Bible Synthesis IV

OVERVIEW OF HABAKKUK

In this little book is found the theme verse of the entire Bible relating to man's justification before a holy God, that is Hab. 2:4. Job asked the question, "how should a man be just with God?" (Job 9:2) Habakkuk answers, "the just shall live by his faith." Paul, the great Apostle, picks up these words and interprets them to us. He uses this verse as the subject verse of three of his New Testament writings:

Romans (1:17), Galatians (3:11), and Hebrews (10:38) echo this truth. In Romans it is "the ***just*** shall live by faith." In Galatians it is "the just ***shall live*** by faith." And in Hebrews it is "the just shall live ***by faith***." This truth, as quoted in Romans 1:17, is the truth which gripped the heart of Martin Luther and caused him to be a leader in the reformation in Europe.

Habakkuk ("embrace") loved God. Nothing is known of him, or of his life, other than the single verse (Hab. 1:1), and the fact that he wrote this book. Needless to say, there has been much speculation about him, as men are wont to do. One certainty is that Habakkuk is the "prophet of faith."

"It is recounted that many years ago a select literary circle was gathered in Paris to hear the 18th Century author and politician, Benjamin Franklin, read a story. When he had finished reading there was unanimous and loud acclamation. The distinguished man of letters had read the book of Habakkuk, which not one of the circle had read before." —Eric W. Hayden

Habakkuk prophesied just before the Babylonian captivity. He announced that captivity. Habakkuk had two problems, both of which are stated in chapter 1:

1. Why didn't God judge Judah's sin?

2. Why should God use Babylon, which was a more wicked nation than Judah to judge it?

Instead of complaining, Habakkuk took his questions to the LORD.

OUTLINE OF HABAKKUK

• *Habakkuk 1:*

1. The Prophet's Complaint —Hab. 1:1–4

• Regarding Unjudged Sin in Judah

— Here we see ***"Faith's sighing"***

• This is PROBLEM #1.

- Habakkuk sees all of the unpunished sin in Judah: He saw the "burden."

"Salting the Oats"

Habakkuk 1:1–4 — How does Habakkuk present his first problem to the LORD?

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"Salting the Oats"

How does this relate to our nation today?

Habakkuk 1:5–11 — How does God reply to Habakkuk's first problem?

- His questions:

(1. How long shall I cry? —1:2

- Thou wilt not hear!
- He is crying out of violence.
- God will not save from that violence!

(2. Why does God show him iniquity? —1:3

- There is grievance, spoiling and violence, and those who raise up strife and contention.

(3. There is no justice —1:4

- (T)he Law is slacked
- Judgment (in the sense of justice) never goes forth (that is, God does not judge them) …
- Wrong judgment "proceedeth"

2. The LORD's Reply —1:5–11

- Judgment Will Come Through the Chaldeans

- This is ANSWER #1.
  - God will punish by means of the fearsome Chaldeans.

1. "You will not believe it!" —1:5

- Behold among the heathen (That is where the judgment will come from.)
- The work will be in his days.
- He would not believe even though he is told about it.

2. The Nature and methods of the Chaldeans —1:6–11

- A "bitter and hasty nation" —1:6
  - They shall march through the land.
  - They shall possess the dwellingplaces.
- Terrible and dreadful —1:7
  - Basically indicating that they were a law unto themselves: "their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves." [Again, judgment refers to *just* judgment] They have their own sense of right and wrong.
- Swift and fierce —1:8
  - Horses swifter than leopards.
  - They are more fierce than evening wolves.
  - Their horsemen shall spread themselves (there will be many spread abroad).
  - They will be in a hurry (like a hungry eagle).
- Violent —1:9
- Powerful — they will scoff and scorn at princes and kings —1:10
  - They will deride every strong hold (fortress). They shall heap dust (set up a mound) and take it.

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- Imputing his power to his God —1:11
  - That was a serious mistake. See Dan. 1:2, where he put the vessels. See also Dan. 3:1 and Nebuchadnezzar's great image which he insisted that all men should worship. Then see Dan. 4:30. But then God humbled him.

3. The Prophet's Complaint —1:12–2:1

- Against the Wickedness of the Chaldeans

- PROBLEM #2:
  - Why does God judge by means of a cruel nation (Chaldea)? This is answered in chapter 2.

1. The LORD's attributes —1:12–13
   (1) A great statement of God's eternity —1:12a
   (2) A great statement of God's holiness —1:13a
   (3) Would such a pure God tolerate the sins of Babylon? —1:13b
2. The fishing of the Chaldeans —1:14–17
   - They make men as fish —1:14
   - They fish with hook, net, and drag —1:15
   - But, they sacrifice to their net (etc.) — meaning that they worship their weapons —1:16
     - Also a very dangerous thing to do (cf. 1:11).
   - They continually empty their net and take others captive in it —1:17

- *Habakkuk 2:*

  •Habakkuk will watch to see what the LORD will say to him (reproof) and what he would answer —2:1
  - Then notice 2:2: He may run with the news.

4. The LORD's Reply —2:2–20

- Judgment Will Come to the Chaldeans Too

- ANSWER #2
  - This chapter is characterized as: "Faith's Seeing."

1. A waiting prophet (see 2:1) —2:2–3
   - He was to write the vision plainly upon tables —2:2a
     - So that he may run with the news —2:2b
   - God's time ("wait for it") —"it will surely come" —2:3
     - Cf. Heb. 10:36–38 where a similar idea is expressed (including Hab. 2:4, however).
2. Justification —2:4
   - The soul of the Chaldeans is lifted up —2:4a

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"Salting the Oats"

Habakkuk 1:12–17 — How does Habakkuk present his second problem to the LORD?

How does this relate to us today?

Habakkuk 2:1 — What does Habakkuk purpose to do concerning his question?

Habakkuk 2:2–5 — What vital counsel does God give us here for receiving His leadership?

"Salting the Oats"

Habakkuk 2:6–20 — What five "woes" upon iniquity are given here?

- But "the just shall live by faith" —2:4b
  - Re. Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38

3. The Chaldeans are proud and insatiable —2:5

4. Five "woes" upon iniquity —2:6–20

(1) Woe to the spoilers —2:6–8
- Speaking of the ill-gotten gain of the Chaldeans.
- The Babylonians will be spoiled —2:8

(2) Woe to the covetous —2:9–11
- The self-exalting: "that he may set his nest on high" —2:9b
- Thinking that such would furnish security from attack —2:9c
- Their sin: "cutting off many people" —2:10
- Even the stones and timbers of their own houses will testify against them —2:11

(3) Woe to him that builds with blood and iniquity —2:12–14
- The Chaldeans built a mighty empire with blood and iniquity —2:12
- The plans of those who oppose God shall fail —2:13
- The Chaldean empire shall fail, but a far greater Kingdom shall be established (the Millennium) in which "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the LORD" —2:14

(4) Woe to the one who gives drink to his neighbor —2:15–17
- True of Chaldea and Judah, and as well, the U.S.A.
- The end of this is shame —2:15c–16
- Chaldea will be judged with violence —2:17
  - They will bring such violence upon Judah, and will suffer it themselves.

(5) Woe to the idol maker —2:18–20
- What profit is there in the idol? —2:18
- He makes it and then attributes life to it, but it is dead! —2:19
- ***But*** in contrast to the idol, God is alive! —2:20
  - He is in His holy temple!
  - Man must be silent before such a LORD. We must listen, and we must obey Him.

- *Habakkuk 3:*

5. The Prophet's Prayer for Revival —3:1–19

- And the Expression of His Supreme Faith in the LORD

- A psalm of absolute and sublime trust in the LORD. This is a prayer which was set to music and sung in the Jewish services after the return from Babylonian exile.

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- Notice the occurrence of "Selah" in this chapter. It is a song sung by the prophet. "Selah" — 3:3, 9, 13. It is a musical notation, a musical rest, a shift of mood. Whenever it appears it conveys the idea of, "think of that!" And here, in Habakkuk, think of that each time it appears!

1. The glory of the LORD —3:1–3
   - The prayer of Habakkuk the Prophet —3:1
     - Shigio´noth — "probably musical instruments" (*New Scofield Reference Bible*). This is unknown for certain.
   - His prayer (3:2–3):
     (1. His conviction — "I have heard thy speech and was afraid" —
     (2. His petition — "… revive thy work in the midst of the years … in wrath remember mercy" —
   - His glory —3:3
     - Teman — The southern portion of Edom. Here used for Idumea (Edom) generally.
     - Paran — a wilderness region located in the east central region of the Sinai peninsula. It was bordered on the east by the Gulf of Aqabah.
     - His glory covered the heavens …
     - The earth was full of His praise …
2. God's great power —3:4–7
   - His brightness and power —3:4
   - His judgment —3:5–7
     - Pestilence and fire went before Him. —3:5
     - His immensity and power —3:6
     - Cushan — The people of Cush, Ethiopians. Speaking of a nomadic people. Their tents were in affliction. —3:6a
     - Midian — Located along the Red Sea across from Ethiopia — also nomads. —3:6b
3. Why He judged nature —3:8–16
   - Here he gives an account of past history.
   - Was his displeasure and wrath against the rivers and the sea? —3:8
     - Rivers refers to the Jordan (Josh. 3:15–17).
     - Sea refers to the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:13–31).
     - He rode upon His horses and His "chariots of salvation." Chariots of Salvation??? Yes, He saved them.
   - Historical events highlighted (3:9–15):
     - Naked bow — He fought for them —3:9a
       According to the oaths of the tribes (God's oaths to the 12 tribes??). He keeps His Word!
     - Mountains trembled — earthquakes —3:10a
     - Water passed by — flood of Noah —3:10b
     - The sun and moon stood still (Josh. 10:12–14) —3:11

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"Salting the Oats"

Habakkuk 3— What subjects are sung about in this song to God?

OR

From the example of Habakkuk's song here what should our songs of praise to God include?

"Salting the Oats"

- He marched through the land, judging the heathen, and delivering the land to Israel —3:12
- It was for the salvation of His people —3:13
- His part in the crossing of the Red Sea —3:15

• Habakkuk is conscious of His sinfulness —3:16
- With this, compare Dan. 10:8; Isa. 6:5 …
- He will rest confidently in the day of invasion.

4. His confidence in God —3:17–19

• Though all be destroyed —by the Chaldeans —3:17

• He will rejoice in the LORD — Joy "in the God of my salvation" —3:18
- He believes in the salvation of God — FUTURE! Israel will be restored.
- See "salvation" in 3:8 which refers to the crossing of the Jordan and the Red Sea. He is looking back at the history which he has recounted (3:9–15).

• What his God is to him —3:19
- The LORD God is his strength.
- Also, He enables (makes his feet like hind's feet). This speaks of fleetness of feet and sureness of feet.

• See the musical notation here — it is a psalm.

END OF HABAKKUK

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