

6/12/16

Habakkuk 1

We have looked at a full introduction to Habakkuk and have gained many important information that will help us better understand the words of the prophet.

The entire book of Habakkuk unfolds through prayer.

1. The confusion of the prophet is expressed in prayer.

Hab. 1

2. The perception of the prophet is cleared up by prayer. Hab. 2

3. The revelation to the prophet is revealed through prayer. Hab. 3 (Xavier Ries)

1:1 The introduction to the book.

1) The burden “ massa” is an oracle, a term identified with judgment.

a) God told Jeremiaiah not to use the phrase “the burdon of the Lord” because the false prophets were over using it.

b) And if he used it God would not talk to him any more.

2) The prophet “nabiy”, was the spokesman for God the messenger of His revelation to be disclosed to mankind, either to repent, intercession of coming judgment. 2Pet. 1:20-21

a) This is only one of three places where the term prophet is joined to the name of the man in the opening verse, the other two are in Haggai and Zechariah. Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1

b) Habakkuk is a distinct prophet in that he is conversing with God by complaining and God is instructing the prophet rather than being the mouth piece of God primarily.

c) The name Habakkuk “chabaquwq”, means to embrace.

3) The mode of Habakkuk’s revelation was a vision, the word saw “chazah” means to see, behold or percieve.

a) Wheather is was in his mind or visual is not stated, but it is distinct from a dearm, while being asleep.

b) Some believe Habakkuk prophecied during the reign of Mannaseh, others Josiah, but I think he fits better inn the rieg of Johoiakim, between 609-598 B.C.

1:2-4 The first problem Habakkuk has with God.

1:2 The prophet Habakkuk accused God of not listening to his prayers. vs. 2a-c

1) His address to God is by His covenant name, “O LORD”. vs. 2a

2) His impatience is marked by the phrase, “how long shall I cry, And You will not hear?” vs. 2b

a) The word for cry “shava”, means to cry out aloud, with the idea of helping.

b) The martyrs under the 5th seal. Rev. 6:10

c) Jeremiah stood at the house of the Lord and declared to the people their repentance was superficial and

denounced their spiritual evil and they wanted to kill him. Jer. 7; 26:1-11

- 3) The consternation of Habakkuk is that God has not been listening to him. vs. 2c
 - a) The question is rhetorical is sarcastic and disrespectful.
 - b) The word hear “shama”, means to hear attentive, with the idea of granting his request.
- 4) His accusation of God is of not delivering the righteous. vs. 2d-f
 - a) He presents his complaint in arrogance. vs. 2d
 - * The phrase cry out “za’ aq” is different from the previous one, it means to call out in sudden alarm as an intercessor, emphasis on “You” Yahweh.
 - b) He expressed his prayer and consternation crying out in this sudden alarm of social injustice. vs. 3e-f
 - 1) The word violence “chamac” means the unscrupulous infringement on a person’s right, brutal wrongdoing.
 - 2) And God was doing nothing to deliver, avenging and preserving the righteous.
 - 3) The complaint of the prophet is God’s seeming indifference and inactiveness regarding evil, as the wicked prevail over the righteous.

1:3 The prophet charged God for making him see the general decadence of Judah. vs. 3a-b

- 1) The expression “Why” is the interrogative, asking the reason or answer to something, usually it is to be instructed or informed regarding the question and such is also the case in our text.
- 2) These are grouped in pairs, the first two words describe the general overall decadence of Judah at the present time and are complementary.
 - a) The word iniquity “aven”, means unjust wickedness and evil.
 - b) The word trouble “amal”, means what is wrong.
 - c. The pair of words are used for perverted justice and oppression of individuals. Job 15:35; Ps. 7:14
- 3) The second pair of words describe the specific unjust oppression of the weaker and more vulnerable members of society. vs. 3c
 - a) Destruction, robbery and devastation was being committed against people by the word plundering “shod”.
 - b) The word violence “chamac” is the same word as in verse two, “violence”, the unscrupulous infringement on a person’s right, wrongdoing and brutality.
 - c) The two words again are complementary revealing the evil deeds.

- d) The prophet Habakkuk expressed his lamentable agony seeing the atrocities with his very own eyes, “are before me”.
 * He was witnessing the fear, despair and suffering of the weak that were preyed on.
- 3) The prophet Habakkuk declared the violent attitude of the people of Judah.
- a) The word strife “riyb”, means controversy and dispute.
 - b) The word contention “madow”, means to evoke the anger and dissension born of conflicting and uncompromising wills.
 - c) The two words again are complementing and revealing the condition of the heart.

1:4 The prophet expressed his frustration and irritation over the ineptness of the law. vs. 4a-b

- 1) The reason for this unjust condition by the residing judges is given, “For the wicked surround the righteous.” vs. 4c
 - a) The ungodly evil people were greater in number
 - b) The righteous were the godly, fewer in number.
- 2) The consequences of such unjust condition is the rule of evil, “Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.” vs. 4d
 - a) The repeated practice is described by the word perverse.
 - b) The judgments that are declared are not true or just.

1:5-11 The first answer of God to the problem Habakkuk had with God.

1:5 The plan of God to use Babylon to judge His people Judah.

- 1) The instruction and commentary to Habakkuk. vs. 5a-b
 - a) The word look “ra’ ah”, means to perceive, consider the nations around them, because the prophet did not think God was doing anything about the sinfulness of Judah. vs. 13a
 - b) The word watch “nabat”, means to fix their eyes and pay attention to the “nations”, implying that God was very active to deal with the sin of Judah. vs. 13b-c
 - c) The result was that Habakkuk was going to be shocked by the phrase, utterly astounded “tamahh”, means to be stunned, amazed, even dumbfounded.
- 2) The revelation and warning to Habakkuk. vs. 5c-d
 - a) God revealed He was sovereignly at work and would soon bring it to pass in the days of Habakkuk, “I will”. vs. 5c
 * God’s work is in effect though unknown to man.
 - b) The warning of God was that he would not believe what He was going to tell the prophet. vs. 5d

* Paul quoted this verse at Antioch regarding the unbelief of the Jews in the gospel. Acts 13:40-41

1:6 The personal involvement of God and the character of Babylon as His instrument of judgment.

- 1) Once again the personal pronoun “I”, God was actively involved raising up Babylon to judge Judah. vs. 6a
- 2) The Chaldeans “kasdiy”, a territory in lower Mesopotamia on the Persian Gulf, living on the lower Euphrates and Tigris River. vs. 6a
- 3) Their temperament was, “A bitter “mar” and hasty “mahar” impetuous nation” indicating angry discontented. vs. 6b
- 4) Their persistency, “Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places *that are* not theirs.” vs. 6c-d
 - a) **This** was prophesied in the Law. Deut. 28:49-52
 - b) Isaiah prophesied to Hezekiah that the men who had come to see after his recovery of his illness, who were from Babylon would come one day and take all he showed them and the royal seed. Is. 39:1-8
 - c) God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that He had made him the head of gold, the supreme empire of the world, an absolute supreme ruler above law, to begin the time of the Gentiles. Dan. 2

d) The fourth chapter opens with the words, “Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.” Dan. 4:1

1:7 The pontifical arrogance as they ruled by their own sense of justice.

- 1) They are terrible “ayom”, they struck people with fear and dreadful “yare” imposing and ruling by fear. vs. 7a
- 2) Their judgment “misphat” justice and their dignity “s@;eth” their exaltation proceeded from themselves, assuming political superiority over all.
 - * Nebuchadnezzar ordered all the wise men to be killed and no one could refute him. Dan. 2

1:8 The army was destructive and merciless.

- 1) Their horses swift and fast, “swifter than leopards”. vs. 8a
- 2) Their soldiers are more alert and cunning than hungry “evening wolves”. vs. 8b
- 3) They are relentless traveling long distances, “Their chargers charge ahead; Their cavalry comes from afar.” vs. 8c-d
- 4) They have a keen eye to take their prey, “They fly as the eagle *that* hastens to eat.” vs. 8e
 - a) The word eagle “neshar” is believed to be the griffon-vulture.

- b) God often describes man's cruel and nation's conquest seeing them as animal. Dan. 7
- c) Man always see himself as powerful and superior like the image of Nebuchadnezzar. Dan. 2

1:9 The Babylonian conquest was certain.

- 1) They are cruel and unjust, "They all come for violence." vs. 9a
- 2) They swallow up everything in their path, "Their faces are set *like* the east wind. They gather captives like sand." vs. 9b-c
- 3) God did not make them do the evil, but know of the evil they would do, otherwise how could God judge them for their evil?

1:10 The Babylonians were proud and invincible.

- 1) They see themselves superior to all rulers, "They scoff at kings, And princes are scorned by them." vs. 10a-b
- 2) They see no difficulty to conquer any fortress or city, but laugh at them, "They deride every stronghold." vs. 19c
- 3) They removed the difficulty of high walls by building dirt mounds to reach the top of the walls and enter the city or fortress, "For they heap up earthen *mounds* and seize it." vs. 19d

1:11 The Babylonians ascribed victory to their gods.

- 1) The kings did not act in accord with their knowledge of God, "Then *his* mind changes, and he transgresses." vs. 11a-b
 - a) Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of the tree cut down and Daniel warned him about his pride and repent, but a year later he exalted himself boasting in Babylon that he had built and God cause him to live like an animal outdoors until he understood that God rules in the kingdom of men. Dan. 4
 - b) Belshazzar took the vessels of God to praise his idols of gold and silver as he saw the finger of God write on the wall his judgment. No one being able to interpret it, the queen mother told him about Daniel, who said, "But you his son, **Belshazzar**, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven." Dan. 5:22-23
- 2) The kings trusted in their pagan gods, "He commits offense, *Ascribing* this power to his god." vs. 11c-d
 - a) Nebuchadnezzar called on all the the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers to interpret his dream. Dan. 2
 - b) Nebuchadnezzar by erecting the image of gold 90 feet high and 9 feet wide on the plain of Dura was contradicting God's vision that he was only the head of gold. Dan. 3

11:12-17 The second problem Habakkuk has with God.

1:12-13 The second complaint against God.

- 1) Habakkuk Knowing God was holy he couldn't reconcile His using a more wicked nation to judge His people. vs. 12a-c
 - a) He responded to the revelation of God in protest with a rhetorical question, the answer being "yes", affirming God was both Eternal and Holy.
 - * He marked the sharp contrast between God and man, God is eternal and infinite, man is temporal and finite.
 - b) He identified himself one with God by the covenant name LORD "Yahweh" and His nature "holy".
 - * The word "holy" appears 174 times from Exodus to Deuteronomy, 54 time in Isaiah fifty-four times and God is called "The Holy One of Israel" 30 times in Isaiah and only 20 times in the rest of the Old Testament.
- 2) Habakkuk claimed their covenant relationship in contrast to the Gentiles. vs. 12d-h
 - a) He claimed the promise of the "remnant", promised throughout the prophets, "we shall not die, O LORD".
 - b) He reminded God He had appointed the Gentiles for judgment living outside the covenant.

c) He acknowledge God the "Rock" had marked them "yacad" fixed firmly or determined to use Babylon to chasten Judah.

- 3) Habakkuk still could not reconcile the sovereign Holy God being one with the evil Babylon. vs. 13
 - a) Hedeclared God could not be one with evil, "*You are* of purer eyes than to behold evil." vs. 13a
 - * The word behold "ra' ah", means to inspect or consider, as to tolerate it, even though God certainly sees, perceives and is aware of all evil, He in no way is partaking of it.
 - b) Habakkuk declared God could not be One to approve of evil, "And cannot look on wickedness." vs. 13b
 - * The word look "nabat", means to show regard with some sense of approval or condoning it.
 - c) Habakkuk could not escape that it appeared God was approving of evil. vs. 13c-d
 - 1)) He was confused and perplexed, as God had declared He was going to use the Babylonians, "Why do You look on those who deal treacherously." vs. 13c
 - a) The word look "nabat", is the same as the previous one, to show regard with some sense of approval or to condon.

- b) The one “dealing treacherously” were the Babylonians.
- 2)) He was confused and perplexed because God was not judging the evil Babylonians at the present, “*And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?*” vs. 13d
 * Habakkuk considered the people of Judah better than the Babylonians, but Judah was ungodly also.
 * When God doesn’t act according to our reason or understanding we seek to become confused. Prov. 3:5-7

1:14-17 The lamentation over the cruelty of the Chaldeans.

1:14-15 The prophet depicted the vast conquest of nations by Babylon like fishermen catching fish.

- 1) The inquiry of the prophet regards the helplessness of those captured. vs. 14
 a) He questions God for allowing it, “Why do You make men like fish of the sea.” vs. 14a
 * The answer is simple the people had rejected Yahweh and apostatized!
 b) He indicated the people were leaderless, “Like creeping things *that have* no ruler over them?” vs. 14b
- 2) The systematic capture is described in a very picturesque manner. vs. 15

- a) He depicts the Babylonians by their various effective methods of war like professional fishermen, “They take up all of them with a hook, They catch them in their net, And gather them in their dragnet.” vs. 15a-c
 b) He stated the Babylonians gloating over their victory, “Therefore they rejoice and are glad.” vs. 15d

1:16 The prophet indicated the relationship of their victories with their gods.

- 1) The word “therefore” looks back to the capture of the nations, as the reason why they did what is described. vs. 14-15
 2) The Babylonians worshipped their gods, ascribing to them their victories, “they sacrifice to their net, And burn incense to their dragnet.” vs. 16a-b; 11c-d
 3) The reason is stated, their gods have enriched them with wealth and provided an abundance of food, “Because by them their share *is* sumptuous And their food plentiful.” vs. 16c

1:17 The prophet closed by expressing his lamentable despair.

- 1) Will this go on, not able to be stopped?, “Shall they therefore empty their net.” vs. 17a
 2) Will they continue unmercifully to all their captives, “And continue to slay nations without pity?” vs. 17b

* The word pity, “chamal”, means
compassion