

## **Habakkuk in 5**

This is Habakkuk in 5.

Habakkuk is a prophet of the OT, one of the minor prophets who prophesied around 600 BC. He is a prophet of the theology of the cross. It is Habakkuk who teaches us that the Righteous will live by faith, a phrase quoted by Paul several times, a major theme of the New Testament and the turning point of this book.

Habakkuk is a prophet who questions God. He stands before God and questions Him. Twice.

The first question is, "How can you do nothing in light of the evil that is being done among your people?"

And the second question is, "How can God use an evil nation to punish His own chosen people?"

The first question looks at the violence and the injustice that is being done in Judah and Jerusalem, and asks God why He isn't doing anything about it. We're very familiar with that kind of questioning in our own lives, aren't we?

The second question is in light of God's response to the first question because God says that He will indeed punish the evil in Jerusalem and Judah. He will do it by using the Chaldeans, a godless, ruthless, violent nation. Habakkuk questions this and asks why God would use evil to punish evil.

God's response is simple: the righteous will live by faith. Faith does not question God, but trusts God - in His Word and in His promises.

And so Habakkuk ends chapter 2 with the statement that God is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silent. And that's the end of the real narrative of Habakkuk, just 2 chapters.

Chapter 3 of Habakkuk is a psalm, in which Habakkuk starts with a statement that God will remember His mercy and then ends with a great praise of God that even though everything is going wrong, even though everything is falling apart and nothing seems to be going right, yet God is our salvation and we will trust in Him.

So this short book, just 3 chapters, starts with questioning God, His inactivity in the face of evil, questioning God's use of evil for His purposes, and resolves it with the faith that God IS in His holy temple and we will praise Him even though everything seems to be falling apart.

Now the problem is, not too long after Habakkuk wrote this, God's temple was destroyed. And the prophet who said that God was in His holy temple and the whole earth must keep silent witnessed the destruction of the temple and the seeming

absence of God as the Chaldeans came and destroyed God's people, destroyed the holy temple, destroyed Jerusalem.

THIS is the theology of the cross: the righteous will live by faith. We do not look at our circumstances to determine whether or not God is faithful. We believe His Word. We cling to His promises.

Here Habakkuk points us toward Christ. Hanging there on the cross, it looks as though the enemies have won and God has left. Yet Jesus tells us in John chapter 2 that when they destroy the temple, that is His body, He will raise it again in three days. Thus with the resurrection of Jesus, we are told that faith is the eye that sees the truth of God.

This is the great confession by Thomas after the resurrection of Jesus in John chapter 20 when Jesus says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

The righteous will live by faith. We believe God's promises. When it looks as though He's doing nothing, when it looks as though evil is winning, we trust God's promises because they are kept in Christ.

In Christ we are brought to the place where it seems as though God is entirely absent, a criminal crucified. But there, the place where God seems absent, is where we see God fully displayed, as a God who remembers His promises, as a God who has mercy, as a God who conquers evil, as a God who forgives our sins, and as a God who conquers death through the resurrection of His Son, Jesus.

The Lord is in His holy temple, in the very body of Jesus. And you are righteous by faith in Him.

This is Habakkuk in 5. Read it. Learn it. And pass it on.