

WHEN GOD DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

TEXT: (Habakkuk 3:16-18, NIV)

¹⁶ I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us. ¹⁷ Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

INTRODUCTION

1. "How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, 'Violence!' but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted" (Habakkuk 1:2-4, NIV).
2. "Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own. They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor" (Habakkuk 1:5-7, NIV).
3. "Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?" (Habakkuk 1:13, NIV).
4. "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay" (Habakkuk 2:3, NIV).

I. THE PROPHET'S PERPLEXITY

A. Habakkuk's Complaint

1. "How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, 'Violence!' but you do not save?" (Habakkuk 1:2).

B. The LORD'S Reply

1. "Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like a vulture swooping to devour; they all come bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand. They deride kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; they build earthen ramps and capture them. Then they sweep past like the wind and go on—guilty men, whose own strength is their god" (Habakkuk 1:8-11, NIV).

C. Habakkuk Question's God's Wisdom

1. "O LORD, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, we will not die. O LORD, you have appointed them to execute judgment; O Rock, you have ordained them to punish. Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?" (Habakkuk 1:12-13, NIV).
2. "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many" (Hebrews 12:15, NIV).

3. "When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord" (I Corinthians 5:4-5, NIV).
4. "But we (let us) also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:4-5, NIV).
5. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4, NIV).

II. THE LORD'S ANSWER

A. The LORD's Assurance of Deliverance

1. "Then the LORD replied: 'Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay'" (Habakkuk 2:2-3, NIV).
2. "See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous will live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4, NIV).

B. Must Trust the LORD's Wisdom

1. "Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn?" (Habakkuk 2:6, NIV).

C. The Secret of Overcoming

1. "But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him" (Hebrews 10:38, NIV).
2. "But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved" (Hebrews 10:39, NIV).
3. "What leaven needs to be worked out of this lump of clay?"
4. "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14, NIV).

III. HABAKKUK'S PRAYER AND TRUST

1. "LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy" (Habakkuk 3:2, NIV).

A. Habakkuk Counted the Blessings of God

1. "God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah* His glory covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth. His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand, where his power was hidden. Plague went before him; pestilence followed his steps. He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed. His ways are eternal. I saw the tents of Cushan in distress, the dwellings of Midian in anguish" (Habakkuk 3:3-7, NIV).
2. "I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to

come on the nation invading us” (Habakkuk 3:16, NIV).

B. Habakkuk's Trust in God

1. “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior” (Habakkuk 3:17-18, NIV).
2. “The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights” (3:19, NIV).

CONCLUSION

1. “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31, KJV).