

“Why God?” (Habakkuk 2: 6-20)

For the week of April 2, 2017

Background

This passage is heavy going. The woes contained within this chapter lead to difficult times for Habakkuk's generation and even more so for the days leading up to the return of Jesus Christ. Habakkuk had previously thought that God was inactive, blind to the sins being committed in his day. Not so! In laying out the five 'woes' God outlined specific reasons for the coming judgment of both Judah and Babylon, and as we have seen, these reasons apply just as well for the world today as they did 2600 years ago. If the days ahead get darker, the key verse in this chapter will become all the more important. That is 2:4 which says '*the righteous shall live by their faith.*' It will become critical that the believer has a close walk with the Lord and can trust Him and His sovereign will despite all that occurs on this planet. All in all, **God's purposes will ultimately be accomplished, no matter how bad things seem.**

Opening

Read Habakkuk 2:6-20. The five "woe oracles" describe the reasons why Babylon deserves its punishment. Woe oracles are generally divided into two parts: declaration of the wrong, and then announcing the impending judgment as a result. The woes highlight God's judgment.

One of the ongoing "big questions" asked of believers of Christ is this: If God is defined as love, how can He be a God of judgment, bringing punishment to the wicked?

The previous question can be "flipped" and asked another way: How can a loving God allow evil to flourish, to allow death and unjust actions occur without taking action?

How do you personally view God? As strictly a God of love? Or maybe a God of judgment? Or both, such as a parent who loves his children yet must correct them? Is God distant to you or close to you?

Believers of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will inherit a world where God's justice reigns. Where life is like it was supposed to be – no pain and suffering; where love and peace and truth flourish. How will these things be possible? It's because God is willing to deal with evil. God will not compromise. He is a just God. God has a plan. He plans to punish the wicked. He plans to bring justice to the world. And it will come to pass.

Woe #1: Theft and Lust for Control (vv. 6-9)

Read Proverbs 3:5-6. Why is trust in the Lord needed to allow God to control your life? If we all agree with Proverbs 3:5-6, why is this not wholeheartedly practiced by Christians? What percentage of your life is controlled by God? If not 100%, why not?

Woe #2: Greed and Unjust Gain (vv. 9-11)

Read Colossians 3:5-7. Greed is defined by Merriam-Webster as “a selfish and excessive desire for more of something (as money) than is needed.” How should Christians view greed? How should Christians view wealth? What are some signs of greed? Do you view your money and possessions as owned by you or by God?

Woe #3: Violence (vv. 12-14)

Statistics reveal that violence causes more than 1.6 million deaths worldwide each year. The Bakersfield local news typically starts most evening broadcasts with a description of a violent act occurring that day within the city or county. With violence surrounding us continually, how does verse 14 provide comfort? What is meant by the phrase in verse 14 which says “...the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord...”?

Woe #4: Drunkenness, Lust & Corrupting Others

The fourth woe involves the corrupting of others. The specific sins mentioned are getting others drunk for the purpose of lust and sexual sins. Verse 17 gives another result from drunkenness – violence. The Bible clearly states that drunkenness is a sin (see Proverbs 20:1; Ephesians 5:18). Focus on Ephesians 5:18. It says that being controlled by the Spirit of God and being controlled by alcohol is not possible. Why? Read Galatians 5:16, 25 on what we are to always be doing. Besides alcohol, what other things can inhibit your walking in the Spirit?

Woe #5: Idolatry (vv. 18-19)

Idolatry mentioned in this passage is the abandoning of God for a false religion; literally trying to replace the irreplaceable with something that can never satisfy. We may not have wooden idols carved by man but we still have idols that we worship in place of God such as pleasure, wealth, and materialism. An idol is any person, object or activity you give a higher priority in your life than a relationship with God. Name at least one idol in your life that you are grappling with today. Read Exodus 20:3-5 for God's view on idols. What step can you take to remove that idol from your life and give God 100%?

The Lord Rules! (v. 20)

Why is silence commanded? What does that accomplish (see Zephaniah 1:7)?

Pray

Pray for our upcoming Easter weekend (April 14-16). Pray for the following:

- For final planning efforts to be completed.
- For God to be glorified.
- For hearts to be prepared to hear the Good News at the Easter service.
- For many to make decisions for Christ and follow in baptism.
- For our church body to invite many to attend Good Friday service, Saturday in the Park, and the Sunday Easter service.

He is risen...He is risen indeed!