

# Habakkuk

## Lessons for Life, when Pride fails us

**2:4; “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.**

There are many people who may never study their bibles, may never understand the most adolescent verses, though they confess Jesus as the Christ what is it they truly believe? We have been watching Habakkuk struggle and wrestle with God, he does not understand nor does he appear to see the need for such a punishment, after all, they are not as bad as the Chaldeans.

The just shall live by his faith, used four times in the NKJV three times “by faith”, once by “his faith.” I believe this change here in Habakkuk, his faith, is more than a simple statement used in generality but it is a double entendre, that God is addressing all people, while driving home the point that perhaps Habakkuk’s faith had become a challenge for him.

By his faith is a phrase, 'ěmûnâ, firmness, fidelity, steadfastness, steadiness, as we look back over chapter one we can see Habakkuk’s faith a bit wobbly. However, from our observations in what he was facing most of us may also do in like manner. If you knew of Nebuchadnezzar’s reputation and how he would destroy others would you not fear him?

As we read this section where God is answering back and we find a wobbling faith now beginning to see fear converted into a stronger faith. As we began our study of Habakkuk he was wanting to know “God where are you?” As we look around our world today and especially at our nations own moral depravity we may ask the same question. However, for the strong believer this question should never even enter the believers mind. Unlike the Old Testament we are on the other side of the cross and we have a new testament of where to place our trust. The believers of today are not to live by works, as so many try to do, but we live by faith, it is not an outwardly work but instead an inwardly security by a changed heart that believes and trust in God for all things.

**“Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him;**

Upright – yāšar, yaw-shar', As used there in Habakkuk it implies a man who is inflated by his own pride, has little to no need for anything outside of himself. This person is the opposite of level minded, and upright.

**Job 40:12; Look on everyone who is proud, and bring him low; Tread down the wicked in their place.**

What is it about the proud that God seeks to remove? We know of Nebuchadnezzar’s fall and punishment after he said look at all “I” have done. His is a problem that affects not only people of all walks but more so is the flamboyant church goer who looks down his nose at everyone while passing judgment in his self-pious attitude. We are not to be above others, we are to help them find Jesus and He will cure their wrongs. Over the years I have met many people who in

their puffed up and usually misguided understandings they seek to preach another gospel, a sensational message made up from their idea of Scripture.

**Colossians 2:18; Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,**

This pridefulness is dangerous for many such as these talk with such a positive convincing voice of commitment that people, including themselves accept the lie. These are those who seek to build another church on Jesus foundation just a few feet off the mark. They seek others to fall in behind them but who will later doubt their own faith and the Bible. Those who walk in pride and seek to belittle the strong surrendered believer fail to see the humility of which we are to walk in.

#### Pride and Humility

“Pride is your greatest enemy, humility is your greatest friend.” “So said the late John R.W. Stott, a remarkably humble man of great abilities and accomplishments who is often said to have made the greatest impact for Christ of anyone in the twentieth century. His succinct statement about pride and humility goes straight to the heart of what the Bible teaches about the deadly root of our sins and sorrows.”

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According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere flea bites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil:

Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind..... it is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began.

If this sounds like exaggeration, it will help us to know that Lewis is not simply giving us his private opinion but summarizing the thinking of great saints through the ages.

Augustine and Aquinas both taught that pride was the root of sin. Likewise Calvin, Luther, and many others. Make no mistake about it: pride is the great sin. It is the devil’s most effective and destructive tool.

<https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/pride-and-humility/>

When we add pride with deception we get a formula for destruction. Eve must have thought being as God would be the best thing ever, she could have had no understanding no reasonable knowledge of what would happen not even to the one deceiving her at the time. We read here that Stott along with C.S. Lewis address pride as the most dangerous destructive tool used against man, but what of deception? It was pride that first festered in Satan and it would be pride that taught him to deceive, to conquer others by lying, convincing man he be as God and

what better thing could there be than to be as God. When we think we can make it through life without God by believing we can be like Him, as Eve must have thought, we fool ourselves and hardship and destruction will follow. **Proverbs 16:18; Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**

Regarding Nebuchadnezzar, He swept through nations and ravaged the people, he fought large battles and won, God placed him in charge of all things. **Jeremiah 27:5-7;**

**By My great power and outstretched arm, I made the earth and the men and beasts on the face of it, and I give it to whom I please. So now I have placed all these lands under the authority of My servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. I have even made the beasts of the field subject to him. All nations will serve him and his son and grandson, until the time of his own land comes; then many nations and great kings will enslave him.**

Nebuchadnezzar was on top of the world but he believed it was his power that brought all things under him. He failed to see God was orchestrating all that was being done. His downfall? he pushed God aside and claimed all the power to be his and nothing of God. I often wonder how we can be so blind, that we see ourselves as some type of authority when it comes to God and salvation. We must not forget what the following verse says and how we have witnessed it played out in real time regarding what Nebuchadnezzar went through.

**Proverbs 18:12; Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility.**

**2;5-6; “Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, He is a proud man, And he does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as hell, And he is like death, and cannot be satisfied, He gathers to himself all nations And heaps up for himself all peoples.**

A perfect image of the one enslaved in pride. I say enslaved for the reason pride can and will control a man. As one who believes himself to be wiser according to the amount of wine he drinks, so is the wise man who is drunk with pride. **Isaiah 28:3; The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, Will be trampled underfoot;**

**“Will not all these take up a proverb against him, And a taunting riddle against him, and say, ‘Woe to him who increases What is not his—how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges’?**

Here we see a description of how Habakkuk envisioned Nebuchadnezzar, sweeping across the nations taking what is not his, and why? If not because of pride, would he have been satisfied with what he first accomplished and had no need to take Judah?

This is the equation the formula for destruction. As we read and study the Scripture we find disaster in every verse that addresses pride, used 51 times in 48 verses and proud 47 times in 47 verses in the NKJV, it addresses ruin.

Matthew Henry writes of the Prophet and I think it serves us well to envision our world through his concept. I say this because we far too often dismiss God's work as just something that naturally happens and we fail to see and understand the work He is busy doing in every one of us.

**When we are tossed and perplexed with doubts concerning the methods of Providence, are tempted to think that it is fate, or fortune, and not a wise God, that governs the world, or that the church is abandoned, and God's covenant with his people canceled and laid aside, then we must take pains to furnish ourselves with considerations proper to clear this matter; we must stand upon our watch against the temptation, that it may not get ground upon us, must set ourselves upon the tower, to see if we can discover that which will silence the temptation and solve the objected difficulties, must do as the psalmist, consider the days of old and make a diligent search (Ps. 77:6), must go into the sanctuary of God, and there labour to understand the end of these things (Ps. 73:17); we must not give way to our doubts, but struggle to make the best of our way out of them.**

Had Habakkuk viewed his situation in such a manner we may not have watched the struggles he endured, his faith would have shown itself to be much more reliant on God and not his own understanding. How often do we lean to our own understanding and violate Proverbs chapter 3:5.

**Verses 2:6-14** will now give the prophecy to Habakkuk of the punishment that will come upon Nebuchadnezzar in time.

**“Will not all these take up a proverb against him, And a taunting riddle against him, and say, ‘Woe to him who increases What is not his—how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges’? 7 Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty. 8 Because you have plundered many nations, All the remnant of the people shall plunder you, Because of men’s blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it.**

**9 “Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, That he may set his nest on high, That he may be delivered from the power of disaster! 10 You give shameful counsel to your house, Cutting off many peoples, And sin against your soul. 11 For the stone will cry out from the wall, And the beam from the timbers will answer it. 12 “Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed, Who establishes a city by iniquity! 13 Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts That the peoples labor to feed the fire, And nations weary themselves in vain? 14 For the earth will be filled. With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.**

**“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing him to your bottle, Even to make him drunk, That you may look on his nakedness! 16 You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also—drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the LORD’s right hand will be turned against you, And utter shame will be on your glory. 17 For the violence done to**

Lebanon will cover you, And the plunder of beasts which made them afraid, Because of men's blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it. 18 "What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, The molded image, a teacher of lies, That the maker of its mold should trust in it, To make mute idols? 19 Woe to him who says to wood, 'Awake!' To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!' Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, Yet in it there is no breath at all. 20 "But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."