

The Minor Prophets Habakkuk

Little is known about the prophet Habakkuk. He was likely a contemporary of Zephaniah and Jeremiah, and possibly even of Ezekiel and Daniel, but none of the other prophets mention him. His name appears twice in the book (1:1; 3:1), and he is clearly the main character.

Key Themes:

- I. God is just and merciful, even though his people may not always understand his ways (2:4).
- II. Wickedness will eventually be punished, and the righteous will ultimately see God's justice (2:5-20).
- III. God uses some wicked nations to punish other wicked nations, but ultimately God will judge all nations (1:6; 2:5-20).
- IV. The key phrase “but the righteous will live by his faith” summarizes the path of life God sets for his people and is quoted three times in the NT (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38), each time highlighting a different aspect of the phrase's meaning.

1. Habakkuk 1

- a. **Habakkuk 1:2-4** - O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? 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. So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.
 - i. Grieving over injustice of nation
 - ii. Questioning whether the Lord sees the wickedness of Judah
 - iii. How can the wicked surround the righteous?!
- b. **Habakkuk 1:5-6** - “Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own.
 - i. Lord answers and agrees that the nation is wicked
 - ii. The Lord is raising the Chaldeans to judge
- c. **Habakkuk 1:12-13** - Are you not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, you have ordained them as a judgment, and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof. You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?
 - i. Habakkuk does not like this answer.
 - ii. Habakkuk answers “are you not everlasting?”
 - iii. You are of purer eyes than to behold evil (how can you use the Chaldeans?)

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- iv. How can you allow them to swallow up men more righteous than they?!
- 2. Habakkuk 2
 - a. Habakkuk knows he just questioned God and awaits an answer
 - i. Hab 2:1 – I will take my stand and wait to be corrected
 - ii. Hab 2:2 – Lord tells Habakkuk to write the vision for an appointed time
 - b. **Habakkuk 2:4** – Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.
 - i. **Romans 1:16-17** - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”
 - ii. **Galatians 3:11** - Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”
 - iii. **Hebrews 10:38** - but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”
 - c. The people with the book are unrighteous (Rom 2), the people without the Book are unrighteous (Rom 1). All are unrighteous (Rom 3). But God is the just and justifier! (Rom 3:25-26)
- 3. Habakkuk 3
 - a. Habakkuk worships God
 - b. **Habakkuk 3:2** - O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.
 - c. **Habakkuk 3:17-18** Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.