

Habakkuk's Prayer for Justice

Key Verse: *“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?”*
—*Habakkuk 1:13*

Selected Scripture:
Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14

Our Key Verse illustrates God's requirement that only perfect human beings shall be counted worthy to abide on the earth forever. As Habakkuk states, our Heavenly Father is “of purer eyes” than to behold evil, or to look upon iniquity. This being the case, the prophet in our lesson expresses his perplexity concerning the sins of Israel and the apparent silence of God with respect to them. (Hab. 1:1-4) Though not a perfect Israelite himself, Habakkuk's desire to live up to God's righteous standards to

TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING of these words, we are first reminded of the cause of all the troubles that have afflicted mankind for thousands of years—the act of disobedience on the part of our first parents against the righteous law and authority of their all-wise and loving Creator. Their sin brought upon them and their progeny the penalty of death. (Gen. 2:17; 3:6-13,16-19) While it might appear that Adam and Eve's error was not of a terrible sort, yet it was the clear disobedience of the divine law of which they had been previously made aware.

the best of his ability caused him, and properly so, to be more concerned that the holiness of God should be vindicated than that Israel should escape punishment.

The character of God calls for our development of holiness, even though he understands that we cannot do this perfectly at the present time. However, the intents of our hearts must become pure, and must be guarded to remain so, if we are to have the full approval and blessing of God. The attainment of holiness, however, goes beyond just our heart condition. We must work on the development of such a character, and its resulting fruitage, as exemplified in God's beloved Son, Christ Jesus. Our fitness of character to meet God's approval is being established and tested now, while we are in the flesh. (Eph. 2:8-10; II Tim. 2:15) Thankfully, our unintentional weaknesses and failures are covered by the merit of Christ's redemptive sacrifice, and by his position as our Advocate before God. (I John 1:7-9; 2:1) Under this gracious arrangement, we are thus admonished by God: "Be ye holy; for I am holy."—Lev. 11:44; I Pet. 1:15,16

The importance of purity of heart, as well as the need to continually examine the thoughts of our mind, are brought to our attention throughout the Bible. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Peter later added, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." Paul admonished, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." (Matt. 5:8; I Pet. 3:15; Rom. 12:2) The Apostle Paul even testified of his own personal battle with sin: "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."—Rom. 7:25

We look forward to the time soon to come, in God's kingdom on earth, when all mankind will be given the opportunity to dedicate themselves to the Lord, and to develop a character in harmony with that of their Creator. (Matt. 6:10) All who do so obediently from their hearts will have emblazoned upon their characters, "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD."—Zech. 14:20 ■