

Habakkuk: Moving from Holding Out to Holding On

Habakkuk: Hebrew, *strongly embrace (wrestle)*

Occupation: Professional prophet, probably working in the temple, possibly a Levite and associated with the temple singers

Key verse: Habakkuk 2:4 ...the just shall live by his faith

Time: Probably around 607-609 B.C., God was “raising up the Chaldeans” (Babylonians) so the extent of their power was not yet fully realized. The Babylonian rise to power made its most significant step at the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. when they defeated the Egyptians

Background: Habakkuk had probably seen the spiritual revival under the leadership of the young king Josiah, but also the fall after the reign of his son Jehoahaz for three months before being replaced by the Pharaoh of Egypt by Jehoiakim his brother.

Notes:

- Habakkuk differs from many of his contemporaries as he speaks representing the people to God instead of God's messenger to the people.
- Other prophets pleaded with God to ease the judgments on the nation, whereas Habakkuk questions God's lack of action against the unrighteous
- Like many other greats in the Bible, Habakkuk's faith caused him to question God.
- Even though he did not understand God's timing or methods, he took his concerns to Jehovah.
- His faith pushed him to seek answers from the only One capable.
- Habakkuk walked away from this dialogue stronger in his faith and closer than when he began.
- Answers received did not satisfy his original intentions, yet he realized the greatness of God.

Overview:

- 1:1, Habakkuk's burden, something to be picked up and carried
- The book goes from worry to worship. It begins with sorrow and ends in song (and he didn't get the answers he was expecting).
- Habakkuk sees injustice, violence, and unrighteousness and calls out to God
- 1:5 God begins his reply to the first complaint and informs Habakkuk He is formulating judgment via the up and coming Babylonian empire
- 1:12 Habakkuk does not understand God's purpose in using the godless to judge the ungodly, why use pagans to judge your own people?
- Does this not also contradict our view of God? Would God use the wicked for His purpose?
- 2:1 Habakkuk resolves to wait on the Lord and watch for His work He will perform
- Although not understanding God's ways, the prophet is determined to be vigilant
- 2:3 The Lord's words are sure, it may take some time, but it will happen
- 2:4 The just man shall live by his faithfulness, the wicked may appear to have their day, it might look like they prosper and are allowed to rule unchecked, but remember, no sin is overlooked by a holy and just God, each will give account for deeds done in the flesh, whether good or evil
- 2:14 The prophet sees God in His holy temple, despite the wicked's rise to power, God alone occupies the throne, when the wicked finally receive judgment, God is still on His throne
- 2:18 False idols will not save in the day of the Lord, the works of a man's hands will not save him from judgment. Do not envy the kingdom of the wicked, their very riches testify against them.
- 3:2 in wrath remember mercy, Habakkuk acknowledges God's sovereign works and that they are far beyond man's comprehension, he has resolved to wait on the Lord's time, but also realizes the greatness of the foretold judgment, the prophet pleads that God remember mercy
- When we pray for our nation's return to godliness, how far are we expecting God to go?
- 3:16 Habakkuk will worship God whether or not circumstances encourage it, He will not love the Lord based on health and wealth, but on the fact the the Lord is the God of his salvation