



Prophet Prophesying Eternal Life



The Minor Prophet Holy Book Review

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Habakkuk: this word is derived from Hebrew; it means “the embraced.” It also may be of Assyrian origin, “Hambakkuk” i.e., a garden plant.

History of the Holy Book : It was written during the Chaldean Age, as the Temple was still in existence (2 : 20) and the musical direction was still being experienced (3 : 19); The Chaldeans at that time appeared as fierce fighters (1:5,6) who started to conquer all nations (1 : 6, 7).

- Some scholars state that Habakkuk 1:5,6 refers to the conditions before the Chaldean victories over Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, in 612 B.C. After these victories the Chaldean Kings ruled over in the world and defeated Egypt in the Carchemish battle (2 Corinth 35: 20; Jer 46:2).
- This Holy Book was written in the days of Johiakim, King of Judah (609-598 B.C.).

The Chaldeans: They dwelt in Chaldea, south of Babylon. They represented the majority in Babylon from 721 to 539 B.C. They were the leaders, the people of high ranks and the priests of the capital. The word “Chaldean” means “Baal’s priest” as mentioned by Herodotus. They seemed to be wise men and magicians (Dan. 1:4; 2:2, 4).

Characteristics of the Holy Book:

- 1) The prophet moaned with sorrow because of the people’s corruption. As God revealed to him the people were being punished through the Chaldeans by Him, he cries out to God to raise His severe penalties. Finally, he praises God and rejoices in the Lord for all His deeds and wisdom. Ch. 1 refers to the internal corruption. Ch. 2 refers to the external wars. Ch. 3 contains thanksgiving to God who takes care of us in the midst of our tribulations.
- 2) This book reveals the concept of the “Word of God” as a dialogue between God and man. The prophet asks and God listens to his petitions, and replies. The Word of God represents mutual love and openness of God towards man.
- 3) This Book declares the characteristics of the minister of God, in the person of Habakkuk.

- a. He had an open heart towards God, entering in dialogue as a son with his Father.
- b. He loved those who served, mourns for their wickedness, and for their punishment. He could not see them in bitterness.
- c. He was filled with joy, praising God, hoping for their salvation no matter how dark the surrounding was.

Chapter 1 - Inquiry about God’s punishment of His people.

Chapter 2 - Inquiry about the punishment of the Chaldeans.

Chapter 3 - Psalm for praising God.

Chapter 1: Inquiry about God’s Punishment of His People.

Habakkuk introduces this chapter by the eternal inquiry: “O Lord, how long shall I cry and Thou wilt not hear? Even cry out unto Thee of violence and Thou wilt not save!” (v.1). The prophet saw corruption everywhere among the people, as if God left the unjust doers to experience their wickedness without any control. The reply was that God intends to let His punishment fall at the convenient time. The execution would be the Chaldean exile.

In this chapter:

- 1 - The prophet Habakkuk’s inquiry (v. 1-4).
- 2 - God’s reply: The punishment would be the Chaldean exile (v. 5-11).
- 3 - Habakkuk’s kindness towards his people (v. 12-17).

It is to be noticed that:

- 1 - The main reason for injustice is the diversity from the commandment (“the law is slacked” v. 4).
- 2 - The punishing nation mentioned here carries the same characteristics of Satan, to whom we are willingly subject to as slaves :
 - A nation (v. 6) of great number of inhabitants, like Satan who fights us with various trials.



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- Filled with bitterness (v. 6), that lets man be denied his peace and joy.
- Aggressive nation (v. 6), i.e., marching through our internal land, threatening our lives.
- Wandering over the earth (v. 6): Once man's heart and mind leans towards earth by accepting earthly desires, surely he will be a field for Satan's activities.
- Possessing habitations not her own (v. 6), i.e., captures sons of God and converts them to sons of evil.
- "Their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves" v. 7; the enemy is subject only to his own wicked law .
- "Their horses are swifter than the leopards and are more fierce than the evening wolves" (v. 8), i.e., the enemy moves to chase speedily in day like the leopard and deceitfully at night like the wolf.
- "Their faces shall sup up ..." v. 9, i.e. they are as wild beasts and not as men whose faces look upright.
- "They shall scoff at the kings" v. 10. God appoints us as kings, furnishing us with power, but under the influence of sin we are subjected to the enemy's mockery.
"They shall heap dust and take it" v. 10, for through sin our life is broken down into dust and owned by the enemy.
- "He shall pass over and offend, imputing this, his power unto his God" v. 11.

This means that the wicked one passes from evil to evil, depending on his might as if he is a God.

- 3 - Habakkuk who often cried out for the glory of God, because of the corruption that prevailed among his people, was at the same time aware of the expectancy of bitter punishment that would soon fall, he asked God's mercy to save them (v. 12-17). With Jeremiah (8:21) he said: "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt;... astonishment hath taken hold on me." If we are filled with grief for the sinners as they commit evil deeds we must not rejoice at their misfortune but we must be kind to them.

The prophet with such tenderly affections complain to God of the Chaldean's treatment of his people.

- 4 - His saying: "they sacrifice unto their net and burn incense unto their drag" v. 16, means that the Chaldeans, the more they chase souls, the more they are eager to sacrifice and burn incense to their idols. They thought they had made God's people submissive by the power of their gods, but in fact this was done by permission from God, as a punishment.

Chapter 2: The Punishment of the Chaldeans

- 1 - The prophet waits for God's reply :

Habakkuk inquired from God about the designation of the Chaldeans, who thought that they were able - by their own power - to defeat His people and enslave them. The prophet awaited God's reply, as he said: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower" v. 1. He was like a simple dove who has no power, but finds its refuge in the clefts of the rock (Song 2:14). Let us wait till the wonderful deeds of God are fulfilled.

- 2 - God's interest in our inquiry (v. 2, 3). The prophet ought to wait God's reply; but God Himself wants to reveal His mysteries to His own beloved men, but He asks us to wait.
- 3 - God punished the Chaldeans for the following sins they committed :

a) Pride and internal emptiness (v. 4-8), "... who enlarged his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied ... Woe to him that increased that which is not his!"

b) Covetousness (9-11): The stones with which he built his house cry out for he bought them from injustice and the beam out of the timber answer them.

c) Violence and cruelty (v. 12-14).

d) Drunkenness and adultery (v. 15-17).

e) Worshipping idols (v. 18-20): "Woe unto him that saith to the wood (wooden idols), Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise," for they think these wooden and stone idols gods.



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Chapter 3: Psalm for Praising God

Habakkuk, started his Holy Book by continually groaning for the internal corruption of his people, then he cried out for their punishment through the Chaldeans, then he transferred to praising God upon the “Shigionoth,” i.e. upon the strings of the lyre.

His hymn contains the following:

1 - Introduction to God’s Works Through the Ages (v.1.2)
His mercy never ceased.

2 - God’s Work on Mount Sinai (3-12)

- “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise” v. 3. God came to them through His Law, and His glory covered the heavens, “The Lord came down upon Mount Sinai” Exodus 19:20, “and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount” Exodus 24:17 (See Deut. 33:2).
- According to the Septuagint “God comes from the south and the Holy One from the shadow mount.” The “South” refers to the inflamed spirit, while the “North” denotes the coldness in spirit. That is why the bride in Song of Songs 4:16 asks her Beloved Bridegroom to drive away the north winds and blows upon her garden the south wind.
- The “South” refers to Bethlehem, south of Jerusalem, the birth place of the Incarnated Son of God.
- Through His Law (Word of God) He descends into our heart as if it were the Mount of Sinai. Our souls (the heavens) will be covered by His Divine glory and our body (the earth) will be filled with praise and joy.
- As God declares His salvation (v. 7), the tents of Cushan become afflicted (God delivered Cushan through the hands of Othoniel the son of Kenaz (Judges 3:8-11); and the curtains of the land of Midan tremble, through Gideon (Judges 7: 13).
- “Was thine anger against the rivers? Was thy wrath against the sea?” v. 8. Rivers with their sweet waters refers to

God’s people, who must be inflicted with the divine punishment for their sins but only for a while. The seas refer to the unfaithful souls, as they are bitter, like the marine waters and must also fall under God’s wrath.

- The Word of God is like the arrow that chases the human soul to enter the Kingdom of God: “Thy bow was made quite naked ...” v. 9.
- If our life became “earth” the Word of God would work in us, sending His Holy Spirit, as a river flows with living waters (John 7:38). This is what he means by saying: “Thou did’st cleave the earth with rivers” v. 9.

3 - Rejoicing for the Divine Salvation (13-19):

This Holy Book is concluded by rejoicing for God’s salvation, declaring the destruction of the enemy (Satan) and the joy of God’s children. ✚

Can You Translate These Coptic Words Within This Mighty Arrows?

1. ⲬⲁⲥⲒⲀⲘ
2. Ⲡⲓⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲭⲁⲣⲕⲟⲥ
ⲡⲓⲉⲱⲣⲓⲙⲟⲥ
3. ⲓⲟⲩⲱⲓⲱ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲥⲙⲁⲣⲱⲟⲩⲧ Ⲡⲁⲙⲃⲟ
4. ⲓⲒⲒⲛⲃⲓ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ
5. ⲛⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ Ⲡⲟⲗⲓⲕⲁⲣⲟⲥ ⲡⲓⲉⲡⲓⲕⲟⲡⲟⲥ
ⲛⲧⲉ Ⲙⲓⲧⲣⲛⲁ
6. ⲛⲓⲉⲛⲕⲁⲓ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲉⲧⲱⲉⲙⲱⲓ
7. ⲓⲱⲛⲁ
8. Ⲭⲉⲃⲓⲟⲛ
9. ⲁⲃⲃⲁⲕⲟⲩⲙ
10. Ⲓⲉⲗⲉⲕⲓⲛⲁ
11. ⲛⲥⲁⲛⲁⲥ
12. Ⲓⲉⲣⲉⲙⲓⲁⲥ
13. Ⲓⲁⲕⲁⲣⲓⲁⲥ
14. ⲛⲃⲟⲓⲥ Ⲓⲛⲥⲟⲩⲥ Ⲡⲓⲕⲣⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ