

Love & War #5

When God Seemingly Allows Evil People to Succeed

Word

Scripture Reference

Habakkuk 1:12-2:20

Discussion Questions

1. What evilness in this world do you wish God would deal with right away? Why?
2. Read Habakkuk 1:12-2:1-20. When bad things happen, we put God on trial, even in our own minds. Habakkuk put God on trial and asked why God seemingly allows evil people to succeed. Judah's impending punishment would be at the hands of the Babylonians. Habakkuk was dismayed that God would use a nation more wicked than Judah to punish Judah. And so he asked, "Why does God allow evil to succeed?" (ch. 1:12-17). Discuss why you think God allows evil to prosper. When you ought to be punished or corrected, are you able to choose the kind of discipline God uses on you? Why or why not?
3. God gave two answers to Habakkuk's question. First, God assured him that the righteous would experience eternal success (as opposed to limited success by the evil people) by his faith or trust in the Lord (ch. 2:1-4). Evil, unfairness, and biases look like they have the upper hand in the world. Like Habakkuk, you may possibly feel angry and disheartened as you see injustices going on. Habakkuk strongly complained to God about the situation. What was God's answer to his complaint in verses 1-4? Do you think God will punish sin as He said he would? What do you know about God that makes you say so? What does it mean that "evil people's success is limited, but the righteous will live by his faith (ch. 2:4)"? Share how you would trust God even when you can't fathom why things happen as they do.
4. God's second answer to Habakkuk's question was His assurance that God would judge all evil people (ch. 2:5-20). The wicked Babylonians were a proud lot and trusted in their own selves. Their riches had come from the misfortunes of others. But God knew Babylon's sins and would punish it in due time. Their temporal success would end. The Babylonians' pride led them to commit five sins that would bring about God's anger and punishment:
 - a. *Corruption* (ch. 2:6-8). In what way did the Babylonians make themselves rich by taking advantage of others? Discuss the corruption that is going on in your society. Did you ever ask when would it end? How do you think God would deal with the perpetrators of corruption? Do you and can you trust that God

would do as He said He would?

- b. *Self-exaltation* (ch. 2:9-11). The Babylonians used their conquest to build for themselves a kingdom that they thought would last forever. They exalted themselves, but everything would be taken away from them. What's wrong with being proud? Is it always evil in itself? What is the fine line between praising God and self-exaltation? How have you seen God humble the prideful?
- c. *Cruelty* (ch. 2:12-14). God would punish the Babylonians for their cruelty and oppression because they built their cities with bloodshed. Discuss the many injustices going on around you. How do you feel that nothing established by injustices in this world will stand? What encourages you to persevere in doing what glorifies the Lord?
- d. *Greed* (ch. 2:15-17). God takes greed seriously. Because of Babylon's sin of greed, what specific punishment would God lay on them in verse 2:15? How is greed evident in many evil people's life nowadays? How should you react if you are greedy? What sobering thought does Mark 8:36 speak to you?
- e. *Idolatry* (ch. 2:18-20). Idolatry is placing our trust in anything other than God. How do these verses further describe what idols are? Why is it ridiculous to trust in idols? What does verse 2:20 tell us about why people should not need man-made idols in the church to worship Him? Discuss what kind of "idols" Christians have in their lives, prioritizing its importance over God?

Walk

God will deal with sins such as corruption, self-exaltation, cruelty, greed, and idolatry in a severe way, but He will bless the righteous who live in faith and will give them eternal success. Are you a victim of any of the sins mentioned in this passage? Talk to God and ask for His grace so you will not be bitter and angry. Remember that the just will live by faith.

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, you know the thoughts and motives of men, for you can see what's in the heart. You will not allow sin to go unpunished because you are just and righteous. Lord, help me help me recognize the sins I have in my heart, even those I think I may not be guilty of. Have I been corrupt, cruel, and greedy in some of my actions toward others? Have I been exalted myself instead of giving glory to Your Name? Am I guilty of idolatry in my home or at work because I trust in what my hands have made instead of trusting You? Please forgive me if I am. Help me to live a righteous life by always trusting in You. In Jesus Name. Amen