

A Reader's Guide to Discipleship©: Readings in the Old Testament

Strauss 2009

The sufficiency of the scriptures for all things pertaining to life and godliness
(II Tim 3:16)

Habakkuk: The just shall live by faith

I. The question reveals the man 1:1-4

A. The question: Why is sin unjudged?

B. Observations on the man

1. A man who loved the law 1:4
2. A man who related to God personally
3. A man who saw God as a saving God
4. A man responded emotionally not just intellectually to the problem of evil
5. A man locked in time, who felt alone but was driven to God because of it.

II. An answer that reveals the nature and character of God 1:5-11

A. the answer: Caution- God is at work. He will use evil for His purposes.

B. Observations on the nature and character of God. This may not be the God you were looking for but He is the One true God.

1. Unthreatened by evil 1:6a
2. Reveals himself in history but we have a hard time seeing or believing it 1:5
3. the world systems belong to Him 1:6b (this is perhaps more amazing than even all nature being under His control)
4. He is all powerful 1:5
5. Strength of man is like the wind passing through. Man puts all his confidence in it but it passes away. 1:11
6. Reminder of Is 55:8-9 (my ways are not your ways) and Heb 13:8 (He is the same yesterday, today and forever)

III. Habakkuk's pursuit of God 1:12-2:1

A. Habakkuk's position: okay, I am totally lost but I still only look to the Lord

B. Observations on how to deal with the plan of God

1. Begin with worship- acknowledge Him as the Holy one, the rock, the everlasting, the pure one 1:12-13a
2. Be ready to listen and accept your own limitations 2:1
3. Be determined in your faith 2:1
4. Stand firm on what you do know but allow God to correct you since His ways are not confined to our understanding 1:12-13
5. Recognize the distortions in the picture we see but don't lose faith because of it 1:12-17

C. God's answer: faith is the foundation for those who seek to know and serve Him 2:2-4

1. Faith results in justification see Rom 3:21-28
2. Faith provides the only sure foundation for the just to live. 2:4
3. The only way to live under God's rule in this fallen world is by faith
4. Faith is all about knowing and delighting God Heb 11 (see verse 6)

5. The outcome of faith in this world may only be a good testimony
Heb 11:39
6. Pride is the opposite of faith – a focus on self kills the soul 2:4
7. This message should be proclaimed confidently 2:2
8. We do not know the timing of God's answers 2:3

D. A short study on faith

1. Heb 11:1-2, 6, 13, 39- faith is not about us receiving the promises, it is about pleasing God and developing a good testimony about our God.
2. 2 Cor 5:7- Walk by faith not by sight in context is about living in this world without "seeing" the One we are following.
3. 1 Cor 13:2, 13, 2 Pet 1:5-7- faith is not the highest virtue. It is the foundation for the virtues, love being the highest.
4. James 2:14-26 faith is incomplete and ineffective without works of obedience. This is not about the reader's salvation from hell but rather, saving those who are suffering and receiving a good testimony like Abraham did (called a friend of God).

D. Warnings about the effect of pride 2: 5-20

1. Oppressed will eventually rise up against the oppressor 2:5-8
 - Characteristics of pride: entitlement, self-satisfying, arrogance, blindness 2:5
 - consequences of pride: foreclosure, plundered by those who were oppressed 2:6-8
2. Seeking false security brings shame on your house 2:9-11
 - characteristics of pride: greed, fearful, seeking security in high places 2:9
 - consequences of pride: destructive council to family and others, loss of character strength, undermining the foundation of your home (and by analogy, undermining the foundation of faith) 2:10-11
 - note: pride does not usually bring a frontal assault on faith, rather it subtly undermines the very nature of faith. Pride makes it easy to "believe" without action.
3. Thirst for power rather than responding to the Lord brings weariness 2:12-14
 - characteristics of pride: devalues life and morals for the sake of power, end justifies the means 2:12
 - consequences of pride: wastefulness, ineffectiveness 2:13
 - a glimpse of the glory of God filling the earth 2:14 (*cf* Is.11:9)
The utter vanity of establishing our own boundaries in light of the certainty of the glory of God filling the earth with no boundaries. (also Ps 46:10)
4. Corruption of personal integrity brings personal shame 2:15-17
 - characteristics of pride: victimizer, manipulator, and makes a mockery of others
 - consequences of pride: personal shame by exposure of intentions, loss of integrity, emptiness, target of retribution 2:16-17
5. Search for replacing God brings emptiness 2:18-20

- characteristics of pride: seeks to create god, wants to control god, looks for answers from what he can create 2:18-19
- the reality: the kingdom of the Lord will fill the earth and we will keep silent. 2:20

IV. Habakkuk's song of faith 3:1-19 (divided by "selah" verses)

Habakkuk sees the folly of pride and responds in triumphant faith

- A. Rather than trying to judge God's work, pray for God to work more 3:1-3a
- B. The overwhelming glory of God 3:3b-9a
- C. The victorious plan of God 3:9b-13
- D. Joy in the Lord no matter what the circumstances 3:14-19