


HABAKKUK

JUSTIFICATION

&

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HABAKKUK

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INTRODUCTION 1

The uplifted burden which Habakkuk the prophet saw.

(1) *He enjoyed the favour of seeing*

(2) *He saw it mentally or with prophetic insight*

(3) *He contemplated it or carried it through his life.*

(4) *He elected to act upon and bear it*

(5) *He felt it deeply in his soul*

The prophet's name means "an embrace" from the idea of "folding the arms" but whereas such action is a sign of idleness this use is a sign of "affection."

HABAKKUK'S HEBREW POETRY

Dr Driver commented "The Prayer of Habakkuk as a lyric ode for sublimity of poetic conception and splendour of diction ranks with the finest of Hebrew poetry"

HABAKKUK PLEADS FOR JUSTICE & THEOCRACY

2-4

O Lord please shall I still keep on crying for help [*Piel of [wv "continue to cry"]*] but you do not hear or act in response? I cried out to you [*q[z "to cry in pain"]*] "violence" and you did not cause salvation? Why will you have me see evil ahead and expect [*fjbt*] travail mischief or sorrow? Both destruction and violence belong to my declaration or are in my presence and strife continues and the man of contention or ruling or testifying will be a burden. For this reason Torah will cease to act and justification does not spring up or prove fruitful permanently or completely! *Habakkuk is aware that the law is come into disrepute and there is no "victory" for right over wrong on a regular basis.*

GOD'S ANSWER -WATCH MY FOREIGN POLICY 5

Look prophetically at the Gentile nations and regard them with hope[*wfybh "expectation of action"*] and wonder or be amazed-they are astonishing [*hmt surprising "a miracle"*] for I am working a work in the days your are all living in that none of you would believe if it will have been related as history or written down as historical fact. *Clearly it would be credible after the event but if written before it would not be believed.*

CHALDEA FROM SUMERIAN DAYS (2900B.C.) TO 610 B.C.-A FIERCE NATION 6-10

For look towards me as I raise up the Chaldeans – the bitter and impetuous or precipitate nation that walks over the spacious earth as it were its own to occupy inhabited places which don't belong to it. They are terribly formidable and fearful. Its justice [*fpm*] and its confident rectitude [*hvn*] come from itself alone. Their horses are swifter than leopards and sharper or fiercer than wolves of the evening and their horse riders leap proud and fierce – indeed their horsemen come from far-flung lands. They fly as the eagle hastening to devour. They are all come for violence; the longings their faces [*G W Wade "the strains of their faces is ever forward"-testimony to unswerving pursuit of their goal*] is to surprise violently and they gather prisoners as sand. He has scorned kings and princes are a laugh to him. He will laugh at any fortification and will heap up earthworks and will capture it. *Habakkuk who wrote about 610 B.C. is drawing attention to a very simple siege practice of using the "dust" of the earth to bring down the finest of bulwarks. Had it not been for the angel of the LORD and a possible plague of mice that ate the shields and arrow flights Jerusalem which the Assyrian laughed at might well have fallen in the time of Hezekiah.*

THE LORD'S INDICTMENT IS SPIRITUAL 11

Since that ancient time the spirit (of the nation) has flourished and revived and passed over but he is guilty of this trespass-his strength belongs to his god. Nabu was the god of wisdom and science who with Ishtar the goddess of love and war were worshipped. *It is in this spiritual area that the divine indictment comes.*

HABAKKUK'S PRAYER No.2

(1) Are you not from ancient time O Yahweh My God My Holy One – **we** will not die. [*The Jews allege that the original text was "You shall not die" -changed out of respect for God*] *The tremendous implication of "You (God) shall not die" is clear. God who was from eternity did die in the person of our LORD Jesus Christ but the original text remains clear – He rose again gloriously "in the power of an endless life"*

(2) O LORD You set them up to bring about judgment

(3) And O my Rock You founded or decreed him to smite (us).

(4) Your eyes are better than the prophetic sightings of evil and you are not able to expect or look at vexatious mischief or wrong-doing. [*Im*] so why are You able to look at those who are treacherous or cloaked in violence [*dgb*]. Why are you silent or keeping still at the destruction by the wicked of those more righteous than he? For you made man like the fish of the sea – as sea creatures that have no ruler. The (Chaldeans) fish them all up with a hook they drag them up with their net and gather them in their snare or fishing net. Therefore they are exultant and dance around. For that reason they sacrifice to their net [the god of Nineveh was a "fish god"; the god of the Scythians was the "scimitar"(Herodotus 4.62) but that of Chaldea was a "net" or "allurement" [*possibly Ishtar "God of love"*] and burn incense to their fishing net for through these their lot is made rich and fat and their eating wonderful. On this account will they empty their net so as to slaughter nations? Will he not have mercy?

CHAPTER 2

HABAKKUK'S WILL TO WAIT 1

I will stand to minister at my station of the watchman [*רמ"מ* may also mean "prison". *Habakkuk is faithful to his prophetic ministry day by day*] and I will have settled myself or stood a conqueror at my watch-tower to see the prophecy which He will speak for the promised future to me and what I will respond on my contention that I have shown (to God)

THE LORD'S SECOND ANSWER 2-3

The LORD answered me and said "Write a vision and keep explaining it or engraving it on **tablets...** [*ג'מ*] were generally graven wood or stone tablets which would be used not in a sort of academy but in public places much like the texts Sister Basilea Schlink had engraven on steel and placed at historic sites of Christian pilgrimage.]....in order that he who runs may proclaim (it) aloud. [*ח"מ* refers regularly to "a courier" or "one running for refuge"] The best understanding might be that chosen couriers much like Wycliffe's preachers carried these inscribed messages through the nation so that they might be read or even explained to the people. It is suggested that Habakkuk had such writings written and displayed in the Jerusalem of his day as a kind of forerunner of the bill-board. The word "read" *ח"מ* is used in the sense of "recite" or "proclaim" or "publish" For the vision is still for a set year or festival time. It will utter the truth or be fragrant or hasten [like the couriers] to the harvest or towards the end [*ח"מ* intimates a "prophetic event or a visitation of destruction"] It will not lie. If it continue to delay or linger or refuse to go away keep waiting for it for it will definitely come. It will not be behind time.

EVE IS PROUD ADAM IS CROOKED-BUT BY FAITH COMES RIGHTEOUSNESS 4

Behold she is arrogant presumptuous climber and his soul in him is not straight or just **but the righteous will live (as the LORD lives) by his faith.** *Because the feminine is used and the masculine immediately subsequent there is some obscurity in the text. If we remember that the texts were to be written clearly for the purpose of telling the populace the mystery is dispelled. God is speaking to the woman and man in the street. The woman by pride and the man by crooked ways show themselves sinners but the way of faith is open to all. This verse was taken up by the Bohemian Swiss and English Reformation movement following the teaching of Martin Luther on "Faith Alone" for salvation. It was the apostle Paul who highlighted and popularized the concept in Romans 1.17 & Galatians 3.11 in both of which places he quotes Habakkuk. Luther for his part studied and taught this truth most avidly from Galatians and thus brought about a sea-change in theological thinking worldwide.*

THE DRUNKARD / GLUTTON/ SOCIALITE 5

And definitely when wine covers up or is treacherous a haughty man also will not rest – the man who puffs up his soul or enlarges himself (by eating) as Sheol and he is as dead and he will not be satisfied. He also gathers all nations to himself and collects all the peoples to him. Will not all these lift up a proverb against him and with enigmas and riddles they will say to him?

THE FIRST WRITTEN WOE 6-8

"Woe to the one who grows great by what is not his own. How long can it go on? And he who loads himself with pledges. Will not those who exact interest rise up – those who constantly agitate or cause concern awake and you will be for those who plunder? Because you have stripped and spoiled many nations all the people who remain will plunder you from the shedding of human blood and violence against earth the city and all the dwellers in the city.

THE SECOND WRITTEN WOE 9-11

Woe the constant plunderer or he who gains unjustly for his own house to set his nest on high to deliver himself from the hand of calamity. *The Chaldeans as Jeremiah also testifies in 51.53* You have taken counsel in shame for your house – destruction of many people and have sinned or wronged your soul for **the stone from the wall will cry out and the holding joists of wood will answer the stone.**

THE THIRD WRITTEN WOE 12-14 UNIVERSAL FAITH WILL COME

Woe to the man who builds a city through bloodshed and the founder of a town by unrighteous dealing [1#] Behold is it not from the LORD of Hosts that peoples weary and gain fruit of earnings in enough fire or through enough fire and they will weary them with sufficient empty things **for the earth will be filled for the purpose of knowing the glory of the LORD intimately as the waters will cover the sea** like a garment. *This classic promise intimates that the earth we live in for the millennium will be one with a giant seaboard which will command the total oceanic space as the intimate knowledge of the LORD will cover the landmasses of the earth.*

THE FOURTH WRITTEN WOE 15-18

Woe to the one who plies his neighbour with drink (as a butler) continually pouring out your wrath or being prepared for intercourse [tmj] and definitely plying drink in order to look on their nakedness. You will be satisfied with disgrace far from glory. You also – drink and nakedness and foreskin will roll on you or circumcision will change. The cup in the right hand of the LORD will come upon you and total disgrace upon your glory. For your violence concerning Lebanon will cover you or obliterate you and destruction by wild animals will cause you to be broken in fear and distress – because you shed human blood and violence done against the land the city and all that dwell in it. *The Chaldeans harvested lumber and hunted deer in the Lebanon forests but in so doing paid the penalty of the savagery of wild beasts.*

What is the profit of an idol when he who gives it form carves it out? It is a fusing or "pouring out" and a teacher or Torah of deceit for the carver trust in it making dumb idols.

THE FIFTH WRITTEN WOE 19

Woe to the one who speaks to wood "Awake from death or sleep" [xwq] and to dumb stone "Rouse yourself to watch" [rw/] Can it teach law? Behold it is captured by or bound in or set in gold and silver. There is not a breath in the middle of its body. But the living LORD is in His holy temple. All the earth be silent before His face.

CHAPTER 3

AN APPEAL FOR THE LORD TO REVEAL HIMSELF PLAINLY 1-2

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shiginoth. *This is a prayer which may be also a hymn or reel -an extolling or celebration of the LORD – some cite the second temple as the background of the composition but of this there is no need and the theory is purely speculative.* LORD I have heard your answer or call and summons. LORD I have been in dread of your undertaken tasks.

- (1) In the midst of the years continue to give life [or "revive" or "renew"].
- (2) In the midst of the years cause You to be made known.
- (3) In disquiet fury or anger may you remember mercy.

THE GREAT MESSIANIC PROPHECY OF HABAKKUK 3-4

Eloah [*The strong one*] will come from Teman; and the Holy One from Mount Peran.

Pause

His majestic beauty covers the heavens and his praise fills the earth. Moreover **His**

splendour or light

giving [hgn] will be as daylight or morning light (or) the splendour of **shafts or horns**

of light from his arms will be as morning light and there the covering or veil of

strength will be. *Two things are being said in one revelation of the coming Messiah.*

First, He will arrive from the south at his glorious coming pushing against the southern flank of Israel's enemies. He will be recognizable by His arms which will bear shining centres of powerful light comparable to the morning sun from the veil of His flesh. This in itself is good enough to prophecy the incarnation of the Messiah. His strength is seen to be in His continued life after death of which the glorious marks in His flesh give testimony.

PREVIEW OF THE TIME BEFORE MESSIAH RETURNS – cf SHAKING OF THE EARTH 5-7

- (1) Before his face death's destruction's word walks;
- (2) Lightning or burning fever goes before his feet.
- (3) He stands to minister
- (4) And **will have moved or shaken** the earth.
- (5) He looks and **will have caused the shaking** [*rtn – fluttering or "shaking off of the yoke" of nations*]
- (6) Mountains continuing during man's existence [*d[]*] will have scattered [*xnp-shattered in pieces or scattered*]
- (7) Hills of age-long duration will stoop down or fall down in worship.
- (8) His are ancient goings.

Four times no less Habakkuk testifies to the "shaking" of the latter days that is referred to in the NT and numerous times in the Old Testament. (cf Isaiah 13.13 (Ezek 38.19) Joel 3.16 & Haggai 2.6 & 2.21 with Heb12.26 & Mt24.29, Mark 13.25, Lk21.26) I have counted 12 references in all.

HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND GOD'S WRATH O THE LAST DAYS? 8-18

*The prophecy of Habakkuk is not just a useful documentation of the truth of "justification by faith" which the Church Reform movement of the 16th century grasped. With the same fervour the church ought to grasp the full-orbed truth of our LORD Jesus and His emergent kingdom which upon his advent will be the joy of the whole earth at His coming. Truth to tell Christianity has become immured in the world and affianced to Western Culture and it seems like the fast approaching event of the "Catching Away" and the subsequent unveiling [*αποκαλυψις*] of **the Kingdom fully realized** has been permanently put on the back burner. A rude awakening awaits if we like the 5 foolish virgins to continue unready.*

I have seen the dwellings of Cushan (Ethiopia or Africa) under calamity or adverse circumstance

the curtains of the land of Midian will be perturbed with anger or grief. **Is your anger O LORD which is against the rivers kindled with the rivers on the one hand or Your overwhelming or passing throughout with the sea when you ride on your horses of your chariots of Yeshua or salvation?** *The importance of the question is not just for the comfort of the prophet B.C. but for the guidance of the believer A.D. Like the old world the world of the latter days would develop significant divisions between the West and the Arab world of the Mid-East and Africa in which the famous river civilizations of Egypt – on the Nile and Babylon – on the Euphrates would represent one part. Was the LORD only angry with the Chaldeans and Egyptians or with the whole earth in past times? Is the LORD only angry with the whole world – including the civilizations developed in the supposedly Christian West today? With whom will the returning Messiah struggle? As ever prophecy has historic and up-to-date relevance!*

- (1) You emptied the sheath of your bow – seven rods – saying think **SELAH** – rivers divide the earth.
- (2) The mountains see You and tremble or writhe.
- (3) Violent overwhelming water passes over;

- (4) The deep gives its call; it lifts its power [literally "arms"] high.
- (5) The habitation of sun-moon stands still for the lightning of your arrows
- (6) They will march to the splendour of the lightning of your encampment or spear.
- (7) In indignation **He** will chase or pass through the earth, in anger he will tread down the nations.
- (8) **You are coming belonging to deliverance of your people; belonging to the deliverance of your Anointed One.** *This expression may read in the sense of Israel's deliverance which is linked to the work and intervention of Messiah Yeshua*
- (9) You dash or bruise by crushing the head (Rosh) of the house of the wicked and make him bare or empty from a foundation to a small (power) – think of that. **SELAH**
- (10) You curse or hammer **Rosh** with his own rod or sceptre. *We see the ironic "hammer" which was emblazoned on the flag of the people prophecy calls "the head of the nations"*
- (11) His rulers will toss as a tempest or scatter to overflow me or dispense me abroad-rejoicing as in the swallowing of the poor by ambush [rts] *It may be that the impoverished Russian Jewish Diaspora is in the mind of God in this prophecy.*
- (12) You march Your horses in the sea agitating or fermenting great waters. *[The massive wave power of the sea may picture the great military sea power of the last days ranged against Rosh]*
- This then is the answer to Habakkuk's prayer. A massive end-time conflict will emerge in which the world will be involved and the sea in two manners – first as world powers are drawn into conflict and second as the conflict brings about sea engagements.*

HABAKKUK FEARS INVASION BUT TRUSTS IN THE LORD 16-19

I heard and tummy trembled; my lips quivered at the voice. Rot entered my bones and instead or on account of the voice or under these circumstances I will tremble or be disquieted because I will rest [hna from jm "to wait cf Noah-Habakkuk feels he must do a "Noah" but the word "rest" suggests that like Daniel the events in God's answer are very far distant – not the Chaldean or Assyrian approach but the events of the end-times spoken about. Habakkuk will see neither the destruction of the city of Jerusalem nor the ultimate end of human government and evil empire] as to the day of adversity coming upon the people that will invade or disturb or render us fugitives. [dm]

THE FAMOUS PETHERICK TEXT

In 1666 during the great fire of London and the plague when this businessman lost all-his family by plague and his warehouses in the fire besides he continued to rejoice with Habakkuk in the LORD because he was saved by the grace of God. It is ultimately Salvation that is so precious-that is the last word of Habakkuk.

For the fig tree may not be fruitful and though on the vines there will be no produce; though the work and fruit of the olive wastes or fails and the fields create nothing to eat and the flock be cut in two or diminished [rzg] from the sheepfold and no cattle in the stalls still I will exult [zl ["to leap and dance"]] in the LORD and I will exult in a circle or in my generation [lyg] in the God of **MY SALVATION**—Yahweh my Lord, my

strength. He makes my feet as a deer's feet and causes me to walk or **make my way up into my high places**. For the director of song on Neginoth-*for strings or for the harp*. *This great song of joy and pathos would be accompanied by a harpist. It would be immensely touching to hear the Hebrew poetry sung to the deep melodious harp – a see a sole instrumentalist play as the prophet sang and danced amid the failed harvest and decimated herds -determined to rejoice in his day despite hard times and to leave the future in the hands of the God of salvation who would conquer Israel's last enemies and bring His kingdom in to replace the thrones of men.*

THE END