

Why is it so important that the Christian trust Yahweh? Because He's the only way to have life, life as God intended all to live! Trusting our God, our Savior, our Lord, is where life is found. The secret of life is found in this passage of Habakkuk. "You mean God put the secret of life in a book hardly anyone ever reads?" The apostle Paul thought so; it's a key verse in **Galatians (3:11)**, and he even based the entire book of **Romans (1:17)** on a verse in this Habakkuk passage. It's also a key verse in **Hebrews (10:38)**. What's the secret? The righteous will live by his/her...? Faith in God!! Total surrender, rest in Him.

In these verses the man/woman of pride is contrasted with the man/woman of faith. The proud person is mired in self-centeredness and self-confidence; he doesn't think he needs God; he'll handle it in his own strength. The proud person tends to think he is right about everything and usually is blind to his own sins. A person's pride may be revealed in many ways—aggression, control, coveting, injustice, inhumanity, idolatry—but really it just means he doesn't trust God for life; he's trying to find 'life' another way. On the other hand, the faithful person trusts the almighty, personal, holy, dependable God of the Bible. He/She trusts that this God will do what is best, at the right time. Which are you? And what is your end? The proud trust in themselves and are soul-sick. The faithful are those who have life as God intended—joyful, peaceful, loving, serving, thankful, patient, kind, self-controlled. Do you want to be sick in your soul OR see the character of God Himself lived out through you? Let's learn how to live! Let's see God's answer to the prophet Habakkuk and see His dealings with the proud and with the trusting.

Read 1:1-2:5. Remember the outline of Habakkuk: **1:1-4** "Yahweh, why aren't You dealing with Your people?" **1:5-11** "I will; I'm going to use the Chaldeans (the Babylonians) as My instrument." **1:12-2:1** "How can You use a nation worse than us?" **2:2-5** "Trust Me." **2:6-20** "I'll take care of the Chaldeans." **3:1-2** Habakkuk prays for the Lord's work to be revived and His mercy to be remembered. **3:3-15** Habakkuk reviews God's power and deliverance in Israel's past. **3:16-19** Habakkuk expresses his complete confidence in God. God's solution in **2:2-20**: THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH (2:2-5), AND THE PROUD CHALDEANS WILL BE PUNISHED (2:6-20). In **2:1** we have Habakkuk waiting for God's answer, keeping watch, like a guard on a wall of a city watching for the enemy. And God answers him.

When? The timing is interesting. Habakkuk starts out the book with himself being the center of his world and he doesn't like what he sees all around him. No wonder he is frustrated, with such limited vision of the situation. But then he goes to God, shares his questions and complaints, and God answers him. "I'm going to correct the sins of My people, and I'm going to use the Chaldeans to do it!" Habakkuk really has a problem with this solution because the Chaldeans are BAD, far worse in his mind than the Judeans. But he stops to think, using his mind instead of relying on his emotions or his circumstances. He then reminds himself of what he knows to be true about God—Yahweh God is everlasting, personal, sovereign, holy, faithful, mighty. Then in light of who God is, Habakkuk shares his confusion. "How can You

look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they? I don't understand; it doesn't make sense to me. But I know You(!), so I'll leave these perplexing questions in Your hands. Personally, I'll watch and wait to see how You will respond." He asks God the hard questions, but has grown into a man expectantly waiting God's response, and in doing so, he'll learn the secret of life itself. Even if God reproves him for his questions and complaints, he'll wait for Yahweh's answer.

:2 Then Yahweh answered me and said, "Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run." When Yahweh answered Habakkuk, He tells him to write and wait. "Write, record the vision, inscribe it on tablets of baked clay. I'm going to tell you what will take place, and I want you to write it down, that the one who reads it may run." **The one who reads it may run**—either the messenger can read it and run to obey and warn others; or, its reader, even if on the run, may read and understand as he passes. "Write down what will happen to the proud. Write down what will happen to the faithful. Write down the consequences of wine. And wait for it to happen." This prophecy has lasting relevance and is to be preserved. Why? Because it contains the secret of life! "Make it clear; write it in large, legible letters."

:3 For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay. The vision will occur at God's appointed time. From 605 B.C. to 586 B.C. Judah was dealt with, and in 539 B.C. the proud Chaldeans did fall to the Medo-Persian kingdom of Cyrus (**Dan. 5**). What God promised, He most certainly performed. The fulfillment won't be a fraction of a second late. Though it may be longer than you'd expect or want, it will certainly come. The vision gasps, pants for the goal; it can't fail. God's time is not our time (with the Lord one day is as 1000 years!). He may appear to delay, but wait for it; it won't be late. "In My time and way, I'll deal with the Judeans and the Chaldeans too. They can't stop My day of deliverance." So God may answer only a few of our questions, but He has given us Himself. Trust Him with the outcome. Trust Him with the timing. It hastens toward the goal, the appointed time; it will not fail.

:4 Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith. "Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked; but the righteous will live by their faith (NLB)." The self-centered pagans are contrasted with the trusting remnant. The proud will be punished, and the faithful will be rewarded.

God lets Habakkuk know the real issue at stake. The real issue is not Judah's violence or the coming Chaldean invasion. The real issue is the state of each individual's heart and life before God. Are you walking by faith in God, or, are you walking by faith in something or someone else or yourself? Your trust may be in an educational system, or a type of government, a political party, certain laws, technology, a person such as a sports star or movie star or music star, the size of your bank account or retirement fund, your job position, your

popularity, your peer group, a degree. It's okay to have many of these or even respect someone, but we're to only trust and worship the Biblical God. He alone is worthy. Remember, the Chaldeans' strength was their god (**1:11**). They worshiped their war machinery. If we aren't trusting the Biblical God, who/what are we trusting? Take some time to think of your answer.

The word proud means to puff up, to bulge, bloat, swell. What's the problem with this kind of person? His soul, the seat of his life, is not straight or level but crooked. It teaches us that pride by its very nature is self-destructive. Yes, the proud may achieve much in terms of fame, fortune, power, or pleasure, but see his end—the five woes, listed in **2:6-20**. The proud thinks he's got it within himself—his ability, his brain, his education, his strength, his position—yet he'll ultimately fail because God is opposed to the proud. God goes to war against such a person or nation (**James 4:6, I Pet. 5:5**). The proud is soul-sick!

But look at the other type of person mentioned in **:4**—the person of faith. (Again, this phrase is quoted three times in the NT—**Rom. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38**.) This person will live, he will enjoy God's favor (with or without material benefits). This is the individual who trusts the Lord, relies on Him, is faithful to Him and His ways. As this makes clear, faith is not a one-time act but a way of life. “Be faithful during the time of religious decline; be faithful in time of national calamity; keep trusting Me when you are perplexed; rely on Me when your personal world seems to be falling apart. I (Yahweh) know why, I know how long, I know the frustration you're facing, the questions you're asking. Why am I using the wicked Chaldean to punish My people? I know, and that's enough! Leave that to Me, the all-wise God. If I haven't revealed the answers to you, you don't need to know. It's more important for you to trust Me than it is for you to fully understand My ways and what is happening. Wait patiently and trust Me. I'm trustworthy! Believe Me, My words, My character, and act on My character and My words.”

Either our lives are based on faith in the Biblical God or they are not. If they are not, it doesn't much matter how much understanding we have or where we have placed our trust. The righteous stake all on God and His Word, on what God has revealed and how He has worked in history. Like Marylee says, “He's a sure bet! I'm all-in!” **Jer. 17:7** says, “**Blessed is the man who trusts in Yahweh, and whose trust IS Yahweh.**” He is love in us and through us; He is life in us and through us; He is everything that we need in us and through us.

Trusting Him means resting from all the anxieties that are making knots in our stomachs. Trusting Him means not having to understand everything that is troubling us right now. Trusting Him means following Him and putting one foot in front of the other, our hands in His, and letting Him lead us through ‘this valley of deep perplexity’. Trusting Him means resting in Him that He will live life through us if we let Him, even when the world has gone mad. Trusting Him means not only knowing the facts of His Word but believing them and acting on them. Trusting Him means we let God work with others to make the needed changes in their lives.

“Write down My words, write down that ‘the proud will be destroyed

because he's opposed to Me’. Write down that ‘the righteous will live by his faith in Me’. And wait for My solution, for it will certainly come, at the right time. Also, write down the consequences of pride and wine.”

:5 Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man, so that he does not stay at home. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, and he is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all nations and collects to himself all peoples.” Often one of the problems associated with pride is drunkenness. At the end of the Chaldean empire, Belshazzar and his leaders were feasting at a drinking banquet. Let's **read** the end of the story in **Dan. 5:1-30**. Note especially **:20-23**. Now it's back to **Hab. 2:5**: literally ‘wine is a deceiver’. It makes a person restless, dissatisfied with his home; it enlarges the desire; there's a thirst for fame, fortune, power, and/or pleasure. Just like the grave or death, he wants to gobble everything up; the greed is insatiable. See **Eph. 4:17-19**. Death never says, “That's enough; I'm full!”. Neither does pride. The proud deal with the property of God as if it was their own. The proud act without mature deliberation. They are inconsiderate of the feelings of others. They are irreverent toward all that is sacred to God or man. They are disapproving of anything that does not agree with them. Wine and pride know no limits; they always want more. “Though he makes himself a beast, he thinks of himself as a king!” He will end up an object of ridicule and disgust.

So Yahweh in this passage opens a window into the future, giving Habakkuk a glimpse of Judah's immediate future and the Chaldeans' distant future. Judah will be dealt with over a 20-year period; the Chaldeans will be dealt with within 70 years. “Habakkuk, you can trust Me, for the future and for the present! Remember, the righteous will LIVE by faith in Me. Please do so!”

Let's summarize. We are to know God and His Word, wait, and trust. God is not indifferent to sin. God is not insensitive to suffering. God knows what He's doing. “The Chaldeans, whom I am raising up to discipline Judah, in My time will themselves be completely destroyed. In approximately 70 years I'll raise up the Medes and Persians who will utterly destroy the proud Chaldeans. I know what I'm doing. I have a plan and I'll carry it out, at exactly the right time; it won't be a minute late. The plan is best for all involved, including you! Will you trust Me with your life, your dreams, your plans, your families, your finances, your house, your questions, your complaints, your troubles, your heartaches, your relationships, your enemies, your heart, your soul? I'm Yahweh: everlasting, personal, sovereign, holy, faithful, mighty, all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful; you can trust Me. Please do so!” **Read Ps. 62**. What a Psalm of David.

Let's close by reading **3:16-19**. How do the lessons from this passage need to impact your thinking and/or behavior? What thoughts would you like to express to our Lord as a result of this passage?

Thanks for working these verses through with me. Joel

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