Habakkuk 2:1-20

I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

And the Lord answered me:

Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.

For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Moreover, wine is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest. His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations and collects as his own all peoples.”

Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing and riddles for him, and say, “Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own—for how long?—and loads himself with pledges!”

Will not your debtors suddenly arise, and those awake who will make you tremble? Then you will be spoil for them.

Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

“Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm!

You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many peoples; you have forfeited your life.

For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond.

“Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity!

Behold, is it not from the Lord of hosts that peoples labor merely for fire, and nations weary themselves for nothing?

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

“Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink—you pour out your wrath and make them drunk, in order to gaze at their nakedness!

You will have your fill of shame instead of glory. Drink, yourself, and show your uncircumcision! The cup in the Lord’s right hand will come around to you, and utter shame will come upon your glory!

The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them, for the blood of man and violence to the
to cities and all who dwell in them.  

18 “What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies? For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols!

19 Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake; to a silent stone, Arise! Can this teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in it.  

20 But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.”

Discussion/Journal Questions
Read Habakkuk 2:1-20. Against whom does God pronounce “woe” in this text? How would you describe such a person?

Reflect on verses 18-20. What does God say about the person who makes and trusts in idols? What are some modern idols that people trust in today? What modern idols do you struggle with?

In this chapter, God tells Habakkuk that He will not ignore the evil of the Babylonians, but that they will face God’s justice. Do you trust God to bring justice to those who do evil? Why or why not?
Isaiah 44:9-20 English Standard Version (ESV)

9 All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit. Their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame. 10 Who fashions a god or casts an idol that is profitable for nothing? 11 Behold, all his companions shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are only human. Let them all assemble, let them stand forth. They shall be terrified; they shall be put to shame together.

12 The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. 13 The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. 14 He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. 15 Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. 16 Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, “Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!” 17 And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god!”

18 They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. 19 No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, “Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?” 20 He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, “Is there not a lie in my right hand?”

Discussion/Journal Questions
Read Isaiah 44:9-20. Summarize the argument Isaiah is making against idols. What is so absurd about them?

According to Isaiah 44:18-20, why do people not see how absurd idol worship is?

Read Romans 1:18-32. What is the connection between what we believe and how we act?
1 Kings 18:20-40

20 So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word. 22 Then Elijah said to the people, “I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men. 23 Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. 24 And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, he is God.” And all the people answered, “It is well spoken.” 25 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it.” 26 And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. 27 And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” 28 And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. 29 And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention. 30 Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that had been thrown down. 31 Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord came, saying, “Israel shall be your name,” 32 and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs of seed. 33 And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, “Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood.” 34 And he said, “Do it a second time.” And they did it a second time. And he said, “Do it a third time.” And they did it a third time. 35 And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water. 36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. 37 Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” 38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.” 40 And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.” And they
seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.

**Discussion/Journal Questions**
Read 1 Kings 18:20-29. What is the decisions that Elijah calls the people to make? What is the test he sets up between himself and the prophets of Baal?

Read 1 Kings 18:30-35. What did Elijah ask the people to do to the altar? Why do you think he did this?

Read 1 Kings 18:36-40. How is Elijah's prayer to God different from the prayers of the prophets of Baal? What does this tell us about who God is?
Daily Reading: Thursday, May 7


57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” 58 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” 59 To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” 60 And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” 61 Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” 62 Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Discussion/Journal Questions

Read Luke 9:57-62. In your own words, how would you describe what is Jesus doing in this passage?

What about the people with whom Jesus is speaking? What are their motivations?

Is the high bar that Jesus sets here for all Christians or only for clergy? Why do you think so?
Matthew 16:21-28 English Standard Version (ESV)

21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” 23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. 28 Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

Discussion/Journal Questions
Read Matthew 16:21-23. Why do you think Peter contradicted Jesus? What did Peter expect from Jesus?

Read Matthew 16:24-28. Is Jesus being literal or figurative when He says we must take up our crosses and follow Him? Why do you think so?

What does it look like for you personally to deny yourself and take up your cross to follow Jesus?