

Sermon on Habakkuk 1

Introduction

The book of Habakkuk is one of those overlooked little gems in the OT known as the Minor Prophets. You could easily read all of Habakkuk in one day as part of your daily reading plan and then be on to Zephaniah the next day. But though it is a mere three chapters, Habakkuk raises some of the most profound questions that can be and have ever been raised to which are joined the incomprehensibly more profound answers from the LORD. And Habakkuk presents us with, or rather Habakkuk is the presentation to us of, one of the most centrally important theme verses in the NT, quoted three times in the NT, in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38 – the just shall live by faith. That the just shall live by faith is the heart of the theme verse of the book of Romans and it is the central message of the book of Habakkuk. That theme is woven into the fabric of the book from start to finish.

By way of overview, the book consists of three chapters but really only two parts. The first part is found in chapters 1 and 2 and is in the form of a dialog between Habakkuk and the LORD. Habakkuk poses his initial question/complaint in chapter 1 verses 2-4 and God replies in verses 5-11. Habakkuk again speaks in verses 12 through chapter 2 verse 1. And then we have the LORD's overwhelming response from chapter 2 verse 2 through to the end, verse 20, at which God puts an end to all dialog with the words, "the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."

In chapter 3, Habakkuk presents an ode, a prayer, a psalm of faith in response to the LORD's awesome pronouncements of judgment and wrath. It is said to be "upon Shigionoth" which though the word is not clearly understood is also found in Psalm 7, which is a "Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD." So, it is a song of some sort. Also, Habakkuk 3 uses the word 'Selah' three times (v. 3, 9 and 13) and these are the only three times the word 'Selah' appears outside the book of Psalms – there 'Selah' appears 70 times. And, finally, confirming that it was meant to be sung, the chapter ends with instructions "To the chief singer on my stringed instruments." Maybe Habakkuk was a temple musician.

Everything we know about the man has to be gleaned from these three chapters because he is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. His name is mentioned only in chapter 1 verse 1 and chapter 3 verse 1 of this book, at the head of the two main parts of the work. We are not given his genealogy. We aren't given a record of his calling. The most important fact about him is recorded in verse 1, where he is introduced, though almost incidentally, as "Habakkuk the prophet." So, he is a prophet and a vehicle for the message, the burden which the prophet saw. The burden is the message and the message is a burden to the prophet. But the prophet himself is merely a vehicle, as the Apostle Peter notes, that "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

What we can say about the historical context of the book must also be gleaned from the book itself. It is certain that the book was written prior to the Siege of Jerusalem in 587 BC because that is the primary prophetic pronouncement of the LORD in chapter 1 verse 6, "For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation." And based on the complaint that the prophet raises, it seems that the time is likely after the time of Josiah, during whose time there was revival of religion in the land. But, following his death in 609 BC, it seems likely that, during the intervening period of roughly 20 years, the situation in

Jerusalem continued to worsen and worsen and lawlessness increasingly abounded. It is just in the midst of this deepening darkness that the LORD reveals Himself to this tender-hearted man of God.

The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. (Habakkuk 1:1)

The Hebrew word rendered “burden” in verse 1 is, in its primary usage literally a burden, such as a thing that would be carried on the back. In Jeremiah 17:22 the LORD commanded, “Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.” And in Numbers 11, Moses speaks of the “burden of the people,” as the crushing weight of responsibility of dealing with so many souls, which the Lord graciously divided among the elders of the people. The Lord said, “I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone” (Numbers 11:17). And these usages are consistent with our usage of the English word ‘burden’. Paul told us to “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

But Nahum, Habakkuk, Zechariah and Malachi speak of the “burden of the word of the LORD” in the sense of the awesome weight of responsibility that comes with God’s Word. There is an exceeding and eternal weight of glory to the Word of God which lays a burden upon the prophet and his audience alike. The burden flows from the sovereignty of the thrice holy God who is there, who speaks, and who works His will among the creatures as the Potter molds the clay. The burden is a burden of truth and judgment, not just for him and his hearers, but also for ourselves and our loved one, for our children and their families, for our neighbors and our nation. The burden of the Word of the LORD is heavy because God’s judgment is overwhelming. It is terrifying and is already on its way. But the prophet has another burden that he bears, one that comes to us as well, that we really, truly need to hear and understand the central theme of the gospel message: the just shall live by faith.

And so, as best we can glean from the introduction of this book, Habakkuk is a simple man of God with a sensitive heart chosen by the LORD to be a prophet, to represent the people before God and to faithfully bring the Word that God addresses to his fellow men. And so, as we enter into this text, let’s be careful how we hear -- we enter into the dialog represented by Habakkuk, who is like every child of God with a sensitive heart. So, as we enter into his complaint and feel it as our own, let us likewise enter into his burden as well. For if his complaint is our complaint then his burden is our burden as well.

Analysis of the Text

The Complaint

O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! (Habakkuk 1:2)

The first question the prophet asks is “how long?” The words translated “how long” are a long way to ask “how long” in Hebrew and seem to indicate that the prophet was experiencing frustration. It seems clear that he had been crying out to the LORD for a long time without receiving any answer; only to see things continue to get worse and worse. He complains of the degradation of society, even of things having progressed to open violence, and is frustrated that God is not doing anything to improve the situation. The word “cry” indicates intense and urgent prayer. The same word is used of the desperate cry of Jonah from the belly of the whale (Jonah 2:2). Imagine how intense and urgent was his cry when he cried out of the belly of hell!

We should recall that there had been a revival among the people during the time of Josiah, of recent memory and it seems that Habakkuk was pleading with the LORD to bring revival again. Even though the prophet complains of God's inaction, his faith in God's sovereignty is made clear by his equating God's hearing and His saving. The parallel of God not hearing with not saving implies that he believed if God chose to hear, that He would and certainly could save. There is no unbelief here.

Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. (Habakkuk 1:3)

The second question is "why?" The prophet wants to understand why wickedness is being allowed to flourish all around. He introduces three couplets: iniquity and grievance, spoiling and violence, and strife and contention.

The word for iniquity is related to vanity and idolatry. It indicates an internal form of moral impurity that flows from covetousness. The word translated "grievance" in this verse is rendered "iniquity" in verse 13, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" so both iniquity and grievance are representative of that moral impurity which the LORD cannot tolerate.

Spoiling and violence are likewise related. As Micah had condemned the nation of Israel 100 years earlier with the words, "They covet fields and take them by violence, also houses, and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance" (Micah 2:2). Spoiling and violence are related terms that represent social injustice perpetrated by the strong against the weak.

In Jeremiah 22:16-17, probably during the time of Habakkuk, the Lord compares Jehoiakim with his father Josiah, saying "He [that is, Josiah] judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD. But thine eyes and thine heart [, Jehoiakim] are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it" (Jeremiah 22:16-17). The fish rots from the head, as the saying goes – if the leaders are corrupt, then so will the rest of society be corrupted.

And then Habakkuk complains about those who raise up strife and contention. The word for strife used here is elsewhere used of legal cases or causes or controversies. In Deut 25:1, we read, "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked." And contention is probably related to the realm of political and legal action as well. There was apparently much contention in public matters with men bringing lawsuits and counter lawsuits against one another.

And so, the prophet is here describing a complete breakdown of society. There is immorality among the people, the rich and powerful were oppressing the poor and helpless and the rich and powerful were in contention amongst each other. The result of all this is seen to be lawlessness.

Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth. (Habakkuk 1:4)

The society of Habakkuk's time was rotten through and through, from the head to the sole of the foot, there was no soundness in it. The law is said to have been slacked. It was made feeble or ceased to have any influence in the nation. Judgment was being perverted by the rich and powerful. Those who would

still seek to bring forth justice in the land were unable because the wicked were in control of everything. Though they had the precious law of God, it was as if they did not, and justice was perverted.

Brothers and sisters, doesn't this describe our own situation? Doesn't it echo the cries of our own hearts? Don't we cry out, "how long, O Lord?" and "why, O Lord, do things keep getting worse and worse?" Don't we grieve over the violence done to more than a million unborn children each and every year? Don't we grieve over the seemingly endless cases of gun violence in our nation? There were almost 700 mass shootings in the US in 2021 and yet the deaths from those only account for about 3% of total gun deaths, not even counting suicides. Don't we grieve over the epidemics of drug abuse, pornography, domestic violence, child abuse, and the proliferation of all kinds of sexual perversion? Then, there is the less visible epidemic of white collar crime, of stealing from work, cheating on income taxes, fraud, and frivolous lawsuits. All the things that Habakkuk complained about are rampant in our culture and then some. We've cried out to the Lord for long, for so long, and yet things continue to get worse and worse.

Who among us does not grieve over the condition of the church? Polls indicate that an increasing number of evangelicals no longer believe that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. Many don't believe in the Virgin Birth of Christ, or in a literal hell. According to the Ligonier State of Theology in the evangelical church, more than 50% don't believe in unconditional election, a majority believes that people are good by nature, and accept that there are many paths to God. Antinomianism has swept through the church in modern times and has left behind a Christianity which, as Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:5, has a form of godliness but which denies the power thereof. That is, the doctrine of the necessity of on-going repentance is not preached where the law is not preached and the so the power of the gospel to conform souls to the image of Christ is denied. The church as a whole has left its first love. What is left is an empty façade of religiosity as is spoken of the church in Laodicea, which thought itself to be "rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing; not knowing that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev 3:17).

Who among us does not grieve over the lostness of souls? Don't we cry out to the LORD to save our children and grandchildren? Don't we cry out to the LORD to save our friends and neighbors? Don't we yearn to see the kind of revival that swept through this area 200 years ago in the Second Great Awakening? And 250 years ago in the First Great Awakening?

Surely we feel the weight of the burden of the complaint of the prophet! Surely, if our souls are at all sensitive to the condition of the world around us, and of the lowly condition of the church, we will cry out, "How long, O LORD?" and "why do you make us look upon such wickedness even in the church itself?"

The prophet's complaint includes some unstated premises which we share as well. He presupposes the utter holiness of God as well as His absolute sovereignty. He also bases his assumption of God's need to work upon the covenantal relationship of God to the people. The prophet clearly understood that the situation could not continue as it has been going because the presence of the thrice holy God cannot continue in the midst of such great wickedness. It was an unstable situation and something must give.

And so, Habakkuk cried out urgently to the LORD to bring salvation to the people as the LORD had done so many times in the past. The prophet surely believed that the LORD would bring revival to the people. The existence of lawlessness among God's people made it necessary in his mind for God to act! But the

LORD moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. Let's move on to the LORD's terrifying response.

The LORD's Terrifying Response

Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. (Habakkuk 1:5)

In the LORD's awesome response, we note that He addresses not merely the prophet individually but speaks to the people. He speaks to the prophet as representative of the people and addresses them in the plural, "Behold ye". The text heaps up words – Behold! Regard! Be astonished! Wonder! The Hebrew doubles the word for wonder which is literally "wonder wondering" to produce the effect of "wonder marvelously." We will see in a little while that when the Apostle Paul refers to this verse in Acts 13:41, he takes the doubled sense as "wonder and perish."

And note that though the LORD doesn't directly answer the prophet's questions, yet neither does He rebuke him or correct his evaluation of the miserable condition of the people. Instead, He addresses us all and lifts our attention beyond the narrow scope of the prophet's concern to reveal the larger scope of His purpose. He turns the prophet's attention outward saying, "behold ye among the heathen!" The LORD agrees with the prophet regarding the condition of the people and recognizes the need for something to be done. But, in His pronouncement, He makes it clear that He intends to address the situation in a way which is outside the bounds Habakkuk had imposed on God's action. Habakkuk wanted God to deal with the lawlessness of the people and so it was God's intention to do. He would demonstrate His holiness and His justice would certainly be upheld, but not in the way the prophet had conceived. There was to be no revival.

For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. (Habakkuk 1:6-7)

Here the prophet's vision is raised from the narrow scope of the evils and wrongs occurring among the people to see the exposed arm of God's imminent wrath coming from the heathen. The Chaldeans were the neo-Babylonian or the Second Babylonian empire which had not yet risen to global dominance but which were being raised on the ashes of the Assyrian empire. The LORD Himself is raising them up.

The Chaldeans are said to be a bitter and hasty nation. They are cruel and merciless. They are fierce and impetuous. They are an unstoppable force which will march through the whole land and take possession of the dwelling places of the nations all around them. They are terrible and dreadful – they spread fear and terror. The thought of them brings terror. The sight of them brings dread. They are lawless – their judgment proceeds from themselves. Their dignity proceeds from themselves – they accept no law other than what proceeds from themselves. They are a law unto themselves.

They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up [as] the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it. (Habakkuk 1:9-10)

And so the answer of God comes with terrifying force – He will deal with the sins of the people. Since they gave themselves over to violence, God will give them over to violence. Since they seize the houses of widows and orphans to take them by force, so God decreed that their houses would be taken by force

and their wives be made widows and their children orphans. God declares His unfathomable purpose to use the lawlessness of the Chaldeans to punish the lawlessness of His visible church.

God declares that His plans and purposes extend beyond the Jewish nation and that the wickedness of that nation could by no means thwart His purposes. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. (Romans 3:3-4)

The Chaldeans would meet with complete success because it was the LORD's decree. They moved with great speed and heaped up earthen mounds around the cities and entered in and took them with ease, even into Jerusalem, the City of the Great King. There was nothing that could stop them because the LORD wielded them for His own purposes.

Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god. (Habakkuk 1:11)

But then we see that the wickedness of man never escapes the judgment of God. This is the sentence of judgment brought against the Chaldean. This is God stating that He will give him over to his own proud heart. It was God's purpose to give the victory to the Chaldean. And God's employment of the wicked to accomplish His will in the earth does not prevent Him from bringing judgment against them. The Chaldean would perform the will of God exactly as He intended but then his mind would transgress and he would ascribe the power which had accomplished all those things to his own god. But it was not the power of man on display, because the LORD revealed it beforehand to the prophets, and declared it clearly and plainly, as astonishing as it must have been for the prophet to hear this pronouncement. When it came to pass exactly as foretold, they knew it was the LORD who had done it.

How can we grapple with this? How can we comprehend it? How can the infinitely holy God use a nation more wicked than His own to bring judgment on them? And then how can He give that wicked nation over to judgment after having performed His will? And what are we to do with all this?

The Assyrian, the Chaldean, the Roman, and the Antichrist

Let's notice the pattern. In Isaiah 10, in his prophecy of the Assyrian who had taken away the northern tribes about 100 years prior to Habakkuk, the same pattern appears. The wicked is raised up to bring judgment against the ungodly visible church, but then he transgresses in his pride. We read,

Wherefore it shall come to pass, [that] when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done [it], and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant [man]: (Isaiah 10:12-13)

The Assyrian had swept away the northern kingdom and sent the ten tribes into exile. Then he had come up to the very gates of Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah but he was not allowed to touch or enter the great city. The LORD defended Jerusalem and in one night the Angel of the LORD slew 185,000 persons. The LORD used the wicked intentions of the Assyrian to bring judgment against His visible church for their wickedness but he set bounds and worked his will perfectly, marvelously, through the sinful

choices of wicked men. And all the surrounding nations had seen the hitherto unstoppable Assyrian army go up to Jerusalem but not come back. Everyone became aware that the LORD had defended Jerusalem, so it was very hard for them to believe that the LORD would finally give it over to the enemy, as Jeremiah wrote in Lamentation 4:11-12, written by Jeremiah after the fall of Jerusalem.

The LORD hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof. The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem. (Lamentations 4:11-12)

And yet they did. Just as he had told the prophets.

Now, let's take a look at how the Apostle Paul uses this passage in a speech recorded in Acts 13, in a way which is rich with significance. Speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His resurrection from the dead, Paul said,

Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. (Acts 13:38-41)

In applying Habakkuk 1:5 to the gospel, Paul fits the redemption of Christ into the same pattern. He expresses the idea that God's wondrous work in sending Christ the Savior was a marvel beyond comprehension, in every way – the infinite, eternal Holy Son of God became a man and lived a perfectly righteous life and, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, was taken, and by wicked hands was crucified and slain: (Acts 2:23). He was raised from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God. This is a marvelous work that cannot be believed by the natural man.

Isaiah wrote, "behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, [even] a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Isaiah 29:14) This obscurity is part of the marvelous sovereign purpose of God. Speaking of the necessity of the obscurity of it, Paul says, "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8).

For as Jerusalem, the city of His love, was given over to the enemy to be destroyed, and no one would have believed it to be possible, so too the Son of His love was delivered up for our offenses and raised for our justification. Who would have believed it possible that the Eternal Son of God could be taken and put to death by the wicked hands of mortal man? But, believe it we must! And unto salvation! What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? for He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32)

And, historically, we know that for the most part the Jews did reject the gospel, and that the Romans did come and destroy Jerusalem once again in 70AD. And this foreshadows the end of times.

Application to our day

Pressing on, then, to the final reflection of this principle of God's marvelous way of working, of His bringing to pass His righteous ends through instruments of evil, we come to the time of the Antichrist. The Antichrist is shown to us typically in the Assyrian, and in the Chaldean and in the Roman. He is to be given authority over all the earth in his hour. We read of him in Daniel 7,

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. (Daniel 7:20-22) And in Revelation 13, we read, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Revelation 13:7).

Like the types which came before him, this one who is coming will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The Scripture says that He will be seated in the temple of God. We need to be careful how we understand this. The word for temple here does not refer to a physical building which is the temple but rather it refers to the church.

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (2 Corinthians 6:16)

And so, we are to understand that the antichrist will be revered and honored in the visible church. And this is the judgment of God, and we must be careful to understand this in our day because it is so appalling. It is hard to swallow but the Scripture says that the man of sin will be held in high esteem among the visible people of God.

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:10). For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17)

Here is the terrifying application of the Word of the LORD to our day. Here is the burden of Habakkuk laid upon us. We cry out to the LORD, we even cry violence, and yet we receive no answer from the LORD. The visible church goes from worse to worse. What are we to do? Let's look at the answer given by Habakkuk.

Habakkuk's answer

There are many who, being relatively unaware of the increasingly miserable condition of the visible church, are completely oblivious to the coming judgment. They scoff, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4). Others are aware of the unholy influences at work in the visible church, but are yet surprisingly indifferent to it all, showing that they have no real heart for what so intimately concerns the glory of God and the welfare of His saints. The Lord warned us, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). And there are some tender-hearted souls who become aware of the rising power of the mystery of iniquity and, having a grasp of the holiness of God, and clearly seeing the dishonor done to Christ in the departures from the truth to the right hand and to the

left, become oppressed in spirit by the seemingly irremediable and increasingly distressing conditions which are prevailing in the world and in the visible church.

But all these are wrong! What is the prophet's response? It is simple and beautiful.

**Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.
(Habakkuk 1:12)**

What a blessed response to the overwhelming message of the LORD! What a burden is here borne by faith, flying on the wings of the covenant faithfulness of the eternal God up to the heavens. The prophet's questioning in the earlier verses is not evidence of a weak faith. Here we see the opposite. The LORD had just turned the prophet's world upside down with an astonishing pronouncement of judgment of the most difficult sort to swallow, and yet the prophet grounds his response in the nature and purpose of eternal, holy God. The purposes of the everlasting God are holy as He is holy and cannot be changed or thwarted or frustrated. Truly all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Daniel 4:35) Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? (Gen 18:25)

Please notice that Habakkuk flees to the LORD. He takes his refuge in the LORD. Habakkuk addresses God as, "O LORD my God," and "mine Holy One." He doubles the possessives to make the LORD His own and so he clings to the LORD with all his soul. Thus, this simple statement of God's sovereignty and holiness and covenantal faithfulness grounds the prophet's simple and beautiful confidence: "we shall not die." Here is that justifying faith by which the just shall live!

Our faith is in the Living God, who works all things according to the counsel of His will. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6). Our victory is in Christ. "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:36-37). This is that same Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (Hebrews 13:8)

The people of Habakkuk's day were judged for the light they had. But we have far greater light than they did. And so let us take heed to ourselves, how we hear, because the revelation of the Word of God is a burden to us as well. Unto whom much is given, much will be required. The message must be heard and mixed with faith or else the word becomes a testimony against us as it did to those who trampled it underfoot in Habakkuk's day. And Paul's admonition still stands for us today – Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. (Hebrews 10:37-38)

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (2 Timothy 2:19)

Amen.