

I. Introduction: facing the problem of evil. v. 1

- A. Habakkuk is a prophet who has an oracle (burden) from the LORD. 1:1 2 Pe. 1:20-21  
Isa. 13:1 14:28 15:1 17:1 19:1 Nah. 1:1 Zech. 12:1 Mal. 1:1 Jer. 20:9 23:33ff
- B. Habakkuk wrestles with the mystery of God's ways.

II. Are you perplexed by the LORD's inaction? v. 2-4

- A. Habakkuk laments the wickedness in Judah. v. 2-4 2 Ki. 21:1-9 Jer. 22:16
  - 1. Violence abounds. v. 2,3b Gen. 6:11 Job 19:7 2 Ki. 21:6 John 8:44
  - 2. Justice is perverted. v. 3a, 4b,d Isa. 59:14,4 2 Ki. 21:16 Ex. 23:6-8
  - 3. The law is paralyzed. v. 4a Mic. 6:8 Is. 1:17
  - 4. The righteous remnant is oppressed. v. 4c Jer. 26:20-23 22:17 23:10-11 Ps. 22:12
  - 5. Habakkuk complains, *LORD, why don't you do something?* v. 2 Ps. 13:1-2 18:41
- B. We have cause for lament today. Rom. 1:18-32
  - 1. Our nation has turned from the LORD – violence, injustice and oppression. Pr. 14:34
  - 2. The church, God's holy nation, has backslidden. 2 Tim. 4:3-4 Jer. 5:31
  - 3. Do you, like Habakkuk, cry out to God: *How long LORD?* Ps. 13:1-2 Gen. 15:16

III. You may find God's actions are more perplexing than His inaction. v. 5-11 Isa. 55:8

- A. Even when the LORD appears to be silent, He is at work. v. 5b-6 II Ki. 24:1ff
  - 1. Before Habakkuk prayed, God was already raising up the Babylonians. v. 5b-6a
  - 2. God is always active in history. Eph. 1:11 Ro. 8:28 Isa. 46:8f
    - a. History is under Divine control.
    - b. History follows a Divine plan and timetable.
    - c. History is bound up with the Divine Kingdom.
  - 3. Don't be nearsighted: focusing upon the immediate and visible. II Co. 4:18 5:7
- B. God provides surprising answers to your prayers. v. 5a Ps. 48:5 Isa. 29:14
  - 1. Why was this answer so amazing and unexpected?
    - a. Habakkuk was probably hoping for revival, not destruction. v. 2d
    - b. The Jews hadn't perceived Babylon to be the great threat.
    - c. The Jews, encouraged by their false prophets, didn't believe that God would allow the holy nation, city and temple to be conquered. Jer. 5:12 6:14 7:4ff
    - d. Habakkuk shouldn't have been all that surprised. Isa. 39:6-8 Deut. 28:15ff
  - 2. God will answer your prayers in His way and in His time.
  - 3. We should not be surprised at the troubles which have come upon our nation.
- C. The LORD uses strange instruments in carrying out His purposes. v. 6 Pr. 21:1
  - 1. God's use of the Babylonians presents Habakkuk with a new problem. v. 13
  - 2. Our sovereign God employs even the vices of wicked men in executing His purposes, without compromising His holy character. Acts 4:27-28 Gen. 50:20
- D. God punishes sin in His time and in His way. v. 6-11
  - 1. His patience is not boundless. He had repeatedly warned Judah. Deut. 28:45f  
Jer. 5:15f II Ki. 21:10f II Chron. 36:15-17
  - 2. Finally they received what their sins deserved: *Lex Talionis*. Ex. 21:24 Le. 24:19  
II Chron. 36:6-10,17f Jer. 4:13 5:17 Isa. 25:12

- a. Violence for violence. v. 6,8-9a,2-3 II Ki. 25:7
  - b. Lawlessness for lawlessness. v. 7,10-11
  - c. Oppression for oppression. v. 9b
3. The Babylonian conquest foreshadows what would happen to Israel after she rejects Christ. Acts 13:40-41 History repeats itself (70 AD).
  4. Ultimately the same will happen to Babylon (*Lex Talionis* part 2). 2:6f Da. 4:30
  5. God's judgement will someday fall upon wicked nations and apostate churches.
- E. What can we say about what is happening in our day?
1. All our military and economic power cannot keep us safe. Is. 25:12 31:1 Ps. 20:7
  2. The forces of evil in our day resemble the Babylonians.
  3. The church is subject to God's judgment. 1 Pet. 4:17
  4. The LORD is at work in ways we could not see or imagine to accomplish His good and righteous purposes.

#### IV. Concluding Applications: How do you deal with the problem of evil?

- A. Many people misunderstand God's ways.
1. Some, like the Babylonians, deny God and trust themselves. v. 7,11 II Pe. 3:3-7
  2. Others, like the Jews, live carelessly not expecting God to judge their sin. v. 5
  3. Some say that bad things only happen to bad people. Luke 13:1-5 John 9:1-3
  4. Many deny God's sovereignty, saying that bad things are out of His control.
- B. We, with Habakkuk, wrestle with this mystery.
1. History is under God's control. Isa. 45:7 Ps. 22:28 Amos 3:6
  2. God is not the author of evil. 1:13 Js. 1:13-18
  3. Many things happen which we cannot understand. Isa. 55:8-9
  4. The only answer is faith in the LORD. 2:4 3:17-19 Rom. 8:18 Ps. 73
- C. What is your relationship to God?
1. Rather than complaining about God's injustice, we should recognize that our sin cries out for God's just wrath. 1:3
  2. Jesus is the one man who ever lived who didn't deserve punishment. Isa. 53:9  
Ps. 22:1-2 Mark 15:34
  3. Habakkuk points to Jesus. 2:4 Luke 24:25-27
  4. Thanks be to God that because of Christ, believers are not judged according to the *Lex Talionis*. II Co. 5:21 Isa. 60:18

#### Discussion Questions

1. When and where did Habakkuk prophesy?
2. What was Habakkuk's first complaint? 1:2-4
3. How does God answer Habakkuk's complaint? 1:5-11
4. What concerns do you have about our nation?  
What would you like for God to do?
5. What concerns do you have about the church in the world today?  
What would you like for God to do?
6. How do God's ways surprise you?
7. What do we deserve from God?
8. What principles should we learn from the terrorist bombings?
9. What might God be doing in our day?