



**The Oaks  
Baptist Church**  
Grand Prairie, Texas



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**Conviction to  
Live by Faith  
A Study in Habakkuk**

Date	Lesson	Text
11/02	<b>Introduction</b>	
11/09	Faith in a Just God	1:1-17
11/16	Doom of Unrighteous	2:1-14
11/23	Giving Thanks	
11/30	Living in Faith	3:1-19
12/07	Review & Summary	

**Food for Thought**

Sorrow looks back.  
Worry looks around.  
Faith looks UP!

In the LORD I take refuge  
**Psalm 11:1a (NIV)**

*(shared by a Class Member)*

## STUDY OF HABAKKUK INTRODUCTION

It seems evident that the prophet Habakkuk wrote the Book of Habakkuk sometime during the 25-year interval between the fall of Nineveh (612 B.C.) and the fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.). It is likely that Habakkuk grew up during the reign of Josiah. He would have witnessed many of the reforms that took place during his reign over Judah. But Josiah was the last righteous king to sit on the throne of Judah. Those who followed him were wicked men. When Josiah died, all of his reforms died with him. There was almost no trace of godliness to be found in Judah. The prophet Jeremiah described the wickedness of Judah before Jerusalem's defeat by the Babylonians (or Chaldeans):

*But you are always thinking and looking for ways to increase your holding by dishonest means. Your eyes and your heart are set only on killing some innocent person and on committing fraud and oppression (Jeremiah 22:17).*

These were dark days for Judah, and Habakkuk did not like what he saw the people of Judah doing. Neither did Habakkuk like what God was doing (or rather "not doing"), so far as the prophet could tell. We will return to the subject of his protests, but first let us pause for a wide angle look at the Book of Habakkuk.

The first chapter of the Book of Habakkuk is dominated by the **protests of the prophet**. He is greatly distressed by the sins of his nation, and even more distressed that God seems to be doing nothing about it. Habakkuk accuses God of failing to do His job, as the prophet perceives it. God answers Habakkuk's protest (1:5-11), but this only provokes a rebuttal from the prophet (1:12—2:1). With the exception of the first verse, **chapter 2 is a divine declaration of foundational principles (2:2-5) and of woe's pronounced upon the wicked (2:6-20)**. The third chapter reveals a radical change in Habakkuk's heart. In chapter 1, the prophet demands justice; **in chapter 3, the prophet pleads for mercy**. In chapter 1, the prophet challenges God's way of dealing with the wicked; **in chapter 3, the prophet finds himself on his knees in prayer**. In chapter 1, Habakkuk is protesting against God; **in chapter 3, he joyfully praises God**.

Something very dramatic happens to the prophet Habakkuk in the course of the book. He is not the same man we saw in chapter 1. The key to understanding the message of Habakkuk is to understand the process by which God changed the prophet's attitudes and actions: **"The whole value of this prophecy is its revelation of the process that led to the song of 3:17-18."** The answer is to be found in chapter 2. With the exception of the first verse of chapter 2, the entire second chapter is God's response to the protests of His prophet. **The centerpiece of God's response is found in verse 2:4:**

*"Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him,  
But the righteous will live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4, NASB).*

The protests of this prophet have often been repeated over the centuries. Let us look at Habakkuk's angry protest, at God's response, and at the final response of the prophet in chapter 3 with an eye to what it says to us, as well as to the people of a bygone day.

*(Excerpts from "The Just Shall Live By Faith" by Bob Deffinbaugh)*

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

### The Book of Habakkuk

**AUTHOR:** Uncertain. Probably Habakkuk. Some have inferred from his psalm (3:1) and the direction to the chief musician (3:19) that he was a chorister in the temple, but this is purely conjectural.

**DATE WRITTEN:** Uncertain. The prophet evidently lived in the Babylonian period. Many scholars fix the time of the prophecy during the reign of Jehoiakim (609 B.C.-597 B.C.)

**PURPOSE:** To remind the prophet himself and his listeners that the God of Israel is the true God, the One in control of everything and every event. He can be trusted, even in the face of the mysterious circumstances of life, which often appear to contradict His sovereign control.

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** Judah, and God's people of all times who may be asking the "difficult" questions of life.

**MAIN THEME:** The mysteries of providence.

**KEY WORD:** Faith, 2:4.

**KEY VERSE:** 1:3.

### NOTABLE PASSAGES:

- (1) The morning star of the reformation, 2:4; Rom 1:17; Heb 10:38.
- (2) The triumph of missions, 2:14
- (3) The woe to the drunkard-maker, 2:15
- (4) An all-conquering faith, 3:17-18

**SYNOPSIS:** The book opens with the prophet in perplexity over the mystery of unpunished evil in the world. The first two chapters are mainly composed of a dialogue between Habakkuk and Jehovah.

(1) **The prophet complains to God** that he sees sinful violence on every hand, yet no punishment is visited upon the evildoers, 1:1-4.

(2) **He receives a reply revealing the divine plan** of using the Babylonians as a swift and terrible instrument of judgment upon the wicked nations, 1:5-11.

(3) **Still the moral problem is unanswered** in the mind of the prophet.

How can a holy God use these wicked heathens to waste and destroy people more righteous than they? Are wrong and violence to continue forever? 1:12-17.

(4) **The prophet ascends his watchtower** to look over the world.

He receives the reply of Jehovah, is told the purpose of God is soon to be fulfilled, and is encouraged to wait for it, 2:1-3. Then follows the sentence that has been a watchword in the Christian church, 2:4.

(5) **Content with the new light received**, the prophet utters a series of five woes against the dishonesty (2:6) ; the covetousness (2:9) ; the bloody building enterprises (2:12) ; the debauchery (2:15) , and the idolatry (2:18-20) of the great world power.

(6) **Finally he utters a sublime prayer** (or psalm of praise) , speaking of the majesty and glory of Jehovah and declaring his unwavering trust in the divine plans, 3:1-19.

**PROMINENT PEOPLE:** Habakkuk, Chaldeans (Babylonians)

*(from "Thompson's Book Outlines", Kirkbride Bible and Technology)*