

11-2017

## Article 35: Habakkuk at a Glance

Harold Willmington

*Liberty University*, [hwillmington@liberty.edu](mailto:hwillmington@liberty.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/owners\\_manual](https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/owners_manual)



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), [Practical Theology Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "Article 35: Habakkuk at a Glance" (2017). *The Owner's Manual File*. 11.  
[https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/owners\\_manual/11](https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/owners_manual/11)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Theological Studies at Scholars Crossing. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Owner's Manual File by an authorized administrator of Scholars Crossing. For more information, please contact [scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu](mailto:scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu).

# HABAKKUK AT A GLANCE

This book records the principal concern of Habakkuk who voices his confusion regarding two puzzling issues: (1) why had not God stepped in and punished Judah for its terrible sin, and, upon learning this would be done at the hands of the Babylonians, (2) the prophet asks why God would use a pagan nation even more wicked than Judah to chasten His people.

## BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

THE SIGHS, THE CRIES, AND THE WHYS, AS UTTERED BY THE DOUBTING THOMAS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

This is Habakkuk's story. His name means "embrace." Habakkuk was the last of the minor prophets writing to the Southern Kingdom before the Babylonian Captivity in 606 B.C., just as Micah was the final prophet to the Northern Kingdom prior to the Assyrian Captivity in 721 B.C.

He was apparently one of the Levitical choristers in the temple. His closing statement, "for the chief musicians on my stringed instrument" reveals that this is actually a song. It is a book of deepest doubt. His doubts centered around two painful problems. How could God allow the sins of Israel to go unpunished? God then tells him Judah would indeed be punished by the Babylonians. How then, he asks, could God justify allowing a godless nation to punish Judah, which nation at least believed in God and had some good men left?

## FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Habakkuk.** He was a Levitical musician who wrote an Old Testament book in song fashion to be sung (Hab. 3:19). His all-important phrase, "*The just shall live by his faith*" (Hab. 2:4) is repeated three times in the New Testament (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38).
2. What? The **Book of Habakkuk.**
3. When and where? 608 B.C., from Jerusalem.
4. Why? To increase the faith of the prophet himself.
5. To whom? The Southern Kingdom of Israel.

## KEY EVENTS

1. Location of the famous declaration, "*the just shall live by ... faith*"
2. A poetic description praising God for His awesome power and marvelous salvation

## KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Habakkuk:** Old Testament prophet whose questions in regards to some of God's actions were answered by the Lord in six short words, "*the just shall live by . . . faith*" (2:4)

## KEY PLACES

1. **Chaldea:** area located in southern Babylon, inhabited by Semitic people, whose armies would be used by God to punish sinful Judah

## UNIQUE FEATURES

1. Habakkuk is the only Old Testament book consisting entirely of a dialogue between God and a human individual. (Parts of Jonah, Job, and a few other books feature such dialogues.) All other prophetic books consist mainly of records of the prophets' preaching.
2. Dr. J. Ronald Blue observes:  
"Habakkuk is a unique book. Unlike other prophets who declared God's message to people this prophet dialogued with God about people. Most Old Testament prophets proclaimed divine judgment. Habakkuk pleaded for divine judgment." (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Victor Books, p. 1505)
3. Habakkuk's book begins with an interrogation of God but ends as an intercession to God. Worry is transformed into worship. Fear turns to faith. Terror becomes trust. Hang-ups are resolved with hope. Anguish melts into adoration. (ibid. p. 1507)
4. Habakkuk's great theological declaration, "*The just shall live by faith*" (2:4), is quoted no less than three times in the New Testament (see Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38).
5. It has been suggested that each of these three New Testament books emphasizes a different phase of Habakkuk's statement. Thus:
  - "The just" is emphasized in Romans.
  - "Shall live" is emphasized in Galatians.
  - "By faith" is emphasized in Hebrews.
6. In essence, Habakkuk functions more like a priest than a prophet. Instead of declaring God's message and thus standing between God and the people, he pleads God's mercy, and thus stands between the people and God.
7. Habakkuk gives the final of five marvelous "bottom-line summaries" of the coming millennium. Note the similar language in each: "*But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord*" (Num. 14:21). "*And blessed be his glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen*" (Psa. 72:19). "*And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory*" (Isa. 6:3). "*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea*" (Psa. 11:9). "*For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*" (2:14).
8. The everlasting WHY asked at the beginning of his book (1:2, 3, 12, 13) is answered at the end of his book by the everlasting WHO (3:18-19).
9. Habakkuk sees one of the greatest manifestations of God's glory and power in all the Bible (3:1-16). It is reminiscent of that at Mount Sinai as viewed by Moses (see Ex. 19).

## **COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS**

### **Isaiah:**

- Both taunt the proud Babylonians (2:6-20; Isa. 14).
- Both include “woes” (2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19; Isa. 5:8-23 and other scattered occurrences).
- Both speak of the “righteous” or the “just” who trust in the Lord (2:4; Isa. 26:1-10).
- Both record a theophany, a visible manifestation of God (3; Isa. 6).

## **TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS**

1. The Holy and Mighty One (1:12)
2. The Lord of Hosts (2:13)
3. The Coming King in all His Glory (3:3-15)