

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

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

- A. Habakkuk laments the wickedness in Judah. v. 2-4**
- 1. Violence abounds. v. 2,3b Gen. 6:11 Job 19:7**
 - 2. Justice is perverted. v. 3a, 4b,d Isa. 59:14**
 - 3. The law is paralyzed. v. 4a**
 - 4. The righteous remnant is oppressed. v. 4c Ps. 22:12**
 - 5. Habakkuk complains, *LORD, why don't you do something?* v. 2**
- B. We have cause for lament today.**
- 1. Our nation has turned from the LORD.**
 - a. Violence and destruction are rampant.**
 - b. Justice is perverted.**
 - c. The righteous are oppressed.**
 - 2. The church, God's holy nation, has backslidden.**
 - a. God's holy Word is abused and ignored.**
 - b. Moral scandal plagues the church.**
 - c. The righteous remnant is mistreated.**
 - 3. Do you, like Habakkuk, cry out to God: *How long LORD?* Ps. 13:1-2**

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

- A. Even when the LORD appears to be silent, He is at work. v. 5b-6 II Ki. 24:2**
- 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 *Lloyd-Jones***
 - 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**
- 1. Why was this answer so amazing and unexpected?**
 - a. Habakkuk was probably hoping for revival, not destruction. v. 2d**
 - b. The Jews didn't perceive Babylon to be a great threat. (but see Isa. 39:6-8)**
 - c. The Jews, encouraged by their false prophets, didn't believe that God would allow the holy nation, city and temple to be conquered. Je. 5:12 6:14 7:1f**
 - 2. God will answer your prayers in His way and in His time.**
 - 3. We should not be surprised at the calamity which has come upon our nation**
 - a. Death and destruction are all too common in our fallen sinful world.**
 - b. The peace and security we have enjoyed have been unusual.**
- 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. Why would God allow fanatical Muslims to succeed in slaughtering thousands and destabilizing our nation?**
 - 3. Our sovereign God employs even the vices of wicked men in executing His purposes, without blemishing to His own Holy Character. Acts 4:27-28**

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. 36:15-16 They shouldn't be surprised.
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 will happen to Israel after she rejects Christ. Acts 13:41 History repeats itself (70 AD).
4. Ultimately the same will happen to Babylon (Lex Talionis part 2). 2:6f Da. 4:30 Surely God will not long put up with her arrogance. v. 7b, 11b
5. God's judgement will someday fall upon wicked nations and apostate churches.

E. What can we say about what is happening in our country?

1. Our nation is not "good".
2. All our military and economic power cannot keep us safe. Is. 25:12 34:13 30:13f
3. Perhaps 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, like Job's friends, 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
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 Ro. 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.
2. Thanks be to God that because of Christ believers are not judged according to the Lex Talionis. II Co. 5:21

Discussion Questions for Family Worship

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?

Job cried out. Job. 19:7 Theology not match experience. Job. 6:28-38 7:11,20-21 9:21

Don't want to look at it. Jer. 20:8,18

Ps. 119:126 Its time for Your to act.

Murderers released: Singleton.

Fulfilled 587 BC

Unlike Job, Habakkuk receives a direct answer.

God allows us to pour out our hearts. Jer. 15:10

Calvin: We are tender on what concerns us as individuals & we easily forgive when God is wronged & His truth is despised.

God can employ the vices of men in executing His judgments & yet contract no spot nor blemish

The worst of men are in God's hand as Satan is, & yet God is not implicated in their wickedness

God remains just, whatever use He may make of instruments, yea the very worst.

N: Destruction of Jerusalem: National & theological crisis.

Y2K threat: nothing: decade of prosperity, peace, hope:

Expect: just talk with other side & everything will be OK.

People claim sign of the end.

Many religious people today deny every aspect of God's judgment. *No hell.*

Don't underestimate how ruthless Muslims are: Philippines, Nigeria, Indonesia