



**Really? Thank You Lord?  
I Know We've Been Bad, But Babylon?  
Habakkuk 1:12 – 2:4**

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As we began our excursion in the book of Habakkuk, we learned that he is a prophet with a heart for YAHWEH who sees the sin of Judah through the eyes of YAHWEH.

He asks for, rather, demands that God takes some action.

He also wants to see that action happen sooner rather than later as the culture all around him is in meltdown.

God hears him.

We need to remember that as we see our culture also going through meltdown. We too see the same things taking place that Habakkuk saw taking place and for those who are believers, we also find ourselves asking the same question.

How long?

Some ask the question while continuing to work in the task Jesus gave to the church, to make disciples. Others though, ask the question and then withdraw into their Christian ghettos.



What is a Christian ghetto? Good question, I'm glad you asked. They have been around for centuries.

At one time, they were called monasteries and nunneries.

The thought is this: The world is wicked, maybe I can be closer to the Lord if I totally withdraw from the world and spend my time solely with Him.

Today, the withdrawal is into Christian radio and television, podcasts and the Internet which is a dangerous place to be all on its own. We run to the car on Sunday and drive to church and then run home.

During the week we make sure we only buy fast food from Chick fil a and other restaurants that have not yet gone to the other side. But we have our ever-ready Christian "boycott" ready to go.

We homeschool, which is really a good idea these days, but then we do nothing to socialize our kids with others in the neighborhood.

We try to monitor the screen time our kids have and yet then struggle to do the same for ourselves.

Eventually, we move to the middle of nowhere and pray the rapture occurs today. What did Jesus say?

Luke 19:11–15

"While the people were listening to this, Jesus continued and told them a parable. He was now almost at Jerusalem, and they supposed that the Kingdom of God was just about to appear. So he said, "There was once a man of high rank who was going to a country far away to be made king, after which he planned to come back home. Before he left, he called his ten servants and gave them each a gold coin and told them, '**See what you can earn with this while I am gone.**' Now, his own people hated him, and so they sent messengers after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.' The man was made king and came back. At once he ordered his servants to appear before him, in order to find out how much they had earned." (GNB)

The rest of the parable goes through the accounting and rewards being given for those who were busy doing as the master had commanded. But there was one servant who decided to withdraw from the culture and go into Christian ghetto mode. How did it go for him?

That one servant, had other ideas and he told the master all about his idea, which was not what the master had instructed. The result?

Luke 19:22–26

"He said to him, 'You bad servant! I will use your own words to condemn you! You know that I am a hard man, taking what is not mine and reaping what I have not sown. Well, then, why didn't you put my money in the bank? Then I would have received it back with interest when I returned.' Then he said to those who were standing there, 'Take the gold coin away from him and give it to the servant who has ten coins.' But they said to him, 'Sir, he already has ten coins!' 'I tell you,' he replied, 'that to all those who have something, even more will be given; but those who have nothing, even the little that they have will be taken away from them.'" (GNB)

Our marching orders are clear.

Matthew 28:19–20

"Therefore **go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (NET 2nd ed.)



For us, withdrawing from the culture is not an option, we must be in the world but not of the world.

Philippians 2:14–15

“Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, **shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.**” (NLT)

Got it. Habakkuk got it as well. He is zealous for the Lord. He is concerned yet he continues to serve in the Temple and still engages the culture around him. But he is also concerned about the sin of those around him, so he prays and asks the question, “How long?”

The answer was unexpected and blew him away. So now we pick up with his response.

Habakkuk 1:12

“Are You not from time everlasting, LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, LORD, have appointed them to deliver judgment; And You, O Rock, have destined them to punish.” (NASB 2020)

Once again, Habakkuk knows where to go when he is struggling with a Word from God. The same place we must also turn as we read and digest what the Word tells us...prayer.

He affirms who God is. He is worshiping in awe of His eternality, that the God of the universe in His grace chose him and his people.

He also prays in affirmation by claiming the Lord as “my God, My Holy One.” His object of trust is the true God, all-powerful, the very possession of the waiting heart, the One who cannot fail it. He is holy, set apart to all that is just, pure and true, all that His law exalts Him as being (cf. 1:4). (Rosscup 2008, 1383)

There is a lesson we need to take from Habakkuk here. When we pray, and He answers, even if it is a no or not now, we need to remember who it is we are talking to and continue to faithfully worship Him.

I knew God would take care of us when I was praying for a job. I was not happy with just how He intended to do that in my life, but it did send me to Him in worship and prayer.

For me, I went from spiritual warfare to actual physical warfare. He is faithful, I know that now more than ever before because of how He said yes. Habakkuk is struggling with the yes, but he worships.

We are listening to Habakkuk, the perplexed, pray. He worships, and he also affirms the promise that the Jews are God’s chosen people, they are not going to be wiped out.

Why would he think that? Nineveh is why.

But if they go into exile, what then?

We shall not die, the prophetic faith affirms. Linking himself with the eternity of God which he had just developed, the prophetic mediator conjoins the covenant people with himself. Yahweh is their God. Therefore it is impossible that they could perish. Instead of serving as an instrument of annihilation, the enemy being raised up by God against Israel must function as the divine tool for justice and for rebuke. (Robertson 1990, 157)

Habakkuk goes further in his prayer, after affirming the promises of God, that using Babylon would mean they have been appointed by Him to deliver the needed discipline. But he also lets God know he sees Babylon as the bad guys.



It is the Rock who is behind all of this, he is confident that YAHWEH who is just will do what is right as He is a promise keeping God. Habakkuk is familiar with those promises from Deuteronomy, the blessings, as well as the curses.

Deuteronomy 28:49–50

“The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young.” (NKJV)

Habakkuk knows this and he also remembers the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But this doesn't stop him from being perplexed.

That's okay though. Being perplexed is not being faithless. We are not eternal and do not have God's perspective.

Habakkuk 1:13

“Your eyes are too pure to look at evil, And You cannot look at harm favorably. Why do You look favorably At those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they?” (NASB 2020)

Initially, it was Habakkuk who was asking the why question. God has answered and now the shift seems to be moving from the sin problem of Judah to the discipline solution from YAHWEH. In light of what he knows of God's character, he asks a question.

Why would God allow such a wicked nation to devour those who were more righteous? That seemed like a perversion of justice. Sinful though Judah had been, her wickedness was dwarfed by the atrocities committed by the Babylonians. Habakkuk was in a dilemma. (Blue 1985, 1511)

There is a prophet though who has also discussed this issue of being perplexed at just how God operates. Isaiah, and he was given insight.

Isaiah 55:8–9

““My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.”” (NLT)

But even knowing all of that, how could a Holy God use such a wicked nation to discipline Judah? “God had “appointed” and “ordained” Babylon to execute judgment against Judah and to punish the wicked in Jerusalem.” (Barker 1999, 313)

Here is another thing we learn from this. The history of the world, is completely under the control of God. “Habakkuk knows that God rules history; he knows that God's order will be its outcome—the prophet never abandons God and faith in his purpose. He therefore asks this further question: How long, my God, are you going to allow this reversal of your purpose?” (Achteimer 1986, 40)

Habakkuk gets that God is going to use an even more wicked people, the Babylonians, to deal with His own people who have rejected the covenant and Him. The question though is now more expansive, when is it all going to end? Not just the sin problem in Judah, or the wickedness in the nations, but all of it? **When will God fulfill His purposes here on earth and end all the wickedness.**

He has expanded his original question to one that encompasses much of the same territory that John cover in the book of Revelation as John explains the how God fulfills the when question of Habakkuk.



Habakkuk 1:14–17

“Why have You made people like the fish of the sea, Like crawling things that have no ruler over them? The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook, Drag them away with their net, And gather them together in their fishing net. Therefore they rejoice and are joyful. Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net And burn incense to their fishing net, Because through these things their catch is large, And their food is plentiful. Will they therefore empty their net, And continually slay nations without sparing?” (NASB 2020)

Habakkuk uses a fishing analogy to talk about the conduct of the Babylonians as they go about conquering other nations. “...the Babylonians treated the people of all nations as if they were fish to be caught (v 15), no better than the creatures they were made to rule. And yet it was God who had ordained this: ‘You make mankind like ...’” (Pakula 2014, 85)

Why is God allowing the Babylonians to do this? Verse 15 tells us what it is they did. They were taking people away as prisoners, catching them just like they were fish. That is bad enough, but then Habakkuk expands the analogy to show that those using the nets to enslave others, worshipped the nets. They are idol worshippers.

They are becoming rich from the catch. This leads to another “how long” question from Habakkuk. How long will Babylon continue to catch with their nets? Will they be able to continue doing this with no repercussions?

God is holy and eternal. Why did He allow Nazi Germany to remain as long as they did. What about the killing fields in Cambodia? We forget this about the God of the Universe.

Psalms 5:4–6

“Certainly you are not a God who approves of evil; evil people cannot dwell with you. Arrogant people cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who behave wickedly. You destroy liars; the LORD despises violent and deceitful people.” (NET 2nd ed.)

He hates sin, violence and oppression more than we do or ever will be able to. These are not random events, there is a real enemy.

You see, we are part of the problem, not God. He initially gave us control of earth, but then we gave it to someone else and that’s the problem.

Jesus came and, on the cross, bought it all back with His blood and defeated the enemy through His resurrection. The title deed is in heaven and the closing is outlined for us in the book of Revelation starting in Revelation 4.

Why evil? Jesus gave the reason why in a discussion with the pharisees.

John 8:44

“You people are from your father the devil, and you want to do what your father desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not uphold the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies.” (NET 2nd ed.)

“It was God’s original design for his human children to be servant rulers over the earth under his authority as his representatives—in the presence of his glory. Restoring the loss of the Edenic vision eventually involves creating a people known as Israel and giving them a king (David), who is the template for messiah. In the final eschatological outcome, the messiah is the ultimate Davidic king, and all glorified believers share that rule in a new, global Eden.” (Heiser 2015, 96)

Habakkuk is not into cynicism and denial; he believes and is perplexed. Unlike the cynic who makes a comment and leaves, Habakkuk, because he is a believer and refuses to deny, stays for an answer.



The world at present is fallen. We forget that. The enemy and his fallen followers are busy with suggestion selling at all levels of government and they are all buying. The enemy offers power and riches at an extreme cost. We want to believe that there must be some inherent goodness in man, but God tells us the truth, there isn't.

Jeremiah 17:9

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (ESV)

Habakkuk has already referred to God's pure eyes in 1:13. But in God's view, there are believers and then those who are not.

Romans 3:23

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (ESV)

There are no degrees of righteousness or unrighteousness. God does not keep league tables, with certain people high up on his lists and others languishing in the lower divisions. There is no pass mark. There are no credits. There are no sliding or rising criteria for his decisions. (Prior 1988, 223-224)

The world is under the control of the enemy and the earth dwellers like it that way.

I use the term earth dwellers as it is one John liked to use talking about those who were being judged by God in the book of Revelation. God's wrath is for those who have bought into and followed the the enemy.

Knowing about the fall in Genesis 3 though does not stop Habakkuk from asking the questions or announce he will be looking for an answer from the Lord.

Habakkuk 2:1

"I will stand at my guard post And station myself on the watchtower; And I will keep watch to see what He will say to me, And how I may reply when I am reprimanded." (NASB 2020)

Habakkuk has completed his second prayer. He is still asking questions, and he still believes that God is the King of the Universe. He is a watchman for Israel, all the prophets were. He knows there are others with the same questions, so he will wait on the Lord for His answer.

The High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity (Isa. 57:25; Hab. 1:12a) is gracious in counseling one who is sincere but whose limited mind needs His light to dawn more fully. Not only for himself, but for those to whom he ministers Habakkuk needs help. People will pump him for answers, and he must not fall apart but be ready and on the right track so that he can truly help. (Rosscup 2008, 1384)

I like the fact that Habakkuk is honest and asks questions. He is a Levite. He knows his Torah, but he still is perplexed. I also like how he is concerned with learning the answer so he can clearly and effectively communicate the heart of God to the people of Judah.

There has been more than one section of scripture where after study and review, I have no idea what it is saying. I want to effectively communicate His word, but I need to know too. I also have questions and He is gracious to answer, in fact, He invites us to ask.

John 14:26

"But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you." (NLT)



Are you having difficulty with that verse you just read? The author invites you to come to Him and ask and let Him teach you.

- Who is teaching? The Holy Spirit is.
- How much will He teach? Everything.
- How frequently will He teach? Just listen for the answer.

For me, the Lord lets me struggle for the answer. He shows me His word and then begins to reveal His heart about the passage as I look to the Greek or the Hebrew as well as study what others who have struggled with the same passage might have said about it. Sometimes this takes hours of work. But I am always excited when He tells me the answer.

I then brag about what it is the Lord has just shown me to my wife, who stops me before I am able to tell her, and she tells me what I have just spent hours working over. The Holy Spirit just gives it to her.

Habakkuk reflects that desire to know what it is God wants to say. He has prepared His heart to hear from the Lord. Just as we are invited to allow the Holy Spirit to teach us, we, like Habakkuk, must find the place to actively watch and wait on the Lord.

This is an active watching and waiting. He expects to hear or see an answer. He is looking for the answer. As we pray about something in His Word, and then go about our day, do we continue in the attitude of waiting to hear from Him. He may give us the answer in a conversation at lunch, or from a song on the radio. We must be watching and waiting.

The “watchman” who waits for God’s word stands in vivid contrast with those who resort to their own imaginations. (Robertson 1990, 166)

And did you notice this, Habakkuk expects to be rebuked for even asking the questions he has asked. He is keeping alert to know what God will say, and he also wants to be able to respond appropriately to the Lord when he is rebuked.

Growing up, I learned there are certain things that if you ask for or about them, a lecture will follow. I lived in a house with a father who was not saved and a mother who was. After I was saved, I learned who to ask to go to Bible Study, not Dad. I also learned who to ask to go play football, not Mom. I really did not want the lecture. By the time I was a Senior in High School, I no longer cared because I was tired of the lectures from Dad about how much time I was wasting on the Bible, Church and all of that. But the Bible teaches that children must honor their parents. So, like Habakkuk, I would ask and then sit back to listen to the lecture.

Habakkuk 2:2–3

“Then the LORD answered me and said, “Write down the vision And inscribe it clearly on tablets, So that one who reads it may run. “For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hurries toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it delays, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay long.” (NASB 2020)

The Lord will show Habakkuk. He gives him a vision. The decision has been made, the Divine Council has affirmed the decision and it is time to write it down and act.

“The context suggests an intentional allusion to the inscribing of the original “ten words” of the book of the covenant (Exod. 31:18; 32:15–16; Deut. 9:10). Originally Israel also had been directed to “inscribe” on whitewashed stones all the words of the law, and to “make very plain” (ba’ēr hêtēb) this inscription (Deut. 27:8). Now Habakkuk is directed to make it plain [bā’ēr] on the tablets the vision being given to him. Reflecting the long-established pattern of inscribing a fresh copy of covenant law as an essential step in covenant renewal, Habakkuk’s instructions include inscribing his vision on the tablets.” (Robertson 1990, 168)



Unlike Isaiah who was told to write on a scroll and a tablet (Isaiah 30:8), and Jeremiah who was told to write in a book (Jeremiah 30:2), Habakkuk is told to write this on the tablets. This implies the significance of what it is the Lord is saying.

Perhaps with good reason Jewish tradition declared that the 613 laws of the Pentateuch had been reduced to one by Habakkuk. (Robertson 1990, 169)

This message needs to be clearly written down so that a messenger can read it and then run. The answer is not simply for the today of Habakkuk, but for the future as well. He did ask when in a global manner, so the answer must be clear for all.

Habakkuk 2:3

“For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hurries toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it delays, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay long.” (NASB 2020)

The notes connected to this verse in the Scofield Bible very clearly state what the answer truly is to be.

*“To the watching prophet comes the response of the “vision” (vs. 2–20). Three elements are to be distinguished: (1) The moral judgment of Jehovah upon the evils practised by dispersed Israel (vs. 5–13, 15–19). (2) The future purpose of God that, “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea” (v. 14). That this revelation awaits the return of the Lord in glory is shown (a) by the parallel passage in Isa. 11:9–12; and (b) by the quotation of verse 3 in Heb. 10:37, 38, where the “it” of the “vision” becomes “he” and refers to the return of the Lord. It is then, after the “vision” is fulfilled, that “the knowledge of the glory,” etc., shall fill the earth. But (3) meantime, “the just shall live by his faith.” This great evangelic word is applied to Jew and Gentile in Rom. 1:17; to the Gentiles in Gal. 3:11–14; and to Hebrews (especially) in Heb. 10:38. This opening of life to faith alone, makes possible not only the salvation of the Gentiles during the dispersion of Israel “among the nations” (Hab. 1:5; Gal. 3:11–14), but also makes possible a believing remnant in Israel while the nation, as such, is in blindness and unbelief (Rom. 11:1–5, note), with neither priesthood nor temple, and consequently unable to keep the ordinances of the law. Such is Jehovah!” (Scofield 1917, 956)*

The vision is much more than just for the now of Habakkuk. It awaits fulfillment in a future appointed time. The revelation from God, the vision will not be false but proven true and it will not fail. Yes, Babylon will fall, but so will the future Babylon at the end of the Tribulation.

God Himself says “Though it delays, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay long.” (Habakkuk 2:3b, NASB 2020)

This verse gets picked up in the book of Hebrews as part of a discussion aimed towards persecuted believers.

Hebrews 10:32–38

“Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering. Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail, and when all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever. So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God’s will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. **“For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay. And my righteous ones will live by faith. But I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away.”**” (NLT)

When Messiah returns to reign on earth with perfect justice is when. Habakkuk is relating a truth to us here that is broad in scope and does indeed refer to the end of the age and the Messiah who is to come.





From the point that God revealed this to Habakkuk, there has indeed been delay to the fulfillment of his “when” question.

The prophet’s humanity demanded that God provide a warning about impatience, one even more important to people living in the exhausting pace of modern society. Whether in prayer or prophecy, contemporary worshipers demand that God act according to the dizzying schedule of those pressed for time. God reminded the prophet of the certainty of the message but without the promise of meeting Habakkuk’s time schedule. (Barker 1999, 324)

Just as the people of Babylon would be judged, in God’s time, so too the wicked. Habakkuk had expanded his question from a Judah to the planet to all of time as he reflected his jealousy for the name of the Lord. The Lord responds to that global question. The fulfillment is indeed coming.

A key concept is given contrasting those who are followers of Babylon, living in the world versus those who live by faith.

Habakkuk 2:4

“Behold, as for the impudent one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous one will live by his faith.” (NASB 2020)

This verse gives us life for a believer in a time of crisis.

This is a great text. It could even be called the great text of the Bible. To understand it is to understand the Christian gospel and the Christian life. It is so important that it is picked up by the New Testament writers, twice by Paul (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11) and once by the author of the Book of Hebrews (Heb. 10:38). (Boice 2002, 408)

The very first word used is noteworthy. By using the word “behold,” the Lord is pointing out to Habakkuk that this is foundational truth he is about to hear. This is not something he could learn on his own, it has to be shown to him and he must be reminded that yes, he knew this, but now he can put the pieces together.

Two people in contrast, a non-believer, and a believer.

This is an answer by the way. In contrast to those who do not know the Lord, the wicked that Habakkuk has been complaining about, those who are of the remnant, those who are believers, are to live by faith. Those who are proud cannot be upright, but those who are righteous are to live by their faith and trust in the Lord, but those who are not righteous, they will not live by faith.

Those who are proud are still following the lie of Genesis 3, they still believe they know more than God and are like Him.

For someone who is living that way, as long as they are exalting themselves, they cannot even find that righteousness actually exists outside of them, since they believe that they are the source. They believe God grades on the curve, and they are not in need of anything. They will not continue, and at the end of the Tribulation, they indeed will not.

But the righteous, those who understand that they need to remain faithful to YAHWEH and live by faith in YAHWEH. They can wait, just as God said was needed earlier.

The ultimate end is when Jesus the Messiah returns in glory and will be acknowledged by all as Lord of all. ‘Then comes the end, when [Christ] delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last



enemy to be destroyed is death' (1 Cor. 15:24–26). Habakkuk's vision, in this eschatological sense, is still panting for fulfilment. (Prior 1988, 237)

Because the righteous are living by faith, they will not simply survive, but they will grow and flourish even in a time as dark as that which is coming to Judah. Daniel, his friends, Ezekiel, Ezra and others are prime examples of that.

How does that happen? They live by their faith. "Clearly, faith and faithfulness are here intricately related: it is impossible to remain faithful to YHWH without having faith in him and his revelation; it is impossible to have faith in YHWH and not remain faithful to him." (Renz 2021, 290)

How do I do that? How do I live by faith?

First of all, you must accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. Then we are to simply trust Him and walk by faith. Recall I said that this verse is foundational to the gospel. It is God's summary of the primary principle taught by the law. It shows up three times in the New Testament.

The first time we see this is in Romans 1:16 – 17

Romans 1:16–17

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (ESV)

The emphasis here is on justification by faith for salvation. By having faith in what Christ did for us on the cross and rising from the dead, we are justified. In other words, we are made right with God. When God looks at us after we place faith in Christ, He sees the righteousness of Jesus rather than our own self-assuredness as expressed in the first half of Habakkuk 2:4.

The point in Romans, the one who has been justified by their faith in Christ, shall also live by faith. That is the message of Romans.

This reference in Habakkuk again shows up in Galatians.

Galatians 3:11

"Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." (ESV)

We learned in Romans that justification by faith is necessary for salvation. The message in Galatians though is the living by faith, is something we must do all of our lives after we come to Christ.

Galatians 2:20

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (ESV)

The final place we see this reference appear is in Hebrews 10:38. We looked at the context of that already that it is our faith that also allows us to go through persecution looking to what has been promised for those who do remain faithful. But there are multiple examples provided for us in Hebrews of those who lived by their faith.

Hebrews 11 is the great hall of faith.

From where we sit today, looking back across history, seeing the examples provided for us in the New Testament and looking forward to the soon return of Jesus Christ for His church, we now can understand



what it is Habakkuk had to take on faith. “God sent His own people into captivity because it served the purpose of chastisement for their sins. And now we see His greater purpose: it enabled Him to bring the Savior into the world—in the fullness of time.” (McGee 1997, 848)

Paul provided sermons at just about everywhere he went. At Pisidian Antioch, he delivered a major sermon to the synagogue there. Since he was addressing a group of Jews, he made use of the scriptures and began the process of tying together the answer God gave to Habakkuk and quotes from Habakkuk 1:5 as part of his argument to them.

He wants them to see that the just must live by faith.

Acts 13:37–41

“but the one whom God raised up did not experience decay. Therefore let it be known to you, brothers, that through this one forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by this one everyone who believes is justified from everything from which the law of Moses could not justify you. Watch out, then, that what is spoken about by the prophets does not happen to you: ‘Look, you scoffers; be amazed and perish! For I am doing a work in your days, a work you would never believe, even if someone tells you.’ ” (NET 2nd ed.)

Habakkuk 2:4

“Behold, as for the impudent one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous one will live by his faith.” (NASB 2020)

This verse is the focal point of this entire book. It is a focal point for our reality today as well. We can do life as an unbeliever, here called an impudent one, we know this because their soul is not right within them. In other words, they live for self. Or we can be believers and live by faith. Notice the option for a believer not to live by faith is not even considered, either here or in the three references we discussed.

God is not saying, “You should live by faith,” or, “I want you to live by faith,” but, “you will live by faith.” He’s saying, “You won’t always have answers to your questions, Habakkuk. You won’t always have solutions to your problems. You are going to live not by intellect, sight, feelings, or touch. You’re going to live by faith. (Courson 2006, 860)

This is not easy to do. We tend to want to know why, like Habakkuk, and the answer is for us is in Proverbs.

Proverbs 3:5–7

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.” (NKJV)

Charles Spurgeon talks about this. The just shall live by faith.

Observe that the text means that the moment a man believes he begins to live in the sight of God: he trusts his God, he accepts God’s revelation of himself, he confides, reposes, leans upon his Saviour, and that moment he becomes a spiritually living man, quickened with spiritual life by God the Holy Ghost. All his existence before that belief was but a form of death: when he comes to trust in God he enters upon eternal life, and is born from above. Yes, but that is not all, nor half; for if that man is to continue living before God, if he is to hold on his way in holiness, his perseverance must be the result of continued faith. The faith which saves is not one single act done and ended on a certain day: it is an act continued and persevered in throughout the entire life of man. The just not only commences to live by his faith, but he continues to live by his faith: he does not begin in the spirit and end in the flesh, nor go so far by grace, and the rest of the way by the works of the law...Faith is essential all along; every day and all the day, in



all things. Our natural life begins by breathing, and it must be continued by breathing: what the breath is to the body, that is faith to the soul. (Spurgeon 1883, 618-619)

### **About faith**

- Faith is not a leap in the dark. (Romans 10:17 “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (NKJV)
- Faith is emotional. When the Holy Spirit reveals the truth of Jesus to us, for many, the emotions follow as we realize just how great a salvation we have just encountered. (Psalm 106:12) But emotion can also be misleading such as those in Mark 4:16 & 17.
- Faith is voluntary. We agree with the facts and the truth of the promises, then faith reaches out and appropriates what is provided. “Knowledge itself is not enough. A man may have the knowledge that Christ is Divine and yet reject Him as Savior. Knowledge affirms the reality of these things, but it neither accepts or rejects.” (Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, 218)
- Real faith involves the will and takes action. “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10, NKJV)
- Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (ESV)

Here is the thing, we start with faith in a person, Jesus Christ. He makes some promises that if we believe them and then appropriate them for ourselves, in other words exercise faith, our eternity is changed.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

### **ABC’s of Salvation**

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.



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