

1:1-1:11 First Prayer and Response

1-4 Habakkuk's Prayer

5-11 God's Response

1:12-2:20 Second Prayer and Response

1:12-2:1 Habakkuk's Prayer and Posture

2:2-20 God's Response

2-5 Call to Faith

6-20 Five Woes on the Wicked

3:1-3:19 Final Prayer of Faith

What will God do with the wicked?

Habakkuk, Part III

Habakkuk 2:6-20

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I. God and Injustice (Ps 9:15-20)

The purpose of these woes is to make us staunch and stalwart in the pursuit of righteousness even when observing the temporary prosperity of the wicked. God wants us to point out the folly of wickedness (2:6). The future belongs to the righteous. Psalm 9:17-18, *"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever."*

II. Woes on the Wicked

A. On him who builds his life on injustice (6-8)

...Woe to him who increases What is not his—how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges. ⁷Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty. ⁸Because you have plundered many nations, All the remnant of the people shall plunder you, Because of men's blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it.

B. On him who builds his house on injustice (9-11)

⁹Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, That he may set his nest on high, That he may be delivered from the power of disaster! ¹⁰You give shameful counsel to your house, Cutting off many peoples, And sin against your soul. ¹¹For the stone will cry out from the wall, And the beam from the timbers will answer it.

C. On him who builds his city on injustice (12-14 cf. Num 14:21; Is 11:9)

¹²Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed, Who establishes a city by iniquity! ¹³Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts That the peoples labor to feed the fire, And nations weary themselves in vain? ¹⁴For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

D. On him who is immoral (15-17 cf. Phil 3:19)

¹⁵Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing him to your bottle, Even to make him drunk, That you may look on his nakedness! ¹⁶You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also—drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the LORD's right hand will be turned against you, And utter shame will be on your glory. ¹⁷For the violence done to Lebanon will cover you, And the plunder of beasts which made them afraid, Because of men's blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it.

E. On him who is an idolater (18-20 cf. Ps 115:1-8)

¹⁸What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, The molded image, a teacher of lies, That the maker of its mold should trust in it, To make mute idols? ¹⁹Woe to him who says to wood, 'Awake!' To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!' Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, Yet in it there is no breath at all. ²⁰But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."

III. The Future of Injustice

A. The Law and the King (cf. 1 Kings 21; 2 Kings 9:30-37)

The impulse to accumulate wealth, power, and prestige unjustly is at the heart of Habakkuk's first three woes. This impulse is helpfully summarized by the Latin phrase *Rex Lex* – the _____ is the Law. In other words, might makes right.

The opposite of a *Rex Lex* society is a *Lex Rex* society – a society built on the belief that *the _____ is king*. There are eternal, transcendent laws that stand over and above every society which every society must learn and obey. We don't create the law; we discover the eternal law as it is revealed in Scripture and in God's creation. So even if we have a majority, we may not take another's life or curtail his liberty or confiscate his property unless he has been convicted in a court of law of violating that transcendent law himself.

B. Drinking the cup of God's wrath (cf. Prov 28:6; 1 Thes 4:3-8)

Habakkuk reveals that the threefold foundation of unjust societies is *injustice, immorality, and idolatry*. *Immorality* and *idolatry* form the soil in which *injustice* grows. "Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich" (Prov 28:6).

Habakkuk warns that _____ societies will collapse in fire and vanity. This is a design feature in God's world. God will not permit injustice to thrive long term (Hab 2:13). So:

- The plunderer will be plundered;
- The house built on injustice will collapse on its owner;
- The city built on bloodshed will come to ruin;
- The man who lives shamefully will be brought to shame;
- The "dumb" idolater will be silenced before the Lord.

³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. ⁷For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

C. Living Justly by Faith (Hab 2:4, 14; Mic 6:8; Eph 6:14)

God has given these woes so that we may *live justly by faith* (Hab 2:4). We are to believe God's promise that He will judge and destroy the wicked and to use that as motivation to continue living justly by faith even in the face of persecution or opposition. "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do _____, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic 6:8) God calls us to speak faithfully about wickedness and to leave the results to Him. He may choose to bless our faithfulness with fruitfulness – a revival of faith may accompany our witness, or He may choose to bless our faithfulness with martyrdom – a gnashing of teeth and persecution may accompany our witness. Our calling is to be faithful, to *gird our loins with _____* (Eph 6:14).

IV. Conclusion