THE TIME FRAMES OF HABAKKUK

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Faithful Remnant
BABYLONIA [bab i LOW nih uh] — ancient pagan empire between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in southern Mesopotamia. The Babylonians struggled with the neighboring Assyrians for domination of the ancient world during much of their history. At the height of their power, the Babylonians overpowered the nation of Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, and carried God’s Covenant People into captivity in 586 B.C.

The fortunes of the Babylonians rose and fell during the long sweep of Old Testament history—from about 2000 B.C. to about 500 B.C. References to these people—their culture, religion, and military power—occur throughout the Old Testament.

Babylonia was a long, narrow country about 65 kilometers (40 miles) wide at its widest point and having an area of about 8,000 square miles. It was bordered on the north by Assyria, on the east by Elam, on the south and west by the Arabian desert, and on the southeast by the Persian Gulf.

Among the earliest inhabitants of this region were the Sumerians, whom the Bible refers to as the people of the “land of Shinar” (Gen. 10:10). Sargon I (the Great), from one of the Sumerian cities, united the people of Babylonia under his rule about 2300 B.C. Many scholars believe Sargon was the same person as Nimrod (Gen. 10:8).

In 1792 B.C. Hammurapi emerged as the ruler of Babylonia. He expanded the borders of the Empire and organized its laws into a written system, referred to by scholars as the Code of Hammurapi. Abraham had earlier left Ur, one of the ancient cities in lower Babylonia, and moved to Haran, a city in the north. Abraham eventually left Haran and migrated into the land of Canaan under God’s promise that he would become the father of a great nation (Gen. 12:1–20).

This reconstruction of Babylon from the time of King Nebuchadnezzar II shows the huge ziggurat on the left and the temple of the pagan god Marduk on the right.

Any account of Babylonia must also mention Assyria, which bordered Babylonia on the north. Assyria’s development was often intertwined with the course of Babylonian history. About 1270 B.C., the Assyrians overpowered Babylonia. For the next 700 years, Babylonia was a second-rate power as the Assyrians dominated the ancient world.

In 626 B.C., Babylonian independence was finally won from Assyria by a leader named Nabopolassar. Under his leadership, Babylonia again became a great empire. In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, became ruler and reigned for 44 years. Under him the Babylonian Empire reached its greatest strength. Using the treasures he took from other nations, Nebuchadnezzar built BABYLON, the capital city of
Babylonia, into one of the leading cities of the world. The famous “hanging gardens” of Babylon were known as one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world.

In 586 B.C., the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and carried the leading citizens of the nation of Judah as captives to Babylon. During this period of captivity, the Persians conquered Babylonia, and the Babylonians passed from the scene as a world power.

The ruins of Babylon, once the proud capital city of the mighty Babylonian Empire.

Photo: Matson Photo Collection

During its long history, Babylonia attained a high level of civilization that was influential beyond its borders. Sumerian culture was its basis, which later Babylonians regarded as traditional. In the realm of religion, the Sumerians already had a system of gods, each with a main temple in a particular city. The chief gods were Anu, god of heaven; Enil, god of the air; and Enki or Ea, god of the subterranean ocean. Others were Shamash, the sun-god; Sin, the moon-god; Ishtar, goddess of love and war; and Adad, the storm-god. The Amorites promoted the god Marduk at the city of Babylon, so that he became the chief god of the Babylonian religion, beginning about 1100 B.C.

Babylonian religion was temple-centered, with elaborate festivals and many different types of priests, especially the exorcist and the diviner, whose function was to drive away evil spirits.

Babylonian literature was dominated by mythology and legends. Among these was a “creation” myth called Enuma Elish, written to glorify a god known as Marduk. According to this myth, Marduk created heaven and earth from the corpse of the goddess Tiamat. Another work was the Gilgamesh Epic, which includes a flood story and was written about 2000 B.C. Scientific literature of the Babylonians included treatises on astronomy, mathematics, medicine, chemistry, botany, and zoology.

An important aspect of Babylonian culture was a codified system of law. Hammurapi’s code was the successor of earlier collections of laws going back several centuries. The Babylonians used art for the celebration of great events and glorification of the gods. It was marked by stylized and symbolic representations, but it expressed realism and spontaneity in the depiction of animals.

The Old Testament contains many references to Babylonia. Genesis 10:10 mentions four Babylonian cities: Babel (Babylon), Erech (Uruk), Accad (Agade) and Calneh. These, along with Assyria, were ruled by Nimrod.¹

THE VICINITY OF THE CAMPAIGN OF ARMAGEDDON AND THE SECOND COMING OF THE MESSIAH
HABAKKUK 3:2 (NASB95)

STRUCTURAL KEY: PARALLELISM,

A
B
B
A

² LORD, I have heard the report about You and I fear.

O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years,

In the midst of the years make it known;

In wrath remember mercy.

1. Synonymous: reinforcement by repetition (B)
2. Antithetic: contrast
3. Synthetic: builds upon the idea (A)
4. Climactic: expands the thought
5. Emblematic: an image illustrates the thought
6. Formal: two dissimilar thoughts connected
THE ROUTE OF MARCH INCLUDING TEMAN AND THE WILDERNESS OF PARAN

Revelation 14:20 (NASB95)
And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, **for a distance of two hundred miles.**
HABAKKUK
Theme / Application Chart

SCRIPTURE: Habakkuk 1:1 – 3:19

THEME: The just shall live by faith, patiently waiting through the day of calamity.

APPLICATION: Habakkuk’s life is our example.

SPECIFIC APPLICATION: What confusing calamity is invading your life: job loss, ungodly co-worker, unprincipled boss, betrayal by spouse, abuse by parent, a nagging question or doubt, sickness, etc, etc?

PLAN OF ACTION: Suggestions:

1) Seek God through the study of His word
   Look for principles in scripture that speak to your situation and practically implement them.

2) Prayer for the situation
   Alone with God – express your perplexity and anger and confusion like Habakkuk did.

3) Patiently wait on God and trust Him to make things right.

4) Fulfill your responsibilities in the situation but refuse to take matters into your own hands.

5) Remember, if you do not experience relief or justice in this life, God will make all things right at the Second Coming of Yeshua.