

Habakkuk: Jesus the light of the World

I. Chapters 1-2 Troubled faith

II. Chapter 3 Triumphant faith

Based upon the text we believe Habakkuk was a priest that was involved in worship in the temple, (The third chapter is a psalm). It is believed by most that Habakkuk wrote this book around 609 BC at around 30 years of age and only 23 years before the threefold Babylonian invasion. That means he was a contemporary of Jeremiah and that he lived through the brief time of the revival of the young king Josiah and into the rebellion of Jehoiakim kings of Judah. Josiah was only 8 when he became king and 12 years later when they were doing a little restoration on the temple they found the a copy of the word of God which led to reformation on the nation. The tragedy is that the reformation lasted only through the reign of Josiah and proved only to be a “*reformation*” and not “*regeneration*”. What is of further interest to me is that it is the words of Habakkuk 2:4 “*The just shall live by faith*” (recorded three times in the N.T. Rm. 1:17, Gal. 3:11 and Heb. 10:38) were the very words that spawned another “*reformation*” through Martin Luther and the jury is still out on whether this will be a reformation or a regeneration. Habakkuk’s name means to embrace or cling and in some contexts to wrestle.

Dear ones Habakkuk’s words to Judah that is in the death throws as a nation speak to a wider application of our hearts as we will find ourselves as Paul spoke in Galatians 5:17 in a personal conflict the flesh against the spirit. Are we going to embrace and cling to the Lord or in a foolish attempt like Jacob wrestle the Lord for control?

I. Chapters 1-2 Troubled faith

Habakkuk in 1:1 introduces himself as a prophet and is one of only two of the prophets in the Bible who identify themselves as a prophet, (the other is Haggai two books away). There may have been more who were called out of the priesthood into being a prophet but these are the only two who say so. The priesthood was for ordered and structured each day they had to follow strict activities as well as special appointed feasts. Ah but the role of a prophet was very different, they were moved by the Spirit to do and say what ever He guided. Isaiah was called to take his clothes off and walk through out the land to get peoples attention so that he could explain to them the “*naked truth*”. Hosea was told to marry a prostitute so that his life became a living billboard of God’s heart towards those that were “*unfaithful*” to Him. I’m not sure that there would be many takers in the “*school of the prophets*” if folks took a serious look at the cost of the calling of those that the Lord placed in this ministry.

Chapter 1: Most of the prophets speak for the Lord but Habakkuk speaks to the Lord and asks in 1:2-4 “*How long, O Lord, must I call for help? But you do not listen! "Violence!" I cry, but you do not come to save. Must I forever see this sin and misery all around me? Wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight. The law has become paralyzed and useless, and there is no justice given in the courts. The wicked far outnumber the righteous, and justice is perverted with bribes and trickery.*” The revival of Josiah was gone and now the people had gone back to there former ways the out come was “*violence, sin and misery*”. The people just wanted to “*argue and fight*” all because the word of God had become “*paralyzed and useless*”. How is that possible? Well, Jesus said in John 5:39 “*You search the Scriptures*

because you believe they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me”! Dear ones far too much time has been wasted upon arguments over opinions of the Bible when the world is waiting for us to be transformed by the truths we proclaim!

Notice God replies to Habakkuk’s question in 1:5 *“Look among the nations and watch--Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you.”* Habakkuk, says, *“God your not doing anything!”* And God says, *“I’m doing so much that you wouldn’t believe Me if I told you”*. Oh how many times do we accuse God of not doing anything, of being indifferent or inactive? But God declares it’s not that I’m in active it’s rather that what I’m doing you wouldn’t be able to receive it. This was a great case in point as Habakkuk wanted God to do something about the sin problem in Judea and God says in verse 6 *“I’ve got that covered I’m sending the Babylonians and they are terrible and dreadful”* To which Habakkuk responds in 1:12 *“Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction.”* Dear ones we accuse God of not working then we He is working we tell Him we don’t like the work! *“You can’t use the Babylonians to judge us they are worse then we are”*, complains Habakkuk.

Chapter 2: Habakkuk had complained about God’s inactivity, fussed about God’s work but now he does what we all should do when we discover what Isaiah spoke about in 55:8-9 when God said, *“My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”* In 2:1 we see Habakkuk does three things in his prayer:

1. *“I will stand my watch”*: He is determined to spend time with the Lord, he doesn’t say, *“When I get a round to it”* no, *“I will stand my watch”*. I can’t tell you that if you were more determined in prayer that you would get what you ask but I can say that without that determination you can count on the fact that you won’t. Hebrews 11:6 says that *“without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”*
2. *“And set myself on the rampart”*: Next I notice the fact that Habakkuk got away to seek the Lord. Sometimes it isn’t that the Lord isn’t speaking to us it’s that we can’t hear from because of all the distractions around us.
3. *“And watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected”*: Finally I notice that Habakkuk expected an answer and further more was willing to be corrected. It is certain that we will never hear God speak if we don’t trust Him and aren’t willing to say we were wrong.

Right after this prayer God says in 2:2 *“Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.”* This can mean two things:

- Write this vision so clearly that the person on the go can easily read it and understand it.
- Write the vision and make it plain so that the person you share it with can get going.

God tells Habakkuk that the vision is for an “appointed time” and even though it may not seem possible yet it will become true. Then he tells us the reason why so many folks miss the Word of God in 2:4 *“Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just*

shall live by his faith.” Nebuchadnezzar will be the instrument by which God will judge Judah but his pride will cause him not to see that his end will be the same as Judah’s. God is not saying we “should” live by faith neither is He saying “I want” you to live by faith. No, He is saying “you WILL” live by faith. Romans 14:23 says “*whatever is not from faith is sin.*” It is not a matter of trust it is what or whom your trust is in and if it isn’t in God that you aren’t going to be living.

In verse 6-7 God warns against piling up debt as a means of avoiding the consequences of foolish decisions. God adds four more woes to this in verses 9-20 and concludes by asking Habakkuk 2:18 “*What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, the molded image, a teacher of lies, that the maker of its mold should trust in it, to make mute idols?*”

II. Chapter 3 Triumphant faith

Habakkuk in 3:2 says, “*O Lord, I have heard your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.*” Facing questions not liking the answers Habakkuk falls on his knees and prays and prays, “*God I’m the one that needs to change!*” Saints think of how few arguments we would have if that was the cry of our hearts “*O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years!*” The rest of this chapter is a song of the glory of God. Don’t you love it when our prayer turns from questioning God to asking Him to revive our heart praise breaks forth. How about it my friends is your worship become flat, no joy is your praise? Why not ask God to revive your heart. In 3:18 Habakkuk writes “*Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*” Listen saints, the word for “rejoice” here means to “Jump” and the word “Joy” here means to “Spin About”. You see the Jews

were very expressive in their worship and they should their excitement in God with not only words of praise but actions as well. This verse literally reads “*Yet I will **JUMP** in the Lord, I will **SPIN ABOUT** in the God of my salvation.*” Oh how inappropriate some claim but then go to a Griz game and jump and spin about. I suggest that we ought to be far more willing to jump and spin about in praise to our Lord then at a ball game.

Finally look at what this kind of praise will do in 3:19 it will signify that “*The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills.*” Are your feet slipping, need more power, some sure footedness in the slippery slope of life? Try jumping and spinning about in adoration to the King of Kings!