

Series: Living Godly When the Godless Bear Rule

Study 2

Summary - Lesson 1 examined and compared the context of the readers of Habakkuk and Peter.

Habakkuk

The flawed perception of the godly when overwhelmed with godlessness in their society.

- 1:1 Obsession with current events “burden” “did see”
- 1:2 Frustration that prayer isn’t working “how long shall I cry”
- 1:2 Perceived refusal of God to intervene “Thou wilt not” – hear or sav
- 1:3 The travesty of Justice - violence 1:4 2:5,16 indulgence 2:18,19 idolatry

Faith focus - “The just shall live by his faith.(V. 2:1)”

Takeaway - When we find ourselves frustrated with God like Habakkuk, our focus needs to be on what He wants to do in us instead of what we think He should do about the wicked around us.

Peter the Apostle to the Gentiles Writes to the Jews

1 Pet. 1:1 “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia...” The Greek word for “scattered” is “dispersed.” They were the Jewish diaspora. They were literally Jewish disciples of Christ scattered along side of unsaved Jews and Gentiles. These “Hellenized” Jewish believers had totally adopted the Greek language & culture. An example of Hellenized or “Greek” Jews is seen in John 7:35. “Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the **dispersed among the Gentiles**, and teach the Gentiles?” The Rabbis reasoned that Jesus meant that He would go to the Jewish Diaspora.

Takeaway – If non-believing Jews had become totally assimilated into Greek culture, how difficult it must have been for those Jews who now believed in Jesus to separate themselves from that engrained worldliness. We are no different today. We are so tainted by our culture that worldliness seems normal. An old saying illustrates the lack of objectivity about our condition. “A fish doesn’t know he is wet.” Going against the stream of wickedness around us had consequences then and it still does today. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12

Diaspora Jews were being saved by the tens of thousands in the months and years following Pentecost. They were first rejected by the Pharisees in their native country for being Hellenized and once they returned home they were being doubly rejected for following Jesus. They really were alone in the world, but divinely placed among the pagans to be salt and light. They were not to become polluted or watered down to resemble the mission field they now called their home. Peter reminded that them they were strangers and pilgrims not just geographically but spiritually. **The other extreme danger is for us to become isolated in a Christian sub-culture and to become so tactful or silent that we no longer have any contact.**

Faith focus 1 Peter 1:7 “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” 1 Peter 4:12 “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you”

It has been told that a silver smith remarked that he knew that the silver had been heated long enough to be rid of the impurities, when he could see his reflection in it.

May it be said of us what was said of Peter, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.(Acts 4:13)” May this be said of us in godless times. May we not become a statistic of the decline of the Faith.

1. The context of the Jewish readers of 1st & 2nd Peter

These “strangers and pilgrims” were in small local assemblies of believers of Jews and Gentiles. 1 Peter 2:9-12

There was persecution, false accusation, suffering for the name of Jesus.

1 Peter 1:6 “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:”

The godly under godless rule are admonished to “greatly rejoice,” in times of:

- seasonal heaviness
- many temptations

Notice the particular Jewish terminology in 2:9. “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;” This is a quote from Exodus 19:6, “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” The interpretation of 1 Peter 2:9 is clearly limited to the Jewish context. Peter reminded these scattered Jewish believers who are the redeemed “remnant” of Israel, the generation that was chosen to see the Messiah Jesus and believe. These Jewish believers are the first generation in the New Testament church to be a kingdom of priests. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5).

These first century Jewish believers and Jewish believers in our day are the literal embodiment of Exodus 19:1-6 “In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai. . . and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying . . . Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: And **ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation**. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” ie: the first century Jewish believers.

2. The context of the Jewish readers of Habakkuk

Jerusalem’s population had gone through the spiritual cycle of decline.

- **Godlessness begins more easily in times of affluence. Men become lovers of things - idolatry 2:18 ,19**
- **It leads to apathy. Men become lovers of self, more than lovers of each other.**
- **This leads to apostasy. Men reject or twist the scripture to justify themselves.**
- **This leads to anarchy where everyman does what is best for himself not others or God or society.**

First, He uses the acts of the ungodly as an instrument of chastisement. Habakkuk 1:5-8, 3:16.

Then comes the act of God. Drought, then famine 3:17; 2 Pet. 2:1-6

“The ultimate cure for Godlessness is an act of God.”

3. The Panic of the Godly Habakkuk 1:12,13

Peter tells the Jewish believers again to be happy because they suffer for righteousness’s sake and not to be afraid of terror nor be troubled. “And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; (1 Peter 3:13,14).

How can we genuinely have such a counterintuitive attitude toward actual persecution?

Habakkuk had the key. “The just shall live by his faith.”

Faith grows best under duress and delays. “For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, **wait for it**; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. (Habakkuk 2:3).

- Romans 1:17 “as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
- Galatians 3:11 “*it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”
- Hebrews 10:38 “The just shall live by faith but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.”

4. The Faith of the Godly Habakkuk was personally challenged. “The just shall live by his faith.”

- **Salvation faith, sanctification and serving faith are personal. God has no grandchildren. Faith is Individual.**
“But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

- **Have you been saved from your sin and it’s eternal penalty by faith In Jesus as your Savior?**

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8,9)

- **Are you following Him in faithful obedience to the commands in scripture?**

“why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? (Luke 6:46)

- **Are you doing anything to build up your faith?**

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude 1:20)