

HABAKKUK - SHORT VERSION

The prophet who questioned God

Historical context. Habakkuk prophesied shortly after Nahum and immediately before the exile 608-598BC. The Babylonians have defeated the Assyrians and are now threatening to destroy Judah where Habakkuk preaches. Habakkuk is a contemporary of Jeremiah.

Focus. As Habakkuk ponders the impending attack on Judah by the Babylonians and the violence that comes with it; he puts God “on trial.” He begins to ask the age-old questions: Why do the wicked prevail over the just? How can God allow such a situation to exist? Is God just? Is it possible that the actions of the Babylonians (called the Chaldeans in this book) are beyond the control of the God of Israel? Habakkuk asks the kinds of questions people in every age ask of God and his ways in the world.

The Colledgeville Bible Commentary states: *“Several major religious motifs thread their way through Habakkuk’s prophecy: God’s absolute trustworthiness; God’s control of the universe; our inability to understand adequately the mysterious ways of God; our failure to fathom the mysteries of the universe and the colossal struggles of nature and politics; God’s determination not to tolerate violence, begotten by pride” (p. 530).*

DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

- Dialogue between God and the prophet (Chapters 1-2)
- Habakkuk’s prayer of faith (Chapter 3)

The reader is encouraged to read chapters 1 and 2 and the commentary on them. In these chapters, the prophet questions God twice and God responds.

2:2-3 are the best known verses in this book.