

Habakkuk Intro & Background Pt. 2

Habakkuk 1:1-2, CBC December 6, 2023 From the Squalor

1:1 oracle—burden—often speaking of judgment/doom, here, focus on divine revelation in dialogue b/n Habakkuk and God—feel the burden/weight as Habakkuk starts with “How long”; **who is Habakkuk?** (Conjecture, nothing more); **we must take him for his job, not for breadth of knowledge about his person**—spokesperson for the Lord, bearer of God’s message; asked, **are you okay being known this way as a Christian—by your identity and mission?** OR is our service to the Lord, our hope/joy dependent on acceptance, freedom to express self, appreciated, understanding—you need these things, but **they come foundationally from God and that takes work—Habakkuk’s dialogue with God shows the messy work of what goes on for him to be faithful to that calling; though we don’t know Habakkuk, we do know his surroundings**—(specifically, reign of Jehoiakim of Judah (609-597), II Kings 23:36-24:7, Jeremiah 22:13-19, 26:1, 35:1; II Chronicles 36; **but need background for why it would be a surprise for the Chaldeans to judge Judah** (b/n Delaware and Connecticut in size); Assyria had been rising world power moving empire westward since the reign of **Adad-nirari II (911-891)** (frame of reference **Jehoshaphat in Judah & Ahab king of Israel** around 873 BC). By the time of **Shalmaneser III (858-824)**, clear that Assyria was seeking to take over entire western world (got as far as 100 miles from Damascus, then stopped—went back & picked up Babylon in 850, then came back and besieged Damascus in 841; **Jehu, king of Israel**, paid heavy tribute to Assyria and were left alone for 100 years; **Jonah**—somewhere b/n 782-753 forgiveness, redemption; **Ahaz of Judah** (735-716), prophet **Micah** during this time; asked Assyria for help II Ki. 16:2-9, Is. 7:1-17, 8:4-8 b/c Israel and Syria sought to fight against Judah b/c they wouldn’t side w them against Assyria; Israel falls to Assyria in 722; in Judah, **Hezekiah 715-687 BC** big revival starting w Hezekiah himself & moving toward wiping out idolatry & apostasy, **II Ki. 18:7**, Hezekiah rebels against Assyria & stops paying tribute; sometime after 705, Sennacherib comes to power and comes after Judah, **II Ki. 18:13, 17** only escapes because of God’s intervention II Ki. 19, destroying the Assyrian army); God granted 15 yrs. after sickness, but showed ALL riches to ambassadors from Babylon Is. 39:3-8, II Ki. 20:12ff., **II Chron. 32:30-31; Is. 39:5-8 Manasseh (687-642)**—evil reign begun at 12, 10 yrs. W dad, 45 years alone afterwards II Ki. 21:1; introducing sacred prostitution & human sacrifice; even putting Asherah in the holy temple **II Ki. 21:2-7** (time of big push by Assyrians into Egypt—Assyria destroys Egyptian capital Thebes in 663, around this time, **Nahum** at greatest point of Assyrian conquest speaks of Ninevah’s fall (ministered 650-620) probably before people realized that Babylonia would do it; Manasseh II Chron. 33:10-13 deported to Babylon by the Assyrians, repented & restored to Jerusalem—building projects and some religious reforms; son **Amon (642-640)** turned away from God, assassinated by own servants at age 24 II Ki. 21:19-23, II Chron. 33:20-24, **Josiah (640-609)** 8 yr. old king II Ki. 22:1, prob. Married at 13, child at 14 (Jehoiakim), by 16, known as following God II Chron. 34:3—using words of II Chron. 7:14, vv. 4-7, **early purge occurred in 12th year of reign when 20**, II Kings 22:8-20, 628 BC, **one year before death of mighty Ashurbanipal in 627—who had forced Manasseh to support in fight against Egypt**; not only cleaned out idols in south, went into north which had already been captured by Assyrians (this put him on wrong side of mighty Assyrians at 20; standing against religious/social/political system that had dominated for some 60 years); when Ashurbanipal died in 627, ended 100 year period of Assyrian domination of people in Palestine Robertson, p. 9 **this BEFORE** discovery around age 26, around 621 BC??? **II Chron. 34:8, 14-15**, found scroll in temple (probably all or part of Deuteronomy) (praise God for sovereignty of some obedient priest hiding it) (**II Chron. 35 v. 18**, —great Passover feast; “Because she was a vassal of Egypt and a friend of Babylon, it seemed as if nothing could threaten the progress of Judah’s prosperity” CJ Barber in Kenneth Barker NAC, p. 246 — period of 625-575BC these are days of **Nahum, Zephaniah (636-623, 627), Habakkuk (prophetic career—612-589 Logos Timeline??, 630? 621-609, to 605?), and Jeremiah (627-574, 580)**—but it is also the period where Judah loses life and religious center, Assyria fades, Babylon takes over Babylon growing—**Nabopolassar** becomes king of Babylonia in **626 (626-605 king)**—**turning point & writing on wall for Assyria—Ninevah fell in 612 to Babylonia & Medes**; Egypt tries to come to Assyria’s aid, but held back by Josiah of Judah, but dies in Megiddo in battle in **609 II Chron. 35:20-27**, this was landmark time—referred to in **Zech. 12:10-11** 100 years later upon Israel’s restoration; then **II Chron. 36, II Kings 23:29-30** people chose Josiah’s son Jehoahaz king probably b/c thought would stand against Egypt—lasted for 3 months, then Neco took him in chains to Egypt where he died according to Jeremiah’s prophecy Jer. 22:10-11, then Neco placed Josiah’s eldest son by another wife, **Jehoiakim 609-597** wicked, set up by Egyptians—one who burned Jeremiah’s scroll in Jer. 36, **Jer. 22:18-19** promised him the burial of a donkey; **about 4 years into his wicked reign, Assyrians retreat west to Carchemish on the upper Euphrates**. Eugene Merrill notes, “**Relentlessly the Babylonian armies took up the pursuit and in 605, under their brilliant commander and crown prince Nebuchadnezzar, crushed the Assyrian remnant once and for all**” p. 441; this sealed Babylon’s place as new power, also knocked Egyptians out of Palestine; But Judah’s fall is imminent—**Nebuchadnezzar’s first invasion in 605 (Daniel & many nobles taken)**, second in 597 (Ezekiel & 10,000 others), 586 final destruction; **Massive shift**—almost 300 years of domination by Assyria; Egypt stable but not big power; Babylon on the move (Iraq); in background, the Medes & Persians in highlands of Iran are on move; sets foundation for what see in **Hab. 1:1-4** seems to be during reign of Jehoiakim, after fall of Ninevah in 612 b/c Ninevah not mentioned but before fall of Egypt at Carchemish in 605 when Babylons power and intent fully seen by those observing—Hab. 1:5, **Give thoughts as think of what we’ve started to memorize & this background—what are your thoughts about nations, God’s people, righteousness and judgment from eternal perspective? What do you learn about God and His ways? 1. God brings respite even while movement toward impending judgment. Use it wisely.** Christian nationalism, theonomy, reconstruction debates—YES, it’s big for America, but problem deeper than those debates—NOT ignoring problem, but saying United States shifting for some time—look at length of build up for judgment in OT, USE time for church to wake up! **more at stake than us just losing American Dream in Depression or even being persecuted for faith; the church has gone to sleep, largely b/c we have centered on ourselves neglecting God’s words as we pursue our dreams/agendas; (ie. Political cartoon,** World mag—America—all letters wiped out except 2nd & 3rd) **you can’t live for self w/o consequences** (Rom. 6:23) thank God for mercy of not receiving more of what we deserve; thank Him for no condemnation eternally; but must

scrub self-centeredness at deepest levels as look at our dreams/ambitions—seek His kingdom first—Col. 3 you have died, life hidden in Christ **2. Worship God’s judgment as a sign of God’s holy justice**—individually & corporately—(Nahum, Zeph. 2—all the nations would get what is coming to them); His discipline is sign of ownership, fathering (Heb. 12); sign of His holiness **3. Must look farther for God’s justice, mercy, deliverance** Larger cycles than just immediate—must look farther/higher for hope and THROUGH judgment **God will save His own**—contrast **Habakkuk 3:2 w 3:16-19**; kingdom perspective; **read captions from Paul Tripp’s “A Quest for More”**; let us follow the text of Matt. 6:33 and live for His kingdom & look at the big picture and see the hand of God individually, corporately, and nationally; **but now want you to think of how these people felt and the path forward to hope and toward fellowship with God** righteous must have been hit hard—how could righteous Josiah be killed by foreign king? How could his sons be so wicked; Habakkuk speaks of themes of injustice, doubt, suffering/fear—where is hope? Jewish leaders seem to be oppressing, not following God’s law (torah), exacting taxes from people to pay for fines—just getting over fear of Assyrians b/r positive certainty that Babylon would sweep through; **v. 5 something you would not believe**; Barker notes, “**It was an agitated time, characterized by rapid political change, international turmoil, bloody military encounters, and a growing rebellion against the demands of the covenant by the great majority in Judah. Prophetic activity was feverish, not only with the ministries of people like Jeremiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Huldah, and Ezekiel, but also with false prophets in abundance.**” P. 251 **Main Theme: includes injustice, doubt, questioning, fears, suffering, hope, but** Elizabeth Achtemeier “shows that Habakkuk is not primarily about (1) the justice of God, a theme the prophet assumes rather than debates; (2) human doubt since the prophet maintains strong communion with God and expects the right answers from God; (3) human suffering and helplessness before the world’s evil powers, that being the setting of the book not the theme.” Barker, p. 276 **Key is posture, What do you think should be the posture we take in face of injustice, doubts, fears, and lack of hope and what fights against it?**

2 Kings 23:29–30 In his days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. And King Josiah went to meet him, and when Pharaoh Neco saw him he killed him at Megiddo. 30 His servants drove his body in a chariot from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah and anointed him and made him king in place of his father.

2 Chronicles 32:30–31 It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all that he did. 31 Even in the matter of the envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who sent him to inquire of the wonder that had happened in the land, God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.

Isaiah 39:6–8 ‘Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing will be left,’ says the LORD. 7 ‘And some of your sons who will issue from you, whom you will beget, will be taken away, and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ 8 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good.” For he thought, “For there will be peace and truth in my days.”

Jeremiah 22:18–19 Therefore thus says the LORD in regard to Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, “They will not lament for him: ‘Alas, my brother!’ or, ‘Alas, sister!’ They will not lament for him: ‘Alas for the master!’ or, ‘Alas for his splendor!’ 19 “He will be buried with a donkey’s burial, Dragged off and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

Zechariah 12:10–11 “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. 11 “In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.