

“O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear?... Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; There is strife, and contention arises. Therefore the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds. (Habakkuk 1:2-4).

This was part of my reading this morning. I had to look twice to see if I was reading the Bible or the morning newspaper. Retail theft has swelled above \$100 billion dollars as shoplifting, “flash mobs,” and organized crimes continue to climb. They are saying there is no end in sight. Target is closing nine stores, in urban areas of four states, citing increased violence related to theft and organized retail crime. Black and gray uniformed vandals stormed the doors of Nordstroms in Topanga Canyon, and more than 30 masked robbers, men and women, flowed into a Canoga Park store to steal purses, clothes, and jewels. These happened in broad daylight. They are just a sampling of the brazen mob violence in the United States. Why do these crimes continue to happen? Some dismiss the problem as minor. Others contend police have no role in dealing with it. Frequently people are arrested and not held, or released the next day without bail. Law enforcement tactics which used to be the norm are not used. Officers stripped of authority can only watch as crime marches on. Habakkuk asked the Lord, “How long?” Here is what Habakkuk complained during his time: violence, the law was useless, no justice in the courts, wickedness surrounded the righteous, justice was perverted. This is not only a sign of the times in which we live, it is the fulfillment of prophecy before our eyes. The church should not be “shaken” (II Thessalonians 2:2) when we see this. “For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains (the Holy spirit) will do so until He is taken out of the way” (II Thessalonians 2:7). As God’s people, we must do two things. 1. Focus on the rapture, rather than the reasons. In other words, focus on the solution, not the problem. “The coming of the lawless one (Antichrist) is according to the working of Satan...” (II Thessalonians 2:9). What we are witnessing is the result of Satanic wickedness. There is no political solution to the wiles of the Devil. He is God’s problem, and His solution is the return of Jesus to this earth. Look forward to the rapture of the church. Be ready for “the voice of an archangel, and...the trumpet of God” (I Thessalonians 4:16). 2. Focus on the reason we are here. We are to turn people to God, while we wait for His Son to “deliver us from the wrath to come” (I Thessalonians 2:10). Tell people about Jesus while you can, so they will not believe the lie of the Antichrist when they are left behind (II Thessalonians 2:11).