

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Habakkuk 2:1-5; 3:17-19

English Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, October 5, 2014

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, October 5, 2014**, is from **Habakkuk 2:1-5; 3:17-19**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the [*International Bible Lessons Commentary*](#) website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is usually posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Habakkuk 2:1-5; 3:17-19

(Habakkuk 2:1) I will take my stand at my watchpost 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.

Very little is known about the prophet Habakkuk. Some scholars believe he might have been a contemporary of Jeremiah. His message and experience can apply to any time and place when uncertainties prevail in the world regarding sickness and health, economic uncertainty and personal safety, war and peace. The believer can go to God in prayer as the prophet Habakkuk did to seek the reason for their troubles and affirm their faith in God in spite of their dire and uncertain circumstances.

(Habakkuk 2:2) And the LORD answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.

God can reveal His answer personally as He did to Habakkuk; however, God will often send a messenger with His answer for many people, as God did through Habakkuk. God told Habakkuk to write His answer so large on a tablet that someone running past, perhaps fleeing from an enemy, could read it without pausing to stop. The answer God gave Habakkuk has become part of our Bible as part of God’s answer in times of trouble.

(Habakkuk 2:3) 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.

The end could apply to the end of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New Covenant, or to the end of Jerusalem in the time of the Babylonians or later to the time when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, or to the time before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ or to some other end of a culture or society or country. Sometimes we must wait for God to fulfill His promises, and we are told to wait because He surely will fulfill them. We need to take God's perspective and from God's perspective He will not delay.

(Habakkuk 2:4) “Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

All this-worldly accomplishments and endeavors, all injustices and times of oppression will end someday. The proud who survey the godless works of their hands in rebellion against God will come to an end according to God's perfect timing. Their spirit is one of selfishness and self-promotion. The righteous will live by their faith in God that leads them to obey God no matter the possible consequences and suffering to themselves personally. The righteousness of the faithful results from God's grace and their trust in God's steadfast love and faithfulness.

(Habakkuk 2:5) “Moreover, wine is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest. His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations and collects as his own all peoples.”

The love of money, the desire to acquire more and more money or property or power over others is deceiving and treacherous to the self-centered and selfish; and such people can deceive or entrap the innocent believer who will cry out to God for justice and freedom. The godless wealthy never have enough of the things of this world to satisfy them, and they grasp for more and more of those things that will never satisfy. The most wealthy and powerful godless people will unite in an effort to bring all the nations and people of the earth under their power so they can enslave them and increase their wealth, power, and security; such was the case with the Babylonians, the Romans, some political movements, and will be the case before Jesus Christ comes again.

(Habakkuk 3:17) Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,

Habakkuk recorded the right faith response to God when world history or personal problems seem to be the very worst. Though in abject poverty because of what had happened around him and to him when God had to punish Judah for their idolatry,

Habakkuk resolved to keep believing in God and trusting God as He revealed himself in the sacred writings Habakkuk knew, in the history of Israel, and in the comfort God gave him personally.

(Habakkuk 3:18) yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

No matter how tough the times, Habakkuk resolved not only to keep believing in the true God of the universe, he would do more! He would rejoice in God and exult in the fact that God was his Savior and would be his salvation – if not in his personal lifetime on earth, then after his death, because he trusted in God who had promised to send the Redeemer Messiah into the world. Habakkuk knew the Messiah would come someday, and He trusted in God and His promises no matter what was happening around him.

(Habakkuk 3:19) GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.

Rather than wallow in hopeless despair over his circumstances, because Habakkuk believed in the LORD, God gave Habakkuk strength beyond what he needed. God gave Habakkuk the spiritual strength to soar above his problems and spend time praising God instead of remaining in the dark valley where he found himself. He knew the words of the psalmist, who before him knew what Habakkuk had come to believe: “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want” (see Psalm 23). These last verses of Habakkuk could be sung, and sung by a congregation to memorize in preparation for troubled times.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why do you think God wanted Habakkuk to write and make plain the vision He gave him?
2. When did God say the vision would be fulfilled?
3. What can be the personal experience of someone who is wealthy who is also proud and arrogant?
4. How does a righteous person live? Describe what that means to you.
5. What did Habakkuk say he would do if he became poor and totally unable to find food to eat because life had gotten so bad where he was?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

— © Copyright 2014 by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr. Permission Granted for Not for Profit Use.