

## Habakkuk



**T**his book features a dialogue between the prophet Habakkuk and God about suffering and justice, and concludes with a prayer in praise of the Lord's power and glory.

**1** I am Habakkuk the prophet. And this is the message<sup>></sup> that the LORD gave me.

### **Habakkuk Complains to the LORD**

- <sup>2</sup> Our LORD, how long must I beg for your help before you listen?  
How long before you save us from all this violence?
- <sup>3</sup> Why do you make me watch such terrible injustice?  
Why do you allow violence, lawlessness, crime, and cruelty to spread everywhere?
- <sup>4</sup> Laws cannot be enforced;  
justice is always the loser;  
criminals crowd out honest people and twist the laws around.

### **The LORD Answers Habakkuk**

- <sup>5</sup> Look and be amazed at what's happening among the nations!  
Even if you were told, you would never believe what's taking place now.
- <sup>6</sup> I am sending the Babylonians.

They are fierce and cruel—  
marching across the land,  
conquering cities and towns.

- <sup>7</sup> How fearsome and frightening.  
Their only laws and rules are the ones they make up.
- <sup>8</sup> Their cavalry troops are faster than leopards,  
more ferocious than wolves hunting at sunset,  
and swifter than hungry eagles suddenly swooping down.
- <sup>9</sup> They are 'eager to destroy,'  
and they gather captives like handfuls of sand.
- <sup>10</sup> They make fun of rulers and laugh at fortresses,  
while building dirt mounds so they can capture cities.
- <sup>11</sup> Then suddenly they disappear like a gust of wind—  
those sinful people who worship their own strength.

### **Habakkuk Complains Again**

- <sup>12</sup> Holy LORD God, mighty rock,<sup>></sup>  
you are eternal,  
and we<sup>></sup> are safe from death.

- You are using those Babylonians  
to judge and punish others.▷
- 13 But you can't stand sin or wrong.  
So don't sit by in silence  
while they gobble down people  
who are better than they are.
- 14 The people you put on this earth  
are like fish or reptiles  
without a leader.
- 15 Then an enemy comes along  
and takes them captive  
with hooks and nets.  
It makes him so happy  
16 that he offers sacrifices  
to his fishing nets,  
because they make him rich  
and provide choice foods.
- 17 Will he keep hauling in his nets  
and destroying nations  
without showing mercy?

### The LORD Answers Habakkuk Again

- 2 While standing guard  
on the watchtower,  
'I waited for the LORD's answer,  
before explaining the reason  
for my complaint.'
- 2 Then the LORD told me:  
'I will give you my message  
in the form of a vision.  
Write it clearly enough  
to be read at a glance.
- 3 At the time I have decided,  
my words will come true.  
You can trust what I say  
about the future.  
It may take a long time,  
but keep on waiting—  
it will happen!
- 4 'I, the LORD, refuse to accept  
anyone who is proud.  
Only those who live by faith  
are acceptable to me.▷

### Trouble for Evil People

- 5 Wine▷ is treacherous,  
and arrogant people  
are never satisfied.  
They are no less greedy  
than death itself—  
they open their mouths as wide

- as the world of the dead  
and swallow everyone.
- 6 But they will be mocked  
with these words:  
You're doomed!  
You stored up stolen goods  
and cheated others  
of what belonged to them.
- 7 But without warning,  
those you owe  
will demand payment.  
Then you will become  
a frightened victim.
- 8 You robbed cities and nations  
everywhere on earth  
and murdered their people.  
Now those who survived  
will be as cruel to you.
- 9 You're doomed!  
You made your family rich  
at the expense of others.  
You even said to yourself,  
"I'm above the law."
- 10 But you will bring shame  
on your family  
and ruin to yourself  
for what you did to others.
- 11 The very stones and wood  
in your home  
will testify against you.
- 12 You're doomed! You built a city  
on crime and violence.
- 13 But the LORD All-Powerful  
sends up in flames  
what nations and people  
work so hard to gain.
- 14 Just as water fills the sea,  
the land will be filled  
with people who know  
and honor the LORD.
- 15 You're doomed!  
You get your friends drunk,  
just to see them naked.
- 16 Now you will be disgraced  
instead of praised.  
The LORD will make you drunk,  
and when others see you naked,  
you will lose their respect.
- 17 You destroyed trees and animals  
on Mount Lebanon;

you were ruthless to towns  
and people everywhere.  
Now you will be terrorized.

### Idolatry Is Foolish

- <sup>18</sup> What is an idol worth?  
It's merely a false god.  
Why trust a speechless image  
made from wood or metal  
by human hands?
- <sup>19</sup> What can you learn from idols  
covered with silver or gold?  
They can't even breathe.  
Pity anyone who says to an idol  
of wood or stone,  
"Get up and do something!"
- <sup>20</sup> Let all the world be silent –  
the LORD is present  
in his holy temple.

### Habakkuk's Prayer

- 3** This is my prayer:▷  
<sup>2</sup> I know your reputation, LORD,  
and I am amazed  
at what you have done.  
Please turn from your anger  
and be merciful;  
do for us what you did  
for our ancestors.
- <sup>3</sup> You are the same Holy God  
who came from Teman  
and Paran to help us.  
The brightness of your glory  
covered the heavens,  
and your praises were heard  
everywhere on earth.
- <sup>4</sup> Your glory shone like the sun,  
and light flashed from your hands,  
hiding your mighty power.
- <sup>5</sup> Dreadful diseases and plagues  
marched in front  
and followed behind.
- <sup>6</sup> When you stopped,  
the earth shook;  
when you stared,  
nations trembled;  
when you walked  
along your ancient paths,  
eternal mountains and hills  
crumbled and collapsed.

- <sup>7</sup> The tents of desert tribes  
in Cushan and Midian  
were ripped apart.
- <sup>8</sup> Our LORD, were you angry  
with the monsters  
of the deep?  
You attacked in your chariot  
and wiped them out.
- <sup>9</sup> Your arrows were ready  
and 'obeyed your commands.'<sup>1</sup>  
You split the earth apart  
with rivers and streams;  
<sup>10</sup> mountains trembled  
at the sight of you;  
rain poured from the clouds;  
ocean waves roared and rose.
- <sup>11</sup> The sun and moon stood still,  
while your arrows and spears  
flashed like lightning.
- <sup>12</sup> In your furious anger,  
you trampled on nations
- <sup>13</sup> to rescue your people  
and save your chosen one.▷  
'You crushed a nation's ruler  
and stripped his evil kingdom  
of its power.'
- <sup>14</sup> His troops had come like a storm,  
hoping to scatter us  
and glad to gobble us down.  
To them we were refugees  
in hiding –  
'but you smashed their heads  
with their own weapons.'
- <sup>15</sup> Then your chariots churned  
the waters of the sea.

### Habakkuk's Response to God's Message

- <sup>16</sup> When I heard this message,▷  
I felt weak from fear,  
and my lips quivered.  
My bones seemed to melt,  
and I stumbled around.  
But 'I will patiently wait.  
Someday those vicious enemies  
will be struck by disaster.'

### Trust in a Time of Trouble

- <sup>17</sup> Fig trees may no longer bloom,  
or vineyards produce grapes;  
olive trees may be fruitless,  
and harvest time a failure;

sheep pens may be empty,  
and cattle stalls vacant—  
18 but I will still celebrate  
because the LORD God  
saves me.  
19 The LORD gives me strength.

He makes my feet as sure  
as those of a deer,  
and he helps me 'stand  
on the mountains.'

To the music director:  
Use stringed instruments.

### Notes

Phrases enclosed in half square superscript brackets (‘’) are those that are difficult to translate from the original Hebrew with great certainty. Consequently, the English rendering given should be understood as only one possible way of translating such texts.

- ▷ **1.1** *message*: Or "vision."
- ▷ **1.12** *mighty rock*: The Hebrew text has "rock."
- ▷ **1.12** *we*: Hebrew; one ancient Jewish tradition "you."
- ▷ **1.12** *You ... others*: Or "You will judge and punish those Babylonians."
- ▷ **2.4** *Only ... me*: Or "But those who are acceptable to me will live because of their faithfulness."
- ▷ **2.5** *Wine*: The Standard Hebrew Text; the Dead Sea Scrolls "Wealth."
- ▷ **3.1** *prayer*: The Hebrew text adds "according to the shigionoth," which may mean a prayer of request or a prayer to be accompanied by a special musical instrument.
- ▷ **3.13** *chosen one*: Or "chosen ones."
- ▷ **3.16** *heard this message*: Or "saw this vision."