

**A LOOK AT THE BOOK
HABAKKUK
THE RIGHTEOUS LIVE BY FAITH**

Ralph Porter

AUTHOR

Habakkuk's background is not known.

It is assumed by some that he may have been a Levite.

This would account for some elements of the psalm contained in chapter 3.

The use of music in worship was the responsibility of the priest.

DATE

The most common view is that the book was written about 606 or 607 B.C., after the death of Josiah and during the subsequent moral decline.

BACKGROUND

The book was written shortly before the fall of Judah, probably during the reign of Jehoiakim.

The period was noted primarily for the decline which followed the death of Josiah and eventually led to Judah's destruction.

The Chaldeans seem to have been well known already.

The fall of Assyria (612 B.C.) probably occurred prior to writing the book.

Possibly even the battle of Carchemesh (605 B.C.) has occurred.

Against backdrop of sin, injustice, and idolatry.

PURPOSE AND THEME

The message of the book is that God is going to use the Chaldeans (Neo-Babylonia) to discipline Judah for sin, and then judge the Chaldeans because the same sins and worse are in them.

It deals with some of the basic issues raised by God's people when they suffer at the hands of the prosperous wicked.

God is in control of history and will at His established time recompense men according to their pattern of conduct.

The book's purpose seems to be dual:

To the unfaithful:

Message of warning concerning coming judgment, to call God's people to repentance.

To those who have been faithful to God and have suffered from the injustice of the wicked:

Word to encourage them to trust God and to remain faithful.

God knows their affliction and will repay justly in the end.

ORGANIZATION

The book's structure is divided into three parts:

It starts and ends with Habakkuk's deliberation concerning his dilemma.

Why does God allow the wicked to continue prospering, while the just suffer (1)?

Habakkuk's complaint is silenced by God's answer that He is about to repay the wicked for their evil deeds.

Announcement that judgment is coming (2).

Though startled by some of the details of God's plan, Habakkuk's complaint is silenced by God's answer.

He responds with a psalm of praise to God for His plan (3).

DEBATE WITH GOD 1:1-17

Introduction 1:1

Name-Habakkuk

Office-Prophet

Content-"Burden"

Method of revelation-a vision

Habakkuk's first problem 1:2-11

The book begins with Habakkuk's basic complaint.

His complaint 1:2-4

He is disturbed because as he looks out over the land of Judah, he observes that the wicked prosper and the righteous are persecuted.

God seems to be silent and unconcerned-GOD IS INDIFFERENT

- To his cries
- To the lack of justice

He can't understand how a righteous God can permit such injustice among His people.

- "How long?"
- "Why?"

God's failure to answer 1:2

God's failure to judge the wicked 1:3-4

God's answer 1:5-11

God's activity 1:5

God's answer: "I AM WORKING"
 He is doing something about it.
 Judgment of Israel for perversion of justice

God's instrument 1:6-11

He is sending the Chaldeans who will conquer Judah.
 They will serve to judge the wicked.

Habakkuk's second problem 1:12-17 -THE INSTRUMENT

As a result of the answer to his first question, a second is raised.

Habakkuk is troubled by God's use of the Chaldeans.

He asks how a righteous God can use a more evil nation to correct Judah, His own people.

Pleads God's holiness
 He is eternal
 He is holy
 He is not looking on evil

How can a holy God use the wicked to judge the more righteous?

ANSWER FROM GOD 2:1-20

God's answer:

- 1) Write the vision
- 2) Make it plain
- 3) Its appointed time will come!

He will also judge the Chaldeans, after they have performed His will against Judah.

He does not defend their deeds but He uses them and then judges them for their own evil deeds.

God will judge the one who is puffed up and preserve alive the one who walks by faith (2:1-4).

Clarity of judgment 2:1-2

"What He will speak with me" 2:1

Certainty of judgment 2:3

Comfort from judgment 2:4

"The 'puffed-up' one" => Judgment 2:4a

Puffed up to be judged 2:4a

Righteous to live by faith 2:4b

Criteria for judgment 2:5-20

The basis for God's just judgment of any people is revealed.

He who lives in unrighteousness will be destroyed by God, whether he be Jew or Babylonian.

FIVE WOES:

Not clear to what he is referring.

All relate to their violent treatment of the nations—especially Israel

1) Judgment for pride 2:5-8

The remnant will plunder you
Violence will be repaid

2) Judgment for covetousness 2:9-11

The stones and beams will cry out

3) Judgment for violence 2:12-14

The cities will be destroyed

4) Judgment for immorality 2:15-17

Judgment for bringing shame on a neighbor
Repayment of same shame

5) Judgment for idolatry 2:18-20

Unanswering gods—not home!
Contrasted with the true God who is in His holy temple
The whole earth keeps silence before Him—deserves reverence

PRAISE TO GOD 3:1-19

Having received the answer to his questions, Habakkuk prays that God will start His program and accomplish His purposes.

He is satisfied that God is going to correct the unjust situation in a just manner, and thus offers praise to God because of His dealings with Israel.

Though he regrets the time of judgment, he rejoices in the knowledge that God is able to restore the nation and deliver him.

"What I will answer" 2:1b

"The righteous" => His confidence 2:4b

Petition for fulfillment of plan 3:1-2

Prayer for Him to get started with the plan 3:1 *Introduction*

Prayer for Him not to forget about His mercy! 3:2 *1st person*

3:3-7 *God-3rd person*

Praise because of God's intervention 3:3-15 3:8-15 *God-2nd person*

3:16-18 *1st person*

God's intervention in the affairs of His people 3:19 *God-3rd person*

Greatness of God

Working

Wrathful

Merciful

Glorious

Bright

Powerful

Judging

Producing salvation for His people

Intervening

Resultant fear (=> 3:16)

Praise based on trust in God 3:16-19

Habakkuk's fear and faith 3:16

Habakkuk's praise and confidence 3:17-19

The Lord is

his source of salvation

his strength

Yahweh causes him to walk in high places.

What lessons do we learn from our study of this book?

- *About God?*

He is in control—even when we don't understand what He is doing

He isn't bothered by our doubts—nor by our honest questioning

He will recompense justly

- *About the unrighteous?*

They may appear to win now
In the end they will pay for their injustice

- *About ourselves?*

We don't have to be afraid to come to God with the hard questions
If all we go by is what we see, we may miss something important

It is more important to trust God than to have all the answers!