

Lesson #21  
Book Overviews  
Habakkuk

Introduction:

- Habakkuk offers hope by recognizing how dark and chaotic the world is and inviting us to trust that God will one day remove evil.
- He lived during the final decades of Israel's Southern Kingdom.
- Spoke against injustice and idolatry.
- Told of rising threat of Babylon on the horizon.
- Doesn't speak on God's behalf to the people.
- He doesn't speak/accuse Israel.
- \*\*\* All his words are addressed personally to God. "Is God really good when there is so much evil?"
- He wrote poems of "lament".

1. Chapters 1-2a: Back and forth argument between Habakkuk and God.

- a. He makes two complaints of which God offers 2 responses.
  - i. #1 Complaint: Life in Israel is intolerable. Tolerated by corrupt leaders.
    - 1. God's response #1: God is aware and will send Babylon as judgement.
  - ii. #2 Complaint: Babylon is even worse than Israel!
    - 1. God's response #2: Commands Habakkuk to write down a vision about the future.
      - a. The righteous will live by hope according to the vision i.e. God will eventually bring Babylon down.

2. 5 Woes

- a. Unjust economic practices. Rich charge the poor crazy high prices.
- b. Unjust "debt".
- c. Slave labor, treating people like animals.
- d. Abuse of alcohol by irresponsible leaders.
- e. Idolatry: This is the engine that drives such evil nations.

- f. Given the nature of man, most nations become like Babylon.
  - i. God's answer here becomes an answer to ALL later generations.
- 3. Chapter 3 – Prayer
  - a. Asks God to act “now” in the present as He has in the past to bring down corrupt nations.
  - b. Chapter 3:3-7: Frightening Vision.
    - i. Describes future punishment in similar terms as Egyptian exodus of Israel.
    - ii. God will punish the King of Babylon as He did Pharaoh.
    - iii. Babylon becomes Arch Type of violent nations.
  - c. When God confronts evil He will also save the people and send the “anointed” one i.e. the King from the line of David.
- 4. Conclusion (3:16-19) Hopeful Praise

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### Book Overviews

#### Zephaniah

#### Introduction

- Zephaniah shows how God's justice and love work together to give the world hope, purifying his people and restoration.
  - Lived in final decades of the Southern Kingdom.
  - During the time when King Josiah was trying to bring about real change in the land.
  - But people's idolatry was too entrenched.
  - Josiah was killed due to his pride. Destroyed by Babylon.
  - Zephaniah saw all this tragedy coming so he was warning the leaders of Jerusalem.
  - His work is a collection of Poems in 3 parts. (1) Ch. 1-2:3 – Judgement is coming, (2) Judgement on the nations and Jerusalem and, (3) Hope for the nations and for Jerusalem.
1. Chapter 1-2:3 – Judgement on Jerusalem.
    - a. The reversal of Genesis 1.
      - i. Ordered world descending into CHAOS.

- b. Judah and Jerusalem will also descend into ruin, including ALL the INSTITUTIONS!
      - i. Great army coming to destroy! He doesn't tell us what Army from where.
- 2. Chapter 2:4-3:8 – Judgement on nations around Judah.
  - a. All nations are corrupt and violent.
    - i. All will fall like Babylon.
  - b. 3:1-8: Jerusalem will ALSO fall. They aren't recognizable as His people anymore!
  - c. Divine fire not to destroy but to PURIFY Israel and the nations.
- 3. Chapter 3:9-20 – Hope for the nations and for Israel.
  - a. He will heal and transform nations into one unified family.
    - i. Fulfills Genesis 12:2-3.
  - b. Restores Temple in the CENTER of the nations i.e. the Remnant.
  - c. Sing and Rejoice, including God to celebrate His people.
  - d. We see God's intense justice and love.

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#### Haggai

#### Introduction:

Haggai encourages those who have just returned from the exile in Babylon to remain faithful, obedient and hopeful for God's promise.

- Small book essential to understand the Hebrew bible. Written around 520 BC, 70 years after the exile to Babylon.
  - Hebrew prophets are speaking out to corrupt leaders. But also spoke of HOPE that God would raise up a remnant. Live in new Jerusalem where God would live in their midsts.
  - Babylon collapsed, Persia in control and allow return of exiles to Jerusalem.
  - Under leadership of Joshua (priest) and Zerubbabel, a group returned to Jerusalem.
  - Book has 4 sections spoken over 4 months.
1. 1:1-15: Accusation that people misplaced priorities.
    - a. Building their own homes while Temple remains in ruins.
  2. 2:1-9: Addressing shattered expectations among them.

- a. Temple that was built a disappointment.
  - i. So he talks about promise of future kingdom, new Temple.
    - 1. \*\* New Jerusalem to redeem the whole world.
- 3. 2:10-19: Call to Covenant faithfulness.
  - a. Ritual purity from Leviticus.
    - i. If people's motives are bad then their service at the Temple is contaminated.
    - ii. People need to truly repent so God will bless their work.
      - 1. Future is in their hands.
- 4. 2:20-23 – Future Hope of God's Kingdom.
  - a. New Jerusalem will be the center of God's plan.
    - i. Will defeat evil in all nations!
  - b. \*\* God will establish Messianic King of David.
    - i. Typology is in Zerubbabel!

Our choices matter in working out God's purposes!

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Zechariah

Through a series of dreams and visions, Zechariah offers new hope of a new Jerusalem to the Israelites and reminds God's people of the Messiah.

- Setting is the return of the Exiles from Babylon.
- Ezra 5:1-2: Zechariah and Haggai challenged the people to rebuild the Temple.
- 1. 1:1-6 – Introduction.
  - a. Zechariah's challenge to turn back to God and not be like their ancestors.
    - i. People repent or so it seems.
- 2. 1:7 to chapter 6 – Zechariah's dreams/visions.

- a. Warning: dreams are very bizarre.
  - i. Horsemen
  - ii. Horns
  - iii. Woman in a basket
  - iv. Rebuilding new Jerusalem. Beacon to the nations.
  - v. Fly scroll
  - vi. Joshua – a High Priest and Zerubbabel is an heir of David.
    - 1. They must rely on God’s spirit and not self to be successful.
  - vii. Joshua given crown representing Messiah.
    - 1. Coming of the Messiah conditional on people’s faithfulness.
- 3. Conclusion – Challenge from Zechariah. (Chapters 7-8)
  - a. Repeat and be faithful to Covenant in order for success to occur.
- 4. Chapters 9-11: Images of the Messianic Kingdom. (Point #1)
  - a. Messiah riding on a donkey to rule in new Jerusalem.
  - b. Messiah symbolized as a shepherd who is rejected by his own people.
  - c. Human leaders emerge that are corrupt and the people follow them.
    - i. Questions: Will Israel’s rejection of their King last forever?
- 5. Chapter 12-14: Images of the Messiah. (Point #2)
  - a. The response of God about Israel’s rejection of the Messiah lasting forever is “NO”!
  - b. New Jerusalem where God’s justice confronts evil among the nations.
  - c. God will also confront the hearts among His own people.
    - i. 12:10, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.
  - d. New Jerusalem is gathering place for all the nations.
    - i. Becomes the new Garden of Eden.
      - 1. River of Living Water!
      - 2. Healing to ALL the nations.
  - e. ALL becomes a reality IF God’s people are faithful!

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Book Overview

Malachi

Introduction: Malachi exposes Israel's corruption but it also offers hope. Even after exile, God promises to purify a faithful REMNANT.

- He lived about 100 years after the exiles returned from Babylon.
- Message directed to people living in Jerusalem
- Temple built, but things were not going well. (Ezra and Nehemiah)
- When exiles first returned, hopes were high and ALL promises were to be fulfilled i.e. the New Jerusalem. But the people were just as corrupt as the previous generations which resulted in poverty and injustice.
- Book designed as a series of disputes. God says something then Israel disagrees and even questions God! Then God gives the last word on the issue.

1. Chapter 1-2: Exposing Israel's corruption.

- a. He still loves Israel.
- b. They despise the Temple.
  - i. Priests are corrupt.
- c. Treachery against God and their wives!
  - i. Marrying pagan women after divorcing their own wives.

2. Confronting Israel's corruption.

- a. God will purify His people with FIRE to create a REMNANT.
- b. Call people to turn back to Him.
  - i. Confronts their selfishness e.g. Offering of the tithe.
- c. People claim it's pointless to serve God. (3:3-18)
  - i. Corrupt are succeeding while the faithful are struggling.
    - 1. God tells a story of a Remnant.
    - 2. Scroll of Remembrance.

3. Conclusion: The Day of the Lord.

- a. Purifying fire to cleanse the Remnant.
- b. \*\* Future of the Faithful Remnant.
  - i. A reason for joy not fear for those that love God.

4. Final 3 verses not part of disputes (4:4-6) Torah and the Prophets.
  - a. Remember the Torah!
  - b. Will send prophet Elijah to restore the hearts of the people.
    - i. Torah and prophets point to the future!
      1. A unified story.
  - c. God will send a new Moses, Elijah, to restore God's people and heal their hearts. (Deut. 30; Jere. 31 and Ezekiel 36:27)

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#### Psalms

Introduction: The book of Psalms is an intricately designed collection of poetry that recounts Israel's history and God's Covenant.

- A collection of 150 ancient Hebrew poems, songs and prayers from various writers.
    - o David – 73
    - o Asaph – 12
    - o Sons of Korah – 11
    - o Heman and Ethan – 2
    - o Solomon and Moses – 3
    - o Anonymous – 49
  - Many poems sung by the choirs in the Temple.
  - After the Babylonian exile, the material was intentionally gathered into a book. Not a hymnbook.
  - Hallelu-ya = Promise.
  - Divided into 5 books i.e. large sections.
  - The poem in each of the 5 sections ALL have a very blessed ending. "May the Lord God of Israel be blessed forever, amen and amen!
  - Chapters 1-2: An introduction and anonymous.
1. Chapter 1 – Blessed is the one who obeys the Torah.
    - a. Psalms is supposed to be the "New Torah" about prayer.

2. Chapter 2 – Reflects on 2 Samuel 7 i.e. the Promised Messiah from David's line.
  - a. Blessed are those that take refuge in the King!
  - b. The Next 5 books (sections) revolve around the themes introduced in Chapters 1 and 2.
3. Book #1 (3-41)
  - a. Chapter 15 – A call of covenant of Faithfulness.
    - i. David is the model.
    - ii. Future Messiah
4. Book #2 (Chapters 42-72) The hope for a future return to the Temple in Zion i.e. the Messianic Kingdom.
  - a. Chapter 72 – Future reign of Messianic Kingdom.
    - i. Echoes the prophets.
  - b. Fulfills God's blessing to the nations.
5. Book #3 (73-89) Promise of the Messianic Kingdom.
  - a. David's line unfaithful.
    - i. Asks God not to forget promise to David.
6. Book #4 (90-106) Responds to the crisis of exile.
  - a. Chapter 90 – Prayer of Moses . . . Show mercy!
  - b. God reigns as the TRUE KING!
7. Book #5 (107-145)
  - a. Messianic King – Defeats evil and brings God's Kingdom.
    - i. Psalms 119 – Longest Poem!
8. Final 5 poem set (146-150)
  - a. Psalms 148 – God has raised up a horn.
    - i. Horn is a symbol of the Messianic King.
9. Two BIG themes of Psalms. Lament and Praise!