

Reading Paul from out of Habakkuk, both Hebrew and Greek

James Mauney

ABSTRACT: Sacred scrolls of the Hebrew Bible translated into the Greek language and proclaimed to the communities of Paul's churches were intentionally used by Paul to instruct those looking for the return of their risen Lord in final glory. Without the awareness of the Greek translation of Habakkuk, we miss the aspect that for Paul's original listeners, the Greek rendering of the divine promise in Habakkuk 2:4, "the one who is righteous from out of *my* faithfulness shall live," is what leads into the arguments that Paul makes about justification by faith (or "faithfulness" as Greek *pistos* may be translated). To the congregation that *knows* the Greek Habakkuk promise of God, Paul gets freed up to talk about the faithfulness of God demonstrated and exhibited in the faithfulness of Christ and communicated by the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit to be poured into the faithfulness of the church and the faithfulness of the believer so that they are connected by the undergirding divine promise from Habakkuk "from out my faithfulness." "From out of faithfulness" (ἐκ πιστεως) can include both God's "My faithfulness" and my personal human faith since both occur at the same time. This double resonance is allowed because the already known foundational faithfulness comes from the divinely promised "My faithfulness." Therefore, in Christ the righteousness of God is revealed—from out of faithfulness into faithfulness.

God's Promise of Faithfulness in Paul according to Greek Habakkuk

In Romans, an excited Paul chose the verse from the Greek Septuagint Habakkuk 2:4: "the one who is righteous from out of *my* faithfulness shall live." Why? The risen Christ had actually appeared to him: "the One who was righteous from out of the *faithfulness of God* actually lived!" The wording of Greek Habakkuk 2:4 had come true in his life.

The pre-Damascus trip Saul, who became the post-Damascus trip Paul, wrote, "It is now no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And this life I now live in the flesh, I live *in faith of the Son of God* who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20-21). This was a testimony of praise, heartfelt and life changing. The risen Lord now lived in Paul, and Paul now lived for him because Christ "died for all that they might live no longer for themselves, but for him who had died for them" (2 Cor 5:15).

In I Corinthians, Paul wrote that the risen Lord appeared to him. Acts declares that the appearance hit him all at once in a voice he heard and a brightness so intense it blinded him! Paul writes in Galatians that God revealed Jesus to him—interestingly, to the very one who was seeking to destroy the church of the Lord did the Lord of the church reveal Himself. Thereafter was fulfilled the statement, "God's wrath remembered mercy" (Greek Habakkuk 3:2), which inspired Paul to write, "the life I now live in the flesh I live in *faith of the Son of God* who loved me and gave himself for me." God's faithfulness to Jesus in raising Him from the dead had given life to the dead. God then reveals to Paul and the world that the dead, crucified, and accursed one was the risen and righteous One.

Saint Paul experienced the faithfulness of God in the appearance of the truly resurrected Jesus Christ to him! Paul never imagined such a transforming new understanding of God's faithfulness. He recognized that if he now had any human righteousness at all, it paled compared to the divine faithfulness and righteousness of Jesus Christ and His obedience to his Father. The event turned Paul's life around. He went from persecuting the gospel to running for the gospel.

Additionally, Paul remembered that wonderful promise of "*my faithfulness*"; he intentionally chose that phrase from the Greek text of Habakkuk 2:4 to become a foundation in his faith-filled writing because that personal promise Habakkuk seemed thoroughly to apply in his new life. From that point forward, Paul would have a righteousness based on that which comes from God's righteousness revealed and given in Jesus Christ's faithfulness.

Able to read and understand both the Hebrew and the Greek, Paul recognized the usefulness of both. As a Hebrew reader looking at the Hebrew translation of Hebrew Habakkuk 2:4, he recognized that he could use either the Hebrew letter "vav" or the Hebrew letter "ioda" to write: "*my faithfulness*" or "*his faithfulness*." Having been rescued with his life changed by the faithfulness of God in the revelation of the resurrected Jesus, there was no way he could understand the faithfulness in Habakkuk 2:4 other than via a God who rescued him in spite of Paul's righteous zeal. It was now all about the Greek Habakkuk's, "*my faithfulness*," i.e., God's, that had rescued him! Paul went from being a man with a foundation in the law based on his own righteousness to knowing a foundation of faithfulness lived from out of the righteousness of God, who was Jesus Christ crucified and raised from the dead. He went from being a Pharisee who knew of a hope in the resurrection to a Christian knowing the One who was actually resurrected.

Habakkuk's Prophecy in Paul's Letters

Paul witnessed the actual appearing of the Risen Christ, and, as such, the prophecy of Habakkuk is present in the letters of Paul. The prophecy in the Septuagint (LXX) scroll¹ inspired verses and images that Paul remembered as he wrote letters to the Galatians, Romans, and Philippians, and that text also influenced how he preached and wrote with the communities of his missionary journeys and likely even with most of the Jews he dialogued with outside of Jerusalem. The circulating scrolls of the Septuagint served as the primary and, in most places, only form of scripture, especially for the early church throughout the Roman Empire. It is most likely on his missionary journeys into Asia Minor and Greece that Paul's reading of the text of Habakkuk was likely from a Greek scroll. Additionally, it was unlikely that the people he encountered would have even understood a sentence of Hebrew any more than Christian congregations today.

Of particular note from the Greek Septuagint Habakkuk is one specific, unique phrase in 2:4b: "But the one who is righteous from out of *my* faithfulness shall live." In the Greek, it is a powerful promise of God. Paul uses it as his opening theme in Romans 1:17: "For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed *from out of* faithfulness *into* faith, as it is written, "the one who is righteous from out of faithfulness shall live."

In the Greek verse of Romans 1:17, πιστεως, *pisteos*, or in English, "of faithfulness" in the genitive case, appears twice: "from out of faithfulness into faith," and "for the one who is righteous from out of faithfulness shall live." In the translation of Romans 3:21-5:2, this peculiar form, *pisteos*, occurred 14 more times. It is a peculiar form because in what eventually became the entire Septuagint (4th century), which is more than four times as large as the New Testament, the phrase "ἐκ πιστεως,"

1. When I use the term Septuagint as a term of convenience for the time frame of Paul, I use it as a catch-all term for the Greek scrolls read as translations of the Hebrew Pentateuch, prophets, psalms, and wisdom that were in circulation during the time of Paul. The Septuagint of many scrolls written in Greek were gathered into great manuscripts in the fourth century, 325-360 CE. Eusebius of Caesarea wrote that Emperor Constantine commissioned fifty copies. People have wondered if the ancient manuscripts of Sinaiticus or Vaticanus were a part of this project. Greek scrolls that eventually were included in these gathered manuscripts of the fourth century CE were circulating from the mid third century BCE. These were primarily of the Pentateuch though the texts of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the book of the twelve prophets were circulating in the early second century BCE. Ben Sirach in his prologue in 132 BCE writes of his grandfather creating a Hebrew scroll of the twelve prophets. I will suggest that the Greek translation of Habakkuk could make sense to me translated during the harsh reign of Ptolemy Antiochus Epiphanies IV, 175-164 BCE. Apocalyptic literature like Daniel and I Enoch would begin arising in this time. The prophecy of the Hebrew prophet, Habakkuk, written in 603 BCE or so, offered a model of hope in a most difficult time for faith. I will be asserting that Greek scrolls of scripture would have been what was read and known to Paul's churches in 48-65 CE. "Septuagint" is not a fixed document but a term of convenience.

or “from out of my faithfulness,” only appears once in the Greek Habakkuk 2:4. Paul will use the rare Greek word form πιστεως 54 times in his letters and the rare phrase εκ πιστεως 17 times. The Romans 1:17 phrase “from out of faithfulness into faith” brings to mind an image of a great pitcher pouring (εκ: “from out of”) from out of its very contents (εις: “into”) into another pitcher, and the originating pitcher (εκ: another meaning of its use) is the God who in Habakkuk 2:4 promises that “the one who is righteous from out of my faithfulness shall live.”

The Hebrew text apparently appealed to the general human persistence in faith: “the one who is righteous in his faith shall live.” Alternatively, the Septuagint Greek text seemed to me the most powerful promise that God makes as it is a personal promise: “the one who is righteous from out of my faithfulness shall live.” That reading in the Greek Habakkuk 2:4 pertained also to reading Romans 3:21-5:11 and Galatians 1-3 and Philippians 3. Taking in view the whole book of Habakkuk in the Septuagint, other places appear in Habakkuk that seem to have caught Paul’s attention. Knowing that Paul would have known the whole prophecy of Habakkuk as well as the one verse 2:4, some connections of verses, phrases, and words from the whole prophecy of Habakkuk in Galatians and Romans become apparent. For Paul, the Septuagint’s image in Habakkuk 2:2-4 of a “vision” at a “kairos time,” of “one who runs with the vision” and thusly of “one who is righteous” by virtue of this powerful promise by God, and the reading of “from out of my faithfulness” as found only in the Greek Habakkuk 2:2-4 all stood out as meaningful scriptures for Paul.

Paul twice used the verse from Greek Habakkuk 2:4, once in Romans 1:17 and once in Galatians 3:11. Paul had in mind the whole verse of Habakkuk 2:4 from the Greek in the second chapter of Galatians. Paul was likely also impacted by the prophecy of Greek Habakkuk because of the frequency of his use of the genitive form, πιστεως. It appears twice in the whole Septuagint but 54 times in Paul’s letters. Four aspects regarding this usage become apparent and worth analyzing.

First is the reminder that in the time and place wherein Paul lived, the Septuagint scrolls were the primary Bible for the listeners of his letters in his churches. It would remain that way in the early church until the time of Jerome in the fifth century. Since the fifth century, the Western tradition of the Catholic Church has studied and translated almost exclusively from the Hebrew. The Septuagint is now seen as a secondary translation, but before the fifth century, the Christian churches outside of Judea and west of Syria most likely read from the Septuagint Greek scrolls that were available to them.

That fact changes how the original listeners of Paul’s letters heard “from out of faithfulness” from Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11. Upon hearing this read aloud in worship, they could likely have been reminded of “from out of my faithfulness” from Greek scrolls of Habakkuk 2:4. In Paul’s churches, whether from his preaching or his letter, Christians may have already known or heard that “the one who is righteous from out of my faithfulness shall live” as the default, familiar Greek rendering of Habakkuk 2:4. Paul was possibly banking on that familiar Greek translation of the Septuagint.

Second, certain parts within the Greek Habakkuk seem to appear within Paul's letters. There is not only the last half of a single verse (Habakkuk 2:4b) but large sections from all three chapters of Greek Habakkuk. As such, Paul was certainly influenced by the entire Habakkuk rather than just the second half of one verse.

Third is the πιστεως of God in the letters of Paul. The phrase εκ πιστεως μου, "the one who is righteous *from out of my faithfulness* shall live," was the commonly read and heard Habakkuk 2:4b. The Septuagint phrase εκ πιστεως, "from out of faithfulness," appears 18 times in the New Testament. The phrase does not appear in any of the four gospels, Acts, Letters of Peter, Letters of John, James, Jude, or Revelation. It appears 17 times in Paul's letters: nine times in Romans, seven times in Galatians, and one time in Philippians. It appears in only one other place in the New Testament, in Hebrews 10:38 as the writer recalls, unsurprisingly, Habakkuk 2:4.

Fourth is πιστεως in the life of God, the theological implications.

A History of Reception Reminder

The scrolls of the Septuagint were the main sources of scripture in the days of Paul across the vast majority of the Roman Empire. To know Paul as author is to read him just as a child raised in Tarsus, Cilicia, as a Greek speaker in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. It is possible that his mother, her mother, and perhaps four prior generations of his Jewish family had been hearing, reading, and worshipping the same scrolls that evolved into the Greek Septuagint. Perhaps, "from out of my faithfulness" from the Greek Habakkuk 2:4 had been a cherished promise of God for generations by the time of Paul's letters sent to Galatia and Rome.

Paul wrote letters to Christians with scriptures he believed would have been helpful to their circumstances. He picked from the available scrolls of the Septuagint for what inspired and informed him. It was Paul who found the promise from the Septuagint Habakkuk personally inspiring. The Greek of πιστεως μου, "of my faithfulness," provided to Paul the undergirding text of the divine fountainhead of faithfulness.

Members of his congregations knew Greek, so he had to make his arguments and his points in Greek. In order to ensure the opportunity for full understanding, Paul had to use Greek scrolls for people in the Greek language, culture, and context. "Jewish communities of the Diaspora considered the Greek text of the Septuagint (LXX) rather than the Hebrew text to be authoritative scripture. By the middle of the first century CE, large segments of the Christian Church employed this Greek translation as their Bible."² For Paul's original listeners, then, the Greek Septuagint scrolls were the default texts people would have known, read, and used.

2. George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Jewish Context of the New Testament," *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in 12 Volumes*, vol. VIII, p. 29. "The process for the Septuagint probably began not long after the time of Alexander the Great and continued with various

According to Acts 22:3, the young Pharisee Saul learned from Gamaliel in Jerusalem. Such a renowned rabbi enabled him to become a proficient reader of the Hebrew scrolls and a learned, zealous Pharisee who wrote and preached with a Hebrew covenantal Torah eye. Conversely, Paul the Apostle of Christ wrote and preached to his congregations often in the Greek rhetoric and always with the Greek language. His knowledge of both Greek and Hebrew enabled him to richly see in a double way every verse of scripture that he read and memorized. This knowledge allowed him to choose from both languages of scripture as he primarily preached while present among them. One-on-one conversations likely included excited and engaging phrases like, “the Hebrew scriptures actually say here in this verse.” In his letters and preaching, though, he could not use the Hebrew without having to stop and explain his reason for using it, just as a preacher would today. The normal written text was by far the Greek Septuagint scrolls. Today, we look to the Hebrew tradition as the known primary text, but Paul’s listeners came to Christian understanding through their dependable Spirit-inspired Septuagint scrolls.

Paul wants to intentionally use the Greek Habakkuk 2:4 with its essential $\epsilon\kappa$ $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ $\mu\omicron\upsilon$ to carry his message about the faithfulness and justifying righteousness of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This gets reinforced with the interesting fact that this language occurs predominantly in places where Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith is controversial. Significantly, human righteousness became an issue in Galatia, Philippi, and perhaps in Rome. Paul proclaimed to them that God’s righteousness had been revealed “through” ($\delta\iota\alpha$) the faithfulness and “from out of” ($\epsilon\kappa$) the faithfulness of Jesus Christ! *It is the faithfulness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ that is setting things right* (Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:21-22). Divine faithfulness and divine righteousness are at stake in Paul’s writings where Paul quotes from Habakkuk from which Paul wrote that Jesus Christ may be seen as the One who is Righteous, or as the One who is Faithful. He who has been crucified and raised is the Righteous One as the Faithful One.

In Paul writing the familiar $\epsilon\kappa$ $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ of Habakkuk 2:4 in the heart of his opening chapters of Romans and Galatians without the pronoun my, he might have grabbed his listeners’ attention regarding its absence. This may have also caused

revisions, (Theodotion and Aquila) into the second century CE. Although one purpose of the translation may have been to give access to the Jewish scriptures to non-Jews, the primary beneficiaries were Greek-speaking Jews, living outside the land of Israel. The Greek Bible, or Septuagint (meaning 70 for the 72 translators of the Aristis legend), was the Bible of the early Christians. While Jesus and the first Palestinian Christians probably did use the Hebrew Bible, as soon as Christianity moved beyond the land of Israel, the Greek Septuagint became the church’s Bible. However, there is evidence from Qumran of the use of the Greek Bible, even within the boundaries of Palestine. Most New Testament writers quoted the Bible according to the Septuagint version. And very quickly the early Christian evangelists and apologists use the Septuagint as the ‘quarry’ for their arguments to prove the truth of Christianity.” Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., “Introduction to the Canon,” *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in 12 Volumes*, vol. 1, p. 11.

surprise when he wrote of Jesus Christ as the visible, fleshly, faithfulness of God in Galatians 2:16 and Romans 3:22, which was grounded within their known scripture of LXX Habakkuk 2:4. Certainly, Paul's uses of the Greek Habakkuk 2:4 in Galatians 2 and of "from out of faithfulness into faith" in Romans 1:17 reveal his being influenced by its special wording. "From out of *my* faithfulness" is a promise from God now enacted and so revealed in Jesus Christ who was publicly exhibited as crucified. The crucified One now lives!

Paul's churches' view of the unique form of the Greek word for "of faithfulness," *pisteos*, as primarily a "faithfulness from out of Jesus Christ" is deeply dependent on the Greek understanding of Habakkuk 2:4. As such, the growing use of the Hebrew text in the Christian church from Jerome forward facilitated a shift toward an objective-genitive reading of *pistis Christou* in the Western Church tradition, as "faith in Christ." However, places of intense persecution, such as Thessalonica, required public commendation of their steadfastness, thus to the *πιστεως* that filled them with courage and witness in word and deed. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 5:24, Paul sought to assure them that they were yet in the faithfulness of God.

"My faithfulness" as used in the Greek Septuagint was the likely the translation known to Paul's congregations that he served, but I am also proposing that Paul represents Jesus to be the incarnation of "my faithfulness" promised by God in Habakkuk 2:4. Therefore, "ἐκ πιστεως μου" may also have been the well-known and default Greek text understanding that Paul brought to his preaching that his churches used, knew, believed, and served as the background understanding for his letters. Paul even likely wanted that common Greek understanding among his listeners to be the familiar promise of God's faithfulness even though the pronoun is omitted in both Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11. Paul wanted to insert Jesus Christ into the very place in Habakkuk 2:4 where the "my" pronoun designated a divinely powerful promiser. Jesus Christ is the "my faithfulness" of God, and the text of Greek Habakkuk becomes a true source for Paul's writing. This has been a history of reception reminder about the Greek language context of the Pauline congregations 40-65 AD. It is also an argument that Paul has been impacted by the prophecy of Habakkuk, and chooses the Greek Habakkuk translation to serve as background for some of his writing in Romans 1-8, Galatians 1-3, and Philippians 3.

How Greek Habakkuk Influenced Paul in His Ministry and Writing

The Habakkuk prophecy can be likened to an Oreo cookie, so to speak, with a promise about the faithfulness of God set between a coming invasion of judgement from the God of wrath and a coming invasion by the faithful God of hope. Between the imminent invasion of the Chaldeans in chapter 1 and the coming invasion of the saving God in chapter 3, Habakkuk speaks of a vision coming that the one who sees it should run with it. The present appears to be the time to be living by God's faithfulness in the interim time of chapter 2.

One wonders whether the translator of what became the Greek Habakkuk could have been translating within the violent reign of Ptolemy Antiochus Epiphanies IV (175-164 BCE) where receptivity for a Greek text in a Greek Jerusalem culture might provide hope for a difficult time bordering on the apocalyptic. Not only did Antiochus IV's invasion cause Judea to cry out to God for deliverance from such injustice, but Habakkuk 1 also provided much about a ruler's unjust cruelty. Afterward came the promise of a vision from God that seemed to point toward the tarrying amidst the rule of an arrogant one (Antiochus IV) against whom five woes in Habakkuk 2 would seem spot on, whose abominations in the holy of holies would surely call for a counter-invasion of a righteous, faithful YHWH in Habakkuk 3. Is the Greek translator making much of the Holy God's promised faithfulness versus an arrogant pagan king who believes himself divine, especially shown in the placing of swine upon the altar in the Jerusalem temple? Could the apocalyptic Paul have thought of these two invasions in Habakkuk for his time? Is not the prophecy about the justice and righteousness and faithfulness of God meant for just such an evil age? (Gal. 1:4).

That vision in Habakkuk 2 is of God looking for a runner to run with God's vision in the anticipation of a righteous one. Paul, in Philippians 3, employed the same Greek verb "pressing on to make it his own." Paul had more than a vision; he had a revelation of a risen Son of God. Perhaps Paul felt himself in an evil age between human invasions and awaiting the coming invasion of God to set all things right as his Lord returns in glory. J. Louis Martyn comments on Galatians 3:23-25:

To explicate the verb *apokalyphthenai*, "to reveal," Paul uses as a synonym the verb *erchomai*, "to come on the scene." And the result is startling, for it shows that Paul's apocalyptic theology, especially in Galatians, is focused on the motif of invasive movement from beyond ... in short, it is not as though, provided with a good religious foundation for a good religious ladder, one could ascend from the wrong to the right. Things are the other way around. God has elected to invade the realm of the wrong, the present evil age, by sending God's Son and the Spirit of the Son into it from outside. And it is in this apocalyptic invasion that God has liberated us from the powers of the present evil age again to deliver from slavery. Galatians is a particularly clear witness to one of Paul's basic convictions: the gospel is not about human movement into blessedness; it is about God's liberating invasion of the cosmos.³

Paul's revelation of apocalypse is not a disclosure of information in answering an epistemological question but a divine deed answering a burning question of theodicy: where on the earth is the righteousness/faithfulness of God?

Psalms 143:2—"for no one living is righteous before you"—was confessed in the temple, but the temple prophet in Habakkuk 1:1-13 doesn't sound like he

3. J. Louis Martyn, "The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians," *Interpretation* 53 (2000), pp. 254-255.

understands it yet. He cried to God about all the unrighteousness of others. “For the ungodly man prevails over the just; therefore perverse judgment will proceed” (1:4). “Wilt thou be silent when the ungodly swallows up the just” (1:13)? “Are you not from the beginning, O Lord God, my holy one? And surely we shall not die. Oh Lord, thou has established it for judgment, and he has formed me to chasten with his correction.” The Lord tells Habakkuk that the prophet’s land and temple are about to be invaded by the Chaldeans because of the very unrighteousness that Habakkuk described. God was indeed very aware of the ungodliness within Judea. Although a temple prophet, Habakkuk fails to see that even he is within the problem. Habakkuk, like Paul, is “living in this present evil age.” (Galatians 1:3). Romans 1:18-3:19 reads like Paul notices Habakkuk’s blindness: “We are all in league with the corrupted entities of this world and age deserving the wrath of God. Even the most righteous are not so before God” (Psalm 143:1-2, Romans 2:17-24). Paul turned to a solution apart from the Law (Romans 3:21-26), including a reminder in 3:23 that states, “for there is no distinction since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Chapter 1 of Habakkuk has three verbs of confinement:

1:4: περιέχω means to encircle or to besiege—“For the ungodly encompass, encircle the righteous.”

1:15: αγγρεύω means to be caught or trapped—“They catch them in their net.”

1:9: αιχμαλωσια means captivity or imprisonment in 1:9—“They shall gather the captivity like sand.”

The present power of the ungodly and unrighteous in the land of Judah now encompass the righteous. The approaching invasion and reign of the Chaldeans will indeed encircle, besiege, catch, capture, take into captivity.

Paul also writes of two kinds of invasion as well. For Paul, scripture had imprisoned people under the power of sin (Galatians 3:22), and sin reigned in death (Romans 5:17). Also, people were guarded and shut in by their guardian, the Law. Additionally, God had imprisoned all in disobedience so that he could be merciful to all (Romans 11:33). Those like Paul caught in the apocalyptic certainty of God’s coming wrath can identify with the writer of Habakkuk who knew of the coming wrath of the Chaldean invasion. They, too, were trapped in their land with nowhere to go to avoid the coming inescapable horror when it finally came.

“Behold you despisers and look, and wonder marvelously, and vanish: for I work a work in your days, which you will in nowise believe, though a man declare it to you.” Paul appears to be also making this point with excitement in Romans 1:1-4: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David, according to the flesh, and was declared to be Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom we

have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ!" Is this not a proclamation that makes one wonder marvelously? Is it not so wonderful that "you will in nowise believe" unless "from out of (my) faithfulness into (your) faith," faith is declared and given (Romans 1:17)?

Compare the Greek and Hebrew of Habakkuk 2:2-3:

Hebrew: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay."

Greek: "Write the vision, plainly on a tablet, that he that reads it may run (διωκω). For the vision is yet for a time (καιρος), and it shall shoot forth at the end, and not in vain; though he tarry, wait for him: for *he will surely come* and will not tarry."

In considering how Paul appropriated these ideas, one must ask if he was drawn by a vision (gospel) to an appointed time as he had been personally encountered by the coming (righteous) one (Galatians 1:12; 1 Cor 15:8) and so he had been running with a new vision of God (Phil 3:12-14). With his apocalyptic hope, Paul made the most of both translations as he named God's *kairos* time in Jesus Christ. It was more than a vision; it was a gospel that "is the power of salvation for the Jew first and then the Gentile" (Romans 1:16). Paul knew the faithfulness of God in the "revelation" (Galatians 1:12, 16) of the crucified and *risen* Lord of Life to him. Paul *knows* the one who has been *raised* from the dead who had appeared to him (1 Cor 15:8) and who is coming again in the end time (1 Corinthians 15). And Paul saw himself as one who was sent to run/pursue/press on (διωκω) with this gospel (Philippians 3:12-14) because the first installment of the *kairos*, the appointed time, had come (Romans 3:25).

Thus, Habakkuk 2:4 is more than a proof text. Paul used it twice, once in Romans 1:17 and once in Galatians 3:11. It is a lens through which Paul sees the gospel. "The one who is righteous from out of *my* faithfulness shall live." Greek Habakkuk 2:4b is a covenantal promise of hope. It is an image of receiving, like a larger pitcher of faithfulness pouring into a lesser pitcher that can then also be a pitcher for another. "For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from out of faithfulness (*ek*) into faith (*eis*)" (Romans 1:17). If only such a promise of God's faithfulness could be seen, embodied, and revealed! "Paul wrote that it was being revealed "from out of Jesus Christ's faithfulness" (Galatians 2:16).

The whole verse includes the warning about "shrinking back." God will not be pleased by a runner who "shrinks back" from running with the vision. Paul used this verb for shrinking back (υποστειλλω) only one time in all of his letters to his congregations, in Galatians 2:12: "but when Cephus came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; for until certain people came

from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he *shrank back* (υποστειλλω) and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction.” Paul used this very verb to describe Peter’s apostolic failure. Two verses later comes the second half of the verse: “but we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so *that we may be made righteous from out of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.*”

The two phrases within Greek Habakkuk 2:4 had been used most powerfully by Paul in Galatians 2:12-2:16. This was a purely Greek Septuagint reading. The Hebrew of Habakkuk 2:4 reads, “Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the one who is righteous lives in his faithfulness.” However, the literal Greek wording reads, “If he should shrink back (υποστειλλω), my soul has no pleasure in him: but the one who is righteous from out of *my* faithfulness shall live.” Peter was a “runner” of the vision/gospel who was “shrinking back” from fear. Paul had intentionally used the first half of the Greek Habakkuk 2:4, the shrinking back, but in the Greek Habakkuk 2:4, there is either retreat or advance. There is retreating under God’s displeasure or advancing with life by the faithfulness of God. Paul, therefore, decided to be a runner advancing the gospel to all. Two verses later, Paul wrote the second half of Habakkuk 2:4 with a surprising new twist in Galatians 2:16: “We ourselves are Jews by birth, and not Gentile sinners, yet we know that a man [the issue is circumcision] *is made righteous* not from out of doing works but through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, because one will not be made righteous from out of doing works, but *from out of Jesus Christ’s faithfulness!*” The pronoun “my” has been embodied with *Jesus Christ* in the promising of God’s faithfulness through the gospel.

The full Septuagint Greek verse of Habakkuk 2:4 gets enacted in Galatians 2:11-16 but with a surprise ending. The listeners may even know Paul is inserting “Jesus Christ” into a beloved verse, as if John 3:16 now began, “for Jesus Christ so loved the world.” Paul’s listeners, hearing the verse from God promising “the one who is righteous from out of my faithfulness shall live” hear instead as Paul’s letter is read that “the one who is righteous from out of Jesus Christ’s faithfulness shall live.”

Paul’s whole intent in Galatians 2:16 in employing Habakkuk 2:4 concerns being made righteous from out of faithfulness and to live righteously because of faithfulness. Paul had the full attention of his listeners with this surprising change. With the preposition *δια*, they are hearing of “divine faithfulness” relocated in a Christologically historical and visible agent whose name is Jesus the Christ through whom the same divine source of God’s promise of faithfulness in Habakkuk 2:4 comes to the world. Paul was not replacing God’s faithfulness; he was naming its historical embodiment. Paul intended a movement within Galatians 2:16. God is mediating His own faithfulness through/by the means of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection is of the same divine faithfulness that comes from out of *my faithfulness* in Habakkuk 2:4. Faith has a divine source, as in Psalm 36:10: “For with you is the fountain of Life, in your Light we see light.”

Jesus did not shrink back but “gave himself for our sins” (Galatians 1:4), “was publicly exhibited as crucified” (Galatians 3:1), “redeemed us from the curse of the

Law by becoming a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13), and was “raised from the dead” (Galatians 1:1) and now lives as the enacted faithfulness of God of Habakkuk’s 2:4. Jesus is very God from very God, poured from one pitcher into another pouring pitcher from the very source of life as in Romans 1:17: “from out of faithfulness into faith.” Paul interpreted Habakkuk 2:4’s “from out of my faithfulness” as “from out of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ;” this is a “very God of very God” proclamation. In Romans 3:21-26, Paul named Jesus as the revealed righteousness of God, as the holy Ark of the Covenant’s mercy seat, effective through the faithfulness effective in his blood, and providing the redemption of God for ones who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The Son of God was faithfully obedient for sinners. Romans 1:17 proclaims that this divine faithfulness of Jesus Christ) is poured from out of that faithfulness into our faith. Our personal faith is not independently made by us but has a divine source as it is a divine gift. Like Galatians 2:20, it has a life that fills us. Like Romans 5:5, it has been poured into us. At the appointed time, the *kairos*, Christ died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6). As in Galatians 3:24–26, “therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be made righteous (ἐκ πίστεως) from out of (Jesus’) faithfulness. Now that the faith (of Jesus) has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus, all are children of God (ἐκ πίστεως) from out of (Jesus’) faithfulness in this evil age between the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus to His coming again in glory.

Note the sudden shift between LXX Habakkuk 2:4 and 2:5. 2:4 ends: “But the one who is righteous from out of my faithfulness shall live.” 2:5 begins, “ But the arrogant man and the scorner, the boastful man, shall not finish anything; who has enlarged his desire as the grave, and like death, he is never satisfied, and he will gather to himself all the nations, and will receive to himself all the peoples.” What then follows in chapter 2 of Habakkuk are five woes. This verse is jarring and is a shocking change from a most positive, hopeful, heartwarming message to the dire opposite. Paul used just such a sudden shift with Romans 1:16-18: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is God’s saving power for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is being revealed from out of faithfulness into faith, as it is written, ‘The one who is righteous will live by faith. For the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those who by their injustice suppress the truth.’” Is this a literary technique learned from Habakkuk?

The Prayer or Psalm of Habakkuk 3:2-19 is a masterful song recalling the faithfulness of God. The temple prophet before the people of Judah rallied their hope in the faithfulness of their God by quoting phrases from verses of the nation’s scriptural history. God, the warrior for Judah, was on the move coming up from the south, from out of the wilderness, out of Sinai, with reminders of God’s mighty plagues, the Red Sea, the blessing of Moses, Deuteronomy 32, the Song of Moses, the Deuteronomy 30 blessing, the Song of Deborah, the Song of Hannah, the rout of Gideon, the Song of David, Psalm 18 and the rescue of David, Psalm 114 and the wonders of the Exodus, Psalm 77 and the deliverance from Egypt, Psalm 44, and

a prayer of national lament. It compressed the wilderness march with Sinai, the Exodus, the Conquest, Judges, and David's Royal victory in only 19 verses. It is a psalm about the righteous who shall live from out "of my faithfulness." Paul could see in this prayer of Habakkuk how the quoting of scripture from all its variety of settings, history, events, songs, prayers, laments, triumphs, images, and characters of faith not only moved the soul of the reader but centered the reader within the faithfulness of a living, rescuing God and in the tradition of the faithful.

The greatest diversion of the Greek from the Hebrew takes place in Habakkuk 3:2. The Hebrew reads: "Oh Lord, I have heard of your renown, and I stand in awe, O Lord, of your work. In our own time, revive it; in our own time, make it known; in wrath, may you remember mercy." The Greek reads: "Oh, Lord, I have heard your report, and was afraid: I considered your works, and was amazed: you will be known in the midst of the two living creatures, you will be acknowledged when the years draw nigh; you will be manifested when the time is come; when my soul is troubled, you will in wrath remember mercy."

In the unpointed ancient text, the Hebrew word, שנים, looks the same for "years" and the number, "two." The Hebrew letters in ancient texts have no break between letters and words. Averselooklikethis. The Hebrew verb meaning "to revive" and the Hebrew adjective "living" are thought to have been changed by a misreading or a miscopying of a text. The beginning of Habakkuk's psalm describing a theophany. Could that call to mind theophonic words and images from Ezekiel 1 (ζωωνη) "living ones" and Exodus 25 (the description of the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant as between two cherubim) to influence a Jewish scribe translating Hebrew Habakkuk (603 BC) into Greek Habakkuk (180-150 BC)? While the Hebrew text used for translation is now unknown, the three primary uncials (Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus) provide a unanimous witness to a Greek tradition that replaces the Hebrew temporal reference ("midst of years") with a specific theophanic image: God being revealed "between two living beings." While they contain minor scribal variations, they are in total agreement regarding the expanded liturgical structure of the prayer and its emphasis on God's manifestation in the midst of turmoil. This section could certainly be a reference to the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. Habakkuk 3 is a psalm about Yahweh, the faithful warrior for Israel. When leading soldiers into the fray of battles Joshua, the tribes of Israel, and King David all brought the Ark of the Covenant.

A Jewish scribe/teacher of scripture from Jerusalem, who was called to be a translator of the Hebrew scriptures for the coming project of the Septuagint, remembered the Ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies, perhaps that it had even disappeared following the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians during the prophet Habakkuk's time. It was this translator, therefore, who noticed that the phrase "in the midst of the years" could also be translated "in the midst of the two living ones." Did a resident of Jerusalem seeing the reference to the temple in possession of God's Ark of power in Habakkuk's time (603 BC) but knowing the

sadness of that Ark of the Covenant with its mercy seat gone in 180 BC recognize within the Hebrew a possible wording about the hope of the return of such a mercy seat in the coming faithful movement of God? Did it not make sense for the coming invasion of God to have the Ark of the Covenant involved since the psalm of Habakkuk includes the hallmarks of Israel's great moments of victory over its enemies as the Ark was carried into its battles, thus revealing the very presence of God going before the army of Israel? Did Paul see the wording as a lamentation and a defiant word about the mercy seat of the Ark of the covenant?

In Romans 3:22-25, Paul wrote, "For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a *mercy seat* by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to demonstrate at the present time his own righteousness, so that he is righteous and he justifies the one who has the faithfulness from out of Jesus." The evangelist John, in all his "I Am" statements, referenced Jesus as the navel of the earth, the place where heaven and earth touch. Paul did the same when he named Jesus as the mercy seat of the Ark of the covenant where God revealed himself, spoke with Moses/high priest, and forgave the sins of Israel between the two cherubim (Exodus 25:17-22; Leviticus 16:13-15; Numbers 7:89). Thus, I Corinthians 1:30, "He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

A gut wrenching appearance of God in Habakkuk's life is found in Habakkuk 3:16: "I watched, and my belly trembled at the sound of the prayer of my lips, and trembling/terror entered into my bones, and my frame was troubled within me; I will rest in the day of affliction, from going up to the people of my sojourning." Did such a verse cause St. Paul to reflect upon "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12) made known to him? Did it recall an incident as in the book of Acts 9? What was the appearance of Jesus to Paul like (I Corinthians 15:8; I Corinthians 9:1)? Would he have contrasted such an episode of Habakkuk with his own glorious experience (2 Corinthians 12:1-7)? Was it such an experience that he wrote of it as Jesus "making me his own" (Philippians 3:12)? Did Habakkuk's own experience with God remind Paul of his own revelation from his risen Lord Jesus?

The closing of LXX Habakkuk 3:18-19 reads: "The Lord God is my strength, and he will perfectly strengthen my feet; he mounts me upon high places, that I may conquer by his song." This glorious statement of God's faithfulness undergirding hope is prefaced by "for the fig tree shall bear no fruit, and there shall be no produce on the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall produce no food: the sheep have failed from the pasture, and there are no oxen at the cribs" (Habakkuk 3:17). The joy following this verse prefaced by such hardship reminds of the way Paul wrote in Romans 8:36-37. Romans 8:36 quotes Psalm 44:22 from the Septuagint: "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted

as sheep to be slaughtered.” Romans 8:37 follows: “No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” LXX Habakkuk says “that I may conquer by His song.” Romans 8:37 says “we are *more* than conquerors” as Paul seems to take the prophet’s “conquer” νικᾶω and ramp it up: “we are υπερνικᾶω,” hyper-conquerors through him who loved us. This is the only place in the New Testament where υπερνικᾶω appears.

Habakkuk 3:19 in the Hebrew makes no mention about conquering by a “song.” Rather, the verse reads: “God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer and makes me tread upon the height. To the leader: with stringed instruments.” Paul, therefore, uses the Septuagint verse, “that I may conquer by His song,” instead of referring to the “stringed instruments.”

Many have noticed that Paul was influenced by the last half of Habakkuk 2:4. But we have now seen much from Habakkuk’s three chapters that may have caught Paul’s eye, heart, and faith.

In three places from LXX Habakkuk, the Greek and Hebrew are very different: Habakkuk 2:2-4, 3:2, and 3:19. In all three, Paul uses the imagery or words from the Greek Habakkuk translation within his letters. Habakkuk 2:4 will serve as background for Romans 1:17; Habakkuk 3:2 for Romans 3:21-26; and Habakkuk 3:18-19 for Romans 8:31-38. They are part of the scaffolding of Romans. How, then, does Paul make use of the Greek word, πιστεως, from Habakkuk 2:4 in the Septuagint translation?

Πιστεως in the Letters of Paul

“The one who is righteous from out of *my* faithfulness shall live.” Paul presupposes the Greek Habakkuk 2:4b as his grounding verse of promise for everyone. God is the source of righteousness, faithfulness, and life. God is the headwaters of the faithfulness that flows (εκ) from pitcher (εις) to pitcher. Humans are not creating faith on their own. It is infused as they are responding to the call of the God who calls into being what does not as yet exist (Romans 4:15) through the preached gospel as described in Galatians 3:2 and 3:5. More than Habakkuk’s assertion of a promise, though, it is now an accomplished rescue in the midst of the present evil age for all those believing, those clothed in the faithfully righteous Christ, and even all those consigned to disobedience who shall live from out of God’s great mercy through and from out of Jesus Christ (Romans 11:32).

While εκ πιστεως μου (from out of my faithfulness) never appears in any of his letters, Paul presents faithfulness in multiple connected ways, articulating the faithfulness that originates in God to reach the otherwise faithless. Paul wrote about the faithfulness of God, the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit, the faithfulness of the church, the faithfulness of believers, and the obedience of faith, all of which originated from the promise in the Greek Habakkuk 2:4b εκ πιστεως μου.

Paul clearly did not lift up a new cultural religion because to Paul, God is God for all (Romans 1:19-21). The risen Jesus actually encountered Paul. Paul experienced the true new reality that Jesus Christ, who was crucified, is alive and appeared in order to forgive him, save him, and call him. In Romans 3:3-5 Paul, therefore, asked, “what if some (what if ALL) are faithless? Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? Certainly not! Although every human is a liar, let God be proved true.” God fulfills God’s promises!

Paul recognized that the Greek Habakkuk 2:4b expressed that *the One who was truly righteous lived from out of the very faithfulness of the Father and Holy Spirit*, and by his resurrection is indeed now alive. Knowing that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead changed everything for Paul, and Paul believed that was true for everyone. Likewise, because Jesus Christ is Lord and risen from the dead, the meanings of all the verses of scripture that he quotes are reframed. They no longer mean the same because now there is the only God of this universe, revealed among us in the truly risen Lord, a crucified and risen Lord. God has invaded this world with a “No!” to sin, evil, and death and a “Yes!” to the redemption of those imprisoned under their powers. In the world of evil, Jesus is for Jew and Gentile, slave or free, women and men. Each person is no longer an idle tale but part of the story and reality from God’s faithfulness through Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thence through the church. For Paul, then, Habakkuk 2:4 connected God’s faithfulness coming through the gospel into the believer’s faithfulness in every part and every second of life.

For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is now revealed, from out of faithfulness into faith:

- From out of the faithfulness of God the Father into Christ, very God of very God
- From out of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ’s obedience and
- From out of the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
- In order to save us from sin and the the wrath of God and to reconcile us to God
- Poured into the faithfulness of Paul
- From out of Paul’s preaching the faithfulness of God
- Poured into his congregations, the church,
- all the way down to me, generation upon generation.

In Paul’s personal letters, in each occurrence of this unique Greek scripture word “πιστεως,” it is possible that Paul takes readers back to Habakkuk’s originating and grounding. For Paul, πιστεως remains a unique and pregnant Greek word used intentionally to proclaim the “my faithfulness” of God obediently embodied in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, *happening now*. In the hearing of it, God forgives, redeems, encounters, loves, and beckons listeners to respond and participate with “faithfulness” (both God’s and mine) in the gospelizing of others with the same

divine intention of calling neighbors into the blessing of Abraham and the promise of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 3:14). ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ is the preached gospel word, revealed, handed down, heard, participated within, and confessing the originating faithfulness of God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In Jesus, Christians see “the One who is righteous,” but His death also reveals our truly being part of the daily ongoing crucifying, the ongoing sin, and the ongoing killing of God’s love. The cross of Christ reveals the ongoing failure to love God and love one’s neighbor, those “other” than the self. His death was a death for all our rejection of the “other” in thought, word, and deed. The divine died for all mortals to give them eternal life yet the love for God and regard for “others” constantly comes up lacking in our own thoughts, words, and deeds.

In this daily, difficult time of living, in this evil age, wherever it is difficult to see the justice of God, wherever it is difficult to talk about the righteousness of God, Habakkuk 1 persists: “why *do* the ungodly prevail over the One who is righteous?” How will the divine faithfulness give life to my own faithlessness? Paul writes that *now* the sought for righteousness of God comes on the scene to be revealed in the faithfulness of Jesus, effective through his blood, to save us from the wrath of God, Jesus, whom God in faithfulness raised from the dead so that Jesus shall forever surely live in us and for the world (Galatians 2:16, Romans 3:22-26; Romans 5:5-10)! Jesus, the my faithfulness from God, becomes my faithfulness even as my own life reveals far more of my own faithlessness than a corresponding faithfulness. Yet sinful children of Adam become children of God in Christ (Romans 5:12-21). In Adam, we were of dust, but in Christ, we are of heaven (1 Cor 15:42-49).

We see in Jesus’s life the love of God and love of neighbor faithfully lived out even to His death for our sin under deserved wrath so that in his surprising resurrection, the very faithfulness of God in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit provided the vision of Habakkuk, the embodied remedy by God in our experience of sinful mortality. The promise is vouchsafed that through the faithfulness and righteousness of Jesus, the Son emptying himself in order to truly die our sinful death. From out of God’s faithfulness, “for our sake, he who knew no sin became sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21), the Lord gave His life that we might finally live.

Romans 10:6, with its apparently active faithfulness in English, offers a righteousness that comes “ἐκ πίστεως,” from a pitcher already filled with another’s faith. “The word of faithfulness (πίστεως) that we already proclaimed to you, is poured into you” (Romans 10:8). Therefore, 10:9 is not an “if” one believes but rather a strong “since” one believes, he will be saved. It is not humanly generated but a “πίστεως,” the faithfulness from out of God pouring in the believer’s faith. 10:17, “so the faith is coming from what is being heard because the hearing is through the word of Christ.” Just so in Galatians 3:2 and 3:5, it is “from out of hearing faithfulness” (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως). The gospel has externally come to us in the news of the saving

faithfulness/obedience for us of Jesus, even to his death on the cross and vindicated by his resurrection and exaltation.

The mystery concerns those who do not believe from hearing. From God's faithfulness, faith is poured into a believer. For Paul, the mystery lies in the failure to receive faith, but Paul ends his argument with this articulation of the mystery: "For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that God may be merciful to all" (Romans 11:32). This is a direct quote from the Greek Isaiah 55, but could this also allude to Greek Habakkuk 3:2? "O Lord, I have heard your report, and was afraid: I considered your works, and was amazed: you will be known between the two living creatures, you will be acknowledged when the years draw nigh; you will be manifested when the kairós is come; when my soul is troubled, you will in wrath remember mercy."

ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ is a gospel word pregnant with the faithfulness of God as the fountain of faithfulness establishing divine presence through the Son and Spirit for Paul and for all who believe and hear. As there is something in the pouring pitcher, there is someone in the preaching. The illustrating image is the pouring "from out of" a pitcher "into" another pitcher, then "into" another pitcher, then "into" another pitcher right up to right now, this appointed time. For in this gospel, the righteousness of God is being revealed "from out of faithfulness into faithfulness." Paul certainly sustains Habakkuk's promise of divine faithfulness, calling God "faithful" five more times in his letters: in Romans 3:3, the faithfulness of God will prevail; in 1 Corinthians 1:9, from God's faithfulness, you were called, drawn into the fellowship of Jesus Christ; in 1 Corinthians 10:13, God is faithful and will not be absent in the testing and trials in this world; in 2 Corinthians 1:18, as God is faithful, who rescued us over and over, so we are faithful to you; and in 1 Thessalonians 5:1, the One who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

In Romans, Paul would quote this verse, "the one who is righteous from out of faithfulness shall live." Maybe some of his Greek speaking listeners would hear the phrase and wonder why the pronoun "my" was dropped when Paul was quoting that familiar phrase. Certainly, it could catch their attention that the *my* was missing from faithfulness, and the surprising wording within Romans 1:17 would have likely made them suspicious. So, the question about that missing "my" remained in their minds until they heard at length that even with the help of the Law, we shall never be righteous or faithful enough. Indeed, "For no human will be justified before him by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). Yet only to continue: "But now! Apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been made revealed to us and is witnessed to by the Law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ into all who are believing" (Romans 3:21-22).

Is Paul is attempting to describe the experience of "Aha! Ohhhhh!" when the gospel hits home and is heard in the heart? Paul lets the familiar Greek Habakkuk 2:4b "ἐκ πίστεως μου" remain an undergirding divine promise so that the omission

of the divine “my” allows for the concrete specification of it. Habakkuk’s divine promise gets lived out among us in Jesus as the One who is righteous for us in the living out the promised “my faithfulness” of God. Paul wants Christians who already know their faith is being built upon the faithfulness of God to also know that nothing will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, for in Him we are more than conquerors on account of his loving enactment of divine faithfulness.

The ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ of God

From his own words, there was a special divine revelation (Galatians 1:12; 1:15-16), a seeing, an appearance of the risen Lord (1 Corinthians 1:9; 15:8) such that a zealous Jew based in the Law (Philippians 3:4-6) now became filled with the life of Jesus, thus wanting to know more deeply this crucified and risen Lord Jesus (Philippians 3:7-14; Galatians 2:19-20). Paul lived from out of that divine faithfulness with great joy and certainty (2 Corinthians 12:1-4) in that it was grounded from out of the faithfulness of God through and by means of Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:16; Galatians 2:20; Romans 3:21-26), whose enacted love had poured into the heart of Paul (1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Romans 1:16-17; Romans 3:21-26; Romans 5:1-11) so that he was now pouring the faithful love of God into his listeners by his gospelizing preaching and presence among them: *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν*, from out of the faithfulness of God/through Jesus Christ into believers (Romans 1:17; Galatians 2:16, 3:22-27; 2 Corinthians 4:7-15; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21).

The apostle would have thusly confessed: “My faithfulness comes from your faithfulness, O God (LXX Habakkuk 2:4). Your faithfulness in Jesus Christ has been revealed to me (Galatians 1:12, 1:15-16, 2:16). I now know that Jesus is not dead, but is alive and even has appeared to me (1 Corinthians 15:8), who now lives in me (Galatians 2:20), who is your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30), who loves me, and whose Spirit has been poured into me (Romans 5). You, Lord, have sent me running with more than a vision (Habakkuk 2:3, Galatians 2:2) for it is also a gospel declaration (Galatians 2:16, Romans 3:21-26), the word of God that creates human participation in it (2 Corinthians 5:21; 4:7-15). For you have called us into your life and service and you will keep us sound in spirit and body and blameless until the coming of our Lord. You are faithful, and you will do this! (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24). From out of your faithfulness into my faithfulness, I shall live (Romans 1:17, LXX Habakkuk 2:4). And I will exult and conquer in your song (LXX Habakkuk 3:18-19). For in you, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.... Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord!” (Romans 8:37-39).

Promissio

A Journal of Confessing Theology



A Call for Papers

Promissio seeks submissions for the upcoming issues:

Volume 1, No. 4 (Autumn 2026):

How do creeds and confessions provide
the grammar of the scriptural language of faith?

Volume 2, No. 1 (Winter 2027):

The doctrine and proclamation of the Fatherhood of God

Volume 2, No. 2 (Spring 2027):

The doctrine and proclamation of the divine Sonship of the man Jesus

Volume 2, No. 3 (Summer 2027):

The doctrine and proclamation of the personhood of the Holy Spirit

Volume 2, No. 4 (Autumn 2027):

The doctrine and proclamation of the Holy Trinity

All submissions should be emailed to the General Editor

All accepted authors will need an account at promissio.ilt.edu

Please see the Submissions Guidelines there for important information!

All questions can be directed to:

Paul R. Hinlicky, General Editor

phinlicky@ilt.edu