

## *“The Just shall live by Faith”*

### *Habakkuk 2:1-4*

We left Habakkuk clinging to the reality that he knew to be true about the character of the true and living God and at the same time wrestling with God over His plan to judge Judah. Marvelously, our God, who is infinite in His wisdom and power, is also a God who allows us, finite created beings, limited in our understanding,-- He lets us wrestle with Him.

As we venture into the second chapter we find Habakkuk waiting for God's response. He is about to receive one of the most important revelations in the entire Old Testament. Most of what is here is not new. It is rather a distillation of the nature of God's work with Habakkuk to God's second response. It falls into three parts.

- I. A Waiting Prophet (v.1)*
- II. An Important Message (v.2-3)*
- III. The Eternal Principle (v.4)*

#### *I. A Waiting Prophet (v.1)*

A. Habakkuk's attitude in waiting for God's response is clearly seen in **vs. 1**. Three phrases picture Habakkuk as the watchman on the wall.

***“I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected.”***

1. These are picturesque phrases. Habakkuk may have actually taken a physical position on the wall to see what God was going to do. However, since Habakkuk was looking for a response from God, it is probable that this simply speaks of his anticipation of God's response.
2. Habakkuk was not waiting reluctantly to see what God was going to say. He was waiting with great anticipation. He was confident that God was going to respond, he just didn't know what God was going to say.

B. Do we know what it is to “wait on God” as Habakkuk was doing here? We live in an age of instant everything, but God is never in a hurry. That is because the work He is doing is much more important than we can comprehend. The LORD tells us over and over again that we need to wait for Him.

1. In the middle of difficult circumstances we need to trust and wait for Him to deliver us! **Psalm 37:34** says,  
***“Wait for the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land. You will look on when the wicked are cut off.”***

2. The Lord tells us that when we are ready to take vengeance we need to wait on the Lord. **Proverbs 20:22;**

***“Do not say, ‘I will repay evil.’ Wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you.”***

3. We must not forget the great promise that God gives us at the end of **Isaiah 40** for all those who wait upon the Lord. **Isaiah 40:31;**

***“But those who wait on 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.”***

## ***II. An Important Message (v.2-3)***

A. We are not told how long Habakkuk waited. But at last the Lord responded to Habakkuk's complaint (v.2-3).

***“Then the Lord answered me and said: ‘Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time. But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come. It will not tarry.’”***

1. The preamble to the answer that the Lord gives clearly indicates the importance of the message.

2. This message is for a wide audience. This was not just for Habakkuk's use. It was to be written down clearly for future generations to see. God was not only answering Habakkuk's fears, He was addressing eternal truth to His people in all ages.

3. Not only was it to be written down, it was to be told and carried out to the world. This message was too important to be kept to oneself.

B. We, too, need to learn the lesson that God was pressing home to Habakkuk in this. God is doing more than working on the fears of one prophet here.

1. God is concerned about individuals, (i.e. Habakkuk and Jonah), but, at the same time, God is working out His eternal plan among the nations of the world.

2. Let us not lose focus of this reality. God's work in each of our lives needs to be seen in the context of God's work in the world. The Gospel that saved us needs to be brought to the world.

C. Now comes the beginning of the revelation (v.3 [ESV]).

***“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”.***

This is not all for right now, Habakkuk. There is a twofold fulfillment of this prophecy.

1. Concerning the events that the Lord is predicting for Babylon and the judgments to come upon her, they would come, but they would come in the future.

Yes, Judah would fall. Yes, Babylon would appear to be unstoppable and to have subdued Judah's God. But Babylon would not escape judgment. The day would come that Babylon would fall. God's judgments on this godless nation would happen just as God said, but Habakkuk and the rest of the Jews would have to wait for that day. It would appear to be delayed. God's timing was set and it would be a time in the future. But it would not tarry (i.e. It would not be late!). God's timing is perfect. God is never in a hurry, but He is never late!

2. The writer of Hebrews picks up this part of the prophecy given to Habakkuk and shows us by divine inspiration the second part of the fulfillment of what God said to Habakkuk. **Hebrews 10:36-37;**

***“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, ‘yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay.’”***

In the book of **Hebrews**, the writer quotes from the LXX which changes the “it” to “he” and refers to the coming of the Lord Jesus to set all things right. He is coming and though we think from our perspective that He does tarry, His timetable is on track. He is coming right on time.

### ***III. The Eternal Principle (v.4)***

A. So, we discover that this revelation is not simply personal. It is to be a major message to the people of God of all ages. It is a message to be read and acted upon. It is a message of future import that we are to wait for its fulfillment.

B. Now as we step into the beginning of this great revelation, God gives to Habakkuk an eternal principle. This principle is to be the basis of all that follows. Here in **vs. 4** is the concise statement of the contrast between men of all ages. It is also the statement of God's eternal plan of redemption.

***“Behold the proud. His soul is not upright in him. But the just shall live by his faith.”***

1. The first class of mankind that the LORD mentions is the man whose soul is lifted up. This is proud mankind. He does not need God. He thinks he can make it on his own.

All unregenerate mankind fits this description, for they find no need of God. Paul shows us this in **Romans 1:21-22;**

***“Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts***

*were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.”*

From a human perspective, the major stumbling block that keeps most lost people from God is their pride. They are unwilling to admit that they cannot save themselves. These are the unrighteous ones who shall be judged.

2. God then describes the second class of mankind, *“the just,” “the righteous ones,”* and the characteristic that marks them out is their *“faith”* or *“faithfulness.”* Some commentators see a problem here with this statement and way the statement is used in the New Testament. The thrust here is that Habakkuk needs to live a life that flows from his faith in God and is characterized by faithfulness. The concept of *“faithfulness”* is included in the Greek word for *“faith.”*

This important truth is repeated three times in the New Testament. In **Romans 1:17** Paul used this statement as an introduction to the Gospel. There he tells us, how the just become righteous. In **Galatians 3** he again focuses on this statement and describes, how the just live. Then in **Hebrews 10:38** the writer of Hebrews quotes **Habakkuk 2:4** and outlines what the faith that “the just” live by looks like. Ultimately, this little phrase describes those who are truly God's people from all ages. They are the *“the Just,” “the righteous ones.”* And they are righteous because they are they who come unto God by faith. Have we come to God through faith? Are we living as righteous and faithful ones in this dark world?