

**PREPARATION FOR LESSON:** read the book of Habakkuk**BACKGROUND****Author:** Habakkuk, Mr. Why; contemporary of Zephaniah

Writes temple music, which means he is from the tribe of Levi. 3:1, 19

Style: not delivering a message, but solving a problem.

Other prophets, when they knew of the future, told the **people** *what* God would do.Habakkuk, when he knows the future, asks **God** *why* He is doing this.**Date and Place of Ministry:** He taught some 20 years in Jerusalem from 624 – 605 BC

He wrote his book c. 606 BC

**Theme:** *The just shall live by faith* 2:4**Purposes:** To explain God's justice.

To explain how God's people are to live in times of national, personal or spiritual crisis.

**Scripture background:** 2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 34-36:5; Jeremiah 22:13-23**OUTLINE**

Questions 1

Answers 2

Praise 3

**HISTORICAL SETTING IN JUDAH****Politically and Economically:** c. 606 BC

- 6 years earlier Nineveh was destroyed (612 BC); 3 yrs. earlier Josiah, Judah's king was killed in battle. (609 BC)
- Egypt and Babylon are both creating world empires.
- Egypt is in control of Judah; she installed Josiah's #2 son, Jehoiakim, as king.
- The people are fearful about the future and are trying to get financial security any way possible.
- In their social life, there are no ethics, morals, honesty nor compassion.

**Spiritually:** There are still believing Jews but because they are a minority, they cannot change society or their nation.

King Jehoiakim is not interested in God; he has told the people they do not have to accept God's rules.

The majority talk about God; there are huge crowds at temple worship, but it is only appearance.

National laws cannot be enforced because of sympathy for criminals; it is impossible to find justice. 1:3-4

**EXPLANATION** of the Babylonians 1:5-11**Their name:** called Chaldeans because their leaders always came from the southern region of Chaldea**Their character**ruthless, impetuous, feared, a law to themselves, attack quickly (invented the *blitzkrieg*)

promote their own honor, gather prisoners, nothings stops them; their strength is their god

**Their sin**

aggression, greed, exploitation, inhumanity, drunkenness, immorality, idolatry

**DEVELOPED OUTLINE****Questions** in chapter 1

- *Why don't You do something about all the injustice, violence and evil?* 1:1-4 Shocked at God's lack of action  
God replies, *I will do something; I am sending Babylon to attack you* 1:5-11
- *Why would You use a pagan nation to punish us?* Shocked at God's method
- *Why do You let people keep doing such terrible things?*
- *Why do godly people have to suffer when you punish the guilty?*
- *Why will You let a heathen nation prosper when they give the credit to their idols?*

*I'll listen and wait for an answer from God* 2:1Our questions and doubts will either drive us **from** God or **to** God!

**DEVELOPED OUTLINE** *continued*

**Answers** in chapter 2 *The righteous will live by faith* meaning, *believe, count on, hang onto 5 truths about God*

God is perfect in **wisdom** - God knows what He is doing in bringing this crisis 2:3

God is always **faithful** - God's help may seem delayed, but He will respond 2:3

God **provides** what is needed - God will give the ability to go thru the suffering 2:4

God will give living grace or dying grace, whichever is needed

God is **just and fair** - God knows the sin of the Babylonians and will punish them 2:5-19

God is absolutely **holy** - God will always do what is right for the situation 2:20

God gives Habakkuk time to ask questions, time to hear the answers and time to be convinced about God.

*But the Lord is in His holy Temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him. 2:20*

Being convinced about God builds confidence. Instead of more questions, He can let his mind be at rest.

**Praise** in chapter 3 Confidence in God leads to thankfulness and praise

• Praise blended with prayer for what God will do in the future ***In Your judgment, remember mercy*** 3:1-2

• Praise for what God did in their past history ***You were with us; You preserved us*** 3:3-15

vss 3-4 remind them of Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Law

vs. 5 reminds them of their slavery in Egypt and how God used plagues to set them free

vs. 8 reminds them of the Reed Sea and the Jordan River and how God got them across

vs. 11 reminds them of what God did to conquer the Promised Land

vss. 12-14 remind them of what God did to keep them in the land when their enemies attacked them

This chapter is a psalm to be sung in temple liturgy, so people will remember it

*Shigionoth* - a musical term of how it should be sung: *triumphantly, with abandon and great excitement*

*for the choir director; on stringed instruments* - a notation of what instruments should be used

*selah* - look at what you just said and feel a sense of awe (It is giving time for a silent, unspoken response)

**APPLICATION: Living by faith**

How similar our circumstances today - nationally, socially and spiritually. There is evil, violence, injustice and suffering everywhere. In our society there are no ethics, morals, honesty or compassion. Foundations around us are crumbling.

As believers we have prayed for **God** to change things. **We** have also tried to change things. The Christian world has tried getting more political influence in order to change laws. It has tried creating revivals thru human plans and formulas or changing God's values and rules to be more accommodating to others. It has thought if the church looked and acted more like the world, the world would listen to us. But the more the Christian world has tried **these** methods, the worse the world has become.

As individual believers, we need to change our thinking. When foundations around us crumble, God must bring consequences - to individuals, societies or nations. No one can stop His judgment. This is when:

We pray for our nation, ***God, in Your judgment, remember to also show mercy.***

We live by faith, being confident in 5 truths about God

God has all **wisdom**. He knows what He is doing as the crisis continue.

God is always **faithful**. Help may seem delayed, but He will respond to our prayers and be with us.

God will **provide**. He will give us the ability to go thru whatever suffering we face.

He will give us living grace. And when we need it, He will also give us dying grace.

God is **just and fair**. Eventually He will deal with the evil and injustice.

God is **holy**. He will always do what is right for the situation.

We build up this confidence by:

taking time to examine and assimilate what we have learned and know about God.

remembering all the things God has done for us in the past

If He has done all of this before, then surely He will do it in the future

We lift our hearts in praise and thankfulness. Hab. 3:17-19 paraphrased for our day

*Even if I feel insecure, my family brings sorrow, I lose my health or I am fearful of the future, yet I will find joy in my relationship with the Lord. I will be joyful in God who has given me assurance of eternity with Him. He is my strength. He will enable me to do whatever is necessary in my life.*

**This is what it means to live by faith.**

