

The Book of Habakkuk

The Title, Author, and Date of Habakkuk

1. Title: Habakkuk –“The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw”
 - a. Hebrew – חֲבַקְקֻדָּה
 - b. Greek – Ἀμβακούμ
2. Author: Habakkuk
 - a. The name “Habakkuk” seems to come from a word meaning “embrace, cling.” This is fitting, in light of the prophet’s action at the end of the book.
 - b. We have no other information about the prophet. No internal information in the book.
 - c. *Habakkuk 2.4* is quoted in the NT, in key verses, in three places: *Ro 1.17*; *Ga 3.11*; *He 10.38*
3. Date: It is difficult to know for sure. Likely around 612-606 B.C.
 - a. We are again not helped with any statement of his lineage, nor who the reigning king was.
 - b. The oracle records a bitter lament by Habakkuk, in *1.2-4*, which seems to be shortly after King Josiah’s death in 609 B.C. Also, the Chaldeans are mentioned by name in *1.6*.

The Background and Setting of Habakkuk.

1. Assyria is ending.
2. Babylon is rising, beginning in 626 B.C.
 - a. Expansion to North and West
 - b. Overthrew Nineveh in 612 B.C., causing the nobility to flee to Haran (overthrown in 609 B.C.), then to Carchemish (overthrown in 605 B.C.).
 - c. A brutal and wicked nation.
3. Egypt ends up being defeated.
 - a. King Necho assisted the flight of the Assyrian King in 609 B.C.
 - b. Josiah opposed him, and was killed.
 - c. Egypt was defeated by Babylon.
4. Judah
 - a. King Josiah brought in spiritual revival. He was killed in battle in 609 B.C. (*1 Ch 35.20-24*)
 - b. His reforms unraveled (*Je 22.13-19*). Greed, injustice, corruption, and idolatry all crept back in.
 - c. Habakkuk sees absence of justice, unchecked corruption, greed, violence, wickedness.
5. The Man
 - a. Nothing is known for certain about Habakkuk.
 - b. A contemporary of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zephaniah.
 - c. He would have been a prophet in Judah (since the northern 10 tribes are gone).

6. The Book

- a. Habakkuk is an unusual book.
- b. Not an oracle to Judah, and yet, *is* an oracle to Judah (2.2).
 - 1) Habakkuk records his struggle with faith. What he is seeing (Judah's unrepentant evil and the rise of hideous Babylon . . . Sin winning!) does not seem to reconcile with what Habakkuk knows of God's character (God of covenant . . . Keeps His promises . . . Holy . . . will purify and protect His own people)! It looks like evil will win!
 - 2) Habakkuk *trusts* God, but is confounded by the circumstances He sees. He is confused by God's silence. (note 1.3, 13)
 - 3) Habakkuk brings his complaints to God . . . and God answers . . .
 - a) Chapter 1a – Q: "Why? Violence!!" A: "Look. . . You won't believe it. But, don't worry."
 - b) Chapter 1b-2 – Q: "Huh?! WHAT?! Why?! How can You . . . ? . . . OK, I will wait and listen." A: "Behold . . . By Faith."
 - c) Chapter 3 – A: "You are awesome. I will trust You, no matter what. (Even though I am scared)"

The Purpose and Message of Habakkuk

1. The **purpose** of the book is to **to teach God's people to trust Him, regardless of the circumstances**, and by this, **give Judah hope and encouragement, by faith, not by sight**.
2. The **message** of the book of Habakkuk is: **"Trust God."**

The Themes of Habakkuk

1. How can a holy and just God ethically use an unholy, godless and horrible nation to judge His people (who are less evil than that other nation)?
2. Trusting God when you cannot understand what He is doing.
3. Key Verses: 1.2, 13; 2. 4, 16; 3.18-19

The Outline of Habakkuk

1. Superscription – 1.1
2. Habakkuk's First Question and God's Answer – 1.2-11
 - a. Q: "Violence! God, why aren't you dealing with evil in Judah?" 1.2-4
 - b. A: "I am. Babylon." 1.5-11
3. Habakkuk's Second Question and God's Answer – 1.12-2.20
 - a. Q: "What?! Babylon?! They are worse than us! How . . . ?!" – 1.12-2.1
 - b. A: "Write it down. It will be scary. I have it all under control." – 2.2-20
4. Habakkuk's Response of Trust in God – 3.1-19
 - a. "Please be merciful." 3.1-2
 - b. "You are awesome!" 3.3-15
 - c. "I will trust You, no matter what." 3.16-19