

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAR 30TH-31ST, 2019 // BOOK OF HABAKKUK

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- The author is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible, but is known as a deeply spiritual and courageous “minor prophet.”
- Habakkuk means to embrace.
- Was well known in Jewish folklore
- He struggled with God's methods and spoke more on the behalf of humanity than of God.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Habakkuk predicted a major invasion by the Chaldeans (Babylonians). He also addressed many cultural and governmental problems of his day. He asked God why there is injustice why God uses the methods He does.

- **Through questions, Habakkuk learns to trust God even during confusing times.**

THE THEME OF THIS BOOK IS FAITH

Hab. 2:4 is the central passage of this short book and it illuminates the overall theme..

- The secondary theme of honesty was influential on Paul (70% of the NT) and also the leaders of the Protestant Reformation (Luther, Hus, Calvin). It was written around 605 B.C.

WAITING (HAB. 1:1-4)

PROPHETIC BOOKS

Typically, books of the Bible that foretell future events begin with lengthy intros from the author and the purpose of the prophecy. Habakkuk doesn't do this. He just gives his name and starts the prophecy.

- “Pronouncement” means a burden to share. Once Habby “saw” his responsibility, he shared this dialogue.

THIS BOOK OPENS IN A VERY ODD WAY

Unlike other prophets, Habby opens up with a question for God rather than an immediate charge from Him to His people. Rarely do we see such **balance of boldness and respect**.

- **God is not offended by hard questions.** In fact, us going to other sources for complicated issues probably frustrates Him.

HOW LONG LORD? (V2)

This phrase appears in the Bible over 60 times and is usually about the delay of justice. Habby thought God was oblivious or unconcerned about the evil things being inflicted on good people.

- He had heard stories of God striking the Egyptians and bringing fire down on Mt. Sinai, but where was God now?

EVIL HAD ESCALATED AND WAS HIGHLY VISIBLE

Habby says, “Oppression and violence are right in front of me.” He was referring to the crime that had overrun Judah (south Israel). The culture had become violent, the court systems were corrupt, and the people were always accusing each other.

- In other words, culture's value system had broken down.

HABAKKUK HAD SEEN SOCIETY AT ITS BEST

King Josiah (640-609 B.C.) had ushered in one of the greatest spiritual awakenings in centuries for the Jewish people. Unfortunately, the king that followed was corrupt and put the nation in disarray.

- We have also seen a decline in morality and integrity in our society. It is hard to hold on during these times.

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

- Do we have a “pronouncement” or burden that we are called to share? How should we address injustice? How do we communicate with a culture that has different values? Are we close enough to God to have honest conversation with Him?

DARK TIMES (HAB. 1:5-11)

GOD WAS PAYING ATTENTION

Habakkuk thought God was distant, but God tells Habby that not only will He deal with evil, it will be swift and by unexpected means.

- We often feel like the world is out of control and that God is absent. But, **we must remember that He is sovereign and knows what He is doing, even in dark times.**

GOD CHALLENGED HABAKKUK TO LOOK

God tells Habby to “observe” because what he will see will “utterly astound him.” God was going to make a massive shift and by means that no one would have guessed.

- **God was going to allow an enemy, the Chaldeans, to rise up to inflict justice on evil people in Judah. Sometimes justice comes via unconventional means.**

WHO WERE THE BABYLONIANS (CHALDEANS)?

This was a nation/people that were incredibly ruthless and feared. They had conquered much of the known world and were hyper aggressive in obtaining land.

- The army was led by Nebuchadnezzar, a military genius that became a famous convert in Daniel.

THEY HAVE “COME TO DO VIOLENCE” (V9-10)

The Jews had become violent towards each other, and now they would reap what they had sown (Deut. 28:49). V10 shows just how vicious the Babylonians were, and that **“their strength is their god.”**

- **This sounds eerily like the U.S. We have turned on each other boasting about our power and influence.**

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

- As Christians, are we aware of the shift in the world? Are we biblically literate enough to know if it's good or bad? What is our source of comfort and wisdom during turbulent times?

NOT MY WAY? (HAB. 1:12-17)

I TRUST YOU BUT I DON'T GET IT

V12 and 13 show that Habakkuk is committed to God even though he doesn't understand why He does what He does.

- He says, “Are You not from eternity...?” **This shows the humility we should all have to admit that God is not like us, but far beyond us (Num. 23).**

OF COURSE GOD WON'T DIE

When Habakkuk says, “You will not die,” he wasn't just talking about God, but also His people. **Habakkuk knew that God had made a promise to His people, and God isn't slack on promises (2 Pet. 3:9).**

- **The promises of God are only known if we read His Word!** We must remember the promises of God.

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

In v13 Habakkuk rephrases his original question and shows his utter confusion as to why God is letting the evil around him take place. He knows that God is “pure” and “cannot tolerate evil.”

- **The “Why are You silent?” question can easily be turned back on us. Why do we allow so much evil around us?**

A PEOPLE THAT WORSHIP THEMSELVES

V14-17 is a simple fishing analogy about how the Chaldeans capture and plunder nations and people.

Habby says they're “glad and rejoice” in their power and abilities.

- Babylon was a nation/people that boasted about their power. **When a nation/people forget where true power comes from, it is destined to fall.**

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

- We are so good at pointing fingers and skirting responsibility, but have we ever looked in the mirror and asked how we are making the world a better place? The problem is not God, but us.

WATCHING (HAB. 2:1)

WAITING FOR A RESPONSE

Habakkuk had voiced his concern, but the difference between his complaint and most of ours is that he had a relationship with God and fully expected a response from the Lord.

- **It is hard to listen if we're never quiet. We are to build a relationship with God, voice our concerns, and then patiently wait for Him to speak to us.**

WE MUST POSITION OURSELVES TO SEE AND HEAR

We cannot expect to hear from God if we are constantly multitasking and treating Him like Santa Claus. Habakkuk positioned himself like a watchman on a guard post watching for God to show up.

- **Are we seeking His will or just complaining about what we don't have or understand?**

STRENGTH IN CONFUSING TIMES

- Are we close enough to God to have honest conversation with Him?
- Are we too distracted to hear from God? **Do we position ourselves to see and hear Him?**
- Do we engage in the broken world around us? Are we aware of the shift in values?
- **Do we take personal responsibility** for the state of the world around us?
- **What is our source of comfort and strength when times are confusing and difficult?** Do we run to God or temporary comforts?