

HABAKKUK

just living by faith

March 22, 2009



God answers Habakkuk with two promises—life for those who put their faith in God and woes for those who put their faith elsewhere.

Habakkuk 2:2-20

2 Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. 3 For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. 4 "See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright-- but the righteous will live by his faith--5 indeed, wine betrays him; he is arrogant and never at rest. Because he is as greedy as the grave and like death is never satisfied, he gathers to himself all the nations and takes captive all the peoples.

6 "Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn, saying, "Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion! How long must this go on?" 7 Will not your debtors suddenly arise? Will they not wake up and make you tremble? Then you will become their victim. 8 Because you have plundered many nations, the peoples who are left will plunder you. For you have shed man's blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them. 9 "Woe to him who builds his realm by unjust gain to set his nest on high, to escape the clutches of ruin! 10 You have plotted the ruin of many peoples, shaming your own house and forfeiting your life. 11 The stones of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it. 12 "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by crime! 13 Has not the LORD Almighty determined that the people's labor is only fuel for the fire, that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing? 14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. 15 "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies. 16 You will be filled with shame instead of glory. Now it is your turn! Drink and be exposed! The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory. 17 The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, and your destruction of animals will terrify you. For you have shed man's blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them. 18 "Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that teaches lies? For he who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak. 19 Woe to him who says to wood, Come to life!" Or to lifeless stone, Wake up!" Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it. 20 But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him."

Promise of a Revelation vs 2-3

Promise of Woes vs 6-20

Promise of Life vs 4-5

Practical for Our Lives

Other than in God, in what are you tempted to put "faith"? What is the outcome that God promises for that misplaced faith?

Where Do I Grow from Here? (Personal and Growth Group Questions)

You and others will benefit most by recording your answers in advance of your Growth Group meeting.

Growth Group Questions

Interact

- 1) For what is it toughest for you to wait lately? dinner? bus/BART? commuter traffic? a buyer? Christmas? a doctor's callback? retirement? an empty nest? a birthday? vacation? *other*?

Observe and Interpret

The Promise of a Revelation v 2-3

- 2) What does God begin to say to Habakkuk? What is Habakkuk supposed to do with the vision? What is said about it?
- 3) What might the vision be? (v 4-5? the woes? the whole book of Habakkuk? something else?)
- 4) "God may seem to be *late*, but is invariably *on time*"--Would Habakkuk agree? Would you? How might God measure "time"?

The Promise of Life v 4-5

- 5) What is the contrast in verse 4?
- 6) From what does "living by faith" protect?
- 7) How is the *puffed up* further described in verse 5?
- 8) True or false, what is faith?
 - a) *very, very strong feelings of hopefulness*
 - b) *hope that you've been good enough for God to ignore your mistakes and misdeeds*
 - c) *confidence in God'--even if things go poorly*
 - d) *a way of life*
 - e) *required by God in order to please Him*
 - f) *belief that God rewards those who seek Him*
 - g) *trust in the basic goodness of humanity*
 - h) *for Habakkuk, a confidence that God will not let any of the Jews die (v 12)*
- 9) In what does the *puffed up* put "faith"?

The Promise of Woes v 6-20 (Fill out this chart)

Woe #1: where? (verses _____)
wrong? _____ warning?

word-pictures?

Woe #2: where? (verses _____)
wrong? _____ warning?

word-pictures?

Woe #3: where? (verses _____)
wrong? _____ warning?

word-pictures?

Woe #4: where? (verses _____)
wrong? _____ warning?

word-pictures?

Woe #5: where? (verses _____)
wrong? _____ warning?

word-pictures?

- 10) With which of the woes do you identify? Why?
- 11) In what do the wrong-doers in each of these five woes put confidence, trust, or "faith"?
- 12) How might self-worship lead to violence?
- 13) How is God, especially as seen in verses 14 and 20, contrasted with the unrighteous?
- 14) How does this oracle answer Habakkuk's original concern about God using the evil Babylonians for His purpose to judge the Jewish people (1:12-17)?

Apply

- 15) How is your lifestyle like the life of the *puffed up*? How is it like the life of the righteous? What would it mean for you to live faithfully an area you are not now?
- 16) If you were Habakkuk, would you be satisfied with God's answer? Why or why not? How are "waiting" and "living by faith" similar?
- 17) For what are you now waiting as you look to God?
- 18) What can *you* do to impact a world in which such things happen?

Even Further Optional Reading

- What examples in these "woes" are in Babylon's Jerusalem attack in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 25:8-21)?
- Compare 2:4 to Romans 1:16-18 & Galatians 3:10-14. In these two passages, what use does Paul make of this famous Habakkuk passage to speak a new word to us? How is Paul's emphasis like/unlike Habakkuk's?
- Which texts of Habakkuk mean the most to you?