

Habakkuk's Holy God

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As we study the Minor Prophets in Bible Class, we continue this series on how they viewed God. This week, we notice how Habakkuk shows us the God we serve. Habakkuk has some of the most clear and concise statements about God.

Habakkuk had complained to God that nothing was being done about the sins of the people. The prophet felt God was showing him the sins of the people around him but without any judgment taking place. See Hab. 1:2-4. Then God responded that He was sending the Babylonians in to bring harsh judgment against the people (1:5-11.) To this, Habakkuk was even more perplexed, not understanding how God could use a people more evil than His own to bring this judgment. We read, *"You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?"* (Hab. 1:13.) I'm sure that if Habakkuk had just thought about it, he would have answered his own question. God is pure and holy and as such, cannot abide with sin. All sin is hateful in God's sight. As a man turns away from sickening sights, so God turns away the sin that makes Him sick. All sin! If Habakkuk considered this, he would remember that Judah was sinful as well as the Babylonians and there were no degrees of sin with God. Thus, God would be just in using whoever to bring judgment.

And it is precisely the fact that God cannot look at evil that gives us assurance that He forgives us today. If God did nothing more than simply overlook our sins, what assurance or confidence would we have in God? What would it say about God's holiness if He just ignored our sins? Wouldn't it say God is not holy at all? The fact God can't look at sin should have caused our condemnation but because God is righteous and holy when He forgives (Rom. 3:21-26), He found another way to deal with sin. Jesus and His death on the cross was God's way of dealing with sin so we can be sure that God has acted out of His holiness and not just ignoring our sins. God's forgiveness has fully taken our sins into account.

Because God is so indescribably holy, what is our response? "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." (Hab. 2:20.) God's throne is in heaven, "The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man." (Psalms 11:4.) Worship is directed toward God's holy temple, "But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you." (Psalm 5:7.) The very fact that the Lord is in His holy temple should give us pause to reflect on just who God is. Think about just how perfect God is. Think about how eternal He is. Think of His power and creation. Or how about His unspotted holiness. The very utterance of a word by God will move mountains. The whole universe is filled with His presence all at the same time. God shows justice without partiality and love the same way. His mercy forgives the worst sin and His judgment not only destroys nations but condemn for all eternity. God does things that no one would believe even though they were told (Hab. 1:5.) Just the fact that God is there in heaven is awe-inspiring and should lead us to do what Habakkuk did in chapter 3. We must praise God for His matchless holiness. When it is time to judge, God will do so and when it is time to forgive, He will forgive. He will always take care of business.