

The wicked thrive and the righteous suffer

Habakkuk 1: 12 – 2: 20

1) The character of God

- God is eternal.
 - Nothing has taken Him by surprise. He knows all things from beginning to end.
- God is Holy and will never die
 - God is set apart from all evil
- God is our Rock
 - He is immovable and although we might be thrown out and disturbed by everything going on around us He always remains steadfast.
- God is too pure to look on evil
 - He will not even look on evil except to judge it.
 - This gives an indication of the judgement that He brought on Jesus when Jesus died for the sins of the world.

2) The thriving wicked and the suffering righteous

- After acknowledging who God is the moral dilemma of the thriving of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous is raised.
 - The issue isn't just that but why is God silent over the matter?
 - Psalm 73 – The prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous.
- Not only do the wicked prosper while the righteous suffer but the wicked often prosper at the expense of the righteous.
 - The rich often oppress the poor.
 - James 2: 5 – 7 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?
- The rich are often boastful and worship the works of their hands.
 - So often we also so admire the works of people's hands that we give them more praise than we give to God.
 - Remember when King Nebuchadnezzar walked on the roof of his palace in Daniel chapter 4 and boasted: "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"
- Let us remember Proverbs 22: 16: One who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and one who gives gifts to the rich--both come to poverty.

3) The truth revealed

- The revelation or vision – truth from God – would be revealed at its proper time and it would be obvious to all
- Nothing and no one can or will stop the plans and purposes of God from being accomplished.
 - Job 42: 2 "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
 - Isaiah 14: 27 For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?
- Not only won't the plans of the Lord be stopped but they won't be delayed. They happen at the precise time that He planned them to happen.

- The Lord reiterates His faithfulness to the righteous and the fact that the righteous live by faith in His faithfulness.
 - It doesn't matter what the circumstances around us seem to be God is always faithful.
 - 2 Timothy 2: 13 If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself
- God then reveals how he sees the wicked as proud, arrogant and greedy.
- He then reveals the pending judgment on the wicked with 5 woes:
 - Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion!
 - Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain, setting his nest on high to escape the clutches of ruin!
 - Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by injustice!
 - Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbours, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies!
 - Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come to life!' Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!
- The Lord is in His Holy Temple – a place where He is to be worshipped.
- Let the earth be silent – in awe and reverence – before Him
 - Live lives of worship in the fear of the Lord.