

# Prophecy Through the Bible – Minor Prophets

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Hopefully we will finish the remaining books of the Minor Prophets and discuss briefly the intertestamental period before the New Testament time starts.

We begin today's discussion with the book of **Habakkuk**.

## Prophecy in the book of Habakkuk

This book is an unusual book even by prophetic standards, where many books are unique and unusual. In Habakkuk, the book records a conversation between the Prophet and God, not a communication between the Prophet and the people after instruction from God. In terms of prophecy related to the future time from now, it offers little new information, but there are tremendous thoughts we need to understand from it today.

The personal story of Habakkuk is clouded in dispute. No one really knows anything about him and even the name meaning is not clear. The name is clearly a biblical baby name and the best understanding is that it means "He that embraces", or "He that wrestles". Likely he was a member of the **Levitical choir** and was a contemporary with Jeremiah and Zephaniah.

The Levitical choir was one of the duties of the 24 sections of Levite priests who ministered in the temple. Singing proficiency was critical as they sang the "**Hallel**" praise Psalms in certain temple worship or celebration services.

Halley's Bible Handbook lists the main thought of each book of the Bible, and for Habakkuk it lists:

***"The Just Shall Live by Faith"***

The book has 3 chapters and each chapter covers the following:

1. **Habakkuk's Complaint** – Lord why do the wicked prosper and the Just get left out? Why are the Ungodly not judged?
2. **The Lord Answers...**
3. **Habakkuk prays to the Lord, thankfulness and worship**

His complaint is all too familiar to us today. "***Why are the wicked not punished?"*** ***Why are the righteous taken advantage of by the wicked?"*** How many times do you seek the Lord, or petition the Lord, or Cry out to the Lord and it seems that nothing happens or justice is not forthcoming? It seems like this is a common occurrence to the people of faith. It was true in Habakkuk's day and it is true in our day as well.

## Habakkuk 1:2-3

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*1 The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet received.*

## **Habakkuk's Complaint**

*2 How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen?*

*Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save?*

*3 Why do you make me look at injustice?*

*Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?*

*Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.*

Is this a familiar sounding thought of yours? I know it times of stress, anguish, and sadness we are all praying to the Lord for relief. When we see violence and wickedness all around us (just watch the news any night), don't we long for God to step in and right the wrongs and set everything back on the right track.

## **Habakkuk 1:5-11 The LORD's Answer**

*5 "Look at the nations and watch— and be utterly amazed.*

*For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.*

*6 I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings not their own.*

*7 They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.*

*8 Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk.*

*Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar.*

*They fly like an eagle swooping to devour;<sup>9</sup> they all come intent on violence.*

*Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand.*

*10 They mock kings and scoff at rulers.*

*They laugh at all fortified cities; by building earthen ramps they capture them.*

*11 Then they sweep past like the wind and go on— guilty people, whose own strength is their god."*

This is a dialog between the Lord and Habakkuk. Habakkuk has a complaint or issue and he asks the Lord about it...and He responds to him.

## **Habakkuk complaint number two**

Habakkuk 1:12-17 asks why the Lord would use a wicked and corrupt nation to exact judgment and conquer Israel. Israel was a less wicked nation than Babylon. How can God tolerate such a wicked and sinful nation and allow them to conquer Israel in spite of their wicked state?

## **The Lord answers...**

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### Habakkuk 2:1-8

*2 I will stand at my watch  
and station myself on the ramparts;  
I will look to see what he will say to me,  
and what answer I am to give to this complaint.*

#### *The LORD's Answer*

*<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD replied:*

*"Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets  
so that a herald may run with it.*

*<sup>3</sup> For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false.  
Though it linger, wait for it;  
it will certainly come and will not delay.*

*<sup>4</sup> "See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright—  
**but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness—***

*<sup>5</sup> indeed, wine betrays him; he is arrogant and never at rest.  
Because he is as greedy as the grave and like death is never satisfied,  
he gathers to himself all the nations and takes captive all the peoples.*

*<sup>6</sup> "Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn, saying, "Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion!  
How long must this go on?"*

*<sup>7</sup> Will not your creditors suddenly arise? Will they not wake up and make you tremble?  
Then you will become their prey.<sup>8</sup> Because you have plundered many nations,  
the peoples who are left will plunder you. For you have shed human blood;  
you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.*

There are several interesting things to pull out and discuss;

**Habakkuk will keep doing what he is called to do and await the Lord's response.** When we are waiting for God to answer us, we should do the same. We do not quit and complain to others, we wait on the Lord to respond. **Stay at your post...whatever the Lord has called you to do...and wait all the while doing what you are supposed to do.**

***But the righteous person will live by his faithfulness*** – An early review of a common NT theme as well, as we see in Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; and Hebrews 10:38

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While **Evil appears to win for a time...**in Gods appointed time, **God's judgment will be true and swift if we just...wait for it.**

### Habakkuk's Prayer

This is an astonishing prayer in the midst of Habakkuk's questions. In response to God's revelation to him of God's ultimate righteousness and the judgment for every sin, he broke out in prayer and worship in Ch 3 verse 2.

*<sup>2</sup> LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD.  
Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known;  
in wrath remember mercy.*

You can read the remainder of Hab. 3 and see the beautiful prayer he worshipped the Lord through praying. **The net of it is that Habakkuk's simple trust in God was not based on the events around him but on the Word of God, and his prophetic promise of ultimate justice. So it should be for us today.**

### Prophecy in Zephaniah

These prophecies are similar to others in the prophets in that they predict not only the woes to the countries surrounding Israel, but also to Judah and Jerusalem. The familiar countries of Philistia/Gaza, Moab, and Ammon are mentioned. Also Assyria/Ninevah and Cush/Ethiopia come under specific judgment. These events have all happened.

In the early parts of the book, Zephaniah refers to the **Day of the Lord** multiple times and speaks of judgment of the entire Earth. This is a **Second Coming** prophecy which is yet to be fulfilled. Zephaniah lived in the time of Jeremiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk. He was also probably from the royal line of King Josiah, and a great-grandson of former King Hezekiah.

Zeph 1:14-18

*<sup>14</sup> The great day of the LORD is near— near and coming quickly.  
The cry on the day of the LORD is bitter; the Mighty Warrior shouts his battle cry.  
<sup>15</sup> That day will be a day of wrath— a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin,  
a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness—  
<sup>16</sup> a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers.  
  
<sup>17</sup> "I will bring such distress on all people that they will grope about like those who are blind,  
because they have sinned against the LORD.  
Their blood will be poured out like dust and their entrails like dung.  
<sup>18</sup> Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath."*

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*In the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live on the earth.*

This is all reminiscent of the portrayal of the end of the earth in the final judgment period after the Millennial Kingdom. God will create a new Heaven and new Earth for the Eternal life.

### Prophecy in Haggai

Haggai is the first prophet after the Jews returned to rebuild Jerusalem (postexilic). Haggai is the 2<sup>nd</sup> shortest book in the OT, just behind Obadiah in length. There are 5 messages relating to the delay in rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. The year is around 520BC. These messages were given to Zerubbabel (governor of Judah), and Joshua, the high priest.

The theme of the messages was stated in Haggai 1:2-8

<sup>2</sup> *This is what the LORD Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the LORD’s house.’”*

<sup>3</sup> *Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: <sup>4</sup> “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”*

<sup>5</sup> *Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. <sup>6</sup> You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.”*

<sup>7</sup> *This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. <sup>8</sup> Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the LORD.*

There are alternate rebukes and encouragement in Haggai, but in the end of the book, there is an enlightening future look-ahead.

### Haggai 2:20-23

<sup>20</sup> *The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month: <sup>21</sup> “Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. <sup>22</sup> I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother.*

<sup>23</sup> *“On that day,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,’ declares the LORD Almighty.”*

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This seems like an odd prophecy but remember that after Solomon, the Kings of Judah were wicked and their thrones were taken away from them. This punishment lasted a long time. Zerubbabel was a governor over Judah, not a king, but he did accomplish the building of the temple again.

Because of this, God promised that He would shake everything up, both heavens and earth, and overturn kings and destroy the power of foreign kingdoms. Military power would be destroyed and armies would fight each other and kill one another. But Zerubbabel would become God's Signet Ring.

A **Signet Ring** is a symbol of Royal Authority. This would not happen in Zerubbabel's lifetime but was a promise of a descendant to come. Zerubbabel was a descendant of David and therefore this is seen as another promise of a King to come. We know this King as Messiah and He will reign and rule in the Millennial Kingdom.

### Prophecy in the book of Zechariah

This prophet was born in Babylon during the exile and returned to Israel with the first group of returnees back to Jerusalem. He was a contemporary with Haggai, Zerubbabel, and Joshua the High Priest. His name means "The Lord remembers". When the temple was stalled during its reconstruction due to the resistance of the local people, it stalled nearly 50 years. During this time Haggai prophesied and died. Zechariah took over the prophetic challenge during the actual reconstruction period.

The book of Zechariah is one of the most compact apocalyptic books in the OT. It includes eight prophetic dreams from a single night with apocalyptic language and end times revelation. Some of these are hard to interpret, but the book self-interprets some things and a basic understanding of biblical terms also aids interpretation. We have done a detailed, chapter by chapter study of Zechariah which you should listen to for deeper understanding and detail. This is a powerful book and important to understand future events.

In Zechariah 1:1-6, he warns the children of Israel to NOT be like their forefathers who would not listen to either God or His prophets and then were carried off into exile and captivity.

**Zech 1:7-17** the first vision – A Man among the Myrtle trees

### Read the scripture and comment

**Zech1:18-20** the second vision – 4 Horns and 4 Craftsmen

### Read the scripture and comment

**Zech 2:1-13** the third vision – the man who would measure Jerusalem

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*2 Then I looked up, and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand. <sup>2</sup> I asked, “Where are you going?”*

*He answered me, “To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and how long it is.”*

*<sup>3</sup> While the angel who was speaking to me was leaving, another angel came to meet him <sup>4</sup> and said to him: “Run, tell that young man, ‘Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. <sup>5</sup> And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will be its glory within.*

The “man” is not identified who does the measuring, but it clear from the scripture that he is an angel and this actual measuring of the city was meant to be an encouragement for the people who were engaged at that time in rebuilding the temple of the Lord.

This prophecy, like so many others, spans events in the future. Much of it pertained to the actual time of Zechariah and the present Temple, but it also referred to the time of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the city without walls. It also refers to the Millennial Kingdom time where it speaks of the Lord Himself being its “wall” of fire around, and also its “glory” within.

**Zech 3:1-10 the fourth vision...Joshua the high priest**

### Clean Garments for the High Priest

*3 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. <sup>2</sup> The LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! **Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”***

*<sup>3</sup> Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. <sup>4</sup> The angel said to those who were standing before him, “**Take off his filthy clothes.**”*

*Then he said to Joshua, “**See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.**”*

*<sup>5</sup> Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.*

*<sup>6</sup> The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: <sup>7</sup> “**This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘If you will walk in obedience to me and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.***

*<sup>8</sup> “**Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. <sup>9</sup> See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes (facets) on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.***

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***10 “In that day each of you will invite your neighbor to sit under your vine and fig tree,’ declares the LORD Almighty.”***

The Angel of the Lord is Jesus Christ Himself and you see where He reveals the Father's will and words to this high priest. This transformation of both the people and the Land happens during the Tribulation period when there is a mighty revival among the Jews who begin to see Jesus as the Messiah, and thus become Children of God and saved.

The Branch is a term for Jesus as well. This is another pearl of understanding about the future time of redemption for the Jews.

**Zech 4:1-14 the fifth vision...Gold lampstand and two olive trees**

These verses are a perfect use of familiar images to convey a parallel truth. After the 4<sup>th</sup> vision, the Angel of the Lord awakens Zechariah and asks him what he sees. A lampstand with pipes and bowls feeding olive oil to the lamp, with olive trees along side.

This portrays a never ending supply of oil for light to the lamps. The olive oil represents the Holy Spirit of God and verse 6 clarifies it.

***4 Then the angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep. 2 He asked me, “What do you see?”***

***I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. 3 Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.”***

***4 I asked the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”***

***5 He answered, “Do you not know what these are?”***

***“No, my lord,” I replied.***

***6 So he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.***

...

***11 Then I asked the angel, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?”***

***12 Again I asked him, “What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil?”***



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<sup>13</sup> *He replied, “Do you not know what these are?”*

*“No, my lord,” I said.*

<sup>14</sup> *So he said, “These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth.”*

This last verse sets the time in the Tribulation period where the two witnesses serve the Lord by witnessing and converting thousands of Jews to the Lord. The trees are the source for the flowing of God’s Spirit out to the world and illuminating Him to the world.

### **Zech 5:1-4 the sixth vision...the flying scroll**

This immense scroll represents God’s judgment of sin, and represents what God will do to those sinners represented by writing on the scroll. It is a reminder that in the midst of God’s grace and salvation and redemption, He will judge sin. This timeframe is also during the Tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom.

### **Zech 5: 5-11 the seventh vision...the measuring basket and the women**

This set of verses covers something a little different, from a prophecy standpoint. I am going to shorten the discussion but encourage you to listen to the audio of this part of the study of Zechariah on the website for more detail.

Zechariah sees a large basket with a lead top and a woman sitting in it. He sees two other women with wings along side of it. The basket is full of the sin of the people, and woman inside represents that sin. It is the sin of idolatry and paganism. The Angel of the Lord pushes the woman in the basket back in the basket and puts the lid on it. The other two women fly it to a place in Babylon to be held until it is time to release the woman inside.

Babylon has long been held to be the seat of wickedness that will revive in the end times, after the Rapture of the church. In this time the one world church will reappear under the false prophet and the world will follow him to the Antichrist. The interesting thing is that the Babylonian religion held that the Queen of Heaven (Semiremis) would give birth to a son, called Tammuz. This Queen of Heaven was married to Nimrod who built the tower of Babylon in an attempt to reach God. Semiremis held that Tammuz fulfilled the prophecy of a messiah to come. This was also a Sun worshipping religion. There are many similarities between its pagan practices and some of the churches that were patterned after it that are still here, both pagan and “Christian”. Without getting into the details further lets get back to the scripture in Zechariah.

<sup>5</sup> *Then the angel who was speaking to me came forward and said to me, “Look up and see what is appearing.”*

<sup>6</sup> *I asked, “What is it?”*

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*He replied, "It is a basket." And he added, "This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land."*

*<sup>7</sup> Then the cover of lead was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman! <sup>8</sup> He said, "This is wickedness," and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed its lead cover down on it.*

*<sup>9</sup> Then I looked up—and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth.*

*<sup>10</sup> "Where are they taking the basket?" I asked the angel who was speaking to me.*

*<sup>11</sup> He replied, "To the country of Babylonia to build a house for it. When the house is ready, the basket will be set there in its place."*

We know from other prophecies in the New Testament, that Babylon will be the seat of power for the Antichrist, and the False Prophet will lead his church from the city of seven hills (Rome?). So when the "house is ready", that is, when God's timing permits the Antichrist and all his followers to come to power and rebuild Babylon, the woman in the basket will be released and the mother-son cult will be the predominant belief for the apostate church lead by the false prophet.

### **Zech 6:1-8 the eighth vision** – the four chariots

Again this vision is subject to various interpretations.

*6 I looked up again, and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze. <sup>2</sup> The first chariot had red horses, the second black, <sup>3</sup> the third white, and the fourth dappled—all of them powerful. <sup>4</sup> I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?"*

*<sup>5</sup> The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits (winds) of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. <sup>6</sup> The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west (or after them) and the one with the dappled horses toward the south."*

*<sup>7</sup> When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, "Go throughout the earth!" So they went throughout the earth.*

*<sup>8</sup> Then he called to me, "Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north."*

Many equate these horses like the 4 riders of horses of the apocalypse in Revelation Ch 6. The red horse is War, the Black horse is famine and death, the dapple horse is pestilence, and the white horse is conquest. This makes sense in that after the red, black, white, and dapple horse go throughout the world, there is a time where the Spirit rests there. One might see this as the time in the beginning of

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the Tribulation period where peace comes as the Wrath of God appears, and final Wrath ushers in true peace and a time for the Spirit to rest.

Zechariah is a powerful book and has much to teach us about prophecy and future events.

In Zechariah Ch 9, we see the coming deliverance of the Messiah

In Zechariah Ch 10 we see the promise of deliverance and restoration of Judah (Southern Kingdom) and Ephraim (Northern Kingdom). We also see the regathering of Israel (vv9-12), and rejection of Israel's Messiah (Zech 11:1-17) and its consequences.

Zech Ch 12 speaks to the repentance of Israel in that day, and Ch13 speaks to the cleansing of the Remnant of Israel. There are purging judgments in Ch 13 as well.

Zech Ch14 speaks to the triumphant coming of the Messiah (Second Coming) as the final drama of the Tribulation period comes to a close. Ch 14 also tells us about the physical changes to the Holy Land and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.

*14 A day of the LORD is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls.*

*<sup>2</sup> I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. <sup>3</sup> Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. <sup>4</sup> On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. <sup>5</sup> You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake<sup>[a]</sup> in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.*

*<sup>6</sup> On that day there will be neither sunlight nor cold, frosty darkness. <sup>7</sup> It will be a unique day—a day known only to the LORD—with no distinction between day and night. **When evening comes, there will be light.***

There is so much here. In the Temple, the Eastern Gate is where Jesus entered the temple while he was on earth. It is also called **Messiah's Gate**. This gate was sealed up by Suileman, one of the Moslem rulers of Jerusalem to prevent the Messiah from entering there again. The prophecy in **Psalms 24:7-10**

*"Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter. Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, invincible in battle. Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter. Who is the King of glory? The Lord of Heaven's Armies - He is the King of glory"*

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In these verses in both Zechariah and Psalms we see that when the Lord returns to earth for the Second Coming, his feet will touchdown on the Mount of Olives, and a violent earthquake will happen and split the Mt of Olives in two pieces with a rift valley that extends from this Messiahs Gate to the area near Petra in Jordan. Interestingly the Muslims have placed their graveyards on the hillside rising to the Temple Mount because they know no Jew (or Messiah) will cross them. Fortunately the Lord is not bound by these rules for men, and he splits the valley apart and walks through the rift straight to the Eastern Gate and goes in. (recount the story with the Arab Guide in Jerusalem)

We also see that when the Lord dwells here there is no more darkness and the light at night is provided by His Glory.

*Maranatha...come Lord Jesus*