

Directions:

This is a booklet to aid you in your personal study of this book. Read through the text first, discovering God's precious truths for yourself. Write down the main point of each section of text in the space provided. Use the margins on each side of the text and the backside of the page to make notations of the truths you discover and passages you do not understand. When you believe you have seen all there is in text, read and answer the questions in the booklet pertaining to that section of text. The questions are not an exhaustive list of things to look for in the text. The questions are to help you consider the points that the author was trying to convey to his audience. Be prepared to share your findings in class.

Introduction:

We know nothing about the prophet Habakkuk and we are not explicitly told the time of his prophecy. What makes this prophecy unique is that Habakkuk is not preaching to the people the oracles of God. Rather, this book records a dialogue between God and his prophet Habakkuk. Based on his complaints and the responses from God it is likely that Habakkuk is having his dialogue with God around 609 BC. Under King Josiah, the nation of Judah had undertaken many moral reforms. Under Josiah's rule he purged the nation of the altars to the false gods (1 Chronicles 34:1-7). The book of the law is found and Josiah restores the Passover celebration (2 Kings 22:8-20; 23:21-27). However, Josiah dies in battle against Neco, the king of Egypt in 609 BC. Upon Josiah's death, all the reforms of the nation are erased and the subsequent kings commit evil in the Lord's sight. With the death of Josiah and wickedness on the rise, Habakkuk receives his prophecy and engages in a dialogue with the Lord. It is with the loss of the king who was reforming the nation and the decline of the morality of the nation that Habakkuk engages the Lord.

1. Write down who are God's prophets around the same time as Habakkuk's prophecy.
2. Who is the world power at the time of Habakkuk's prophecy? What impact does this have on Habakkuk's discussion with God?
3. If you were to have a discussion with God, what would you say? What would you ask?

HABAKKUK

1:1-4

1 The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw. 2 O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? 3 Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. 4 So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted. (ESV)

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

1. What questions does Habakkuk ask God?
2. Study the following scriptures and write down who is questioning God and what the questions are:
REVELATION 6:9-10

PSALM 13:1-2

ZECHARIAH 1:12

JOB 21:7-34

JOB 19:7
3. What lessons and applications do we learn from these people questioning God?
4. Can we be honest with God (cf. Psalm 39:1-9)? Do you feel like you can be honest with God?
5. Why is honesty with God important to developing our faith?
6. What function does prayer have during perplexing times?
7. Does Habakkuk exhibit an “everything happens for a reason” attitude? Explain.
8. How can we know God loves us in perplexing times?

5 “Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. 6 For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own. 7 They are dreaded and fearsome; their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. 8 Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves; their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swift to devour. 9 They all come for violence, all their faces forward. They gather captives like sand. 10 At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it. 11 Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men, whose own might is their god!” (ESV)

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

1. Explain the basic message God gives Habakkuk.
2. Describe the Chaldeans. Who are they?
3. What important lessons do we learn about God from his response to Habakkuk's complaint?

Did God know what was going on in Judah (cf. Psalm 33:13-15)?

Was God going to do something? Had God been preparing to act?

Did God act in the way Habakkuk expected?

4. How does the way God acts change our view of world affairs?
5. What problems arise when we think of people or nations as being “more righteous” or “more wicked?”
6. Paul quotes Habakkuk 1:5 in Acts 13:41. Read the context of Paul's sermon in Acts and explain the point Paul is making by ending his sermon by quoting this text from Habakkuk.

HABAKKUK

1:12-2:1

12 Are you not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, you have ordained them as a judgment, and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof. 13 You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he? 14 You make mankind like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler. 15 He brings all of them up with a hook; he drags them out with his net; he gathers them in his dragnet; so he rejoices and is glad. 16 Therefore he sacrifices to his net and makes offerings to his dragnet; for by them he lives in luxury, and his food is rich. 17 Is he then to keep on emptying his net and mercilessly killing nations forever? 1 I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint. (Habakkuk 1:12–2:1 ESV)

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

1. What is Habakkuk's initial response to God's answer (1:12)?
2. What does Habakkuk understand about how God is using the Babylonians (1:12)?
3. What is Habakkuk's complaint in verse 13?
4. What is Habakkuk's complaint in verses 14-17?

"I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; and I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, and how I may reply when I am reproved." (Habakkuk 2:1 NASB)

5. What is Habakkuk declaring in 2:1? What action is he taking? What do we learn from this?
6. What lessons do we learn from the dialogue between God and Habakkuk thus far?

2 And the LORD answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. 3 For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

4 “Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

5 “Moreover, wine is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest. His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations and collects as his own all peoples.” (ESV)

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

1. Why was the vision to be written on tablets?
2. Why was Habakkuk to make it plain?
3. Explain verse 3. What point is God making?
4. What does verse 3 teach us about God’s judgments. Are there New Testament scriptures that teach a similar point?
5. What are the characteristics of those who are not righteous, according to verses 4-5?
6. How do the righteous live? How do the righteous not live?
7. What exactly is God telling Habakkuk in verse 4?
8. What lessons do we learn from God’s response to Habakkuk?

6 Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing and riddles for him, and say, “Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own— for how long?— and loads himself with pledges!” 7 Will not your debtors suddenly arise, and those awake who will make you tremble? Then you will be spoil for them. 8 Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

9 “Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm! 10 You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many peoples; you have forfeited your life. 11 For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond.

12 “Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity! 13 Behold, is it not from the LORD of hosts that peoples labor merely for fire, and nations weary themselves for nothing? 14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

15 “Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink— you pour out your wrath and make them drunk, in order to gaze at their nakedness! 16 You will have your fill of shame instead of glory. Drink, yourself, and show your uncircumcision! The cup in the LORD’s right hand will come around to you, and utter shame will come upon your glory! 17 The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

18 “What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies? For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols! 19 Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake; to a silent stone, Arise! Can this teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in it. 20 But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.” (ESV)

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

1. The first woe is in verses 6-8. What are the actions of the wicked? What do we learn?

Does a legal activity mean that it is God-approved? Explain.

2. The second woe is in verses 9-11. What are the actions of the wicked? What do we learn?

What do the sinful put their trust in?

3. The third woe is in verses 12-14. What are the actions of the wicked? What do we learn?

Explain verse 13: “Has not the LORD Almighty determined that the people’s labor is only fuel for the fire, that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing?” (Habakkuk 2:13 NIV)

4. The fourth woe is in verses 15-17. What are the actions of the wicked? What do we learn?

5. The fifth woe is in verses 18-20. What are the actions of the wicked? What do we learn?

Why is idolatry foolish?

6. Explain verse 20. What is God telling the people to do?

HABAKKUK

3

1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.

2 O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. 3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. *Selah* 4 His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power. 5 Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels. 6 He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. 7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. 8 Was your wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation? 9 You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. *Selah* You split the earth with rivers. 10 The mountains saw you and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice; it lifted its hands on high. 11 The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear. 12 You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger. 13 You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. *Selah* 14 You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. 15 You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters.

16 I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. 17 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, 18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. 19 GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. (ESV)

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

1. What is unique about Habakkuk's prayer?
2. What is Habakkuk asking for the Lord to do in verses 2-3 (cf. Deuteronomy 33:2)?
3. What is Habakkuk describing in verses 3-7? Why is Habakkuk describing these things?
4. What is Habakkuk describing in verses 8-15? Why is Habakkuk describing these things?

5. What is Habakkuk's reaction to God's declaration about the coming events (3:16)? Explain.

6. What does Habakkuk say is going to happen to the nation (3:17)? Explain.

7. What is Habakkuk's response to the coming disaster (3:18)? How can Habakkuk do this?

8. Explain verse 19.

HABAKKUK



Faith Under Fire

A SELF-STUDY WORKBOOK

by: Brent Kercheville