

Refuge City Church — November 19, 2023
“Faith in the Chaos”: A study in the book of Habakkuk
“Live by Faith” (Habakkuk 2)

Introduction

Habakkuk 1:13, 17, “You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he? Is he then to keep on emptying his net and mercilessly killing nations forever?”

- **Question #1:** Why does God allow sin to go unpunished?
- **Question #2:** If God is so just, why allow sinners to punish those who sin less than they do?

“Wait and Listen” [verse 1]

“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.”

- A true conclusion to Chapter 1.
 - Habakkuk willingly and patiently waits for the Lord to answer.
- How do we wait in the silence? Expectantly? Ready? Watching, with a ‘standing attitude’?
 - **Psalm 85:8**, “Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints.”
- Habakkuk waited expectantly for God to answer, and he did so going about his responsibilities.
 - At the same time, contemplating his answers to how God may respond.
 - **NASB/NIV:** “When I am reprov’d/corrected”.
 - He knew God is good and right. He anticipated correction to his questions.

“God will answer” [verses 2-3]

“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.”

- What God answers to us, most likely will be for others as well.
 - Share the word of God! So that those who read/hear may be encouraged to go and tell others!
 - **Isaiah 40:31**, “but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”
- God’s timing is perfect! [vs. 3]
 - **QUOTE:** “Just as, in human life, the timing of certain actions and events is of crucial importance, so it is also in the divine scheme of things... The apparent lack of divine action, which may cause faith to falter, is in reality only our inability to perceive the timing of divine action.” [Peter C. Craigie]

- God’s promises and provision may not happen immediately, but if He says He will do it, bet on it!
 - **Psalm 89:30-34**, “If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my rules, if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes, but I will not remove from him my steadfast love or be false to my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips.”
 - **Psalm 119:81**, “My soul longs for your salvation; I hope in your word.”

“Live by Faith” [verse 4]

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

- The centerpiece of the book... so much so, that this verse is quoted 3 other times in the NT. [Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38]
- In context of Habakkuk’s question, God directs His attention first to Babylon.
 - They’re prideful, arrogant, not right, dishonoring, and disobedient to God.
 - They are to be used as an example of how *not* to live.
 - Therefore, those in right standing before God should live by faith.
- So what does this verse mean for us?... **“the righteous shall live by faith.”**
 - The same as it did for Habakkuk and those who would read these words living in the shadow of evil intentions; either from without [Babylon], or within [sinful depravity].

1. Righteous/Just

- There is only one way to achieve true righteousness... Faith in God and His promises.
 - **Genesis 15:6**, “Abraham believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”
- When we repent of our sins and *believe* in Jesus, we are saved.
 - **Ephesians 2:8**, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,”
 - **Romans 10:9**, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and *believe* in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
- At that moment, we are ‘justified’ [made new; born again]; redeemed, reconciled.
 - **Romans 10:10**, “For with the heart one believes and is *justified*, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”
- That’s why the Apostle Paul would quote this verse in **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... For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The *righteous* shall live by faith.” [focus on righteousness]

2. “Shall live”

- **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.”
- As we’ve been justified, we then live in Christ, and are being sanctified.

- By God’s grace, we wake up each day to live in the fullness of Christ, and walk in His Spirit; not giving in to the desires of the flesh [pride, ego, lust].
- That’s why Paul would quote this verse in **Galatians 3:11**, “Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall *live* by faith.” [focus on living; freedom]

3. “By faith”

- **Hebrews 10:38**, “but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” [focus on faith]
- What does it mean to have faith? = Complete dependency on God for all outcomes in life.
 - **Hebrews 11:1**, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
- Faith that despite the attacks, the lies, the hardships, the struggles, the anxiety... still trusts in God because of His goodness and promises.
 - **1 John 5:4-5**, “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”
- The righteous shall live by faith... Live in victory!!

“God’s Judgment” [verses 5-20]

- The remainder of Chapter 2 gives us a glimpse into the mind of God, how He views sin, and how He will judge the unrepentant sinner.
 - There are 6 sins that God will accuse.
 - Each section starts with a ‘woe’ [warning], and ends with pronounced judgement.
- **Verse 4** started by claiming, “his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him...”
 - Now God pronounces judgement on the Babylonians, and in affect, anyone who walks in such a way.
- **Verse 5**: Arrogance and greed
 - “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.”
 - We can never be satisfied outside of Jesus Christ. Nothing in this world can bring lasting joy and fulfillment.
 - *Idolizing* the material will only lead to a greater depth of emptiness.
- **Verses 6-8**: Exploitation of others/Selfish ambition
 - **[vs. 6]** “Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own— for how long?— and loads himself with pledges!”
 - Ambition is not wrong unless its done for selfish gain.
 - **Romans 15:20**, “and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel...”
 - **2 Corinthians 5:9 NASB**, “Therefore we also have as our ambition...to be pleasing to Him.”
 - Selfish desire leads to destruction, typically in the same way.. you reap what you sow.

- The Babylonians were eventually overthrown in 539 B.C.
- **Galatians 6:7-9**, “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”
- **Verses 9-11: Self-exaltation/Coveting**
 - **[vs. 9]** “Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm!”
 - **[Edomites] Obadiah 1:3-4**, “The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, ‘Who will bring me down to the ground?’ Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the Lord.” **[pride comes before the fall]**
 - **Mark 8:36**, “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”
 - What does your material gain say to the world? “Look at me! Look what I got!”
 - Whether materially or spiritually, there is no room for pride-filled living.
- **Verses 12-14: Oppression**
 - **[vs. 12]** “Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity!”
 - Human history is filled with empires and countries, including our own, built on the backs of slaves and the blood of war.
 - Yet it will all come crashing down when Jesus returns, if not before.
 - **[the builders of Babel] Genesis 11:4**, “Come, let *us* build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let *us* make a name for *ourselves*...”
 - **Revelation 18:21**, “Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, ‘So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more;’”
 - The glory of man will be replaced by the glory of God! **[vs. 14, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord...]**
- **Verses 15-17: Repulsive drunkenness and the decline of morality; especially when forced upon another.**
 - “Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink— you pour out your wrath and make them drunk, in order to gaze at their nakedness!”
 - But God said that the sins of Babylon will be exposed.
- **Verses 18-20: Idolatry**
 - **[vs. 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.”
 - Do not think for a moment that you don’t have the inherent tendency to bow down to idols. We all do.
 - **Ephesians 5:5**, “For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”
 - Famous people can become our idols. Dead entertainers still have their followers. Cars, houses, boats, jewelry, and art. It’s one thing to own them, and quite something else to be owned by them. Social position and vocational

achievement. Your appetite can be your god. Whatever you pursue to bring you carnal pleasure. Your intellectual ability. [paraphrased from Warren Wiersbe]

- *What's the 1st commandment?* "You shall have no other gods before me."

- **REMEMBER: [vs. 20]** "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

Conclusion

- So, did God answer Habakkuk's questions?? Will He answer yours??
 - Are you patient enough to wait for *His* answer in *His* timing?
 - Are you *willing* to receive direct answers that may bring correction & conviction, and then *respond* to that call?
- The righteous live by faith!
 - Not by trying '*not to sin*' like the Babylonians, or those who sin greater than we do. [not by comparison]
 - But by understanding the glory of God, who saved us by His grace, so that we can live rightly in a chaotic world, pursuing Him in all we do!