

- In the ancient TaNaK, the order of the Hebrew Bible, the 12 prophetic works of Hosea through Malachi, sometimes referred to as the Minor Prophets, were designed as a single book called The Twelve. Habakkuk is the eighth book of The Twelve.
- What's in a name? Habakkuk means hugger or clinger.
- 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” ([Habakkuk 1:1; 3:1](#)), a term that seems to indicate Habakkuk was recognized as a 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 ([1 Samuel 19:20](#)). 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” ([Habakkuk 3:19](#)).

### **Where are we?**

Determining the date of the book of Habakkuk is quite a bit easier than dating most books. He spoke of an imminent Babylonian invasion ([Habakkuk 1:6](#)), an event that occurred on a smaller scale in 605 BC before the total destruction of Judah’s capital city, Jerusalem, in 586 BC. 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 is directed to Israel, a nation on the edge of disaster. 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.

### **Why is Habakkuk so important?**

Habakkuk provides us one of the most remarkable sections in all of Scripture, as it contains an extended dialogue between Habakkuk and God ([Habakkuk 1–2](#)). The prophet initiated this conversation based on his distress about God’s “inaction” in Judah. 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.

**The book of Habakkuk has striking similarities between Israel at the time and the US presently.**

### **What's the big idea?**

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 (**Habakkuk 2:2–3**). 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, Israel as well as Babylon, while the righteous live by faith in God (**2:4**). 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 (**Romans 8:28**).

### **How do I apply this?**

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?" (**Habakkuk 1:3 MSG**). 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, many times of our own making. Suffering the effects at time of 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, through repentance, for God's grace to penetrate in a powerful and life-affirming way.



## **Habakkuk has a complaint**

**Habakkuk 1** “The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.<sup>2</sup> O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? <sup>3</sup> Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me, strife and contention arise. <sup>4</sup> So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.

Despite increased international attention and resources from states and other non-governmental institutions, the number of people falling victim to human trafficking around the world continues to grow. Between 2008 and 2019 the number of human trafficking victims identified worldwide more than quadrupled from around 30,000 to nearly 120,000. Trafficking in persons is an illegal practice that is shaded in secrecy, and it is therefore nearly impossible to measure it in its entirety.

50%, Half of people 12 and older have used illicit drugs at least once.

700K Drug overdose deaths in the US since 2000 are nearing one million.

The federal budget for drug control in 2020 was \$35 billion.

Homicide, the act of one person killing another, is a leading cause of death in the United States. While homicide encompasses illegal crimes of murder and manslaughter, the data may differ depending upon the source. According to the FBI, there were 21,156 cases of murder and manslaughter, defined as the willful killing of one human being by another, in 2022 - equivalent to a rate of 6.3 homicides per 100,000 of the U.S. population. While this is a slight decrease from the previous year, these figures still represent the highest recorded levels since the late 90's. Among affluent nations, the United States is an outlier; between 2000 and 2021, the U.S. had the highest homicide rate of the G7 countries, and as of 2023, was the only country outside of Mexico to feature in a ranking of the top seven most dangerous cities worldwide, as a result of the high homicide rate in St. Louis, Missouri.

Mexico's drug cartels are thriving. The outgoing president, Manuel Obrador said he would tackle gangs with 'hugs not bullets'. Five years on, violence is worse than ever.

There have been approximately 50 million abortions performed worldwide in 2023.



<sup>5</sup> “Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe even if forewarned. <sup>6</sup> For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans (Babylonians), that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own. <sup>7</sup> They are dreaded and fearsome; their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. <sup>8</sup> Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves; their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swift to devour. <sup>9</sup> They all come for violence, all their faces forward. They gather captives like sand. <sup>10</sup> At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it.<sup>11</sup> Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men, whose own might is their god!

<sup>12</sup> O LORD my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal—surely you do not plan to wipe us out? O LORD, our Rock, you have sent these Babylonians to correct us, to punish us for our many sins. <sup>13</sup> But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil. Will you wink at their treachery?

Should you be silent while the wicked swallow up people more righteous than they? <sup>14</sup> Are we only fish to be caught and killed? Are we only sea creatures that have no leader? <sup>15</sup> Must we be strung up on their hooks and caught in their nets while they rejoice and celebrate? <sup>16</sup> Then they will worship their nets and burn incense in front of them. “These nets are the gods who have made us rich!” they will claim. <sup>17</sup> Will you let them get away with this forever? Will they succeed forever in their heartless conquests?”

**Proverbs 21:1** “The king’s heart is like a stream of water directed by the LORD; he guides it wherever he pleases.”

**Romans 13:1** “Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God.”

