HABAKKUK.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK AS A WHOLE.

(Division.)

\[ \text{A}^1 | 1.1--2.20. \ \text{THE BURDEN OF HABAKKUK.} \]
\[ \text{A}^2 | 3.1--19. \ \text{THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK.} \]

For the Canonical order and place of the Prophets, see Ap. 1, and pp. 1206 and 1207.
For the Chronological order of the Prophets, see Ap. 77.
For the Inter-relation of the Prophetic Books, see Ap. 78.
For the Formula of Prophetic Utterance. See Ap. 82.
For References to the Pentateuch by the Prophets, see Ap. 92.
For the Inter-relation of the Minor (or Shorter) Prophets, see pp. 1206 and 1207.

Of Habakkuk (pronounced Ḥāḇakkūk) nothing can be really known beyond what he says of himself. From this it is clear that he lived in evil days, and was perplexed with the silence and forbearance of a holy God in permitting the evil to continue. Cp. Ps. 73.

His prophecy takes the form of a colloquy with Jehovah; and Jehovah answers his cry by revealing the fact that a time will come when the evil will be visited upon Judah by the Chaldean successors of Assyria (1.6), and by the Dispersion of Judah (1.5--11).

The prayer in chap. 3 is very important as being a summary of Jehovah's dealings with His People from the passage of the Red Sea to the prophet's own time.

The prayer is important also, as being the model (together with Isa. 38), outside the Psalter, of the proper construction of a Psalm, with (1) the super-scription, (2) the text, and (3) sub-scription (see Ap. 65); and also, of the meaning and use of the word “Selah” (Ap. 66.11).

The prophecy is undated; but we have a clue afforded in 1.5,6. It is given to Habakkuk before the fall of Nineveh, which placed Babylon at the head of the Gentile world. According to traditional or “received” dating, this took place in 625 B.C., but, according to the chronology given in Ap. 50, it was 515 B.C., or 110 years later.

If the hints given in 1.3,11 are to be accepted on the above lines, we may date the prophecy of Habakkuk as being given (as a whole), or at any rate commenced, in the year with which Jeremiah begins: viz. in the thirteenth year of Josiah, 518 B.C., i.e. three years before the destruction of Nineveh.

In this case, supposing one among those Habakkuk addressed to be twenty years old, he would be forty-two in Jehoiakim's fourth year and Nebuchadnezzar's first. At the carrying away to Babylon he would be forty-nine; and at the destruction of Jerusalem he would be sixty-one.
HABAKKUK.

1. 1–20 (A¹). THE BURDEN OF HABAKKUK. (Alternation.)

A¹ | A | 1. 1–4. The prophet's cry.
A | 1. 12–2. 1. The prophet's cry.

1 burden. See note on Nah. 1. 1.

cry=cry for help in distress; as in Ps. 18. 41; 22. 24.

6 For, olo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that
bitter and hasty nation, which shall march
through the breadth of the land, to possess the
dwelling places that are not theirs.

7 They are terrible and dreadful: their
judgment and their dignity shall proceed
of themselves.

8 Their horses also are swifter than the
leopards, and are more fierce than the evening
wolves: and their horsemen shall
be reproved, and offend, they shall fly as the eagle
that hasteth to eat.

9 They shall come all for violence: their
faces shall sup up as the east wind, and
they shall gather the captivity as the sand.

10 And shall scoff at the kings, and
the princes shall be a scorn unto them:
they shall deride every strong hold; for
they shall heap dust, and take it.

11 Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass
over, and offend, imputing this his power
unto his God.

A² | Art 3. You not from everlasting, O Lord
my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die.

O Lord, Thou hast ordained them for judgment;
and, O mighty God, Thou hast established them for correction.

8 more fierce = keener. shall fly as the eagle. Ref. to Pent. (Deut. 28. 49, 50). Ap. 92.
9 all for violence: i.e. not for conquest, but for destruction. faces = aspect, intent, or eagerness.

as the sand. Fig. Paroemia. Ap. 6. 10 them = it, as above (v. 6). heap dust = heap up mounds. take it = capture it: i.e. every stronghold.

12 Art 2.για not ... ? Note the change of subject, as shown in the Structure above ("A²").

13 God. Heb. Elohim. Ap. 4. I. we shall not die. This is one of the eighteen emendations of the Stephanus (see Ap. 38), which they say they made because it was considered offensive to say this of Jehovah; hence, the one word of the primitive text "who diest not" was changed to "who die not" (rendered in A. V., R. V., "we shall not die"). This is the only one of the eighteen emendations which the R. V. and American R. V. notice, and speak of it in the margin as "an ancient Jewish tradition", whereas a list of such emendations is given in the Massoret. The change from the second person to the first did more than avoid the supposed irreverent expression; it transferred to mortal men the truth which, apart from resurrection, pertains to God alone, "Who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6. 16). Cp. 1 Cor. 15. 53, 54.

O mighty God = O Rock. Cp. Deut. 32. 4, 15, 18, 30. 1 Sam. 2. 2. 2 Sam. 23. 3. Ps. 18. 2, 31, 46; 19. 14, &c.
1. 13. HABUKKUK.

13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity: wherefore dost thou seek my judgment? and makest men more righteous than he? 

14 And maketh men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them? 

15 Therefore they sacrifice unto their portion, and burn incense unto their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad.

16 They sacrifice unto: or, in their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous. 

17 Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?

2 I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon my tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

2 And the LORD answered me, and said, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will come surely, it will not tarry."

4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him:

but the just shall live by his faith.

5 Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at thick clay! Therefore the man that is proud, neither keepeth at thick clay: therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag: because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous. 

8 Because the vast and spoilt many nations, all the remnant of the 8 people shall spoil thee; because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

9 Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness! 

live: i.e. live for ever in resurrection life. See notes on Lev. 18. 6. The wicked go on living, without faith, if it refers to this life; therefore "live" must refer to a future life. The Heb. accents the emphasis on "shall live": not "the just by his faith", but a just one, by his faith, will live", and make the contrast not between faith and unbelief, but between the fate of each—perishing and living for ever. In Rom. 1. 17 the context places the emphasis on "the righteous": in Gal. 3. 11 it is placed on "faith":

transgresseth = it transgressing, or is acting deceitfully.

wines = clear, please. Ref. to Pent. Ap. 27. 1. man = strong

beget = to produce. Ref. to Pent. Ap. 27. Occurs in this form only here. Cp. other forms in Deut. 10. 24, where it occurs nine times with a cognate meaning, and in Joel 2. 7.

7 bite: or, exact usury. ves = shake.

ouensness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the "power of evil!"
10 Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul.
11 For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.
12 Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by error of it. the maker thereof hath graven it. the molten image is cast for sin, and casteth itself; for he saith in his heart, "I will set my throne in the city, and my throne in the midst of the years in the midst of the years."! 15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on his nakedness!
16 For the violence of Lebanon shall cover him, which made them afraid; or, shall make thee afraid.
17 Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it.
20 But the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.
3 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.
2 O Lord, I have heard Thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years; make known; in wrath remember mercy.
3 O Lord, come from Teman, and the Holy One set his nest on high. Ref. to Pent. (Num. 24. 21).

2. 9. HABAKKUK.

3. 3. set his nest on high. Ref. to Pent. (Num. 24. 21). power = hand. Put by Fig. Metonymy (of Subject), Ap. 6, for the power exercised by it.
8 Consulted = counselled, or devised. shame = a shameful thing. sinned against thy soul. Ref. to Pent. (Num. 16. 30). sinned. Heb. čādēt. Ap. 44. i.
14 the earth shall be filled, &c. Ref. to Pent. (Num. 14. 21). Ap. 92. This is the fifth and last occ. of this wondrous prophecy. Num. 14. 21. Ps. 72. 19. Isa. 5. 5 (=shall be); 11. 9, and Hab. 2. 14.
15 that puttest thy bottle to him = that addest (or pourest) thy fury or venom (Heb. construct form of ḥēmēth = heat, wrath; not of ḥēmēth = bottle) thereto. See Oxford gæumius p. 105, under ṣiphon. maketh him drunken, &c. Ref. to Pent. (Gen. 9. 29). let thy foreskin be uncovered; i.e. be as one uncircumcised: i.e. uncovenanted.
17 violence of Lebanon: i.e. violence (done to) Lebanon by felling its trees, which made them afraid: or, shall make thee afraid.
20 holy. See note on Ex. 3. 5. keep silence = Hush! Be still! So Zeph. 1. 7. Zech. 2. 13.

3. 1-19 (A, p. 1266). THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK. (Introderson and Alteration.)
1 E. The Superscription.
2 "I have heard." Consequent effect, "fear".
16. "I have heard." Consequent effect, "trembling".

1 Shigionoth. The pl. of Shigion (cp. Ps. 7), a crying aloud. See Ap. 68. xx.

speech = hearing. Put by Fig. Metonymy (of Subject), Num. 14. 15. 1 Kings 10. 1. Isa. 66. 19. afraid. In aew; as in Ex. 14. 31. revive = renew, in the sense of repeating, doing over again. work. Some codices, with Aram., Sept., and Syc., read "works": i.e. doings. years. Put by Fig. Metonymy (of Adjunct), Ap. 6, for the affictions, them, or "wrath" manifested in them. in the midst, &c. Out of 273 occurrences, this is the only place where it refers to time. Had Habakkuk learnt, like Daniel? Note the Fig. Anadiplosis (Ap. 6), for emphasis.

make known = make [Thyself] known. The Heb. accent places the logical pause on this verb: i.e. by repeating now what Thou hast done in the past.

wrath. As manifested in present affliction; showing what is meant by "years," above. mercy = compassion. Supply here the logical Ellipsis (Ap. 6): "[I will meditate on Thy doings of old:—]".

3. 3-15 (H, above). SALVATION. JEHOWAH'S DOINGS. (Repeated Alternation.)


3.3

HABAKKUK.

3.14

3.3.  

One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.

4. And His brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of His hand: and there was the hiding of His power.

5. Before Him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at His feet.

6. He stood, and measured the earth: He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: His ways are everlasting.

I saw the tents of Cushan: the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

8. Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? Was Thine anger against the rivers? Thy wrath against the sea, that Thou didst ride upon Thine horses and Thy chariots of salvation?

9. Thy bow was made quite naked, (according to the oaths of the tribes, even Thy word). Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.

10. The mountains saw Thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.

11. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of Thine arrows they went, and at the shining of Thy glittering spear.

12. Thou didst march through the land in indignation, Thou didst othresh the heathen in anger.

13. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy People, even for salvation with Thine anointed;

14. Thou didst strike through with His staves the head of his villages: they came

Selah. Connecting His coming forth with the glorious effects of it. See Ap. 86. II. Note the three “Selahs” in vv. 3, 9, 13. His glory. Cp. Isa. 6. 2. horns = power. Put by Fig. Metonymy (of Effect), Ap. 6, for the power put forth by them. Heb. dual = two rays, coming out of = from: i.e. power from [His] hands [at His].

the hiding, &c. = hiding (or concealing) of His [full] power.

Before Him went, &c. Supply the logical Ellipsis (Ap. 6): “[As He went forth to conquer for His People] before Him went”, &c. See Ex. 15. 27. Ps. 68. 1, 2. burning coals: or, lightning. Cp. Ps. 18. 8; 76. 3; 76. 44.

3.6-11 (K1, p. 1289). HIS DOINGS. (Repeated Alternations.)

1 To the Lord, and after Creation.

14. Among Israel’s enemies.

7. At the Exodus.

6. In Israel’s Deliverances.

9. At the Conquest of Canaan.

6. measured the earth: or, caused the earth to tremble. So the Targum and the requirement of the “correspondence” with the next line. beheld = looked.

drove asunder the nations = caused the nations to shake, or start. scattered = shattered.

perpetual = ancient, or primeval.

7. in affliction = [brought low] by affliction.
curtains = hangings. Put by Fig. Metonymy (of Cause), Ap. 6, for the tents formed by them.


Thou didst ride. Ref. to Pent. (Deut. 33. 26, 27).

horses = horses [of power]. and. Some codices, with three early printed editions (some Rabbinic), Sept., Syr., and Vulg., read this “and” in the text.


according to the oaths of the tribes . . . Selah.

This second “Selah” (see Ap. 86. II) is to connect the remarkable parenthetical statement with the continuation of the details of Israel’s deliverances, which it interrupts, and might otherwise have disturbed. The text of this clause is not “corrupt”, as alleged by some modern critics. The oaths are the promises sworn to the fathers or the tribes [of Israel] when still in the loins of the patriarchs.

with rivers = [and the waters gushed out] with rivers.

See Ps. 74. 10; 75. 15, 16; 105. 41.


the overflowing, &c. Referring to the Jordan. Cp. Josh. 3. 15, 16.

11. The sun and moon, &c. Ref. to Josh. 10. 12, 13.

at the light, &c. = like light Thine arrows flew, and at the shining, &c. = like lightning was Thy glittering spear.

3. 12, 13 (J2, p. 1989). JEHOVAH’S GOINGS. (Introversion.)

12. For the subduing of Israel’s enemies.

13. For the subduing of Israel’s enemies.

14. For the subduing of Israel’s enemies.


13. nation = nations: i.e. the nations of Canaan.

14. anointed = Jehovah’s anointed People (sing.). See Ps. 105. 15. wound = dashed pieces.


Looking forward to the final destruction of Israel’s enemy in the person of the Antichrist. The Targum (or Paraphrase) of Jonathan is remarkable: “the kingdom of Babylon will not remain, nor exercise dominion over Israel. The Romans will be destroyed, and not take tribute from Jerusalem; and therefore, on account of the marvellous deliverance which Thou wilt accomplish for Thine Anointed, and for the remnant of Thy People, they will praise the LORD”. by discovering, &c.: i.e. overturning the house from the top (the neck) so completely as to lay bare the foundations. Such will be the final overthrow of Israel’s great enemy, Selah. This third Selah connects this final overthrow and its magnitude, when contrasted with the enemy’s previous proud boasting and exaltation in v. 4. It connects Jehovah’s doings also (“K1”, v. 14) with Jehovah’s goings (“J2”, v. 10). See Ap. 86. II. 14. strike through = pierce. His own weapons.

3.4.

head = chief. villages = leaders. they came out, &c. = [when] they came forth.

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out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly.

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15 Thou didst walk through the sea with Thine horses, through the heap of great waters.

FG

10 When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.

H

17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

18 Yet will I rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the strength of my God of my salvation.

19 The LORD's God is my strength, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places.

E

To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

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**ZEPHANIAH.**

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK AS A WHOLE.**

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The last of the Prophets immediately preceding the Captivity.

Unlike all the other Prophets, Zephaniah's genealogy is traced back for four generations; and, as Hezekiah of Prov. 25. 1 and Hizkiah of Zeph. 1. 1 are the same word in Hebrew as Hezekiah King of Judah, he was not improbably his great-great-grandson. Zephaniah's prophecy is dated in 1. 1, as being given "in the days of Josiah". In ch. 2. 13 he says that Assyria shall be destroyed, and Nineveh made a desolation. Therefore it was before the fall of Nineveh, 615 B.C., according to The Companion Bible dating (Ap. 50), or 625 B.C. (according to "received" dating).

Zephaniah was the contemporary of Jeremiah. By a comparison with 2 Kings 23, which records the destruction of "the remnant of Baal" (Zeph. 1. 4), Josiah's reformation had not been completed. The prophecy may therefore be dated as coming between the twelfth and the eighteenth year of Josiah—say 618 B.C., or about three years before the fall of Nineveh.