

Habakkuk 1-2

How long, O YHVH, must I call for help? But you do not listen! "Violence is everywhere!" I cry, but you do not come to save.

Must I forever see these evil deeds? Why must I watch all this misery? Wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight.

The law has become paralyzed, and there is no justice in the courts. The wicked far outnumber the righteous, so that justice has become perverted.

YHVH replied, "Look around at the nations; look and be amazed! For I am doing a work in your days that you would never believe even if someone told you. I am raising up the (Chaldeans) Babylonians, a cruel and violent people. Who march throughout the earth To seize dwelling places which are not theirs. They are dreaded and feared. Their justice and authority originate with themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards And keener than wolves in the evening. Their horsemen come galloping, Their horsemen come from afar;

They fly like an eagle swooping down to devour. They all come for violence; Their horde of faces moves [eagerly] forward, They gather prisoners like sand. They mock at kings, And rulers are a laughing matter to them. They laugh at every fortress, And heap up rubble to capture it. Then *his* mind changes, and he transgresses; He commits offense, *Ascribing* this power to his god

O YHVH my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal – surely you do not plan to wipe us out? O YHVH, our Rock, you have sent these Babylonians to correct us, to punish us for our many sins. Your eyes are too pure to look upon evil, and You cannot tolerate wrongdoing. So why do You tolerate the faithless? Why are You silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

Why have You made men like the fish of the sea, Like creeping things without a ruler over them? The foe pulls all of them up with a hook; he catches them in his dragnet, and gathers them in his fishing net; so he rejoices gladly. Then they will worship their nets and burn incense in front of them.

“These nets are the gods who have made us rich!” they will claim. Will you let them get away with this forever? Will they succeed forever in their heartless conquests?

I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guardpost. There I will wait to see what YHVH says and how he will answer my complaint.

Then YHVH said to me, **“Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. See, the enemy is puffed up; They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to YHVH. Wealth is treacherous, and the arrogant are never at rest. They open their mouths as wide as the grave, and like death, they are never satisfied. In their greed they have gathered up many nations and swallowed many peoples. But soon their captives will taunt them. They will mock them, saying, ‘What sorrow awaits you thieves! Now you will get what you deserve!**”

You've become rich by extortion, but how much longer can this go on?' Will your creditors not rise up suddenly, And those who collect from you awaken? Then you will become plunder for them. Because you have plundered many nations, now all the survivors will plunder you.

You committed murder throughout the countryside and filled the towns with violence. What sorrow awaits you who build big houses with money gained dishonestly! You believe your wealth will buy security, putting your family's nest beyond the reach of danger.

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The stones of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it. What sorrow awaits you who build cities with money gained through murder and corruption! Behold, isn't it of YHVH of Armies that the peoples labor for the fire, and the nations weary themselves for vanity?

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of YHVH as the waters cover the sea. What sorrow awaits you who make your neighbors drunk! You force your cup on them so you can gloat over their shameful nakedness. But soon it will be your turn to be disgraced.

Come, drink and be exposed! Drink from the cup of YHVH's judgment, and all your glory will be turned to shame. For your violence against Lebanon will overwhelm you, and the destruction of animals will terrify you, because of your bloodshed against men and your violence against the land, the city, and all their dwellers. Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman? Or an image that teaches lies?

For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak. Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come to life!' Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!' Can it give guidance?

It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it."

YHVH is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.