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Habakkuk 2.

(2014)

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Habakkuk 2.

Topics.

- Habakkuk takes his stand to see how the LORD will answer his complaint.
- The LORD tells Habakkuk to write the vision on tablets.
- The Chaldeans are not upright, but the righteous shall live by their faith.
- The Chaldean is full of greed he gathers for himself all nations.
- Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own.
- Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high.
- Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity.
- The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD.
- Woe to him who makes his neighbours drinks and makes them drunk.
- Woe to those who pray to a wooden or stone idol.

INTRODUCTION: Habakkuk was probably written about 640–615 B.C., just before the fall of Assyria and the rise of Babylon. God used Assyria to punish Israel (722); now he would use Babylon to punish Judah. This prophecy would be fulfilled several decades after Habakkuk, in 586. The “theme question” of Habakkuk is how can God use a wicked nation such as Babylon for his divine purpose?

God judges all nations, said Habakkuk, and even Babylon would eventually be judged (Babylon fell to Persia in 539). But God’s people are held to a higher standard because they have greater revelation. Though God’s ways are sometimes mysterious, “the righteous shall live by his faith” (2:4) while awaiting salvation. These words are quoted three times in the New Testament. (Rom. 1:17) (Gal. 3:11) (Heb. 10:38).

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: “Map Locations and People of the Bible,” and the title: “Bible Dictionary” on Website Menu.

Habakkuk takes his Stand to see How the LORD will answer his Complaint.

Habakkuk 2:1 ----- ¹I (Habakkuk) will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he (the LORD) will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

Habakkuk goes to a quiet place and waits on the LORD to see how God will answer his question regarding the prosperity of the wicked and the ruin of the innocent.

In the previous chapter he asked the LORD how long will the wicked prosper over the righteous, how long will He let wicked nations conquer one nation and filled themselves with the spoil, carry and lay it up, and then proceed to fight against another kingdom and nation, and plunder it in like manner? And continue to endlessly repeat their cruel and merciless attacks and lay nations and kingdoms waste until God does something.

It appeared to Habakkuk that God prospered Israel’s enemies so that they had plenty to eat making them healthy and strong and they thanked their god for making them prosperous and then continue on their path of mercilessly killing and making war against other nations.

Habakkuk aware of the wicked around him prospering asked the LORD, "Will this cycle of nation conquering nations continue forever, will the wicked forever be allowed without interruption to enjoy the fruits of their violence without any judgment? He was puzzled how God could sit idly in heaven seeing the wicked prosper over the righteous and not do anything.

If it was today: Habakkuk would be saying, LORD why do you prosper governments, companies and businesses that lie, deceive, and oppress their employees so they can live in excessive luxury when their so called success encourages them to continue to lie, deceive and oppress their workers or go to war and bomb and bring to ruin cities and nations, killing the innocent to make even more money for themselves. After bringing these questions or thoughts to the LORD, Habakkuk then asked the LORD if He is going to continue to prosper the wicked, and allow them to carry on killing nations for their own selfish gain. This chapter is the beginning of God's answer to Habakkuk question.

The LORD tells Habakkuk to write the Vision on Tablets.

Habakkuk 2:2-3 ----- ²And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. ³For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

The LORD answers Habakkuk and tells him to write the vision that he is about to see, because its fulfilment is for a specific time in the future, (it was fulfilled after Habakkuk's had died). A vision can relate to a spectacle gazed at by the eyes or a movie played out in the mind, in most cases God gives the picture or vision then the prophet speaks or writes it in their own words. Sometimes the same biblical event or experience is spoken of as an actual and real event, while at other times the same event maybe recorded as a vision (an image or mental experience within the mind).

A biblical vision is always under God's control and can appear as a movie played out on the screen of the imagination of the mind (similar to a dream) or it may appear as a hologram appearing in the air that is actually seen by the eyes of the prophet or to whoever God chooses to give the vision to. The vision communicates the LORD'S will or future events to the prophet who then proceeds to tell the vision to the people, sometimes in their own words and at other times in the exact words the LORD has spoken to them in the vision.

The Chaldeans are Not upright, but the Righteous shall Live by their Faith.

Habakkuk 2:4 ----- ⁴"Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Chapter one shows us that the words, "Behold His" refer to the Chaldeans (Hab. 1:6) of who Babylon was the capital city. Here we are told that the heart of the Chaldean nation is pride.

NOTE: though the focus of Habakkuk's prophetic message is primarily on the Babylonians many of the principles taught throughout his message applies to any nation or individual in the same circumstances.

The righteous shall live by their faith: means regardless of how bad the situation or circumstances are surrounding the life of those who trust in the LORD they always continue to praise God and believe in His goodness and His promises of forgiveness, salvation and eternal life. For an absolutely beautiful example of this kind of faith see Habakkuk's final words at the end of chapter three.

Babylon is full of Greed he Gathers for Himself all Nations.

Habakkuk 2:5 ----- ⁵"Moreover, wine is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest. His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations and collects as his own all peoples."

The LORD likens the arrogance and greed of the Babylonians to an alcoholic drinking excess wine that not only betrays the drinker, by promising joy and instead

leads them to destruction, but also leaves them wanting more and causes them to lie and deceive (often with charm and flattery) to get what they want such is the heart of Babylon. They go from conquering one nation to another their greed for wealth, global renown and power is never satisfied.

Woe to Him who Heaps up what is Not his Own.

Habakkuk 2:6-8 ----- ⁶Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing and riddles for him, and say, "Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own—for how long?—and loads himself with pledges!" ⁷Will not your debtors suddenly arise, and those awake who will make you tremble? Then you will be spoil for them. ⁸Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

The first woe: is toward those who have cruelly and mercilessly conquered and brought to ruin others for their own gain and to those who enter into contracts and make promises they cannot keep, because eventually those they have mercilessly conquered will gather together and rise up against them and those they have entered into contracts with and made promises to will demand the debt be paid.

Woe to him who Gets evil Gain for his House, to Set his Nest on High.

Habakkuk 2:9-11 ----- ⁹"Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm! ¹⁰You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many peoples; you have forfeited your life. ¹¹For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond.

The second woe: against those who have used violence for their own selfish gain and oppressed others to enrich themselves. This is because those they have unjustly killed for their own gain will cry out for justice and the violent and those who have oppressed, killed and slaughtered to advantage their own lives will not escape judgment.

Woe to Him who Builds a Town with Blood and Finds a City on Iniquity!

Habakkuk 2:12-14 --- ¹²"Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity! ¹³Behold, is it not from the LORD of hosts that peoples labour merely for fire, and nations weary themselves for nothing? ¹⁴For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

The third woe: against those who have built their city on wickedness, meaning by war and killing and taking towns and farms of people who have worked honestly to establish them they will be judged accordingly. It is not the LORD'S will that people work and do honest labour just to have others destroy or take it from them for their own greedy and selfish gain. Though judgment is delayed at this time those who do such things will not escape it.

The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD: Israel had set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets they rebelled against the LORD they turned to other gods and entered into gross sin so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them.

The fierce armies of Babylon (the Chaldeans) invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem and pillaged the temple and took the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) into captivity later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. Israel and Judah were under Babylonian rule for seventy years. They went into captivity to Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods.

Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist.

But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

Now here is the good news: while in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd and took by His right hand to conquer the Empire of Babylon (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem.

Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again)

Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a time of prosperity and peace followed so the Habakkuk words: "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea," (Hab. 2:14) can (with limitations) apply to this period of time, because a golden age of peace for Israel followed and it was a time when all the surrounding nations of the Middle East saw the Jews with their families worshipping at the Temple and farming their land in safety and in peace.

But Habakkuk's' prophetic words are not limited to the era of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, they cannot be contained to this time of great restoration and prosperity only, rather the prophetic words of Habakkuk rest on Israel for a time, but then take up wings and soar through history and time until they arrive at their ultimate resting place when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Woe to Him who Makes his Neighbours Drink and make them drunk.

Habakkuk 2:15-17 --- ¹⁵"Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink—you pour out your wrath and make them drunk, in order to gaze at their nakedness! ¹⁶You will have your fill of shame instead of glory. Drink, yourself, and show your uncircumcision! The cup in the LORD'S right hand will come around to you, and utter shame will come upon your glory! ¹⁷The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

Lebanon; was famous for its cedar trees, their massive branches, their fragrance their height and their growth and resistance to decay, became symbols of dignity, pride and endurance. They were also famous for choice wine, the lion and the leopard. The pagan empires ruthless exploited Lebanon's resources and the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Greeks invaded it. (It is north of Israel above Tyre).

Nakedness: in this context can apply to sexual nakedness, but mostly carries the idea of exposing a person's disgrace, sins and weaknesses.

The fourth woe: is directed at people who force others to drink alcohol to excess, to get them to reveal their secrets or weakness (a common practice in ancient times inflicted on prisoners) so that they can learn their secrets and take advantage of them.

The Chaldeans would do this with their prisoner so they could take advantage of their enemies in battle, but the LORD says, instead of success the Babylonians will have utter shame. He will judge them according to all the people they have killed in war and the destruction they have done to the earth.

Woe to those who Pray to a Wooden or Stone Idol.

Habakkuk 2:18-20 ---- ¹⁸"What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies? For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols! ¹⁹Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake; to a silent stone, Arise! Can this teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in it. ²⁰But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

This is a good example of the absolute stupidity of worshipping idols. The living Bible says something like this: "A man cuts down a tree and chops some of it up to build a house, some for furniture and some for fire wood and then from the same wood he carves an idol, covers it with some gold and bows down and worships it, "O stupid man can't you see it's just a block of wood." To believe that one can profit by praying to something one has made from wood or stone and trusting it to answer is the epitome of human foolishness.

An Idol cannot hear, speak, stand up, teach or breath it is simply a wooden block or a carved stone. In contrast to this the invisible, immortal Almighty God is the source of all life and creator of all things including the idols, in the sense that it was God who created the tree and the stone that the idol was made from.

The LORD is in his Holy Temple, has the following three aspects: -

1. The LORD'S presence was in the Holy of Holies in the Temple.
2. The LORD'S presence is in the heavenly Temple.
3. The LORD'S presence is in the heart of the faithful and those who trust in Him.

Let all the earth keep silence before God: means don't do anything that offends the LORD or that stirs up His wrath, like worshipping blocks of wood or the wicked and cruel things the Chaldeans have done to decent and innocent people, so that they would increase their power and renown and increase their riches and wealth.

The fifth woe: is to all who put their trust in idols, because they will stand before the immortal, invisible Almighty God of all creation who sits in His Holy Temple and their idols will have no power to save them.

SUMMARY: though Habakkuk's five woes are primarily directed toward to the Chaldeans (Babylonians), the following summary of them show that by extension they can be applied to all humanity in general.

1. Woe to those who heap up what is not their own and load themselves with pledges. (Hab. 2:6-8). Today this would read; woe to those who borrow extremely excessive amounts of money (especially on credit cards) and sign contracts to pay it back so that they can purchase what is not theirs"
2. Woe to those who get evil gain for their house, to set their nest on high to be safe from the reach of harm, meaning woe to those who cheat and lie, steal to set up their homes. (Hab. 2:9-11). Today this would read woe to those who acquire a home by dishonesty or by cheating someone else out of what is rightfully theirs"
3. Woe to those who build a town with blood, and establish a city on iniquity. (Hab. 2:12-13). Today this would read woe to leaders of countries, who for their own selfish gain establish the wealth and prosperity of their nation by going to war against another.
4. Woe to those who uses their power to exalt themselves by making their neighbour suffer and forcing them to poverty and oppression, exposing their weakness's (nakedness). (Hab. 2:15-17). Today this would read; "Woe to secular or religious leaders who use their authority and power to exalt themselves and use physical force or guilt, fear and oppression to bring their followers to poverty, so that they can be rich"
5. Woe to those who trust and pray to a wooden or stone idol that they have created with their own hands and expect it to awake, arise and answer their prayers (Hab. 2:19-20). Today this would read; "Woe to anyone who worships anything the LORD God has created in contrast to worshipping God the creator of all things Himself.

The LORD'S answer to Habakkuk's question in chapter one (why do the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper?) is given in this chapter. The LORD tells Habakkuk the wicked and unrighteous will both have moments of suffering until the appointed time of judgment when everyone will be judged accordingly and eternity begins in all its royal glory and majestic fullness.

But until that time the righteous are to live by faith (Hab. 2:4). God does not try to justify Himself to anyone who questions the lack of justice in our mortal and corrupt world today and what seems to be unfair to our natural way of thinking, but instead reassures the faithful that they are to live by faith (meaning they are to trust God regardless of their circumstances good or bad) and have confidence that the wicked will pay their due at the appointed time.

End.