

Habakkuk

MEANING “One who embraces”

AUTHOR: Habakkuk

TIME WRITTEN: Probable date of about 607 B.C.

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 35th Book in the Bible
- 35th book in the Old Testament
- 13th of 17 books of Prophecy
- 8th of 12 Minor Prophet Books
- 34 have preceded it. 31 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 3

VERSES: 56

WORDS: 1,476

KEY WORD: “The just shall live by faith.”

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **Habakkuk 2:4** - “Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.”
2. **Habakkuk 3:17-19** - “Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls--
Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.
The LORD God is my strength; he will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills. To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.”

KEY CHAPTER: Habakkuk 3

1. The Book of Habakkuk builds to a triumphant climax in the last three verses of the book (3:17-19).
2. The beginning of the book and the ending stand in stark contrast:
 - a. Mystery to certainty.
 - b. Questioning to affirming.
 - c. Complaint to confidence.
3. Chapter three is one of the most majestic of all Scripture and records the glory of God in past history and in future history (prophecy).

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT HABAKKUK:

1. Habakkuk minister during the “death throbs” of the nation of Judah.
 - a. Although repeatedly called to repentance, the nation stubbornly refuses to change her sinful ways.
 - b. Habakkuk, knowing the hardness of his countrymen, asks God how long this intolerable condition can continue.
 - c. God replies that the Babylonians will be His chastening rod upon the nation—an announcement that send the prophet to his knees.
 - d. God acknowledges that the just in any generation shall live by faith (2:4), not by sight.
 - e. Habakkuk concludes by praising God’s wisdom even though he does not fully understand God’s ways.
2. The circumstances of life sometimes appear to contradict God’s revelation concerning His power and purposes.

- a. Habakkuk struggles in his faith when he sees men flagrantly violate God's law and distort justice on every level, without fear of divine intervention.
- b. He wants to know why God allows this growing iniquity to go unpunished.
- c. When God revealed His intention to use Babylon as His rod of judgment, Habakkuk is even more troubled because that nation is more corrupt than Judah.
- d. God's answer satisfies Habakkuk that he can trust Him even in the worst of circumstances God's matchless wisdom, goodness, and power make it so.
- e. Herein is a great lesson for us today as well as for Habakkuk back then.
 1. God's plan is perfect, and nothing is big enough to stand in the way of its ultimate fulfillment.
 2. In spite of circumstances to the contrary, God is still on the throne as the Lord of history and the Ruler of the nations.
 3. God may be slow to wrath, but all iniquity will be punished eventually.
 4. God is the worthiest object of faith, and the righteous man will trust in Him at all times.
3. God did indeed raise up Babylon to be His chastening rod.
 - a. The Babylonians began to rise in power during the reign of Nabopolassar (625-605 B.C.), and in 612 B.C. they destroyed the Assyrian capital of Nineveh.
 - b. By the time of Jehoiakim, Babylon was the undisputed world power.
 - c. Nabopolassar's successor, Nebuchadnezzar, came to power in 605 B.C. and carried out successful military expeditions in the west, advancing into Palestine and Egypt.
 - d. Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion of Judah occurred in his first year, when he deported ten thousand of Judah's leaders to Babylon.
 1. The nobles who oppressed and extorted from the poor were the first to be carried away.
 2. Included in the first group of 10,000 captives were Daniel, Shadach, Meshach, and Abednigo.

SUMMARY OF HABAKKUK

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Habakkuk is a freethinking prophet who is not afraid to wrestle with issues that test his faith.
 1. He openly and honestly directs his problems to God and waits to see how He will respond to his probing questions.
 2. After two rounds of dialogue with the Lord, Habakkuk's understanding of the Person, power, and plan of God cause him to conclude with a psalm of unqualified praise.
 3. The more he knows about the Planner, the more he can trust His plans. (A great lesson!)
 4. No matter what God brings to pass, "the just shall live by faith" (**2:4**).
- C. There are two major divisions in the book:
 1. The Problems of Habakkuk. (1-2)
 2. The Praise of Habakkuk. (3)

THE PROBLEMS OF HABAKKUK. (1)

- A. Habakkuk's first dialogue with God takes place in 1:1-11.

1. In 1:1-4 the prophet asks God how now He will allow the wickedness of Judah to go unpunished.
 2. The people of Judah sin with impunity, and justice is perverted.
 3. God's answer is given in 1:5-11: he is raising up the fierce Babylonians as His rod of judgment upon sinful Judah.
 4. The Chaldeans will come against Judah swiftly, violently, and completely.
 5. The coming storm from the east will be God's answer to Judah's crimes.
- B. The answer leads to Habakkuk's second dialogue with God as recorded in 1:12 - 2:20.
1. The prophet is more perplexed than ever and in 2:15-17 asks how the righteous God can punish Judah with a nation that is even more wicked.
 - a. Will the God whose eyes are too pure to approve evil reward the Babylonians for their cruelty and idolatry?
 - b. Habakkuk stands upon a watchtower to wait for God's reply.
 2. In Habakkuk 2:5-20 God answers with a series of five woes.
 - a. 1st woe: Greed and aggression. (2:5-8)
 - b. 2nd woe: Exploitation and extortion. (2:9-11)
 - c. 3rd woe: Violence. (2:12-14)
 - d. 4th woe: Immorality. (2:15-17)
 - e. 5th woe: Idolatry. (2:18-20)
 3. God is aware of the sins of the Babylonians, and they will not escape His terrible judgment.
 4. But Judah is guilty of the same offenses and stands under the same condemnation.
 5. God concludes His answer with a great statement of His sovereign majesty: **"But the Lord is in His holy temple, Let all the earth keep silent before Him" (2:20).**

THE PRAISE OF HABAKKUK. (3)

- A. Habakkuk begins by questioning God, but he concludes his book with a psalm of praise for:
1. The Person of God. (3:1-3)
 2. The Power of God. (3:4-12)
 3. The Plan of God. (3:13-19)
- B. He now acknowledges God's wisdom in the coming invasion of Judah. And although it terrifies him, he will trust the Lord. (Another great lesson for us.)
1. God's creative and redemptive work in the past gives the prophet confidence in the divine purposes and hope at a time when he would otherwise despair.
 2. "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (**3:18**)