**III. HABAKKUK (609-606 BC**)

A. The Authorship of Habakkuk (“embrace”)

 1. He gives no genealogy, but calls himself the prophet (*hannabi’*) in 1:1.

2. He apparently was a musician as he dedicated his work to the chief singer (3:19).

 3. The apocryphal book *Bel and the Dragon* says he was from the tribe of Levi.

 4. Perhaps he was a member of the Temple choir or a Levite.

5. Paul cites Hab. 1:5 (Acts 13:41) and Hab. 2:4 (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11, and Heb. 10:38).

B. The Date of Habakkuk

 1. It was written when Jehovah was stirring up the Babylonians (1:6).

2. Perhaps he refers to the period prior to the Battle of Carchemish (605 BC) when Babylon sacked Egypt.

3. His ministry was a least around 609 to 606 BC (during Jehoiakim’s reign [II Ki. 23:34 ff.]).

C. The Occasion of Habakkuk

1. The prophet addressed God and sought an answer to why is there wickedness in God’s holy creation (1:3-4).

 2. He is assured that faith will help him resolve the issue of *“Theodicy”* (2:4).

D. The Outline of Habakkuk

 1. The Problems of Habakkuk (1:1-2:20)

 a. Problem #1 Asked: Why does wickedness go unpunished (1:2-4)?

 b. Problem #1 Answered: Judgment is coming. (1:5-11).

c. Problem #2 Asked: Why does God use an unholy nation to judge (1:12-2:1)?

 d. Problem #2 Answered: Trust Me (2:2-3:20)!

 2. The Prayer of Habakkuk (3:1-19)

 a. The Petition to the LORD (3:1-2)

 b. The Person of the LORD (3:3-16)

 c. The Promise in the LORD (3:17-19)

E. The Summary of Habakkuk

**Background**

Isaiah had already predicted the rise and fall of Assyria (Isa. 36-39), and also the coming of threat of Babylon (Isa. 39:7; 43:14). Now the Babylonians were on the march, crushing Assyria and then Egypt. As Habakkuk watched nations fall to the growing threat of Babylon, he also recognized Judah was ripe for judgment because of internal apostasy. The subject of *“Theodicy,”* or the justice of God, was upon his mind. In the prophet’s dialogue with the Lord, he ponders the lack of justice upon his own people, and then ponders the justice of God using the terrible Babylonians as Jehovah’s rod of judgment. In the end, the only answer is *“the just shall live by faith.”* The Lord had already answered the question ‘why’ with ‘trust me.’ The writer Habakkuk takes the audience from interrogation to intervention, from worry to worship, from fear to faith, from terror to trust, and from anguish to adoration!

**Contents**

*Chapter One*

Habakkuk recognized the wickedness of the Jews in paralyzing the *Torah* and questioned God’s justice with his *“why”*[[1]](#footnote-1) (1:1-4). Jehovah answered by revealing that judgment was coming (1:5-11). Habakkuk queried about the use of wicked Chaldeans to judge Judah (1:12-2:1).

*Chapter Two*

 Again Jehovah answered Habakkuk’s and him to write it for all to see. The plain message was *“the just shall live by his faith.”[[2]](#footnote-2)* Jehovah revealed that He would judge all unjust nations, not only Judah but also Babylon! In a 3-fold set of five woes, the LORD spelled out his just judgments (vv. 6, 9, 12, 15,[[3]](#footnote-3) and 19).[[4]](#footnote-4)

*Chapter Three*

Habakkuk received the Lord’s answers and wrote a psalm of praise, focusing around his Petition to the LORD (3:1-2), the Person of the LORD (3:3-16),[[5]](#footnote-5) and the Promise of the LORD (3:17-19).

1. The interrogative *mah* occurs 5x in Habakkuk (1:3, 13; 2:1[2x]; and 2:18). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Paul employed the expression and applied to the *“just”* in Romans (1:17), *“shall live”* in Galatians (3:11), and *“by faith”* in Hebrews (10:38; cf. also 11:1-40). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This is one of the strongest verses in the Bible that condemns alcohol and the distribution of alcohol to others. Christ did not change water into alcoholic wine (Jn. 2:9-10)—He was not the *divine bartender*! [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The prophet gave successive woes to thieves, to the dishonest, to murderers, to bartenders, and to idolaters. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The physical creation responded to the LORD as mountains quaked, waters roared and waves clapped, and the sun and moon stood in their created realm (cf. Josh 10:12-14). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)