

Habakkuk

1. *Discuss the concepts of "just", "live", and "faith" from the phrase "The just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2.4) in the light of Habakkuk's historical dilemma.*

“Just” refers to a life lived in a straight or level direction, with a goal of being as God is, perfect in observance of the law. This justness serves as a protecting influence from God’s judgment on those that are unjust. “Live” refers only to the earthly life of the people, and the quality of that life, the survival of the righteous is highlighted in the use of this term. Finally the “faith” that Habakkuk refers to is a demarcation of permanence and stability, it implies an ongoing obedient trust. This faith in Habakkuk’s time referred to the need to be just daily to receive deliverance. Simply put, the need to stand firm in spite of many earthly threats.

2. *Compare Habakkuk's meaning of this phrase and the connotations of Rom. 1.17 where Paul quotes it. Is there any difference in the meaning Paul seems to attribute to the OT phrase?*

The startling difference in the Pauline epistle stems from the object of saving faith as now being made an eternal promise and not simply a present earthly reality as it is in Habakkuk. Being “just” is now obtained through faith in Jesus Christ and is in return shown through our fruitful living. The reality is that the true acceptance of Jesus Christ as our savior should change us into a people who are characterized by lifestyles of faith and righteous living (He makes us righteous), which will not stop at the end of our lives in this place, but rather continue for eternity (because of grace we need not fear Gods wrath!). In contrast Habakkuk was motivating his readers to seek a righteous lifestyle and to walk with God as they drew closer to His coming judgment.