

# **Habakkuk: From Sorrow to Singing**

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction: Hab. 1:1 - 3:19

- A. In the Old Testament period in which Judah was alone in serving God, and Israel had disappeared into captivity:
  - 1. Zephaniah was prophesying to Judah.
  - 2. Nahum was pronouncing God's judgment upon Nineveh.
- B. Habakkuk was filled with troubling questions.
  - 1. Almost nothing is known about Habakkuk, aside from what is stated within the book of the Bible bearing his name, or those inferences that may be drawn from it.
  - 2. His name is either taken from the Hebrew root word for "embrace," or from the Aramaic name "habbaququ" meaning "fragrant plant."
  - 3. Luther writes: "His name speaks as one who took his nation to his heart, comforted it and held it up, as one embraces and presses to his bosom a poor weeping child, calming and consoling it with good hope."
  - 4. Date of writing: around 612-606 B.C., just as Babylon was making her westward move toward world conquest
  - 5. His message falls into three sections consisting of five oracles; four in prophecy against Chaldean and one in praise to God:
    - a. A burden - Hab. 1:1 - 2:1
    - b. A vision - Hab. 2:2-20
    - c. A prayer - Hab. 3:1-19
- C. The difference between Habakkuk and other prophets
  - 1. Instead of taking the Lord's message directly to the people, he takes the complaint of the people to the Lord, representing them in the complaint.
  - 2. As he does so, Habakkuk goes "From Sorrow to Singing."

## **I. HIS BURDEN: FAITH GRAPPLING WITH A PROBLEM**

- A. He laments over rule of wickedness and violence; how can the Lord justify His apparent indifference to such things? - Hab. 1:1-4
- B. God is not indifferent; He is doing something hard to understand - Hab. 1:5-11
  - 1. He will raise up the Chaldeans to execute His judgment, using a violent nation that arrogantly thinks it is serving its own god and purposes.
- C. How can a holy God use such an impure, unholy agency? - Hab. 1:12-17
  - 1. He will wait for God to answer - Hab. 2:1

## **II. HIS VISION: FAITH GRASPING THE SOLUTION**

- A. God's first answer: The just shall live by his faith.
  - 1. Habakkuk is to write what God reveals to him - Hab. 2:2-3
  - 2. The proud are not upright; but the just shall live by his faith - Hab. 2:4
- B. God's second answer: God will judge the proud.
  - 1. Woe to the proud possessed with lust for conquest and plunder - Hab. 2:5-8

2. Woe to their efforts to build a permanent empire through cruelty and godless gain - Hab. 2:9-11
  3. Woe to those who build cities with bloodshed - Hab. 2:12-14
  4. Woe to those cruel in their treatment of the conquered - Hab. 2:15-17
  5. Woe to those given over to idolatry, who worship that in which there is no breath at all, while the Lord is in His holy temple, before whom the earth should keep silence - Hab. 2:18-20
- C. While God may use a wicked nation like Babylon to punish the wickedness of Judah, He will not let Babylon's wickedness go unpunished either.

### **III. HIS PRAYER: FAITH GLORYING IN ASSURANCE**

- A. Petition for God's action and mercy written in the form of a psalm - Hab 3:1, 19
  1. Asks God to revive His works and to remember mercy - Hab. 3:2
- B. Praise for God's past deliverance and mighty works - Hab. 3:3-7
  1. Punishment to the wicked and salvation to His people - Hab. 3:8-15
- C. Profession of faith
  1. He trembled at what he has heard, that he will have rest in the day of trouble - Hab. 3:16
  2. He expresses his faith that while trouble may come, he will rejoice in the Lord who will be his strength - Hab. 3:17-19
  3. One of the greatest expressions of faith found anywhere

### **IV. LESSONS GLEANED FROM HABAKKUK**

- A. The universal supremacy of God's judgment upon the wicked
  1. God would use Chaldea to punish wicked Judah
  2. Then Chaldea would be destroyed for its own wickedness
- B. Evil is self-destructive
  1. If the righteous can be patient, trusting in the Lord
  2. The tyranny and arrogance of the wicked will catch up to them
- C. Faith is essential
  1. By faith, the righteous in Habakkuk's day would live.
  2. By faith, the righteous will live today.
    - a. In salvation - Rom. 1:16-17
    - b. In perseverance - Heb. 10:35-39
    - c. Note that both quote from Hab. 2:4
- D. But our faith must not be a shallow faith; it must be like that of Habakkuk.
  1. Hab. 3:17-19