

How to Survive the Worst of Times

International Bible Lesson

Habakkuk 2:1-5; 3:17-19

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“Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Habakkuk 3:18—KJV).

“Yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation” (Habakkuk 3:18—NRSV).

We know little about the prophet Habakkuk, but we can learn from his horrifying experiences and observations how to survive during the worst of times. When Habakkuk looked around Judah and Jerusalem, he saw violence and destruction produced by the immoral nation. The King of Judah and his political allies were wicked and lawless, and the religious leaders supported their lawlessness; therefore, Habakkuk complained to God, “So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous—therefore judgment comes forth perverted” (Habakkuk 1:4). God answered that He would give justice to His people. He would justly punish the corrupt leaders of Judah, end the priests’ promotion of godless idolatry and stop the violence by sending the Babylonians to punish Judah. Then Habakkuk complained that the wicked and violent Babylonians were more wicked than God’s people; so how could God act justly and use such evil people to punish the Judeans. God replied that He would punish the Babylonians later for their injustices: “because of human bloodshed and violence to the earth” (Habakkuk 2:8). Since Habakkuk had experienced unjust suffering under the wicked King of Judah and understood that the times could only get worse under the wicked Babylonians, he resolved to “wait quietly for the day of calamity to come upon the people [the Babylonians] who attack us ” (Habakkuk 3:16). In spite of economic deprivations and the coming doom, Habakkuk chose to keep living by faith in God and God’s faithfulness. Even though he had no food and no prospect of finding food, Habakkuk resolved to keep rejoicing in the LORD who would save him and give him endurance.

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Thinking Further

1. Why do you think God wanted Habakkuk to write and make plain the vision He gave him?
2. When did God say the vision would be fulfilled?
3. What can be the personal experience of someone who is wealthy who is also proud and arrogant?
4. How does a righteous person live? Describe what that means to you.
5. What did Habakkuk say he would do if he became poor and totally unable to find food to eat because life had gotten so bad where he was?