

Outline of Habakkuk

The book of Habakkuk was probably written sometime between 609 and 598 B.C. during the reign of Jehoiakim. This date best explains the identity of the wicked people in 1:2-4 (Jews in Judah), the super-power status of Babylon (which had to come after Nabopolassar in 625 B.C.), and the fact that Josiah (reign 640-609 B.C.) was exempted from seeing the invasion of Babylon (2 Kings 22:20). Verse 1:5 indicates that the fulfillment of the judgment on Judah will be within the prophet's lifetime.

- I. Question and Answer Regarding Sin in Judah..... 1:1-11
 - A. Introduction 1:1
 - B. Question about the wicked 1:2-4
 - C. God's Answer: He will use Babylon to punish Judah..... 1:5-11
 - 1. It will be a surprise 1:5
 - 2. The fierceness of Babylon..... 1:6-11
- II. Question and Answer Regarding Babylon 1:12-2:20
 - A. Question about Babylon 1:12-17
 - 1. Objection to God's appointment 1:12
 - 2. How can God use wicked to punish more righteous? 1:13
 - 3. Will the nations ever stop killing each other? 1:14-17
 - B. God's Answer: Woe to Babylon 2:1-20
 - 1. Habakkuk watches for the answer..... 2:1
 - 2. Habakkuk commanded to record the answer: it is urgent 2:2-3
 - 3. Babylon is wicked 2:4-5
 - 4. First woe: Wealth taken away 2:6-8
 - 5. Second woe: What they build will itself cry for judgment . 2:9-11
 - 6. Third woe: Fire will consume their labor..... 2:12-14
 - 7. Fourth woe: Evil they do will come on themselves 2:15-17
 - 5. Fifth woe: Uselessness of idols 2:18-20
- III. Habakkuk's Prayer Psalm 3:1-19
 - A. Request to revive God's work..... 3:1-2
 - B. God's answer: A Theophany of judgment and deliverance 3:3-15
 - 1. Description of the Theophany 3:3-4
 - 2. Judgment resulting in natural disaster 3:5-11
 - 3. Judgment resulting in national disasters 3:12, 13b-15
 - 4. Israel's salvation..... 3:13a
 - C. Habakkuk's Response 3:16-18
 - 1. Fear at what God will do 3:16
 - 2. Joy in God despite calamity 3:17-19

Notes

- Note the use of Hab. 2:4 in the NT: Rom. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38. The seeming varied application of the verse is an interesting interpretive problem in light of the single meaning of any given proposition.

- The surprise of 1:5a is because Egypt was the dominant power over Israel's region. Egypt would be supplanted by Babylon.
- Is 1:12 an objection or an agreement with God's appointment of Babylon as the instrument to mete out His punishment?
- The book in general speaks of a near judgment and an eventual deliverance of Israel.
- What is the answer to Habakkuk's initial question, i.e. "How can you use someone more wicked than we to judge us?"
 - Habakkuk does recognize God's appointment of Babylon as the instrument of judgment, but he wonders about the fairness of it.
 - God says that He will ultimately take care of Babylon too.
 - It is interesting to note that there are no "righteous" nations that God can use to judge other ones. But relative righteousness seems to be a valid thing to talk about, though it is not determinative in God's choice of instrument.
- Note the deep trust of the prophet in God at the end of chapter 3.