

## *The Third Tower* *Habakkuk 1:18-20*

INTRO:

Habakkuk, the prophet who dared to ask why, complained to God because of all the injustice and sin he saw in Judah. He accused God of being indifferent to the plight of righteous people in Judah, and of being inactive in doing anything about the situation. To these charges God shocks His prophet by answering this challenge with a call to look among the heathen. The Chaldeans were coming to take care of Judah's sinfulness. Habakkuk then stepped back and took time to remind himself of what was real. God is eternal. God is holy. God is the faithful covenant keeping God of Israel. God is Elohim, our all-powerful God. We will not die! But God how can you use those less holy than we are to judge us?

In 2:2 it says, ***“Then the LORD answered me and said: ‘Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.’*** The whole of chapter two is God's answer to Habakkuk's question. God's answer involves five woes and at the beginning in the middle and at the end of the woes are three towers of timeless truths for the righteous ones to run into and be safe. Tower one was ***“the just shall live by faith.”*** Tower two was ***“the knowledge of the glory of the LORD shall cover the earth as the water covers the sea.”*** We are looking at the third tower today. ***“But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”*** To understand this statement we must understand the contrast with the last woe. So, our study has two parts.

***I. The Reality of Idols (v. 18-19)***

***II. The Reality of the Living God (v.20)***

***I. The Reality of Idols (v. 18-19)***

A. Most expositors remark that the last woe unlike the others does not begin with the word woe itself. It has a preamble. This is true, but the preamble and the woe itself is the backdrop against which the last tower, the last statement of timeless truth must be seen.

***“What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, The molded image, a teacher of lies, That the maker of its mold should trust in it, To make mute idols? Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Awake!’ To silent stone, ‘Arise! It shall teach!’ Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, Yet in it there is no breath at all” (Habakkuk 2:18-19).***

This woe or calling for judgment is against those who trust in idols and not the true and living God.

B. About now we might be tempted to fall asleep. Clearly this message is not for me because I do not have an idol hidden in my closet. There is no shrine against one wall of my living room. But the point is broader than just an item. It is a heart problem.

1. Have you ever read the book of **1 John**? The very last verse of **1 John** says, ***“Little children guard yourself from idols.”*** There is not one word in the rest of the epistle leading up to this little verse saying anything about idols. He wrote the verse because anything that we trust in place of God is an idol.

2. The Scripture are replete with statements like we hear here in Habakkuk about the futility of making and worshipping idols. After Isaiah’s great vision of the person of God in **Isaiah 40** we find Isaiah asking, ***“To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?”*** The LORD Himself echoes this thought in **vs. 25** ***“To whom then will you liken Me that I would be his equal?” says the Holy One.*** Nothing and no one can adequately represent God. We must not let an idol take God’s place.

C. The fact is that this disaster fell upon Judah because they put their trust in idols instead of the true and living God. The account in **Jeremiah 44** shows us how far Judah had gone into idolatry and allows us to see the potential sin in ourselves. Pragmatism in place of trust can lead to disaster.

## ***II. The Reality of the Living God (v.20)***

A. Although idols are not real and can’t do anything to help us in the crisis, God is real and is really there for us. ***“But the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.”*** Some may indulge in their false gods, but this does not mean that the true and living God is not there. No, sir, God is in His temple and still demands our worship. This principle breaks into two parts. PART ONE -- GOD IS WHERE HE IS SUPPOSED TO BE!

1. The Hebrew word translated ***“temple”*** means ***“house of a king, temple, palace, tabernacle, etc.”*** This can mean that the Lord is in the Temple in Jerusalem dwelling between the cherubim, or it can simply mean that God is in His palace on His throne in heaven.

2. God is still on His throne and He is still in control of the situation. God has not gone on vacation, nor is He napping. **GOD IS STILL ON THE JOB!** You can worship false gods but that does not change who God is and what He is doing. Interestingly enough is this very fact that Habakkuk was doubting in chapter one. Habakkuk thought God had forgotten him. He thought that God did not care about what was going on. He may even have entertained a shadow of a doubt about God’s integrity!

3. But God was there and He was not silent. He still was working out His will for the world around Habakkuk, just as He is working out His plan in the world in which we live! **Psalm 115:1-3** catches Habakkuk’s spirit in this verse.

***“Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness! Why should the nations say, ‘Where is their God?’ Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.”***

4. This fact is the secret of our confidence. It is the foundation upon which we live our lives. Remember what Elisha said and did when Elijah went to heaven? ***“Where is the LORD God of Elijah” 2 Kings 2:14.*** He is here and He is not silent! Just remember the things He has done!

B. The second part of this principle is the required response of the people. ***“Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”*** After five verses exposing the problems and futility of idols and false gods, the Psalmist in **Psalm 115** tells us exactly what we should do. ***“O Israel, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless those who fear the LORD, Both small and great”*** (Psalm 115:9–13).

We can have comfort, confidence, and peace, because we know God is still on the throne and we wait in trust for Him.

1. Waiting for Him involves seeking His face and His will for us in the situation. ***“Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.”*** Psalm 27:11.

2. We also learn about waiting in **Psalm 37:5-9**. ***“Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.”***

3. Waiting upon God is more than sitting on our hands on the sideline. It involves active believing in God, and obeying God in the midst of the trial. It also involves a real commitment to the fact that God has a plan and He is in absolute control of the situation.