**Lesson 21**

**7-8 March 2022**

**Genesis 42-27**

***Another Perspective*: Habakkuk**

**Timeline and Map –** Habakkuk is the sixth of the minor prophets in terms of the timeline, so write his name on the blank beside number 6. I went with the date suggested by the *Women’s Study Bible* (640 b.c.) but you notice that the *Know Your Bible* booklet says “approximately 600 b.c.” That’s why I put the little wavy “~” symbol before each blank in the “date” column on the timeline worksheet. We know from some of the things Habakkuk says in his book that he lived sometime after the fall of Israel and before the fall of Judah, but we don’t know exactly when in that span of time. We do know that he lived in Judah, so we will draw a little stickman in that area of the map.

**An Unusual Book –** As the *Women’s Study Bible* points out, “Habakkuk is unusual as a prophetic book.

* It never addresses the people of Judah directly. Rather **it is a dialogue, or conversation, between the prophet and God**.” The first two chapters begin with a complaint or lament from Habakkuk as he pours out his heart to God, and they end with God’s response to him. In essence, Habakkuk is giving us a peek inside his prayer journal.
* The third chapter is a prayer that reveal Habakkuk’s response to all that God has told him, and the very last verse contains another unusual feature:  **this final prayer is a song that is meant to be sung by God’s people,** and Habakkuk gives specific instructions to the “choirmaster” that the song is to be accompanied by stringed instruments!

**Content and Structure –** Habakkuk was a man who lived in a time and situation very similar to the one in which we live today. Let’s look at 1:2-4. Does what he is describing sound very familiar? Now look at God’s response in verses 5-11. God says that He has already begun to answer Habakkuk’s prayer. He is bringing the Chaldeans (another name for the Babylonians) to punish Judah. But Habakkuk finds God’s “solution” even more troubling than the original problem. He cries out, “Why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallow up the man more righteous than he?” In other words, he wonders how God can use a wicked nation (Babylon) to punish a less wicked one (Judah). This time God tells him to write down His answer, and He assures Habakkuk that God will surely punish the wicked, but that won’t happen until “the appointed time”. (See 2:2-3.)

**Key Themes of the Book –** The *Women’s Study Bible* lists four important themes found in this little book.

1. God is just and merciful, even though His people may not always understand His ways (2:4).
2. Wickedness will eventually be punished, and the righteous will ultimately see God’s justice (2:5-20).
3. God uses some wicked nations to punish other wicked nations, but ultimately God will judge all nations (1:6; 2:5-20).
4. The key phrase “the righteous shall live by his faith” (2:4) summarizes God’s plan for His people. It is quoted three times in the New Testament (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). Each time a different aspect of the phrase’s meaning is highlighted.

**Habakkuk’s Laments End in Joy –** As we read 3:16-19, we can almost hear Habakkuk bursting into song as he realizes that God is faithful and trustworthy and is at work even when there doesn’t seem to be any visible evidence. No wonder he wanted people to sing this prayer in his day . . . and may we take comfort from this little “mini Psalm” today as we ponder our own circumstances.

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***Bible Study Fellowship’s Perspective:*** The following comments were taken from Lesson 27 of the BSF course on Genesis.

**The Purpose for Joseph’s Tests –** God used the tests Joseph imposed on his brothers **to reveal their willingness to protect their brother Benjamin and honor their father, Jacob.** pg 1

**Joseph’s Own Heart Attitude –** [When Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, he] did not ignore or redefine their sin. He addressed their past offense against him without bitterness or resentment. “And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.” How was he able to acknowledge their sin against him without casting blame, seeking retaliation or recounting the pain they had caused him? **God had revealed His overruling redemptive purposes to Joseph.** When Joseph was young, he had dreamed of his future power to rule. Now, Joseph exercised that power as God had ordained. Joseph’s trials had deepened his desire to love and serve others—the Egyptians and hungry visitors, including his family. **That love now exceeded his quest for power, position or revenge.** pg 1-2

**Jacob’s Family Registry –** Scripture lists Jacob’s family members who left Canaan to live in Egypt…**The people on this list became the nation of Israel, the people of God.** Carefully maintained legal registries were the basis for the distribution of land in Canaan among the various tribes of Israel. Accurate genealogical records were preserved up through the birth of Jesus. Jesus’ genealogy was traced through these ancient records that had been preserved in the temple. All legal records after the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ appear to have been lost in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. pg 3

**Jacob’s “Pilgrimage” –** When Pharaoh asked Jacob how old he was, Jacob responded that his years were “few and difficult”. His years *were* few when contrasted with the ages of his forefathers, and they were difficult because he had indeed lived a hard life. “He endured some trouble of his own making and some inflicted by others…Jacob referred to his life as a ‘pilgrimage’. A pilgrim is in transit—a traveler or wayfarer headed somewhere else. Like Jacob, we are pilgrims on this earth, our temporary dwelling place. The believer’s true citizenship is not on this earth where pain reigns and suffering lingers…Whether or not things resolve [here], eternity is bright for God’s children.” pg 4-5

**Jesus Is Greater –** Many have pointed to beautiful parallels between Joseph and Jesus…While God used Joseph greatly to accomplish His purposes, the person and work of Christ far exceed that of Joseph:

* Joseph suffered in slavery and prison and was exalted by God to save His people from extinction through famine.
	+ *Jesus suffered on the cross and rose from the dead to save His people from sin and death.*
* Joseph was used by God to preserve the people of the Promised One who would come from the line of Judah.
	+ *Jesus is the Lion of Judah.*
* Joseph was exalted to second-in-command in ancient Egypt.
	+ *Jesus is King of kings, exalted to the highest place.*

 **Joseph is to be respected; *Jesus is to be worshipped for eternity.*** pg 2