

SLOW FOOD BIBLE STUDIES

HABAKKUK (18 studies)

Habakkuk's prophecy is set against the background of the decline and fall of the Judean kingdom (c626-586 BC/BCE). In 612 the power of the Assyrians was broken when Nineveh was destroyed; it was swiftly succeeded by the Babylonian empire whose threat to Judea resulted in attacking the city of Jerusalem in 605 and 597 and finally sacking it in 587. In the book of Habakkuk we have a record of the prophet's spiritual meditations and struggles over much of this period. No personal details of Habakkuk remain: uniquely among the prophets, he did not speak for God to his people, but rather to God about the people. Chapters 2-3 carry us beyond the fall of Judah to the future and to the ultimate triumph of the Lord. Habakkuk 2:4 is a key verse for New Testament theology.

Study helps: David Prior *Listening to the Voice of God* (BST); IVP *New Bible Commentary*; www.amazon.co.uk 'Habakkuk'. *The Message* provides, as ever, a lively if idiosyncratic paraphrase.

- 1:1** Read the book at one sitting. Would you conclude that the author was suffering from incurable depression when he wrote it?
- 1:2-4** Why does God apparently do nothing about the worrying things one sees on the news or reads in the papers? *Gen. 18:25; Psalm 37:1, 7-8, 13; Luke 18:1-8.*
- 1:5-11** If an invading army, or other powerful organisation, is 'raised up' (v6) by God, can it do wrong? *Isaiah 5:26-30; Daniel 2:20-21; Acts 13:41.*
- 1:12 -13** If God is eternal and holy, how can he tolerate temporal evil?
Ps. 34:16; Psalm 73:17; Ps.90:2.
- 1:14-17** What is Habakkuk's image of the fisherman trying to tell me?
Prov 5:22-23; Heb 4:15-16; 1 John 4:4.
- 2:1-3** How impatient am I? *Lam 3:25-26; Isa 30:18; 2 Pet 3:12.*
- 2:4** **Either**, Am I spiritually in the first or second half of this verse? *Rom 10:3-4; 1 Cor 4:7; Jas 4:6.*
Or, How is 2:4b interpreted in the NT as applying to the believer in Christ?
Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38.
- 2:5-8** How does the spirit of aggressive violence contrast with the spirit of Christ?
Prov 16:2; Mal 2:13-16; Luke 9:54-55.
- 2:9-11** Is it wrong to pursue material security for myself, my family or my school/organisation?
Prov 18:11; Matt 6:33; 1 Tim 6:17.
- 2:12-14** How does the earth (or my particular bit of it) become filled with the knowledge of God's glory? *Ps 127:1; Isa 2:17; 2 Cor 4:6.*
- 2:15-17** How does v16 shed light upon what Christ did for me upon the cross?
Matt 26:39-42; John 18:11; 1 Cor 10:16.
- 2:18-20** Given the tendency of the human race towards idolatry, what truths about God is the present generation likely to be missing out on? *Isaiah 46:7, 13; Col 3:5; 1 John 5:19-21.*
- 3:1-3** What principles regarding God's work on earth might apply to where I find myself today?
Ps 85:1-9; Jas 2:13b.

- 3:4-6** Do I have to understand the power of God before I start praying?
Job 26:14; 2 Cor 4:7; Rev 8:3-5.
- 3:7-9a** Do natural disasters occur because God is angry with us?
Gen 3:18; Luke 13:1-5; Rom 8:20-22.
- 3:9b-16** If affairs (personal, local, international) seem to be in turmoil, can I nevertheless be confident that God is accomplishing his purposes? *Psalm 46:1ff; Dan 3:17-18; Phil 1:12, 19.*
- 3:17-19** Where is my joy? *Ps 73:25; Ps 126:5; Phil 4:11-13.*
- Review** Trace how the prophet responds to what God 'will' do, by declaring what he, Habakkuk, 'will' do. Apply this to your own determination, or lack of it.