

# Habakkuk

## Author

Little is known about who the prophet Habakkuk was. In Hebrew, the word Habakkuk means “embrace” or “embracer”. Habakkuk 3:19 reveals Habakkuk owned musical instruments. In Hebrew, Habakkuk’s lyric ode in Chapter 3 is of extremely good quality. So he was possibly a music writer or musician.

## Date

The Book of Habakkuk was written between the death of King Josiah of Judah in 609 B.C. and the beginning of the Babylonian captivity in 605 B.C. The prophet Habakkuk experienced the great injustices and violence of king Jehoiakim of Judah during 609-597 B.C. (see 2 Kings 23:35-24:7 and Jeremiah 22:13-19). The Book of Habakkuk was written not long before the cruel onslaught of King Nebuchadnezzar and the pagan nation of Babylonia or Chaldea against his own nation of Judea.

## Main teachings

The main teachings in the Book of Habakkuk are:

1. *revealing God’s character.* God is revealed as eternal (see Habakkuk 1:12) and being so holy and pure that he hates to even look at any wickedness (see Habakkuk 1:13). God’s glory is greater than the heavens (see Habakkuk 3:3 and 3:11). But despite this He is still a personal God who can be called “**my God**” (see Habakkuk 1:12).  
God possesses unchangeable stability as indicated by His Name “**the Rock**” (see Habakkuk 1:12). But despite this, sometimes His actions cannot be fully understood by human minds and can astound or even frighten those who do not fully understand them (see Habakkuk 1:5, 3:2 and 3:16).  
God is also revealed as a God having great anger against evil and disobedience to His will (see Habakkuk 3:1) and as a saving God (see Habakkuk 3:13).
2. The question of “Why were the righteous Jews suffering and the wicked Jews prospering?” Read Habakkuk 1:2-4. Habakkuk could not understand this, considering the Law of Moses promised earthly prosperity to the repentant righteous people of faith (see Deuteronomy 30:1-10) and earthly punishments and death to the unrepentant wicked (see Leviticus 26:14-39 and Deuteronomy 28:15-68).  
In Habakkuk 1:5-11, God answered Habakkuk’s questions. He said He was going to punish the wicked Jews through an invasion of Judea by the wicked Chaldeans or Babylonians.
3. The question of “Why does God use the extremely wicked to punish the less wicked and allow the extremely wicked to prosper more than others?” In Habakkuk 1:12-2:1,

Habakkuk asked God how He could use the extremely wicked Chaldeans to punish the less wicked Judean nation and also permit the Chaldeans to be blessed with multitudes of earthly blessings. Refer to Habakkuk 1:16 which says the Babylonians “*share is sumptuous and their food plentiful.*” Note Deuteronomy 28:45 promises such blessings to the totally obedient to the Mosaic Law, but the Babylonians did not totally obey the Mosaic Law. Habakkuk could not understand how a perfectly holy and pure God Who cannot stand to even look at wickedness could do such a thing (see Habakkuk 1:12-13). God answered Habakkuk’s questions about this in Habakkuk 2:2-20.

4. Habakkuk searches for full answers to the above questions. But God basically gives only two answers to these questions:
  - a) The first is the righteous should trust God *in all circumstances*, even when their surrounding society is full of injustices (see Habakkuk 2:4) and when catastrophes and disasters are everywhere (see Habakkuk 3:17-19). God wanted Habakkuk’s faith to be built on a revelation of *God’s character and nature* and not on whether He was rewarding the righteous with earthly prosperity and blessings and now punishing the wicked on Earth.
  - b) In His perfect justice God will *ultimately punish all unrepentant wicked people* – the less and more wicked (see Habakkuk 2:5-20). God will do this in His own good time and not when humans think He should do this.
5. God emphasises how He is against people using each other selfishly, treating others unjustly and practicing any type of idolatry (see Habakkuk 2:1-20).