

Author - STEVEN R. DOUGLAS 2017

THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

OLD TESTAMENT

BOOK 35

HABAKKUK



Habakkuk and the Angel, by Bernini

SUMMARY

The Book of Habakkuk is an oracle from the Prophet Habakkuk. The Book of Habakkuk was likely written between 610 and 605 B.C.

Habakkuk was wondering why God was allowing His chosen people to go through the current suffering at the hands of their enemies. God answers and Habakkuk's faith is restored.

The Book of Habakkuk begins with Habakkuk crying out to God for an answer to why God's chosen people are allowed to suffer in their captivity. The Lord gives His answer to Habakkuk, essentially stating, You wouldn't believe it if I told you.

Habakkuk then follows up by saying, Ok, you are God, but still tell me more about why this is happening. God then answers him again and gives him more information, then tells the earth to be silent before Him. Then Habakkuk writes a prayer expressing his strong faith in God, in spite of these trials.

The application to the reader of Habakkuk is that it is permissible to question what God is doing, although with respect and reverence. Sometimes it is not evident to us what is going on, especially if we are thrown into suffering for a period of time or if it seems our enemies are prospering while we are just barely getting by.

The Book of Habakkuk affirms that God is a sovereign, omnipotent God who has all things under control. We just need to be still and know He is at work. He is who He says He is and does keep His promises. He will punish the wicked. Even when we cannot see it, He is still on the throne of the universe.

We need to stay focused on this: The Sovereign Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights (Habakkuk 3:19). Enabling us to go on the heights is taking us to the higher places with Him where we are set apart from the world.

Sometimes the way we have to go to get us there is through suffering and sorrow, but if we rest in Him and trust Him, we come out where He wants us.

Chapter 1: Habakkuk asks God why he seems to delay judgment against the wicked. The Lord is raising up the Chaldeans. Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and fiercer than evening wolves. They gather captives like sand, scoffing at kings and princes.

When the Babylonians overwhelm the land of Judah, they will wrongly give the credit to their false gods. Habakkuk wonders why God would use a nation more wicked than Judah to bring judgment on Judah. Habakkuk will stand his watch and wait for God's reply.

Chapter 2: The Lord tells Habakkuk to write the reply down. The proud are not upright, but the just shall live by faith. Babylon has an insatiable desire for conquest, but they shall be plundered by the remnant of those they plundered. Woe to the greedy, the violent, the drunk and the idolatrous. The Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silent before Him.

SUMMARY Continued

Chapter 3: Habakkuk pleads for revival. There is a song of praise (punctuated by 'Selah', as in the Psalms) glorifying God's power over the earth and the nations. Habakkuk is afraid yet resolves to rejoice in the Lord.

The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills. To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 2:4** Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.
- 2:14** For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea.
- 2:15** Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing him to your bottle, Even to make him drunk, That you may look on his nakedness!
- 2:16** You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also--drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the Lord's right hand will be turned against you, And utter shame will be on your glory.
- 3:17** Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls--
- 3:18** Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.
- 3:19** The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills. To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

BIBLE TIMELINE

625 BC

The Oracle to Habakkuk

Habakkuk 1 - 3

CHARACTER Definitions

HABAKKUK - We know little of Habakkuk beyond the two mentions of his name in this book of prophecy. Both times, he identified himself as "Habakkuk the prophet", a term that seems to indicate Habakkuk was a professional prophet.

This could mean that Habakkuk was trained in the Law of Moses in a prophetic school, an institution for educating prophets that cropped up after the days of Samuel.

Habakkuk also could have been a priest involved with the worship of God at the temple. This assumption is based on the book's final, psalm-like statement: For the choir director, on my stringed instruments.

Determining the date of the book of Habakkuk is quite a bit easier than dating most books. He spoke often of an imminent Babylonian invasion, an event that occurred on a smaller scale in 605 BC before the total destruction of Judah's capital city, Jerusalem, in 586 BC.

CHARACTERS Continued

The way Habakkuk described Judah indicates a low time in its history. If the dating is to remain close to the Babylonian invasion, Habakkuk likely prophesied in the first five years of Jehoiakim's reign (609–598 BC) to a king who led his people into evil.

Habakkuk's prophecy was directed to a world that, through the eyes of God's people, must have seemed on the edge of disaster. Even when the northern kingdom had been destroyed in 722 BC, God's people remained in Judah.

However, with another powerful foreign army on the rampage, faithful people like Habakkuk were wondering what God was doing. Hadn't He given the land to His people? Would He now take it away?

Habakkuk's prayer of faith for the remainder of God's people in the face of such destruction still stands today as a remarkable witness of true faith and undying hope.

Habakkuk provides us one of the most remarkable sections in all of Scripture, as it contains an extended dialogue between Habakkuk and God. The prophet initiated this conversation based on his distress about God's "inaction" in the world. He wanted to see God do something more, particularly in the area of justice for evildoers.

The book of Habakkuk pictures a frustrated prophet, much like Jonah, though Habakkuk channeled his frustration into prayers and eventually praise to God, rather than trying to run from the Lord as Jonah did.

As the prophet Habakkuk stood in Jerusalem and pondered the state of his nation, Judah, he must have been dumbfounded. So much evil thrived, completely in the open, but God remained strangely silent. Where was He? How long would He allow this mess to continue?

Not long, according to the Lord. Another nation, the Babylonians, would come and execute justice on the Lord's behalf. The wicked in Judah, those who thought they would get away with their evil deeds forever, were soon to be punished.

The book of Habakkuk offers us a picture of a prideful people being humbled, while the righteous live by faith in God. It reminds us that while God may seem silent and uninvolved in our world, He always has a plan to deal with evil and always works out justice eventually.

The example of the prophet Habakkuk encourages believers to wait on the Lord, expecting that He will indeed work out all things for our good.

Habakkuk asked God the kind of question that so many of us have pondered, Why do you force me to look at evil, stare trouble in the face day after day?. We have all seen the evidence of evil in our lives. We've all been touched by it. And we bear scars at various stages of healing.

Surrounded by evil as if we are trapped in a dark prison cell of our own making, we are often downtrodden by our poor choices and our fallen world. However, the book of Habakkuk reminds us that no place is too dark and no wall too thick for God's grace to penetrate in a powerful and life-affirming way.

MAP REFERENCES

Chart of the Minor Prophets

Date (B.C.)	Prophet	Meaning of the Name	Theme of the Book	Prophecies To / About	Major Sins
840 - 830	Obadiah	(Worshipper of YHVH)	Day of the Lord, Edom's Destruction, Israel's restoration.	Against Edom	Edom had continual violence toward Jacob. Edom cheered when Judah taken captive.
830 - 750	Joel	(YHVH is God)	Day of the Lord	Israel (Ten Tribes of Israel)	Adultery, drunkenness, idolatry, licentiousness
780 - 740	Jonah	(Dove)	Sign of Commitment, Type of Jesus Christ, Mercy to Repentant.	Nineveh, with implications to all people.	Cruelty of Assyrians
760	Amos	(Burden Bearer)	Day of the Lord, The Eternal will roar	Israel, Judah, Benjamin and all nations	Oppression of poor, Sexual Immorality, Wanton Luxury, Corrupt law and men
740 - 700	Micah	(Who is like YHVH?)	The Eternal is just Judge	Samaria, Jerusalem, All Nations	Lack of justice in land, Oppression
640 - 620	Nahum	(Consolation)	Judgment on Nineveh, Comfort to Israel	Assyrians, primarily city of Nineveh	Cruelty of the Assyrians, overstepped boundaries
640 - 609	Zephaniah	(Hidden by YHVH)	God's indignation, Who may be hidden? Israel repents then God saves them.	Judah, Jerusalem, all Israel, all people, about Day of the Lord	Spiritual fornication
608 - 605	Habakkuk	(Embrace)	God embraces Judah through destroying the Chaldeans	Babylon with implications for all people	Aggression and plunder, Greed, Graft, violence in building, Inhumanity and idolatry
520	Haggai	(Festival)	The restoration Temple points to the Church	Zerubbabel, Joshua and the returned remnant	Neglect in building God's House, Procrastination
520 - 480	Zechariah	(Remembered by YHVH)	The coming of God's Kingdom, preceded by building of Temple	Zerubbabel, Joshua and the returned remnant	Joshua's filthy garments, Lack of Judgment, Lack of mercy and peace, Living in evil ways
420 - 400	Malachi	(My Messenger)	Be prepared for the messenger that is to come	Israel (twelve tribes) and Israel of God today (the church)	Priests neglecting duties. People chided for divorce, adultery, robbing God and criticizing.