

Habakkuk's Concern

Chapter 1:1-11

Burden may be translated oracle, word, song or message.

I. Habakkuk's Complaint God's inactivity

His cry to God why aren't you doing something? The emphasis seems to be that the Prophet had been pleading for a long time to God concerning the moral depravity. Yet God did not seem to hear.

Habakkuk uses several words to describe how he saw Israel's situation.

Violence - implying cruelty and injustice.
Iniquity - primarily meaning emptiness and vanity, sorrow & evil

Grievance - trouble or mischief toward another person.

Spoiling - the primary meaning destruction.

Strife - a quarrel or dispute

Contention - speaks of a dispute that once it starts cannot be stopped.

Slacked - a word meaning to be stunned, to be paralyzed. The idea is to grow cold.

God answered His servant and declared to him that He was working among the nations even though Habakkuk could not see what He was doing.

Chaldeans - God was planning to use the godless Babylonians to bring punishment to the Jews.

The Lord used a number of pictures to describe the Babylonians as to how they would treat people.

1. **Bitter & hasty** - refers to their cruelty and impetuous.
2. **To possess** - they took what they wanted.
3. **Horses swifter than leopards** - the speed of which they moved.
4. **More fierce than wolves** - the viciousness they displayed toward their enemy.
5. **As eagles to eat** - they would dive down on their prey like scavengers.
6. **Come all for violence** - verse describes how their army swept across the desert and would deport captives like the sand.
7. **Scoff at kings and princes** - they had no fear or respect for authority.
8. **Deride every strong hold** - they would laugh at fortified cities as they sieged them.
9. **His power unto his god** - God's ultimate indictment of them. They worshipped their own strength.

1 The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.

2 O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!

3 Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention.

4 Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

5 Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

6 For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs.

7 They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves.

8 Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.

9 They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand.

10 And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it.

11 Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god.

Habakkuk. Early Hebrew traditions speculate that Habakkuk was the son of the Shunammite woman who Elisha foretold would have a son the next year.

Habakkuk's name means "embrace" which is what Elisha told the woman in 2 Kings 4:16.

Again this is just speculation the true identity of the prophet remain a mystery. He is found no where else in scripture.

Habakkuk was disturbed by what he felt was God's seemingly indifference and inactivity concerning the widespread immorality and public injustice that he saw all about him.

II. The Lord's Answer God's methods are often mystifying

God is about to answer Habakkuk's complaint. But he is not ready for the answer he is about to get.

God told Habakkuk you are not going to believe how I am going to bring judgement upon my people even though I'm telling you.

Everybody knew who the Babylonians were. They were decisive, vicious, ravenous in their desire for destruction.

These are nasty people, and God knows how bad they are. When God decides to judge Judah, he picks the meanest nation around to do the job. They were the most hated and most feared nation on earth. No one was able to stand against them. No one was able to defeat them.

Nothing about that made sense to Habakkuk. Sometimes things have to get worst before than get better.

As we study the book of Habakkuk we will find the prophet experiencing a total change in his life.

He will move from. . .

1. Fear to faith,
2. Burden to blessing,
3. Perplexity to praise,
4. Confusion to confidence and,
5. Worry to worship.