

# The Just Shall Live By His Faith

Habakkuk 2:4

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**FOCAL Read Together** **Habakkuk 2:4** Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

## **The Suffering In Haiti**

Unless you've been living in a bubble you've heard about the earthquake that hit **Haiti** on Tuesday, January 12 2010. The quake was 7.0 on the *Moment Magnitude Scale (MMS)*. There were – according to the United States Geological Team that measured the incident – 33 aftershocks, some of which measured 5.5 on the MMS. **"This fault has been locked for the past 250 years, gradually accumulating stress which has now been released in a single large earthquake,"** said Roger Musson of the British Geological Survey. The energy released was equivalent to a *half-megaton nuclear bomb*. The Pan American Health Organization had put the death toll at 50,000-100,000, though estimates are now up to 200,000 dead. As of January 19, 2010 around 25,000 bodies were retrieved from the rubble and buried.

The Evangelist **Pat Robertson** recently stroked the cat the wrong way and raised the fur of liberals everywhere by his remarks on Haiti. What Robertson said was:

**"Something happened a long time ago in Haiti, and people might not want to talk about it. They were under the heel of the French . . . and they got together and swore a pact to the devil. They said, "We will serve you if you'll get us free from the French." True story. And so the devil said, "OK, it's a deal" . . . . Ever since, they have been cursed by one thing after another, desperately poor. .... They need to have, and**

we need to pray for them, a great turning to God, that out of this tragedy, I'm optimistic that something good may come. But right now we're helping the suffering people, and the suffering is almost unimaginable.”

Atheists and unbelievers everywhere were livid. As Robertson made his statement there was – in bold letters across the bottom of the television screen – a 1-800 number you could call to make donations for the beleaguered Haitians. Robertson had said "**Right now we're helping the suffering people**", and he was doing what he said. Yet the liberal mainstream media began to report Robertson's statements as fabrication, old wives tales, and urban legends. Comedian **Jon Stewart** on Comedy Central's *Daily Show* blasted Robertson. He said:

**“Of all the things you could have drawn from your religion to comfort the people of a devastated region ... (Stewart then brings out a Bible) Look, Look how big your book is.”** Opening the Bible Stewart quoted three Scriptures:

**Psalms 34:18** The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. <sup>(NIV)</sup>

**Isaiah 41:10** Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. <sup>(KJV)</sup>

**Isaiah 54:10** Though the mountains be shaken and

the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

After quoting the last verse Stewart ended by saying **“That almost sounds like it's about (expletive) earthquakes.”**

**Like most unbelievers, Jon Stewart doesn't get it.** Most unbelievers only call on God when something bad happens. When things are rosy the unbeliever doesn't go around saying, "**My, wasn't that nice of God to give me such a great day**". No, he ignores God, curses God, reviles Him, mocks Him. But let something bad happen and the unbeliever says "How can a loving God allow such a thing?"

God doesn't exist for our benefit - we exist for His benefit. God is not our errand Boy nor our 911 Operator. He is God. He wants everyone to **repent**, to turn away from the gods and goddesses they are now following, and come and walk with Him.

**1 Timothy 1:15** “Christ came into the world to save sinners”.

**Christ came into the world to save sinners.** He didn't come into this world to heal people of their physical ailments, nor did He come in this world to be the *politically correct Spokesman for God*. God the Father sent God the Son to this world to **save our souls, for God is more concerned about our souls than He is our**

**bodies.** The soul is eternal, the body is temporal. When this body becomes inanimate because of death the soul continues on, and must reside somewhere else. This is why the **very first sermon Jesus ever preached** was:

**Matthew 4:17** .... **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

**Word Study** The word “**repent**” in the original language of our Scripture is the Greek METANOEO (*μετανοεω* pronounced *met-an-o-eh'-o*), which means “to mentally turn from one direction to another, to make a 180 degree change, to change your mind from where it is going now to where it should go”.

**ILLUSTRATE** A man heading down a road sees a flagman waving him down. He stops, and the flagman says “**you'll need to turn around and take the detour behind you. The road in front of you leads to a washed out bridge. You can't get where you're going on this road**”. That man is telling you to REPENT, to TURN AROUND and go another way. If you continue down that road you will come to certain destruction. REPENT. TURN. Heed the flagman.

Did Pat Robertson misspeak? There *was* a better way to talk about the Haitians and the disaster that struck them.

Some **Galilean Jews** had been plotting an uprising against Rome, and the Governor Pilate heard of it. According to Dr. Lightfoot these Jews were offering sacrifices at the Temple when Pilate's soldiers burst in and killed them. The Gentiles **mingled the blood of the**

**Galileans with their sacrifices (Luke 13:1).** Someone asked Jesus about this incident. Please note His reply:

**Luke 13:2-5** ... **Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? [3] I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. [4] Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? [5] I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**

Jesus viewed both the Galilean tragedy as well as another incident - **the falling of the tower in Siloam, which killed 18 people** - and concluded “**except you repent, you shall all likewise perish**”. Rather than debate on *why* the earthquake hit Haiti we who are truly Christians need to see this as an opportunity to reach out in Christ-like love to these hurting people. We need to support efforts to bring food and water to this troubled area. But we also need to remember that our *primary concern* is to **preach the Gospel of salvation to these people**. We need to tell them “**except you repent, and turn by faith to Jesus Christ, you shall all likewise perish**”.

The sin of Haiti - whether they made a pact with the devil or not - is no greater than the sin of America. The sin of Jon Stewart is no greater than the sin of Jack the Ripper. God calls every man to repent, turn from his wicked way, and to come and walk with Him by faith. For **the just shall live by his faith**.

**Does God Bring Dark Moments Into Our Lives?**

Does God bring *dark moments* into our lives? The simple answer is YES. He can. He does. Why does He do this?

God does not try us in the valleys of life because He hates us, or because He's treating us like rats in a maze. God tries us in the valleys and in the shadows because He wants us to *walk with Him by faith*.

**Word Study** We know very little about the Prophet Habakkuk. We know that his name (חַבְקֻק pronounced *khab-ak-kook'*) means "**he who embraces**". Habakkuk was a man who loved the Lord and loved Israel.

The Lord came to the Prophet Habakkuk and told him a shocking thing. The Babylonians - a fierce and godless people - were going to overthrow Assyria, and along with Assyria they were going to attack and destroy Jerusalem. Habakkuk cried out to God, saying:

**CONTEXT Habakkuk 1:2-4** O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! *even* cry out unto thee *of* violence, and thou wilt not save! [3] Why dost thou show 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 cried out "How can this be, O Lord? How is it

that the Chaldeans - the ancient Babylonians - shall destroy your people? God replied, "Not only will the Chaldeans do this - but I am the cause. I AM raising them up!

**CONTEXT Habakkuk 1:6** 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 pleads with God.

**CONTEXT Habakkuk 1:12-13** **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?**

"These Babylonians are more wicked than Judah is. Why, O Lord, will you allow Judah to be consumed by those who are more wicked? Haven't You made a covenant with us? How can this be?"

Then Habakkuk waited for God's reply. The Lord said:

**CONTEXT Habakkuk 2:3** 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.**

“Your complaints will not stop what I have said. It will happen. The vision will not happen right now, but it will come to pass at **the appointed time**”. In 586 BC the Babylonians would overthrow Judah, and “**wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down**” (2 Kings 21:13)”. The Prophet Daniel and his friends **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego** would be carried away into Babylonian captivity.

### **Why Would God Bring Dark Moments To Me?**

There's no question that God was going to bring a dark moment to Judah, the Southern Kingdom of Israel. What was God's explanation for this? Look at your focal verse:

**FOCAL Habakkuk 2:4** Behold, his soul which is **lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.**

The Lord said “**his soul is lifted up is not upright in him**”. Look at the first two words, “**his soul**”. Of all the creatures that God created, man alone has a *distinctive soul*. Animals have *life forces*, they have animation. But man is not an animal. Angels, though they are more powerful than men, have animation and free will.

Mankind, of all that God has created, has one thing that no other created thing has. **Man has a soul created in the image of God.**

God made man in His image and after His likeness,

according to:

**Genesis 1:26** .. **God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.**

Man was – according to the Scripture – formed by the Everlasting God.

**Genesis 2:7** And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life; and man became a living soul.**

“**Man became a living soul**”. Man was given free will, and given dominion over all the creatures that God created on this earth. Man, of all the creatures, was designed with the capacity to *communicate, to walk, and to be with God*.

Man is unique among creation. Our *souls* are unique, made in God's image. Our bodies are temporary and fallible, but our souls are everlasting, just as God is everlasting. We were designed to be with God, to love God, to glorify God.

**FOCAL Habakkuk 2:4** Behold, his soul which is **lifted up is not upright in him ....**

Why did God send the dark moment to Judah? Because **his soul – filled with pride – is NOT UPRIGHT in him.**

**Word Study** The word “upright” is the Qal Perfect of the Hebrew YAWSHAR ( ישר pronounced yaw-shar'), which means “to be straight”

You were designed to have a “straight” or a “vertical relationship” with God. God's Judah had been richly blessed by God, but they forgot from where their blessings came. Day after day the Lord gave the people of Judah life and liberty.

**Matthew 5:45** {the Heavenly Father} maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Judah was blessed. How did the nation respond to God's abundant blessing?

**CONTEXT Habakkuk 2:5** Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people:

The nation was filled with drunkards. They were filled with pride. He did not “keepeth at home” or look after his family. His appetites drove him, and he was never satisfied. I was visiting at the hospital the other day and two young women passed me talking. One of those ladies sneered, “It was so nice outside, and now look at it!”. Americans – like Judah – are not happy. They continue frantically searching for happiness, but are never please. In the next verse I use the New International Version for it is a little clearer:

**CONTEXT Habakkuk 2:6** "Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn, saying, " 'Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion! How long must this go on?'

Honor was no longer among Judah. The people desired no relationship with God. They were focused on gaining, but had no concern for their Lord or their very souls.

**ILLUSTRATE** I was listening to an Adrian Rogers sermon just the other day where he gave a great illustration. He said that a certain man fell in love with a young lady and decided to marry her. The young man went to the local jewelry store and purchased a very expensive diamond ring. As with all expensive diamonds it came in quite an attractive box. The young man went to his intended's house and, on one knee, offered her the boxed diamond saying “will you marry me?” The young girl took the box, and, clasp it to her heart, said “What a beautiful box! It's so pretty with the blue velvet on the outside, and the little gold clasp.” The young man said, “No, no, no, open the box”. She opened it, and, removing the ring, handed it to her beloved, saying “all I want is the box!”

That may be silly, but this is how so many people treat life. The most important thing you will ever own is your soul. Your goods, your home, your cars, your toys, and even your present body will one day cease to be. “What shall it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul?”

What is a soul worth? It's worth more than the pretty velvet box.

Look at what God said:

**CONTEXT Habakkuk 2:10** **Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul.**

When a person lives his life in such a way as to dishonor God he **damages his own soul**. I have had people tell me

“What does it matter? What business is it of yours, Preacher, if I do thus and thus sin?” It matters, dear friend, because we are all in this *together*. When sin runs rampant in a nation it damages a nation. When sin runs rampant in a Church it damages a Church. When sin runs rampant in a family it damages a family.

You were not designed to follow idols, but to love the Lord. You were not designed to satisfy your every whim, but to love the Lord. When a nation, a Church, a family, or a person draws away from the Lord He not only can but *will* send dark moments.

God sends trials, dark moments, because – whether you realize it or not – your soul is the most important thing you have. God wants you to draw near to Him *for your own benefit*. Trials break us and draw us near to God.

## Suffering Draws Our Attention To What Matters Most

**FOCAL Habakkuk 2:4** ... **the just shall live by his faith.**

The Apostle Paul quoted Habakkuk 2:4, saying:

**Romans 1:16-17** For **I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (17) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written. The just shall live by faith.**

How may a person be righteous? **He must believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.** What does the Gospel of Christ do? **It saves everyone who believes – the just shall BE MADE ALIVE by faith.** By faith in what? **By faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God.** The Apostle goes on to say:

**Galatians 3:11-13** But that **no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. (12) And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. (13) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:**

Am I saved by keeping the Law of God? **No, for the just shall be MADE ALIVE by faith.** How is it that faith in Christ saves me? **Christ alone has redeemed me from**

**the curse of the Law.** How did He do this? **He became cursed in my place by laying down His life on the Cross for me.** How am I then saved? **The just shall LIVE by faith.**

But what about *after* salvation? When I have believed on Jesus Christ for salvation, how then shall I live? The Apostle wrote:

**Hebrews 10:38-39** Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. (39) But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Dear friends, salvation *changes a person*. When you repent and call upon the name of Jesus the Holy Spirit of God comes to you. He changes you from the inside out. You are a **new creature in Christ. Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.** (2 **Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15**). As a new creature you are a child of God, reborn, and designed to walk and talk with God.

God brings trials on the new creature – the Christian – to strengthen your faith. Saved by faith, the **just live by faith**. How does this great truth effect us?

As we turn to Chapter Three of Habakkuk we read

**CONTEXT Habakkuk 3:1** A **prayer of Habakkuk the prophet**...

Habakkuk begins to pray to the Lord. Though he was initially shocked by what the Lord told him, Habakkuk begins to live out the reality of **the just shall live by faith.**

A faith that is just words is just words. It is useless to the speaker, and useless to the seeker. Our faith is of value because of WHO we have faith in.

**CONTEXT Habakkuk 3:2-4** O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy. (3) God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. (4) And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.

Our God is awesome! He is powerful! He is faithful, and He wants to commune with us. He loves His people, and loves to save. Habakkuk prayed:

**CONTEXT Habakkuk 3:13** Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.

God has proved Himself time and time again. Who are we to doubt Him? He saved Israel from Egypt, He will save Judah from himself. He gave His Only Begotten Son on Calvary so that **whosoever believeth on Him**

shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

We who believe on Him are His Children, Children born of faith and Children kept by faith. If you are God's Child then *your portion is God! It is not your things. It is not your idols. It is GOD!*

**As long as my portion is God, and He is my strength, then I will climb as surefooted as the deer. Nothing will rob me of my joy while God is my portion, for HE shall MAKE ME WALK UPON MY HIGH PLACES.**

Habakkuk ended with these words. He said:

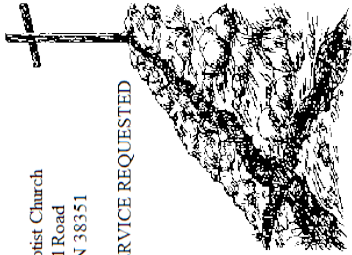
**CONTEXT Habakkuk 3:17-19** Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: (18) Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. (19) The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. ....

If you are born again by faith in Him then you love Him above all else. God brings trials to us to test us. If, in the midst of the trial, you find yourself *disgusted* with God and ready to wash your hands of Him like a petulant child, then, dear friend, **you might not be saved**. Those who are saved love the Lord Who saved them. **Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor of the olives shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls .... YET I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD, I WILL JOY IN THE GOD OF MY SALVATION.**

This life is temporary, but what I have with God is eternal.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**FOCAL Read Together Habakkuk 2:4** Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

**The Suffering In Haiti**

**Psalms 34:18; Isaiah 41:10; Isaiah 54:10; 1 Timothy 1:15; Matthew 4:17; Luke 13:2-5**

**Word Study** The word “repent” in the original language of our Scripture is the Greek METANOEO (μετανοεω pronounced met-an-o-eh'-o), \_\_\_\_\_

**Does God Bring Dark Moments Into Our Lives?**

**Habakkuk 1:2-4; Habakkuk 1:6; Habakkuk 1:12-13; Habakkuk 2:3**

- Does God bring *dark moments* into our lives? \_\_\_\_\_

**Word Study** The Prophet Habakkuk's name (חבקוק pronounced khab-ak-kook') means \_\_\_\_\_

**Why Would God Bring Dark Moments To Me?**

**Habakkuk 2:4; Genesis 1:26; Genesis 2:7; Habakkuk 2:4; Matthew 5:45; Habakkuk 2:5; Habakkuk 2:6; Habakkuk 2:10**

- Mankind, of all that God has created, has one thing that no other created thing has. \_\_\_\_\_

**Word Study** The word “upright” is the Qal Perfect of the Hebrew YAWSHAR \_\_\_\_\_

**Suffering Draws Our Attention To What Matters Most**

**Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:16-17; Galatians 3:11-13; Hebrews 10:38-39; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Habakkuk 3:1; Habakkuk 3:2-4; Habakkuk 3:13; Habakkuk 3:17-19**

- God brings trials on the new creature – the Christian – to strengthen your faith. Saved by faith, the **just live by faith**. How does this great truth effect us? \_\_\_\_\_