

HABAKKUK

HABAKKUK — THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

Nothing is known of the personal history of Habakkuk, and little as to the time when he prophesied. He is placed by some successor to Zephaniah, for he makes no mention of Assyria and yet refers to the approach of the Babylonian invasion. See verses 1:6; 2:3; 3:2, 16-19. The book seems to have been written by himself, as we judge from 1:2, and 2:1-2.

His "burden" begins by lamenting the iniquity of his people 1:1-4. He then declares God's purpose of raising up the Chaldean nation as a scourge against them vv. 5-10. The probability is that the Chaldeans (or Babylonians) were still a friendly nation (see ^{<12102>}2 Kings 20:12-19), but they were soon to march through the land as a ravaging enemy. There were three invasions by the Babylonians, as the second book of Kings showed us; in the reigns of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, and it is thought Habakkuk alludes to all three. Verse 11 of chapter 1 might be taken as a prophecy of the disease that came over Nebuchadnezzar when, as a punishment for his pride, his reason was taken from him for a season. The chapter concludes with an expostulation to the Holy One for inflicting such judgment on Judah and for using a nation to inflict them less righteous, as the prophet thinks, than themselves.

In chapter 2 he awaits God's answer to this expostulation (v. 1), and receives it (vv. 2-4). This is encouraging. "The vision shall surely come and the just shall live by faith and wait for it." The continuation of the chapter is a prediction of the judgments that shall fall on the Babylonians for their cruelty and idolatry.

The prophet, hearing these promises and threatenings, concludes his book with a song of praise and prayer (chapter 3). He celebrates past displays of the power and grace of Jehovah, supplicates God for the speedy deliverance of His people and closes by expressing a confidence in God which no change can destroy.

Attention is called to the words in verse 2:3, which the writer of Hebrews, according to the law of double reference, applies to the second coming of Christ (~~31037~~ Hebrews 10:37-38).

In the same manner notice verse 4 of the same chapter, "The just shall live by faith," and the application of it in ~~40117~~ Romans 1:17; 5:1 and ~~41024~~ Galatians 3:24.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the terms of the indictment against Judah (1:1-4)?
2. What features of the military power of Babylon are noted (1:8)?
3. How would you interpret ~~31010~~ Habakkuk 2:1?
4. Have you identified the New Testament reference in this lesson?
5. What are the terms of indictment against Babylon (2:5-19)?
6. Memorize ~~31017~~ Habakkuk 3:17-18.