

HONEST QUESTIONS
Grace Lutheran—September 18, 2011
Habakkuk 1:1 – 2:1

Introduction: Applicable and relevant to us today. Natural disasters, economic ruin, political tragedy. People ask: "Where's God?" or "How can a good God every let this happen?" Habakkuk has the answer.

Who was Habakkuk? Minor prophet, probably temple musician, about 600 BC. Israel prosperous, but in moral decline (sound familiar?). Babylonians gaining in power, cruel warriors.

But his writings transition from standing in honest questions to standing in awe, come what may. How? A study of Habakkuk prepares us for whatever may come in our lives.

What are "honest questions" ?

_____ questions come from sincere heart, without doubting; not unbelief, just seeking to understand.

_____ questions are critical, mocking, cynical. Seek to disprove the existence of God.

JAS 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt...

Habakkuk's first questions (Hab 1: 1-4)

1st question is about _____ (v.2): When will you listen? (Do you really hear me?)
ISA 59:1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

2nd question is about _____ (v.2): When will you help?

3rd question is about Habakkuk's heart grieved (v.3): Why do I have to look at injustice?

4th question is about _____ (v.3): How can You stand this mess??

God's first answer, "I'm sending the wicked Babylonians!" (Hab 1:5-11)

Expected answers: I hear you. I'm going to help. I'll take away injustice. I can't stand this evil. God's answers don't always seem to make sense.

ISA 55:9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

God's _____ (v.5) Watch! (Mt 26:41, Mk 14:38, Lk 21:36)

LK 21:25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

God's _____ (v.6) Satan is on a leash, evil with boundaries.

Ruthless, impetuous, thieves, anarchy, self-seeking, violent, mocking, disrespectful of authority, idolaters.

Trust their own strength. Hits close to home: personal, church, nation.

_____ scene builds (v.11): Judge pronounces them guilty.
So God says, "Watch. I'm in charge. Here's what the guilty look like."

Habakkuk's second set of questions (Hab 1: 12— 2:1)

First, he remembers who God is (v.12-13a).

Eternal, God, holy, Judge (court room), rock (unchangeable, faithful, absolute, dependable), sovereign (You ordained...), pure.

Honest questions (v.13):

5th question: You can't look on evil, so why do You tolerate it?

6th question: Why do you allow the wicked to swallow up those more righteous?"

7th question: Is there no mercy for us fish? (v.17)

Important: Habakkuk has gone from asking mercy for _____, to asking mercy for the _____. He's beginning to understand God's perspective: big picture, righteous vs. wicked.

Scene closes with Habakkuk standing in question. (2:1)

Key thoughts from Habakkuk 1

- 1) Honest questions seek His _____
- 2) His _____ are high above ours
- 3) _____ and pray
- 4) See who _____ is: outside of time and space, holy, pure, judge, sovereign, unchangeable.
- 5) See who God declares _____:
proud, selfish, rebellious, idolaters, mockers, disrespectful, not compassionate

Next week we'll see the next step in how a Christian must live, come what may.

Also next Sunday evening: stories from Ethiopia, coffee ceremony.