

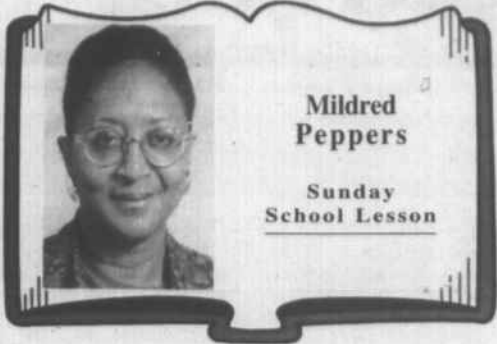
God wants justice

Lesson Scripture:
Habakkuk 2: 6-14

Lesson Aims: to explain the book of Habakkuk, to recognize that God is always concerned about justice and righteousness, and to faithfully persevere during great suffering.

Background: What we know about today's prophet comes from the book penned by him. More than likely, his writing came at the end of Josiah's reign or at the beginning of Jehoiakim's (evil king). Prophets before him along with his contemporaries (Jeremiah and Zephaniah) spoke out about idolatry, injustice, corruption, and greed. Habakkuk's message was a little different from the others. He acknowledged all of Judah's sins but he struggled with the manner in which God would bring judgment against them. His book was more of a conversation with God that ultimately led him "to find a personal response that will sustain him during difficult times" (Richards' Complete Bible Handbook).

Lesson: This minor prophet's book is only three chapters long. Its theme is eloquently expressed in 2:4, "the just shall live by faith." When the historical backdrop of this period is examined we can understand Habakkuk's struggle with "God's silence." In chapter 1, the prophet complains to God about His inactivity. It appears that He is tolerant of wrongdoing because nothing has been done to the oppressors (princes, judges, prophets, priests) in Judah. God responds in verses 5-11 by informing him that the Chaldeans (Babylonians) are being prepared to punish Judah. Now he complains that a more wicked nation will punish a less wicked one (verses 12-17). God's response this time explains the hidden processes of judgment. "A testimony to the moral nature of the universe is planted deep in each personality and in the inner workings of society" (Richards' Complete Bible Handbook). After Habakkuk works through this, he is commissioned to tell the people the principles learned. Our lesson today is



Mildred Peppers
Sunday School Lesson

a part of those principles (2:4-20). The six principles refer to the Chaldeans but can be applied to any oppressive forces - individually and/or corporately. Don't forget that "woe" is translated as great dissatisfaction! Principle one is "the more you get, the more you want." Humanity is never satisfied when greed is the motivation (verses 4 and 5). When mistreatment is the order of the day, those mistreated people will rise up against their wicked oppressors is principle two (verses 6-8). If you study history it teaches this principle. No matter the size or height no place is secure from the oppressed people (verses 9-11), the third principle. Principle four states that the wicked's monuments will not last for the whole earth is destined to be filled with the Lord's glory (verses 12-14). Their disgrace is certain and there is no escape from the oppressed (verses 15-20). These lessons are principles five and six. Habakkuk begins to pray for quick judgment in chapter three. After he reviews God's judgments in the past he calms down and concludes that he will rejoice in the Lord of his salvation. Like Job who declares in 13:15 "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him". The Lord is his strength who makes his feet sure footed as the deer to climb heights.

Application: The world says "when times get tough, tie a knot in the rope and hang on." Job and Habakkuk say "trust in God"! On this side of the Jordan anything can happen due to sin (corporate and/or individual) that will bring about great suffering. Will you lose hope and wonder what God is doing? Studying the

Scriptures, not just reading them will reinforce our faith that empowers us to endure. Our world is in turmoil and it doesn't matter if it's a democracy or not; a capitalist economy or not; the haves are getting richer at the expense of the have nots. Corruption and injustice are running rampant and it seems like God is doing nothing! Keep the faith, God is working it out. He does care and will bring judgment in His own way. Do the right thing found in His Word, trust Him and persevere!



Almota Miller, seated, center, with members of her family.

Bless the Children gives appreciation award

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Almota Miller was presented a special appreciation award for 20 years of services to the Bless the Children Program/Family Outreach Ministries of Winston-Salem on July 7. During this presentation, Robert Miller celebrated his 72nd birthday.

Johnell and Debra Hunter, founders and general overseers of Bless the Children Program/Family Outreach would like to thank Winston-Salem and the entire Piedmont Triad area for all of their support. It has been 23 years of continuous services to thousands. The ministries are happy to stay in the heart of giving and discipleship.

The Bless the Children Program/Family

Outreach Ministry has grown and become very successful with over 12 neighborhood sites throughout Winston-Salem, Clemmons, Kernersville, Oldtown, Oak Ridge and soon to serve in Lexington and High Point. Many youth and families have been blessed in so many ways. The ministry feels it is their duty to reach out and help as the Bible plainly teaches us all. They will be issuing an announcement about their new Family Outreach Center and annex complex sometime between July and August.

For more information about their services and how you and your family can become a part of or volunteer, please contact Johnell or Debra Hunter at 788-0974 or write to Bless the Children Program/Family Outreach Center, Box 17, 1001 S. Marshall St., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101.

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Scriptures
Acts 2:4
Acts 2:37-40
Acts 10:44-48
Acts 19:1-6

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