

Pillar Passages – Habakkuk 2

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Today, we look at Habakkuk chapter 2. We saw in Habakkuk chapter 1 that Habakkuk received a vision about judgement upon Israel for its abject wickedness. Habakkuk has questions about that, because God's tool for bringing about that just chastisement is a tool that is even more wicked than Israel. So, Habakkuk has questions that he is respectfully asking God. Please help me piece this together. I don't understand, because this would even besmirch Your own glory. Habakkuk waits, and now he receives more of the answer.

The answer begins in verses 2 and 3 of chapter 2. First wait. The answer is going to be a little while in coming. My response is a little while in coming. But in the meantime, while you must wait, here is the key principle (verse 4). "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith." The righteous shall live—as he waits for all things to become clear—he shall live by his faith.

This has been true since Abraham. In fact, it's been true for the entire Bible, since Adam and Eve. In a fallen world, no one is righteous, no not one. God substitutes righteousness for faith. Faith in Him. Faith in *His* righteousness. We live—before God—only by faith.

However, it's more than that. And become righteous before Him—we are transformed by faith. Because the comparison in this verse is between righteousness and unrighteousness; between being proud and puffed up and being truly upright.

The person who is filled with pride, with self, with self-will, self-promotion, and self-protection, is bloated. He is puffed up. He has puffed up his soul within him. The puffed up soul within a person is like inflatable waving guy at the used car dealer. You know, he is full and upright, but only for a moment. A stiff wind or a child pulling on it will bring it down. That's not truly upright, it's just inflated. That's the proud soul.

On the other hand, the soul that puts its faith in God is righteous and alive. In the sense—and to the degree with which—the One relied upon is righteous and alive. To be righteous like this, results in being upright and rooted, rock-solid in real life. This one's soul is truly righteous and truly upright. So, the righteous shall live by—his—faith. He shall have a soul within him that is rock-solid.

Then in chapter 2 verse 5, this phrase here (and we should note the footnote that this word wine here could be could also be translated as wealth. The foot note here says that the meaning of these two lines is uncertain. I think it is certain enough that what is it; who is the "he" from verse 4? Well, it is the Chaldeans who are coming and bring judgement upon Israel. They are filled with wealth. They steal. Wine fills them up. Therefore, they are like the "arrogant man who is never at rest."

Now Habakkuk is understanding from the Lord what is going to happen to them. This is more of the Lord's answer. "His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations and collects as his own all peoples."

Whether it's wine or wealth in our pride, what we can't see in our pride is that in the moment we are consuming and using it—whether it be wealth or food or sex or power or whatever it is—it is consuming and using us. We are the ones who are getting collected. People from every tongue, tribe, and nation; from all peoples; from all the nations.

When God says that He is out to call out a people for Himself—a bride for His Son—from among all the nations, He is not the only party doing this. So is wealth. So is pride. When God calls a people from all the nations—this has always been a rescue operation. Because we are at war. God has always been at war because the darkness is out for this as well. Pride is out to capture—to collect—people from all of the nations. It has been this way from the beginning. Thus God—in love—has been at war with pride since the beginning.

So then to Habakkuk's question. To be like an oak and not the flapping inflatable guy; the way to be free and not captured by pride, is to walk by faith—buoyant faith. That is a buoyant humility that exercises itself in faith in God, in His righteousness.

Therefore, verse 6-17, the rest of the chapter, is really—in essence—God saying, 'But I do have more to say about the more evil tool that I will be employing. They will be plundered. Their pillaging of others only makes them more richer spoil for someone else. Verse 17, God will bring recompence. "The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you." God will bring justice upon them.'

The bottle line, there is no profit in pursuing idols (v. 18-20). They have no truth. They have no life. So again, Habakkuk, the wisdom of the ages is this: Come into the presence of God and listen. Listen to Him. That is how you receive life in this evil age.

Thus, the pivotal moment of Romans, when Paul is arguing the very same thing—that righteousness comes by faith alone. He quotes in Romans 1:17, Habakkuk 2:4, where he says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God"—in the gospel—"the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith. In other words—top to bottom—**faith alone** brings righteousness.

Why? Because it is in the gospel. If the object of faith is Christ, as displayed and made known through the gospel, then the object of the faith is truly a good and capable source of granting righteousness. This comes by Jesus' cross and His resurrection.

It has always been by faith, as long as that faith rests in the God of the gospel. And at the center of it all, His Son, Jesus. In it—in the gospel—the righteousness of God is revealed and made

known, what has always been spoken of and anticipated in the Bible—the righteousness of God that comes by faith.

Thus, Jesus would say in Matthew 11, “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden”—by trying to make a righteousness yourself. A righteousness that comes by a work of your own hand; by pride; by idols . “Come to Me and I will give you rest.” The faith that rests on Jesus is truly *restful*. Therefore, Jesus says. “Take My yoke upon you”—Come into My presence come into the presence of God through Me—“and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” You will no longer be like the flowy flapping guy in the used car lot. You will be like an oak that is strong in your soul You will be at rest like a great redwood is at rest “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”