

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Prophecy

October 27: Habakkuk 1-3 (John Morris)

Reading for October 27, 2017

HABAKKUK

Happy Friday, everyone!

Today we tackle Habakkuk, a book I first heard taught by brother Dwain Stoops some 15+ years ago in Ozark, MO. Dwain pointed out that the book's contents could be summed up with three "P's." First, Habbakuk is PERPLEXED, then he begins to PERCIEVE, and finally he PRAISES. I think we'll find this to be true.

WHEN DID HABAKKUK PROPHECY?

Habakkuk doesn't tell us when he prophesied, but internal evidence strongly suggests it was during the reign of Josiah (641-609 BC). God tells Habakkuk that, within Habakkuk's lifetime, He was going raise up the Chaldeans to punish His people, and states that this prediction would be regarded, even by Habakkuk, as unbelievable (1:5-11). The reasons for this are rooted in history. The Assyrian nation was still going VERY strong during the early years of Josiah's reign (you can read up on Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, if interested—his reign (669-633 BC) has been likened to Rome's Augustan period). In 625 BC, however, eight years after Ashurbanipal's death, history began to take an unexpected turn. Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, declared Babylonian independence from Assyria. This, of course, led to war between Assyria and Babylon, and eventually, resulted in Nebuchadnezzar (army general at the time) conquering the Assyrian capital in 612 BC! The remainder of the Assyrian army fled to Haran, but only to be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's reorganized forces three years later (609 BC). "How the mighty have fallen!" Nebuchadnezzar then went on to defeat Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish in 605 BC, thus sealing the deal on who was going to be the new world power. No one could have seen all this coming. Only a few months later in 605 BC, Babylon paid a visit to Jerusalem, and began carrying away its people and wealth (thus starting the 70 years of captivity).

ABOUT THE BOOK

The book, itself, is unique among the prophets in that there is no public preaching. The first two chapters are a dialogue between Habakkuk and God, the third chapter a song. As an aid to reading, the following shows who is talking when:

1:1-4: Habakkuk

1:5-11: God

1:12-2:2a: Habakkuk

2:2b-20: God

3:1-19: Habakkuk

Concerning the song in chapter three, apparently Habakkuk was a musician, as well as a prophet and an inspired lyricist. 3:19 contains these words: "To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments." This is almost identical to a note that appears four times in Psalms (4:1; 6:1; 54:1; 55:1). Also, the expression "my instruments" seems to indicate that either the song

was to be performed using instruments in Habakkuk's possession, and/or instruments of his own design (remember that David designed his own instruments: 1 Chron. 23:5; Amos 6:5). Fascinating to think about. That Habakkuk could write a song intended for "the Chief Musician" may also indicate that he was among the Levites whose special duty it was to praise the LORD with instruments (1 Chron. 23:3-5). If not, he at least had connections.

THE FLOW OF THE BOOK

- 1:1-4: Habakkuk is wondering why God is permitting wickedness and lawlessness to persist in Judah.
- 1:5-11: God informs Habakkuk that He's not permitting it indefinitely, but that He's raising a nation to judge Judah.
- 1:12-2:2a: Habakkuk asks God why He's going to judge Judah with a wicked, idolatrous nation that should be judged, itself.
- 2:2b-20: God explains that Babylon will not escape its own judgment. Using five woes (2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19), God explains that Babylon will pay for its sins, as well.
- 3:1-19: Habakkuk praises the God who does all things well, has delivered His people in time past, and who can be trusted with the future. The musical prayer, and thus the book, closes with a powerful expression of Habakkuk's faith (3:17-19).

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thanks John! Gotta love those musicians and song writers!

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, brother John!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, John! So many golden nuggets you brought forth from this book. Very interesting! I'm grateful for your edification.