

Bible Study Notes and Questions on the Book of Habakkuk

Background: Little is known about the prophet, except his name Habakkuk, which means “embracing”. A possible date for this book being put together could be around **600 BC** in view of the text mentioning the Chaldeans coming to invade Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. The northern kingdom of Israel had already been conquered by Assyria over one hundred years earlier. The Assyrian Empire crumbled after the Chaldeans had destroyed Nineveh (Situated in Northern Iraq on the River Tigris) in **612 BC**. The Chaldeans moved swiftly to take over other nations including Israel in its entirety.

Judah had become a vassal state of Egypt after the death of King Josiah in about **608 BC** (**2Chronicles36:1-4**). Pharaoh Necho, the Egyptian ruler, removed the son of King Josiah, Jehoahaz. He was replaced by Jehoiakim to become king of Judah. The defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish (upper region of the River Euphrates near Syrian-Turkish border) in 605 BC by the Chaldeans led to Judah being a vassal state to Babylon. Jehoiakim served King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon for three years but then rebelled against his rule. He was an evil king who led Judah into much sin and he refused to listen to God’s word (**Jeremiah36:1-32**). Judah was judged by God using the ungodly Chaldeans to discipline his people for rejecting him (**Jeremiah40:2-3**).

Habakkuk was given a revelation of the impending destruction of Judah which led ultimately to the devastation of Jerusalem in about **586 BC**.

Overview

Chapter 1:

1:1) Habakkuk was given a pronouncement (burden or oracle) from God of what had been revealed to him.

1:2-4) The prophet complained to the Lord of continual injustice where the wicked appeared to be getting away with oppressing the righteous.

1:5-11) God responded to the prophet’s prayer in revealing the coming invasion of the Chaldeans to punish Judah.

1:12-17) Habakkuk was confused and amazed that God should allow a wicked nation to rule over Judah.

Chapter 2:

2:1) Habakkuk was prepared to listen to God by taking his place as a watchman.

2:2-20) God responded by showing to Habakkuk that this wicked and proud nation of Babylon will eventually fall in his appointed time (**2:3-4**). Only the righteous and just people will live faithfully serving the Lord. God gives five woes that condemn the Chaldeans in such sins as greed (**2:6**), violence (**2:8 & 17**), covetousness (2:9), lust (**2:12-13**), drunkenness (**2:15-16**) and idolatry (**2:18-19**). God is in control (**2:20**).

Chapter 3:

This final chapter is a prayer in the form of a psalm sung to musical instruments. Habakkuk had responded with confidence to God. He admitted his fear of what God had revealed to him (**3:2&16**) having prayed that God would still be at work no matter what difficulties he would have to face. In **3:3-15** the prophet revealed the glory of God (**3:3-4**) and the power of God possibly in delivering his people Israel from Egypt and in helping them to possess the promised land by defeating the Canaanites. The final verses **3:17-19** show Habakkuk confidence in God. Even if there was no fruitfulness in the land the prophet would continue to rejoice in God believing He would be his strength to endure the coming times of trial.

Questions

- Q 1)** In **1:1-4** what was Habakkuk's problem?
- Q 2)** What is the evidence from the text that Judah was about to be invaded by the Chaldeans? See **1:6-10**.
- Q 3)** Did God answer Habakkuk in the way he expected? Give your reasons. See **1:5-11**.
- Q 4)** Is it right to complain to God in prayer? See **1:12-17**.
For further reading see also **Psalms 13:1-6 and 73:1-28**.
- Q 5)** What is God's attitude to sin? See **1:13** and read carefully **2:5-13,15-19**.
- Q 6)** What do we understand about the Chaldeans in **1:5-17** and **2:5-19**?
- Q 7)** Using **2:4**, what is the distinction between those who are wicked and those that are righteous? See also **Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11** and **Hebrews 10:38**.
- Q 8)** When will **2:14** be fulfilled?
- Q 9)** What evidence makes chapter three clearly a psalm? See **3:1, 3, 9, 13&19**.
- Q 10)** How does Habakkuk show his confidence in God in chapter three? See **3:17-19**.
- Q 11)** Show that Habakkuk was a man of prayer. See **1:2, 12-17; 2:1; 3:1-19**.
- Q 12)** Look carefully through the text to find out who God is. See **1:12; 2:20; 3:2, 18-19**.

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