

Sorry Substitutes for Real Peace

Habakkuk 2:5-8

“Pure religion undefiled before God is caring for orphans and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27). What does this verse mean? Often, we lose sight of the principle because we focus on the particulars. *A person right with God lives life selflessly.* The worship of Christ always translates to a walk with Christ.

False religions are called *“the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, the great whore of Babylon.”*

- False religion is compared to a *“strange woman”* in Proverbs 7.
- The religion of Babylon is called *“the Great Whore”* and *“the Mother of Harlots”* (Rev. 17 and 18).
- False religion is the broad way that everyone is on, but it always leads to destruction (Prov. 14:12).

The religion of self. The religion of pride. The religion of Babylon. Verse 5 describes the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, and his religion. Then, verses 6-8 describe the end of one without the prince of Peace.

I. The person seeking satisfaction in life apart from Christ spends his energy finding happiness.

The grace of God in one’s life through Christ brings inner contentment. This is real happiness in life. *“The zealous missionary needs as much grace as a newly awakened hard-living sinner”* (Jerry Bridges). Why? The discipline to be content is as much a work of grace as the deliverance from self-contempt.

A. The one not in union with Christ departs from his responsibilities because he feels like it.

“Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man, so that he does not stay at home” (5a).

Nebuchadnezzar, king of the (Babylonians), is prominent in the Bible and in Habakkuk’s oracle.

Daniel the prophet introduces Nebuchadnezzar as the king who takes Daniel captive to Babylon. He’s the Chaldean king who attacks Jerusalem twice (597, 586 B.C.), described in 2 Kings 24–25.

Jeremiah (contemporary of Habakkuk) calls Nebuchadnezzar *“the destroyer of nations”* (Jer. 4:7).

1. Graced people are *dependable* - “capable of being depended on, worthy of trust, reliable.”
2. Graced people are *reliable* - “consistent in character, judgment, performance, or result.”
3. Graced people are *faithful* - “steady in allegiance, affection, loyalty, and are to be believed.

B. The one not in union with Christ desires ever more satisfaction than what he is receiving.

“He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, and he is like death, never satisfied” (v. 5b). Paul writes:

“Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is shame” (Phil. 3:19).

C. The one apart from Christ determines to take everything and everyone for himself.

“He also gathers to himself all nations and collects to himself all peoples” (v. 5c). Self-absorption is to be *“preoccupied with oneself or one’s own affairs to the exclusion of others.”*

II. The person seeking satisfaction in life apart from Christ finds his end to be destruction.

“There is a way of life that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to destruction” (Prov. 14:12).

Those things we think we need to function become the very things that lead to our destruction.

Any pathway to peace apart from Christ becomes a pathway to pain. Habakkuk 2:7 says this clearly:

*“Will not **all these** take up a taunt-song against him... “Woe to him who increases what is not his.”*

A. Without union to Christ, you sow what you reap.

In verse 7 we find that *“creditors rise up”* and *“those who collect from you awaken”* (v. 7).

“Indeed,” the Lord says, *“You will be plunder for them.”* Who’s them? The ones you plundered.

B. In union with Christ, you reap what you have not sown.

“The righteousness that comes from God and is on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:9).

C. In union with Christ, the Spirit produces fruit from you.

Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and **self-control**.