

Habakkuk 1:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

Analysis

Habakkuk's second complaint begins: 'Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction' (halo attah miqqedem Yahweh Elohai Qedoshi lo namut Yahweh lemishpat samtam veTzur lehokhiach yesadto). The prophet anchors himself in God's eternal nature (miqqedem, from everlasting), His covenant relationship (Yahweh Elohai, LORD my God), and His holiness (Qedoshi). From this foundation, he reasons: 'we shall not die' (lo namut)—though judgment comes, the covenant people won't be utterly destroyed. He acknowledges God's sovereignty: 'thou hast ordained them for judgment' (lemishpat samtam)—Babylon exists by divine appointment to execute judgment. 'Established them for correction' (lehokhiach yesadto)—they're instruments of discipline, not ultimate destroyers. Yet this creates the problem verse 13 addresses: how can holy God use unholy Babylon?

Historical Context

Habakkuk's theology reflects deep understanding of covenant promises. God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be eternal (Genesis 17:7), promised David an everlasting kingdom (2 Samuel 7:16), and declared through prophets that a remnant would survive judgment (Isaiah 10:20-22). Despite coming catastrophe,

these promises assured ultimate preservation. The prophet's confidence ('we shall not die') wasn't presumption but faith in God's character and word. Historical fulfillment proved him right—though Jerusalem was destroyed and Judah exiled, the people survived, returned, and from them came the Messiah. Even divine judgment on covenant people serves redemptive purposes, not final destruction.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does anchoring faith in God's eternal, holy character help believers process difficult providences?
2. What is the difference between divine judgment that corrects versus divine judgment that destroys?
3. How do God's covenant promises provide assurance even when experiencing severe discipline?

Interlinear Text

אֵל וָאֵל H3808	אֵת הָ H859	מִן עוֹלָם H6924	יְהוָה H3068	אֱלֹהֵי H430	קִדְשִׁי H6918
		Art thou not from everlasting	O LORD	my God	mine Holy One
לֹא H3808	נָמֹת H4191	יְהוָה H3068	לְמִשְׁפָּט H4941	שָׁמַת H7760	
	we shall not die	O LORD	them for judgment	thou hast ordained	
וְיָ H6697		לְהוֹכִיחַ H3198	יְסֻדָּתָם H3245		
and O mighty God		them for correction	thou hast established		

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 32:4 (Judgment): He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Psalms 90:2 (Eternal Life): Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Deuteronomy 33:27 (Eternal Life): The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

Jeremiah 30:11 (References Lord): For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

Jeremiah 46:28 (References Lord): Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

Psalms 93:2 (Eternal Life): Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.

Hebrews 13:8 (Parallel theme): Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Isaiah 40:28 (Eternal Life): Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

Isaiah 43:15 (Holy): I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

Acts 3:14 (Holy): But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;