

What does it mean to us when God speaks to us?

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 3:1-2

This is a complex question that would require many messages because God has spoken to us about many things.

- God's Word can bring us wonder and delight (Psalm 1:1-2; 119:24,129,162).
- God's Word can bring us joy, comfort, and encouragement (Psalm 119:49-50,52; 130:5; Jeremiah 15:16; I Thessalonians 1:6; I John 1:4).
- God's Word can make us grateful (Psalm 119:62,164).
- God's Word can bring us to a place of humility and self-examination (Psalm 19:7-14; 139:23-24; Hebrews 4:12-13).
- God's Word can bring us to repentance and action (Psalm 119:101-102,105-106,112; Romans 16:25-26; I Thessalonians 1:5-10; II Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:22-25).

But today's message is about the Word of God bringing fear (Psalm 119:161).

In view of the persecutions of powerful earthly leaders, the psalmist's heart "stands in awe of" or "trembles at" the word of God (Hebrew = *"to fear, tremble, revere, dread; to be in awe"* cp. Matthew 10:28). See also Isaiah 66:1-2; Amos 3:8; Acts 24:24-25. To encourage the fear of God and His Word isn't the most popular subject today. Many ministries are focused on getting people to be happy. But God knows that we must be holy before we can experience His kind of happiness (John 15:5-11). As the old hymn says, *"'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved..."* See Proverbs 9:10; Psalm 111:10; II Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:28-29.

Habakkuk lived and ministered at a time when the Assyrian Empire was ending, and the Babylonian Empire was ascending. Josiah, king of Judah, was a good and godly king, who helped to turn Judah back to the ways of the Lord. He reversed many of the idolatrous practices, which previous kings had implemented. Sadly, Josiah died in battle and the nation quickly went back to its old idolatrous ways. Amos was crying out for revival. He was burdened that God had not corrected the people and caused them to stay with the Lord's ways. With destruction all around them, as one empire is destroying another, Habakkuk is concerned for the spiritual and moral fiber of their nation. God is going to chasten them with an ungodly nation (Babylon) unless they repent (Jeremiah 25:1-11). The most well-known passage in the book of Habakkuk is Habakkuk 2:4, where we are told, *"...The just (i.e., the righteous person) shall live by his faith."* See Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38.

The third chapter of Habakkuk is a prayer. It has three basic parts:

- Prayer for Mercy – Habakkuk 3:1-2
- Pondering the ways of God – Habakkuk 3:3-16
- Praise with Uncircumstantial / Unconditional Love and Devotion – Habakkuk 3:17-19

Consider Habakkuk 3:2. Here are some questions to ask ourselves:

- Does God's judgment (on us personally and on others) concern us? Do we ever fear or tremble at His Word?
- Is it God's work that we want revived? Or is it our work that we want restored and blessed?
- Do we want God to reveal truth to our minds and hearts? Are we willing to be corrected?
- Do we acknowledge and confirm God's justness and His right to pour out wrath and condemnation on sin?
- Are we truly seeking the mercy of the Lord? Or are we just hoping to work things out and make it better by our own efforts?

See Psalm 90:1-17; 139:23-24; Daniel 9:1-12

Consider Habakkuk 3:17-19. Is our love and devotion to God Uncircumstantial / Unconditional?

If God were to bring bad times into our world / our life, would we still love Him, trust Him, and desire Him? See Psalm 73:23-26 cp. II Chronicles 7:13-14.