

## How Long Shall I Cry By Trey Sullins

Have you ever been so upset that all you could do is cry? Usually, these types of emotions come out whenever something greatly traumatic occurs. In the Bible we find many events where people were overcome with emotion just like this. The book of Habakkuk opens in exactly this way. Habakkuk 1:1-2 says, “The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw. O LORD, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, ‘Violence!’ And You will not save.” Habakkuk wondered how long it would be before God would end the chaos that was going on in the land. The lesson which Habakkuk learns next is an important one showing us how we all need to wait for the Lord.

Habakkuk’s cry was lamenting the situation of his day. Habakkuk lived in a day when the sins of Israel had finally caught up with them. The northern kingdom of Israel had already been destroyed and now southern Judah was about to be destroyed as well. Morally, the land was vile and wicked. This led to violence and chaos not only from the people afflicting each other, but also from the invaders as well. Habakkuk 1:4 mentions that there was no more justice in the land: “Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.” It seems that the leaders and judges had become so corrupted that the wicked were pressing in on the righteous and stamping out any righteousness and justice that was left. Habakkuk’s question to God was why was God allowing this to continue and he had not yet saved them from this situation. The situation was looking very grim.

God answers Habakkuk very simply beginning in Habakkuk 1:5. His answer is to look and watch what was going to happen. God reveals that Habakkuk was going to witness something that would be astounding; The Babylonians would be raised so powerful that they would sweep across the land and do whatever they pleased. God’s point behind this answer is that Habakkuk needed to continue to wait on Him and when the time was right, the judgment would be delivered. To this answer Habakkuk wondered how God could use such a wicked nation for His purposes. “Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?” (Habakkuk 1:13) Once more God reveals in the next chapter that this nation too would be punished for their wickedness. Ultimately wickedness will never escape the judgment of God.

The ultimate lesson for us is to wait on the Lord. The world around us seems like an increasingly wicked place. As the nations of earth get older, they become more immoral, and these effects are seen today in so many ways. While we often want results now, our best, and only, option is to wait on God. Philippians 2:15 describes the first century world as a “crooked and perverse generation.” This description certainly fits our day as well. With all of this in view, all we can do is remember the power and plan of God. Like Habakkuk the wickedness of the world will not make us happy, but we must remember that God has a plan. If we remain faithful and obedient to Him according to His word, then His plan will bring us home to Him in heaven!

Although sometimes it may seem like things are not going the way they should, our God is great, glorious, and powerful. He raised and destroyed Babylon because He has control over all. Isaiah 40:31 puts it plainly, “But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall

mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.” We must wait on the Lord, serve Him, and never turn our backs from following Him. When we do this, then we can look forward to the day when the Lord returns, and our wait is over.