

HABAKKUK.

Outline of Habakkuk.

The prophet Habakkuk lived about the same time as Nahum, Zephaniah and Jeremiah. The Assyrian Nation had now been destroyed but the Babylonians, under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, were now in control. Jeremiah has prophesied that the Babylonians were about to attack Judah and destroy the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. The nation of Judah would then be taken into exile, this event happened in 606 to 586 B.C. Very little is known about Habakkuk, he seems to know the Old Testament scriptures which suggests that he may have been a priest. He describes himself as "Habakkuk the prophet,"

[Habakkuk 1:1](#),

So may have been a priest who God used as a prophet.

The name Habakkuk comes from a Hebrew word meaning "*to embrace*", however, it can also mean "*to wrestle*". In the book of Habakkuk we can see both meanings, it starts with questioning, wrestling with, then the actions of God, but ends with submission to the will of God by Habakkuk in all matters.

In the beginning we find that Habakkuk is very concerned with what he can see happening around him, he can see the spiritual decline of the Jewish nation and is asking God "why are you not sorting out the problem?" But God does not seem to respond at first to his prayers.

Possible outline for the book of Habakkuk

The Prophet is concerned, "Why is this happening God?" [Habakkuk 1:1-17](#).

God does not appear to respond to his questions. [Habakkuk 1:2-4](#).

God replies: *I am at work*. [Habakkuk 1:5-11](#).

The Chaldeans are more evil than the Jews. [Habakkuk 1:12-17](#).

The Prophet decides to watch and wait. [Habakkuk 2:1-20](#).

God responds, write the vision. [Habakkuk 2:1-3](#).

Trust God, "the just shall live by his faith." [Habakkuk 2:4-5](#).

The judgement of God. Five distress / troubles. [Habakkuk 2:6-20](#).

The Selfish. [Habakkuk 2:6-8](#).

The evil people gain. [Habakkuk 2:9-11](#).

The evil people are using other people. [Habakkuk 2:12-14](#).

Warning to those who are drunk. [Habakkuk 2:15-17](#).

Warning to those who worship idols. [Habakkuk 2:18-20](#).

Habakkuk worships and praises God. [Habakkuk 3:1-19](#).

Habakkuk prays to God. [Habakkuk 3:1-2](#).

Habakkuk thinks about how God works. [Habakkuk 3:3-15](#).

Habakkuk praises God. [Habakkuk 3:16-19](#).

The Prophet is concerned. Why God?

[Habakkuk 1:1-17](#).

Habakkuk apparently has a close relationship with God, he is looking at the way the evil nations nearby are attacking the people of God. "Why do the good people suffer and the evil people gain." This is often a question made by the Christian today, "Lord, why do I suffer yet my neighbour's, who do not know you, are doing well?" There is nothing in God's Word that tells us that Believers will have a perfect, safe, life. The exact opposite will happen as the world, who wants nothing to do with the Lord, is therefore against a Believer.

It appears the prophet has had these concerns for some time, the words he uses indicates that at the time it was difficult and dangerous to be alive, "*how long shall I cry, and You will not hear?*" verse 2. Habakkuk knows that the people of Judah are not worshipping the Lord from their heart, the leaders would not obey the Law of God, verse 4, but Habakkuk feels that God can correct this, yet He does not seem to respond. Habakkuk has taken the right action, he has taken the problem, and his concerns, to the Lord.

God has revealed to Habakkuk the evil *"Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble?"* The law of God is powerless, verse 4. "God, you are holy, why do you permit this?" Why is God so indifferent to what is happening?

God replies: *I am at work.*

[Habakkuk 1:5-11](#). *"Look among the nations and watch. Be utterly astounded!"* verse 5. "Habakkuk, I am at work, but you are not going to like what is about to happen under my control. The Chaldeans are my instrument of punishment on my people." God has given Habakkuk a revelation but not an explanation. God does not owe us any explanations, As He always knows the best action.

Paul used similar thoughts and words,

[Acts 13:41](#),

God was about to call the Gentiles into His family, Jew and Greek were to become one in God.

Verse 6 suggests that at the time of Habakkuk, the people of Babylon, the Chaldean Nation, were not considered a great world power, God tells Habakkuk that *"I am raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation."* God goes on to describe the terrible behaviour of the people that He is about to release on the world, verses 6-10.

God had warned the Jews, through His prophets many times, but they were not listening, now God plans to use the Babylonians to punish Judah. This was not the answer Habakkuk had expected, he was hoping that God would cause a revival of true worship, carry out judgement on their poor leadership and priests.

The Chaldeans are more evil than the Jews.

[Habakkuk 1:12-17](#).

Some Bible students think these verses were written later, after Habakkuk had experienced the Babylonian presence, there is no indication of a delay in the writing from the text.

Habakkuk had the vision of a fisherman who was using every way to catch the rich collection of "fish". He could see the effect of God sending these people to carry out His punishment on the Jews. This obviously caused Habakkuk terrible distress, the coming destruction and the punishment on the Jews by the use of, what he considered, a more evil nation.

Another problem for Habakkuk, that God is so pure, how can He look upon the use of such evil, verses 13-17. Habakkuk knew the attributes of God, His holiness, His purity, His omnipotence (all power), His omniscience (knows all things), verse 12, shows his faith in his Lord but he is questioning the action of God, His Divine nature. Just because he cannot know why God has acting this way. Habakkuk cannot understand so decided's to wait and watch, to see what will happen.

These questions and doubts had caused God to respond to Habakkuk.

God responds, write the vision.

[Habakkuk 2:1-20](#).

Habakkuk now saw himself as a watchman, waiting to take the message of God to the people. It was the job of the watchman to normally to warn the people of coming danger,

[Ezekiel 3:17-21](#)

Tells us that it was a very responsible job.

As children of God we should be "watchmen" warning the world of the coming return of Christ.

What Habakkuk did to record the vision we are not told, but God wanted it to be recorded because it is for an "appointed time," according to the plans of God, and must be preserved "on tablets." This suggests that the vision was not just for the times of Habakkuk, an immediate use of the Babylonians to carry out the plans of God, but it also applies for sometime in the future.

The words "an appointed time;" is also used in,

[Daniel 8:19](#),

So it may possibly be referring to the "End Times," when the ungodly world power, which has connections to the name Babylon, is destroyed. The writer of Hebrews in [Hebrews 10:37](#) used the passage and Peter pointed out the promise in,

[2 Peter 3:3ff](#).

God also points out that the vision that He is giving Habakkuk may appear to be delayed but it will happen,

it is not a lie.

Compare [2 Chronicles 36:14-21](#).

Trust God,

"The just shall live by his faith."

[Habakkuk 2:4-5](#).

The words given by God to Habakkuk now compare to those who have faith in God and to those who reject God. Initially He is referring to the pride of the Babylonians.

One of the signs of "pride" in a person is that they are never satisfied, *"he is like death, and cannot be satisfied,"*. The Babylonians wanted the world, more land, more wealth.

Pride often involves greed, or a new thrill, or it makes the person more important in the eyes of others. The world is full of people like that. How in contrast is the words, *"the just shall live by his faith."*

The "just" person is the person who has been justified by the grace of God, not by their own works, because *"knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."*

[Galatians 2:16,21](#);

See also [Romans 3:20](#).

Also, consider [Romans 1:17-19](#);

And [Galatians 3:11,12](#);

Or [Hebrews 10:38](#).

Following the comments made by God on the violence and corruption of these people, we find that throughout "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.", verse 14 and "The Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.", verse 20. Nations may rise and fall but God is still in full and control.

The judgement of God. Five distress / troubles.

[Habakkuk 2:6-20](#).

In these verses God lists five sins of the Babylonians which will be punished:-

The Selfish.

verse 6-8. If ambition is motivated by greed, for myself only, then hurting others, then it is wrong. The Babylonians wanted selfish wealth, not caring for what it would cost others. But, one day these will rise up and punish the Babylonians. This happened when the Medes and Persians invaded the lands of Babylon,

[Daniel 5:1-30](#).

The evil people gain.

verse 9-11. The people of Babylon just took land and wealth that was not theirs,

[Exodus 20:15](#),

They wanted to have a great empire which would give them glory. But God is the only one who should be glorified.

Consider [Mark 8:36](#);

[Matthew 16:26](#);

[Luke 9:25](#);

[James 5:1-6](#)

The evil people are using other people.

verses 12-14. Babylon was very proud, but the building of the city caused much bloodshed, they often used slave labour and did not care for these people who were captured in the wars.

Historians tell us that it was a magnificent construction, but God said that it would not last, today the city of Babylon has gone, only museum models now exist.

Warning to those who are drunk.

verses 15-17. The Bible gives many warnings against the danger of excessive drink, though it does not demand total avoidance of alcohol. Drunkenness often goes with other evil acts,

[Romans 13:11-14](#);

[Gal 5:19-21](#).

verse 15: The neighbour can refer to immediate locality or a nearby nation being affected by the behaviour of Babylon and its power.

Often judgement is associated with drink, in verse 16, we see God using His *"cup of judgement,"* See [Jeremiah 25:16-29](#).

verse 17: Tells us that the Babylonians also mis-used animals and plants to use in their war actions. The text tells us that what ever the Babylonians did to the other nations, God will be doing to them. It is worth looking at the final "Babylon" in the End Times as it "drinks the cup of God's wrath" [Revelations 16:17-21](#)

Warning to those who worship idols.

verses 18-20. What does "idol worship " mean? God gave Paul in [Romans 1:25](#)

The best answer, "anyone who worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." Anything which puts God second in their 'worship.' This does not mean only a carved figure an idol, it could be your job, home, a possession, a position, personal desires, another person, famous or a friend, anything which is more important than God in your life.

Consider [Romans 16:17-20](#);
[Philippians 3 18,19](#).

God was talking about the Babylonians initially but unfortunately the Jews were also idol worshippers, they had put other nations god's in place of the True God. Many prophets had come with warnings against disobedience of the commands of God,

[Exodus 20:4-6](#),

But the Jews had rejected the warnings.

What ever you put first in your life, remember "the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."

Following the vision and message from God, Habakkuk now seems to understand that God is and will always be in charge in all that happens in the world, he changes from worry to worship.

Habakkuk worships and praises God.

[Habakkuk 3:1-19](#).

Habakkuk can now see the glory of God in all situations, his circumstances has not changed but now he has put his full trust in God.

Habakkuk prays to God.

Habakkuk is now in prayer to the Lord, in the previous chapters he had started in a deep valley of worry, questioned the actions of God, now his thoughts had turned to praise and worship. God had spoken to him and answered his doubts, he now appreciated the power and actions of God, *"O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid;"*; verse 2, *"Your will be done"* is now his main thought. Prayer is an important part of a Believers spiritual life, but it should not just be a "shopping list " of things you want though God has promised "all your needs." and we can take in the words of God through James in,

[James 4:10](#),

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."

Hearing the Word of God will also increase our faith, *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

[Romans 10:17](#);

[Mark 11:22-24](#);

[John 15:7](#).

The prophet is full of reverence and awe at the power of God, as he prays he can see the power of God, verses 3-15, he has realized his weakness and knows that he has to depend upon God, verse 16,

[James 4:8](#).

Meeting God has always caused a problem,

See [Hebrews 12:18-21](#);

[Joshua 5:13-15](#);

[1 Chronicles 21:16](#);

[Daniel 8:27](#);

[Daniel 10:11;](#)

[Matthew 17:6;](#)

[Revelations 1:17.](#)

Are you ready to meet God?

Habakkuk has now accepted that God knows best for the situation and the world, it probably was not what he thought should be done but now he accepts, *"Your will be done"*. Habakkuk is also asking God for mercy for his people, he has accepted that they need punishment but asks that the Love of God will show through to them as well. History tells us that God did show mercy, they were protected in Babylon and later returned to their land.

verses 3-6: We probably will not get a vision from God like Habakkuk but we should always consider His power and splendor as Habakkuk does in these verses, *"His ways are everlasting."*, verse 6, *"He stood and measured the earth;"*, verse 6, it was all His and can do what He likes with it.

verses 8-15: Habakkuk remembers the acts of God over the years, how the nations had been pushed aside as God delivered His people, this God has control over all things, the mountains, the seas, the sun and the moon, the rivers, armies, He is the God of victory.

Habakkuk ends with a great confession of faith, *"I might rest in the day of trouble."*, verse 16. *"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."*, verse 18. *"The Lord God is my strength;"*, verse 19. *"He will make me walk on my high hills."*, verse 19.

Habakkuk teaches us to take humbly our problems and doubts to the Lord, wait upon Him, worship Him, no matter what we see, feel, suffer, for He is in charge and controls all things.