

Who Said God Can't Look At Sin?

We have been taught that God can't look at sin, but can he?

One statement used to cement this in our theology is this:

Habakkuk 1:13a (NKJV) – *You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness.*

Is that all we need to know about it? The rest of the verse and using other translations will help us get a better picture.

Habakkuk 1:13b (NKJV) – *Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he?*

The problem is our literal understanding of this verse. The expression “to look on” is metaphorical for ‘approve’.

Try these translations.

Habakkuk 1:13 (TLB¹) – *Will you, who cannot allow sin in any form, stand idly by while they swallow us up? Should you be silent while the wicked destroy those who are better than they?*

Habakkuk 1:13 (AMP²) – *Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You cannot look favorably on wickedness. Why then do You look favorably On those who act treacherously? Why are you silent when the wicked (Chaldean oppressors) destroy Those more righteous than they?*

Habakkuk 1:13 (MSG³) – *You can't condone evil! So why don't you do something about this? Why are you silent now? This outrage! Evil men swallow up the righteous and you stand around and watch!*

That gives us a different perspective.

A second OT source used to promote God not able to look on sin is this one:

Isaiah 59:2 (NIV) – *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*

Remember, that is a statement under the OC and, it's not God speaking, it's Isaiah lecturing the nation.

If we stop there in Isaiah, we don't get the full picture. Later on in the chapter He lets the people know that God will send the messiah to deal with evil and injustice.

Isaiah 59:16, 20a (NIV) – *He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm achieved salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him...The Redeemer will come...*

So, Father will send his Son so that evil and injustice can be dealt with. He's not letting us 'drown' in our sin, he's shepherding us, husbanding us, and providing a 'cure'.

Jesus demonstrated that same love when he was on Earth. He loved the sinner and hung out with them all the time. That wasn't because he loved their wrongdoing, but because he looked past that, to the person. If the spirit of The Son in Jesus was unable to “look on sin”, he would have avoided sinners. Instead he

1 – The Living Bible
2 – Amplified Bible
3 – The Message Bible

loved Zacchaeus, the woman caught in adultery, the prostitute who anointed his feet, and many, many more.

So there are reasons to refute the idea that God can't look on sin. His love takes him past that.

On another point, which is true: Sin cannot be allowed in Heaven.

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(Readers will need to look up for themselves any scriptures alluded to in this document)