentence upon the nation Judah. "This doesn't sound like You."

1:12-13a Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; And You, O Rock, have established them to correct. :13 Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You cannot look on wickedness with favor.

1:12-13A READ. Habakkuk uses his mind and concentrates on the facts about our Lord he knows to be true. Everlasting, eternal—Yahweh always has been; He always will be. Yahweh—Habakkuk thinks about God's name and what it means (I AM That I AM, He which is, the self-existent One). Personal: My God—Elohim, the supreme deity, in control of all. My Holy One—I *know* You hate sin and demand purity. Can You do wrong?

We will not die—he realizes they can't all die. God had made a one-sided covenant with the first Jew Abraham, and God is faithful. God had promised king David an eternal king on his throne. Death to all Judah would contradict Your very nature. O Rock (almighty, immovable, strong, all-powerful), You have appointed the Chaldeans to judge—nations are in Your hands. This is Your work. You have established them to correct—not to demolish but to judge, not to annihilate but to establish what is just or right.

What was God's purpose in all this? He had lovingly warned and wooed Judah for over 300 years. His purpose was to discipline and restore the nation. The core issue was idolatry. They had lost their focus on God. Drastic measures were needed. When God works in our lives or other's lives, there's the chance we'll ask Him, "What's going on?" It's about relationship. He was and deserves our worship. He is to be our God and no other.

Our response to this God and His character should be to fall on our knees and worship Him, like Moses in Ex. 34! Stop to think, not about the problem, but about the character of the Biblical God. Then...!

1:13b-17 Why do You look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they? :14 Why have You made men like the fish of the sea, like creeping things without a ruler over them? :15 The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook, drag them away with their net, and gather them together in their fishing net. Therefore they rejoice and are glad. :16 Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net and burn incense to their fishing net; because through these things their catch is large, and their food is plentiful. :17 Will they therefore empty their net and continually slay nations without sparing?

1:13B-17 READ. How *can* the wicked Chaldeans be used by a God who can't by His very nature approve of wickedness? It's amazing how quickly Habakkuk has forgotten his own people's sins listed in :1-4. "Would not Your use of the depraved Chaldeans result in great damage to Your righteous character? Why don't You act immediately or why will You deal with Your people this way?"

Before the Chaldeans, there was no defense, no protection, no leader, people were helpless. The Chaldeans' greatest delight was to inflict hardship upon others. Like a fisherman, the Chaldean sat beside a stream stocked with human fish. The Chaldeans worshiped the means that brought them success: their nets, their war machinery, their strength. Even after they'd dined excessively, they continued to fish! The surplus they dumped out on the shore to die. Such a picture of man—proud, powerful, self-sufficient.

Even in reading this description, we realize this isn't going to end well for them!

The prophet now places his questions in context with who God is. Yahweh had already told him in 1:11 that they will be held guilty! But Habakkuk is still confused. So, he makes one of the most significant decisions of his entire ministry. **2:1 READ. I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guardpost. There I will wait to see what Yahweh says and how He will answer my complaint (NLT).** He decides to stand back and wait and watch.

He takes his problems to his God in prayer and leaves them with Him. “This problem is Yours, not mine. I’ll wait for Your answer if I need further clarification.” Habakkuk prayed and waited, which are action words, not passive! God loves us enough to bring us to the point of faith in Him alone.

We need to keep our eyes fixed on God, not the problem. Habakkuk clearly believed the facts he knew about God and he acted on them. When we know who God is—loving, all-powerful, all-wise, holy, the Rock, faithful, supreme—we can watch and wait. We know He’ll answer! READ Dt. 32:3-4. Habakkuk thinks, prays, waits, listens. And God answers!

READ 2:2-4. GOD’S ANSWER: “THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH (AND, 2:4-20, THE PROUD WILL BE PUNISHED!).”

2:2-4 :2 Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. :3 "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay. :4 "Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.

That last phrase is quoted in Gal. 3:11, Rom. 1:17, and Heb. 10:38. God’s solution to confusing, troubling times is trusting Him completely, acting with unreserved confidence in Him and His Word. The one right with God trusts Him, the almighty, personal, holy, dependable God of the Bible. The faithful experience life as God intended, no matter what the circumstances or questions. On the other hand, the proud person is mired in self-centeredness and self-confidence. The proud trust in themselves and are soul-sick.

:2 READ. Record the message, write down what will happen, that the one who reads it may run—either the messenger can read it and run to warn others, or its reader, even if on the run, may read and understand as he passes. “Write down what will happen to the proud. Write down what will happen to the faithful. Write it all down and wait for it to happen. Make it clear, or write the message in large, legible letters!” Habakkuk had to be sobered by God’s answer. These are GOD’s words, for him to practice and share.

:3 READ. The vision will occur at God’s appointed time. In 605-586 B.C. Judah was dealt with, and in 539 B.C. the Chaldeans did fall to the Medo-Persian king. The vision gasps, pants for the goal; it can’t fail. [NLT **If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place.**] God has given us Himself; trust Him with the outcome and with the timing.

:4 READ. NLB “**Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked; but the righteous will live by their faith.**” The self-centered, proud pagans whose strength is their god are contrasted with the trusting remnant. The real issue is not Judah’s violence or the coming Chaldean destruction but the state of each individual’s heart and life before God. In who/what is your trust? If we aren’t trusting the Biblical God, who/what are we trusting? This is the most important earthly decision we will ever make.

Pride by its very nature is self-destructive. Yes, the proud may achieve much in terms of fame, fortune, power, or pleasure, but see his end—the five woes, listed in 2:6-20. He’ll ultimately fail because God is opposed to the proud. God goes to war against such a person or nation (James 4:6, 1 Pet. 5:5). See the example of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. 4:28-37!

But look at the trusting person. As this statement makes clear, FAITH IS NOT A ONE-TIME ACT BUT **A WAY OF LIFE**. “I know the frustration you’re facing, the questions you’re asking. If I haven’t revealed the answer to you, you don’t need to know. Believe Me, My words, My character, and act on who I am.

The righteous stake all on Me and My Word. “Because of Who I am and what I’ve done, you can trust Me. That’s what I want you to do no matter what is taking place or what is going to happen. Listen carefully: ‘The righteous will live by his/her faith in Me.’” Jer. 17:7 says, “**Blessed is the man who trusts in Yahweh, and whose trust IS Yahweh.**”

Trusting Him (or walking by faith) means not only knowing the facts of the Bible but believing them and acting on them. Trusting Him means resting from all the anxieties that are making knots in our stomachs. Trusting Him means not having to understand everything that is troubling us right now. It’s letting the whole burden of my life go by entrusting it to the Father. (see day 29 in 31 Days of Praise) “Habakkuk, you can trust Me, for the future, and for the present! You’ll experience LIFE as you walk by faith. Please do so!”

We are to know God, His character, and His Word, wait, and trust. God is not indifferent to sin. God is not insensitive to suffering.

GOD KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING. “WILL YOU TRUST ME WITH YOUR LIFE, DREAMS, PLANS, FAMILIES, HOUSE, FINANCES, QUESTIONS, COMPLAINTS, HEARTACHES, RELATIONSHIPS, ENEMIES, HEART, SOUL? I’M EVERLASTING, PERSONAL, SUPREME, HOLY, FAITHFUL, MIGHTY, ALL-WISE, ALL-POWERFUL, AND ALL-LOVING. YOU CAN TRUST ME. PLEASE DO SO! MY PROMISE TO YOU IS THAT I WILL USE IT FOR GOOD.”

WHEN SOMEONE ASKS WHY GOD DOESN’T DO SOMETHING ABOUT EVIL, WE CAN ANSWER, “GOD HAS DONE SOMETHING ABOUT IT! AROUND 2000 YEARS AGO, HE GAVE HIS SON JESUS TO DIE FOR OUR SINS AND FOR US AS SINNERS. STOP TO REFLECT ON THAT FACT! APPLY THAT FACT TO THE ISSUES OF SINS AND SINNERS. TALK TO OUR GOD IN PRAYER AND SIT AT JESUS’ FEET AND LISTEN. ALSO KEEP IN MIND, THERE IS COMING A DAY OF WRATH FOR UNBELIEVERS (ROM. 2:5).

WHAT WE NEED TO ASK WHEN SOMETHING HAPPENS IS, “YAHWEH, WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO LEARN ABOUT YOU DURING THIS TIME? WILL WE WALK BY FAITH IN YOU, NO MATTER WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US OR AROUND US? MAY OUR FOCUS BE FIXED ON YOU, YAHWEH, THE GREAT I AM!”

Conclude by reading **3:16-19**. Time of prayer.

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EXTRA NOTES:

1:12-17 :12 Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; And You, O Rock, have established them to correct. 13 Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor On those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they? 14 Why have You made men like the fish of the sea, Like creeping things without a ruler over them? 15 The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook, Drag them away with their net, And gather them together in their fishing net. Therefore they rejoice and are glad. 16 Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net And burn incense to their fishing net; Because through these things their catch is large, And their food is plentiful. 17 Will they therefore empty their net And continually slay nations without sparing?

1:12-17 [NLT] O LORD my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal--surely you do not plan to wipe us out? O LORD, our Rock, you have sent these Babylonians to correct us, to punish us for our many sins. 13 But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil. Will you wink at their treachery? Should you be silent while the wicked swallow up people more righteous than they? 14 Are we only fish to be caught and killed? Are we only sea creatures that have no leader? 15 Must we be strung up on their hooks and caught in their nets while they rejoice and celebrate? 16 Then they will worship their nets and burn incense in front of them. "These nets are the gods who have made us rich!" they will claim. 17 Will you let them get away with this forever? Will they succeed forever in their heartless conquests?

2:1-4 I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart; And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, And how I may reply when I am reproved. 2 Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision And inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run. 3 "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay. 4 "Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.

2:1-4 [NLT] :1 I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guardpost. There I will wait to see what the LORD says and how he will answer my complaint. :2 Then the LORD said to me, "Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others. 3 This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed. 4 "Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God.