

He Knows Best

“Why do you let the wicked destroy the righteous?”

THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET HABAKKUK VOICED, in his conversation with *Yehovah-Adonia*, a plaintive cry that has been repeated throughout the ages since.

*Your eyes are too pure to approve evil,
And You can not look on wickedness with favor.
Why do You look with favor
On those who deal treacherously?
Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up
Those more righteous than they?*

Habakkuk 1:13

It was repeated when Rome laid siege to Jerusalem in AD 66, and subsequently burned and destroyed the Temple in 70. It was repeated in 135 when the Romans again crushed rebellion and destroyed Jerusalem, when hundreds of thousands of Jews were slaughtered and the women and children sold into slavery, and Israel ceased as a sovereign

state until regaining its independence in 1948.

It was repeated, at full volume, in the 1930s when Adolf Hitler began his heinous, systematic obliteration of the Jewish race, which ended only after the torture and death of six million men, women, and children from European Jewry.

And we hear a thin, if self-centered echo of the lament in today's common refrain, "How could a loving God permit such a tragedy?"



Modern man has constructed a "God" who is expected to behave by man's perception of justice. And he is offended by the *real* God's persistent refusal to fit Himself into the neat package of his shortsighted design. Because He *is* God, He has no obligation to be anything but Himself.

With wars and crime, political deceit and thuggery, dictator-contrived droughts and famine—time and again both redeemed and unredeemed cry out in stupefied disbelief: *How can this happen? Where is God in all this?*

The answer for today's believer is found not just in Jehovah's reply to Habakkuk, but even more in Jesus' reply to the apostle Peter after His resurrection. Early one morning during His final days on earth Jesus shared breakfast with His disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. After they had breakfasted on grilled fish, Jesus turned to the recently errant Peter and grilled *him* on the depth and authenticity of his devotion, finishing with a prophecy of the remainder of the disciple's career in service to his Lord.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow

old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!" [i.e., "keep on following Me!"]

John 21:18-19

Not surprisingly, this left Peter discomfited. Jesus had just told him that from here on out he would carry a heavy load in ministry—a new and different responsibility, carrying with it a new danger, and ending in a violent death. Perhaps feeling a bit put upon and singled out, the persistently human Peter turned toward John, who was following behind the pair, and asked Jesus

"Lord, and what about this man?"

John 21:21



In other words, "All right, Lord, I'll accept this hard life You describe. But what about *this* guy? Are you going to make it equally harsh on *him*? I mean, let's be fair about this."

Jesus' reply to Peter is also the answer to the troubled heart who sees inequity in this world—where the wicked and ungodly so often hold dominion over the godly and righteous. It is also the answer to that ancient prophet, Habakkuk, who cried out against the seeming injustice of the heathen Chaldeans destroying Jerusalem and taking captive the people who were supposed to be God's own.

Jesus said to [Peter], "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!"

John 21:22

Either we live by faith or we do not. And living by faith means we believe not just that God is in control of this life, but that *He knows best*.

"What is that to you? You follow Me."

The evil men do is both a by-product of The Fall—Adam's rejection of the Lord's laws for life, and uninterrupted communion with Him—and a result of the same Lord calling the shots even now. Are we smarter than God, confident in our position that what He is doing is wrong? Are we, better than He, able to see around the bend in the road and over the horizon, to the ultimate consequence tomorrow of events today?

The answer to that is simple and clear: No.

God is still God—and we, still, are not.



*O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Saviour,
And life more abundant and free!*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.*

Helen H. Lemmel

Jesus told the apostle Peter, and still tells us today, that we bring balance into our life when we keep our focus on Him, rather than on all that is taking place around us. We gain heavenly perspective on earthly things when we keep our eyes on the Lord of heaven.

Both Habakkuk and Peter had set aside the clarity of heavenly vision in favor of the short-sighted, clouded cataracts of earthly sight. Jesus says, "Keep following *me*. Don't worry about what the other guy is doing. Just have faith in *me*."

Faith may not always supply every answer, but it does supply, in abundance, peace for the soul when questions arise.