

# The Book of Habakkuk

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

- Habakkuk's name means "embrace". It is a peculiar name found only in this book.
- All that we know for certain of Habakkuk's life is that he was a prophet and wrote this book.
  - He is not mentioned in any other Old Testament book but is quoted in the New Testament.
- Reese dates this book to 607 B.C., between the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. and the first incursion into Judah by Babylon in 606 B.C.
- The king over Judah at this time is Jehoiakim, a wicked ruler (II Kings 23:36-37)
- B.H. Carroll – "The style of the book is almost classical. Habakkuk is one of the most original of the Hebrew writers. He is a sublime poet. Though we have only one of his poems preserved to us, it is one of the finest poems in Hebrew literature. He is a literary genius of the highest type, almost equal to that of Isaiah."
- Outline
  - Habakkuk's First Complaint – 1:1-4
  - God's First Response – 1:5-11
  - Habakkuk's Second Complaint – 1:12-17
  - God's Second Response – 2:1-20
  - Habakkuk's Song of Praise – 3:1-19

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- vs. 1 – the message given to Habakkuk is literally a "burden", a term used often when the prophecy when the prophecy forbodes danger or judgment. Other examples include Isaiah, 13:1, Nahum 1:1, and Malachi 1:1.
- vs. 2-4 – Habakkuk's prayer/complaint to God – society is totally corrupt.
  - vs. 2 – "violence" – a very strong term signifying great crimes.
  - vs. 3 – The perspective of the prophet – all he sees is evil.
  - vs. 4 – When God's Law is not respected evil will rise and justice will not be found.
- vs. 5-11 – God's response to Habakkuk – the coming judgment at the hands of the Babylonians.
  - vs. 5 – Perhaps Judah thought it was free now that Assyria had fallen, or perhaps they underestimated the Babylonians.
  - vs. 6 – Note it is not the Babylonians who made themselves a great empire – it was all God's doing. See Deuteronomy 28:49-52.

- vs. 7 – The Babylonians could be cruel (but not as cruel as the Assyrians had been), but they also were a people who operated by rule of law.
- vs. 8-9 – the fury of the Babylonian armies.
- vs. 10 – The last part of this verse describes taking fortresses by siege ramps. They were not content to simply starve out their enemies or wait for them to surrender.
- vs. 11 – The downfall of Babylon was its pride. See II Chronicles 32:17-19 and Daniel 4:30 for examples.
- vs. 12-17 - Habakkuk's second prayer/complaint – Will Babylon face judgment?
  - vs. 12 - There are two points of faith in this verse: (1) that God will remain the same merciful God who called Israel and therefore would not utterly destroy them, and (2) that God is working through the Babylonians for Israel's benefit, not to usurp or destroy them.
  - vs. 13 – How can God overlook what the Babylonians do? (He won't.)
  - vs. 14-15 – The conquests of Babylon are compared to fishing and their attitude towards their subjects is as if they were the lowest animals.
  - vs. 16 – Their successes cause them to worship their own greatness and not honor God who put them in a place of power.
  - vs. 17 – Will there be an end to their conquering? God answers in the next chapter.