

1. The book of Habakkuk is unique. Habakkuk records a dialog with God and a concluding hymn.
2. Less is stated in the Bible concerning Habakkuk than almost any other prophet. Not even his father, tribe or hometown are mentioned.
3. Historical summary for Habakkuk:

Habakkuk was a contemporary of Nahum, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah, during the reigns of Josiah (640–609 BC) and Jehoiakim (609–598 BC). Assyria was off the scene; Babylon (“the Chaldeans”) was in power. Nebuchadnezzar had defeated Egypt in 605 BC and was about to attack Judah. Jeremiah had announced that Babylon would invade Judah, destroy Jerusalem and the temple, and send the nation into exile - taking place in 587/586 BC.

4. Instead of speaking to the people on behalf of God - Habakkuk spoke to God for the people.
5. Habakkuk took his complaints directly to God. He questioned how God could remain silent while the wicked prospered. (1:2–4)
6. God responded to Habakkuk’s first complaint with the revelation that He would raise up the Babylonians to punish wicked Judah - Habakkuk became even more perplexed. (1:5-11)
7. Habakkuk’s second complaint - How could God use such a wicked nation to punish His people? (1:12–17)
8. Habakkuk’s views of God were right - but his perspective was too limited.
9. He had looked for the punishment of the wicked so that the prosperity of his people could be assured.
10. However - God - who knew the end from the beginning, looked for the punishment of His people so that they could be restored to fellowship.
11. Habakkuk had two alternatives - he could allow his doubts to be either destructive or creative.
12. He could use his doubts, struggles, and questions to turn from God and to renounce his faith - or he could keep his focus on God, trusting Him for an answer.
13. Next we find God’s second answer in chapter 2 verses 1-5.
14. In preparation for God’s second answer, Habakkuk sought to take his stand upon his watch and to station himself upon the rampart.
15. He had a position - much like the military watchman who had a post above the city looking out for the approach of enemy armies.
16. Wherever his post was, the prophet went there to withdraw from the people and concentrate specifically on God and what God would say when He decided to speak.

17. The prophet knew he could not give an answer himself and would be permitted to speak again only when he received the divine decision.
18. God answered the prophet by means of a strong contrast. (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38)
19. The one whose life is puffed up in pride and arrogance will die; the righteous, in contrast, by his faithfulness will live. Whether in Judah or Babylon, those in rebellion against God would die.
20. The righteous are those courageous enough to accept God's word of promise in a world dominated by the horrors of Babylonian power described in the preceding verses.
21. To look for salvation in a world dominated by persecution requires faithfulness. World history may not indicate it, but God is leading His world to accomplish His purposes.
22. Habakkuk's revelation emphasized the life-giving nature of God.
23. Though the revelation may take what appears to be an agonizingly long time to appear, wait for it. God knows and cares for his people.
24. Words of woe are given in chapter 2 verses 6-20.
25. The Babylonians sought more and more nations to devour, taking captives away to Babylon. Babylon, like Assyria before it, practiced exiling captives to far-away lands.
26. The Babylonians added to this brutal practice by bringing captives from other lands to occupy the lands of those deported to other places.
27. The series of woes confirms the truth of the God's message in verse 4. The arrogant ultimately will fall under the weight of their sin; the righteous will live by faithfulness to God.
28. The final verse of the chapter 2 (v20) points the reader to the holy God enthroned in His holy temple and prepares the reader for the prayer of Habakkuk in chap. 3.
29. Habakkuk turns to praise. Why? He has heard God's voice and seen God's vision. He knows the ultimate outcome of history.
30. Therefore in chapter 3 verses 17 and 18 we see a fitting climaxe to the book as a whole.
31. Here the prophet accepts God's program and resolving his own contention with God expressed so strongly in chaps. 1-2.
32. The fact that the book concludes with the prophet rejoicing in the saving power and strength of God indicates that Habakkuk felt God's impulse to judge in no way dismissed the Lord's loving nature.