

Habakkuk 2:1

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/hab/hab-2/habakkuk-21/>

The prophet Habakkuk remains alert to receive God's answer to his complaint.

In the previous chapter, Habakkuk explained his dilemma. He could not understand why a Holy and everlasting God would use a wicked and ferocious nation such as Babylon/Chaldea to chastise His covenant people (Habakkuk 1:12-17). In Chapter 1, Habakkuk petitioned God to discipline Judah for its wickedness, asking God why He was taking so long to do so. God's covenant with Judah, spelled out in the law, clearly stated that if Israel/Judah fell into exploitation and violence like the surrounding nations they would be disciplined (Deuteronomy 8:19-20; 28:15). Habakkuk wondered why God was taking so long to do so, and God disclosed His intent to have the Chaldeans (Babylonians) overthrow Judah.

In the present chapter, Habakkuk ended his second question/complaint as to how a righteous God could use the wicked Babylonians as an instrument of judgment upon Judah by saying that he would remain alert and wait for the LORD to provide him with an answer (Habakkuk 2:1).

As the prophet anticipated the LORD's reply, he stated, *I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart*. To *stand* is to position oneself. For instance, Absalom used to "stand beside the way to the gate" of the city of Jerusalem to intercept those who would speak to King David about a matter of concern (2 Samuel 15:2). The verb *stand* is thus synonymous with the verb *station*. Habakkuk appears to essentially be saying, "I am not going to ask or complain any longer, I am just going to wait for an answer and follow what you tell me." He seems to have learned his lesson from question 1, that God's timing is His own.

The Hebrew word translated as *guard post* is "mishmereth." It stresses the activity of watching or observing something. Often, it appears in the general sense of being attentive in one's occupation or profession (Joshua 22:3). Moreover, the word for *rampart* ["mishmar" in Hebrew] refers to a spot where a person stands to watch. It is a place of elevation, usually located on top of a defensive wall.

In the ancient world, a sentinel would *stand* on a tower to report what he saw. His job was to guard a town to protect it against surprise enemy attacks. In the book of 2 Kings, we find an example of such a practice. A "watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the company of Jehu as he came, and said, 'I see a company'" (2 Kings 9:17).

This example demonstrates that a sentinel was to be patient and vigilant (Nahum 2:1; Psalm 127:1). Likewise, Habakkuk positioned himself vigilantly. He *stationed* himself firmly and with much determination. It seems Habakkuk is committing here to stay at his station, like a good watchman, and keep watch as long as necessary. God's answer to Habakkuk's initial inquiry made clear that God always has a purpose, but keeps his own timing. Habakkuk now honors that, and determines that he will patiently wait as long as it takes to receive God's answer. In doing this, Habakkuk provides an excellent example for us. He honestly pursues God to understand,

but recognizes God's perspective is far above our own (Romans 11:33-36) and His timing is His own, not ours (2 Peter 3:8; 1 Peter 5:6; Galatians 6:9).

The remaining part of the verse continues the sentinel imagery and reveals the prophet's intention. Here, Habakkuk issued two statements. In the first, he declared, *I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me*. Although Habakkuk was perplexed and disturbed, he put his faith in the LORD, and recognized that the LORD is God, and he a creation of God. He wanted to wait and see how the LORD would act, so he *stationed* himself as a watchman, committing to retain his position of watching and waiting until he got an answer from the LORD. This is likely an attitude he is expressing rather than a physical activity.

In the second statement, Habakkuk stated that he would wait to see *how I may reply when I am reproved*. The translation *when I am reproved* is literally "upon my reproof." In judicial proceedings, the term "reproof" refers to a formal statement of one's position (Job 13:6; 23:4). When issued from God's mouth, it is a verdict that effects punishment, through which He executes His judgment (Ezekiel 5:15; 25:17). Habakkuk's statement indicates his full submission to the LORD. He actually expects to receive a word and learn something from God that changes his perspective. It appears he is not only willing to be corrected, but looks forward to it. In this, Habakkuk exhibits the attitude New Testament believers are exhorted to pursue, which is to seek to be transformed by gaining a renewed mind (Romans 12:1-2). To pursuing "the renewing of your mind" requires this attitude displayed by Habakkuk. He sought to know, could not untangle the answer on his own, then asked of God, expecting an answer that would alter his perspective.

In this, Habakkuk also demonstrates a self-awareness that we choose our perspective (how we see things, our worldview, or attitude). God controls history, but has given us stewardship of choosing how to view what we see occurring that is creating history. Habakkuk displays great wisdom here in recognizing his current perspective, and seeking God to learn and understand what perspective is actually a true perspective.

As a faithful prophet, he waited eagerly to hear the divine verdict to see how he might *reply*. Habakkuk was willing to pursue God's perspective until he gained an answer from the LORD, that he might gain God's perspective, a perspective that was true.

Biblical Text

**¹I will stand on my guard post
And station myself on the rampart;
And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me,
And how I may reply when I am reproved.**