

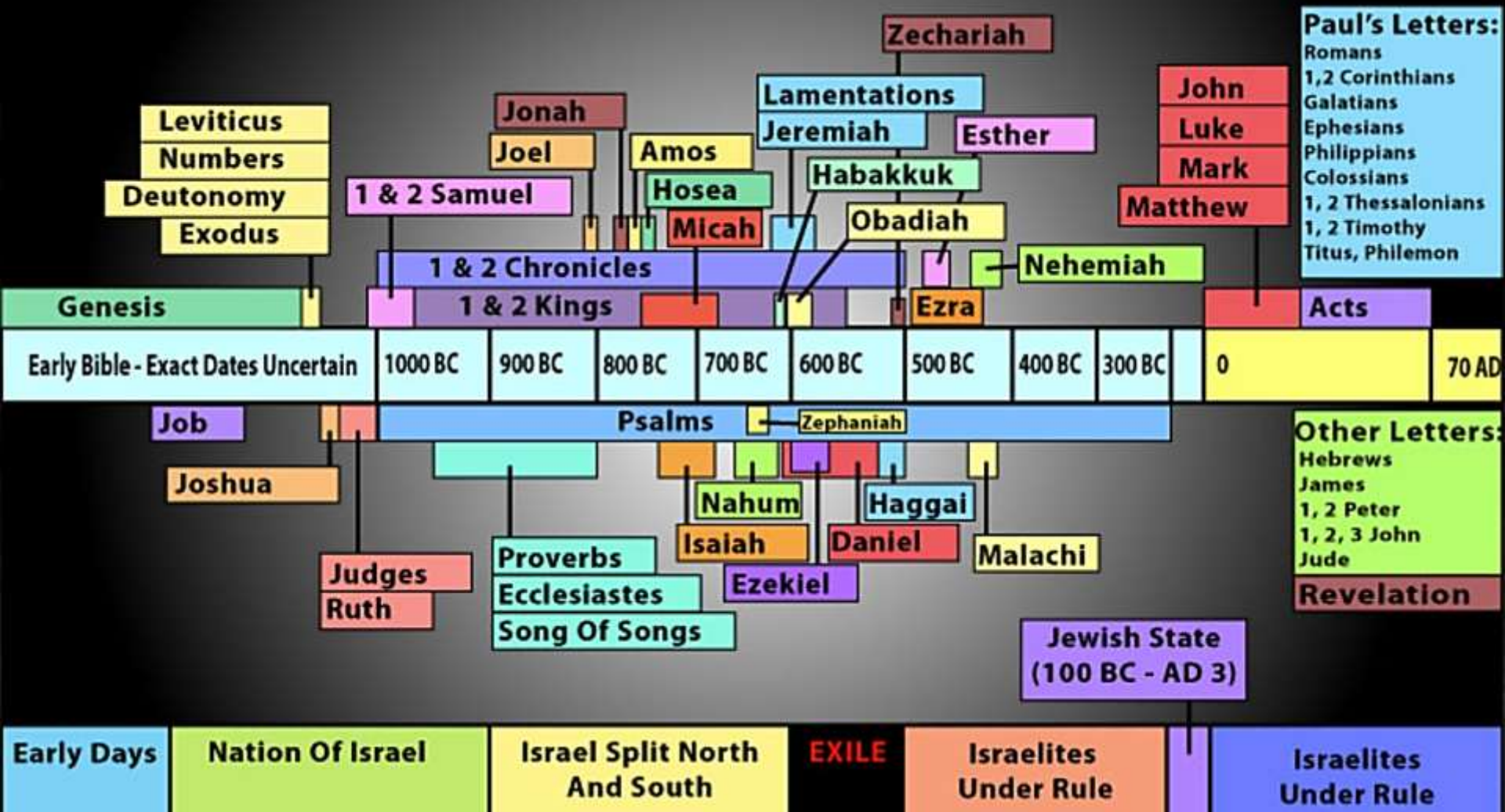


THE BOOK OF

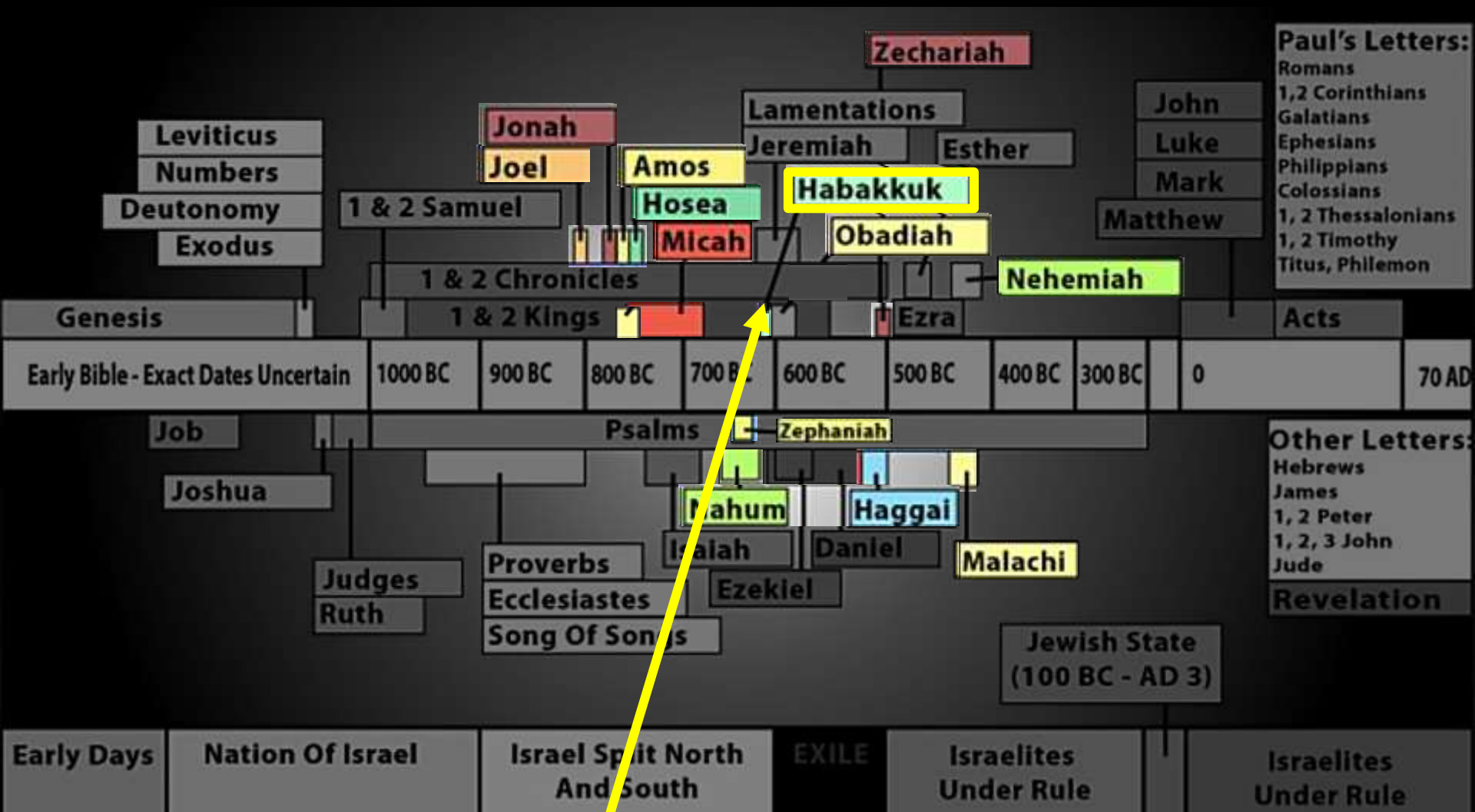
Habakkuk

A verse by verse study

Chronology of the Bible Books



Ministry of the Minor Prophets



Habakkuk: c.612 - 606 B.C.

Habakkuk

- *“Habakkuk, the 8th of the Minor Prophets, occupies a special place. For he does not speak to men under God's commission as do the other prophets, but he speaks about his people and their enemies the Chaldeans to God” - Arend Remmers*
- He does not complain about God, but to God.

Habakkuk

- *“When Habakkuk only looked at his circumstances, he was bewildered and confused (1:3). When he waited for God and listened to his word, he rejoiced in song (3:18-19). The real purpose of religion is not to have the doubts removed, but to help us be sure of God's control of our lives and our world. – John Waddey*

Habakkuk

- Habakkuk is the epitome of the question '*why God do you allow...*'
- This book is Habakkuk's summary of his cry to God
- The conclusion?
- Simply because God is God!

*“God is God and I am not
I can only see a part of the picture He's painting
God is God and I am man
So I'll never understand it all
For only God is God”*

- Steven Curtis Chapman

Habakkuk

- Habakkuk's name means to 'wrestle'
 - Some transliterate as 'embracer'
- Most likely a Levite & musician – 3:19
- A prophet
 - only he Zechariah and Haggai give themselves this title
- His contemporaries were Jeremiah, Huldah and Zephaniah
 - *“Habakkuk reflects a familiarity with the writings of Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah”.*
- Rabbinic tradition says he was the son of the Shunammite woman raised from the dead by Elisha
 - 2 Kings 4:17-37

Habakkuk

- *"He was a philosopher, earnest and candid...sensitive, speculative; the suppliant among the prophets"* - George Robinson
- *"He represents pessimism or despair as it never was represented before, and on the other (hand) he rises to heights of faith which even David did not attain"* - Joseph Parker
- As was Thomas among the apostles, so was Habakkuk among the prophets.
- In him we see the conflict of a doubting mind with a believing heart.

Habakkuk

- He witnessed Josiah's great reform movement in Judah and its fading effect.
- He heard with great sorrow of the death of King Josiah at Megiddo at the hands of Pharaoh Necho.
- He heard the report of the fall of mighty Nineveh in 612 B.C.
 - For a short while, Pharaoh Necho controlled all the lands west of the Euphrates.
- Babylon, formerly a tributary of Assyria, was rapidly rising to prominence under Nabopolassar.
 - His son, Nebuchadnezzar, was a brilliant young general in his father's army.

Habakkuk

- The evil sons of Josiah - Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim - reigned in Judah.
- Social conditions in Judah were deplorable (1:2-4):
 - 1. Lawlessness and tyranny were rife,
 - 2. Strife and contention was the norm.
 - 3. Righteous people were oppressed, especially the poor.
 - 4. Many lived in open, flagrant sin.
 - 5. Idolatry flourished.
- See 2 Kings 23:29-37 for more information.

Habakkuk - Overview

- Habakkuk's complaint 1:1-4
 - Why do the unrighteous prosper in Israel?
- God's response 1:5-11
 - The Babylonian's are coming to bring judgment!
 - But they themselves will not escape my wrath!
- Habakkuk's question 1:12-17
 - I kinda' trust You... You're just right? ...
 - But are You sure this is a good idea?
- God's response Ch 2
 - This is why I am bringing judgment... and yes...
 - It is severe because of Israel's iniquity
- His anthem of praise Ch 3



THE BOOK OF

Habakkuk

Chapter 1

1 The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.
2 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 1:1-2

- The burden... ‘the load’
 - Indicates a heavy weight
- This weighed heavy on Habakkuk’s heart
- ‘How long...?’
 - How long will God cry, and we not hear?!
- All our tears are recorded:
 - “Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?” – Psalm 56:8
- “Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?” – Isaiah 50:2

³ 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.

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

Habakkuk 1:3-4

- Habakkuk's burden is not merely for his own skin...
- ...but also for the nation who had forgotten God's Law, been overcome with wickedness and injustice

Necessary Judgment

- *They pay no attention to [the Law] it has lost all its vigour, its restraining and correcting power, it is not executed; right judgment is never pronounced; and the poor righteous man complains in vain that he is grievously oppressed by the wicked, and by those in power and authority. That the utmost depravity prevailed in the land of Judah is evident from these verses; and can we wonder, then, that God poured out such signal judgments upon them? When judgment doth not proceed from the seat of judgment upon earth, it will infallibly go forth from the throne of judgment in heaven.*

– Adam Clarke

- God now responds:

5 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

- God is outside of time, we are not!
- His ways and thoughts are above ours
- So why do we complain when we don't understand?
- Paul quotes this verse in Acts 13:41 alluding to the completed work of Christ

6 For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs.

Habakkuk 1:6

- Chaldeans = Babylonians
- Note that God will raise them up
- *“the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men”* Dan 4:17

7 They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves.

8 Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.

Habakkuk 1:7-8

9 They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand.

10 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.

11 Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god.

Habakkuk 1:9-11

- **Pride comes before a fall!**

The Infinite God

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

8 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9

- Habakkuk, now humbled, speaks again:
- “Why would You use the Chaldeans?”

¹² 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.

¹³ Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

14 And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them?

15 They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad.

16 Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.

17 Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?

Habakkuk 1:14-17



THE BOOK OF

Habakkuk

Chapter 2

¹ I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd.

Habakkuk 2:1

- The hardest lesson to learn...
- Wait!
- We are so busy, everything is instant, we want our answers now!
- God is never in a hurry!
- He is seldom early, but never late!
- Consider the countless examples in scripture of individuals who had to wait...
- Did God every not 'turn up' at the appointed time?



The Book of 1st Samuel

Chapter 13

1 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

2 Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

3 And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

4 And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

1 Samuel 13:3-4

5 And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven.

6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

7 And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

1 Samuel 13:10

11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

Lessons from Saul's Failure

- What prompted Saul to disobey?
- Fear!
- Fear that he did not have the natural resources to cope with the situation
- Fear that he had lost credibility and respect
- Fear he had run out of time

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Matthew 6:25

Don't Worry!

“Take no thought for your life.” “Be careful about one thing only,” says our Lord—“your relationship to Me.” Common sense shouts loud and says—“That is absurd, I must consider how I am going to live, I must consider what I am going to eat and drink.” Jesus says you must not.

- Oswald Chambers,

Don't Worry!

“Beware of allowing the thought that this statement is made by One Who does not understand our particular circumstances. Jesus Christ knows our circumstances better than we do, and He says we must not think about these things so as to make them the one concern of our life. Whenever there is competition, be sure that you put your relationship to God first”

- Oswald Chambers,

² And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

³ For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Habakkuk 2:2-3

*God is God and I am not, I can only see a part of the picture
He's painting*

*God is God and I am man, so I'll never understand it all
For only God is God*

- Steven Curtis Chapman

To know this, is what faith is all about, and through the trial and the pain Habakkuk was enduring, God declares to him:

4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him:

Habakkuk 2:4

- That is, Nebuchadnezzar's soul was not upright
- God here was pronouncing judgment on Babylon

4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Habakkuk 2:4

- Not by knowledge and understanding...
- not by resolve or determination...
- ...but by faith.
- Not faith in faith, not merely hoping things will turn out ok,
- not wishful thinking, and certainly not a blind leap in the dark,
- but an unshakable faith in the person of God; that God is who He says He is.

4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Habakkuk 2:4

- He is good Psalm 119:68
- and He is faithful 2 Tim 3:13
- He does keep His promises 2 Cor 1:20
- He is unchanging Heb 13:8
- He really is working all things together for good for those who love Him! Rom 8:28

The Just Shall Live by Faith

- Though we may not see what God is doing or why, it is the faith that, like Job, says:
 - "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him!" (Job 13:15).
- Though storms may come, though we may lose everything we 'once held dear', it is the faith that says:
 - "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21).
- Not by knowledge and understanding, not by resolve or determination, but by faith.

The Just Shall Live by Faith

- This verse was the touchstone of the reformation in Europe
- Martin Luther tried everything he knew to live a holy and pious life
- However, upon reading Habakkuk 2:4 suddenly realised that to be 'just',
 - i.e. to be counted as 'justified' before a holy God,
- ...did not require endless self-mortification, penance or observance of rituals, it simply required faith...
- faith in the completed work of Jesus on the cross.

The Just Shall Live by Faith

- Christ paid it all, there was nothing that could be added by even the most devout lifestyle.
- Salvation is a gift, it cannot be earned, it is received by faith.
- **The just** (Romans 1:17)
 - those who are counted as justified and right before God
- **shall live** (Galatians 3:11)
 - that is, their way of living will be...
- **by faith** (Hebrews 10:39)
 - by an unshakable trust in the person of Jesus Christ who will never leave them or forsake them, who is the resurrection and the life, the same yesterday, today and forever, the great I AM, the beginning and the end, the Way, the Truth and the Life!

The Just Shall Live by Faith

- If Jesus is all this (and He is!), trusting Him to deliver us, provide for us, protect us, and bring us safe to glory should be the easiest thing in the world!
- Oswald Chambers once said: *"Suppose God is the God you know Him to be when you are nearest to Him — what an impertinence worry is!"*

The Just Shall Live by Faith

- Habakkuk reminds us it's ok to question God.
 - God knows our weaknesses.
- Habakkuk asks God 'How long'...
 - we often ask the same question.
- But while you are waiting for the answer, (that is sure to come), remember that God asks the same question of you!
- See: Exodus 16:28 / Numbers 14:11 / Joshua 18:3 / 1 Kings 18:21



THE BOOK OF

Habakkuk

To be continued...



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