



The Book of HABAKKUK

“The Just Shall Live By Faith!”

> Habakkuk - “One Who Embraces” or “Clings”

Go for God!

> Date: 607 B.C.

> Place: Judah

> Theme: *The just shall live by Faith* (cp. N.T. - Ro. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38)

> Key Word: *Faith*

> Key Verses:

- Habakkuk 2:4 - *“Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.”*

- Habakkuk 3:17-19 - *“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--yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 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.”*

> Christ in Habakkuk: The word “*salvation*” appears three times (3:13,18) and is the root word from which the name “*Jesus*” is derived (cf. Matt. 1:21- “*And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”*)

H.A. Ironside writes, “Habakkuk is a man deeply exercised both as to the state of his people—yea, his own state and the ways of God in government. Nor can he rest in quietness until he has the mind of the Lord as to it all. His book, therefore, is of special value in our degenerate and Laodicean times, characterized by what another has designated as “high truth and low walk.” It strikingly portrays the working of spiritual sensibilities, and the divine answer to the same, in a man of like passions with ourselves, as each chapter will make manifest.”

C.I. Scofield writes, “Habakkuk was a man of a deeply tender nature and spiritual character. He manifested a great love for his people, fulfilling the position of watchman over them. His questions and doubts arose from his jealousy for the holiness and justice of God. The prophet was perplexed over God’s permission of evil in Judah, and even more so

over God's use of Babylon as the rod of correction for His people. . . Sin must issue in destruction; faith invariably leads to spiritual life."

- Warren Wiersbe writes, "Habakkuk was a contemporary of Nahum, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah, during the reigns of Josiah (640 B.C. - 609 B.C.) and Jehoiakim (609-598). Assyria was off the scene; Babylon ("the Chaldeans") was in power. Nebuchadnezzar had defeated Egypt in 605 and was about to attack Judah. Jeremiah had announced that Babylon would invade Judah, destroy Jerusalem and the temple, and send the nation into exile. This happened in 606-586.

Habakkuk's little book indicates that he knew the Scriptures well, was a competent theologian, and had great faith in God. Because of the psalm in chapter 3, some scholars think he may have been a priest who led worship in the temple. If so, then like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, he was a priest called to be a prophet — a more difficult ministry.

His name means "to embrace" or "to wrestle," and in his book, he does both. He wrestles with God concerning the problem of how a holy God could use a wicked nation like Babylon to chasten the people of Judah, and then by faith, he embraces God and clings to His promises.

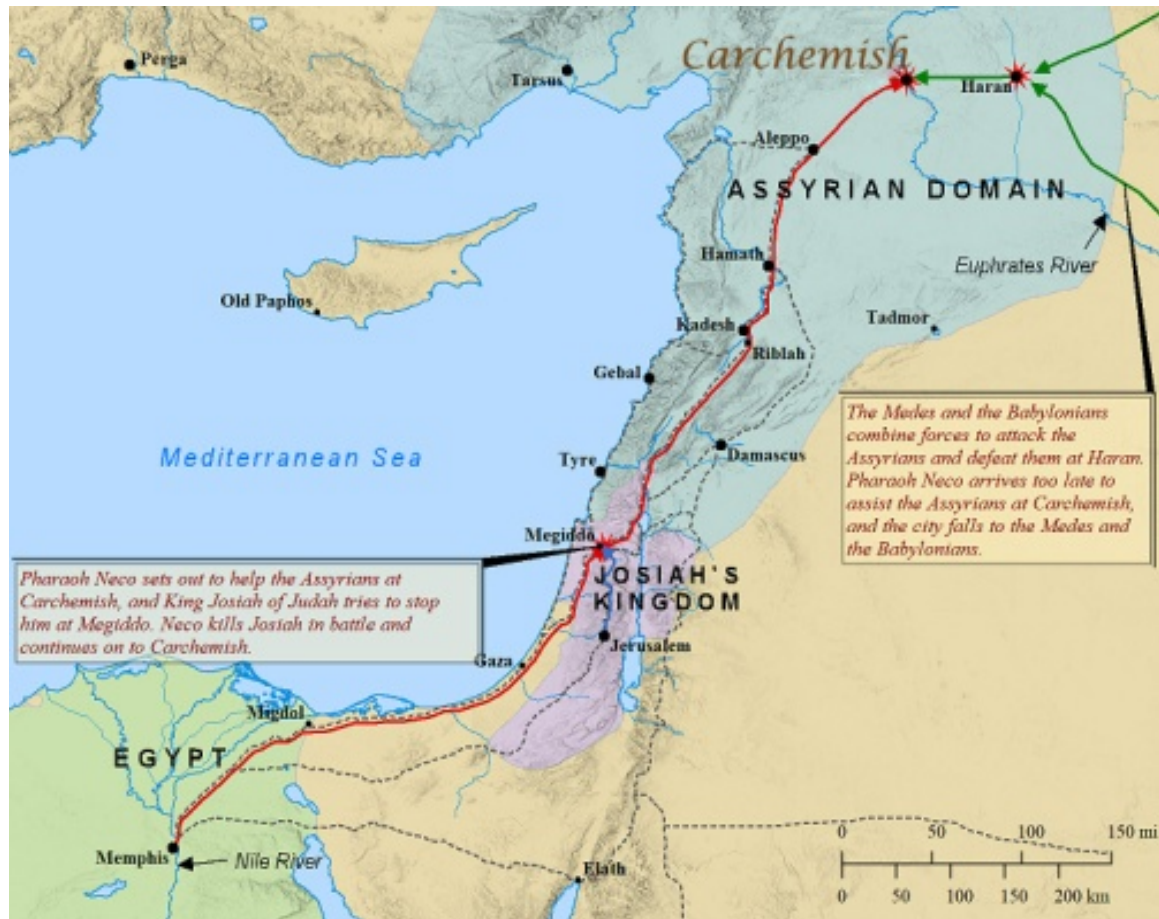
Habakkuk also wrestles with the spiritual decline of the nation and why God wasn't doing something about it. Habakkuk wanted to see the people revived (3:2), but God wasn't answering his prayers.

The prophet's statement "The just shall live by his faith" (2:4) is quoted three times in the New Testament (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). The emphasis in Romans is on the just, in Galatians on how they should live, and in Hebrews on faith. It takes three books to explain and apply this one verse!"

> BACKGROUND / SETTING - Habakkuk prophesied during the final days of the Assyrian Empire and the beginning of Babylonia's world rulership under Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar. When Nabopolassar ascended to power in 626 B.C., he immediately began to expand his influence to the North and West. Under the leadership of his son, the Babylonian army overthrew Nineveh in 612 B.C., forcing the Assyrian nobility to take refuge first in Haran and then Carchemish. Nebuchadnezzar pursued them, overrunning Haran in 609 B.C. and Carchemish in 605 B.C.

The Egyptian king Necho, traveling through Judah in 609 B.C. to assist the fleeing Assyrian king, was opposed by King Josiah at Megiddo (2Ch 35:20–24). Josiah was killed in the ensuing battle, leaving his throne to a succession of 3 sons and a grandson. Earlier, as a result of discovering

the Book of the Law in the temple (622 B.C.), Josiah had instituted significant spiritual reforms in Judah (2Ki 22, 23), abolishing many of the idolatrous practices of his father Amon (2Ki 21:20–22) and grandfather Manasseh (2Ki 21:11–13). Upon his death, however, the nation quickly reverted to her evil ways (cf. Jer 22:13–19), causing Habakkuk to question God’s silence and apparent lack of punitive action (1:2–4) to purge His covenant people.¹



> **Chapter 1 - “Question—Answer—Question”**

(v1-4) Habakkuk asks the question, “Why does evil persist in Judah?” Habakkuk speaks of *violence, iniquity, plundering, strife, contention, no enforcement of laws, no justice (criminal goes free), the wicked persecute the righteous, and perverse judgment (lack of proper sentencing for the crimes)*.

(v5-11) God will bring justice and judgment through the Chaldeans / Babylonians?

- **Who are the CHALDEANS? What are their roots?**

In the Bible the term Chaldeans is first mentioned in connection with Haran—the son of Terah and brother of Abram—who “died before his father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans” (Gen 11:28). The

¹MacArthur, John: *MacArthur Study Bible NASB*. Thomas Nelson Publishers; Nashville, TN, 2006; 2008, S. Na 3:18

Book of Genesis tells us that *"Terah took his son Abram [Abraham] and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter in-law Sarai [Sarah], his son Abram's wife, and they went out...from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan"* (Gen 11:31). Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldeans before the Chaldeans dominated Babylon.

The term Chaldean also was used by several ancient authors to denote the priests and other persons educated in the classical Babylonian literature, especially in traditions of astronomy and astrology. Some scholars believe the *"wise men [magoi] from the East"* (Matt 2:1) who came to Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' birth may have been Chaldean astrologers.

In the Bible most of the references to Chaldeans appear in the Book of Jeremiah (21:4,9; 35:11; 51:4,54). Jeremiah identified the Chaldeans with the Babylonians, who besieged the city of Jerusalem during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, looted the Temple, and carried the Israelites into captivity.

(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

(v11) This can be understood by going to Daniel 4:30, which speaks of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, exalting himself, then being humbled by God.

(v12-2:1) Habakkuk - Why use wicked Babylon?

- ANSWER: Here's an historical account of what was happening in and to Judah according to 2 Chronicles 36:11-21 – *Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke the word of the Lord. He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God's name. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart and would not turn to the Lord, the God of Israel. Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the Lord, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the Lord's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the*

palaces and destroyed everything of value there. He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah.

> **Chapter 2 - "God's Answer- 'The Just Shall Live By Faith!'"**

(v2-3) Write the vision for the appointed time

(v4) **"The just shall live by faith"** - The word FAITH is found 245 times in the Bible, here's few of my favorites:

Romans 1:16-17 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Romans 5:1-2 - Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God

Romans 10:17 - So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God

Ephesians 2:8-10 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

1 Timothy 6:12 - Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Ephesians 6:16-17 - taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Jude 3-4 - Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

(v5-19) Five woes pronounced upon the Chaldeans:

- The Proud (4)
- The Drunkard (5)
- The Greedy (6,7)
- The Violent (8)

- **The Covetous (9-11)**
- **The Bloodthirsty (12-14)**
- **The Deceiver (15,16)**
- **The Destroyer (17)**
- **The Idolater (18-20)**

(v14) Speaks of Christ and His glorious Kingdom established at His Second Coming!

> Chapter 3 - "Habakkuk's Prayer of Faith"

(A Psalm of Praise)

(v1-2) Remember Mercy!

(v3-4) Praise to the Holy One!

(v5-11) Praise to His Omnipotence!

(v12-16) Praise to His Victory!

(v17-19) Praise to His Salvation!