

# It's All About Him!

## Seeing God on Every Page

### INTENT

What did God intend for the original audience to know? Consider context and avoid reading with a 21st century world-view.

### TRUTH

What does God reveal about His nature, character, and ways as well as that of the other main characters in the passage?

God the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit

Other Main Characters



### TRANSFORMATION

If I BELIEVE and ACT on what God has revealed, how will my heart be changed and my life be different tomorrow?

If I BELIEVE and ACT on what God has revealed, I WILL . . .

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### INTENT

What did God intend for the original audience to know? The Bible's authors didn't write with a 21st century world-view.

**TITLE/MEANING:**

**AUTHOR:**

**DATE/PERIOD OF HISTORY:**

**AUDIENCE:**

**BIBLICAL LITERARY GENRES:** Circle the genre(s) used and/or write in additional ones not listed:

Historical/Narrative/Story – Poetry/Psalms – Wisdom – Letters/Epistles – Prophecy – Apocalyptic

**BACKGROUND/PURPOSE/CONTEXT:**

**CHRIST CONNECTION:** It's All About Him!

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### INTENT

What did God intend for the original audience to know? The Bible's authors didn't write with a 21st century world-view.

**TITLE/MEANING:** Note the title's meaning if known.

**AUTHOR:** Some of the Bible's authors are unknown.

Is there any important information we need to know about the author that helps us understand the message?

**DATE/PERIOD OF HISTORY:**

The date of some books is uncertain. Usually a period of history can be determined that helps us understand the audience's needs and literary genre, such as if the message is narrative (a story of an actual event) or prophetic (speaking of future events to come.)

**AUDIENCE:** Who was the author's original audience? All four gospels write about the life of Christ, but they wrote to four different audiences. Their audience determined what stories and view points they shared. Matthew wrote to the Jews, Mark wrote to the Romans, Luke wrote to the Greeks, and John wrote to everyone. The audience focuses the message.

**BIBLICAL LITERARY GENRES:** What type of literature is the author using? The type influences the interpretation. The author may use different types within the same book. The following list gives the major types of genres in the Bible, but there are many sub-types. Don't get overwhelmed. The point is to understand that we shouldn't read every part of the Bible the same or else we're likely to misinterpret a passage. Circle the genre(s) used and/or write in additional ones not listed:

Historical/Narrative/Story – Poetry/Psalms – Wisdom – Letters/Epistles – Prophecy – Apocalyptic

1. Historical/Narrative/Story: A record of actual events (Genesis, the Gospels)
2. Poetic/Psalms: Uses poetic devices (such as parallelism and symbolism) to emphasize the message (Psalms)
3. Wisdom: Makes generally true statements to live by but are not to be considered promises (Proverbs)
4. Letters/Epistles: Written to a specific audience usually to address a specific need or problem (Titus)
5. Prophecy: Messages (oracles) from God's prophets that are either  
Forthtelling—messages "telling forth" the word of God, describing the current state of affairs (Deut. 18:15-18)  
Foretelling—messages about future events, judgments, and/or blessings (Isaiah 53)
6. Apocalyptic: Visions or Messages given by God to reveal a glimpse into the invisible spiritual world (Dan. 7-12; Rev.)

**BACKGROUND/PURPOSE/CONTEXT:**

Context determines the meaning of a word, phrase, or message.

When determining the author's intent of a whole book, consider the context of the book within the context of the whole Bible? Consider when the book written. Was it before or after Israel's exile? Before or after the cross? Etc.

When determining the author's intent of a chapter within the book, consider what was happening before and after the chapter you're studying.

Each author was inspired to write according to the need of the original audience. What problems or needs did the audience face that the author addressed?

What had just happened in the lives of the audience or was about to happen?

What was going on in the world that may have led to their need for this message?

**CHRIST CONNECTION: It's All About Him!**

In what ways does the message point to Christ?

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# Habakkuk

Code: MSB35

## Title

This prophetic book takes its name from its author and possibly means “one who embraces” (1:1; 3:1). By the end of the prophecy, this name becomes appropriate as the prophet clings to God regardless of his confusion about God’s plans for his people.

## Author and Date

As with many of the Minor Prophets, nothing is known about the prophet except that which can be inferred from the book. In the case of Habakkuk, internal information is virtually nonexistent, making conclusions about his identity and life conjectural. His simple introduction as “the prophet Habakkuk” may imply that he needed no introduction since he was a well known prophet of his day. It is certain that he was a contemporary of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zephaniah.

The mention of the Chaldeans (1:6) suggests a late seventh century B.C. date, shortly before Nebuchadnezzar commenced his military march through Nineveh (612 B.C.), Haran (609 B.C.), and Carchemish (605 B.C.), on his way to Jerusalem (605 B.C.). Habakkuk’s bitter lament (1:2–4) may reflect a time period shortly after the death of Josiah (609 B.C.), days in which the godly king’s reforms (cf. 2 Kin. 23) were quickly overturned by his successor, Jehoiakim (Jer. 22:13–19).

## Background and Setting

Habakkuk prophesied during the final days of the Assyrian Empire and the beginning of Babylonia’s world rulership under Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar. When Nabopolassar ascended to power in 626 B.C., he immediately began to expand his influence to the N and W. Under the leadership of his son, the Babylonian army overthrew Nineveh in 612 B.C., forcing the Assyrian nobility to take refuge first in Haran and then Carchemish. Nebuchadnezzar pursued them, overrunning Haran in 609 B.C. and Carchemish in 606 B.C.

The Egyptian king Necho, traveling through Judah in 609 B.C. to assist the fleeing Assyrian king, was opposed by King Josiah at Megiddo (2 Chr. 35:20–24). Josiah was killed in the ensuing battle, leaving his throne to a succession of 3 sons and a grandson. Earlier, as a result of discovering the Book of the Law in the temple (622 B.C.), Josiah had instituted significant spiritual reforms in Judah (2 Kin. 22,23), abolishing many of the idolatrous practices of his father Amon (2 Kin. 21:20–22) and grandfather Manasseh (2 Kin. 21:11–13). Upon his death, however, the nation quickly reverted to her evil ways (cf. Jer. 22:13–19), causing Habakkuk to question God's silence and apparent lack of punitive action (1:2–4) to purge His covenant people.

### Historical and Theological Themes

The opening verses reveal a historical situation similar to the days of Amos and Micah. Justice had essentially disappeared from the Land; violence and wickedness were pervasive, existing unchecked. In the midst of these dark days, the prophet cried out for divine intervention (1:2–4). God's response, that He was sending the Chaldeans to judge Judah (1:5–11), creates an even greater theological dilemma for Habakkuk: Why didn't God purge His people and restore their righteousness? How could God use the Chaldeans to judge a people more righteous than they (1:12–2:1)? God's answer that He would judge the Chaldeans also (2:2–20), did not fully satisfy the prophet's theological quandary; in fact, it only intensified it. In Habakkuk's mind, the issue crying for resolution is no longer God's righteous response toward evil (or lack thereof), but the vindication of God's character and covenant with His people (1:13). Like Job, the prophet argued with God, and through that experience he achieved a deeper understanding of God's sovereign character and a firmer faith in Him (cf. Job 42:5,6; Is. 55:8,9). Ultimately, Habakkuk realized that God was not to be worshiped merely because of the temporal blessings He bestowed, but for His own sake (3:17–19).

### Interpretive Challenges

The queries of the prophet represent some of the most fundamental questions in all of life, with the answers providing crucial foundation stones on which to build a proper understanding of God's character and His sovereign ways in history. The core of his message lies in the call to trust God (2:4), "the just shall live by his faith." The NT references ascribe unusual importance theologically to Habakkuk. The writer of Hebrews quotes Hab. 2:4 to amplify the believer's need to remain strong and faithful in the midst of affliction and trials (Heb. 10:38). The apostle Paul, on the other hand, employs the verse twice (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11) to accentuate the doctrine of justification by faith. There need not be any interpretive conflict, however, for the emphasis in both Habakkuk and the NT references goes beyond the act of faith to include the continuity of faith. Faith is not a one-time act, but a way of life. The true believer, declared righteous by God, will habitually persevere in faith throughout all his life (cf. Col. 1:22,23; Heb. 3:12–14). He will trust the sovereign God who only does what is right.

## Outline

- I. Superscription (1:1)
- II. The Prophet's Perplexities (1:2–2:20)
  - A. His first complaint (1:2–4)
  - B. God's first response (1:5–11)
  - C. His second complaint (1:12–2:1)
  - D. God's second response (2:2–20)
- III. The Prophet's Prayer (3:1–19)
  - A. Petition for God's mercy (3:1, 2)
  - B. Praise of God's power (3:3–15)
  - C. Promise of God's sufficiency (3:16–19)

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**Who Am I in Christ?**  
**Vs.**  
**Who is the Great I AM?**

**Both Truths should give us courage and peace and lead us to joy.**  
**But which Truth gives you *more* courage and peace and leads you to joy faster?**

1. **Ephesians 2:10** — For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

**Who I Am in Christ:**  
I am God's workmanship.

**Who the Great I AM is in Himself:**  
He is the uncreated Creator.  
His power spoke the world into existence  
and created me in Christ Jesus.

2. **John 15:15** — No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

**Who I Am in Christ:**  
I am no longer a slave. I am Christ's friend.

**Who the Great I AM is in Himself:**  
He is the all-knowing and all-wise One.  
He makes known to me everything I need to understand.

3. **Philippians 4:13** — I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

**Who I Am in Christ:**  
I can do all things through Christ.

**Who the Great I AM is in Himself:**  
He is my strength.  
His power gives me everything I need to do  
everything He calls me to do, including  
endure all circumstances with peace and joy.

4. **1 John 5:18** — We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

**Who I Am in Christ:**  
I am born of God. I am untouchable by  
the evil one and sin.

**Who the Great I AM is in Himself:**  
He is the One who holds me fast.  
He keeps me safe in His grip so that the evil  
one cannot touch me. It is His power that  
keeps me from succumbing to sin.