

A Survey of the Old Testament
Prophetic Books
by Pastor Richard H. Jones

#2 "HABAKKUK"

I. THE PROPHET

Habakkuk's name means "embracing" and may signify "one who embraces". While Jewish tradition holds that Habakkuk was the Shunamite's son whom Elisha restored to life (II Kings 4:16), there is no Biblical support for it.

There are some grounds for supposing Habakkuk to be a descendant of the tribe of Levi. His musical direction (3:1) and Psalm (3:19) may intimate that he was qualified to participate musically in the temple service.

Judging from his predictions of Jerusalem's fall and the Babylonian captivity Habakkuk was probably a contemporary with Jeremiah and Zephaniah.

Only Habakkuk and Haggai call themselves prophets (1).

II. THE PROPHECY

In chapters one and two we have a dialogue between Habakkuk and the Lord concerning Judah's judgment. In perplexity, Habakkuk asks why the violence and sin of Judah is not punished (1:2). God tells him He is nearly ready to send the Chaldeans in judgment upon Judah (1:5-11). Habakkuk then asks how God, who is holy and righteous, could use the wicked Chaldeans to judge Judah (1:12-17). God replied that the Chaldeans would also be judged (2:1-20).

In chapter three we have Habakkuk's prayer and a theophany of God judging the world and delivering His people who trust in Him.

III. THE PERIOD

For the historical background of Habakkuk note that of Jeremiah's prophecy. The Assyrian power fell with the destruction of Nineveh in 612 B.C. The great Babylonian power had arisen and Judah was invaded and captives were taken by 606 B.C. Again in 597 B.C. a second invasion occurred and then finally Jerusalem fell in 586 B.C. to Nebuchadnezzar.

IV. NOTABLE THINGS

- A. Note Habakkuk has been called the grandfather of the Protestant Reformation (2:4) with a genealogy of Paul (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:2; Heb. 10:38); and Luther.

- B. Note Habakkuk's perplexity (1:12-17). He knew the Chaldeans were God's appointed instruments for His wrath upon Judah. It was a problem to Habakkuk, that Judah was going to be judged, for idolatry, by a nation more guilty of the same sin for which they were being judged. Habakkuk found out it wasn't necessary for him to vindicate God's actions or understand all His ways, but that it was important to trust Him (2:4) "the just shall live by faith".
- C. Note the key verse of 2:4.
- D. Note the five-fold characteristics of the Chaldeans (1:6-11).
- E. Note the five-fold woe against the Chaldeans (2:6-20).

V. PERSONAL LESSONS

- A. It's more important to trust God than to understand Him.
- B. To expect God to vindicate His actions to our reason is a sinful demand.
- C. God can sovereignly use whom He wills, even those as instruments of judgment whom He will judge.

OUTLINE

I. POLLUTION AND ITS PRODUCT (1:1-11)

- A. Judah's sin
- B. Judah's judgment

II. PERPLEXITY AND PERCEPTION (1:12-2:8)

- A. Habakkuk's problem
- B. God's answer

III. PRAYER AND PSALM (3)

- A. Habakkuk's faith
- B. Habakkuk's praise

