

SESSION 36 – THE BELIEVER’S KINGDOM AUTHORITY - PART TWO

¹⁸Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps torah (Yahweh’s instructions). (Prov. 29:18)

¹I 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. ²Adn Yahweh answered me: “Write down the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. ³For 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. ⁴Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.” (Hab. 2:1-4)

I. THE POWER OF GOD’S PROPHETIC VISION FOR YOUR LIFE

- A. Solomon writes in Proverbs 29 concerning discipline and its positive impact on the child or servant. It serves as a *constraint* or *restraint* for error. It is a way of wisdom, a way of delight and rest. In this context he writes the famous verse concerning the prophetic vision. Building on the idea of discipline he reaches the point where it is by way of Yahweh’s instruction (*torah*) a person can be constrained in life by means of a prophetic vision.
- B. The prophetic vision sets the course and manner of life by way of Truth. Absent the Torah’s *rod and reproof*, its *discipline* there will result in *shame, wickedness, and transgression, and ultimate downfall*. This is exactly what happened to both Israel and Judah. They lost the *prophetic vision* of the Torah and their result of captivity and exile.
- C. The primary means of God’s discipline then is through His instruction and teaching. It is not the only way, but it begins here. Note the writer of Hebrews,

⁵And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” (Heb. 12:5-6 ESV)

The Greek for *discipline* is *paideia* and means: to provide instruction, with the intent of forming proper habits of behavior—‘to teach, to instruct, to train, teaching, instruction.’¹

Here he quotes Solomon in Proverbs 3:11-12. Proverbs 3 begins however with this,

¹Son, do not forget my commandments, and may your heart keep my words, ²for they will add to your length of life and years of life and peace. (Prov. 3:1-2 LXX)

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 413.

The Hebrew text says, “*My son, do not forget my teaching (torah), but let your heart keep my commandments.*”

It is Yahweh’s Teaching and Instruction (Torah) then that is the starting point for experiencing His discipline. It is the means of prophetic vision.

- D. Proverbs 3:1-10 shows the roadmap for this vision. Observing to obey Yahweh’s words and commands leads to: length of days and years of life; peace; kindness and truth; favor on your life from God *and* man. And we come then to verse 5-6 which drives home the point of Yahweh’s discipline through His words of instruction which constrain from error:

⁵Trust in Yahweh with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. (Prov. 3:5-6 ESV)

⁵Trust God with your whole heart and do not exalt your own wisdom; ⁶make her known in all your ways so that it may direct your ways. (Prov. 3:5-6 LXX)

In other words, by *trusting Him through keeping His teaching and instruction or His words, He will give you a prophetic vision* (i.e., *make your paths straight and direct your ways*).

II. HABBAKUK’S PROPHETIC COMPLAINT AND YAHWEH’S VISIONARY RESPONSE

- A. Habakkuk lived in a time when injustice and wickedness was prevailing in Judah. He brought a complaint to Yahweh concerning His *seeming inaction* to create change in His covenant people and bring them back to His Torah.

“How long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?”

“Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save?”

“Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong?”

“Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.”

“So the Torah is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.” (Hab. 1:2-4)

- B. Yahweh’s response to this prayer complaint, “Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told.” And what was the wonder He was working? He was raising up Babylon (the Chaldeans). Habakkuk 1:6-11 is a restatement of Joel’s prophecy in Joel 2:1-11 with the command to repent before that day He describes as the *Day of the LORD*.

- C. Habakkuk was stunned. “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?” In other words, he knows Judah was sinning and unjust, but Babylon by comparison is more wicked than them. He simply wanted a revival, not an empire raised up to be the means of Yahweh’s Sword against Jerusalem (Ezek. 21).
- D. After describing how wicked Nebuchadnezzar and by extension all world empires (recall, *he is the head of gold* on the image of the world empires in the domain of darkness), Habakkuk *took his place on the watchpost* and stationed himself on the tower, to *see what Yahweh would say* and the answer concerning his complaint. And then he saw the vision.
- E. This vision is central to Yahweh’s plan and how His covenant people are to live in the midst of the domain of darkness. Moving forward to Paul’s description of the powers and authorities of the is present evil age we know Jesus has ended our spiritual exile from His and our God and Father Yahweh and is bringing us into the experience of His Kingdom both now and into the future age to come. He is central to the vision or any vision we may have in how we are to live in this present age. The believer’s authority is paramount to being successful at living this vision.
- F. Habakkuk 2:2-5 is the not only the answer on how to live in the face of evil and injustice in the domain of darkness, but also Who makes it possible. The life vision is directly joined to the Messiah. This is exactly what Paul says in Colossians 1:13. He has rescued us from the domain of darkness (that is He has ended our exile from His Presence on Mount Zion in Eden), and transferred us into the Kingdom of His Son. The life vision will not work unless He rescues us and transfers us into His domain.

III. SEE THE VISION WRITE THE VISION

- A. The *Believer’s Authority* to use the power of the Age to Come must be focused within our new birth from above and the realities of the new creation. By this I mean, we are born again from above (John 3:3, 7) and in the new birth experience we passed from death to life (1 John 3:14) and that life (*zoe*) is the life of God, eternal life, the life of the Age to Come, the New Creation.

¹⁷*Therefore, if anyone **is in Christ**, he is **a new creation**. The **old has passed away**; behold **the new has come**. (2 Cor. 5:17; c.f. Rev. 21:1-5)*

Our lives in the new creation means we are to live in a way consistent with the Age to Come, in power, and authority just as Adam did in the original creation. As a prophet, priest, and king.

- B. We see then areas of life over which we must exercise *this authority*:
 - 1. Sphere 1: Abiding in Him (in Christ Jesus)
 - 2. Sphere 2: Life in the Community of Believers

3. Sphere 3: Authority in the home

4. Sphere 4: Authority in the World

5. Sphere 5: Authority in the Unseen Realm

- C. We need a vision for each of these spheres of life. And it is here that Habakkuk helps us to see *how* to see the vision and what to do with it. We can *have knowledge* but it can't stop there. That knowing (revelation, illumination (Eph. 1:17!)) needs to be *written down* so it can be acted on, by faith.
- D. Habakkuk says, "I will take my *stand* at my *watchpost* and *station myself on the tower*. (Hab. 2:1a)" Here we have Habakkuk *standing at his watchpost, stationed on the tower*. The use of the word *stand* here in the LXX is the exact wording found in Ephesians 6:10-18.

¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to *stand firm* against the schemes of the devil...¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to *stand firm*.¹⁴ *Stand firm* therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...(Eph. 6:11, 13-14)

The stance on the watchpost is defensive in nature. The watchpost is translated into Greek as *phylake* meaning simply to guard. It literally means the time when the guards would take their place to watch for any enemies. Mark 6:48 defines it as a watch of the night. Also seen in Luke 2:8 when the shepherds were keeping *watch* over their flocks by night.

The tower here is defined by HALOT as "fortified city, stronghold."²

It is in the Stronghold of God³ Habakkuk takes his place *to see*, guarding against enemies that will seek to prevent seeing by *blinding the minds* (2 Cor. 4:4)

- E. Having taken his place he looks out to see what Yahweh will say. Here he scans the horizon in a defensive posture against his enemies from a place of safety and security. This is the first necessary step in *seeing the vision*. Only here can he see *and* understand what he is seeing. But it is Yahweh Himself that brings the light. *To see* has several definitions, but can be:

(c) to see is used for to enjoy the light, to live; Gr. βλέπειν; more fully, to see the sun, Ecc. 7:11 (compare Gr. ζῶειν καὶ ὁρᾶν φάος Ἡελίοιο, Hom.; in later writers simply ὁρᾶν); also, to see [Yahweh] in the land of the living, Isa. 38:11. It is thus that the difficult passage Gen. 16:13, is to be understood, אָרָא יְהוָה אֶת אַבְרָהָם אַחֲרֵי הַחֹלִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים אֲנִי וְאַתָּה אָרָא אֶת אֱלֹהֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים אַחֲרֵי הַחֹלִי "do I then here see (i.e. live) also after the vision," sc. of God, having beheld God? compare letter b.—

² Ludwig Koehler et al., The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 623."

³ See Francis Frangipane *The Stronghold of God*; link if you want to order <https://www.amazon.com/Stronghold-God-Francis-Frangipane/dp/0884195473>

(d) to see, i.e. to be taught in visions divinely brought, is said of the prophets, Isa. 30:10 (comp. 29:10). Hence part. רָאָה a prophet (which see), רָאָה vision.⁴

- F. And what does Habbakuk say he wants to see? The *word that Yahweh will say*. In other words, the *vision* rests in the Word of God.

³ *And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but **man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD**.* (Deut. 8:3; c.f. Matt. 4:4)

Having postured himself in the stronghold of God in the what we would understand as the full armor of God as NT Believers is he able to have divine revelation of God's word in Christ Jesus (again, another nod to Ephesians 1-2; and John 1:1-3; Heb. 1:3-4). **This is rhema the believer needs to live life.**

- G. YHWH answers, "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it." Here is what Habakkuk saw, "Write down the vision on tablets in order to run with it." In other words, write down what you see so you can do it. This is another necessary part of living in the believer's authority over all of the spheres of life.

The LXX defines *run* from the Greek *diako* meaning, "to follow with haste, and presumably with intensity of effort, in order to catch up with, for friendly or hostile purpose—to run after, to chase after, to pursue."⁵

It's one thing to *see the vision*, it's another to write it down so you can pursue it. And here is where faith comes into play. James writes, "Even so, faith if it has no works (or corresponding actions), is dead, being by itself. (James 4:17)"

- H. The next thing to understand about the vision is that it will delay in its fullness until a time of fulfillment.

³ *For still **the vision awaits its appointed time** (Heb. *moed*⁶); it hastens to the end – it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. (Hab. 2:3)*

The Greek reads *different* from the Masora Text as the *vision* takes on the *form* of personification as *he*:

³ *Because there is still **a vision for the time**, and **he will appear** at an end, and not in vain; **if he is late, wait for him**, because **one coming** will be present, and **he will not tarry**. (Hab. 2:3 LXX)*

⁴ Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2003), 748–749.

⁵ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 201.

⁶ See Leviticus 23:2. *Moed* are *appointed times* and *holy convocations* – or a sacred meeting for reciting something; a dress rehearsal.

Taken together we see the need for the life vision, but it cannot be separated from the living Word, or the “*He, the One Coming*” of the LXX. Jesus is the only way the vision will be fulfilled in our lives and the fullness of His Father’s plan.

- I. Then we come to the famous verse of Habakkuk.

*⁴If he draws back, my life does not find pleasure in it. But **the righteous one will live by my faith.***” (Hab. 2:4 LXX)

The classic translation is “the just shall live by his faith” or simply the just shall live by faith is found here, but only in context to the vision. We can say, you shall live by faith if you are just, but the *living* part of that statement is in reference to the vision. And in our application, our life vision.

- J. The oldest commentary on Habakkuk was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls of the Qumran community. It translates this passage as:

For there is still a vision ⁶ for the appointed time. It will breathe out to the end-time and it will not lie. (Hab. 2: 3ab) vacat ⁷ Its interpretation is that the final end-time will lengthen, exceeding all ⁸ which the prophets have said, for the mysteries of God are wondrous.⁷

The context of Hab. 2: 3 states that the vision is not so much a hastening to the appointed time, but a testimony or witness to it. The parallel ‘it will not lie’ in the final clause defines the sense of as a verbal act of affirming the time fixed by divine providence. However, if the poetic colour of the biblical text is to be retained in English translation, then ‘it will breathe out’ captures the sense of exhalation as a form of prophetic and divine utterance (cf. Prov. 14: 5).⁸

Most scholars explain the pesher as an assurance that the end-time will eventually come, despite the apparent delay.⁹ In other words here we have *the already-and-not-yet*.

This particular comment from the summary of this passage is startling in that it explains exactly what happened. The use of the word *error* doesn’t mean the Prophets were wrong, it means the means by which the Father has delayed the End Times that *began* at Pentecost is exactly what Habakkuk is saying. Our life visions are inextricably tied to this truth. *We live inside of this delay of time.*

In two parallel clauses, the biblical text refers first to a vision for the appointed time. It then assures the reader that the vision will speak (‘breathe out’) about the end-time, and will not lie. The term qēš is used in parallel to mo‘ēd, suggesting that ‘the end-time’ is also ‘the appointed time’. The pesherist, however, understood Hab. 2: 3a’s reference to a second vision as the prolonging of the end-time. The end-time will be protracted beyond all that the prophets have said. The implication is that the prophetic predictions are

⁷ Timothy H. Lim; The Earliest Commentary on the Prophecy of Habakkuk (Kindle Locations 3845-3850). OUP Premium. Kindle Edition.

⁸ Ibid. Kindle Locations 3873-3878

⁹ Kindle Locations 3926-3927

wrong, or at least inaccurate as regards the chronology of the end. The error is a consequence of the nature of the mysteries of God that are the objects of wonder. The pesher is anchored on the principle of *mysterium dei*, which explains that the perceived delay is predicated on human expectations and his inability to fathom the divine will, which are considered ‘mysteries’ The divine determination of the end-time is both assured and unknowable without the continuing revelation of God.¹⁰

- K. Habakkuk 2:4 breaks down *two* types of individuals: the *one who draws back from the vision* and the other *who by faith preserves in pursuit of the vision*.

This section serves as an overview and introduction to the second half of the pesher where various wicked and righteous figures are mentioned. The pesherist cites the one verse of Hab. 2: 4, divides it into two, and applies each half-verse to those whose punishment will not be accepted and those doers of the law who will be delivered from divine judgment (cf. Rom. 1: 17; Gal. 3: 11; for Paul’s use of this interpretative tradition of judgment, see Lim 2017). Hab. 2: 4a is understood to refer to one whose soul is ‘heaped up’ and ‘not level’, a metaphor that draws on the biblical text of Isaiah 40 and possibly refers to the pride and arrogance of an individual. The clear implication is that he is wicked.¹¹

- L. Paul quotes this passage in Romans 1:17 and again in Galatian 3:11.

¹⁶ *For I am 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.* ¹⁷ *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”* (Rom. 1:16-17 ESV)

¹¹ *Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”* (Gal. 3:11 ESV)

Both of these passages concern the context of Habakkuk chapter 2. Paul did not randomly pull the verse out of context. But being familiar with the commentary surrounding this chapter, he points to *how believers* are to live out the biblical life vision. His letter to the Roman Saints says, “the Gospel (of the Kingdom) is the power of God for salvation. For in it, that is the Gospel of the Kingdom is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. For the just shall live by faith. In other words, viewing it in context of Habakkuk, these are the ones who stay on the wall wearing the armor of God in His Stronghold that see the vision, write it down, and run with it *by faith*. They do not shrink back.

His admonishment to the Galatian *Hagios* is that this does not come by way of *works righteousness*. Rather it is a result of faith in the work of Messiah Jesus. The “He” and “Coming One” part of Habakkuk’s prophecy.

¹⁰ Ibid., Kindle Locations 3945-3955

¹¹ Ibid., Kindle Locations 4183-4188

M. We will end this session with Hebrews 10:32-39,

³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. ³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” ³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

¹ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Heb. 10:32-39; 11:1)

N. Notice, the vision delays and includes suffering, reproach and affliction. And in the midst of the delay of the vision, “Do not throw away your confidence, which has great reward.” How can he say this? He has the LXX copy of Habakkuk which tells him though it delays it will come. Or rather, though *He delay, He will come*. Therefore, to see the vision come to pass, he says, “You have need of endurance and places the source of endurance in The Coming One and then he does what the early commentators of Habakkuk in Qumran do: he contrasts those who go back to works righteousness and those who by faith and patience inherit the promises. And then he defines what faith is and that will be the subject of the next session.

Prophetic Life Vision

Sphere 1: Abiding in Him (in Christ Jesus)

Sphere 2: Life in the Community of Believers

Sphere 3: Authority in the home

Sphere 4: Authority in the World

Sphere 5: Authority in the Unseen Realm