



Habakkuk

The righteous shall live by his faith.

The Minor Prophets

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28. Hosea

29. Joel

30. Amos

31. Obadiah

32. Jonah

33. Micah

34. Nahum

35. Habakkuk

36. Zephaniah

37. Haggai

38. Zechariah

39. Malachi

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- **Time and Setting:** Somewhere around 625-605 B.C.
- This is the same time frame as **Jeremiah**.
- It is before Babylon's invasion of Judah, which came some time after 600 B.C.

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- **Habakkuk** deals with three main historical themes:
 1. The destruction of Judah at the hands of Babylon
 2. Babylon's eventual downfall
 3. God's unfailing faithfulness to Israel

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- There is an underlying theme involving *faith*.
- **Faith** is needed to understand God's involvement in the affairs of this world.
- Scripture deals with this elsewhere, for example, in **Job**.

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- The Prophet Jeremiah summed it up in a question:
- **Jeremiah 12:1** (ESV)

Righteous are you, O LORD,
when I complain to you;
yet I would plead my case before you.
Why does the way of the wicked prosper?
Why do all who are treacherous thrive?

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- Our tidy ideals of reward and retribution rarely seem to work themselves out very tidily in real life.
- Is God therefore unjust?
- This whole issue confuses Habakkuk just as it confused Jeremiah and sometimes confuses us.

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Dr. Charles Feinberg

The book of Habakkuk differs from the regular addresses of the prophets who ministered to Israel. His is a record of his own experience of soul with God. Prophets spoke for God to men. He [argues] with God about His dealings with men.

*– Charles L. Feinberg (1909 – 1995),
professor of Semitics, Talbot Seminary,
convert from Orthodox Judaism*

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- We can outline the book by chapters as follows:
 1. The Prophet's Questions
 2. God's Ultimate Answer
 3. The Prophet's Prayer

1. The prophet's questions

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- **1:1-4** The situation in Judah was awful and unjust.
- Corruption and evil thrived in every direction.
- This leads to the prophet's first question:

“Why doesn't God do something?”

1. The prophet's questions

- **1:5-11** God is doing something, but it's something Habakkuk is not going to like.
- God is raising up **the Chaldeans – Babylon** – to bring judgment upon His own beloved nation Israel.

1. The prophet's questions

- **1:12-17** Can God really desire His people to be caught like fish in a net or trampled like worms by these bullies?
- Things may be bad in Judah, but the Babylonians are so much worse!

1. The prophet's questions

- **1:12-17** The Chaldeans will certainly boast that Yahweh was weaker than their idols.
- This leads to a more serious question:

“How can such a holy God use such an evil nation to discipline His own precious people?”

2. God's ultimate answer

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- **2:1** Habakkuk is determined to wait for God's reply.
- **Psalm 27:14** (ESV)

Wait for the LORD;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD!

2. God's ultimate answer

- God's answer comes in
- Three Assurances for the people of God.
- Five Woes upon the Chaldeans

2. God's ultimate answer

- 2:4 Assurance #1
- The righteous shall live by his faith.

2. God's ultimate answer

- 2:4 Assurance #1

- The righteous shall live by his faith.

- This verse contrasts two categories of people:

1. The proud and self-confident – in this case the Chaldeans
2. The humble person who trusts in the Lord.

2. God's ultimate answer

- See also:
 - **Romans 1:17** emphasis is on “the righteous”
 - **Galatians 3:11** emphasis is on “shall live”
 - **Hebrews 10:38** emphasis is on “by faith”

2. God's ultimate answer

- **2:5** This is a description of the wicked nation of Babylon. He is drunk and covetous.
- **2:6-8** Woe #1
- **For excessive and violent covetousness**
- In the end all the nations Babylon has plundered will rise up like creditors to demand a repayment of their debts.

2. God's ultimate answer

- 2:9-11 Woe #2
- For even resorting to murder for ill-gotten gain

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- 2:9-11 Woe #2
- For even resorting to murder for ill-gotten gain
- 2:12-13 Woe #3
- For building their empire through bloodshed and iniquity

2. God's ultimate answer

- **2:14** Assurance #2
- The knowledge of the glory of the Lord will one day fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

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- **2:14** Assurance #2
- The knowledge of the glory of the Lord will one day fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.
- We already see a foreshadowing of this in the worldwide growth of the church and translation of Scriptures.
- The final fulfillment will come when Christ returns.

2. God's ultimate answer

- 2:15-17 Woe #4
- For drunkenness leading to immorality and violence.

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- 2:15-17 Woe #4
- For drunkenness leading to immorality and violence
- 2:18-19 Woe #5
- For idolatry

2. God's ultimate answer

- 2:20 Assurance #3
- God still rules.

2. God's ultimate answer

- 2:20 Assurance #3
- God still rules.
- His character remains intact. He has not changed.
- When his final judgment comes, it will be perfectly just.
- No one will be able to argue.

2. God's ultimate answer

- 2 Peter 3:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

2. God's ultimate answer

- 2 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

3. The prophet's prayer

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- 3:17-18 See these verses from **Philippians**.
- **Philippians 4:4** (ESV)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

3. The prophet's prayer

- **3:17-18** See these verses from **Philippians**.
- **Philippians 4:11-13** (ESV)

¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Habakkuk's Faith

Habakkuk's Faith

- The prophet's faith is in the living God, the God of Israel, whose character he believes is blameless.
- This is something more than mere optimism that everything will work out OK.
- It is a personal trust in a personal God who knows Habakkuk and his situation personally.

Seeing Jesus in Habakkuk

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- The nation of Judah suffered at the hands of a nation less righteous than themselves.
- Jesus was perfectly righteous and yet suffered at the hands of sinners.

Seeing Jesus in Habakkuk

- The nation later was allowed to return to their land and more recently Israel was restored to its historic place.
- Jesus rose from the dead, revealing that the injustice he suffered was only one part of the story – not the end.

Four Lessons from Habakkuk

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- All four of these lessons deal with our questions about life's problems, puzzles and conundrums.

Four Lessons from Habakkuk

1. Evaluate your issues openly.

- We don't find solutions to serious problems by pretending they are not there.
- We need to define them clearly.

Four Lessons from Habakkuk

2. Pray about your problems.

- God wants to hear our prayers more than we probably feel like praying.
- He is big enough to handle our honest questions.

Four Lessons from Habakkuk

3. Wait for answers.

- The key difference between **a proper question** to God and **an improper one** is found here.
- **An improper question** doesn't really want an answer, it only wants to prove that God is somehow unjust.
- *(Why this, God? I deserve better!)*
- **Habakkuk waited** for the Lord's answer and accepted God's Word as a sufficient response to His query.

Four Lessons from Habakkuk

4. Remain worshipful.

- Habakkuk listened to and meditated upon God's voice.
- It brought him to a place of reverence and awe before God.
- This takes humility, faith and a confidence in God's faithfulness.

Four Lessons from Habakkuk

4. Remain worshipful.

- An irreverent person rejects God's replies when they don't meet his or her expectations.
- A godly person will recognize that God's answer is good enough and actually grows more worshipful in the process.

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Note what a contrast the conclusion of this prophecy is to the perplexity that overwhelmed the prophet at the beginning of the book. He finds the all-sufficient answer to all his problems in God Himself. He will trust God though all blessings fail.

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A Final Blessing

- **Hebrews 13:20-21** (ESV)

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.