



A question that every one of us asks sometimes: For how long, Lord, and why do you allow injustice and corruption on earth? And our Lord answers us on the level our wisdom and understanding and reassures us that evil has an end, and that everything has its time defined by the wisdom of our Lord... and we, with our faith and hope in our Lord, we praise Him and rejoice in Him in all circumstances, even if our circumstances are now difficult.

Meaning of the name: embracing ... as if our Lord embraces His people in order to protect them from evil.

The period of prophecy: A few years before the captivity of the southern kingdom (slightly after Nahum the prophet).

Its most important achievements:

- + He passed with us a journey starting from asking about the justice of our Lord to faith and trust in Him... He taught us to live with faith, hope and praise despite the difficult circumstances, the circumstances of its writing.
- + At this time, the kingdom of Judah was in a very great moral decline, and they completely distanced themselves from the Lord... Several evil kings came after King Hezekiah, who our Lord saved Jerusalem during his era (and the era of the prophet Isaiah) from the captivity of Assyria.
- + Unfortunately, the kings after Hezekiah were very bad... and the people turned away from our Lord.
- + At this time, the kingdom of Babylon began to strengthen and overthrew Assyria, and it was forming a new threat to the kingdom of Judah.
- + For whom is this book intended for? This is a dialogue between Habakkuk and our Lord. It represents the dialogue of every person who believes in our Lord in times of distress.

The book goal:

- + This is one of the rare books of the Little prophets that does not focus on the sins of the people.
- + Not even reproach from God to his people.
- + The book is in the form of personal words from Habakkuk to our Lord... A cry of grief and a main question: How, O Lord, when you are a just God, allow all the evil and injustice in this world?



The key to understanding the book:

- + Babylon = symbol of sin and evil.
- + The kingdom of Judah at that time was very far from our Lord.
- + A dialogue between Habakkuk and God Habakkuk complains to our Lord about two things, and our Lord responds to him as the following:

The first thing:

Oh Lord, why has the situation in Judah reached this very bad stage? Why did people neglect your book, your altar, and your commandments? Why is there injustice, corruption and lack of love to this degree? Unfortunately, the leaders allow this corruption and do not fight it, but they are the ones who lead it!

Our Lord responds to him: I see the hopeless situation that my people have reached, This people needs to be disciplined and punished, and that is why I will use the Kingdom of Babylon, which will be stronger over this people.

The Second thing:

Habakkuk was shocked of our Lord's answer! He said to him: Lord, this kingdom of Babylon is more corrupt even than us! Oh Lord, how can you, the Holy and Just, use a corrupt nation like this?! And Habakkuk was very confused and determined to wait for the answer of our Lord to this question.

And our good Lord responds to his children, He told Habakkuk that the righteous person will live by his faith.

He saw a vision: The kingdom of Babylon will fall as well, and this cycle continues (a kingdom is getting stronger and invades the rest of the kingdoms, and our Lord gives it a chance while it refused repentance, so another kingdom comes and destroys it).

And he told him: It does not mean when I use Babylon, that I see them as righteous or in agree with what they are doing.

What should we learn?

The children of the Lord, when they are separated from him, our Lord, out of His love for them, sends them a discipline, He uses tools and people in this even if they are not good, The important thing is that the children of our Lord stay on to their faith in Him even if the world around them is evil.

O Lord, if I was walking in a wrong way, make me disciplined with your love and stick, so that I am not lost and I perish, but return to your barn and care.



IN SPIRE OF ... I REJOICE IN THE LORD

Babylon's sins: After that, Habakkuk mentions 4 major sins of Babylon, which began to be transmitted to Judah:

- **Injustice:** the rich rob the poor instead of being kind to them.
- **Slavery:** they treated their servants in a violent and inhuman manner.
- **Debauchery:** a life of drunkenness and sin.
- **Worshipping idols:** including human sacrifices and impurities.

What should we learn?

Sin is the same and man is the same in every time and place, And the sins that have existed for thousands of years are the ones that exist today, in other forms.

O Lord, keep away from me the pride that keeps me away from You, Let me be humble, O Lord, so that I do not listen to the devil and do not give the little foxes places in my life so that my vine doesn't be spoiled for eternity.

An important question remains: O Lord, is the world going to be like this all the time? Evil kingdoms after one another? What are your children doing?

The comforting answer comes from our Lord, and Habakkuk understands it, and as soon as we remember and understand our Lord, he changes the mood completely, from sadness to prayer and praise (this is what we see in the third chapter).

In the first, Habakkuk prays: O Lord, as you did with us the greats of our time (the most powerful of which was during the exodus from the land of Egypt), return to work again like this with us in our days.

And the Lord responds in a vision: coming with power to crush evil, in clouds, fire, and earthquake, as it was transfigured on Mount Sinai.

Our Lord will take revenge on evil, and its chief Satan (the head of the house of the evil) as he did with the Pharaoh (a symbol of Satan's symbols).

And of course, our Lord, on this day, will save His children who depend on Him, and justice will be achieved, and the weak and the oppressed will triumph and be happy.

With this hope and certainty, Habakkuk ends the book with a very beautiful hymn, that even though the world and circumstances are now very difficult, I would rather trust in our Lord and in His promises.

Thus, Habakkuk would make a great example of: How the righteous live by faith



What should we learn?

Our Lord always consoles his children and gives wisdom to all those who seek it, He explains to us that there will come a day of revenge against evil and the victory of good. Oh Lord, let me take the Habakkuk prayer as a method in my life... Even if the world and circumstances are not good, I have hope, confidence, joy and sufficiency in you, and I would always pray and praise your holy name.

Verses summarizing the book:

O Lord, how long shall I cry and You will not hear? Even cry out to You, “Violence” and You will not save? Why do You show me iniquity and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises. *Habakkuk 1: 2 - 3*
We usually have that feeling: I am praying and I feel that God does not hear, It is a difficult feeling at the time of trials. Why, Lord, satisfied with this injustice? I'm tired. Our Lord appreciates this feeling, and consoles his children, This is what we will see and we will reach at the end of the book.

For indeed I am the raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter, and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. *Habakkuk 1: 6*
Our Lord does not allow corruption in His people for a long time, When the people reject warnings, our Lord must send discipline. And in His chastisement, our Lord uses many ways, means, and people, even if people are bad. But of course, it is all with the permission of our Lord, not by the strength of these people or their will, this is our Lord who allowed this.

Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; And the just shall live by his faith. *Habakkuk 2: 4*

Part One: The Kingdom of Babylon and their King, which are all pride and arrogance and see themselves as ruling the world.

Part two: the humbleness and faith of the righteous, which they must live by, and this was used by our teacher Paul (Hebrews 10:38).

It also means: He who is justified by faith is the one who will live eternal life. And this is available to the humble, the arrogant is impossible to believe.



IN SPIRE OF ... I REJOICE IN THE LORD

Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, That he may set his nest on high, That he may be delivered from the power of disaster. *Habakkuk 2: 9*

- One of the great sins of Babylon is this: evil gain.
- Unfortunately, this sin is one of the most common sins that exist today: that people earn in a way that is not right.
- And the justification is the same: Because the days are bad, and I need to escape with this earning from poverty and evil.
- Our Lord's response is clear in this: Woe to the person who does this, This is a great sin and simply lack of faith in our Lord

You went forth for the salvation of your people, For the salvation with your Anointed. You struck the head from the house of the wicked, By laying bare from foundation to neck. *selah. Habakkuk 3:13*

- Went forth = came to the world incarnate for salvation.
- Wicked = Satan.
- laying bare from foundation to neck: Christ stripped Satan of all his powers by the power of his cross
- Selah = Meditation on Redemption and Salvation.
- Our Lord may use wicked people to discipline His people, but the wicked have a time of punishment if they are arrogant towards our Lord and reject His warnings.

Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord god is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And he will make me walk on my high hills. *Habakkuk 3:17 - 19*

There is no good anywhere, there is no good news. But despite that, there is praise and rejoicing, I am not waiting for good news from the world. Even if I lived poor or in difficult circumstances, my Lord is enough for me, I stick to him.

- There be no herd in the stalls: a sign of the end of animal sacrifice after the cross.
- God of my salvation: because he prophesied about Christ the Saviour.
- Will make my feet like deer's feet: means to jump like a deer (I'm light and joyful).
- Make me walk on my high hills: it means to be higher than the level of the world.



Interpretation of some verses:

Are you not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, you have appointed them for judgement, O Rock, you have marked them for correction.

Habakkuk 1: 12

Hope in tribulation and prophecy about the New Testament (We shall not die, O Lord). O Lord, you have condemned Your people to chastisement, so that after that their foundation will be on the rock (Our Lord).

Why do You make men like fish of the sea, Like creeping things that have no ruler over them? They take up all of them with a hook, They catch them in their net, And gather them in their dragnet. Therefore they rejoice and are glad. Habakkuk 1: 14 , 16

The talk here is about the evil kingdom of Babylon, which is as if it catches people like fish with a hook, and gathers them in the net in an inhumane way.

I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected. Then the Lord answered me and said: "write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Habakkuk 2: 1 - 3

- The rampart: The watchtower on the country wall (to monitor the enemies), I am waiting for our Lord to intervene.
- Lord I am standing and waiting, From the morning guard to the night.
- That he may run who reads it: For fear of judgment, people take the matter seriously and commit themselves without petting to the spiritual life, This is the case of the one who reads and understands the word of our Lord (he remains warm in the soul).
- For the vision is yet for an appointed time: it will come true at the right time, and even if you don't see its realization, it will happen.
- Though it tarries, wait for it: If the response is delayed, wait for our Lord (Wait for the Lord) and continue your prayer.
- It will surely come, it will not tarry: when the response comes, you will understand that it is at the right time, and that it was never late.

Interpretation of some verses:

O Lord, I have heard your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise. **Habakkuk 3: 2 - 3**

- I have heard your speech and was afraid: a sign of the second coming (the Day of Judgment)
- In the midst of the years: a prophecy of the incarnation.
- God Came: Another Prophecy About the Incarnation.
- Teman: the land of Edom, a symbol of the nations that will receive faith.
- Paran: Sinai (which reminds us about how our Lord was glorified in the exodus of the people of Israel).
- Selah: Like the interludes in the psalms.



FATHER. DAWOUD HANNA

Priest of St. Mark & St. Thomas Coptic Orthodox Church

Hong kong: +852 57435749

Egypt: +201288416082



/smcoa



fr.dawoud.hanna@smcoa.org

أبونا/ داود حنا كاهن كنيسة القديسين الرسولين مرقس وتوما، بمونج كونج

S M C O A

SAINT MARCOS COPTIC ORTHODOX ASSOCIATION