

## **The Half Hour That Changes the World**

### **Habakkuk**

### **Book 35**

#### **Basic Question behind the book:**

*What does our faith in God mean to us when we are faced with difficult issues in the world?*

#### **Summary of book:**

Habakkuk is a believer who questions things with his feet planted firmly on the rock of his faith. The book of Habakkuk is set in the form of the dialogue. Habakkuk issues complaints, or asks questions, and then records God's replies. While Habakkuk believes passionately in God's holiness and goodness, he just can't understand why God seems to tolerate sins, or God's punishment for sin when it comes. He feels secure enough to ask these questions and God responds. God's response tells him that God is holy, and that His concerns are global and long term. The last chapter is a long prayer that ends up giving praise to God despite difficult circumstances.

#### **Vital Statistics:**

Purpose: To show that God is still in control of the world despite the apparent triumph of evil.

Recipients: It was written to Judah, the southern kingdom and to God's kingdom everywhere.

Author: Not much is known about Habakkuk apart from this book. Even the meaning of his name is uncertain. Some believe to derive from a word meaning 'to embrace' as he brought his problems to God and got to grips with them.

Dating: The reference to the Babylonians in 1:6 puts this book at the end of the seventh century BC.

Setting: Babylon was becoming the dominant world power and soon Judah would fall under its destructive force.

#### **Other Reflections:**

It was ok for Habakkuk to question God, as his questioning brought about new understandings of the nature of God and his purposes. The final chapter is the outcome of such dialogue, as Habakkuk praises God for who he is. Habakkuk's example invites us to bring to God issues that we don't understand and to allow God to speak to us as we learn to listen.

*"Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy." (3:2)*

*"Though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food...yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour." (3:17-18)*

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