

Habakkuk 2:4, 3:16-19

There are so many natural events happening in the world that we don't understand. An example is Covid-19 where the world is not prepared for and it lasts for a long period. It affects all the countries and all types of people including Christians and non-Christians. We don't really know what is God's will in this. This is similar to Habakkuk's situation. He prayed to God about the bad situation of His people but couldn't understand God's will.

Habakkuk is a minor prophet book in the Old Testament. Habakkuk is a prophet and the book was written likely right before the Babylonian invasion that is the time of Jehoiakim's reign (609-598 BC). Jehoiakim was an evil king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. There were evil doings in his country as well as foreign countries. He prayed to God and want God to respond. God was mainly silent. Then God answered that Babylonians would come and execute justice on the Lord's behalf. The wickedness of Judah would be punished. Habakkuk could not understand why God would use an evil nation to punish Judah. The theme is that Habakkuk had unanswered questions that didn't seem logical, but faithfully trusted God. This study emphasizes the faith of Habakkuk towards God.

1) The righteous live by faith

Hab. 2:4 of the NIV version states ""See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright— but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness." The NKJ version is "Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." At that time, the enemy is the Babylonian. The pride of the Babylonian will cause their downfall but the faithfulness of the righteous will be their salvation. Habakkuk says the Babylonians are proud and therefore doomed whereas the righteous will be protected and conquered in God's will.

This verse also applies to people at all time/generations in a general sense. People of God shall live by faith. It is stated in the Old Testament here. In Jesus time, Jesus said to the woman that poured perfume on His feet "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" In Luke 7:50. Shortly after Jesus's death, Christians kept that truth as stated in Romans 1:17 that is the quote of the verse Hab. 2:4. In year 1517, Martin Luther nailed the 95 criticisms on the church door of the Roman Catholic. The

Catholics were taught that people are saved through obedience to the church, but Luther argued salvation comes through faith in God. Today, we Christians know faith in Jesus is the only way for eternal life, and we need to live daily with that faith in Him. Heb. 10:36-39 emphasized that point- live by faith is a daily and continuous process. Thus, live by faith is always God's intended will for us.

2) Faith is beyond circumstances

Chapter 3 of Habakkuk has a very different tone than chapters 1 and 2. It is Habakkuk's prayer. It started with praises to God. He praised His deeds, glory, power, righteousness, mercy, deliverance, etc. The note at the end of chapter 3 indicated it is a singable piece of music. Habakkuk was able to pray and sing in such a way during a time Judah was full of sin, and the enemy Babylonian was strong and God will use them to destroy his country. Later part of chapter 3, verses 16-19, showed Habakkuk remained faithful even at a time of famine. Thus, faith in God shall not be affected by circumstances around you.

3) Have joy in God and counting on God for strength

Hab. 3:17 described a famine situation where there would be no crops and no sheep and cattle, but in verse 18 Habakkuk rejoiced in the Lord. "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior." (Hab. 3:18)

Verse 19 described Habakkuk was counting on God's strength. He trusted God that God can enable him to go forward with strength. This verse is similar to the verse in Phil. 4:13 of the New Testament where we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength.

Verses 16-19 show that having joy in God and counting on God for strength in our lives can reveal or reflect our faith in God.

In conclusion, we sometimes don't understand why God let certain situations happen on earth. People suffered in sickness, natural disaster, war etc. as well as pains and hurts at a personal level like unrighteous acts have done on us. Nevertheless, live by faith is what Habakkuk has demonstrated to us. It reminds us that God may seem to be inactive but He always has His plan. He will deal with the evil and works out justice eventually. In the time of calamity, we need to remember God has mercy and faithful to His promise. God will give us strength to go forward. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who

have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28). We need to be patient and live by faith especially at a time of distress.