

Analysis of Habakkuk

General

“Habakkuk was probably a contemporary of Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum and possibly Joel” (Dillard and Longman, p. 411). Two memorable OT sayings come from Habakkuk: “...But the righteous will live by his faith” (2:4), and “...In wrath remember mercy” (3:2).

Authorship

Authorship of the Minor Prophets seems to be straightforward. Since the book bears the prophet’s name, this analysis will side with tradition, which recognizes Habakkuk as the author of the book.

Date

Lasor notes that dates ranging from 700 to 300 have been suggested for the events of this book. Lasor (et. al.) settles for a range between 625 and 605 B. C. (p. 322-323). Dillard and Longman opt for 625-604 while at the same time recognizing that the events of 2:5, 8-10 may suggest a somewhat later date (p. 411).

Key Issues

Key issues in Habakkuk are: 1) to understand the historical significance of the Babylonians, 2) to understand the nature of faith in Habakkuk and the New Testament, 3) to appreciate God’s desire that His people live by faith.

Subject/Purpose Statement

Habakkuk recorded the sinful condition of His people and God’s intended use of the Chaldeans as an instrument of His judgment (and then object of His wrath), to encourage the people to live righteously as people of faith waiting for God to work out His plan.

Outline of Habakkuk

- The prophet and the Lord discuss the present sinful condition of the people (1:1-11).
 - Habakkuk's complaint about the sinful condition and God's inactivity (1:1-4).
 - God's terrible answer of coming judgment through the hands of the Chaldeans (1:5-11).
- The prophet's second complaint about God's method of judgment and God's answer (1:12-2:5).
 - Habakkuk's complaint about God using the treacherous and the wicked to judge the people (1:12-2:1).
 - God asked for faith (2:2-5).
- God assured the prophet that the treacherous would be dealt with at the proper time (2:6-20).
 - God gave Habakkuk a taunt song against the Chaldeans (2:6-20).
 - God's command not to complain about His doings (2:20).
- Habakkuk's psalm of trust and submission (3:1-19).
 - Do what you have spoken, but please remember mercy (3:1-2).
 - The Lord comes and none can stand before him (3:3-7).
 - The Lord as a warrior will be victorious over all the forces arrayed against Him (3:8-15).
 - In spite of the terrible coming destruction Habakkuk trusted in the Lord (3:16-19).

Theological Issues

A few theological aspects found in Habakkuk are: God's holiness, His judgment, His communication individually, His faithfulness of old, His mercy and grace, His power to use anything/anyone, His sovereignty, His perfect timing & plan; man's lack of timing and perspective, wrestling with faith, man's joy and salvation is found in God alone.

Theological Application

Habakkuk learned that the righteous man, no matter how difficult life may be,

must continue to believe, trust “and have confidence that the Lord of all the earth would do right” (Dillard and Longman, p. 413). God’s people need to apply the same message today.