

Chapter 3 is a powerful poem describing the comings and goings and the workings of God with the assurance (vss 17-19) that He will lift up His own and cause them to triumph in the nature of His work and dealing.

The questions that arise in Habakkuk (other than that of correctly pronouncing his name) are on the order of the classic ones asked repeatedly: Why does God not instantly judge sin? Why does God allow men to trifle with His law? Why does God use a page and idolatrous force to punish His own people whose errors are in a similar circle? How will God deal with these oppressive forces later? How will God establish His own people and satisfy our hearts with His justice?

Archaeologically we have a good idea that the descriptions of Habakkuk given to the ways of the Chaldeans are accurate (1:5-11). Of great interest was the finding of a commentary on the Book of Habakkuk among the literary finds of the Dead Sea Scroll period. The commentary covers only the first two chapters of the book and describes the Chaldeans of 1:6 as Kittim... a term thought to be applied to the Romans of the time of the Qumran Community. It seems to be a good example of how contemporarily the prophetic messages were understood. Those interested in this from a more technical viewpoint will find the work of F.F. Bruce: BIBLICAL EXEGESIS AT QUMRAN interesting reading.

To better understand Habakkuk, make a special study of the very interesting verses he writes to show the dependence one needs on God in times of difficulty and how trust in God is sufficient for us. (2:4, 2:14, 2:20). You will also find it worthwhile to read about the Chaldeans in a Bible encyclopaedia or dictionary.

Study aids include reading the book of Habakkuk at a single sitting and reading chapter 3 out loud for poetic effect. A study of 2:18-20 is also a great help in understanding the folly of idolatry.

For further reading consult the commentaries mentioned on page 66 as well as that of Lewis on the Minor Prophets. The article in the NEW BIBLE COMMENTARY is also helpful. But many of the books on Habakkuk become overly involved in the source analysis of the prophecy and do not have a clear interpretation for the reader who is not technically oriented.

b. For further study:

--study carefully chapter 3 analyzing what God does, how he does it, and what its effect should be on his people.

--determine what the vision is of 2:2-4 and when it will have significance for the nation and for us.

Habakkuk is a book of inspiring trust..much used to encourage God's people when the circumstances of life seem unintelligible. The overall thrust is that God has both program and purpose and will bring all to fulfillment. Those who are right with Him will walk by faith.

9. A Survey Study of Zephaniah ("God's cry")

a. An overview

Well, I can see that we should have waited and started this book on the next page. Too late for that now so let me say that this is one of the least known books of the Old Testament...if you have ever heard any message