

When Joseph was very near the end of his life, he gave critically important instructions that would chart the course of his family for hundreds, even thousands, of years. In a bold act of faith, Joseph did something even greater than anything he had done during his entire life.

Joseph understood the importance of the covenant God had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob regarding the land of Canaan. Many actions of integrity could be cited as examples of his solid faith in God. Yet of all the events in his life, this sole action of his faith is what the Holy Spirit chose to record regarding the great faith of Joseph who was very concerned about his bones. This was cited as the most meritorious act of faith.

Hall Of Faith: "The Bones of belief" Heb. 11:22 "By faith Joseph, when he died, (1) made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and (2) gave commandment concerning his bones."

Question: What commandment concerned his bones?

The New Testament is the commentary on the Old Testament. Genesis 50 explains Hebrews 11.

Genesis 50:22-26 Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons; also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees. Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob." Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here." So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Wiersbe: Unless the truth we hear moves from the head into the heart, written there by the Spirit, and then to the will, we have not really learned the Word or been blessed by it. The blessing comes not in hearing the Word, but in DOING the Word.

I. How To Live Confidently

A. Faith Remembers The Unbreakable Promises Of God

Key Verse: 24 "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

1. Joseph, having received the same prophetic promise as his father, grandfather and great-grandfather, KNEW His Family Would Not Stay In Egypt.

Note: Divine Providence and the Protecting Hand Of God had brought them to Egypt.

Question: How Did Joseph KNOW God would bring them out? Promise ~300 yrs. earlier

Gen. 15:13-14 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. [Joseph's Instructions: Take Me With You!]

Adrian Rogers: Joseph said, "I wouldn't be caught dead here."

1. Joseph's request gives assurance these descendants will leave Egypt.
2. Joseph BELIEVED God's promise regarding the inheritance. His instructions to carry his bones to the Promised Land are distinguished by God as the greatest indication of Joseph's faith. His bones rest as a silent reminder and a perpetual testimony to the faithfulness of God's abiding promise to Israel.

Consider: Faith is not a shallow emotion we work up by ourselves. It is not an optimistic "hope-so" attitude. True faith is grounded on the infallible Word of God.

Root of Joseph's faith = A Promise From Almighty God. I believe it and I am to act on it.

He had saturated his mind and will in the promises and word of God.

Rom. 10:17 Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

Faith is getting a promise from the Word of God and "reckoning" it to be true.

Heb. 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for

Hope = glorious assurance based on the Word of God. 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus = Blessed Hope

John 14:3 If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself.

Heb. 6:19 Our Hope is like an Anchor - Hope is the anchor of the soul.

Adrian Rogers: Your faith will not exceed your love, knowledge and understanding of the Word of God.

Dwight L Moody: The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge. It was given to change our lives. Moody said he prayed and prayed for faith. Then he found Romans 10:17. He stopped praying for faith and began to saturate himself in the Word of God. The Faith Came!

Joseph said: You are surely coming out! How did Joseph know after centuries they would be coming out? His faith is rooted in the Word of God and resting in the unbreakable promises of God. True faith always leads to obedient actions.

B. Faith Relies On The Unshakeable Power Of God - Gen. 50:24

1. Faith displayed contrary to evidence

a. When Joseph said this, there was no reason they should leave. They have it made in Egypt. They are in a place of favor and in comfortable circumstances.

2. His faith was not shaken because of fickle emotions. Don't base our faith on how we feel about the situation.

Consider: It is remarkable that Joseph had any faith at all.

1. He had lived apart from his family for many years.

2. A powerful false religion in Egypt surrounded him.

3. There was nobody in Egypt we know of who could encourage his faith.

4. If Joseph had resorted to excuses people use today for rejecting God's promises, he would have ended up a pagan.

5. His "believing" brothers had treated him cruelly.

6. God had allowed him to experience severe trials.

7. The people he helped forgot him in his hour of need.

Note: Joseph's faith, though tested, did not falter.

All he had to go on were his dreams, but he clung to the promises of God.

### C. Joseph's Faith Was Not Eroded by Long Delay

1. It had been ~300 years since God made that promise.

A. Joseph said take my bones with you!

Don't let circumstances, emotions or delay keep you from believing the Word of God.

"The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all."

God's Promises Are Not Eroded Away By Time, Emotion Or By Circumstances!

Do you believe God has the power to do what He says He will do?

Joseph said: God will SURELY bring you out. Joseph had the promise & he knew the Power.

D. Faith Results In The Unmistakable Peace Of God: Joseph has his children and grandchildren with him. No hint of panic! Stepping into glory in perfect peace!

Consider: Joseph's bones rest resolutely in the face of the hostility as a "clarion call of faith that resounds over those hills." They are a perpetual testimony to the faithfulness of God's promises to Israel.

1. His coffin in Egypt was a constant reminder to the Jewish people to have faith in God.

2. When their situation changed in Egypt and they found themselves slaves instead of resident aliens, they could look at this "box of bones" and be encouraged.

3. During their wilderness wanderings, as they carried this "box of bones" from place to place, Joseph ministered to them and urged them to trust God and never give up.

4. Even though Joseph was dead, his witness lived on.

Stand On The Unbreakable Promises Of God

Believe In The Unshakeable Power Of God

Long Delays Do Not Erode The Promises Of God

This Faith Results In The Unmistakable Peace Of God

Spurgeon: "Habakkuk truly was one who saw the promises afar off and was persuaded of them and embraced them. He took fast hold upon the goodness of the Lord and rested there."

The message of Habakkuk is unique; it records a conversation between the prophet and His Lord - God Almighty. It starts off quite high on the 'gloomy' scale (for difficult days ahead were foreseen by the prophet). He unburdens his soul to God - telling God his emotion when it seems God isn't listening - he tries to grasp the agonizing of his spirit over issues that seem to have no solution. In spite of things he couldn't understand, he embraces God.

He concludes his book with tremendous hope and expectation that fittingly backs up the central message of the text: "The just shall live by his faith".

### Habakkuk's 1<sup>st</sup> Complaint & God's Answer

O LORD, How long shall I cry, and You will not hear! I cry [shavah = Scream] out to you, "Violence!" yet You do not save. Why do you make me see iniquity, and cause me to look on wickedness? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises. Therefore, the law is ignored (paralyzed), and justice is never upheld. The wicked surround the righteous, therefore justice comes out perverted.

Habakkuk lived when Israelites had moved far from God and the principles on which their nation was founded. He stood in the midst of the decay of Israel and he cried against the sin of his generation but no one heard him and wickedness continued to increase. He saw his nation in decline and he was overwhelmed with frustration. As Habakkuk surveyed the world in which he lived, he saw unbelievable injustice, violence and inequality that never seemed to be judged. He sought God's help in life only to see days/months go by without anything being communicated back.

*God's answer - Prepare to be amazed!*

Habakkuk 1:5-11 Behold ye among the heathen. Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly astounded. For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, even if you were told. I am raising up the Babylonians (Chaldeans)..They all come bent on violence.

Note: Purpose of the invaders is to perpetrate VIOLENCE in the land.

God's reply is not one that Habakkuk had been expecting. Habakkuk thought that God was strangely silent and absent yet the truth was quite the opposite. The truth was that God was already raising up the nation of Babylon to come against Judah. Habakkuk was hoping God would send a revival to His people. [Hab. 3:2], judge the evil leaders and establish righteousness in the land. Then the nation would escape punishment; the people and the cities would be spared.

However, God had warned His people time and again, but they didn't listen. Prophet after prophet had declared the Word [II Chron. 36:14-21] only to be rejected. God had sent various natural calamities and military defeats, but the people wouldn't listen. Instead of repenting, the people hardened their hearts more and turned to the gods of the nations around them for help. They had tried God's longsuffering long enough and it was time for God to act.

Habakkuk's Response: Habakkuk 1:12-17 Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed [ordained] them to judge; And You, O Rock, have established [marked] them to correct.

This is who God is going to use? As he mulls this over our prophet struggles with 2 main issues:

- How could a pure, holy God, approve and use those that are wicked?
- How could God judge Judah using a nation that was more wicked than they?

### Habakkuk Waiting for a Reply from the Lord

Hab. 2:1 "I will stand my watch (resolutely waits) and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected.

❖ Habakkuk spoke of himself as if he were a sentry on guard duty.

❖ After hearing from the Lord, he will report the information to the people.

God has shown Habakkuk that He was not blind to the sins occurring in the world and that a time had been set aside in which judgment and recompense for these actions would be made.

Hab. 2:2-3 Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run. "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.

### The Vision: Coming of The Babylonians & Their Future Fall & Destruction

We know this prophecy has a "double fulfillment." In other words, ancient Babylon would be defeated, but future revived Babylon [Rev 17-18] would also be destroyed at the Second Coming of the Messiah. This truth from God had a radical impact on his thinking.

Hab. 2:4a "Behold the proud, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him."

To whom does this language apply? The one, or ones, who were seen in the vision, Hab. 1:5-11.

Habakkuk saw Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, immediately in the foreground of the vision.

This picture blends with the great ruler of the end time, namely, the Antichrist.

We will see him transformed from Worry to Worship.

Hab. 2:4b "But the just shall live by his faith."

### The Vision: Coming of The Babylonians & Their Future Fall & Destruction

❖ Put the message in writing in order to preserve it, "for the vision is yet for the appointed time." What is the "Appointed Time?"

Daniel 8 which speaks about the time of the end, sheds light on this subject.

Dan. 8:17, 19 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end." And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.

### The Vision: Coming of The Babylonians & Their Future Fall & Destruction

- ❖ The vision "hasteth toward the end." The nearer one comes to the concluding days of this dispensation, the events pick up speed.
- ❖ It hastens toward the goal. - The word hastens (puwach/puah - 06315) is literally "puffs" or "pants" which draws a great word picture, personifying God's fulfillment as a runner racing to the finish line, the final goal!
- ❖ Future & final destruction of Babylon; redemption & deliverance of God's people [Future Day Of Atonement]; Establish the Kingdom of Jesus Christ

### The Vision: Coming of The Babylonians & Their Future Fall & Destruction

- ❖ The vision is certain of fulfillment because it "shall not lie." For those in Judah about to experience the terrifying Babylonian invasion and Seventy Years of Captivity, this assurance of fulfillment should have been a great comfort [recorded for all to read].
- ❖ Their barbaric captors would themselves in God's appointed time suffer divine judgment!

### The Vision: Coming of The Babylonians & Their Future Fall & Destruction

- ❖ The source of the message is the "non-lying God." He gives His sure word (His guarantee) that what is written on the tablets will come to pass.
- ❖ God watches over His Word to perform it, to fulfill every promise and to carry out every threat. No word from God is without power (Luke 1:37).

### The Vision: Coming of The Babylonians & Their Future Fall & Destruction

- ❖ The Vision Carries: You Wait For It: It Will Surely Come; It will not delay
- ❖ Though things may appear to slow down, the vision is going to be fulfilled as given.
- ❖ As a watchman waiting, God gives him the sure promise that the evil Babylonians would be defeated.

I Kings 8:56 ...there hath not failed one word of all his good promise,...

Question: Can we see someone else in the vision? Yes

This fact is proved by an examination of Habakkuk 2:3-4, which is quoted in Hebrews 10:37-38, interpreted, and applied to the local situation of the Hebrews to whom the Book of Hebrews was written. [They were facing severe persecution.] The writer of Hebrews changes the wording somewhat and instead of talking about the vision of Habakkuk he speaks of the Messiah and His Coming. Habakkuk = vision = Historical Event; Hebrews = vision = Person, Jesus Christ Warren Wiersbe adds ... The revelation God gave was for a near time and about a future time. While the immediate application was to the end of the Babylonian Captivity, the writer of Hebrews interpreted it to refer also to the return of Jesus Christ.

Heb. 10:35-38a Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of endurance (patience), that after you have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. For yet a little while, HE who is coming will come, and will not tarry, Now the just shall live by faith...

Consider: A discouraged Jew in Babylonian exile might ask, "Will the Lord come and deliver us?" and the answer is, "Yes! Wait for him!" (Be amazed)

Some are asking: Is Jesus really coming again? Bible predicts people will have this attitude.

II Pet. 3:3-4, 8 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts And saying, 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.

Wiersbe: Along with the scoffers Peter wrote about in II Pet. 3:3-4, some readers might ask, "Where is the promise of His coming? God's reply is, "Wait for it! It will surely come!"

Consider: We wait for the fulfillment of the Word of the Lord pertaining to His return. We know the Lord completely fulfilled His Word to Habakkuk. Therefore, we can have assurance that He will fulfill His Word to us just as completely.

James 5:7-8 James tells us that persecution will end, and all wrongs will be made right at the Coming of the Lord. He adds that the Lord's return is "at hand;" it could occur at any time (it was always "at hand" - it was Imminent then [in the first century] and is still imminent in our day!). What was the effect of this truth?

It was to be the foundation that would result in "patience and strengthen" their hearts! Truth about the future is not ethereal but practical, for ultimately it should impact our present tense salvation = my sanctification!

Since we have been given such a sure word of prophecy, such an absolutely certain hope ("Blessed Hope" Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,)---- we can "stand on our guard posts" like Habakkuk.

As we by faith (Hab 2:4b) receive this truth, the Holy Spirit will take this sure word of prophecy and renew our minds, strengthen our inner man and transform us from glory to glory.

II Cor 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

One of the great values of prophecy is not to appeal to our curiosity but to stabilize our faith in difficult times. We can know that even though the times may be difficult, the trials will eventually give way to God's eternal truth.

In this case the truth is that Jesus is coming again and temporal trials will end forever.

Write it down! Preserve it! God's timing is perfect! It is His appointed time!

Though it tarry, wait for it! It will surely come; it will not delay.

For yet a little while, He that cometh shall come and He shall not tarry.

Spurgeon's thoughts on the vision tarrying. Excerpt from his Sermon: "Pride: The Destroyer" "The reason why the vision tarried in Habakkuk's day, and the mercy was slow in coming, was that the trials of the people might act as a test of their character. In order to separate the precious from the vile, God used the winnowing fan of affliction, that the chaff might be blown away, and the pure wheat remain. Often, in national trials, the furnace is heated exceedingly hot, and the fire is blown upon with a fierce blast, in order that the gold may be divided from the dross.... Those who looked like true believers while all was smooth and bright, have given up their confidence in God when trial has been fierce and long-protracted. This is the patience of the saints; but, alas! This is often the impatience of mere professors, and God thus makes men see what they really are. *They perceive what is in their hearts when they are exposed to long-continued and severe affliction.* See, then, one reason why troubles come upon both the righteous and the wicked, - that men's true character may be discovered, and that the secrets of their hearts may be revealed."

It happened in this case, and it happens in a great many other instances, that the fierceness of the furnace-heat of trouble separates men into two classes. One class is composed of men who are high and lifted up in heart. Our text says, "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him." Then there is another class, namely, the just; and of these the text says, "The just shall live by his faith." My dear friends, when trial comes on us, — as it surely will, — may you and I be able to bear it! May we prove to be men who can endure it; and if it be so, we shall live by faith; that will be our distinguishing mark.