

Questioning God

Week 5: Things That Destroy Nations

Text: Habakkuk 2:6-20

Introduction/Context

Around 600BC the prophet Habakkuk cries out to God and asks when God is going to do something about the wickedness of the people of Judah. God answers him and says he is already doing something incredible and amazing. The Babylonians are coming and God is going to use them (even in their wickedness) to discipline Judah. Habakkuk is horrified that God would do such a thing. It is like burning down your house because you find a spider. God makes it clear to Habakkuk that he is holy and trustworthy and that he needs to wait in faith to see how God is going to resolve it all, and what God will do with Babylon.

1. The judgment of God will be poured out against the wicked

- Read Habakkuk 2:6-2 & Psalm 75:6-8

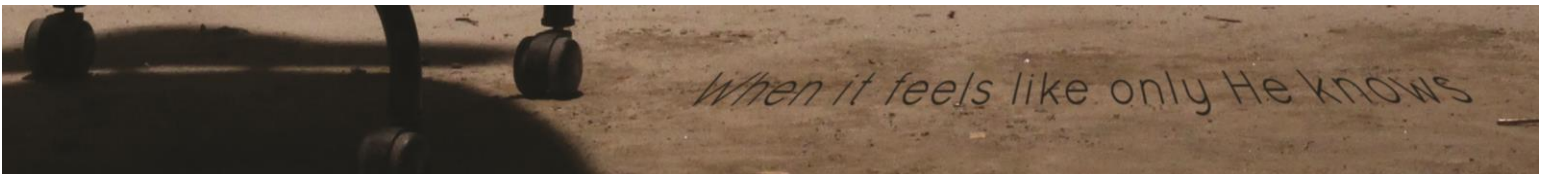
We see that God isn't just going to discipline Judah, he is going to judge and condemn Babylon, and the nations that they oppress will rise up against them and mock and taunt them. This text is full of language of judgment. There is the language of "woe", which is biblical language of judgment. There is talk of God covering the earth with water (verse 14), which is language of judgment. There is talk of a cup of the Lord, which is biblical language for judgment and wrath.

- ❖ Q: Often we try to avoid passages that speak of the wrath of God. What does this passage tell you about God's attitude toward sin?
- ❖ Q: Think about the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. What does this act tell you about a: God's attitude toward, and the seriousness of sin, and b: God's attitude toward us in taking on our sin Himself?
- ❖ Q: Often we are quick to want judgement on others' wickedness, but forget our own sinfulness, Consider your life: is there anything you can think of that God would see as sinful? (Think about a few and share these with your group if you feel comfortable).

2. There are things that the world rewards that God sees as punishable

The five woes are pretty incredible. God speaks against pretty much everything it takes to make it in this world.

- Woe to the one who gets rich off the struggles of others (v 6-8)
- Woe to the one who tries to separate himself from the struggles of the poor, by making illegitimate profit (v 9-11)
- Woe to the one who exploits workers and doesn't bring them out of poverty (v 12-14)
- Woe to the one who celebrates shame and exploits others for pleasure (v 15-17)
- Woe to the one who worships anything but God, and who glories in independence (v 18-19)



When it feels like only He knows

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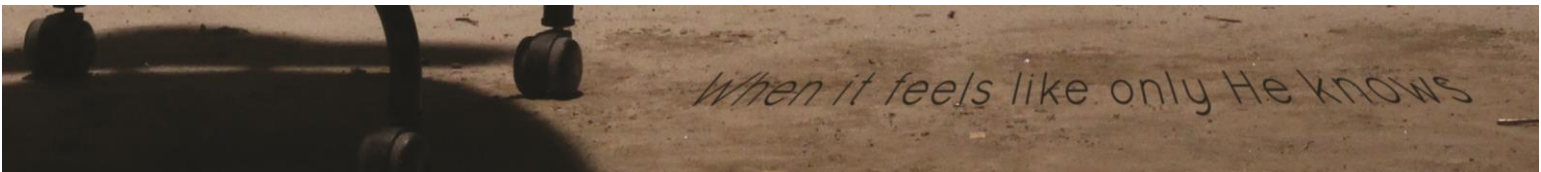
- ❖ Q: Consider the 5 points listed above. Can you think of ways that these things are happening in our immediate society, and perhaps in your life?
- ❖ Q: What could you do in your personal capacity and as a Gospel Community to change this? (Read Matthew 5:14-16)

3. For the people of God, the cup of God's wrath is already poured out

- Read 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 8:1-3, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Hebrews 12:3-13 & 1 Peter 1:3-7

The text in Habakkuk is equal part thrilling and terrifying. Thrilling, because it shows that God is going to act against injustice. Terrifying though, because I am part of the wicked, I have my own forms of injustice, rebellion and idolatry, and so I find myself thinking and wondering if elements of suffering in my life are as a result of God punishing me like he punished the Babylonians. If God used suffering as a sign of his just judgment against Babylon, then is the same true and coming for me? But we see even in Habakkuk that God uses suffering and strife very differently in the lives of his covenant people from the way he uses in the lives of those who don't love and serve him. He used the advance of the Babylonians in the life of Judah, but he used that as a loving dad disciplining a son. This is actually a theme in the lives of the people of God.

- ❖ Q: Consider 2 Corinthians 5:21 & Romans 8:1-3. Are those who are believers in Christ (Christians) under the penalty of God's wrath? Why not?
- ❖ Q: Knowing that God's wrath has been satisfied (diverted somewhere else), what could the purpose of trial and hardship that we experience today be? (2 Corinthians 12:7-10 & Hebrews 12:3-13)
- ❖ Q: How does this change your attitude toward God, knowing that out of love we are sometimes chastened and disciplined?
- ❖ Q: Considering 1 Peter 1:3-7, when we are experiencing trials, or perhaps being disciplined by God, what should our response be?
- ❖ Q: Is there anything going on in your life at the moment that you could see as God's discipline or chastening? (share with the group if comfortable)
- ❖ Q: How can we, knowing that God is holy and trustworthy, better wait in faith in these circumstances (just as Habakkuk was called to do in his)?



When it feels like only He knows