

03.03.21 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

Title: “Why?”

Scripture Reading: [Habakkuk 1: 5 – 17](#)

Reflection: Rev. Evan Heerema

A few weeks back I was privileged to serve as a substitute teacher at a local Christian middle school. The 7th grade Bible class was studying the book of Job. Students were assigned the speeches of Job and his three “friends”. They had to debate each other attempting to prove their point. This was quite a challenge for 7th graders, but I am glad to report that they did a great job attempting to figure out the worldview of Job and his friends. Job repeatedly stated that it is not the righteous who are punished but the wicked; his friends kept saying that Job must have sinned against God since he was being punished. For them too, righteousness does not earn punishment.

The question of “Why me?” was on Job’s lips while the question of “What did you do?” was on the lips of his friends. At the conclusion of the book, God lets the “friends” have it for their misguided arrogance and lack of understanding and Job gets a bit of a tongue lashing too for attempting to usurp God’s sovereignty. (That is my really brief summary of the book.)

Habakkuk 1: 5 – 17 echoes some of the same sentiments that are found in the book of Job. After asking God “How long” will treachery and violence continue in Jerusalem, Habakkuk hears God’s answer, but it is not an answer Habakkuk is all that excited about. God says that he will be sending the evil and ruthless Babylonians to punish – and in God’s name. “O Lord, you have appointed them to execute judgment; O Rock, you have ordained them to punish” (verse 12).

We can almost hear Habakkuk weeping and crying out that the Babylonians cannot be God’s hand of punishment. They are even more evil than the people of Jerusalem. They are a dirty pot calling a kettle black. Even though the people of Jerusalem were not pure by a long shot, compared to Babylon they were not so bad. “Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves” (vs. 13)? You, a holy and pure God would not, could not, tolerate such treachery?

It is tempting to jump ahead in the prophecy to hear God’s final word on the Babylonians, but I will not do that. As in Job, we must wait on God to do what is right and to work his purposes out. He is sovereign. He is God Almighty. And, he is the Lord of heaven and earth and we are not.

We might also ask why Jesus had to go to the cross and suffer the way he did. Why would God let it appear as if death and Satan had won the conflict? Why would the high priest turn against God’s anointed? Why would Pilate, a Roman appointee, ridicule Jesus and wash his hands of justice? Why, why, why? Part of the answer is that God designed that to happen, and Jesus gave himself up to that abuse so that we would not have to. Jesus turned himself over to fulfill the plan of God to provide salvation and victory for the world and for all who believe in Jesus as Lord. From Adam and Eve up to Jesus himself there was the prophecy of one of the seed of Eve being bit in the heel – all the while he was crushing the serpent’s head. That was God’s sovereign plan. Why? Because God loved and loves us. To God be the Glory. AMEN

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for revealing yourself to us as One who loves us and is still working out your sovereign plan for us and your world. We might not comprehend all the details, but we know and trust you, even when we can't see past what looks to be very strange. Strengthen our faith, please. AMEN.

Action Item for the Day/Week:

In the stillness of some meditative moments, wait on God and listen for him to speak to you about who He is. Give him thanks for his revelation.

Songs for today:

[O God our Help in Ages Past](#)