

Habakkuk

The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw. O LORD, how long shall I cry
for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will
not save? Why do you make me see wrong-doing and look at trouble?
Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the
5 law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the
righteous-- therefore judgment comes forth perverted. Look at the nations, and
see! Be astonished! Be astounded! For a work is being done in your days
that you would not believe if you were told. For I am rousing the
Chaldeans, that fierce and impetuous nation, who march through the breadth
10 of the earth to seize dwellings not their own. Dread and fearsome are they;
their justice and dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses are swifter
than leopards, more menacing than wolves at dusk; their horses charge. Their
horsemen come from far away; they fly like an eagle swift to devour. They
all come for violence, with faces pressing forward; they gather captives like
15 sand. At kings they scoff, and of rulers they make sport. They laugh at
every fortress, and heap up earth to take it. Then they sweep by like the
wind; they transgress and become guilty; their own might is their god! Are
you not from of old, O LORD my God, my Holy One? You shall not die.
O LORD, you have marked them for judgment; and you, O Rock, have
20 established them for punishment. Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and

you cannot look on wrongdoing; why do you look on the treacherous, and
are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they? You
have made people like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no
ruler. The enemy brings all of them up with a hook; he drags them out with
5 his net, he gathers them in his seine; so he rejoices and exults. Therefore he
sacrifices to his net and makes offerings to his seine; for by them his
portion is lavish, and his food is rich. Is he then to keep on emptying his
net, and destroying nations without mercy? I will stand at my watchpost, and
station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to
10 me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. Then the LORD
answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a
runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it
speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will
surely come, it will not delay. Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in
15 them, but the righteous live by their faith. Moreover, wealth is treacherous;
the arrogant do not endure. They open their throats wide as Sheol; like
Death they never have enough. They gather all nations for themselves, and
collect all peoples as their own. Shall not everyone taunt such people and,
with mocking riddles, say about them, "Alas for you who heap up what is
20 not your own!" How long will you load yourselves with goods taken in

pledge? Will not your own creditors suddenly rise, and those who make you
tremble wake up? Then you will be booty for them. Because you have
plundered many nations, all that survive of the peoples shall plunder you--
because of human bloodshed, and violence to the earth, to cities and all who
5 live in them. "Alas for you who get evil gain for your houses, setting your
nest on high to be safe from the reach of harm!" You have devised shame
for your house by cutting off many peoples; you have forfeited your life.
The very stones will cry out from the wall, and the plaster will respond
from the woodwork. "Alas for you who build a town by bloodshed, and
10 found a city on iniquity!" Is it not from the LORD of hosts that peoples
labor only to feed the flames, and nations weary themselves for nothing? But
the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the
waters cover the sea. "Alas for you who make your neighbors drink, pouring
out your wrath until they are drunk, in order to gaze on their nakedness!"
15 You will be sated with contempt instead of glory. Drink, you yourself, and
stagger! The cup in the Lord's right hand will come around to you, and
shame will come upon your glory! For the violence done to Lebanon will
overwhelm you; the destruction of the animals will terrify you-- because of
human bloodshed and violence to the earth, to cities and all who live in
20 them. What use is an idol once its maker has shaped it-- a cast image, a

teacher of lies? For its maker trusts in what has been made, though the product is only an idol that cannot speak! Alas for you who say to the wood, "Wake up!" to silent stone, "Rouse yourself!" Can it teach? See, it is gold and silver plated, and there is no breath in it at all. But the LORD is

5 in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him! A prayer of the prophet Habakkuk according to Shigionoth. O LORD, I have heard of your renown, and I stand in awe, O LORD, of your work. In our own time revive it; in our own time make it known; in wrath may you remember mercy. God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His

10 glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. The brightness was like the sun; rays came forth from his hand, where his power lay hidden. Before him went pestilence, and plague followed close behind. He stopped and shook the earth; he looked and made the nations tremble. The eternal mountains were shattered; along his ancient pathways the everlasting

15 hills sank low. I saw the tents of Cushan under affliction; the tent-curtains of the land of Midian trembled. Was your wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Or your anger against the rivers, or your rage against the sea, when you drove your horses, your chariots to victory? You brandished your naked bow, sated were the arrows at your command. Selah You split the earth with

20 rivers. The mountains saw you, and writhed; a torrent of water swept by; the

deep gave forth its voice. The sun raised high its hands; the moon stood still
in its exalted place, at the light of your arrows speeding by, at the gleam of
your flashing spear. In fury you trod the earth, in anger you trampled
nations. You came forth to save your people, to save your anointed. You
5 crushed the head of the wicked house, laying it bare from foundation to roof.
Selah You pierced with his own arrows the head of his warriors, who came
like a whirlwind to scatter us, gloating as if ready to devour the poor who
were in hiding. You trampled the sea with your horses, churning the mighty
waters. I hear, and I tremble within; my lips quiver at the sound. Rottenness
10 enters into my bones, and my steps tremble beneath me. I wait quietly for
the day of calamity to come upon the people who attack us. Though the fig
tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of
the olive fails and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from
the fold and there is no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I
15 will exult in the God of my salvation. GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he
makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and makes me tread upon the heights.
To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.*

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