

Title: “Waiting in the Dark”

Chris Ryan

Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4

10/05/2025

Service Readings: Hab. 1:1-4; 2:1-4, 2 Tim. 1:1-14, Luke 17:1-10

In a world where no light could be found, Habakkuk called out to God. His response was a promise of a light that would overcome the darkness. “Wait for it,” God said.

Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Lord, I turn my ear to the four corners of the earth, and I hear violence. I hear nations rising against nations. I hear the thunder of bombs and missiles; I hear the cries of the wounded and the wails of those who mourn. The world is loud with sorrow and strife, yet You seem silent.

With hands outstretched, I grasp the fabric of this nation and feel it tearing. The threads of its democracy, once woven proudly into its flag, now hang frayed and fragile, pulling apart at the seams. The nation unravels, yet you seem unwilling to mend.

And my eyes! I see injustice at every turn, corruption in every place. The rulers mock your law. They heap up the earth and seize it; they sweep by like the wind and go on—guilty men whose strength is their god (*Habakkuk 1:10-11*). Their injustice is plain to see, yet your justice seems hidden from sight.

Like Habakkuk I call out to you:

O LORD, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not hear?
Or cry to you “Violence!”
and you will not save?
³Why do you make me see iniquity,
and why do you idly look at wrong?
Destruction and violence are before me;
strife and contention arise.
⁴So the law is paralyzed,
and justice never goes forth.
For the wicked surround the righteous;
so justice goes forth perverted.

Where are you, Lord? And when will you return? In the early hour of the days I devote my time to your Word. I take stand at my watch post and station myself in the quiet of the morning, Your Word in my hand, upon my lips, and in my heart. I listen for what you will say to me.

We need to pause here for a moment and talk about Habakkuk. You see, at the time he wrote, the Assyrian Empire was the great power of the world. They had already destroyed Israel’s northern kingdom and once tried – and failed – to conquer Judah. Habakkuk knew that Assyria would not stay away forever, so he cried out to God. And God answered – but not in the way Habakkuk expected. The

Lord told him that Assyria's days were numbered, but their fall would come at the hands of another empire, Babylon. Judah would be delivered from Assyria only to be carried off into an even darker captivity. Still, God gave him a word of hope:

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.

And it did come. Yes, in time Judah was freed from Babylon. But that was only a glimpse, only a shadow of the greater deliverance God had promised. The true answer to Habakkuk's cry did not come with the fall of Babylon but with the birth in Bethlehem – when God himself entered into the darkness, not just to deliver one nation, but to bring salvation to all mankind.

There, in Bethlehem, God gave his final answer to Habakkuk's cry – and to ours. The answer was not words on a page nor a prophet's voice. The answer was not the rising and falling of another empire. The answer was God himself, wrapped in flesh. The light entered into the world and darkness would not overcome it. And yet, *even then* darkness seemed to have won for this child grew up to be mocked, beaten and nailed to a cross. The sins of the world would be placed upon him and the Father would turn his back. On that day darkness covered the land and the sun refused to shine. On that day Habakkuk's cry was Jesus' cry: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" It looked as if God was silent once more.

But the silence was not the final word, for out of the tomb rose the Light. Satan had been defeated; sin had been defeated; death had been defeated. The darkness that once enveloped Habakkuk, that once enveloped us, had been conquered by the *true* Light.

The silence of God has been shattered, once and for all. Yes, violence still fills the earth and nations still rage. Rulers continue to boast in their strength and usurp the very laws they have sworn to uphold. Yet, none of it, *none of it*, can undo what Christ has done. His resurrection from the dead declares that the world holds no true power. No corruption from man, no darkness of the devil, nothing will have the final word, for the final word belongs to Jesus, alone. And that final word is *peace*.

The Lord told Habakkuk, "Wait for it." And now the Lord speaks the same word to us: "Wait for it." Not because he *might* come, but because he surely *will* come. We live in this in-between time. We live in the time between Bethlehem and Christ's return, between the cross and the final resurrection. We wait in a world that has already been conquered by God but still seems dark. But we wait with confident hope, with the same faith that Habakkuk had as he waited for the Lord.

And so we wait. We wait in hospital rooms when the healing seems far away. We wait beside the graves when death feels too strong. We wait in a nation torn by strife, in a world deafened by violence. We wait when our prayers sometimes seem to echo back unanswered. But we do not wait in despair, for the one who came in Bethlehem, who hung in Calvary, who rose on Easter is coming again. The very light that rose from the tomb still shines into the darkness of our lives. It illuminates our life whenever we hear it preached, whenever we feel his very body and blood upon our lips, whenever we see the empty cross.

And while we wait for his return, the Lord does not leave us empty-handed. He gives us his Word that does not fail, his Spirit that sustains, and his very body and blood that forgives, so that even in our deepest night, we can live by faith in the one who was crucified and rose again. For the darkness will not last forever. The Light has already come; the Light will come again. And so we wait — not in fear, not in despair, but in hope. We wait.

Please pray with me.

Lord Jesus Christ, Light of the world, when the darkness of sin and sorrow surrounds us, teach us to wait on Your promises. Strengthen our faith to trust that You are near, even when You seem silent, and keep us steadfast until the day You come again in glory. For You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.