

Habakkuk

Complaining raises the question

We ended last week with Habakkuk describing an attack by Nebuchadnezzar and challenging God's decision in using an evil people to punish His nation Israel. "Therefore perverse judgment proceeds." Habakkuk made this statement when addressing God, we looked at this last week but during this week I pondered it more. As we looked at it last week we found Habakkuk complaining to God of all the woes He is showing him, "Why do You show me iniquity."

God, I do not wish to see these things for You are a righteous God and these people you will use to correct Your people are more wicked than them. It is here I find a twofold comment in regard to judgment. We know Habakkuk was addressing the judgment of man, however, as he is asking God the question of "how could You", is he not at the same time asking such of God? God, where are you? These are a wicked people and You are allowing them to commit a great evil.

If we see a wrong being committed and we do nothing to stop it, what then is the judgment we make? Look at this through the eyes of Habakkuk and we find a disbelieving attitude in regard to God's judgment and the gruesome manner He allows in the correction of His apostate people. Why do we commit offenses and then feel as though God has no right to correct us? This is a question we need to look at from heaven down.

Punishment, the mother who sees the young child place their hand above a hot burner, knowing the outcome should that hand touch the burner reprimands the child for the love of the child. So is it punishment or correction, is it to prevent the accident from occurring or is it for teaching the child who does not understand the danger? Now, think of the danger the apostate person stumbles into and think of what death they may encounter as their last breath is breathed. Our future destination hinges on God's correction and edifying love. Yet here Habakkuk fails to see this as God's love and thus feels abandoned. Here Habakkuk stands in disbelief and repudiation of God's ways.

Habakkuk now goes on with his next question,

12 Are You not from everlasting,

We see Habakkuk obviously knows and understands God, who He is but there is an attitude of disbelief or is it of a fading faith in Habakkuk's eye because he cannot fathom what God is not doing?

O LORD my God, my Holy One?

We shall not die.

This last comment sounds as though Habakkuk is telling God we shall not die. We have witnessed throughout the Old Testament that many people did die under God's correction. God would send plagues and enemies in hope that His people would walk in righteousness. Those in Egypt who did not place the blood of the sacrifice on their door post, Exodus 12:13. The tribes were punished when Achan stole treasure at Jericho, Joshua 7:25, See the punishment for disobedience in Leviticus chapter 26. The generation who died off in the desert, and many others.

O LORD, You have appointed them for judgment;

O Rock, You have marked them for correction.

Here we find judgment necessary for correction for those teachings and instructions man refuses to live by. When evil is removed and right thinking is established we find the cost of correction extremely high, but is it unjust when we place it against a future of damnation. It is not to correct more than it is to punish? Ezekiel 18:23; For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live! 33:11; Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, Hebrews 10:38; And, "But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back."

13 You are of purer eyes than to behold evil,

And cannot look on wickedness.

Why do You look on those who deal treacherously,

And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours

A person more righteous than he?

Again, where are you Lord? You know things, I know your eyes are pure and cannot look upon evil, but Father You must know what there needs to be judgment and condemnation for the evil of these people. Father people are not as evil as those you send to persecute us.

14 Why do You make men like fish of the sea, Like creeping things that have no ruler over them?

15-16; They take up all of them with a hook, They catch them in their net, And gather them in their dragnet. Therefore they rejoice and are glad.

Lord, there is not much we can do to escape, why? Will the innocent be made to suffer also.

Lord, they are coming and they are going to gather us like fish in a net, a wild army that devours and live as there is no ruler over them, they are free to do as they see fit. Why oh Lord, where are You? Therefore they sacrifice to their net, And burn incense to their dragnet; Because by them their share is sumptuous And their food plentiful.

Oh Lord why do the wicked gain and the righteous lose, why does it seem as though they prosper and we have so very little? Lord, why do you hold your tongue?

17; Shall they therefore empty their net, And continue to slay nations without pity?

They sing with joy as they destroy, therefore they rejoice and are glad.

Habakkuk begins to seek the voice of God's answer, he is going from a faith of doubting and questioning to a wall as would a watchman, listening, watching and waiting. The vantage point is obviously much better and this is where he will perch himself and wait for God's reply. He has cast out his complaints and it is now as though God needs to give a good response to all of his complaints.

2:1; I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected.

Strange how Habakkuk says, “and what I will answer when I am corrected?” He knows that the manner of questioning he has said to God will require correction. Rampart here is the same as a tower or wall on which men would guard the city. Habakkuk is going up to a higher place to find a quiet where he can await the answer and get away from all the noise and distractions so that God will instruct him.

Here is God’s reply,

2:2-3; Then the LORD answered me and said: “Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.

Matthew Henry wrote of this that the writing must be big and easy to read so that the person can read it if they were running. Make it plain on tablets. I think it is more along the lines with David Guzik, that Habakkuk is to write, record, the conversation that has and is taking place with God. God says write it on tables, okay we write it on tables, Why? So that there is a record of all that is transpiring here that others may come to know it. Remember, we have not found the God said to tell this to the people, or say the Lord says, yes we do find the Lord tells him to write it down but the entire exchange between God and Habakkuk has been very different from other prophets.

The idea of “that he may run who reads it” is possibly referring to the clarity of the letter and the quick understanding of all it implies. CORRECTION IS COMING, and it will not be simple or nice. You have committed these sins and now I will use someone more sinful than you to correct you, to get your attention. This sounds like a lot of us. It sure rings true for me, that sometimes I have been extremely difficult when it comes to listening to God, and others. I should have learned by the time I was thirty that God allowed me to have wrecks in order to get my attention, and even now as I look back at the last one the urge to ride is still very much inside of me. However, God keeps me occupied.

Spurgeon looks at “make it plain on tablets” as to not make the sermon or the letter so elaborate by adding some of one’s own hyperboles in order to look smarter than the rest. It serves no one any good if the people we are preaching to

cannot understand the message for all the sideshow issues. For me I will lean toward Surgeon and Guzik.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time;

I cannot even imagine what was going through Habakkuk's mind with this comment. God, is there something we need to know? What is this time you are speaking of, how soon will it come? He already claimed he was impatient, and now this riddle, God what are you doing to me? Let us not forget how chapter two begins, "I will stand and watch." Faith is growing, teaching patience and endurance when trouble arises. Habakkuk would need to wait and see.

Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.

This seems confusing when we look at it in our own understanding against those things which are so readily available to us in minutes. It will be a long time coming but when it comes, it will come fast. It will come in time, God's appointed time, not ours, but when it has come, when it is revealed the world will then understand the differences between the law and grace,

Colossians 1:26; the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

We now know these things were hidden for millenniums, certain prophets spoke of them but surely had no knowledge of its promise or fulfillment. We are fortunate to live during the times we do. We have centuries of writings that take us into a deeper understanding of our relationship with God.