

## *The Life of Faith*

Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4 (October 30, 2022)

### ***Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4***

<sup>1</sup>The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw. <sup>2</sup>O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? <sup>3</sup>Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. <sup>4</sup>So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous—therefore judgment comes forth perverted.

<sup>5</sup>Look at the nations, and see! Be astonished! Be astounded! For a work is being done in your days that you would not believe if you were told. <sup>6</sup>For I am rousing the Chaldeans, that fierce and impetuous nation, who march through the breadth of the earth to seize dwellings not their own. <sup>7</sup>Dread and fearsome are they; their justice and dignity proceed from themselves. <sup>8</sup>Their horses are swifter than leopards, more menacing than wolves at dusk; their horses charge. Their horsemen come from far away; they fly like an eagle swift to devour. <sup>9</sup>They all come for violence, with faces pressing forward; they gather captives like sand. <sup>10</sup>At kings they scoff, and of rulers they make sport. They laugh at every fortress, and heap up earth to take it. <sup>11</sup>Then they sweep by like the wind; they transgress and become guilty; their own might is their god!

<sup>12</sup>Are you not from of old, O Lord my God, my Holy One? You shall not die. O Lord, you have marked them for judgment; and you, O Rock, have established them for punishment. <sup>13</sup>Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing; why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they? <sup>14</sup>You have made people like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler. <sup>15</sup>The enemy brings all of them up with a hook; he drags them out with his net, he gathers them in his seine; so he rejoices and exults. <sup>16</sup>Therefore he sacrifices to his net and makes offerings to his seine; for by them his portion is lavish, and his food is rich. <sup>17</sup>Is he then to keep on emptying his net, and destroying nations without mercy?

<sup>2</sup>I will stand at my watchpost, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. <sup>2</sup>Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. <sup>3</sup>For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. <sup>4</sup>Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith.

### ***Historical Context***

This book is one of the twelve Minor Prophets, minor mostly in that they are all short books. The book begins with a dialogue between the prophet and God which seeks to discover why Israelites suffer from foreign invaders, and in which God announces that he will deal with the wicked at the proper time, and will vindicate the faithful. It is likely that Habakkuk was written when the Babylonians were a world power, probably between 608 and 598 BC.

### ***Theme: The Life of Faith***

In essence, the book of Habakkuk proclaims an Old Testament version of the theology of the cross. It says God is not found only (or even primarily) in the high points. Rather, God meets us in our suffering.

The book provides two pictures of the life of faith. The first is that the righteous live now in light of the promise they have received. God has promised the vision. We live now in full faith that it will come. Yes, when we look around now, we see a world in which all too often “the wicked surround the righteous.” But we trust that God’s vision is coming.

The second picture of the life of faith is that of a soul rejoicing in God’s blessings, even when the barns, branches, and pastures are empty. It is a picture of a heart that loves God, rather than merely in the blessings God gives—of a heart that rejoices in God the giver, rather than merely in the gifts of God. It is a picture of one who knows life will inevitably bring low moments. And that these low moments are not signs that God has abandoned us. The righteous trust that God will in fact find us in our suffering.