

35-01-01 --The Whys of the Wise Person

faith, theodicy, why, questions

Hab. 1:1-2:1

Faith is not destroyed but strengthened through "why" questions.

INTRODUCTION:

--What is theodicy (it's not Homer's)

--Who is Habakkuk? (official status no guarantee to fame, but he did get his poem published . . .)

--**v.1** "*massa*," a burden, a song (1Chr.15,25) (esp. this subject "theodicy," like the long dialogue in Job among those trying to answer the "why" question

--**title**--When our faith moves us to question God, His answer often raises greater questions requiring greater faith. Chapter 1 helps us to see how faith grows stronger on "why" questions

--**Faith is not destroyed but strengthened through "why" questions, because**

I. Faith begins the "Why" Question

A. Habakkuk believed the Lord is a God Who:

1. answers prayer, **v.2a** (Time meets Eternity in PRAYER)
(T/P=F; Time/Prayer=Faith)
2. saves (delivers), **v.2b** (Carl Disney's FAITH-WORKOUT)
3. is holy, **v.3a**
4. desires peace and community, **v3b** (CHURCH, HEAVEN)
5. does not change (or no real "why"; PAGAN GODS, no theodicy)
 - a. The believer's "why" shows stable trust.
 - b. The skeptic's "if" shows an unbelief (IF GOD, THEN. . .)

B. Habakkuk believed that God's standards (His Law) were right, **v.4**

1. The distant past--Justice under DAVID ("I love your law...")
2. The recent past--Corruption, then JOSIAH (Torah found)
3. The present regime--the law "numb" (limbs needs NERVE!)
"WHY, O LORD, WHY?"

TRANS: the TITLE . . . Habakkuk was not just a wise person by virtue of his official position. He was a wise person because he

approached God in faith to ask "why?" We've seen how His "whys" began in faith. They were spoken in faith because he expected an answer. This leads into the next point: Faith is not destroyed but strengthened through "why" questions, because...

II. God Hears Our "Whys" and Responds, v.5-11, however,

- A. We may not be ready for the answer
 - 1. It's too startling, v.5a (CHANGE of SCENERY --"vision")
 - 2. It challenges our present faith level, v.5b (A-BOMB & H-BOMB)
- B. We may have expect another kind of answer.
 - 1. Habakkuk probably reflected on JOSIAH's reforms.
 - 2. (BABYLON?) Can God use the evil of Satan to bring good?

TRANS: God hears our "whys" and responds, but it may only lead to further "why" questions. God's answer perplexed Habakkuk, but it didn't damage his faith. It only spurred it on, which leads into our third point.. **Faith is not destroyed but strengthened through "why" questions, because**

III. Faith Maintains Dialogue in the Face of Mystery (PARADOX)

- A. Faith knows HOW TO maintain debate with the Most High, v.12
 - 1. PRAISE Him: "*are you not from everlasting?*"
 - 2. Remind Him of His covenant promises: "*we will not die.*"
 - 3. Use respectful but strategic names:
 - a. "LORD," (Yahweh)– covenant name (MR.GOD vs. I AM),
 - b. "My God,"--because it's a personal and friendly debate,
 - c. "Holy One"--because holiness is a key issue.
 - d. "O Rock"-- special, because it brings up two of God's roles:
 - (1) Ps.144:1-2, "Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me."
 - (2) Deu.t.32:4, "He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."
 - 4. Rephrase what He just told you (in contrast with the

- NAMES) (Perhaps Habakkuk used INFLECTION?)
- B. Faith holds reason's perplexity in tension:
 - 1. What reason sees: (A CURE worse than the DISEASE)
 - a. Reason sees an imbalance: the relatively good vs. the really bad (SICK CHURCH vs. SECULAR HUMANISM)
 - b. Reason sees the plight of the victim: the pillaging of the KING of BABYLON (ADDICTIONS & DEMONIC SLAVERY)
 - c. Reason sees the suffering of the innocent: who already suffer (KIDS & DIVORCE vs. KIDS & LAWLESSNESS)
 - 2. What reason doesn't see:
 - a. The disease may be worse than expected. (NEWS about the CAR, "GET A NEW ONE!")
 - b. God's explanation is beyond our capacity to handle, (GOD ANSWERS JOB, and ASLAN ANSWERS ARAVIS)
- C. Faith puts an "ellipsis mark" at the end of its theodicy . . .
 - 1. The believer takes a stand on the promises, v.2:1 (on the LOOKOUT)
 - 2. The believer awaits God's reply, but prays with his eyes open

CONCLUSION:

--The fool's question and that of the Wise person . . . **Faith is not destroyed but strengthened through "why" questions.**
 --Faith waits on God, to "see what the LORD will say."
 --Faith speaks out, writes out, the "burden" for the COMMUNITY
 --Paul's quoted v.5 in his warning the Jews to reject the Gospel message: in their case, THE DISEASE OF self-righteous UNBELIEF was so bad that the CURE was for God Himself to die. Unbelievable. Yet the only way for us to be saved. Have you taken advantage of the CURE that was in the CROSS?

