

Habakkuk

Original Historical Setting

Author: Habakkuk

Written: Between 612 B.C. – 605 B.C.

Audience: People of Judah

Occasion: We don't know what prompted Habakkuk to write this book, but it is obvious that God felt that the dialogue between Habakkuk and God would be beneficial to all.

Timeline:

- 612 BC – Nineveh falls to Babylon
- 609 BC – Death of Josiah King of Judah
- 605 BC – Beginning of King Nebuchadnezzar
- 605 BC – Babylon invades Judah and takes captives
- 586 BC – Jerusalem falls to Babylon

World Events that occur simultaneously

- 612 B.C. –Babylon begins 70 year dominance of Middle East
- 605 B.C. –Babylon defeats Egypt at battle of Carchemish
- 600 B.C. –Nebuchadnezzar builds Hanging Gardens of Babylon

Features and Structure

Habakkuk questions God twice and God answers him both times. This is followed by five woes regarding those who have committed evil. The book ends with Habakkuk's prayer of praise and acknowledgement of God's sovereignty.

OUTLINE	1:1-4	Habakkuk's first question
	1:5-11	God's first answer
	1:12-2:1	Habakkuk's second question
	2:2-4	God's second answer
	2:5-20	Five "woes" against evil ones
	3:1-19	Habakkuk's prayer of praise

Memory Verse: Habakkuk 3:18

Genre/Literary style

Dialogue, prophecy, woes, and prayer all written in Hebrew poetry

Key text(s)

- 2:4** – Just shall live by faith
- 3:17** – Though the fig tree may not blossom
- 3:18** – I will joy in the God of my salvation
- 3:19** – He will make my feet like deer's feet

What to look for

- Notice that this book is not so much an oracle from God or even the story about the life of a prophet, but a record of the dialogue between Habakkuk and God.
- Note the song (or psalm) at the end of the book which was probably sung as a worship song as indicated by the instructions to the Chief musician.
- Even though Habakkuk is shaken by the news that Babylon will destroy his homeland, he praises the God of creation and pledges unwavering allegiance to Him.

Interesting facts

- There are several legends concerning Habakkuk and his book: 1) There is an apocryphal account of an angel carrying Habakkuk by the hair to Daniel in the lion's den to give him a bowl of stew. 2) Some rabbinic sources theorize that Habakkuk is the Shunammite woman's son whom Elisha restored to life. 3) One of the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls was a Commentary on Habakkuk that interprets Habakkuk's reference to Babylon as actually referring to the Romans who ruled during the writing of the scrolls by the Essenes.
- In 1942 a British scientist named Geoffrey Pyke proposed to Winston Churchill an idea for cutting off a large piece of an arctic iceberg to become an unsinkable, cheap aircraft carrier. He dubbed it "Project Habakkuk" based on the words of **Hab 1:5**.