

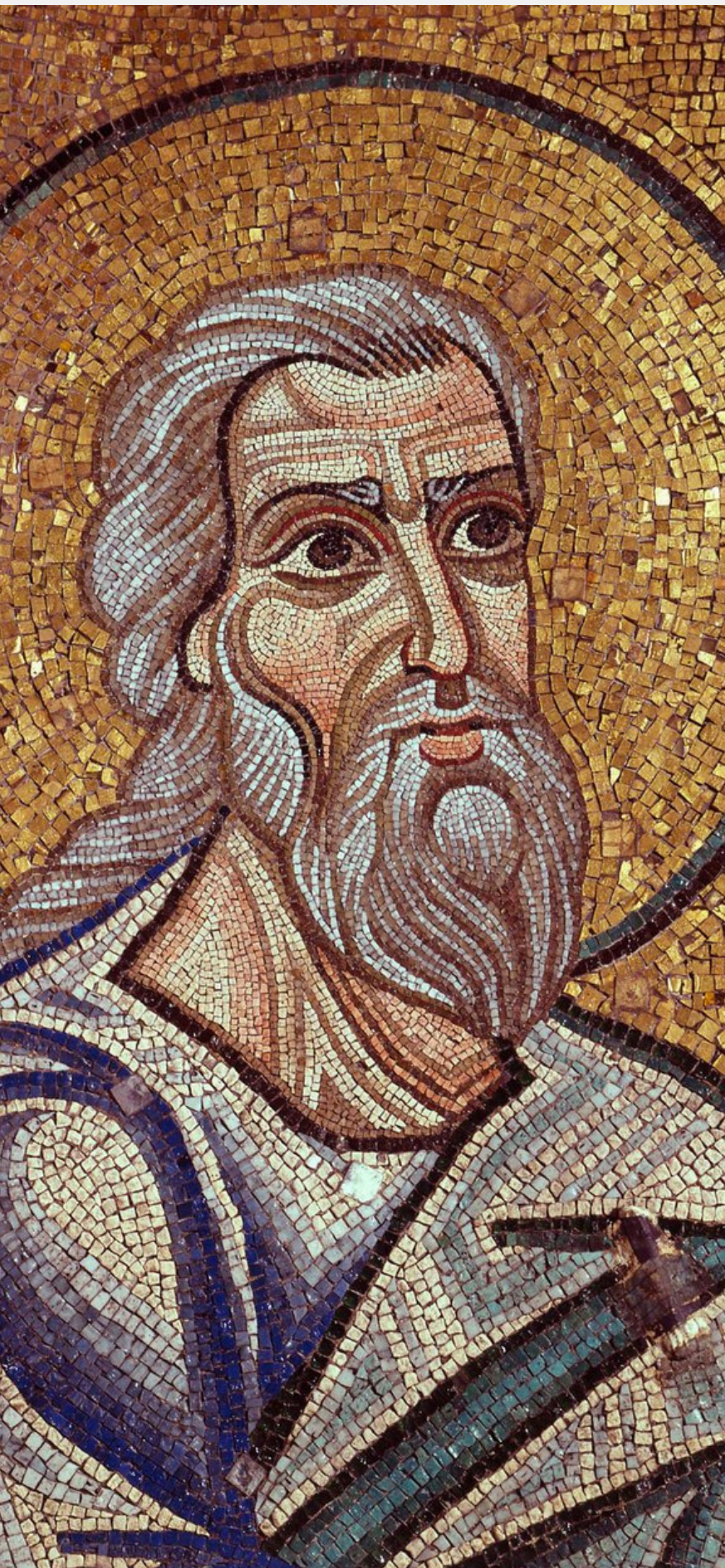


DID YOU KNOW?...

About
Habakkuk

Spring 2025

CONTENTS



PAGE 4

Interesting facts
about Habakkuk

PAGE 6

About the
Chaldeans

PAGE 14

"Radical
Change" by
Chad Baggett

PAGE 17

Learn More
About Habakkuk

**“He brings all
of them up
with a hook; he
drags them out
with his net; he
gathers them
in his dragnet;
so he rejoices
and is glad”
(Habakkuk
1:15 ESV).**

*Photograph: Stele of
victory from Susa depicts
enemies caught in a net,
2371 to 2316 B.C. See
and compare Habakkuk
1:15. [The Louvre (Public
Domain)]*





DID YOU KNOW?

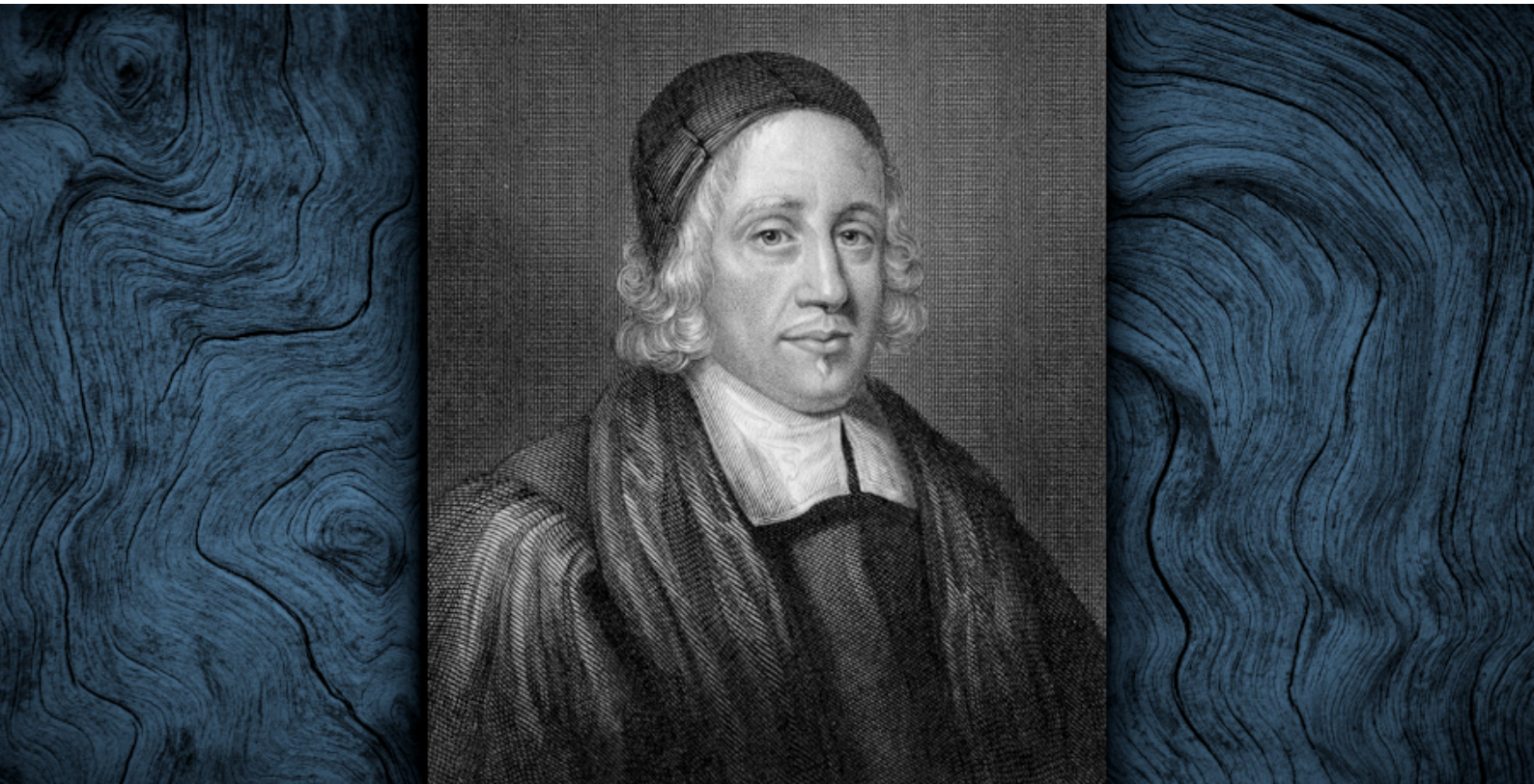
Interesting Facts About Habakkuk

It is difficult to precisely date Habakkuk's "oracle" since, unlike most of the other prophets in the Old Testament, Habakkuk refrains from referencing the reign of a specific king (or kings) as one of his contemporaries.

Nothing is known of the person or life of the prophet beyond his name, "Habakkuk" (Hb *chabhaquq*), which means "to embrace."

Habakkuk's prophecy is unique in the fact that prophets typically speak to people about God; Habakkuk spoke to God about people.

When John Newton's wife died, he (the author of the famous hymn, *Amazing Grace*) voluntarily preached her funeral, triumphantly using the text from Habakkuk 3:17-18.



A Single Precept

The Jews in the Talmud have the saying, *The whole law was given to Moses at Sinai, in six hundred and thirteen precepts*. David, in the fifteenth Psalm, brings them all within the compass of eleven. Isaiah brings them to six (Isaiah 33:15); Micah to three (Micah 6:8); Isaiah, again, to two (Isaiah 56); Habakkuk to this one, *The just shall live by his faith* (Habakkuk 2:4).

JOHN LIGHTFOOT (1602–1675)



About The Chaldeans (Habakkuk 1:7–11)

Book excerpt:
“Why, God? Why?!
Understanding
Habakkuk” by Ron
Metheny (pp. 9–15)



Beginning in 1:7 and continuing for five verses, Habakkuk’s oracle describes in great detail the foreign nation that God had chosen to judge His chosen people. It would serve us well at this point to take a brief, summarical look at the history of the Chaldeans as it pertains to Habakkuk’s prophecy and his fellow Jewish contemporaries.



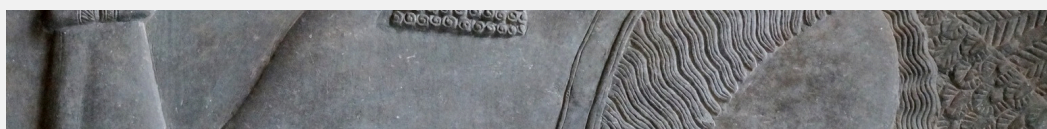
The Chaldeans (Hb Kasdim, Akkadian *kaldû*) were a Semitic tribe related ethnically to the Aramaeans. Their invasion of southern Babylonia appears to coincide chronologically with the Aramaean invasion of Syria sometime around the ninth or tenth century BC. The very first written attestation of the Chaldean's existence occurs historically in the annals of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (c. 852 BC), in which the royal chronicler mentions King Shalmaneser's act of invading the southeastern extremes of Babylonia and subjugating Mushallim-Marduk the main coalitional leader of the Kaldû tribes. As the influence and might of the Assyrian Empire began to wane in the seventh century BC, Chaldean leaders including Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar eventually gained their independence and established the Neo-Babylonian dynasty sometime after 625 BC. Under this dynasty the Chaldeans destroyed the Assyrian Empire and succeeded to its rule over much of the Fertile Crescent. In the shortest of terms, the Chaldeans were the "Babylonians" who ruled over Greater Mesopotamia during that which is historically known as the Neo-Babylonian Period (c. 626–539 BC).



They are dreaded and fearsome; their justice and dignity go forth from themselves (Habakkuk 1:7 ESV).

History attests to the Chaldeans being a warrior race, and a law unto themselves. The morality of those rapidly approaching Judah “from the north” (see Jer 1:13–15; 4:6) can easily be summed up in these three words: “Might makes right!” Although their national pantheon numbered in the hundreds (if not thousands), their own rapacity and ferocity appear to be the twin deities the Chaldeans revered most.

As the Word of the Lord accurately declares in both Habakkuk 1:7 and Jeremiah 4:7, the Neo-Babylonian Empire under the rule of its Chaldean king, Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 2 Kgs 24:1–7), came to pride itself as the proverbial king of the jungle. Other nations were its most unfortunate prey. The prophet Jeremiah thusly stated to Judah’s residents: “A lion has gone up from his thicket, a destroyer of nations has set out; he has gone out from his place to make your land a waste; your cities will be ruins without inhabitant” (Jer 4:7 ESV).





Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves; their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swift to devour (Habakkuk 1:8 ESV).

Like their Assyrian predecessors, the Neo-Babylonian military ran on horsepower. The Chaldeans made extensive use of cavalry, especially mounted archers. Chariots with durable metal “tires” offered supplemental support in battle, which allowed the Chaldeans to execute an ancient mode of blitzkrieg warfare much like that used by the Nazis during World War II. They were masters at storming cities. The speed with which the Neo-Babylonian army conquered her enemies had by Habakkuk’s time even become proverbial.

They all come for violence, all their faces forward. They gather captives like sand (Habakkuk 1:9 ESV).

In all consideration of verse nine's context, the KJV seems to offer a more precise translation of the original text: "They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand." The "East wind" (Hab 1:9 KJV) in this case was presumably the sirocco (Arabic sharqiyya Lit. "easterly"; Hb qadim, "from the front, i.e. the east").

The Sirocco is a seasonal wind that originates in the Sahara region of Africa and moves relentlessly into the Middle East. It is wildly destructive in nature, marked by hurricane like speeds and dust laden aridity. In addition to the physical difficulties and destruction it brings, the sirocco also causes a distinct psychological phenomenon among the affected population: severe mental depression (cf. Jer 4:10–12). Modern scientists have reported that "even the happiest person becomes depressed" when this "east wind" hits.

What a vivid and accurate portrait of the coming Chaldeans bent on Judah's destruction! It is well known today that the Neo-Babylonian Empire, as a matter of deliberate national foreign policy, would deport conquered peoples. They would ruthlessly gather their captives up and disperse them just as the Sirocco displaces countless grains of sand.





At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it (Habakkuk 1:10 ESV).

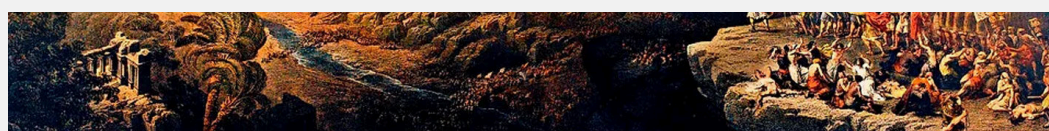
History attests to the fact that the Chaldean military forces conscripted by King Nebuchadnezzar's administration was an efficient and extremely organized war machine (cf. Jer 21:2-6). In addition to its cavalry and infantry units, the Chaldean army carried with it a corps of dedicated siege engineers and sappers whose tactical expertise enabled full frontal assaults against fortified cities. The Chaldeans were so confident in their ability at siege warfare that, according to Habakkuk 1:10, they'd contemptuously laugh at the rulers of their potential captives. Strongholds were objects of their derision. Their enemies' feeble attempts at defense were a joking matter to the Chaldean soldiers—"They laugh at every fortress" (v. 10) and joke about how easy it will be to capture it. The Lord even related in Jeremiah 15:8 that the Chaldeans were brazen to the point of attacking Jerusalem at midday, whereas most invaders of antiquity would begin their siege at dawn to take advantage of as much daylight as possible.



***Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men,
whose own might is their god! (Habakkuk 1:11 ESV).***

The original language of verse eleven is obscure. It is presumably a personal interjection made by the prophet reflecting his amazement at the vision God had just revealed to him. Habakkuk stood in awe at the sheer rapidity of the Chaldeans' mode of plundering. In addition to this, he was bewildered by the fact that these swift despoilers deified their own military might.

The prophet's cause for dismay was not historically unfounded. Consider the textual display of power, arrogance, egocentricity, and dominance recounted in one of several historiographic documents to have been commissioned by Nebuchadnezzar II during his reign, entitled "The Fall of Jerusalem" [Text from the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar II. D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings* (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum (London, 1956). Tablet B.M. 21946 on plates V and XIV ff., also pp. 66 ff.]:





“Seventh year: In the month Kislimu, the king of Akkad called up his army, marched against Syria (lit. Hattu-land), encamped against the city of Judah (URU la-a-hu-du) and seized the town on the second day of the month Adar. He captured the king. He appointed there a king of his own choice. He took much booty from it and sent (it) to Babylon”

Though implied in part, Nebuchadnezzar’s own annals seem to support the view that this ancient ruler attributed his nation’s military victories to no other being, no higher entity, save himself. Nebuchadnezzar served as his own deity. Note the royal chronicler’s choice use of words as (obviously) commissioned by King Nebuchadnezzar in the above ancient text: **he** called up **his** army; **he** marched against Syria; **he** encamped against Jerusalem; **he** seized Jerusalem; **he** captured Judah’s king; **he** appointed a king of **his** own choosing; **he** took much booty; **he** sent it to **his** own city of Babylon.

How could God permit such a depraved megalomaniac, one so completely full of himself and nothing else, to be an instrument of judgment against His chosen? How could God use an army of ungodly overzealous militants led by such an egregious and blasphemous man, as a vessel of wrath against His beloved? “Why, God? Why are you blessing them—those whose actions and thoughts merit not even a drop of Your kindness—and yet, withhold Your blessing from us, the people of Your covenantal law?! Why is Babylon now great? And why is Judah now a curse? Why, God? Why?!” cries the prophet.

RADICAL CHANGE

FROM BEING DEAD TO BEING ALIVE



Over the years I have had more than a few good conversations concerning salvation. One of those conversations was with a married couple that had been members of a local church for several years. During this visit the topic of salvation came up. I mentioned that salvation is a radical change. Almost immediately I was informed that this was not true. The reason for this sudden interruption was because this person was saved as a child. Since they were a child they believed that their sins were not great and therefore the change was not radical. Seeing that I needed to be more specific as to what I meant; I went on to explain that when a person is saved they have gone from being dead to being alive, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)" (Ephesians 2:5, KJV). That alone is something that I would be consider as being radical. Not to mention that a person who is lost is considered to be an enemy of God., "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Romans 5:10, KJV). So, a person that is saved goes from being a dead

enemy of God to being an alive child of God, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." (John 1:12, KJV). If we were to consider just these reasons, we can say that salvation is a radical change. This radical change is something that is brought about by the Lord, "Salvation is of the LORD." (Jonah 2:9, KJV).

After explaining the reasoning behind the claim that salvation is a radical change by stating that salvation is not just saying some words. It was at this point in the conversation that I learned the real problem we were dealing with because at that moment I was interrupted again, with a very stern voice in a manner that let me know I was way off base with what I was saying, and informed that the Bible says you just have to say the words. Unfortunately, many believe that salvation is about saying the right words.

This is sometimes referred to as the sinner's prayer. Often people will be asked to bow their heads, close their eyes, and then repeat the words of the one leading the service. After which they are told that if they did this they are now saved. This is far from being biblically true. What this person was referring to in particular was, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9, KJV). Well, in this person's defense, as you yourself have just read, the Word does say exactly that. If we read this verse and take it as written without any consideration being given to the context, then we find a problem. When we take something out of context we can then make it seem to mean something other than what the Author meant. If we look at this verse as though there are no other accompanying verses we could get the impression that by saying something with our mouths a change can be made to our hearts. To put it plainly if we say it with our mouths and then believe it with our hearts we are saved. This belief would then put us in direct opposition to what Jesus says, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart;" (Matthew 15:18,KJV). So, the words that come out of the mouth find their root in the heart. This means the states of lost and saved find their beginnings or roots in the heart and not the mouth. Salvation is a matter of the conduction of the heart before the Lord. Then there is the problem that is presented by the belief that we can say the words and be saved. If we consider this to be true then what we are saying is that we play an active role in saving ourselves without which we cannot be saved. If we can say words to be saved that would be something that we are doing in order to be saved and if there is something that we can do then that means there is a work that we can do or rather need to do in order to be saved. This is another belief that stands in direct opposition of Scripture concerning salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9,KJV). We can now see that there are at least two problems with the idea that salvation is a matter of just saying the words.

We are now left with the problem of what exactly does Romans 10:9 mean. Fortunately, God gave us more than one verse to understand what He means. If we consider the very next verse we can get a much clearer understanding, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:10, KJV). Verse 10 starts off with a very important three letter word "for". Which means that verse 10 is the explanation as to why verse nine is true. If we consider the word "for" as meaning "because" the biblical understanding of verse nine becomes clear. So, what is the proper understanding of verse nine? Salvation begins in the heart. The Word tells us here that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" which means with the heart one believes and is justified. What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart so, it's only a justified heart which can produce a true confession that Jesus is Lord. The true confession of faith is not something that is added to the justified heart in order for one to be saved. The true confession of faith is the product of a justified heart. There is only One that can justify or declare someone justified, "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3:26, KJV). God is the only One who can declare someone justified. Romans 3:26 is an echo of what we read in the Old Testament where God says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26,KJV). Salvation is completely, in every aspect, a work of God and it is most assuredly a radical change.

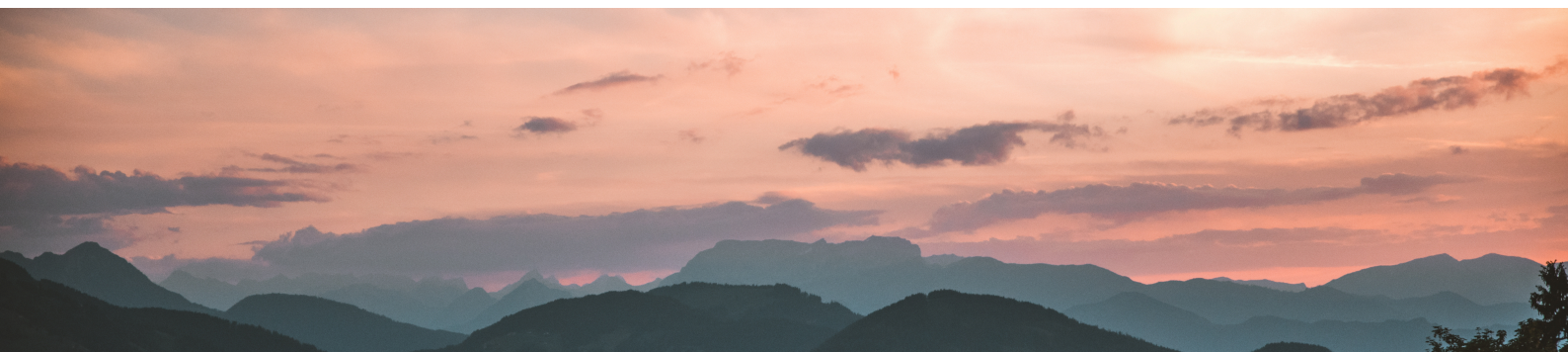
§



Spiritual Peace

"Habakkuk looked at God and ceased to look at his difficulty. That is the true basis of spiritual peace."

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981)



If You'd like to learn more about Habakkuk

"Why, God? Why?!" by Ron Metheny is a comprehensive guide to the book of Habakkuk that will help lead inquisitive minds, like yourself, into the imperative of faith.

The prophet Habakkuk had a question mark for a brain. In the Old Testament book that bears his name Habakkuk analyzes the fallen creation around him, and then quizzes the sovereign God who reigns over him. He's a man brazenly searching for answers. He struggles to understand why bad things happen—especially to God's people. Do you ever wonder the same? Have you ever found yourself walking through life utterly confused by the sequence of current events, wondering Where is God? Do you have a question mark for a brain? If so, then you'll without doubt find yourself relating to this prophet and his prophecy on a very personal level.



**"WHY,
GOD?
WHY?!"**

← Understanding Habakkuk →

RON METHENY

"Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4 ESV).

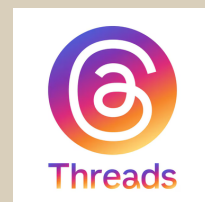
available at **amazon**

DIG DEEP...

with Reformed Archeology



FOLLOW US...



@reformedarcheology