

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for November 8, 2015

Habakkuk 1:1-11
Is God there?

I. The prophet's complaint (1:1-4)

A. The Requests (vv. 2-3a)

- Oracle: burden, heavy message for the people of Judah
- Paraphrased questions:
 - Why don't you listen to me?
 - Why don't you save us?
 - Why do you let sin abound?
- Summarized question:
 - God, are you there?
- Notice the maturity of these requests:
 - He is not concerned with God answering petty selfish requests
 - He is concerned with "iniquity" and "wickedness" in Judah

B. The Reality (v. 3b)

- Destruction, violence, strife and contention are all at work
 - The violence could be physical or ethical wrongdoing
- Contrast righteousness from Josiah to evil Jehoiakim
 - 2 Chronicles 36:8 "Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, the abominations which he did, and what was found against him..."
- Habakkuk knew the situation was a contrast to God's intention for Israel
 - Exodus 19:6 "and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

C. The Result (v. 4a)

- “Therefore the law is ignored”
 - The law is God's law to Israel (Pentateuch)
 - The law was ignored, ineffective or numbed
- “And justice is never upheld”
 - “upheld” literally means “go forth”
 - If the law is ignored, then justice will not go forth or be upheld

-Genesis 18:19 “For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD *by doing righteousness and justice*, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”

D. The Reason (v. 4b)

- “For the wicked surround the righteous”
 - Wickedness overwhelmed Israel and took them into captivity
 - Now wickedness is dominating Judah
- “Therefore justice comes out perverted”
 - Justice was supposed to be upheld by God’s people
 - Wickedness had distorted justice

II. The Lord’s Chaldeans (1:5-11)

A. The raising of the Chaldeans (vv. 5-6a)

- God’s simple answer:
 - “I am here and I am busy at work”
- “You would not believe if you were told”
 - Isaiah 55:8-9 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”
- We will see Habakkuk’s unbelief in his next question (1:13b)

B. The report of the Chaldeans (vv. 6b-11)

1. They are renowned (vv. 6b-7)

- “who march throughout the earth”
 - Chaldeans were still gaining a name for themselves
- “They are dreaded and feared”
 - Chaldeans were about to defeat Assyria and Egypt at Carchemish (605 BC)
- “Their justice and authority originate with themselves”
 - They do what they want and they set their own rules

2. They are rapid (v. 8)

- Horses swifter than leopards
- Horses more eager than hunting and hungry wolves in the evening

- They fly like an eagle to devour their prey
- In Daniel 7, Babylon is described as a lion with eagle's wings

3. They are resolved (v. 9)

- “All of them come for violence”
 - There is no negotiating or peaceful diplomatic talks
- “Their horde of faces moves forward”
 - “Their hordes advance like a desert wind” -NIV
- “They collect captives like sand”

4. They are ruthless (vv. 10-11a)

- They mock kings
- They laugh at fortresses
- “And heap up rubble to capture it”
 - They simply built earthen ramps against the walls of cities
 - 2 Kings 19:32; Ezekiel 4:2
- “Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on”
 - They quickly move on to the next people to conquer

5. They are religious (v. 11b)

- “But they will be held guilty”
 - Looming question: What will become of these Chaldeans?
 - Yahweh declares that they will be held guilty even though He raised them up
- “They whose strength is their god”
 - They believe and trust only in themselves
 - They are the beginning and end of all things
 - Isaiah 10:5-7 “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hands is My indignation, I send it against a godless nation and commission it against the people of My fury to capture booty and to seize plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. Yet it does not so intend, nor does it plan so in its heart, but rather it is its purpose to destroy and to cut off many nations.”
 - Isaiah 10:15 “Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it? Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it? That would be like a club wielding those who lift it, or like a rod lifting him who is not wood.”

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