HABAKKUK

INTRODUCTION

1. AUTHOR – Habakkuk's name means "embracer". This is a more personal book than the other prophets, but nothing else is known of his circumstances.
2. DATE – The book was probably written after the rise of the Chaldeans (or Babylonians) in 612 BC but before the fall of Jerusalem in 605 BC., just before the exile began for Judah.
3. READERS – The book, though written to Judah, is really for God's people of all ages.
4. THEME – The book is a conversation between the prophet and God concerning God's justice.
5. KEY VERSES – 1:3,6,13, 2:4,8,20, 3:16-18

OUTLINE

1. HABAKKUK QUESTIONS GOD – Lord, how can you allow so much injustice among your own people? It distresses me greatly. CH 1:1-4
2. GOD ANSWERS HIS QUESTION – I will raise up the Babylonians to punish My people. CH 1:5-11
3. HABAKKUK QUESTIONS AGAIN – Lord, how can you allow the wicked Babylonians to swallow up those more righteous than they are? CH 1:12-2:1
4. GOD'S ANSWERS HIM AGAIN – CH 2:2-20
   1) The righteous will live by his faith.
   2) The Babylonians will also be destroyed.
   3) God is Sovereign and we must submit to Him.
5. HABAKKUK WORSHIPS – He responds with complete submission and trust in God. CH 3:1-19

THE IMPORTANCE OF HABAKKUK

1. It is always right to ask God any question we think of if we are truly seeking His will. See Hebrews 11:6
2. God controls the movements of nations and empires to carry out His will. Surely I can trust Him with my life.
3. Notice Habakkuk's responses. After asking God a question, he waits for God's answer. After hearing God's answer, he worships God (Ch3).
4. Those who are truly righteous before God will live. And those who live must do so by faith. See 2:4 and compare it to Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38.
5. The Lord asks for complete trust in 2:20. Habakkuk responds beautifully in 3:16-18. What would our response be in those circumstances?
6. When you read through the book of Habakkuk, read it with an attitude of worship. Think about some great question you would want to ask God and try to think of the answer He would give similar to the answer to Habakkuk.

The story of this book is that Habakkuk cried out to God about all the wickedness that he witnessed as he looked around. 1:3 "Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong?" God's answer is that he will raise up the Chaldeans to carry out his judgment on the people. 1:6 "For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own." Habakkuk responded with a question that asked, "How can you use someone even more wicked than we are and bless them?" 1:13 "You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and are silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?" Then in 2:1 the prophet agreed to wait for God's answer. The Lord told him that he was also planning that he would judge the Chaldeans through another nation. Habakkuk finished by falling on his face in worship of God's greatness.

HABAKKUK

1 – This is one of my favorite books because of the way the conversation happens between an honest human and God. It expresses so many of our thoughts (when we think in the right way). The prophet saw all the injustice and evil in the world, especially among his own people and complained to God about it. "How can you, a holy and just God allow all this injustice to occur?" God answered, "I am not allowing it to continue. I have an army of Babylonians who are coming to carry out justice." The prophet answered, "But they are more wicked than we are. How can you allow that to happen?" Then the transition of conversation happens in 2:1. "Now I will wait to see what you have to say about that." There are three transition verses in the argument in chapter 1. V3 "Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong?" V6 "Behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own." V13 "Why do you idly look at traitors and are silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?"

2 – V14 reveals the purpose of God. "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The Lord went on to say that he would punish those who carry out wickedness. The punishment would be to return on the sinners the same things that they did when they sinned against others. He ended with another reminder of the difference between the Lord and all idols. They are breathless and are not able to do anything. He is the ruler of the universe. This chapter has three well-known and great verses. V1 as quoted above is our prayer for the future. It is God's will and will be accomplished. V4, "The righteous shall live by his faith," is quoted three times in the NT. V20 "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." This is a great reminder of our approach to worship and even more our approach to our questions of God when we ask "why" he does what he does. Worship in one sense seems to mean that we trust him with his actions that he will always do what is right and righteous.

3 – The chapter records the concluding prayer of the prophet after God reveals his answers to the prophet's questions. The prayer recognizes that all of the creation, from the heights of the heavens to the smallest part of the earth yields in worship to the Lord of the universe when he acts. The answer that the Lord gives brings about deep faith in the Lord by the prophet. Habakkuk does pray for God to do and carry out his plan. V2 "O Lord, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy." See also V16 where he states that even though the answer frightens him to the core of his being, he still trusts the Lord to do what is right and good and submits to him. "I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon the people who invade us." What faith! Give us that kind of faith!

This is such a remarkable writing. First, can you feel people say, "Why doesn't God do that for me – answer my questions?" Part of God's answer is because we ask the same questions that are asked in the Bible and God has already given answers. Second, the thoughts of this book are so profound. "God, how can you claim to be holy and allow your people to commit such wickedness that I see all around?" "I am going to deal with the wickedness. I have raised up the Babylonians, a great and fearsome army, to come and punish the wickedness you see." "But wait Lord, they are more wicked than we are." "You are right and I will raise another army to carry out my judgment on them." "OK Lord, your ways are too awesome for me. I worship you and will trust in you and your ways." 2:4 "The righteous will live by his faith." 2:14 "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." 2:20 "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." 3:17-18 "Though the fig tree should not blossom nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places." Lord, increase our faith in you and your ways.