

The Book of Habakkuk

Prophet's Name

- Meaning: "Embrace"
- Identity
 - ◇ Habakkuk does not provide any history about himself.
 - ◇ All we know about him comes from internal evidence in his book.
 - ◇ In addition to being a prophet (1:1; 3:1), he may have been a temple priest involved in worship (3:19).

Historical Background

- Date
 - ◇ Habakkuk ministers during the days of Jehoiakim (609-598 B.C.).
 - ◇ He ministers during the "death throes" of the nation of Judah.
 - ◇ The Babylonian captivity is imminent (1:6; 2:1; 3:16).
 - ◇ From history, we know that Babylon destroyed Nineveh in 612 B.C. and invaded Judah initially in 605 B.C. It was during this first exile that Daniel and his companions were taken captive.
 - ◇ Written between 609-597 B.C.
- Setting
 - ◇ Habakkuk ministers during a time of great distress. King Josiah was killed in 609 B.C. Josiah's second son, Jehoahaz, became king for 3 months. Pharaoh Necho replaced Jehoahaz with his older brother, Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim was a wicked king who squandered funds and disdained Jeremiah the prophet.
- Contemporaries
 - ◇ Jeremiah

Theme & Key Characteristics

- Theme: Faith or Trust in God
- Unique characteristics
 - ◇ Habakkuk became greatly burdened concerning the sins of God's people. He cries out to the Lord for justice.
 - ◇ To his surprise, God answers by revealing that He will bring the wicked Babylonians against God's people. This rocked Habakkuk's world and sent him to God for answers.

Outline (Freeman, pp. 259-60)

- I. The Prophet's Perplexity and the Divine Solution (1:1-2:20)
 - A. The Prophet's First Perplexity (1:2-11)
 - 1. God's Silence in View of Judah's Iniquities (1:2-4)
 - 2. The Divine Solution: The Chaldean Invasion (1:5-11)
 - B. The Prophet's Second Perplexity (1:12-2:20)
 - 1. God's Employment of the Wicked Chaldeans as His Instrument of Chastisement (1:12-17)
 - 2. The Divine Solution: The Chaldeans' Destruction (2:1-20)
 - a. The prophet's watch for God's answer (2:1)
 - b. God's directions in preparation for His reply (2:2-3)
 - c. The message of consolation (2:4-5)
 - d. The Chaldeans' destruction depicted in five woes (2:6-20)

- II. The Prophet's Prayer (3:1-19)
 - A. The Superscription (3:1)
 - B. The Prophet's Petition (3:2)
 - C. The Splendor of the Theophany Described (3:3-4)
 - D. The Purpose and Effects of Yahweh's Appearance (3:5-15)
 - E. The Prophet's Meditation upon the Vision (3:16-17)

Key Passages

- 1:2-4 Habakkuk expresses his burden to God about Judah's sins.
- 1:5-7 God will bring against Judah the Babylonians.
- 1:12-13 Habakkuk struggles to reconcile God's justice with His actions.
- 2:4-5 God will bring judgment upon the Babylonians' pride.
- 3:1-2 Habakkuk pleads with God to revive God's people.
- 3:3-6 Habakkuk envisions God's majesty and glory.
- 3:17-19 Habakkuk places his complete trust in the Lord.

Sources

- Hobart Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*
- Leon Wood, *The Prophets of Israel*
- C Hassel Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books*
- Bruce Wilkinson & Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible*
- Charles Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets*