

HABAKKUK

just living by faith

March 8, 2009



God answers Habakkuk's first complaint with an **intention** for disciplining the sinful Judah... but with a surprising **instrument** of discipline.

Habakkuk 1:5-11

5 "Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.

6 I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own.

7 They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.

8 Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like a vulture swooping to devour;

9 they all come bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand.

10 They deride kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; they build earthen ramps and capture them.

11 Then they sweep past like the wind and go on—guilty men, whose own strength is their god."

The Text

1:1-4, First Complaint—Unpunished Wicked

- Evil leadership of kings & priests. Evil people.
2 Chronicles 35:18; 36:14-16
- Mistreatment of the poor and the land.
2 Chronicles 36:21

1:5-11 God's Answer to the First Complaint

God's intention to discipline His people

- v 5 *Look... watch*
- *nations*
- *utterly amazed... would not believe*

God's instrument for disciplining His people

- *For I am...*
- **vs 6** *Babylonians*
- *ruthless and impetuous*
- *not their own*
- **vs 7** *feared and dreaded*
- *law to themselves*

- *promote their own honor*
- **vs 8** *horses... leopards*
- *vulture (eagle)*
- **vs 9** *violence*
- *wind (vs 11)*
- **vs 10** *deride kings*
- *earthen ramps*
- **vs 11** *own strength in their god (vs 6, 7)*

The Take-Home

- God is sovereign: He knows the future.
- God is sovereign: His timing is right.
Rom 2:4; 9:22; 2 Pe 3:9,15
- God is sovereign: He will judge all people & nations. Acts 10:42; 2Co 5:10; Heb 9:27

How will you face the judgment of God?

Isa 53:6; Acts 17:29-31; 2Co 5:21; 1Th 1:9-10;

Where Do I Grow from Here? (Personal and Growth Group Questions)

Consider recording your answers below in advance of your Growth Group meeting

Growth Group Questions

Interact

- 1) Share a "believe-it-or-not" fact from your life story. Who in your group believes it?

or

- 2) What was the most effective punishment that your parents used on you or your siblings?

Observe and Interpret

- 3) Read Habakkuk 1:5-11. How does God describe the Babylonians? How do they conduct warfare?
- 4) What words found in verses 1-4 are repeated in this paragraph? What is the significance of this?
- 5) Compare verse 7 with verses 10-11. Why is violence the logical outcome of the Babylonians' "god"?
- 6) How does the evil of the Babylonians and Judeans compare with evil today?
- 7) How does the Babylonian god compare with the gods of today?
- 8) In what ways is this section an answer to Habakkuk's complaint?
- 9) Pretend you haven't read further in the book, how might Habakkuk respond to God's answer? How would you respond?
- 10) Why does God say, "You would not believe it"?

Apply

- 11) What do you find puzzling about God's answer:
 - (a) The end justifying the means?
 - (b) God using a double standard?
 - (c) God using two wrongs to make a right?
 - (d) God seems to over-react?
 - (e) other? Explain.
- 12) How might God use terrorists, drug thugs, police states, Islamic extremists, and scandals in our day? In your life? To what end?
- 13) What do you think about the three implications of God's sovereignty from the message on Sunday: God knows the future; God's timing is right; God will judge all people and nations? Do they make sense? What is your reaction?
- 14) How did it go this past week as you prayed from the Lord's Prayer? ("*Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" Matthew 6:10)

Even Further Optional Reading

- What do these verses indicate about the fairness of God's judgment?
Nehemiah 9:32-37
Daniel 9:10-11, 14
Isaiah 42:24-25
Hebrews 2:2
- How does Genesis 3:12-13 show the human tendency to give excuses and not take the blame?
- In Romans 1:17-18, what is the basic contrast between the gospel of God being revealed versus the wrath of God being revealed?
- How can God's discipline be good for us?
Proverbs 3:11-12; Deuteronomy 8:1-4; Revelation 3:19; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Hebrews 12:5-6