

Introduction to Habakkuk

Lecture 1

Who Was Habakkuk?

The Prophet Habakkuk was a Jewish man who lived about 600 B.C. He lived at a time when the nation of Judah was declining rapidly. It was a time of injustice, immorality and violence; it was somewhat like the world in which you and I live today.

He was watching his own nation decline on the inside. But even more than that, he was watching the enemy approach from the outside. The empire of Babylon was getting strong and moving in.

A great many false prophets were in the land, and these false prophets were promising peace. Habakkuk knew that war was coming.

The name "Habakkuk" means to embrace or to wrestle. He was wrestling with the Lord as he faced these problems.

Men of faith, as G. Campbell Morgan has said, are always the men who have to confront problems.

He asked himself, "How can a God of love permit these things to happen? How can a God of justice and holiness not judge those who are doing such evil things?"

Habakkuk wrestled with some serious problems: What is God doing in the world? Is there any meaning to history?

Habakkuk 3 contains a beautiful psalm, a beautiful prayer, and it is inscribed at the end "To the chief singer on my stringed instruments" (v. 19).

This notation indicates that Habakkuk may have been a Levitical priest.

Habakkuk ceased to be a priest and became a prophet.

What Was Habakkuk's Message?

It's a very small book; it's one of the minor prophets, but it has a major message. Habakkuk was dealing with the age-old problem of evil in the world.

I. Wondering and Worrying

He had three accusations against God.

A. Accusation number one was God is indifferent.

Habakkuk 1:2

Habakkuk 1:3-4

B. Accusation 2- God is inactive.

God is indifferent, He's not doing anything.

God answered him in 1:5-11.

Habakkuk had another problem;

C. He accused God of being inconsistent (vv. 12-17).

How could a holy God use such a wicked nation as the _____ to punish the people of Israel?

II. Watching and Waiting

What did he do? In Habakkuk 2 he got up into his watch tower.

Habakkuk 2:1

"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved."

He got out of the valley where he'd been wondering and worrying, and he went up into the watchtower to begin watching and waiting.

God answered him in an amazing way. In Habakkuk 2 you find five woes.

1- "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his!"—Selfish Ambition (v. 6).

2- "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house"—Covetousness (v. 9).

3- "Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood"—woe upon those who exploit others (v. 12).

4- "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink"—drunkards and those who promote drunkenness (v. 15).

5- "Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach!"—woe to idolators (v. 19).

Whose sins did those five woes have to do with? Judah & Babylonians
Here we have the dark background of five woes.

Against this dark background of woe, God gave Habakkuk three very marvelous assurances (vv. 4,14,20).

THREE ASSURANCES GIVEN

1- First, there is the assurance of God's GRACE.

"Behold, his soul that is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith" (v. 4).

2- Assurance of God's Glory

Habakkuk 2:14 "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

3- Assurance of God's Government

Meanwhile, what should we do? "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him"(v. 20).

God said, "Habakkuk, I am on the throne. Everything is in My control; so do not worry and fret."

III. Worshiping and Witnessing

In Habakkuk 3 we see a transformation in the life of Habakkuk.

He has moved from wondering and worrying down in the valley (ch. 1) to watching and waiting up in the watchtower (ch. 2) to worshiping and witnessing as he runs upon the mountaintop (ch. 3).

The book ends in verse 19, "He will make me walk upon mine high places."

A. See the Prophet Praying (v.1-2)

He began by praying, "Revive thy work in the midst of the years" (v. 2).

B. See The Prophet Pondering

In verses 3-16 the prophet was pondering. He was pondering the ways of the Lord.

C. See the Prophet Praising 9 (v.17-19)

Then in verses 17-19 you find the prophet praising.

Conclusion:

Let me summarize it like this: When you live by faith, you aren't worried about the things that go on in the world.

The main message of Habakkuk is that the just shall live by faith. Believe God's Word. Believe that God's purposes will be fulfilled, and you will move from the valley to the mountaintop of victory and blessing.

Habakkuk teaches us that God permits evil in the world. But God uses evil in His own way, and eventually God will judge evil, triumph over evil and bring His glory to pass. We need to know that.

But we don't live by explanations, we live by promises. The just shall live by faith. God does permit evil in this world, but God uses it to accomplish His own purposes and one day God will judge evil and triumph over it.

Faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1----

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This is the only verse in the Bible that clearly defines faith.

Two important words are used in that verse which describes and defines faith.

1- "Substance" (hupo/sta/sis)

It speaks of confidence. It speaks of something that has a foundation and is firm. In other words, we are certain of things hoped for.

B. Evidence (elegchos --el'-eng-khos)

It is a proof, what by which a thing is proved or tested. It speaks of a conviction of something being real.

No wonder Hab.2:4 says, *"The just shall live by his faith."*

⇒ Faith is *trusting and possessing* all that God is and says.

⇒ Faith is *believing and possessing* all that God is and says.

⇒ Faith is *having confidence in and possessing* all that God is and says.

⇒ Faith is *hoping for something and possessing it* because God is (exists) and has promised it.

True Biblical faith deals only with truth & reality. It is knowing what is real, experiencing what is real, possessing what is real.