

YET I WILL *Rejoice*

AN INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY
OF HABAKKUK

Rachel Collins



Treasuring God's Word
Fredericksburg, VA

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*"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."*

(Isaiah 55:10-11)

May the Lord accomplish His purposes in this sending forth of His Word.

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Hebrews 11

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Take a few moments to consider ways that you can make spending time with the Lord a priority as we work through this study. He longs to speak to you and has given you His Spirit, who will open His Word personally to your heart.

Method

This study guide uses the inductive method of Bible study. You'll notice that the bulk of your time will be spent directly interacting with the text of the Scriptures themselves, with just a few summaries and explanations included to aid your study. The questions are designed to help you as you look at the text to see what it says, to guide you through a proper understanding of what it means, and to challenge you to consider your responses to what the Lord is showing you. If you are new to inductive Bible study, take a few minutes to read the explanation of this method in the Appendix.

Translation

The questions in this study are based on the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible. You can choose any translation you prefer for your study, but if a question doesn't make sense in your preferred translation, see if referring to the ESV aids in your understanding.

Structure

Each lesson is divided into five parts. The first four will guide you through an inductive study of a passage, and the fifth is designed as a review and small group discussion guide. At the end of selected parts you will find sections titled *Go Deeper*. These optional exercises allow you to explore related Scripture or outside resources. If you'd like to go further in your study, download the Bonus Packet which contains instructions for an independent study of an additional psalm that complements each lesson.

Bonus Packet

Bonus studies, printable copies of the text of Habakkuk and charts in this study, additional study materials, and small group leader tips are included in the free downloadable bonus packet. Click the QR code to the right or at the end of each lesson to access this downloadable PDF.



Pacing

This study is designed for you to set your own pace. Most people find success in working one lesson over two weeks. If you are leading a group through this study,

consider meeting every other week, allowing group members to focus on the main body of the study, and leaving the *Go Deeper* sections and bonus studies as optional extras for those who have more time.

Resources



All you will need to complete this study is this study guide, your personal Bible, and your choice of pens, pencils, or highlighters. If you choose to work through the *Go Deeper* sections or the additional studies in the downloadable Bonus Packet, you will also want to have a notebook where you will have room to record your discoveries. You may also consider purchasing a copy of the book of Habakkuk designed for inductive study to keep your notes in one place. These can be found under the *Bibles* section of the *Treasuring God's Word* website or by scanning the code to the left.

Encouragement

Remember that Bible study is a privilege, not an obligation, and that working through this study guide should not be considered homework. Enjoy this sweet opportunity to get to know the Lord personally: His attributes, His ways, what pleases Him, what displeases Him, how He sees you, and how He wants you to see Him. Don't worry about falling behind if you are using this guide with a group. Begin each new lesson with your group with no guilt for what you didn't complete in the previous lesson.

Most importantly, make sure to begin your time of study in prayer. This is so easily neglected, and yet is the key to a rich, deep time in the Word. As 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 explains, it is the Spirit of God who explains to us the wisdom of God. Through prayer, we recognize our need for the Spirit to open our ears and our hearts to the things of God so that we are reading His Word with spiritual understanding rather than natural understanding. Pray for an open heart as you begin your study, for understanding as you continue, and in response as you complete each study session.

Contact

It brings me great joy to hear how the Lord uses this study in His Church! If you have any questions or need clarification about anything in this study, have a story to share about how the Lord is using this study, or simply want to say hello and let me know that you are using this either for personal or small group use, feel free to contact me at Rachel@treasuringgodsword.com! I would love to hear from you!

May the Lord pour out His unlimited riches of wisdom and insight into your heart as you meditate on His Word!

OPENING WORDS

There are times when studying the Word of God reinforces sweet truths that the Lord has shown you or spoken to you about Himself in the past, like a sweet soothing balm to a tired soul! And then there are times when the Lord shakes you out of your comfort zone and shows you that He is far bigger, more complex, and more powerful than you could ever imagine!

I pray that this study is the latter!

Why? Because there is so much peace, joy, and hope in having a true knowledge of Almighty God and His ways. When you gaze into the complexities of our infinite Lord, you can rest in His goodness even when things don't work out the way you had hoped or expected. Life isn't all sunshine and rainbows, and we need to know that God is the God of the storm as much as He is the God of the stillness. This is the God we meet as we study the prophecy of Habakkuk.

You may be familiar with some of the closing verses of the book of Habakkuk:

*"Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation."
(Habakkuk 3:17-18)*

How we love that word "rejoice!" It's such a heartwarming, positive thought. But there is a word in this verse that comes before "rejoice," a seemingly minor word that is easily overlooked. But don't miss its power despite its apparent insignificance! It is a word that implies a decision. It makes a stark contrast between what came before and what comes after. As you think about it, the moment Habakkuk says "Yet," you know he has considered what has been revealed to him and decided on his response.

We are going to follow Habakkuk's example as we move through this study. We're going to contemplate all that Habakkuk had to consider, seeing what he saw and feeling what he felt. We will humbly allow ourselves to be challenged by the revelations that Habakkuk received, and understand the meaning of the statement in Habakkuk 2:4 that says, "*The righteous shall live by his faith.*" As we bow our hearts before the throne of the Almighty God, I pray that we will come to the same peaceful conclusion that Habakkuk does:

YET I WILL REJOICE!

LESSON 1

A NATION IN CRISIS

Historical Background

Habakkuk was a man who lived during a specific time and in a specific place. He spoke to specific people about a specific situation. His words are timeless, yet they come from the context of his life. As we seek to understand the message that the Lord has for us in his words, let's first get to know what life was like for this ancient prophet.

Come with me, back to the time of the kings of Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. What happened in this nation that led up to what God had to say through Habakkuk?

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are
in Christ Jesus.
(Romans 8:1)*

A decorative graphic of a leafy branch is positioned in the top left corner of the page, partially overlapping the title.

PART 1

A GOOD KING, A POOR DECISION

Before we begin to get into the heart and mind of Habakkuk himself, we are going to spend a few days looking into the world in which he lived, a time when his nation was experiencing a period of extraordinary political instability. What was once a powerful nation under King David, God's chosen leader, was now divided, with rulers that drifted far from the God who established them.

Ten northern tribes of Israel had split off from the unified nation, rejecting the line of David. They were ruled by family after family, who continually led them further away from the Lord. Though God sent prophets who warned them of their unfaithfulness and called them to repent, they would not listen. Because of their hardened hearts, the Lord finally gave them over to the Assyrian empire, and the northern kingdom of Israel went into captivity (2 Kings 17:6-18).

Meanwhile, the two southern tribes, still ruled by David's descendants, had their own ups and downs with the Lord. Periods of deep apostasy were interspersed with moments of revival. But the influence of the world around them was strong, and the people of God forgot the One who had redeemed them, who had set them apart and called them His own (Isaiah 17:10, Hosea 4:6).

We'll begin with the final years of the nation of Judah, the southern kingdom, near the end of King Hezekiah's reign. Although Hezekiah was devoted to the Lord, it is during his time that we see the first shadows of what would become a reality in Habakkuk's day. We'll trace the story right up through Judah's final kings, a time of great political instability and upheaval, when foreign nations seemed to have more power over the people of Judah than their own leaders.

This is the time in which Habakkuk lived and prophesied; these are his people, his nation, his family. Though we live thousands of years after him, people are the same now as they were then, with the same temptations, fears, and concerns. And even more, the God that they served is the same God we serve, an unchanging God of both mercy and justice, a holy God who calls His people to reflect His holiness.

Prepare Your Heart

As you sit down to study today and every day, make sure to go to the Lord in prayer before you begin. Ask Him to open your ears to hear what He is speaking to you, your eyes to see His truth, and your heart to understand His wisdom.

Dig In

We start our study with a king who had a heart to serve the Lord but allowed his pride to get the better of him. Let's get to know King Hezekiah.

Read 2 Kings 18:1-6

How is King Hezekiah described? (v. 3)

According to the text, why is he described this way? (vv. 4-6)

It was in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign that the Assyrian empire came and conquered the northern kingdom, captured Samaria, the capital of Israel, and took the northern king captive (2 Kings 18:9-12). Several years later, Assyria came up against Judah, Hezekiah's kingdom, and laid siege to Jerusalem. Hezekiah cried out to the Lord, and He miraculously delivered them without Judah having to lift a finger (2 Kings 18:13-19:36). It is about this time that a different, far less powerful, nation starts to make itself known in Judah.

Read 2 Kings 20:1-6 (up through 11 if you have time)

What happened to Hezekiah? (v. 1)

What did Isaiah tell him? (v. 1)

How did Hezekiah respond? (vv. 2-3)

How did the Lord respond to Hezekiah's prayer? (vv. 5-6)

The Lord was true to His Word, and Hezekiah recovered. Word of Hezekiah's recovery spread and sparked the curiosity of distant nations.

Read 2 Kings 20:12-13

Who came to visit Hezekiah? Make sure you notice what nation they were from.

How did Hezekiah receive them?

At first glance, does this seem like an appropriate response for a king to make to a foreign envoy?

Read 2 Kings 20:14-15

Who questioned Hezekiah about the envoys?

How did Hezekiah respond?

From what you can see here, how does Hezekiah seem to feel about the envoys' visit?

Read 2 Kings 20:16-18

What was the word of the Lord to Hezekiah?

Before reading verse 19, think about how you would expect Hezekiah would respond to this word. Notice how he responded to the Assyrian threat in 2 Kings 19:1-4 and 14-19 and remember how he responded to the threat of his own death in 2 Kings 20:2-3. What would you anticipate him to say or do at this point?

Now read verse 19

How does Hezekiah respond?

How does this strike you?

Why do you think Hezekiah's response is different than what we saw in 2 Kings 19:14 and 20:2-3, two other times when he faced significant challenges?

Meditate

Think for a moment about your own response to news of disaster. How do your prayers for things that affect you personally compare with your prayers for things that are more distant or detached?

Go Deeper

Read Isaiah 38:9-20 to hear Hezekiah's song of praise for his recovery. *Have you ever been in a place like this? How did the Lord walk you through it?*





PART 2

A CORRUPT LEADER, A CORRUPT NATION

Hezekiah lived the extra fifteen years that the Lord had granted him in response to his prayer for recovery. Eventually though, his time ended, and his son became king in his place.

Prepare Your Heart

Studying history can be challenging. Ask the Lord to give you insight into what you are reading, that by His Spirit it would become very real and relevant to you.

Dig In

Read 2 Kings 20:21—21:1-2

Who was king after Hezekiah?

How old was he when he began to reign?

How long was his reign?

How is he described? (v. 2)

Read 2 Kings 21:3-9

Based on what you see in the following verses, how did Manasseh influence Judah's religious life? Copy what you see in the verses themselves.

v. 3

vv. 4-5

v. 6

v. 7a

What was the promise that God had given years before to David and Solomon?
(vv. 7b-8)

What condition does the Lord make on this promise? (v. 8)

What was the impact of Manasseh's influence on this promise?

We just saw how Manasseh led Judah away from single-hearted worship of the Lord into deep idolatry, nullifying this conditional promise that God made to keep them from falling back into slavery and exile.

Even though we are under a different covenant, with even better promises (Hebrews 8:6), in what ways do we, as blood-bought believers in Jesus, fall short of single-hearted worship of the Lord?

Is this something you personally struggle with? Take a moment in prayer as you answer this, asking the Lord to reveal to you the secrets of your heart (Psalm 139:23-24).

How can we prevent this?

Let's go back to Manasseh:

Read 2 Kings 21:10-15

What is the Lord's evaluation of Manasseh? (v. 11)

What was the Lord's pronouncement against Judah? (vv. 12-14)

Look at 2 Kings 20:17-18 again

How does what the Lord tells Manasseh in chapter 21 compare with what the Lord had told Manasseh's father Hezekiah?

Read 2 Kings 21:16-18

Besides spiritual evils, what else characterized Manasseh's reign?

How would you summarize the state of the nation of Judah because of Manasseh's leadership?

What does this tell you about the importance of leadership, whether in a nation, a church, or a home?

In what areas do you have influence as a leader?

Looking at the fruit of your leadership, how has your influence affected the spiritual condition of those who have been entrusted to you?

Meditate

As you close your study for today, take some time to pray for the leaders in your home, in your church, in your community, and in your nation, according to 1 Timothy 2:1-4. Feel free to write your prayer here.

Go Deeper

There is so much more to the story of Manasseh than just his apostasy that is recorded in 2 Kings. Read 2 Chronicles 33:10-13, as well as the fruit of this encounter in vv. 14-16, and rejoice in the grace of God on behalf of one of His greatest prodigals.



PART 3

A SPARK OF REVIVAL

Manasseh's son Amon ruled after Manasseh's death, and he was every bit as evil as Manasseh. After just two years Amon's servants revolted against him and killed him; but those who were faithful to David's household and dynasty made sure that it was Amon's son (and not the conspirators) who ended up on David's throne in Jerusalem (2 Kings 21:19-25). That son of Amon was 8-year-old Josiah, and his reign was like a cleansing shower on the defiled land of Judah. Even so, as you read between the lines of Josiah's story, see if you can discern just how thoroughly idolatry had infiltrated God's holy people.

Prepare Your Heart

As you open your time in the Word today, ask the Lord to reveal to you any areas of idolatry that may have taken root in your life.

Dig In

Read 2 Kings 22:1-2

How is Josiah's reign summarized?

Think back to the legacy that was left by his grandfather, King Manasseh, and his father, King Amon. What would Josiah have to overcome to have his legacy characterized this way?

Read 2 Chronicles 34:1-3

What was it about Josiah that made the difference in his reign? (v. 3)

Four years later, what did Josiah begin to do? (v. 3)

At 16 years old (eight years into his reign), Josiah began to seek the Lord. At 20 years old (12 years into his reign), he began the purge of Israel that would characterize his reign. 2 Kings 22:3-13 tells of a pivotal event that happened just a few years later, during Josiah's 18th year as king. Josiah saw that the temple was suffering from neglect, and he commissioned some men to restore it. As they did, they made an amazing discovery.

Read 2 Kings 22:8-13

What happened as they were repairing the temple?

How did Josiah respond to this discovery? (vv. 11, 13)

Read 2 Kings 22:14-20

Who did Josiah send his servants to speak to?

What does she tell them:

About Judah? (v. 16)

Why? (v. 17)

About Josiah? (v. 20)

Why? (vv. 18-19)



Think about your own relationship with the Word of God. When you see Josiah's response to the reading of the Law, how does that compare with your reaction to the reading of the Word?

Read 2 Kings 23:1-3

What actions did Josiah take after hearing the Book of the Law and hearing the Lord's judgment through the prophetess Huldah?

Think back to Josiah's great-grandfather, Hezekiah, and how he responded to a similar word from Isaiah. (See 2 Kings 20:16-20.)

How did Josiah's response compare with Hezekiah's?

What does this tell you about Josiah's faith?

What does this tell you about Josiah's heart for the Lord?

Consider what the Lord saw as He looked at His beloved nation—the nation He redeemed out of Egypt, the nation He carried through the wilderness, the nation that were the special recipients of His promises and His covenants. It was a nation that

He Himself selected to be set apart for Him, unique in their witness, intended to be a beacon of truth to all the nations. Think through all that Josiah had to do to cleanse the nation, seeing these reforms through the Lord's eyes.

What comes to mind?

Josiah heard the Word of the Lord, repented, and put his repentance into action (James 1:22). His desire to please the Lord led him to complete an extensive restoration of Israel, followed up with a Passover celebration that was unlike any that had been kept through all the days of Israel, from the days of the judges all the way through Josiah's time (2 Kings 23:21-23).

As we close, look at 2 Kings 23:25-27

Think about what this implies about Judah's heart.

Do you think they had a true repentance?

Why or why not?

Meditate

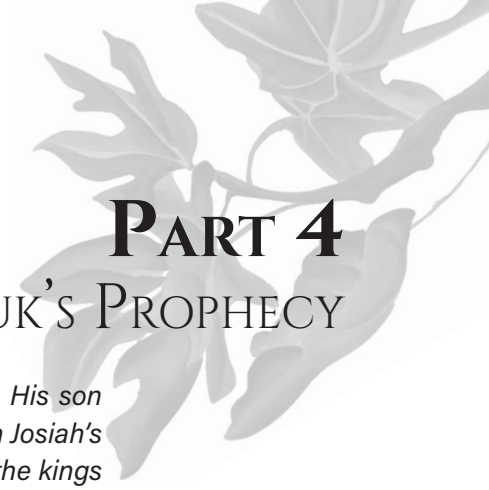
How about you? Is your heart like Josiah's, a heart that truly seeks after the Lord, with revival in your wake? Or are you like Israel, turning this way and that way following the influences of the culture around you?



Go Deeper

This revelation of the Word of God sparked a renewed effort on Josiah's part to cleanse Judah and Israel from the idolatry that had entirely infiltrated the culture.

Read 2 Kings 23:4-24 and look at all that Josiah had to do to complete this cleansing. *What did he have to remove from the temple (vv. 4, 6, 7, 11, 12)? How about the priesthood, the ones who were set apart for the Lord to do His service (vv. 5, 8, 9)? What did he do around the capital city, Jerusalem (vv. 8, 10, 13-14)? And in the rest of Judah and all the way into Israel (vv. 15, 19, 24)?*



PART 4

HABAKKUK'S PROPHECY

The reforms initiated by King Josiah were short-lived. His son Eliakim, who was renamed Jehoiakim, did not follow in Josiah's footsteps and instead returned to the wicked practices of the kings who preceded him (2 Kings 23:37). It is likely that Habakkuk's conversation with the Lord occurred during Jehoiakim's reign.

We will spend today reading through the text of Habakkuk. I recommend using a plain ESV text, such as can be found in the downloadable Bonus Packet or Crossway's ESV Scripture Journal, rather than a study Bible with notes. The joy of inductive study comes from engaging directly with the text of the Bible, learning to hear the Lord's voice, and personally discovering the sweet insights that the Lord has for you.

Prepare Your Heart

Begin in prayer.

Read Habakkuk 1-3

Do this in one sitting without taking any notes.

What are your first impressions of this prophecy?

Dig In

Read Habakkuk a second time

As you do:

- Put a ? in the margin next to anything you don't understand.
- Put a ! in the margin next to anything that surprises you.
- Put a * in the margin next to anything that encourages you.

What were some of the things that you had a question about? (Come back to this as we continue our study and see how the Lord answers your questions.)

What were some things that surprised you?

What was encouraging to you?

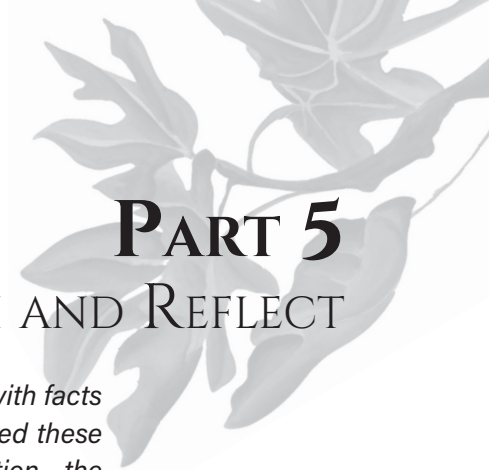
Meditate

After your reading today, how do you anticipate this study making a difference in your life?

Go Deeper

Read through Habakkuk one more time. As you do, add a short summary in the margin next to the text of Habakkuk that gives a short (5-10 word) summary of what is happening in that paragraph. For example, next to verses 2-4, you could write something such as: "Habakkuk cries out to the Lord for help."

Don't worry if you can't do this for all the paragraphs just yet. Summarize as much as you can at this point. As we continue our study, you can come back and add your summaries of any paragraphs that you initially missed.



PART 5

REFRESH AND REFLECT

The Bible isn't merely a history book that presents us with facts about the past. Instead, the Spirit has carefully curated these stories as He shares with us the grand story of redemption—the story of sin and salvation, of faith, judgment, and mercy. Accounts like those we read this week remind us that although we live in a broken world, we have a Great Redeemer who has a plan to make all things right. All the failures of the Old Testament point to God's great victory in the New!

Refresh

We studied the life and impact of several kings of Judah this week. What did we learn about:

King Hezekiah

SMALL GROUP
LEADERS:

These questions are provided for you as a guide for your small group discussion. Start with the refresh questions to help remind your group of what they learned. Then, select a few of the reflect questions to encourage your group to consider how to apply what they have learned. Feel free to incorporate any application questions that were included in the study itself.

King Manesseh

King Josiah

Reflect

Choose a few of the following questions and spend some time answering them. Journal your responses in the space provided or in a separate notebook.

How does the history of Israel illustrate the truth of the first part of Romans 6:23 which says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord?"

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, as well as Galatians 5:19-21. What did you see in the account of Judah that illustrates these verses?

What value is there in learning about the history of God's relationship with Judah? How did you see God's grace and mercy in the passages we studied this week?

Think back to 2 Kings 20:16-19 and 22:15-20. Now that we have seen the outcome of these warnings, what do you think about Hezekiah's and Josiah's responses? Do you think they would have responded differently if they could have known more fully what was going to happen?



Unlike these men, we have the good news of salvation in Jesus fully revealed. Read Titus 3:3-7 carefully. What difference does the gospel make in your life? In the lives of those who are in your sphere of influence? Are you more like Hezekiah, thankful for your salvation but keeping it to yourself? Or, are you like Josiah, using the gifts and position the Lord has given you to impact the world around you?

As we will be studying Habakkuk in the weeks to come, look again at Judah through Habakkuk's eyes. What does he see? What did he experience? How might this have shaped his impressions of the Lord?



WANT MORE? SCAN THE CODE
FOR A BONUS STUDY OF THE
FINAL YEARS OF THE KINGDOM OF
JUDAH.

Endnotes

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