HABAKKUK.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK AS A WHOLE.

(Division.)

\[ F^2 | A^1 | 1.1—2.20. THE BURDEN OF HABAKKUK. \]
\[ A^2 | 3.1—19. THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK. \]

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 Formulae 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 Habak'kuk) 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. Op. 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. 8-11).

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 626 a.c., but, according to the chronology given in Ap. 50, it was 518 a.c., i.e. three years before the destruction of Nineveh.

If the hints given in 1. 1, 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 in which Jeremiah begins; viz. in the thirteenth year of Josiah, 518 a.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. 1-2. 20 (A) p. 1966. THE BURDEN OF HABAKKUK. (Alternation.)  

A1 A | 1. 1-4. The prophet’s cry.  
B | 1. 5-11. Jehovah’s answer.  
A | 1. 12-2. 7. The prophet’s cry.  

1. burden. See note on Nah. 1. 1. did see. The Heb. accent places the chief pause on this verb, to emphasise the fact that the giving of the vision was of more importance than what was revealed by it. A second and lesser pause is placed on “burden”, leaving “Habakkuk” as being less important. The verse therefore should read, “The burden which he saw, Habakkuk the prophet”.  


1. cry=cry for help in distress; as in Ps. 18. 6, 41; 22. 23.  
3. showing that the cry is not personal, but made in the name of all who suffered from the evil times.  
4. cry out=cry with a loud voice, implying the complaint.  
5. grievance = oppression, or injustice. Heb. "’atml. Ap. 44. 5.  
6. There are that raise up. A reading is found in some codices (named in the Masorah), “I had to endure”.  
7. strife and contention. There should not be a comma after “strife”, as in the R.V. The Heb. accents indicate the one not, “and contention rising up”, like “spoiling and violence are before me” in the preceding clause.  
8. slacked = benumbed.  
9. judgment = justice.  

2. The o burden which Habakkuk the proph - et o did see.  

1. LORD, how long shall I o cry, and Thou wilt not hear! even o cry out unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save!  
3. Why dost Thou shew me o iniquity, and cause me to behold o grievance for spoiling and violence are before me: and o there are that raise up o strife and contention.  
4. Therefore the law o slacked, and o judgment doth never go forth: for o the wicked doth compass about o the righteous: therefore o wrong judgment o proceedeth.  

5. Behold ye among o the heathen, and o regard, and o wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, o which ye will not believe, though it be told you.  
6. For, o lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellings places of the heathen.  
7. They are terrible and dreadful: o their judgment and o their dignity shall proceed o of themselves.  
8. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and o their horsemen shall spread o themselves, and o their horsemen shall come from far; o they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.  
9. They shall come o all for violence: o their faces shall o sup up as o the east wind, and o they shall gather the captivity o as the sand.  
10. And o they shall scoff at o the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto o them: o they shall deride every strong hold; for o they shall o heap dust, and o take it.  
11. Then shall his o mind change, and he shall pass o over, and o offend, o imputing this his power upo unto o his god.  

3. Art thou not from everlasting, O o LORD my o God, mine Holy One? o we shall not die.  
4. LORD, Thou hast ordained o them for judgment: and o, O mighty God, Thou hast established o them for correction.  

7. 2 Tyr = St. judgment = decision.  
10. 5-13, 14. 3. more fierce = keen.  
9. all for violence = i.e. not for conquest, but for destruction. faces = aspect, intent, or eagerness. sup up, o swallower up (as in Job 38. 24), as the green things, as the sand. Fig. Paroxyma.  
2. 10. oheap dust = heap up mounds.  
4. o regard = wonder. Note the Fig. Anabasis (Ap. 8).  
12. o art thou not...? Note the change of subject, as shown in the Structure above (“A”).  
God. Hebr. Elohim. Ap. 4. I. we shall not die. This is one of the eighteen emendations of the Septuagint (see Ap. 83), which they say they made because it was considered offensive to say this of Jehovah; hence, the one word of the idiom, the unemended style text “who dieth not” was changed to “who dieth not” (“rendered in A.V., R.V., and American 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 Masorah. 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).  

13. O mighty God = O Rock. Op. Dent. 82. 4, 15, 18, 30. 1 Sam. 2. 2. 2 Sam. 8, 2. 2 Sam. 8, 3. 18. 12, 16; 19. 14, &c.
13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity: wherefore turn aside the innocent out of the way, that thou doest feed on their righteousness: and at the same time, that the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he.

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

15 They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their dragnet: therefore they rejoice and are glad.

16 Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their dragnet: because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plentiful.

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

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

5 Yea, also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heareth unto him all people:

6 Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! How long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!"

7 Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be forbooties unto them?

8 Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the 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 coveth an evil coveteth an evil coveteth a gain.

B C a²
(p. 1268)

B Cf. a³


the wicked = a lawless one. Heb. 'ā' mistress. Ap. 44. x. Looking forward to the Antichrist.

15 angle = hook.

drag = a fish-net. Occurs only here (vv. 15, 16) and in Isa. 19. 8, Greek sogomen. See Ap. 122. 2, Italian sogomen, whence (with a different vowel) the Greek verb sogomen = to sweep [a country] clean.

16 fat = fertile, or rich. plenteous = fat.

2. 1 watch = watch-tower; referring to the place.

Cf. a²

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

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B Cf. a³

2 Command to write.

b⁴ Reason. That the reader may flee.

D² c³ 2-15. Incrimination. Pride.

Cf. a² 5-7. Incrimination. Greed.


D² c³ 2-15. Incrimination. Covetousness.


Cf. a³ 10, 19. Incrimination. Drunkenness.


Write, &c. Ref. to Pent. (Deut. 27. 8). Ap. 47, and 92.

the vision. Supply the logical Ellipsis (Ap. 6).

[which I am about to reveal to thee]. Cp. 1. 1. upon tables: i.e. boxwood tablets smeared with wax.


that he may run that readeth it—that he that readeth it may flee. Heb. 'rā'ēl to run as a messenger (Job 9. 23. Jer. 23. 21; 51. 31. Zech. 2. 4); or, to flee for refuge (Ps. 18. 10), as in Hag. 1. 9.

3 yet = deferred.

appointed: i.e. fixed by Jehovah for its fulfillment, and not lie. Fig. Paronomasia (Ap. 6), for emphasis.

it will not tarry. Some codices, with five early printed editions (one Rabbinic, marg.), Aram., Sept., Syr., and Vulg. read and will not tarry.

4 Behold. Fig. Astigmia (Ap. 6), emphasizing the twofold answer to the prophet's prayer: the fate of the wicked in the coming judgment, and the preservation and eternal lot of the righteous.

Supply the Ellipsis: "Behold (the proud one)."

his: i.e. the Chaldean's of ch. 1; or the lawless one described in ch. 1 and in the verses which follow.


the just = a righteous one. Quoted in Rom. 1. 17 and Gal. 3. 11. Cp. Heb. 10. 38.

the wicked go on living, without faith, if it refers to this life; therefore "live," refer to a future life. The Heb. accents place 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".

5 transgresseth = is transgressing, or is acting deceitfully.


desire = soul.

Cp. Isa. 5. 14. is = is [is]

enigma. Heb. nachash, as in Ps. 73. 2.

Woe. Note the five woes in vv. 6, 9, 12, 15, 19. how long? i.e. how long will it be short.

thick clay = pledges. Ref. to Pent. Ap. 92. Occurs in this form only here. Ap. other forms in Deut. 15. 24, where it occurs nine times with a cognate meaning, and in Joel 2. 7.

7 bite = or, exact usury. vax = shake.


9 coveteth = extorseth a gain. Fig. Paronomasia. Ap. 6. Heb. 'ā'ēl. . . . be'ēl. evil. Heb. 'nā'ēl.
ousness 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 sanceth a city by iniquity!

13 Behold, is not in the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?

14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

(p. 1568)

15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that pouseth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

16 Thou art filled with shame and with disgrace; because the sons of men, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

18 What profiteth the graven image, that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols?

19 Woe unto him that saith to the wood, “Awake!” to the dumb stone, “Arise, it shall teach!” 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.

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, in the midst of the years, make it known; in wrath remember mercy.

3 Come from Teman, and the Holy One

set his nest on high. Ref. to Pent. (Num. 24. 21). power—hand. Put by Fig. Metonymy (of Cause), Ap. 6, for the power exercised by it.


consulted—counselled, or devised.

shame—a shameful thing.

sinned against thy soul. Ref. to Pent. (Num. 16. 38).

sinned. Heb. châlâ.’ Ap. 44. i.


the LORD. Heb. Jehovah (with ’th-); Jehovah of Hosts Himself. Ap. 4. II. See note on 1 Sam. 1. 3.

the earth shall be filled, &c. Ref. to Pent. (Num. 14. 21). Ap. 92. This is the fifth and last occurrence of this wondrous prophecy—Num. 14. 21, Ps. 72. 19, Is. 66. 9 (shall be); 11. 9, and Hab. 2. 14.


that pouseth thy bottle to him—adject (or pouseth) thy fury or venom (Heb. construct form of kânuh = heat, wrath; not of kânu = bottle) thereto. See Oxford English, p. 705, under sôphâk.

thou art filled with shame and with disgrace, because of men’s blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

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Ap. 6, for what was heard. Here—Thy fame, as in Num. 14. 15, 1 Kings 10. 19. Is. 66. 19, afraid. In saw; as in Ex. 14. 31. Revive—renew, in the sense of repeating, doing over again. Work. Some codices, with Aram., Sept., and Syr., read “works”; in doing. Adjunct. Ap. 6, for the afflictions suffered in them, or “wrath” manifested in them. Out of 278 occurrences, this is the only place where it refers to time. Had Habakkuk learnt, like Daniel? Make known—make [Thyself] known. The Heb. present places the logical pause on this verb: i.e. 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. JEHOVAH’S DOINGS.

(Repeated Alternation.)

H J 1 | 3-5. His comings.

K 1 | 6-11. His doings.

J 1 | 12, 13. His going.

K 1 | 14. His doings.

J 1 | 15. His going.

3 from Teman. Ref. to Pent. (Deut. 33. 2). Ap. 92.

3. 3.

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518 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.

K\textsuperscript{1} e\textsuperscript{1}

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.

f\textsuperscript{1}

7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

e\textsuperscript{3}

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

f\textsuperscript{o}

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.

e\textsuperscript{3}

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.

e\textsuperscript{3}

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.

J\textsuperscript{g}

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

h

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

g

9 Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto Selah.

K\textsuperscript{3}

14 Thou didst strike through with His staves the head of His villages: they came uttering his voice, i.e. [at Thy presence].

Selah. Connecting His coming forth with the glorious effects of it. See Ap. 6. II. Note, the three "Selahs" in vv. 3, 9, 12.

His glory. Cp. Isa. 6. 5.

4 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 to His the hiding, &c. = hiding (or concealing) of His full power.

6 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. 23. 27. Ps. 68. 1, 2. burning coals; or, lightning. Cp. Ps. 18. 8; 75. 3; 75. 48.

3. 6-11 (K\textsuperscript{1}, p. 1863). HIS DOINGS.

(Repeated Alterations.)

K\textsuperscript{1} e\textsuperscript{1} | e. At, and after Creation.

f\textsuperscript{1} | f. Among Israel’s enemies.

e\textsuperscript{3} | e. At the Exodus.

f\textsuperscript{2} | f. In Israel’s Deliverances.

e\textsuperscript{3} | e. At the Conquest of Canaan.

f\textsuperscript{3} | g. 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. Pat. by Fig. Metonymy (of Cause). Ap. 6, for the tents formed by them.

f Was ... ? F ig. Erotext. Ap. 6. Rightly supplied in following clauses.

Thou didst ride. Ref. to Pent. (Deut. 33. 26, 27). horses = horses [of power].

and. Some codices, with three early printed editions (the Rabbinic), Sept., Syr., and Vulg., read this as and in the text.

9 Thy bow = [Nay] Thy bow, &c. naked = bare, according to the oaths of the tribes ... Selah. This second Selah (see Ap. 6. 11) is to connect the remarkable parenthetic 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 allaged by some modern critics. The oaths are the promises sworn to the fathers or the tribes [of Israel] whom still in the loins of the patriarchs, with rivers = [and the waters gushed out] with rivers. See Ps. 74. 15; 78. 15, 16; 105. 41.


3. 12, 13 (J\textsuperscript{2}, p. 1296). JEHOVAH’S GOINGS. (Introversion.)

J\textsuperscript{2} | g. 12. For the subduing of Israel’s enemies. h | 13. For the salvation of Israel.

j | 13. For the subduing of Israel’s enemies.

12 thresh = tread down. Cp. Judg. 6. 4. Ps. 68. 7. | h | 13. For the salvation of Israel.

| g | 12. For the subduing of Israel’s enemies.

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

13 anointed: i.e. for the salvation of Jehovah’s anointed People (sing). See Ps. 105. 16. woundedst = dashest in pieces. out of from. the wicked = [the] lawless one. Heb. nishah. Ap. 44. 8. 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. 14. It connects Jehovah’s doings also (v K\textsuperscript{2}, v. 14) with Jehovah’s goings (v. 7, v. 16). See Ap. 68. 1, 2.

14 strike through = pierce. His = his own weapons. Cp. Judg. 7. 22. head = chief. villages = leaders. Heb. text = “leader” (sing); but margin “leaders” they came out, &c. = [when] they came forth.

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3. 14.

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

Thine horses, through the heap of great waters.

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.

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 shall be no herd in the stalls:

Yet will I rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in my salvation.

The LORD my might, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places.

To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

ZEPHANIAH.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK AS A WHOLE.

For the Canonical order and place of the Prophets, see Ap. 1, and pp. 1206 and 1207.
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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. 29. 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. 3 it says that Assyria shall be destroyed, and Nineveh made a desolation. Therefore it was before the fall of Nineveh, 515 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 518 B.C., or about three years before the fall of Nineveh.