
SURVEY OF THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

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THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK, one of the Minor Prophets in the Old Testament, **Centers on the prophet's struggle to reconcile God's justice with the prevalence of evil and suffering.** It's a dialogue between Habakkuk and God, where the prophet questions.

God's actions and God responds, ultimately leading Habakkuk to faith and praise even amidst difficult circumstances. The book of Habakkuk explores theodicy, **The problem of evil and suffering in a world governed by a just God, through the prophet's dialogue with God.** Habakkuk questions God's justice in allowing Judah's wickedness to continue while also raising concerns about the impending judgment by the more wicked Babylonians. **The book culminates in Habakkuk's declaration of faith, recognizing that the righteous live by faith, even amidst apparent injustice and chaos.**

KEY THEMES AND EXEGESIS:

THEODICY AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL:

HABAKKUK GRAPPLES WITH THE AGE-OLD QUESTION OF WHY GOD ALLOWS EVIL TO EXIST AND PROSPER, particularly when the righteous suffer. He witnesses the wickedness of his own people (Judah) and the impending judgment by the even more wicked Babylonians, leading him to question God's justice.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY:

Despite Habakkuk's questions, the book emphasizes God's ultimate control over **HISTORY AND THE NATIONS**. God reveals that He **is using Babylon as an instrument of judgment, demonstrating** that even seemingly powerful nations are subject to His plan.

THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH:

Habakkuk 2:4, "The righteous shall live by his faith," is a central theme. This verse is quoted in the New Testament to highlight the importance of faith in salvation and

justification. **In the context of Habakkuk, it means that even when facing difficult circumstances and unanswered questions, one must trust in God's faithfulness and His ultimate plan.**

FROM COMPLAINT TO WORSHIP:

Habakkuk's journey moves from questioning God's actions to expressing awe and praise for His power and faithfulness. He shifts from a focus on the problem to a focus on God Himself.

JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS:

The book connects justice and righteousness, emphasizing that true righteousness involves **living in right relationship with God and others. When justice is perverted, righteous people suffer.**

GOD'S TIMING AND PLAN:

Habakkuk learns that God's judgment will come at His appointed time, and that His ways are higher than human understanding. This encourages believers to trust in God's plan and remain faithful even when they don't understand the circumstances. Overall, the book of Habakkuk provides a powerful message of hope and encouragement to those who struggle with faith in the face of suffering and injustice. It reminds us

that God is in control, that He is just, and that His righteous will ultimately prevail.

SETTING:

Habakkuk prophesied during the late 7th century BC, likely before the Babylonian invasion of Judah. It was a time of social injustice, idolatry, and rising power of the Babylonian empire.

KEY THEMES:

God's Justice and Sovereignty:

Habakkuk wrestles with how a just God can allow evil to flourish and how He can use the wicked Babylonians to punish Judah.

FAITH AND TRUST: Despite his questions, Habakkuk ultimately chooses to trust in God's sovereignty and faithfulness, even when the reasons for His actions are unclear.

THE "RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY HIS FAITH": This famous verse (2:4) highlights that living a life pleasing to God involves trusting in Him, even amidst uncertainty and hardship.

STRUCTURE:

THE BOOK CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THREE MAIN PARTS:

The Book of Habakkuk, comprised of **THREE CHAPTERS**, presents a dialogue between Habakkuk and God. **HABAKKUK EXPRESSES FRUSTRATION AND QUESTIONS**

GOD'S JUSTICE, WHILE GOD RESPONDS WITH A VISION OF HIS PLAN, INCLUDING THE RISE AND FALL OF NATIONS.

CHAPTER 1:

Habakkuk laments the pervasive injustice and wickedness in his time, wondering why God allows evil to prosper and why He is seemingly silent in the face of suffering. God reveals that He will use the Babylonians to punish Judah, but Habakkuk is troubled that this would mean using a more wicked nation to punish a less wicked one.

CHAPTER 2:

God continues to answer Habakkuk's questions. He declares that **"the just shall live by faith"** and that the wicked will eventually fall. God then pronounces a series of woes against the Babylonians, warning them that their arrogance and cruelty will eventually lead to their own downfall.

CHAPTER 3:

Habakkuk responds with a prayer-song of faith and trust in God, even in the face of the coming judgment and the uncertainty of the future. He expresses confidence in God's power and promises to rejoice in the Lord, even if circumstances are difficult.

PURPOSE:

The book of Habakkuk serves to challenge readers to trust in God's ultimate justice and goodness, even when circumstances seem to contradict it. It emphasizes the importance of faith as a foundation for living a godly life, especially in times of difficulty.

MESSAGES IN HABAKKUK

The book of Habakkuk's central message is about trusting God's plan even when it's difficult to understand or seemingly unjust, emphasizing that the righteous live by faith and that God will ultimately bring justice and righteousness to all. Here's a more detailed breakdown:

FAITH IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING:

Habakkuk grapples with the problem of evil and God's seeming inaction in the face of injustice, particularly the impending judgment of Judah by the Babylonians.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND JUSTICE:

The book assures that God is sovereign and has a plan for dealing with evil, even if it involves using a wicked nation like Babylon to punish Judah.

LIVING BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT:

The famous verse, Habakkuk 2:4, **"The righteous shall live by his faith,"** highlights that true believers trust in God's character and promises, even when circumstances are challenging.

GOD'S ULTIMATE TRIUMPH:

The book concludes with a powerful affirmation of God's ultimate victory and judgment, assuring that even though Babylon will be judged, God's justice will prevail for all.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER:

Habakkuk's dialogue with God throughout the book underscores the significance of prayer and wrestling with difficult questions of faith.

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. **The prophet initiated this conversation based on his distress about God's "inaction" in the world.** 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.

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 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, 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, 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

of our own making, we are often downtrodden by 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 for God’s grace to penetrate in a powerful and life-affirming way.

CONCLUSION

“FATHER HOW LONG”

HYMN 119