

A Vision for the End

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[0 : 00] So hopefully I'm over it, but you'll just have to bear with a little bit of throat issues here and there. As you said, we'll be in Habakkuk, so you can turn in your Bibles to the book of Habakkuk.

I'm just really thankful to be here with you guys. It's a blessing to minister to you this morning to bring God's word. Recently, I studied through Habakkuk in one of my classes.

And so I thought it'd be appropriate to bring this message to you guys this morning as God's used it in my own life. Habakkuk chapter 2, but we'll start in chapter 1.

If you're having trouble finding Habakkuk, it's right in between Nahum and Zephaniah. I know we have a hard time with the Old Testament prophets sometimes because we just kind of pass over them.

They're hard to understand and hard to read. But when you dig into them, they're actually a really big blessing. And I found that to be with Habakkuk. So the first two chapters of Habakkuk are a dialogue between God and the prophet.

[1 : 20] We'll be looking particularly at chapter 2, verses 2 through 4, which is the start of God's second reply to Habakkuk's second complaint.

Habakkuk's second complaint goes something like this. Why does God stand idly by as the wicked swallows up the righteous?

The book of Habakkuk is about justice, about the justice of God particularly. And if you keep that in the back of your mind as we go through this passage, it'll help a bit.

But let's get a running start and start in chapter 1, verse 12. The book of Habakkuk is split up into two sections.

The first section is a question and answer portion with Habakkuk and God, where Habakkuk poses a question and God answers him. Habakkuk poses a second question and God answers him again.

[2 : 21] And then chapter 3 is a poem or a song that Habakkuk uses to praise God.

So let's start in chapter 1, verse 12. This is going to be the second question of Habakkuk, and it'll give us a little bit of background for where we're going today in chapter 2. Are you not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, my Holy One?

We shall not die. O Lord, you have ordained them as a judgment, and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof. 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?

You make mankind like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler. He brings all of them up with a hook. He drags them out with his net.

He gathers them in his dragnet, so he rejoices and is glad. Therefore he sacrifices to his net and makes offerings to his dragnet, for by them he lives in a luxury and his food is rich.

[3 : 35] Is he then to keep on emptying his net and mercilessly killing nations forever? I will take my stand at my watch post and stand 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.

Chapter 2, verse 2. 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. Behold, his soul is puffed up.

It is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith. As I said, the book of Habakkuk is unique among the Old Testament prophets or even the New Testament literature because it's the only prophetic book which is almost entirely made up of dialogue between God and the prophet.

Habakkuk is organized into two sections, question and answer section and the response prayer in chapter 3, which is probably meant to be put to music.

[4 : 56] The main concern that Habakkuk has in the book is with the unpunished justice he sees around him. Verse 2 of chapter 1 says, O Lord, how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear?

Or cry to you violence and you will not save? He is concerned with the iniquity that he sees around him. He takes a look at his surroundings and sees God idly watching as the wicked grows more wicked and the righteous are consumed by that wickedness.

The wicked have grown exceedingly wicked while the righteous seem to be marginalized. Does that sound similar to us today? Justice goes perverted.

Justice is not often met out correctly according to God's standards. We call what is wrong right and we call what is right wrong. The wicked in Habakkuk will grow more and more wicked until the end.

So it shouldn't surprise us that the same happens to us today. That is what wicked people have been doing since before the days of Noah. Yet as we will see, God does not turn a blind eye to the wickedness of man.

[6 : 20] If you read through the book of Habakkuk, there is indication that Habakkuk lived before the Babylonian exile of the southern kingdom, which would be consisting of Judah and Benjamin.

Just a little history lesson to help us get a placement of where Habakkuk would be. In 722 BC, 722 years before Christ, the kingdom of Israel, the northern half, which was 10 tribes, they were taken into captivity by the Assyrians.

And about a century later in 605, it actually happened in three different installments. In 605, 597, and 586 BC, Judah and Benjamin, the last two tribes, they were taken into captivity by the Babylonians.

And that's right about the time when Habakkuk will have been ministering. If you look in chapter 1, verse 5, God says, Look among the nations and see.

He's talking to Habakkuk. Wonder and be astounded, for I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. The term, in your days, gives us a hint that the Babylonian exile is going to happen while Habakkuk was still living.

[7 : 39] So he would have been living right around that time. And he would have seen the Babylonians come and take his people into exile. Turning back to Habakkuk's arguments, Habakkuk's two complaints, which are in chapter 1, could be summarized like this.

Why do you, God, idly watch wickedness? In other words, where is God's justice? The first complaint in 1, 1-4, refers to Judah, the wickedness that he sees in his own country.

And the second complaint, in chapter 1, verses 12-2-1, referred to the Babylonians. They're called the Chaldeans, which is another term for the Babylonians.

But instead of becoming frustrated with the prophet's questions, God graciously answers them. The discourse between Habakkuk and God is interesting because Habakkuk directly and boldly questions God.

Yet the prophet never reacts in disbelief or paints a wrong picture of God. He boldly brings his questions before God because he is genuinely concerned about the righteous, the righteous people in his country.

[9 : 00] Righteous people are oftentimes concerned about other righteous people. Abraham would be an example when he was concerned about his nephew Lot and the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Habakkuk looks at the state of the world and evaluates it against the righteous character of God. And those two seem not to match up.

He sees all the evil going on in his day and he concludes that God has been napping or that God watches idly because God is just and you have a wicked earth.

Those two items don't seem to match up. Same as today. We look at the earth and it's full of wickedness. And yet God still remains just.

So how do we connect those two? It's because of Habakkuk's zeal for God's justice that he asks these questions. He doesn't doubt God, but he asks God because he is concerned about God's righteousness, he's concerned about God's justice, and he's concerned about the righteous people in his country.

[10 : 16] When he sees the world in a shambles, he turns to the one who has the answers, the one who will never fail to mete out justice. However, while the wicked run rampant, Habakkuk has concerns about the righteous, whom he sees as being surrounded and swallowed up by the wicked.

Yet the Lord's second reply shows us that as it showed Habakkuk's people in Habakkuk's day, God does not forget the righteous, and he will judge the wicked with justice at the appropriate time.

So Habakkuk 2, 2 through 4 is the start of God's second reply where he introduces a vision for Habakkuk foretelling the just judgment that will come at the end of the ages.

It's a future judgment that will fall on those who are unrighteous. Here in the second reply to the prophet, the Lord shows the urgency of the message that he's about to give Habakkuk in the rest of chapter 2 concerning the Chaldeans who are coming on the land.

Because Habakkuk, God had just told Habakkuk that he was going to judge Israel, judge the wicked in Israel through the Babylonians who are coming.

[11 : 33] He was going to take his people into exile using this wicked nation. And Habakkuk looks at that and he says, but God, how can you use a people who are more wicked than your people?

And this is God's answer to that cry. Though Israel had disobeyed God's law over and over again, disregarding the prophets which he had sent them, God would not forget them.

While the fate of Judah was sealed, they would go into captivity. Those who were righteous did not have anything ultimately to fear. The Lord's message to Habakkuk would comfort those who remained faithful amidst the widespread idolatry while also bringing fear to those who had ultimately chosen wickedness.

So let's look at verse 2 and start there in our message. The Lord answered me, write the vision, make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.

God is stressing both the clarity and the urgency of this message. Habakkuk is instructed to write it down clearly so that the message can get out. Clarity is an important part of God's message.

[12 : 50] Clarity is important to God. He has always made his word clear and he always will make his word clear. It's called the doctrine of perspicuity, the clarity of scripture, that God's word can be known.

It doesn't mean that it's hard to know or hard to understand or takes work, but it is always clear. Notice that Habakkuk is instructed to write the vision down.

People in Habakkuk's day would have written on many things, leather, parchment, stone, clay, or other materials, but he's instructed to write it on tablets, whether clay or stone.

The text doesn't say. But a written message serves two purposes. First, it is permanent. When God's word is written down, it remains.

Second, a written message cannot be easily misconstrued as an oral one can. This message is an enduring message which needed to be heeded then and needs to be heeded now.

[13 : 57] The last phrase in this verse may be rather confusing or hard to understand. I read it the first time going through this passage and I kind of just skipped over it because I didn't understand what it meant.

So he may run who reads it. Some believe that God is telling Habakkuk to make this message clear on tablets so that even if someone were to run by, the message would be so clear that they could read it and be without excuse.

Kind of like a billboard on the side of the road. No matter if you're going 30 miles an hour or 70 miles an hour, you know there's a McDonald's up ahead. It's right there so that those people passing by could read it.

However, the runner in this verse, I take it more likely to be a herald who would take the message of God from the prophet and run up and down Israel declaring the vision.

The person is described as a runner or one who runs. Running is his job. One example of this kind of herald would be described in 2 Samuel 18.

[15 : 11] There's two actually runners called Ahimehaz and the Cushite. The Cushite isn't named. He's just called the Cushite. They were both heralds in King David's day.

When David's son Absalom was rebelling against his father and then Absalom had been killed, the news needed to be taken back to David.

These two men ran with the news to tell the king. They were heralds. A herald would have been used for a message that you wanted to get out quickly or an urgent message.

Here, I think we have the same idea that Habakkuk is to give a message to a herald. He's supposed to write it down, give it to the message, and the herald is to take that message throughout Judah proclaiming about God's judgment.

Remember, God's judgment is at hand. The Chaldeans are coming soon. So this is why the message needs to get out urgently. Next in verse 3, we come to the timing of the vision.

[16 : 19] Verse 3 reminds us that the timing is important to God. Verse 3 says, For 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 can be tempting when we read the prophets to skip over time references, saying something like, oh, that's interesting, but what is in this text for me here and now?

Or we might even pay attention to them in our heart, but in our hearts say, well, this text obviously doesn't have any merit for study since it's talking about things that will happen later down the line, so I'll just move on.

The prophets oftentimes speak about the timing of their prophecies if you pay attention, which is really important when you study the prophets to look for timing elements so we don't take the meaning of the prophets and put it towards times that weren't meant to be.

Just as the apostle Paul acknowledged, all scripture is God-breathed and profitable. Scripture can speak about the future and still be relevant for today as this passage shows.

[17 : 39] The final judgment of the wicked, which Yahweh is about to pronounce in the rest of chapter 2, will not take place until the end of the ages. So I take this to be a final judgment, God's final judgment that hasn't happened yet, but is still in the future.

This passage is the introduction to a vision which speaks about God's future judgment of the wicked, which will both bring comfort to those living in a righteous life now and during Habakkuk's time, and condemn those whose lives are not upright.

Habakkuk's first cry to God in chapter 1 is, how long? In verse 2. How long?

He has an issue with God's timing of judging wickedness. He says, O Lord, how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear? The third verse of chapter 2, which we just read, God's second reply, is an assurance of the timing of this vision.

It will happen and it's still going to happen. He says, For still the vision awaits its appointed time. God assures Habakkuk that this vision, which he is to make plain, is waiting for something, waiting for the time that God has appointed for it.

[19 : 05] It's a specific time in the coming days when it will be fulfilled. This should be a reminder to us that though we pray often and we pray hard, that God's justice would be met out, that God would see the wickedness in the world right now and that he would do something, that our prayers won't go unanswered ultimately.

Even if God delays in his answer, it is coming. If he says it, it will happen exactly as he says it and exactly when he is appointed it to be.

We may pray for justice, for the setting right of all things, for the preservation of the righteous through hard times, but the answer might not come for a while.

So have endurance in your prayers. God pays attention and he will not forget. His timing is often different than what we would wish for, but it's the perfect timing.

Turning back to the text, this next phrase is particularly interesting and you may be tempted to just skip over it like many phrases in the prophets or scratch your heads and look confused.

[20 : 18] He says in verse 3, it hastens to the end. It will not lie. This is one of the critical points in this, in this passage and I think it points to the timing of the past, of this vision.

The translation is a little strange and it's not really unified amongst the commentators what it means by hasten. Some translations use the word breathes or it runs to the end.

The word in the Hebrew literally means breathes breathes and there's other passages where, especially in the Proverbs and in the Psalms, where it is used for someone who breathes or someone who speaks.

Some commentators think that God is referring to the goal of the vision, that the vision is, as it were, fast approaching its intended goal, that this quality of breathing is like someone panting, someone running, which is why the ESV translates as hastening.

It hastens to the end. Yet, when we look at the use of this, the parallelism in this verse, it seems better to understand this statement to be referring to the timing of the vision and not its hastening to the end.

[21 : 49] The Prophets were good writers and they often used parallelism to connect or contrast or continue the ideas they were communicating. Basically, in the Prophets oftentimes and in the Psalms, you'll see parallelism where the first line will continue on in the same idea on the second line or the first line will contrast the second line or the second line will build upon the first line.

I think this second line, it hastens to the end. It will not lie. Those two lines, it hastens to the end.

It will not lie. I think those two parallel each other. The ESV translates the Hebrew here, hasten.

But I think another way it could be translated is proclaims or speaks about. If we swap the words out here, it would say, the text would read, it speaks about the end, it does not lie.

So the vision, it speaks about the end, it does not lie. Let me read a couple of the other verses where this word is used. And the reason I'm stressing this is because I think it's really key to Habakkuk's argument.

[23 : 12] So in Proverbs 6, 19, we read, there are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him. The last one in the list is a false witness who breathes out lies, someone who speaks lies.

Proverbs 12, 17 says, whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit, using the same word for speaking.

Proverbs 19, 9, a false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will perish, or someone who speaks lies.

Speech is a form of breathing, so I think it's a legitimate way to translate this, to speak. Also, as we noted, the parallelism of this verse, the next line says, it will not lie.

Lying is a quality of speech, not a quality of hastening. He is assuring Habakkuk of the truth of what will be said about the end. Thus, the end is what is being spoken about, the end of the ages, the end times when God will judge the righteous and the wicked.

[24 : 27] This will be when Christ returns and judges both the living and the dead. Then justice will be truly met out, both for the wicked and the righteous.

And if you go on into chapter 2, you can look through Habakkuk's, this vision that God gives Habakkuk, this message. And if you pay attention to certain phrases in it, you realize that God is speaking about a future time.

He's not talking about a time that has happened in our past. And so that's why this vision is speaking about the end. Habakkuk's concern is the timing of God's justice.

And this is more proof about that Habakkuk is concerned about the timing. Look down at chapter 1, verse 2 of Habakkuk. You read, Oh Lord, how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear?

Or cry to you violence and you will not save? He's seeing God's timing is a lot longer than he wishes it would be.

[25 : 36] He knows that God is just and that he will not let iniquity go unpunished. But he is confused as to why it has taken God so long to serve justice to those who deserve it and save the righteous.

Also, if you turn to the end of the book at chapter 3, verse 16, the prophet will say this, and this is after he has heard God's words and this hymn is a hymn of praise to God.

He says, I hear and my body trembles. My lips quiver at the sound. My rottenness enters into my bones. My legs tremble beneath me. And here it is.

Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. At the beginning of the book, the prophet is anxiously questioning the timing of God's justice.

Something has changed in his attitude by the end. He has realized that God's timing is different than his own. Timing is a large part in the book of Habakkuk, which is why God addresses it here in verse 3.

[26 : 45] The people of Israel would go into captivity, but God's justice would not be forgotten.

And then we come to a familiar verse for some of us, but not because we've read Habakkuk so many times, but because it shows up in the New Testament several times.

Verse 4, Behold, his soul is puffed up. It is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith. God, Habakkuk has concerns about people and particularly about the righteous.

Early in the book, in both of his complaints to God, he mentions the righteous and how they're being overrun by the wicked. He has questioned the justice of God. How could God watch as the wicked prosper and overran those who are righteous in Israel?

How could God use a wicked and perverse nation, a nation far worse than Israel, to judge God's covenant people? Look back in chapter 1, verse 13.

[27 : 58] This is what Habakkuk says to God. You who are of pure 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?

This is the question that is on Habakkuk's mind. Here, God answers that question in verse 4. You see, God is concerned with every little part of life from conception to death.

He does watch over the righteous and the unrighteous, and nothing goes idly under His watchful eye. The term righteous or righteous one is used three times in the book of Habakkuk.

Once in Habakkuk's first complaint, once in his second complaint, and here in God's second reply. In my Bible, I take, when I see words repeated like this, I take my pencil and I circle them.

And it helps me keep track of different themes in different books. And I would encourage you to take your pencil and just circle the word righteous when you see it in Habakkuk, because that's a key concern of Habakkuk's.

[29 : 19] look again at verse 4. The NIV translation reads, See, the enemy is puffed up.

His desires are not upright, but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness. So as I said, two individuals are focused on and contrasted here. Behold, it's kind of an old and awkward word, but it's just a focus marker pointing to the reader to the person whom the author wants to focus on.

It's like saying, See, look, this is the proud person. That's what God is saying. He's highlighting this proud person that Habakkuk, that he's talking to Habakkuk about.

How does God describe the proud person? His soul is not right or upright. People who are upright are those who are walking with the Lord, whose lives are characterized by right decisions and right actions, who listen to God's word.

Job is one example of an upright person in the Bible. Job was a man described by God as blameless and upright. To be not upright is the opposite of upright.

[30 : 47] That sounds kind of redundant, but it's true. This person's life is characterized, this person who is not upright is characterized by corruption, by lack of love for God, by disobedience, by disdain for God's law, either actively or passively.

This person is impudent or puffed up. He's proud. He has evaluated his life and found himself to be the master of it. When someone has displaced God from the throne of his or her heart, they are not upright.

Titus 2, 11 through 12 says, For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Uprightness is a characteristic of those who have been saved, those who are characterized not by being upright, are those who are not in a right relationship with God.

So we should ask who God could be referring to in this passage. Remember earlier in the book that God has described the coming of the Babylonians, who he refers to as the Chaldeans.

[32 : 17] He describes them in chapter 1, verse 11 as guilty men whose might is their God. And then in Habakkuk's second reply, Habakkuk describes this man who goes out and he throws a net into the sea or throws a hook into the sea and he pulls up all kinds of fish.

He's describing the Chaldeans, he's describing the Babylonians. He throws out, he catches all kinds of fish, which are the nations that the Babylonians are taking over. And then he looks at the net and says, wow, you're such a great net.

And he starts bowing down to the net, he starts worshipping the net. The net represents his strength, his own might. The Babylonians were characteristic of worshipping their own might.

Remember, if you look in the book of Daniel, you have Nebuchadnezzar looking at Babylon and he says, isn't this Babylon which I have built?

He was a very proud man and God humbled him. But the Babylonians were characteristic of looking at their accomplishments as purely their accomplishments and not giving God the glory.

[33 : 36] They worshipped their own might. And when we don't give God the right recognition of even our own strength, our own strength is not our own.

When we don't recognize that God has given us our strength, we are in the same error that the Chaldeans were, the Babylonians were. So returning back to the text, if you look at the other ways God has described the Chaldeans, I already talked about that.

Another candidate though might be the wicked person that is described in 1.4 who surrounds the wicked. This is the wicked in Judah specifically.

I think that both of these could fit into the description of someone who is proud that God's talking about here, who is not upright before God. After all, not everyone in Israel were children of faith.

There were many who were proud and disregarded God's law, especially in Habakkuk's day. Ultimately, God seems to be referring to the Babylonians since they are whom Habakkuk had mentioned in his second complaint and whom God will refer to in the rest of chapter 2.

[34 : 57] But it is a warning to those in Israel who are proud and lifted up, whose hearts are not upright. They could be considered proud and upright and not upright and would suffer the same judgment as the Chaldeans would.

But God contrasts this person with one who is righteous. So who is this righteous person? The one option is that God could be referring to the coming Messiah.

After all, Jesus is the only one who can truly be called the righteous one by his own inherent righteousness. None of us can call ourselves righteous because we earned it.

Not even Abraham could be considered righteous on his own works. It was a righteousness that was given to him. Stephen calls Jesus the righteous one in his speech before the Jewish council in Acts 7.

And both Peter and Paul also refer to him in the same way as the righteous one. While it could be that the Lord has the Messiah in view here, and I know good people who believe that and hold that position, remember that Habakkuk has already mentioned the righteous twice already in his complaints to the Lord.

- [36 : 23] These refer to righteous Israelites, ordinary men and women in a wicked generation who chose to obey God rather than go the way of the crowd. These are part of the remnant of those Israelites who were children of faith.

So in light of these early references, I take this reference of the righteous one, the righteous one who will live by his faith, to be a reference to any Israelite who was walking a righteous life in obedience to God.

Habakkuk's question concerning the righteous is here answered. Remember, he was very concerned about why the righteous was being surrounded, why the righteous would be taken over by the Babylonians.

And here God says, the righteous one will live by his faith or his faithfulness. Therefore, we do not understand that this righteous one is someone who has a righteousness of his own works.

This is someone who has a righteousness because he has believed what God has said, and God has counted it to him as righteous, just like he did to Abraham. faith is the preserving factor in a righteous person's life.

- [37 : 44] Faith is submission to God. Faith accepts all that God has said to be true and lets it change him or her. It is more than just conceptual in the mind.

Faith is transformational. The end of faith is the preservation of the soul. The Lord is saying that even though immediate judgment is coming, the way someone truly preserves his or her soul is through a life of faith.

God has in mind a bigger picture than the immediate circumstances that people find themselves in. Though the righteous in Habakkuk's day were being crushed and swallowed up by injustice, their faithfulness was not in vain.

Their faith would count for something. faith is an investment beyond the here and now. When justice is finally dealt out in the end, the faith of the righteous person will preserve his soul beyond the grave.

And that's why I take the little phrase, shall live. The righteous shall live by his faith. It's that preserving factor in a person's life.

- [38 : 58] life. This phrase, the righteous shall live by his faith, is quoted three times in the New Testament. And we'll look at each one of those. And each time, it's consistent in the way it is used here.

So first, if you want to turn to Galatians 3.11, Paul quotes this verse. Galatians 3.11. Galatians is probably the first letter of Paul.

And he's arguing to the Galatians that the law of Moses has no salvific merit, that we can't be saved by keeping the law.

So he says here in Galatians 3.11, now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law. For, and here he quotes the verse in Habakkuk, the righteous shall live by faith.

So no one can be justified by God's law, no matter how many commandments he keeps. It's only through faith that someone can be justified.

- [40 : 20] Paul is making the argument that no one can become righteous by works of the law. A righteous standing before God comes only through a life of faith. And to support this, he goes back to the Old Testament to Habakkuk.

Turn over to Romans 1.16 and 17, and this one will be a lot more familiar to most of us. And this was actually the verse that got me interested in Habakkuk 2.4.

We were studying Romans last year, and Emma and I actually took the class together, which was really fun. Dr. Daniel Davey, our president, was teaching it, and I wondered, well, who is this righteous person?

Why does Paul quote it here? Which is why I went back to Habakkuk, which is a good thing to do. If you see an Old Testament quote in the New Testament, go back into the Old Testament and see how it was used.

And you'll see that the New Testament writers use the Old Testament often to support their points, as Paul does here. Paul says in Romans 1.16, I'm actually going to read through 18, for I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

[41 : 37] For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Here again, the faith is the preserving factor in someone's life. Someone's not justified, someone does not earn a right standing before God through the law.

Someone is given a right standing before God, a justified standing through faith. Lastly, let's turn to Hebrews chapter 10, verses 37 through 39.

This is the third quotation of Habakkuk 2.4 in the New Testament. And this one is a little different in the wording.

It's closer to the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which is called the Septuagint. So that could have been what the author of Hebrews was using when he penned his letter.

[42 : 59] He says in chapter 10 of Hebrews, 10.37 through 39, for you have need of endurance. Endurance is the key of Hebrews.

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.

But, and he quotes Habakkuk 2.4, In all three passages, faith is the preserving element for those who are called righteous by God.

God has not forgotten the righteous person. He's not forgotten his people. Despite contrary signs in Habakkuk's day, those who are righteous would be the ones to live, while those who were puffed up with pride would receive the coming judgment of God.

The judgment of God is certain. And it's good for us to take these Old Testament passages and go through them and remind ourselves about the faithfulness of God and the justice of God.

[44 : 29] God is consistent in the New Testament and the Old Testament. He says something and he will do it. Only those of faith will ultimately live.

And that's true in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Faith, no one comes to God except through faith. One of my favorite verses in the New Testament is Romans 10, 17.

So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. We cannot know God except through faith. We cannot know a righteous standing except through faith.

So as we wrap up today in conclusion this text is very relevant for us today. We can read Old Testament prophets and often forget that they have relevance for us today or we can read them and apply them to our lives in an allegorical way but I don't think we need to do that.

God's message was urgent for the nation of Israel and it's still urgent for people today. Habakkuk speaks of a coming time when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

[45 : 53] That's in chapter 2 verse 14. Woe to those who do not have a righteous standing before the Lord in that day. There are two things that we should take away with us today from this text.

First, while at times it can seem that the wicked are thriving in this life, God reminds us that there is an appointed time coming when he will balance the scales of justice.

As he said to Habakkuk, if it seems slow, wait for it. Endure, my brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. As the author of Hebrews says to his congregation, you have need of endurance so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised.

Second, only through faith will someone preserve his or her soul to eternal life. Only through faith in Jesus Christ will someone be counted as righteous. The saints of the Old Testament looked forward to Jesus Christ.

We look back at Jesus Christ, the finished sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who paid for our sins on the cross. only by faith in Jesus Christ can a sinner change his standing before a holy God.

[47 : 14] We remind ourselves of what the Lord Jesus did on that tree, how he died for our sins, offering himself as the perfect atoning sacrifice that we might be the righteousness of God.

As Paul said in Romans 3, 21 through 22, but now the righteousness of God has been manifest apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe God.

Praise God for that. If you want to turn to chapter 3 of Habakkuk, I want to end this way, reading the end of Habakkuk, verses 16 through 19.

Pay attention to how Habakkuk has changed what he's saying. He's no longer crying out, where is your justice, God? How long, O God?

Listen to what Habakkuk says. I hear in my body trembles, my lips quiver at the sound, rottenness enters into my bones. My legs tremble beneath me, yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.

[48 : 28] Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and the field yields no food. The flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls.

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation. Yahweh, the Lord, is my strength. He makes my feet like the deer's.

He makes me tread on my high places to the choir master with stringed instruments. Let's pray. Father God, we are thankful today for your word and the encouragement that it brings.

Lord, I'm thankful for Habakkuk and his faithfulness to you. Lord, I'm thankful that you have provided a sacrifice for us, that those who by faith believe in you preserve their souls, that it's a work done by you, that you initiated it, you sustain it, and you will complete it in the end.

Lord, I'm thankful that you do not let wickedness go unpunished, but I'm so thankful for your grace, Lord. I pray for this congregation, Lord, that you would bless them, bless their pastor, bring him back safely to them, and help us to walk by faith this week in the strength that your word brings.

[49 : 59] We love you, Lord, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.