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God's Judgment of Evil Nations
Habakkuk 1:12-2:20

Introduction

Welcome to Spring! For those of us that prefer warmer weather that is exciting news. For those of you who love Winter - don't worry, it will be back in 9 months or less. I was glad to see the first crocus come up and bloom 10 days ago, and my daffodils and hyacinth are already in bud. Perhaps I will have a few in bloom to display by Resurrection Sunday, which by the way, weather permitting, we intend to hold outside, inside and streaming in order to have as many people on the property as possible. Get the word out and invite people to come. I will also be holding a sunrise service at Fishkill Rural Cemetery as we have been holding for at least 15 year if not longer. I was by myself last year due to the sudden government mandated restrictions. This year I am looking forward to others joining me as we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in a cemetery because of our great hope that both we and our dearly beloved will be transformed, and they shall rise from their graves, and together we shall meet the Lord Jesus in the air and ever be with Him - just as He promised. It will be a wonderful day of celebration - check the bulletin and website for details and any last minute changes.

Review

I want to briefly review last week's message in order to set the context for this week's sermon. Context is critical to a proper understanding of any text. Without context, it is very easy to both misinterpret and misapply what God has revealed.

In examining all the evidence, I believe that it makes the most sense to conclude that Habakkuk wrote this book during the early reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah before King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded and made Judah a vassal state of his empire in 605 B.C. Jehoiakim's father, King Josiah had been a good and godly king that instituted many reforms in moving the nation back to respecting and following the law of God once it was found again in 621 B.C. King Josiah was killed in battle against Pharaoh Neco in 609 B.C. in the effort to keep Pharaoh from helping the dreaded Assyrians that were being besieged by Babylonian forces. Egypt took control of Judah and established wicked Jehoiakim as its vassal king. The reforms that had been made under Josiah were quickly diminishing as the king and people went back to the evil of Josiah's father and grandfather, Amon and Manasseh. Josiah's reforms changed the behavior of the people, but not their hearts, and they quickly pursued evil again.

Habakkuk received an oracle, a burdensome message from the Lord that he was to proclaim to the people. In 1:2-4 Habakkuk presents his complaint and petition to the Lord. The nation had become violent, yet the Lord was not answering Habakkuk's petitions by saving people from it. He was questioning whether God was hearing him as he pointed out the iniquity, wickedness, destruction, strife, contention and injustice that were taking place. Having lived through the reforms under Josiah, Habakkuk wanted God to intervene and return the nation to what it was like then.

That desire is easy to understand because anyone who is godly and has either experienced or studied the history of our own nation even in recent times would like to return to days of yesteryear that were more sane and moral. The continual removal of laws that restricted the expression of evil by courts, legislators and executives have opened the way for wickedness to pervade many areas of our nation. In the last year we have seen those floodgates opened wide so that the insanity of the depraved minds described in Romans 1 now dominate much of society. Good people would like to see a return to what existed prior. We have prayed for both revival and mercy in God granting us political authorities that at least advocated moral righteousness on the major issues of the day.

Habakkuk was shocked when God revealed in 1:5 that He had been at work to answer Habakkuk's prayer all along. God was neither ignoring him nor was He silent. It was just that God's answer was not what the prophet desired or expected. God was going to send the ungodly Chaldeans to chasten Judah even as He had warned many times going back to the Mosaic Law. The description in Habakkuk 1:6-11 is of a powerful, dreadful and fierce people who were arrogant and did what they wanted. They violently conquered other nations and took hordes of captives. They were wicked for their strength was their god and they established their own authority and justice by it.

We have prayed, petitioned and begged God concerning our nation, and He has answered. We have been weighed in the scales and found wanting. His answer at this point is judgment through those of even greater wicked character than what was there before. Evil people have seized the positions of authority following their own perverted value system and they are now forcing their evil upon society by reason of their own power. This is bad, but keep in mind that they may only be temporary because their policies are quickly destroying the ability of the nation to defend itself. We will become an easy target for other nations to defeat and make us a vassal state.

None of this means we stop praying, petitioning and begging God for revival, but it does mean that we must recognize that God answers our prayers according to His will and not our desires. He has a plan and He is carrying it out. Our focus must be to forward the message of His kingdom including warning even those who are currently enemies of God about His wrath in both the present and which is coming in the future in much worse forms.

Habakkuk's first theological problem was that he had not taken seriously God's many warnings about what He would do to the nation if they did not follow and obey Him. Deuteronomy 28 gives the details of God's blessing on them if they do right and His curses upon them if they did not obey and observe His commandments. Perhaps he was ignorant of those warnings, but those warnings are what caused Josiah to tear his clothes when it was read to him because he realized that God's wrath was burning against them because their fathers had not followed the law (2 Kings 22:11-12). Deuteronomy 28:15-68 details what God would do and the order He would do it concluding with defeat and deportation. That chapter was a prophetic outline of what became the history of the nation. In addition, Isaiah 39 records his prophecy to King Hezekiah that Babylon would conquer Judah. Habakkuk should not have been surprised that God was sending the Chaldeans (Babylon) to punish Judah.

Habakkuk's Second Theological Problem - Habakkuk 1:12-2:1

But this brought up his second theological problem expressed in Habakkuk 1:12-2:1 which is basically, how could God, who is pure and holy, use such a wicked nation in this way? Habakkuk presents his dilemma with a series of questions followed by a description of the ungodly character of the Chaldeans and concluding with a statement of his own commitment to watch and wait for the Lord's answer. I will point out later that he actually should have already understood this, but the prophet was human just like we are, and if we are honest, the same questions rise in our own minds.

¹² *Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; And You, O Rock, have established them to correct.* ¹³ *Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor On those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they?* ¹⁴ *Why have You made men like the fish of the sea, Like creeping things without a ruler over them?* ¹⁵ *The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook, Drag them away with their net, And gather them together in their fishing net. Therefore they rejoice and are glad.* ¹⁶ *Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net and burn incense to their fishing net; Because through these things their catch is large, And their food is plentiful.* ¹⁷ *Will they therefore empty their net And continually slay nations without sparing?*

The first question in verse 12 is rhetorical. God is from everlasting. He is addressing God as LORD, Yahweh (Jehovah), the great I am who is self-existent. Yahweh was addressed as the Everlasting God by Abraham in Genesis 21:33. Isaiah 40:28 states of Him, *The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.*” The apostle Paul refers to Him as the “Eternal God” in Romans 16:26 and the “King Eternal” who is immortal, invisible and the only God in 1 Timothy 1:17. One of the Yahweh’s attributes is being Eternal.

Habakkuk quickly ties to this attribute additional ones by which the LORD keeps His promises and uses Babylon at His will. Perhaps Habakkuk had in mind Isaiah 46:9-11, ⁹ *“Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,* ¹⁰ *Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;* ¹¹ *Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.”* What the LORD plans, He will do. What the LORD promises, He will keep.

The statement, *“We will not die,”* is not a claim that Babylon would spare everyone alive. They would kill large portions of the population over the course of their three invasions. It is a reference to the nation itself founded on God’s promises to Abraham. Genesis 17:7-8 records that God’s covenant with Abraham includes, ⁷ *“I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.”* ⁸ *“I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”* Habakkuk knew the nation would suffer greatly, but He also knew they would not be wiped out. God would keep the covenant.

In the rest of verse 12 Habakkuk quickly affirms God’s revelation that He had appointed the Chaldeans to judge and established them to correct His people. He addresses Him as “Rock,” a name often used to refer to the LORD and tied to attributes of justice, faithfulness, righteousness, uprightness, perfect work, stability, immutability and salvation by its usage in Deuteronomy 32. The Chaldeans believed they were victorious because of their own abilities and so became arrogant and worshiped their own strength. The truth is that God had “appointed” and “established” them to accomplish His own purposes. He used them to destroy the wicked Assyrian empire and confine Egypt to their own land. He would use them to chasten His own people.

Habakkuk also points out the LORD’s attribute of being so pure that His eyes would not look upon evil or wickedness, yet it appeared the LORD was tolerating the treacherous and wicked who was consuming those who were more righteous. From the prophet’s standpoint, God had made man as worthless as fish and creeping things to be caught and dragged away. The references in verse 15 uses that same analogy to describe the Chaldeans conquering nations and taking captives and rejoicing and being glad. Verse 16 continues the analogy in describing the pagan nature of the Chaldeans in their idolatry. Like pagan fishermen who worship their nets because by them they were able to have plenty of food, so the Chaldeans would worship the idols of their gods of war. As already stated in verse 11, their strength was their god. Verse 17 concludes with a question of whether these idolatrous people would continue in their conquests which was devouring nations.

These were the causes of Habakkuk’s perplexity. Essentially, how can such a holy God tolerate such evil much less use such a wicked people as the Chaldeans as the means of chastening God’s people? Habakkuk should have known the answer since the Law warned about God using other nations to chasten His people and the history of the nation records that happening. In addition, previous prophets such as Isaiah gave plenty of warning and even details of what God would do later to punish the wicked nations that attacked Israel. The case is specific here, but the underlying question is common to man extending back through time. How can God tolerate evil?

Habakkuk was a prophet because God revealed truth to him and burdened him to proclaim the message. However, he was also an ordinary man subject to the same self-centered blindness of all

humans. God tolerates evil because He is patient and longsuffering. As 2 Peter 3:9 states it, *“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”* 2 Peter 3:15 adds that we are to *“regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.”* However, we are blinded by comparing ourselves to others who are wicked and judging ourselves to be less wicked to give excuse to our own evil. Habakkuk’s opening complaint was for God to do something about the evil in Israel, but in finding out that God is going to judge the nation by the Chaldeans, Israel is suddenly not so bad by comparison.

We must be careful not to fall into the same trap ourselves. First, that becomes the basis for arrogant “holier than thou” attitudes that are judgmental and condemning instead of seeing others as lost sinners in need of the Savior. God was patient with us before we heard the gospel and repented, and He is still patient with us as we are slow to mature. We are to be patient with those who are still lost and recognize that they are the mission field. As Ephesians 6:12 explains, our real struggle is not against flesh and blood, it is against Satan and his forces of wickedness.

Second, you cannot excuse your sins or those of those you favor by comparing them to others who are worse. The truth is that God will judge all sinners unless they have been forgiven on the basis of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. God would chasten Israel through the Chaldeans, but He would then punish the Chaldeans for their evil.

Habakkuk was perplexed, and though the answers to his theological confusion can be found in the Hebrew scriptures that were available to him, he was a humble man that would wait on God to answer as expressed in 2:1. *“I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart; And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, And how I may reply when I am reprov’d.”*

The description is that of a watchman at station on the wall of a fortified city alert to whatever may come. He was actively waiting and looking for the Lord’s answer to his questions and giving thought to how he would answer when the Lord did. The NASB translation of this as “reprov’d” seems strong in this context, but the ESV rendition of *“concerning my complaint”* misses the strength of the term used. The NKJV does better with *“when I am corrected,”* for the term speaks of the reproof given by a father to a son in whom he delights (Prov. 3:12). The prophet knows he is lacking in understanding and desires God to answer him knowing there would be correction in the answer. That is the attitude each of should always have in trying to understand both what God has already revealed in the Scriptures and in how He directs our lives through His providence. We are to plan our way, but He directs our steps (Proverbs 16:9). The Lord’s answer is recorded in Habakkuk 2:2-20.

God’s Judgment of Babylon - Habakkuk 2:2-20

He did not have to wait long for God’s answer which is given in both general terms that can apply to all men and specific descriptions of the Chaldeans which reveals more about how wicked they were. The answer is given in seven sections with the first one giving instructions on what Habakkuk was to do with the answer.

Record the Vision - Habakkuk 2:2-4

² *Then the Lord answered me and said, “Record the vision And inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run. ³ “For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.*

Verse 2 - God wanted His answer recorded for wider dissemination of the warning being given so that people could heed its message. Verse 3 states that the prophetic vision was about what was coming in the near future, but by writing it down it leaves a record for those who would look back at it after the prophecies were fulfilled. That gives greater confidence that this was from the true God for only the eternal God can control the future as already pointed out from Isaiah 46:9-11. That means that the revelation about God’s character and the principles given in this book remain the same and are

applicable in our own time. Verse 3 is emphatic that the fulfillment of the prophecy is future, and that *“though it tarries”* it is coming soon for *“it hastens”* and *“it will not delay.”* Verse 3 is also emphatic that the prophecy is *“for the appointed time,” “it will not fail,”* and *“it will certainly come.”*

The Proud vs The Righteous - Habakkuk 2:4-5

⁴ *“Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith. 5 “Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man, So that he does not stay at home. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, And he is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all nations And collects to himself all peoples.*

The beginning of verse 4 is a reference to the Chaldeans whom God described in His first answer to Habakkuk. They were a people who were swollen, “puffed up” (ESV), presumptuous, proud. Their souls were not right before God. Verse 5 continues the description of them. The Chaldeans were known for their drinking as noted in Daniel 5 in describing Belshazzar’s feast. The rest of the verse describes their unsatiable appetite, compared to Sheol (death) here, to conquer other nations and take captives.

Set in contrast to the Chaldeans at the end of verse 4 are the righteous who live by faith. That is a reference to the godly Jews and is the answer to Habakkuk’s questions. It summarizes the key characteristic that distinguishes those who have a proper relationship with God, the saved, and those who do not. The righteous have faith in God. They believe and trust Him. Habakkuk was correct that God had appointed and established the Chaldeans to judge and chasten Judah. He was also correct about God’s purity and holiness. He would now have to trust that God’s actions in using the Chaldeans in this manner was also in keeping with His purity and holiness. As I already pointed out, the answers to his questions were already given in the Hebrew Scriptures available to him, but in either not being aware of them or perhaps not remembering them at the moment, he would have to trust God according to what he already understood about God.

While the verse is specific to the Chaldeans compared to the godly Jews of the time, the principle is a universal. It is an underlying theme throughout the Scriptures and Paul quotes this verse in both Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11. Those who respond to the gospel with repentance and faith will live by that faith. They will learn to trust God according to His attributes and character even when they do not understand God’s plan for the situations in which they find themselves. Or in short, you do not have to know the details of what God is doing or why He is doing it to trust Him. The righteous are characterized by having faith in God regardless of the circumstances. God is opposed to the proud, but He gives grace to the humble, and it is by God’s grace that any of us are saved though faith in Him (James 4:6; Eph. 2:8-9).

The First Woe - Habakkuk 2:6-8

The rest of Habakkuk 2 encompass five woes pronounced against the Chaldeans for their evil deeds. Each stanza or strophe is made up of three verses each. The first phrase of verse 6 introduces what they will be about, *“Will not all of these take up a taunt-song against him, Even mockery and insinuations against him . . .”* The nations noted in verse 5 that have been conquered will take up a taunt song against the Chaldeans. A taunt song is a proverb or parable that gives a lesson by its example. In this context, the Chaldeans will become a public example throughout history warning of God’s judgment of evil nations. The Lord humbles the haughty. Each stanza adds to the woes pronounced for evils committed.

⁶ *“Will not all of these take up a taunt-song against him, Even mockery and insinuations against him And say, ‘Woe to him who increases what is not his— For how long— And makes himself rich with loans?’”* ⁷ *“Will not your creditors rise up suddenly, And those who collect from you awaken? Indeed, you will become plunder for them”* ⁸ *“Because you have looted many nations, All the remainder of the peoples will loot you— Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, To the town and all its inhabitants.”*

A woe is a warning or threat of God's physical chastening or punishment. Babylon could not continue to expand indefinitely. There would be a reckoning for their actions. Waging war is expensive, and apparently they had made pledges, taken out loans, with other nations. I mentioned last week that the Medes and Scythians were partners in their coalition against Assyria. As some point the pledges would have to be fulfilled, the loans payed back. In addition, what they had done to others would be done to them. The plunders would be plundered. The looters would be looted. Why? Because of the bloodshed and violence they had committed.

The Second Woe - Habakkuk 2:9-11

⁹ *“Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house To put his nest on high, To be delivered from the hand of calamity!”* ¹⁰ *“You have devised a shameful thing for your house By cutting off many peoples; So you are sinning against yourself.”* ¹¹ *“Surely the stone will cry out from the wall, And the rafter will answer it from the framework.”*

They would be held accountable for their wicked ways of gaining wealth in the effort to insure they would not be subject to the harmful effects of any disaster or calamity. While it is wise to save in order to weather future troubles, they did it by causing disaster to others as seen in the earlier references to their plundering and looting and here in cutting them off - exterminating them. Just as the land was a witness to the bloodshed in the previous stanza, so the house in which the evil was committed will be a witness just as Abel's blood cried out to God from the ground. Babylon was built as a fortress city, but it could not save them from the consequences of their evil.

The Third Woe - Habakkuk 2:12-14

¹² *“Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed And founds a town with violence!”* ¹³ *“Is it not indeed from the Lord of hosts That peoples toil for fire, And nations grow weary for nothing?”* ¹⁴ *“For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.”*

This woe expands on the second describing the true cost of building Babylon. The wealth for it came from destroying other nations. The labor for it came from the captives that were enslaved. The end result? It would all burn and the weary labor expended would be for nothing. Babylon would be destroyed, as will all nations in giving way to the kingdom of the LORD. Verse 14 is the same as Isaiah 11:9. The LORD declared in Numbers 14:20 *“all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD.”*

The Fourth Woe - Habakkuk 2:15-17

¹⁵ *“Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk So as to look on their nakedness!”* ¹⁶ *“You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor. Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness. The cup in the LORD'S right hand will come around to you, And utter disgrace will come upon your glory.”* ¹⁷ *“For the violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, And the devastation of its beasts by which you terrified them, Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, To the town and all its inhabitants.”*

Verses 15-16a may refer to the debauchery that was part of pagan culture. The feast of Belshazzar in Daniel 5 has some indication of that as does the ongoing banquet of Ahasuerus described in Esther 1, though that occurs more than a century later. However, the reference to neighbors may refer to the Chaldeans enticing other nations to join them in their campaigns to gain spoil, but then leaving them to suffer loss and shame. The references in the first woe alludes to that. However, they will not escape the LORD'S hand of judgment and the shame they brought on others will come upon them.

Verse 17 sates that the cause for such judgment was the human bloodshed and the violence against the land. While it was common for an army to cut down trees and harvest game animals when sieging a town, this refers to denuding and devastating the forests of Lebanon. That would have long term effects on any inhabitants of the land whether a remnant or a new population brought in. For that reason,

Deuteronomy 20:19-20 prohibited Israel from cutting down fruit trees when laying siege. What they had done would be returned upon them.

The Fifth Woe - Habakkuk 2:18-20

¹⁸ *“What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, Or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork When he fashions speechless idols.”* ¹⁹ *“Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, ‘Awake!’ To a mute stone, ‘Arise!’ And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it.”* ²⁰ *“But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.”*

The last woe is due to idolatry and its foolishness. Idols are speechless because they are lifeless. Regardless of what it was made from, shaped like, or what precious metals may overlay it, an idol is worse than worthless for all the practices associated with it are detrimental to spiritual life. The priest and teachers associated with them can teach lies because the idol cannot contradict him. The same is true of any man made religion. Verses 18 & 19 mock idolatry. Isaiah 40:19-20; 41:7; 44:9-17 and 46:6-7 are all passages that mock idolatry to demonstrate its futility. The object of worship and entity to which they prayed had to be fastened down to keep from falling over, had to be carried about, and the tree from which they were carved would also be used as fuel to bake bread or keep the man warm.

While idolatry still exists around the world, modern man thinks himself to be superior since most do not bow before or pray to images, yet sophisticated, educated people can actually be much worse according to Romans 1 since their philosophical ideas take them into even greater depravity of mind so that they cannot even distinguish good from evil, right from wrong, truth from error, and reality from fantasy. That has become the condition of the United States as seen in the actions of the President and governors, national and state legislative bodies, and judges.

The contrast to the idols, ancient or modern, is the LORD who is in His holy temple and all the earth is to be silent before Him. The LORD is both alive Himself and the source of all life since He is the creator of all that exists. He owes man no explanation for what He does, yet He graciously reveals Himself and His will to man as He does here to Habakkuk. His answer to the prophets perplexity is that He is holy and just and He will judge all those who do evil including nations. God was going to use the wicked Chaldeans to chasten Judah for the evils that were taking place in the land. He would then later punish the Chaldeans for all of their evil.

Daniel 5 records the fall of Babylon. In short, the Medes, who had previously been part of the Babylonian coalition against the Assyrians, had formed a partnership with the Persians. Together they had laid siege to the city though it was well prepared to endure a very long siege until its army could return. In arrogance Belshazzar was holding feast instead of keeping the city on careful watch. One night, the Medes & Persians diverted the Euphrates river which ran through Babylon and then simply used the river bed as a highway into the middle of the city. If the watch had been kept, the invaders would have been easily defeated since the river was walled off on both sides. But no one was watching, and worse, the gates from the city to the river were left open. Babylon was captured in one night and then destroyed. All the prophecies of Habakkuk came true. God judges evil nations.

Conclusions

The lessons of Habakkuk should not be lost on the modern world. God’s answers to Habakkuk about his theological perplexities still apply today. God judged Judah using the Chaldeans just as He had warned would happen with Deuteronomy 28 even giving the details about the order His judgments would come. While the specifics of God’s blessings and curses in Deuteronomy 28 belong to the nation of Israel, the principle expressed in it belongs to all people. God blesses those nations that fulfill His purpose for them in promoting good and bringing wrath on those who do evil (Romans 13:3-5). Likewise, God will punish and destroy those nations that become characterized by the opposite.

Habakkuk 2 is the example of God doing that. The taunts given in chapter two were to make the Chaldeans a lesson to all nations. God is patient and longsuffering, but He will judge nations for their evils, and all eventually fall because of the growth of evil within it. History is the record of the rise and fall of nations, empires and civilizations.

Daniel warned Nebuchadnezzar about his pride, but it took seven years of insanity before the King was humbled and finally recognized that the Most High has an everlasting dominion and to Him *“All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”* (Daniel 4:35).

God used the Chaldeans to judge and destroy the Assyrians and Egypt and then Judah. In turn, God used the Medes and Persians to judge and destroy Babylon, and then they were judged and destroyed by Greece. That empire was then divided up and then eventually nearly all of it conquered by Rome, which eventually corrupted itself and fell to inferior forces of barbarians. Each of those groups in turn fell to other nations which in turn fell to still others. The history of the world, ancient or modern, is one of God’s judgment and condemnation of nations that either were or became wicked. America is no exception to this rule.

As I have pointed out many times in the past, God’s wrath has been upon this nation for a long time. Now it is clear that our prayers and petitions for revival and mercy have been answered with judgment. That does not mean that we do not keep praying and begging for revival or even a reprieve of reform as has happened in Judah under Josiah, but it does mean we are not to be surprised at what is happening nor fall into the trap of thinking God is not hearing and acting. He is! It also means we need to be prepared to face our changing world by being confident in the purposes God has for our lives and confident in the promises He has made to believers.

Recall that Habakkuk was confident “we will not die” (1:12) because of God’s promises to Abraham and his descendants. In a similar way, we are confident that we, the church, will continue to exist and fulfill our purposes in glorifying God by making disciples of Jesus Christ until Jesus calls us out of the world at the Rapture. The church will have to function differently than the present as persecution arises, but we will continue on because Jesus promised that He would build His church (Matthew 16:18) and that is true regardless of what individuals with her, which include us, may suffer even to martyrdom.

Next week we will see how Habakkuk’s trust in God enabled him to have an unshakable hope for the future even though he knew that included the destruction of his nation. He is an example of what it means, *“the righteous shall live by his faith.”*

Sermon Notes - March 21, 2021
God's Judgment of Evil Nations - Habakkuk 1:12-2:20

Introduction

Review

Habakkuk wrote after the reign of good king Josiah during _____ reign of wicked king Jehoiakim (~605BC)
He was perplexed that God _____ seem to be answering his prayers concerning the evil in the land
He was shocked to learn God was sending the _____ Chaldeans as the answer to his prayers
God had already revealed what He would do if they _____ (Deut. 28:15-68; 2 Kings 11:12; Isa. 39)

Habakkuk's Second Theological Problem - Habakkuk 1:12-2:1

How could God, who is pure and holy, use such a _____ nation in this way to judge Judah?
Vs. 12 - God is _____ (Gen. 21:33; Isa. 40:28; Rom. 16:26)
The Lord _____ His promises. What He says He will do (Isa. 46:9-11)
We will not die refers to the nation for God will keep His _____ with Abraham (Gen. 17:7-8)
He affirms the "Rock" (Deut. 32) _____ and established the Chaldeans to judge & correct
He wondered if God had made them like _____ to be caught & dragged away & would the Chaldeans continue
History & previous prophecies gave the answer, but he did not understand God's _____ nature - 2 Pet 3:9,15
God was _____ with you to bring you to the gospel & Christ, He is patient with others - do likewise
You cannot _____ your sins or those of those you favor by comparing them to others who are worse
2:1 - He was humble to be a watchman waiting for the Lord's answer though it would include _____

God's Judgment of Babylon - Habakkuk 2:2-20

Record the Vision - Habakkuk 2:2-4

The vision was to be _____ for wide dissemination & for posterity - it would certainly come soon

The Proud vs The Righteous - Habakkuk 2:4-5

vs. 4 refers to the _____ with vs. 5 continuing a description of them
vs. 4b - the righteous are the _____ who believed and trusted God
The righteous shall live by his faith is a universal _____ & an underlying theme of the Bible
Those who respond to the _____ with repentance and faith will live by that faith (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11)

The First Woe - Habakkuk 2:6-8

Five woes presented in five stanzas of 3 verses each of a taunt-song - a lesson given by their _____
A woe is a _____ or threat of God's physical chastening or punishment
Babylon would be _____. The plunderers would be plundered. The looters would be looted

The Second Woe - Habakkuk 2:9-11

The wealth they gained to protect themselves by destroying others _____ protect them
The land and houses in which the murdered people would be _____ against them

The Third Woe - Habakkuk 2:12-14

Their wealth & labor to build Babylon came from conquering other nations - but it would be _____
All nations will give way to the kingdom of the _____ - Isa. 11:9; Numbers 14:20

The Fourth Woe - Habakkuk 2:15-17

vs. 15-16a _____ was part of pagan culture (Daniel 5; Esther 1)
This may refer to their enticing other nations to join them for spoil, then leaving them suffer loss & _____
vs. 17 - they denuded & devastated the forests of Lebanon - violence to the _____

The Fifth Woe - Habakkuk 2:18-20

Exposure of their foolish _____ which led them astray. vs. 18-19 mock idolatry (Isaiah 44:9-17 & 46:6-7)
The philosophical idolatry of the modern educated elite is _____ than pagan idolatry (Romans 1:18-32)
The LORD is living and the source of all life - reverence is due Him. That is the _____ to his questions
Daniel 5 records the _____ of Babylon - in fulfillment of Habakkuk's prophecies

Conclusions

God judged Judah according to _____ by the Chaldeans as prophesied
God blesses those who obey Him & curses those who don't. Habakkuk 2 is God punishing an _____ nation
Daniel warned Nebuchadnezzar, but he was humbled the hard way before recognizing God's _____
History is the record of God _____ nations for their own evil - one after another after another . . .
God has heard our prayers and has answered with _____. Keep praying for mercy, but don't be surprised
We prepare for the future by being _____ like Habakkuk - God also keeps His promises to the church
The church will continue until the _____, and God will use you for His glory if you will walk with Him

The righteous shall live by his faith

KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – count how many references are made to the wicked. Talk with your parents about the importance of God punishing the wicked and some of the ways He does it.

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. Set the context for the book of Habakkuk. Why was Habakkuk perplexed at God's seeming silence about the evil in Judah? Why was he perplexed at God sending the Chaldeans in answer to his prayer? What does Habakkuk believe about God? What is the importance of God being eternal? What promises of God gave Habakkuk confidence in the "Rock"? Why is God patient? How does 2:1 show Habakkuk's humility? What did he expect? Why did God want the vision to be written down? What is the context of "*But the righteous will live by faith*" in verse 4? Why does Paul quote it in Rom. 1:17 & Gal. 3:11? What is a taunt-song? What is a woe? How would God use this prophecy to make an example of the Chaldeans? What did you learn about the Chaldeans as you read 2:6-20? What did you learn about God's justice in those verses? How has God dealt with evil nations throughout history? What lesson is there in this for America? How can you prepare for increasing persecution? How can you be as confident as Habakkuk? What promises has God made to the church & believers?