

I. The Prophet's Cry

v 1 - 4

v 1 *burden* - def: That which is born or carried, a load which is wearisome or oppressive.

Matthew 12:30, Ecclesiastes 1:18

hist: The prophet laments the iniquity of his time and is grieved over the corruption of God's people.

v 2 - 4 his list: 1. *violence* 2. *iniquity* 3. *grievance* 4. *spoiling* 5. *strife* 6. *contention*
7. *law slacked* 8. *wicked multiply* 9. *wrong judgment*

God's kingdom was broken up into parties and factions that were continually *biting and devouring one another* (Galatians 5:15).

Habakkuk saw *strife and contention* in families, in neighborhoods, among friends, in commerce and in the courts of law. He doesn't complain of being a victim himself, but it truly grieved him to see other people wronged. **Philippians 2:4**

Proverbs 6:16-19 *These six things doth the Lord hate ...*
he that soweth discord among the brethren.

If *blessed are the peacemakers* (Mt 5:9), then cursed are the peace breakers!
Evil men and seducers (2 Tim 3:13) kindle the fires of strife that devour good, and then warm their hands at that same fire.

The law is slacked [def: weak, not holding fast, remiss] - crimes were committed, and no justice was exercised on the criminals.

Judges were taking bribes - **Isaiah 5:23**; contrary to God's Law - **Deu 25:1, Pro 17:15**.

The wicked compassed the righteous (v 4) in public protests and the flow of justice was damned up. The *wicked* openly, impudently, and publicly opposed God's precepts. Solomon had seen and wrote of such behaviour among the heathen in Ecclesiastes. But when God's people *deny the faith*, it's *worse than an infidel* (1 Tim 5:8).

When God appears silent at such wickedness, it shocks the faith of good men. It tempts them to say : *We have cleansed our hearts in vain*, Psalm 73:13.

spir: *violence* = **Zephaniah 3:4** *iniquity* = **Psalm 94:20, Acts 13:10**

II. The LORD's Reply

v 5 - 11

v 5-6 "Since my people have not been brought to repentance through my long-suffering, I am going to take another course of action." **Proverbs 16:4**

"I have ordained the *men of the world as my hand* (Ps 17:14) to spank my errant children. My people need correction, and they deserve it. They should expect it, and they shall have it.

"Those rulers who have been unjust and unmerciful, among whom *the law is slacked, and judgment doth not go forth*; they will be repaid in the same way when they fall into the hands of the unjust and unmerciful Chaldeans."

III. The Prophet's Conflict

v 12 - 19

Habakkuk looks around and sees violence done by Israel, and now foresees violence will be done against Israel. So the prophet returns to God and pours out his conflicted melancholy thoughts.

v 12 *thou hast ordained them for judgment !?!?*

reference: *Matthew Henry's Commentary* (1712 AD), vol 4, Hendrickson Publ.