

## Overview of Habakkuk

**Author & Date:** Like most of the Minor Prophets, we know very little about Habakkuk. About all we do know is that he was a contemporary with Jeremiah immediately prior to the siege of Jerusalem. He may also have been a musician (3:19). Based upon internal evidence (see Hab 1:1-4), Habakkuk wrote the prophecy after the godly reign of Josiah and before the Babylonian's attacked Jerusalem. This would put the writing between 609 and 605 B.C. most likely about 607 B.C.

**Purpose:** The book of Habakkuk is not like most of the other prophecies in that it does not have a "thus says the Lord" tone, rather it is written as a conversation with Habakkuk asking God questions and the Lord answering. The prophet then appropriately ends the discourse with a prayer and a hymn of praise. The purpose is to encourage trust for the Lord even in the face of this world's injustices. In short, "the just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:4b)

### Outline for Habakkuk

- I. Habakkuk's Questions (chapter 1)
  - A. The Prophet's First Question (1:1-4)
  - B. God's Answer to Question 1 (1:5-11)
  - C. The Prophet's Second Question (1:12-17)
- II. God's Response (chapter 2)
  - A. False Prophets proclaim Peace (chapter 3)
  - B. God's true Peace (chapters 4-5)
- III. The Prophet's Response
  - A. Prayer (3:1-16)
  - B. Praise (3:17-19)

### Key/Interesting Passages:

2:4 " Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.

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 --18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 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.*

### Food for Thought

1. Read Hab. 1:1-4. How would you restate the prophet's question in one simple sentence?
2. What is God's answer to Habakkuk's question as stated in vv. 5-11? What does the tenor of God's response tell us about asking God questions like Habakkuk did in the first four verses?
3. How does verse 1:5 help us date the writing of this book?
4. Read Hab. 1:12-17. How would you restate the prophet's question in one simple sentence?

## Overview of Habakkuk

5. The key idea of the book is found in 2:2. How does God tell Habakkuk to live? What does that mean for us when we go through difficulties? When it seems the unrighteous get away with things and the good guys seem to finish last? (c.f. Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38)
  
6. God demonstrates that he is well aware of the injustices going on in Israel. What injustices or individual does he specifically identify (2:5-20)
  
7. How does Habakkuk's response in chapter 3 provide an example to us on how we should respond to God's truth and his ways?
  
8. Make Habakkuk's praise in 3:17-19 your own personal song of praise. What situations might you use in place of verse 17 and how do the truths of verse 18 and 19 provide encouragement should those situations come to pass?
  
9. The book, like Nahum, is a great one for teaching about God. Look at the lessons<sup>1</sup>:
  1. God does not always immediately answer, even his prophets (1:2)
  2. God's answers sometimes are unbelievable (1:5)
  3. God is from everlasting (1:12)
  4. God is the prophet's personal Holy One (1:12)
  5. God is the Rock (1:12)
  6. God is of purer eyes than to behold evil (1:13)
  7. God's glory shall be known in all the world (2:14)
  8. God is in His holy temple, let the earth keep silent (2:20)
  9. God comes to save His own (3:3, 13)
  10. The earth shall be full of His praise (3:3)
  11. He is powerful (3:4-7)
  12. He has anger (3:8, 12)
  13. He is sufficient by Himself (3:17-18)
  14. He is the prophet's strength (3:19)

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Binder, Outline of Habakkuk on [www.TruthSaves.org](http://www.TruthSaves.org)

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1. Read Hab. 1:1-4. How would you restate the prophet's question in one simple sentence?

*Why do the wicked go unpunished?*

2. What is God's answer (1: 5-11) to Habakkuk's question? What does the tenor of God's response tell us about asking God questions like Habakkuk did in the first four verses?

*God is going to do something about this situation soon. He says he is going to send the Chaldean's (Babylonian's) to judge the wicked of Israel. God explains that the Babylonians are "terrible and dreadful (v. 7), so he knows the people he is sending.*

3. How does verse 1:5 help us date the writing of this book?

*Since God will fulfill the judgment against Judah in the days of the prophet, we know that he wrote prior to the 605 B.C. fall of Jerusalem and that he lived to see this event.*

4. Read Hab. 1:12-17. How would you restate the prophet's question in one simple sentence?

*How can a holy God send a people more wicked than Judah to bring judgment on Judah?*

5. The key idea of the book is found in 2:2. What two types of people are compared in this verse? How does God tell Habakkuk to live? What does that mean for us when we go through difficulties? When it seems the unrighteous get away with things and the good guys seem to finish last? (c.f. Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38)

*The verse compares the proud with the just (before God). The proud person does not live in an honorable way. His living comes from the inside (his soul) and it is crooked (not upright). On the other hand, God says that not only Habakkuk, but all of the just are to live not by what they see, but they are to live by faith. Because of the contrast, living by faith is to live in an upright manner even if it does not seem profitable. Therefore, when we go through trials or don't see things happening in a just manner, we need to still trust in the Lord who knows all, sees all, and will complete his plans. This is not just a stated faith, but it is one that affects the way we live our lives. We must LIVE by FAITH. The concept is important enough to be repeated in the NT. (c.f. Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38)*

6. God demonstrates that he is well aware of the injustices going on in Israel. List several things God indicates that He is aware of and hence will take care of (2:5-20)

*The proud – cannot be satisfied (v. 5)  
Evil Gain – unscrupulous in business (v. 9)  
Builds a town with bloodshed – Ruthless for power (v. 11)  
Gives drink to his neighbor – Keeps others down (v. 15)*

7. How does Habakkuk's response in chapter 3 provide an example to us on how we should respond to God's truth and his ways?

*Our encounters with the Lord should humble us and draw us to prayer and praise for who He is and all He is doing.*

8. Make Habakkuk's praise in 3:17-19 your own personal song of praise. What situations might you use in place of verse 17 and how do the truths of verse 18 and 19 provide encouragement should those situations come to pass?