



HABAKKUK

Introduction to the
Book of Habakkuk



Introduction to the Book of Habakkuk

I. Why Study the Book of Habakkuk?

A. Habakkuk's Oversized Influence

1. "The just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:4)
2. The Apostle Paul
 - a. Galatians 3:11
 - b. Romans 1:17
3. Martin Luther

Direct connections: Habakkuk ↔ Paul

- The righteous shall live by his faith (Habakkuk 2:4)
- Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:11)
- For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed faith for faith [*beginning and ending in faith*], as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith” (Romans 1:16-17)[Rob, Elliott]

Habakkuk ↔ Paul ↔ Martin Luther

Martin Luther on Romans 1:17

- “Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that ‘the just shall live by his faith.’ Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith ... **as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live’** ... Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the ‘justice of God’ had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul’s became to me a gate to heaven.”

I. Why Study the Book of Habakkuk?

B. Prequel to the Book of Daniel (The Rise and Fall of Empires)

1. Assyrian Empire

- a. 721 B.C. defeated the “Northern Kingdom” (Samaria) and carries off the “lost” ten tribes of Israel
- b. God strikes down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers under Sennacherib and saves Jerusalem under Hezekiah (2 Kings 19)

75



From northwestern Iran, the Medes began to attack Assyrian territories, first led by Phraortes (647-624 B.C.) and then more vigorously under Cyaxares (623-584 B.C.). Psammetichus I (664-610 B.C.) was a more fearful

from the east. In 614 B.C. Ashur, the ancient Assyrian capital and



That do
 Le
 a day of
 to army
 to
 The re
 be
 and dri
 of
 For the
 to
 in the r
 m
 of
 I
 tested,
 charnel
 chadon
 605 a.c.
 took th
 upon th
 an even
 edies, e
 of a re
 Babylon
 personal
 had too

76

T
 Assyria
 appear
 like Ja
 along a
 and in
 volly, it
 was mi
 der the
 snow
 under;
 the fig
 conceit
 and ge
 made a
 Court
 Egypt
 faces i
 left for

Jerusalem miraculously delivered: (2 Kings 19: 33-37)

- ³³ By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. ³⁴ For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.”
- ³⁵ And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁶ Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. ³⁷ And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword

I. Why Study the Book of Habakkuk?

B. Prequel to the Book of Daniel (The Rise and Fall of Empires)

2. Babylonian Empire

- a. 612 B.C. destroys Assyrian capital of Ninevah
- b. 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar defeats Egypt
- c. 605-598 B.C. the prophecies of Habakkuk
- d. 598 B.C. Babylon carries off aristocracy (e.g. Daniel)
- e. 539 B.C. Babylon defeated by Medes/Persians

THE PERSIAN PERIOD

Introduction

The century from 600 to 500 B.C. brought tremendous changes to the Near East. Four major powers dominated the political landscape at the beginning of the century. The Neo-Babylonian Empire extended across Mesopotamia and the Levant. Under Amasis (570–526 B.C.) Egypt prospered, while continuing to preserve Babylonian interests in the

southern Levant. Increasingly, Amasis forged economic and military links with Greek traders and mercenaries who settled around Delos.

The Medes occupied the territories north of Mesopotamia, governing their empire from their capital at Ecbatana. Median kings extended their holdings westward into the Anatolian plateau (modern Turkey). Beyond the western limit of the Median Empire lay the kingdom of Lydia, with its capital at Sardis. The Lydian kings Croesus and Croesus built Lydia into formidable power utilizing the gold retrieved from the Pactolus River. Within decades all four of these powers would be conquered by a new force—the Persians—resulting in the formation of the largest empire the Near East ever produced: the Persian Empire. For the Jews their conquest meant an end to the Exile and restoration to their ancestral home.

82



II. Components of the Book of Habakkuk

A. Author

Nothing is known about Habakkuk other than what is in the book

B. Date

Suggested dates for composition: 612-599 B.C. and 605-598 B.C.

II. Components of the Book of Habakkuk

C. Content/Framework

1. Habakkuk's frustration over God's delay of justice (lament)
2. Habakkuk lodges two complaints against God
3. Habakkuk's journey of trust in the faithfulness of God
4. Habakkuk's song of praise to God

Overview of the Book of Habakkuk

- The Bible Project (6:48 minutes)
- <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/habakkuk/>

Let Us Pray

