

HOPE from HABAKKUK

Finding Hope in Hopeless Situations

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INTRODUCTION: How “hopeful” are you feeling today?

1. **Definition:** What is “Hope”? Hope is a positive expectation of future things occurring in one’s favor.
2. Hope focuses on various concerns in our lives: (Examples)
 - ➔ Our Financial Future (Comfort v. Struggle)
 - ➔ Our Vocational Future (Job Fulfillment v. Joblessness)
 - ➔ Our Health Future (Favorable health and Vitality v. Illness and Pain)
 - ➔ Our Relational Future (Fulfillment and Happiness v. Isolation and Suffering)
 - ➔ Our National Future (Freedom v. Tyranny)

SO, how “hopeful” are you feeling today?

There are people all around you today that are experiencing differing levels of hope and hopelessness based on various concerns.

3. From where do we, as Christians derive our hope?
 - ➔ We find it in the reliability of God’s character and His Word. Imagine those you know who are struggling with hopelessness and don’t have a Christian worldview and trust in God to sustain them!
 - ➔ When it comes to hopelessness in our current world situation, we can have confidence that things aren’t necessarily falling apart, but merely falling into place for the Lord’s return as prophesied!

Today, I’d like to introduce you to a man who was struggling with hopelessness in a situation before God, not just an ordinary man, but a man of God – the prophet Habakkuk. A short Old Testament book bears his name.

HABAKKUK: A Case Study in Hope from the Book that Bears His Name

Habakkuk’s Hopelessness Expressed in Prayer: (1:1-4)

Summary: “God, why don’t you answer my prayers regarding the inhumane treatment of our own people to one another?”

God’s Answer to Habakkuk’s Prayer: (1:5-11)

Summary: “You’re not able to accept my response to your prayer! I’m going to send the Chaldeans to overtake my people and place them in bondage as punishment!”

Habakkuk’s Problem: (1:12-2:1)

Summary: “But God, how can you use a nation of greater evil than Your people to punish us?”

God’s Response: (2:2-5)

Summary: “Yes, they are evil and I will punish them after I use them to punish you! The righteous one shall live by his faith!”

God's Eventual Judgment on the Chaldeans: (2:6-20)

Summary: "Woe on you Chaldeans for your many sins. Your time of punishment will surely come! The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him."

Habakkuk's Adjustment: (3:1-19)

Summary: "O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy!"

"I will wait in faith on your coming punishment. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord and take joy in the God of my salvation. You are my strength."

CORRELATION:

1. We must take our feelings of hopelessness to the Lord.
2. We must accept God's ultimate will even if we don't desire the outcome.
3. Ask for God's mercy, even when His judgment is in play.
4. How, and who might God use as a godless nation to punish our once God-fearing nation?
5. We must trust that God will deal with all evil in His time, in His own way. Can we wait?

APPLICATION:

1. When you find yourself feeling hopeless, take it to the Lord in prayer and implore His help.
2. To what extent can you allow God to judge our nation that disavows Him and punishes us, even should you, like Habakkuk might be among the innocent? (Re-Read Romans 1:18-32 to learn about God's judgment.)
3. Are you willing to adjust your life as if "Normal isn't returning, but Jesus is"?
4. Will you wait in abiding faith on the Lord to resolve all things in His way?
5. Are you willing to work towards adjusting the things that you can realistically change and accepting the things that you cannot change?

We must find our strength in the Lord who doesn't change, rather than in the circumstances which might never change! THIS is our HOPE in a HOPELESS WORLD.

Prayer for Serenity

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.