

HABAKKUK

Background

Habakkuk 1:1

The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw.

The book of Habakkuk offers great insight on living in light of God's promise no matter what the circumstance, the evil, and the violence that surrounds us.

The prophet Habakkuk lived during the last years that Judah was a nation. Just as the northern kingdom of Israel had turned from Yahweh and received God's judgment, now the southern kingdom of Judah was to receive punishment. The northern kingdom was taken into exile by the Assyrians. At this time in history, the Babylonian empire, the Chaldeans, had defeated Assyria. The king of Babylon was about to invade the land of Judah. The people were walking contrary to God's Word, and there was tremendous evil. In these first few verses, Habakkuk cries to God about the violence and iniquity in the land. The princes, priests, and false prophets all had walked contrary to the laws of God. Jeremiah was a contemporary of Habakkuk. The book of Jeremiah provides more insight as to the evil going on in Judah.

Jeremiah 5:23-31

But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; They have turned aside and departed. They do not say in their heart, "Let us now fear the LORD our God, Who gives rain in its season, both the autumn rain and the spring rain, Who keeps for us the appointed weeks of the harvest." Your iniquities have turned these away, and your sins have withheld good from you. For wicked men are found among My people, they watch like fowlers lying in wait; They set a trap, They catch men. Like a cage full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit; therefore they have become great and rich. They are fat, they are sleek, they also excel in deeds of wickedness; they do not plead the cause, the cause of the orphan, that they may prosper; and they do not defend the rights of the poor. "Shall I not punish these *people*?" declares the LORD, "On a nation such as this shall I not avenge Myself?" An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their *own* authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?

Jeremiah 9:3-6

"They bend their tongue *like* their bow; Lies and not truth prevail in the land; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know Me," declares the LORD. Let everyone be on guard against his neighbor, and do not trust any brother; because every brother deals craftily, and every neighbor goes about as a slanderer. Everyone deceives his neighbor and does not speak the truth, they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves committing iniquity. "Your dwelling is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me," declares the LORD.

The Twelve

Habakkuk's cry to God for help

Habakkuk 1:1-4

"How long, O Yahweh, will I call for help and you will not hear?" Habakkuk looked at the evil going on in his nation and saw wickedness, iniquity, and violence. He asked God why there seems to be no response.

God's answer to Habakkuk

Habakkuk 1:5-11

The Chaldeans/Babylonians are coming.

The powerful nation of Babylon will be coming from the north, and they will devastate the people and the land.

Jeremiah prophesied a similar demise for the nation of Judah. Jeremiah 5:15-17; 6:22-23

Habakkuk questions this punishment from an evil nation

Habakkuk 1:12-17; 2:1

God's Answer

Habakkuk 2:2-20 – Wait for it. It will certainly come. The righteous will live by his faith. In the end, God will bring justice upon the evil nation. Five woes are used figuratively here, showing that God will bring His justice upon Babylon. In the end, the glory of Yahweh will fill the earth. Wait for it. It will certainly come!

A prayer of Habakkuk

Habakkuk 3:1-15

A *shigionoth* is a Hebrew word representing a specific style of the way a psalm or song is to be performed. This prayer or psalm would have a rhythm to it with specific places to pause or "Selah."

Habakkuk 3:16-19

"Yet I will exult in Yahweh, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation."

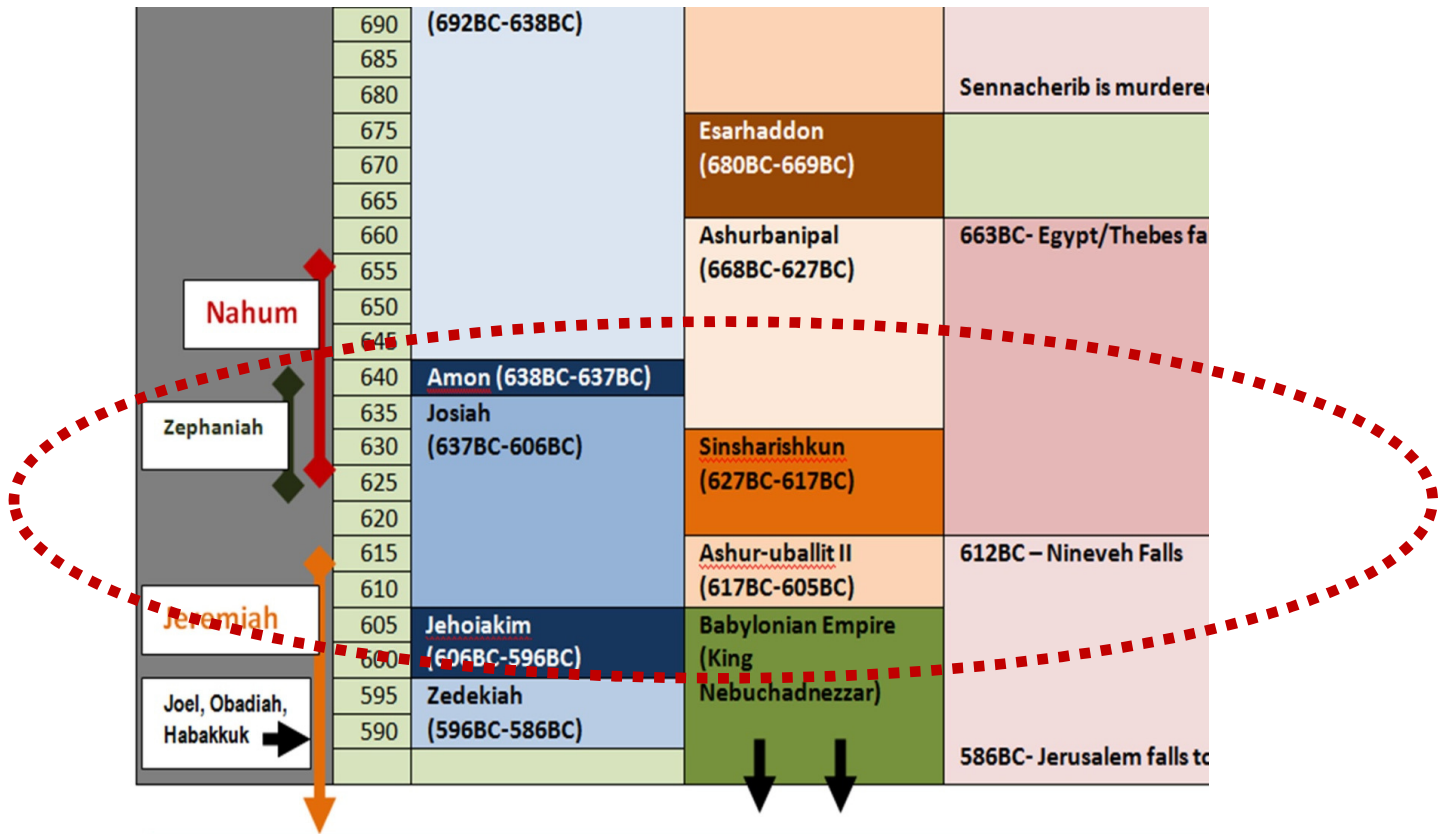
Hebrews 10:23-24, 32-39 – You have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. "The righteous one shall live by faith."
(Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11)

ZEPHANIAH

Background

Zephaniah 1:1

The word of the LORD came to Zephaniah in the days of Josiah. This word of the LORD to Zephaniah probably came very early in the reign of Josiah, before the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. (Zephaniah 2:13-15).



Josiah was a good king, but he was only eight years old when he began to reign. At age 16, he began to seek God, and at age 20, he began purging out idolatry (2 Chr 34:1-3). In these early years of Josiah, when Zephaniah received the word of Yahweh, Judah as a nation was still carrying on idolatrous practices from King Manasseh’s evil influence. 2 Chronicles 33:1-9

Yahweh will stretch out His hand against Judah

Zephaniah 1:1-6

“Those who bow down on the housetops to the host of heaven”

Jeremiah 19:13

The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will be defiled like the place Topheth, because of all the houses on whose rooftops they burned sacrifices to all the heavenly host and poured out drink offerings to other gods.

The Twelve

“Bow down and swear to Yahweh and yet swear by Milcom.” Milcom was a god of the Ammonites. This is a type of syncretism – blending two different religions. In this, one worships his own god while incorporating religious practices of other gods.

The day of the LORD is near

Zephaniah 1:7-18

Throughout the book of Zephaniah, the coming day of the LORD seems as if it is coming soon. This proclaimed judgment on Judah and Jerusalem is intertwined with the judgment on all the earth. Near is the great day of the LORD!!!

Zephaniah 2:1-3

Before this decree takes effect...seek Yahweh. Seek righteousness and humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of Yahweh's anger.

Judgment on the surrounding nations

Zephaniah 2:4-15

- Gaza will be abandoned – the Philistines, modern day Palestine (Gaza strip).
- Moab and Ammon taunted God's people. Moab will be like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah (Genesis 19:30-38).
- Yahweh will destroy Assyria and make Nineveh a desolation.

Woe to the tyrannical city (Jerusalem)

Zephaniah 3:1-7

Wait for Me declares Yahweh

Zephaniah 3:8-9

Yahweh will gather nations, assemble kingdoms, and pour out His indignation. All the earth will be devoured by fire, and then God will give to the people purified lips that all may call on the name of Yahweh

Zephaniah 3:9 (KJV)

For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.

Zephaniah 3:10-11

On that day you will never again be haughty on My holy mountain.

The remnant of Israel

Zephaniah 3:12-20

A humble and lowly people will do no wrong, tell no lies, nor have a deceitful tongue. These will be brought in and gathered and have their fortune restored.