

Key to Habakkuk

1. STATISTICS:

Writer, Habakkuk, a little known prophet (the name means "embrace,") who ministered in the reigns of Josiah and Jehoiakim, possibly 612-598 B.C. Key verse, 2:4; key thought, faith in GOD. Habakkuk was a contemporary of Jeremiah and prophesied in Judah.

2. THEME:

To the prophet was given the vision of the coming captivity of GOD's people by the Babylonians. Already Nebuchadnezzar had carried off some nobles (including Daniel in 606 B.C.) and there were two other deportations to follow (597 and 586 B.C.). Habakkuk's sensitive heart was torn by the devastation of his land. GOD answered by setting forth the coming doom of the Babylonians and the book ends with the prophet's prayer of complete confidence in GOD.

3. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

There is almost a dialogue between GOD and Habakkuk, as the prophet inquiringly complains of the problems of good and evil. GOD patiently answers in chapter 2.

The predictions concerning the fall of Babylon were fulfilled about 70 years later.

Habakkuk has many well quoted passages in the New Testament: particularly 2:4; but also 2:14; 2:20; 3:2; and 3:17,18.

This book is a very beautiful example of poetic prophecy.

Chapter 3 was evidently a psalm to be used in public worship.

4. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:

The prophet was desperately concerned with the evil in his own land. So to him GOD revealed the coming invasion of the enemy, Babylon, to punish the nation for its sins. Habakkuk answered by asking GOD why Israel should be punished for sin by a nation more sinful than itself. GOD's answer was that the "just" would still live by faith, and that He would also punish Babylon in due time. The prophet was satisfied and prayed for speedy deliverance of the people.

5. KEY TO UNDERSTANDING:

The great standard by which Israel and all the nations of the world will be judged is the holiness and righteousness of GOD.

~ end of Habakkuk ~

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