

Rejoice Anyway

Key Verse: “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

—Habakkuk 3:18

*Selected Scripture:
Habakkuk 2:1-5;
3:17-19*

HABAKKUK’S PRAYER IS

recorded for us in the third chapter of his prophecy. In verses 17-19, he concludes his prayer in a most admirable way. He states that the conditions surrounding God’s people at that time were most difficult, yet he continued to rejoice in the Lord and his salvation, and

claimed God as the source of his strength.

God’s people of all ages, including the present time, do well to take note of the prophet’s attitude. At all times, in any place, and under all circumstances, we should rejoice in the Lord and give him glory and honor. Paul said, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice,” and, “Do all to the glory of God.”—Phil. 4:4; I Cor. 10:31

Habakkuk’s prayer contains much in the way of symbolic and figurative language, from which we may glean blessings by their interpretation. Yet the primary lesson he imparts to us is the very simple and plain statement of our Key Verse, “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD.” By going back to the previous chapter, we gain an insight as to why the prophet, and we likewise, can rejoice in the midst of trouble and distress.

In Habakkuk 2:1-3 we read, in part, “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, . . . And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables. . . . For the vision is yet for an

appointed time: . . . the just shall live by his faith.” It is the “vision” of truth—God’s plan of salvation—and our understanding of it, which allows us to rejoice at all times. These verses tell us that in order to understand this vision, we must be a faithful watcher, as Habakkuk evidently was. They further illustrate to us the importance of studying God’s Word, clearly and logically, for in the Bible is laid out God’s wonderful plan of the ages. This plan, indeed, is the central theme and testimony of the Scriptures.

The symbolic testimony of the Bible, such as given by Habakkuk and other writers, is meant to be understood only by those who “hath an ear” to hear and understand. (Rev. 3:22) Jesus said, during his earthly ministry, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” (Luke 10:21) Here we are told that God reveals his plans only to those who give evidence of purity and honesty of heart—traits found in babes. Only such can truly come to appreciate the words, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.” (Matt. 13:16) The eyes of our understanding must be opened before we can appreciate the “vision” the prophet spoke of, and have the rejoicing attitude he expressed. This understanding is made possible through the begetting and indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit.

Another use of figurative language in the Scriptures which we understand as part of our “vision” of truth is found in these statements of our Lord: “I am the vine, ye are the branches,” and “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep.” (John 15:5; 10:14) Jesus speaks here of his footstep followers as “branches” and “sheep,” and himself as the “vine” and “good shepherd.” Those branches and sheep who continually abide in the vine, and under the care of the good shepherd, will inherit the kingdom of heaven. Then, according to God’s “vision,” the whole world of mankind will have the opportunity of walking in “The way of holiness” in Messiah’s kingdom.—Isa. 35:5-10 ■