

Next Week's Prayers



"...The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

Jas. 5:16

▶ Prayer Exercise

Are there events, circumstances or other things in life that you just don't seem to understand? If so, write out these things and express your concerns to God in prayer.

Rehearse what you know about the faithfulness of God, the power of God, and the promises of God. Do these have any bearing on the things you do not understand clearly?

Praise God in spite of your lack of understanding.



DEVELOPING STUDENTS
OF THE BIBLE

Sunday Morning Bible Class



▶ 40 Great Prayers of the Bible

Farmerville
Church of Christ

Habakkuk's Prayer of Praise
Hab 3:1-19

Prayer Study #35

Study Series by Bill Denton, D.Min.

Sunday Morning Bible Class

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Habakkuk's Prayer of Praise

Hab. 3:1-19

The author of this book is Habakkuk, about whom little is known apart from his name, which is derived from the Hebrew word meaning "embrace" or "embracer," and the fact that he is called a "prophet" (1:1; 3:1), which suggests that he was a prophet by profession.

Although the prophecy is not dated according to the reign of a king, internal evidence presupposes a date between the death of King Josiah (609 B.C.) and the beginning of the Babylonian captivity (605 B.C.). The deplorable conditions of the people (1:2–4) imply a date after the untimely death of Josiah at the Battle of Megiddo (609 B.C.) and during the wicked reign of King Jehoiakim (609–597 B.C.; cf. Jer. 22:13–23). Along with Zephaniah and Jeremiah, Habakkuk warned of God's approaching judgment through the Chaldeans, i.e., the Babylonians.

Realizing Israel's iniquity and need for punishment, Habakkuk is perplexed with the moral dilemma of how a holy God could employ the more deplorably wicked Chaldeans to chastise His children. God responds by asserting His sovereign prerogative as to the choice and the timing of His retribution. Though it may appear unreasonable, His way is best. Thus the prophet learns that to believe what God says and to heed His warning is to be numbered among the righteous who shall live by faith (2:4). Consequently, Habakkuk's theme is faith triumphant over apparent difficulties. (Believer's Study Bible)

What Can We Learn?

3:1 "Shigionoth" is a dithyramb—a type of music with impassioned staccato and quick changes of rhythm and emotion (cf. Ps. 7: title, note). The root of "Shigionoth," *sagah* (Heb.), depicts the movement of a drunken man and is here used to denote Habakkuk's strong emotional pressure.

3:2 This is the only petition presented in the prayer. Since it inspires fear, "Your speech" refers not to what follows but to what precedes, the prediction in 1:6–11. In the present context, God's work is the exercise of His goodness and power on behalf of His people. Habakkuk prays for God's redemptive intervention during the period of their chastisement ("in the midst of the years").

3:3–15 Habakkuk recalls Israel's history: God's majesty displayed in Sinai (vv. 3, 4), the plague in the desert (v. 5), the conquest of Canaan (vv. 6–10), the solar miracle in Gibeon (v. 11), and the victories accomplished by God for His people (vv. 12–15). "Selah" is used 71 times in the Psalms and three times in this prayer (cf. Ps. 3:2).

3:16–19 Anticipating the consequent calamity which shall ensue and lead to famine and death, the prophet voices one of the greatest expressions of undaunted faith, the most beautiful exhibition of the power of true religion to be found anywhere in the Bible. Habakkuk declares that although everything fails, he will trust in YAHWEH. No affliction, however severe or trying, can sever the believer from his Lord.

(Believer's Study Bible)

Questions to Ponder

1. Why do you think so many prayers are recorded in scripture as songs?

What importance does this seem to place on expressing praise or other forms of prayer in musical expression?

2. What is the picture of God drawn by Habakkuk in verses 1-7?

3. How is Habakkuk's complaint in 1:1-3 answered in his prayer of praise?

4. What is Habakkuk saying about his faith in 3:16-19?

5. Why is Hab. 2:4 such an important statement for an Old Testament prophet to make?

6. How does Habakkuk's prayer of praise ultimately reflect his faith in spite of questions and lack of complete understanding?

