

The book of Habakkuk

This short book exemplifies of Old Testament prophecy:

- OT prophets served as God's representatives to communicate God's word to His people.
 - **Before exile to Babylon**, prophets often denounced rampant social injustice and oppression of the poor.
 - **After the exile**, their messages turned more specifically to the promise of national renewal and the spiritual blessings that come with trusting God and obeying His will.
- Successful prediction and miracles validated their status and also the part of their messages that were yet future.
- Those claiming to speak for God were held to strict standards. Even if predictions came true, they had to be 100% accurate.
- The position was difficult. The first NT martyr Stephen pointedly asked the Sanhedrin, "Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute?" (Acts 7:52).

Biblical prophecy

- God, as far as we know, is the only one who can "see the end from the beginning." Both Testaments are full of prophecy.
- 27% of Bible verses (that's 8.352verses) in the Bible (OT and NT) include predictions (prophecies).
- Almost 81% of Biblical prophecies have come true so far, including every single one that could have.
- Interpretation of Scripture is called "hermeneutics". Our world view, presuppositions, etc. affect our hermeneutics.
- Eastern (Jewish) and western (Greek) mindset (aka philosophy) developed separately along different lines.
 - The west views prophecy as prediction and fulfillment.
 - The Jewish mind also sees prophecy in recurring patterns.

Forms of biblical prophecy

The Bible uses **almost every available literary form** to convey its prophetic messages, including but not limited to:

- **Prediction/fulfilment** (our Western model)

79%

- 65% • **Oracles** - a prophecy thought to have come directly from a divine source.

- 9% • **Figurative** – a prophecy w/non-literal meaning (simile, metaphor, hyperbole, allusion, paradox, idiom, etc.).

- 5% • **Symbolic** - a prophecy shaped in images or words that represents some final fulfilment.

- **Typological** – prophecy in the form of a person, event, or thing in history that prefigures a corresponding reality. In other words, a recurring pattern.

21%

Greek versus Hebrew languages

The philosophical (world view) differences between western and eastern culture are also reflected in their languages.

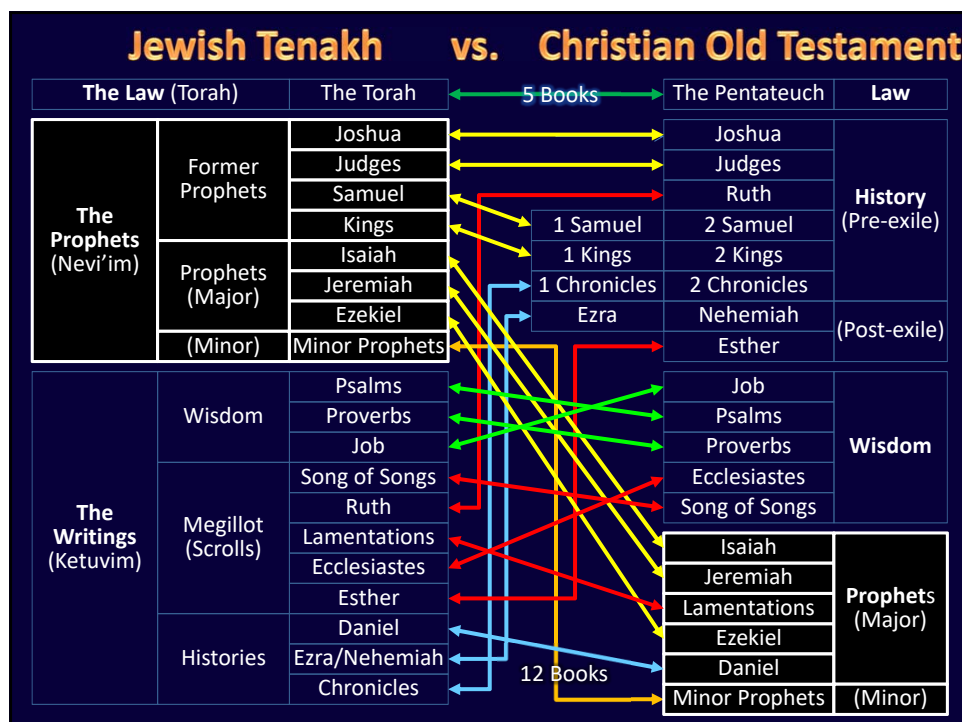
- Greek is highly precise, as thought (gnosis) is considered the highest virtue. It may take a sentence or two to adequately translate a single Greek word into English with precision.
- Hebrew grew up as a multi-level language, with each letter telling a story that was amplified as letters joined together to make words. It is well-suited for wordplay, puns, and poetry. Meaning of a passage can only be deduced from its context.

The Bible tells of the God of the Hebrews and His love and redemption of His chosen People the Israelites despite their disobedience. Followers of Jesus are grafted into God's people, but replace neither them nor their the Bible's Jewishness.

Prophets in the Bible

- There are 42 prophets (*navi*) in the Old Testament, including five women (*neviah*)¹.
- Sixteen prophets are accorded large sections (books):
 - Four have longer books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel). They are called “major prophets”.
 - Twelve have smaller books. The Hebrew Bible treats these as a single book called “The Book of the Twelve Prophets”.
- John the Baptist was the last prophet of the Old era. Jesus Christ brought in a new age of prophetic truth.

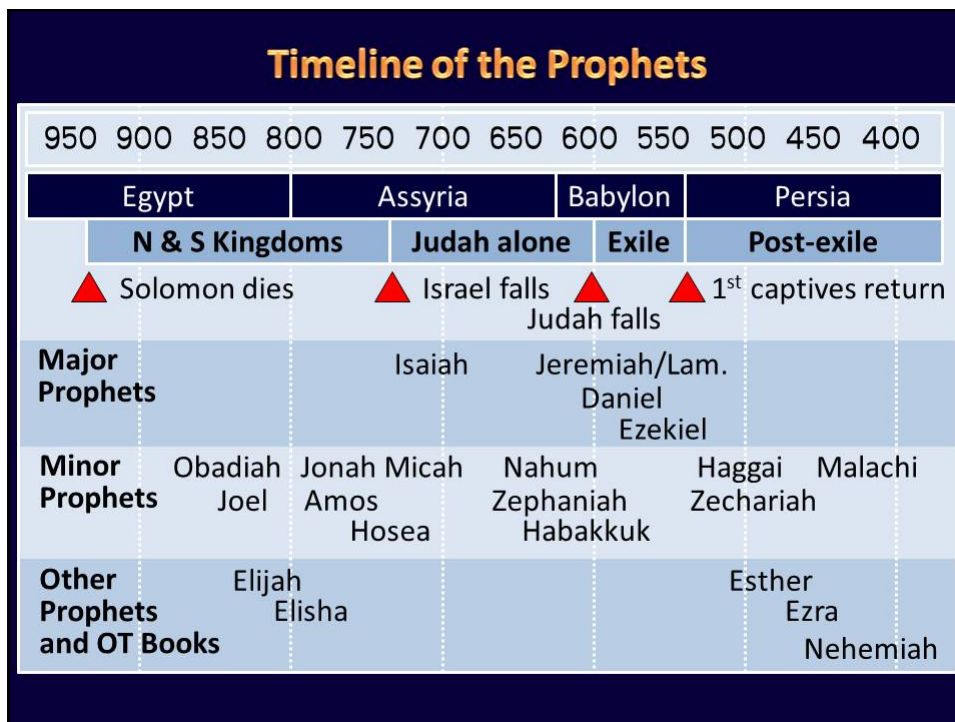
1. Isaiah’s wife; Huldah; Miriam; Deborah; Noadiah





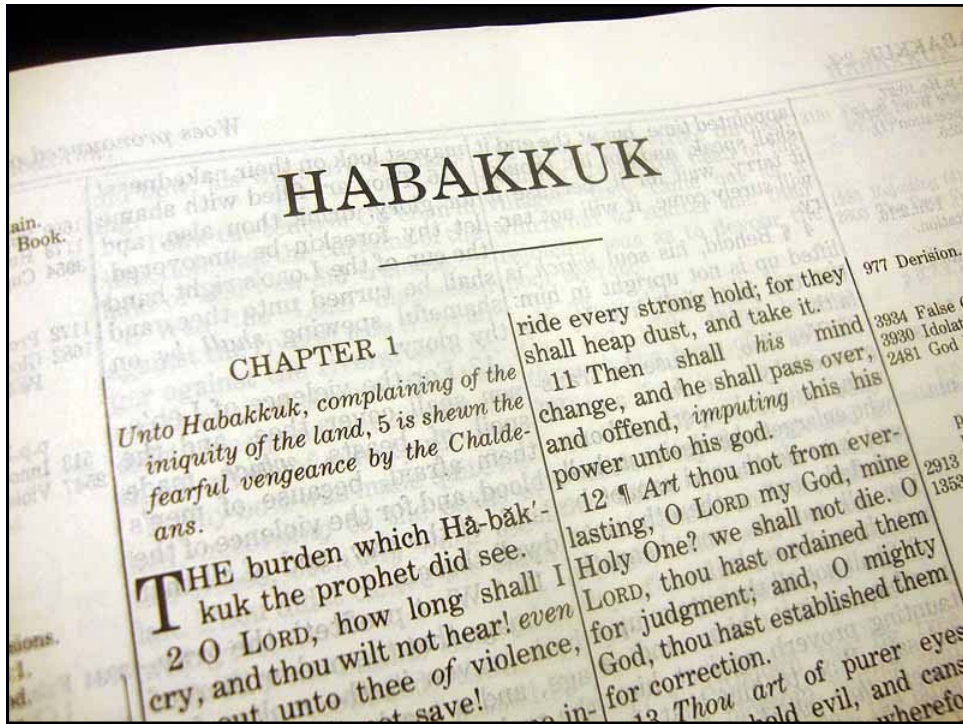
Chronological Order of the Prophets

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before the Exile – (before 606 BC) 		<u>Propheesied</u>
• Obadiah	to Edom	887 B.C.
• Jonah	to Nineveh	862 B.C.
• Joel	to Judah	800 B.C. (835-756?)
• Amos	to Northern Kingdom	787 B.C.
• Hosea	to Northern Kingdom	785 - 725 B.C.
• Isaiah	to Judah	760 - 698 B.C.
• Micah	to Judah	750 – 710 B.C.
• Nahum	to Nineveh	713 B.C.
• Zephaniah	to Judah	630 B.C.
• Habakkuk	to Judah	626 B.C.
• Jeremiah	to Judah	629 – 588 B.C.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Exile (606 – 538 BC) 		
• Jeremiah		629 – 588 B.C.
• Ezekiel		595 – 574 B.C.
• Daniel		607 – 534 B.C.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the Exile (after 538 BC) 		
• Haggai		520 B.C.
• Zechariah		520 – 518 B.C.
• Malachi		397 B.C.
(All dates approximate)		



The Minor Prophets

- These books are called "The Minor Prophets" solely because of size, not relevance to our lives.
- Don't be tricked into missing these overwhelmingly rich studies



Habakkuk, the "modern" prophet

- "Where are you, God?"
- Why do bad things happen to good people? This is one of Habakkuk's main themes.
- This involves what is called "theodicy": a defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in a world of evil.



Habakkuk

- Habakkuk was probably a priest like Jeremiah before he was called as a prophet. Also a contemporary of Daniel, he wrote in the declining days just before the Babylonian captivity.
- Habakkuk 2:4 is one of his most pivotal passages: *"The Just shall live by faith."* This verse deeply affected Martin Luther and led to the Protestant Reformation of 1517-present?
- Some 1,400 years before that, Habakkuk so affected Paul that verse 2:4 is a unifying quotation in three epistles:
 - Who are "the Just"? Paul answers that in Romans.
 - How shall they "live"? Paul answers this in Galatians.
 - "By faith!" Paul focuses on this in Hebrews.
- Habakkuk initiates a snarky dialogue with God, wrestles with Him, and ends up worshiping Him. The Hebrew root of his name (חֲבַקֻּק) means "to embrace" or "wrestle".

When was Habakkuk written?

- Habakkuk Verse 6 describes the "Chaldeans as marching through breadth of the earth" which was only true after their victory at Carchemish in early summer of 605 BC.



- Verse 13 indicates that they were threatening to assume control over Judah, which occurred by August of 605 BC.
- This would place Habakkuk in the reign of Jehoiakim (609-598 BC), a monarch whose depravity stood out even in Judah, in contrast to his father Josiah (Jeremiah 22:15-19).

Outline of Habakkuk – “Worry to Worship”

- Habakkuk’s burden (*massah*, a heavy load) (5 whys)
- Habakkuk’s vision
- Five oracles about the Chaldeans (probably friendly).
 1. Proud Ambition (vv. 2:5-8)
 2. Covetousness (vv. 2:9-11)
 3. Ruthlessness and Cruelty (vv. 2:12-14)
 4. Debauchery (vv. 2:15-17)
 5. Idolatry (vv. 2:18-19)
- Habakkuk’s prayer: a closing song of praise to God.

Outline of Habakkuk

Chapter 1 (1-2.6a) : A= toils; B= to see

P (1:1)			1:1 The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet received in vision.
	A (1:2-4)		1:3 Why do you let me see ruin; why must I look at misery?
		B (1:5-11)	1:6 For see, I am raising up Chaldea
	A (1:12-17)		1:13 Too pure are your eyes to look upon evil, and the sight of misery you cannot endure
		B(2:1-6a)	2:1 And keep watch to see what he will say to me

Chapter 2 (2:6b-20) All A’s = the 5 woes

A(2:6b-8)	2:6 Woe to him who stores up what is not his
A(2:9-11)	2:9 Woe to him who pursues evil gain for his household
A(2:12-14)	2:12 Woe to him who builds a city by bloodshed
A(2:15-18)	2:15 Woe to you who give your neighbors
A(2:19-20)	2:19 Woe to him who says to wood, "Awake!" to dumb stone

Chapter 3 (3:1-19)

A: Salvation. B: Sufferings of enemies. C: Arrows. D: Salvation.

A	3:1-2		3:2 In the course of the years revive it, in the course of the years make it known
	B	3:3-7	3:7 the tents of Cushan (Ethiopian) collapse
		C	3:8-9 3:9 Bared and ready is your bow, filled with arrows is your quiver
		D	3:10-13 3:13 You come forth to save your people
		C	3:14-15 3:14 You pierce with your shafts the heads of their princes
	B	3:16-17	3:16 the day of distress that will come upon the people who attack us
A	3:18-19		3:19 he makes my feet swift as those of hinds and enables me to go upon the heights

Habakkuk 1 - Habakkuk Complains

¹ The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw.

Habakkuk's First Complaint

² **O LORD, how long shall I cry,**

And You will not hear?

Even cry out to You, "Violence!"

And You will not save.

³ Why do You show me iniquity,

And cause *me* to see trouble?

For plundering and violence *are* before me;

There is strife, and contention arises.

⁴ Therefore the law is powerless,

And justice never goes forth.

For the wicked surround the righteous;

Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.

The LORD's Response

⁵ "Look among the nations and watch—
Be utterly astounded!

For *I will* work a work in your days
Which you would not believe, though it were told *you*.

⁶ For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans,
A bitter and hasty nation
Which marches through the breadth of the earth,
To possess dwelling places *that are* not theirs.

⁷ They are terrible and dreadful;
Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves.

They are a **feared and dreaded people**;
they are a **law unto themselves** and
honour only their own.

HABAKKUK 1:7

You wouldn't
believe me
if I **told** you!

⁸ Their horses also are swifter than leopards,
And more fierce than evening wolves.
Their chargers charge ahead;
Their cavalry comes from afar;
They fly as the eagle *that* hastens to eat.

⁹ "They all come for violence;
Their faces are set *like* the east wind.
They gather captives like sand.

¹⁰ They scoff at kings,
And princes are scorned by them.
They deride every stronghold,
For they heap up earthen *mounds* and seize it.

¹¹ Then *his* mind changes, and he transgresses;
He commits offense,
Ascribing this power to his god."



The Prophet's Second Complaint

¹² Are You not from everlasting,
O LORD my God, my Holy One?
We shall not die.

O LORD, You have appointed them for judgment;
O Rock, You have marked them for correction.

¹³ *You are* of purer eyes than to behold evil,
And cannot look on wickedness.

Why do You look on those who deal treacherously,
And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours
A *person* more righteous than he?

¹⁴ *Why* do You make men like fish of the sea,
Like creeping things *that have* no ruler over them?

You are
too pure to
even look
on evil or
tolerate
wrongdoing
so how
can **they**
get away
with it?

¹⁵ They take up all of them with a hook,
They catch them in their net,
And gather them in their dragnet.
Therefore they rejoice and are glad.

¹⁶ Therefore they sacrifice to their net,
And burn incense to their dragnet;
Because by them their share *is* sumptuous
And their food plentiful.

¹⁷ Shall they therefore empty their net,
And continue to slay nations without pity?

2 ¹ I will stand my watch
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 2 - Habakkuk Listens

The LORD's Second Longer Response

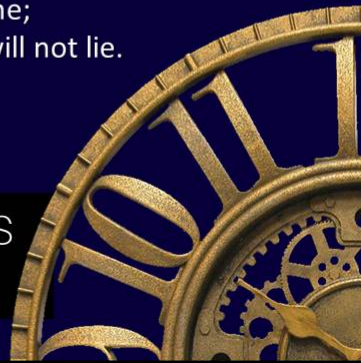
² Then the LORD answered me and said:

“Write the vision

And make *it* plain on tablets,
That he may run who reads it.

³ For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time;
But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.
Though it tarries, wait for it;
Because it will surely come,
It will not tarry.

FAITH in God includes
FAITH in **His timing**.



⁴ “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him;

But the just shall live by his faith.

Woe to the Wicked

⁵ “Indeed, because he transgresses by wine,
He is a proud man,
And he does not stay at home.
Because he enlarges his desire as hell,
And he *is* like death, and cannot be satisfied,
He gathers to himself all nations
And heaps up for himself all peoples.

⁶ “Will not all these take up a proverb against him,
 And a taunting riddle against him, and say,
 ‘Woe to him who increases
What is not his—how long?

And to him who loads himself with many pledges’?
⁷ Will not your creditors rise up suddenly?
 Will they not awaken who oppress you?
 And you will become their booty.

⁸ Because you have plundered many nations,
 All the remnant of the people shall plunder you,
 Because of men’s blood
 And the violence of the land *and* the city,
 And of all who dwell in it.

⁹ “Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house,
 That he may set his nest on high,
 That he may be delivered from the power of disaster!

¹⁰ You give shameful counsel to your house,
 Cutting off many peoples,
 And sin *against* your soul.

¹¹ For the stone will cry out from the wall,
 And the beam from the timbers will answer it.

¹² “Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed,
 Who establishes a city by iniquity!

¹³ Behold, *is it* not of the LORD of hosts
 That the peoples labour to feed the fire,
 And nations weary themselves in vain?

¹⁴ For the earth will be filled
 With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
 As the waters cover the sea.

¹⁵ “**Woe** to him who gives drink to his neighbor,
 Pressing *him to* your bottle,
 Even to make *him* drunk,
 That you may look on his nakedness!

¹⁶ You are filled with shame instead of glory.
 You also—drink!
 And be exposed as uncircumcised!

The cup of the LORD’s right hand *will be* turned against you,
 And utter shame will be on your glory.

¹⁷ For the violence *done to* Lebanon will cover you,
 And the plunder of beasts *which* made them afraid,
 Because of men’s blood
 And the violence of the land *and* the city,
 And of all who dwell in it.

¹⁸ “What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it,
 The moulded image, a teacher of lies,
 That the maker of its mould should trust in it,
 To make mute idols?

¹⁹ **Woe** to him who says to wood, ‘Awake!’
 To silent stone, ‘Arise! It shall teach!’
 Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver,
 Yet in it there is no breath at all.

²⁰ “But the LORD is in His holy temple.
 Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

Habakkuk 3 – Habakkuk Prays

- ¹ A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.
- ² O LORD, I have heard Your speech *and* was afraid;
O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years!
In the midst of the years make *it* known;
In wrath remember mercy.
- ³ God came from Teman,
The Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah*
- His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of His praise.
- ⁴ *His* brightness was like the light;
He had rays *flashing* from His hand,
And there His power *was* hidden.
- ⁵ Before Him went pestilence,
And fever followed at His feet.

You divided the earth with rivers.

- ¹⁰ The mountains saw You *and* trembled;
The overflowing of the water passed by.
The deep uttered its voice,
And lifted its hands on high.
- ¹¹ The sun and moon stood still in their habitation;
At the light of Your arrows they went,
At the shining of Your glittering spear.
- ¹² You marched through the land in indignation;
You trampled the nations in anger.
- ¹³ You went forth for the salvation of Your people,
For salvation with Your Anointed.
You struck the head from the house of the wicked,
By laying bare from foundation to neck. *Selah*

⁶ He stood and measured the earth;
 He looked and startled the nations.
 And the everlasting mountains were scattered,
 The perpetual hills bowed.

His ways *are* everlasting.

⁷ I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction;
 The curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

⁸ O LORD, were *You* displeased with the rivers,
Was Your anger against the rivers,
Was Your wrath against the sea,
 That You rode on Your horses,
 Your chariots of salvation?

⁹ Your bow was made quite ready;
 Oaths were sworn over *Your* arrows. *Selah*

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¹⁰ The mountains saw You *and* trembled;
 The overflowing of the water passed by.
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¹⁴ You thrust through with his own arrows
 The head of his villages.
 They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me;
 Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret.

¹⁵ You walked through the sea with Your horses,
 Through the heap of great waters.

¹⁶ When I heard, my body trembled;
 My lips quivered at *the* voice;
 Rottenness entered my bones;
 And I trembled in myself,
 That I might rest in the day of trouble.

When he comes up to the people,
 He will invade them with his troops.

A Hymn of Faith

¹⁷ Though the fig tree may not blossom,
 Nor fruit be on the vines;

Though the labour of the olive may fail,
 And the fields yield no food;

Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,
 And there 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;
 He will make my feet like deer's feet,
 And He will make me walk on my high hills.

To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

...YET I WILL REJOICE
 IN THE LORD;
**I WILL
 TAKE JOY
 IN THE GOD
 OF MY
 SALVATION.**

By its finish,
Habakkuk
 had **mastered**
 the **key verse**
 of his **book**.



Per the Bible
Salvation
 is a matter of
FAITH

The prophecies in Habakkuk

Prophecy

- Answering the problem of injustice in Judah, God will raise up the Chaldeans (vv 1:5-11)
- Ordaining of Babylon as corrective judgement of the earth in general but more specifically Judah (v 1:12)
- Habakkuk's five woes to come upon the Chaldeans as God vindicates His own (vv 2:6-13, 15-19; 3:16a)
- After noting the punishment to come upon Babylon (vv 2:6-13), Habakkuk quotes Isaiah 11:9 *"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Yahweh...."*

Fulfilment

- Babylonian expansion 605 BC, 2 Kings 24:7
- Babylonian attack, fall of Judah 586 BC
- The Fall of Babylon in 539 BC.
- **FUTURE.** The curseless world at Christ's return (Isa 11:6)

Martin Luther's insight

Martin Luther's entire life was changed by the impact on him of a single verse in an obscure Old Testament book - Habakkuk:

"The **just**
shall **live**
by **faith.**"

(Habakkuk 2:4)

<http://www.lineagejourney.com/episodes/episode-19-martin-luther-the-just-shall-live-by-faith/>



The New Testament Trilogy on Habakkuk 2:4
"The just shall live by faith."

1 Who are the Just?
Romans

2 How shall they live?
Galatians

3 What is faith?
Hebrews

The three tenses of "salvation"

The just shall live by faith.

1 past tense
Justification salvation.
Have been saved! ...from the **penalty** of sin
 Ephesians 2:8-9

2 present tense
Sanctification salvation.
Am being saved! ...from the **power** of sin
 Romans 6 (e.g. 6:2, 6:14)

3 future tense
Glorification salvation.
Will be saved! ...from the **presence** of sin
 Romans 8:23; 1 John 3:2

The three tenses of "salvation"

- 1** Justify To (legally) declare (render) righteous.
- 2** Sanctify To be set apart.
To be honoured.
- 3** Glorify

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...."
(Romans 3:10, 23 NIV)

Beware if
your Bible version says,
"The righteous" instead
of **"The just"**.

Strong's G1342, δίκαιος, *dikaios*

Righteous

MORAL condition

- upright, virtuous, keeping the commands of God
 - of those who seem to themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves in their virtues, whether real or imagined
 - innocent, faultless, guiltless
 - used of him whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no rectification in the heart or life (**only Christ truly**)

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Just (justified) **LEGAL condition**

- Pronounced (declared) **acceptable to God** by faith.



Something to keep in mind

'But Jesus beheld, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but **with God all things are possible.**'
(Matthew 19:26)

- However interesting, it's wrong to let "unimportant" things detract from God's Word.

In necessariis unitas, in dubiis
libertas, in omnibus caritas.

(in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity)

~~Roman Catholic theologian St. Augustine~~
~~Protestant theologian Peter Meiderlin (1626)~~
Catholic Protestant Catholic Heretic Marco de Dominis (d. 1624)