

HABAKKUK

Conversational Version

1:¹The Oracle That Habakkuk the Prophet Saw

Habakkuk's Complaint

- ²How long, LORD, will I call out for help,
and you won't listen?
I cry out, "*Violence!*"
but you don't protect *me*.
- ³Why do you make me watch wickedness?
Destruction and violence go on right in front of me;
fighting and arguing keep getting worse and worse.
- ⁴*The courts* ignore the Law,
so they don't render justice;
sinners are in the majority,
so they pervert justice.

Hab 1:1-4

The LORD's Answer

- ⁵The LORD's first answer:
*"Look around at the nations
and be astounded.
I'm doing something in your own day
you wouldn't believe if somebody told you.*
- ⁶*I'm arousing the Babylonians,
that fierce, impetuous people
that marches across the region
to seize places to live that aren't theirs.*
- ⁷*They're dreaded and feared;
they're a law unto themselves
and make their own rules*
- ⁸*Their horses are faster than cheetahs,
more vicious than wolves at dusk.
Their cavalry comes charging from far away
and swoops down like eagles to devour their prey.*
- ⁹*They come bent on violence;
their hordes surge forward like a desert wind
and sweep captives away like sand.*

¹⁰*They scoff at kings and ridicule rulers;
they laugh at fortresses
and pile up ramparts to besiege them.*

¹¹*They rush through like the wind and move on;
they're guilty men whose power is their god."*

Hab 1:5-11

Habakkuk's Second Complaint

¹²Aren't you from everlasting,
LORD, my God, my Holy One?
Surely you won't let us die.

You, LORD, have appointed *the Babylonians* to judge us;
you, Rock, have sent them to punish us.

¹³You're too pure to approve of evil;
you can't countenance wickedness.

Why do you tolerate treacherous people?

Why are you silent when sinners swallow up
people better than themselves?

Hab 1:12-13

¹⁴They treat us like fish in the sea,
like creatures with no rulers.

¹⁵Sinful people fish us out with hooks
and scoop us up with nets.
They catch us in their seines;
they're happy and celebrate.

¹⁶So they sacrifice to their seines
and burn incense to their fishing nets,
because they make large catches with them
and have lots to eat.

¹⁷Will they empty their nets then
and keep on killing nations without mercy?

Hab 1:14-17

^{2:1}I'll stand at my post and watch;
I'll station myself on a watchtower
to see how he'll answer my complaint.

The LORD's Second Answer

²The LORD's *second* answer:

*"Write down this vision, etch it on tablets
so the messenger can run with it*

³*The vision is still for a future time;*

*it speeds toward the goal and won't fail.
Though it seems slow, wait for it;
it will certainly come in due time.* **Hab 2:1-3**

⁴*“Arrogant people aren't righteous,
but the righteous will have life by his trust in me.
⁵Besides, wine betrays the arrogant, so they don't last.
Their greed increases like the grave;
like death, they're never satisfied.
They gather the whole world to themselves
and use everybody.* **Hab 2:4-5**

⁶*“Won't people taunt them and say in mockery,
'Misfortune awaits you that accumulate what's not yours
and make yourselves rich by extortion
—for how long, though?*

⁷*Won't your creditors suddenly decide
to call in their loans?
You'll become their plunder.*

⁸*Since you've looted many nations,
other nations will loot you
for the blood of men and women that you shed,
for your violence to towns and their people.'*

Hab 2:6-8

⁹*“Misfortune awaits whoever uses dishonest gain
to build a prominent house up high,
like a nest beyond harm's reach.*

¹⁰*You've plotted shamelessly to build that house
by ruining lots of people's lives;
you end up sinning against yourself.*

¹¹*The very stones cry out against you from the wall,
and the beams in the ceiling echo the complaint.* **Hab 2:9-11**

¹²*“Misfortune awaits whoever builds a city with murder
and establishes a town by violence!*

¹³*Isn't it from the LORD of Hosts
that people labor only to have it burn up
and nations wear themselves out for nothing?*

¹⁴*The knowledge of the LORD's glory*

will cover the earth like water fills the ocean. **Hab 2:12-14**

¹⁵“*Misfortune awaits you that make other people drink
your venom to get them drunk
so you can stare at their disgrace!*

¹⁶*You’ll be disgraced, not honored;
you’ll drink and expose your own disgrace.
The cup in the LORD’s right hand will come around to you;
complete disgrace will cover up your honor.*

¹⁷*The violence you did to Lebanon will overwhelm you;
the devastation of its animals will terrify you
because of the murder and violence
you did to the land, its towns, and their people.*

Hab 2:15-17

¹⁸“*What good is an idol after its maker carves it,
or an image, which represents a lie?
Its maker puts his faith in what he’s made
when the idol he’s made can’t even talk.*

¹⁹*Misfortune awaits whoever says to a piece of wood, ‘Wake up!’
or to a speechless rock, ‘Get up and help us!’
That’s your teacher!?
It’s overlaid with gold and silver,
but it can’t breathe.*

²⁰*But the LORD is in his holy Temple;
let the whole earth be silent in his presence.”* **Hab 2:18-20**

3:¹ A Prayer of Habakkuk Set to *Shigionoth*

² LORD, I’ve heard about you and stand in awe.
Revive your work in our time
and show what you can do;
in your anger remember mercy.

Hab 3:1-2

³God is coming from Teman,
the Holy One from Mount Paran.
His brilliance covers the sky;
his praise fills the earth.

⁴His brightness shines like sunshine;

lightning bolts flash from his hand
 where his power lies hidden.

⁵Disease goes ahead of him;
 plague follows him.

⁶He stops and looks the world over;
 the nations see him and tremble.
 He beats down the everlasting mountains
 and levels the ancient hills.
 His ways of working have existed from eternity.

⁷I can see the tents in Nubia in distress;
 the tent curtains in Midian are shaking *in fear*. **Hab 3:3-7**

⁸Did you rage against the rivers?
 Was your anger against the streams?
 Was it against the sea
 that you drove your steeds and victory chariots?

⁹*No*. You took the cover off your bow
 and put your arrows to the string.
 You washed out canyons in the ground.
¹⁰The mountains watched you and shook
 as the torrent flooded past;
 The roaring deep cried out in surrender
 and lifted its hands in submission.

¹¹The sun and moon stood still;
 they retreated at the flash of your arrows
 and the radiance of your spear. **Hab 3:8-11**

¹²In your fury you marched across the world;
 in your anger you trampled nations.

¹³You headed out to save your people,
 to rescue your anointed ones.

You crushed the heads of the wicked
 and laid them open from neck to thigh.

¹⁴You thrust through the leaders of their troops
 with their own spears.

They'd stormed in to scatter us,
 celebrating as if running over the poor unchecked.

¹⁵*But* with your horses you tramped down the sea of soldiers,
 that surging mighty flood. **Hab 3:12-15**

¹⁶I heard *it* and my body trembled;
my lips quivered at the sound.
My knees buckled;
I froze, unable to move;
I'll wait in silence for distress
to descend on our invaders.

¹⁷Though the fir tree hasn't budded,
and there're no grapes on the vine,
and the fields aren't growing any food,
though the flock has scattered from the fold,
and there are no cattle in the stalls,

¹⁸I'll still rejoice in the LORD
and delight in the salvation he'll bring me.

¹⁹The Lord GOD is my strength;
he's made my feet like deer's feet
and enables me to walk surefooted on high places.

(For the choir director accompanied by my stringed instruments) **Hab 3:16-19**

Version by Virgil Warren: christir.org