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Habakkuk

Habakkuk Complains to God

1 This is the message that was given to Habakkuk the prophet.*

²Lord, I continue to ask for help. When will you listen to me? I cried to you about the violence. But you did nothing! ³People are stealing things and hurting other people. People are arguing and fighting. Why do you make me look at these terrible things? ⁴The law is weak and not fair to people. Evil people win their fights against good people. So, the law is no longer fair. Justice doesn't win anymore!

God Answers Habakkuk

⁵[The Lord answered,] "Look at the other nations! Watch them, and you will be amazed. I will do something in your lifetime that will amaze you. [You will have to see it to believe it.] You would not believe it if you were told about it. ⁶I will make the Babylonian people a strong nation. Those people are mean and powerful fighters. They will march across the earth. They will take houses and cities that don't belong to them. ⁷The Babylonian people will scare the other people. The Babylonian people will do what they want to do and go where they want to go. ⁸Their horses will be faster than leopards* and meaner than wolves* at sunset. Their horse soldiers will come from faraway places. They will attack their enemies quickly, like a hungry eagle swooping down from the sky. ⁹The one thing

they all want to do is fight. Their armies will march fast like the wind in the desert. And the Babylonian soldiers will take many, many prisoners—as many as the grains of sand.

¹⁰"The Babylonian soldiers will laugh at the kings of other nations. Foreign rulers will be like jokes to them. The Babylonian soldiers will laugh at the cities with tall, strong walls. The soldiers will simply build dirt roads up to the top of the walls and easily defeat the cities. ¹¹Then they will leave like the wind and go on to fight against other places. The only thing those Babylonians will worship is their own strength."

Habakkuk's Second Complaint

¹²[Then Habakkuk said,]

"Lord, you are the Lord who lives forever!
You are my holy God who never dies!*"
Lord, you created the Babylonian people
to do what must be done.

Our Rock,* you created them
to punish [the people of Judah].

¹³ Your eyes are too good to look at evil.
You can't watch people doing wrong.
So how can you watch
those evil people win?
How can you watch bad people
defeating good people?

¹⁴ "You have made the people
like fish in the sea.
They are like little sea-animals
without a leader.

prophet A person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach to the people.

leopard A large animal, like a lion.

wolves A wolf is a type of wild dog.

Lord, you are ... never dies Or, "Lord, you have been my holy God forever! Surely we will not die."

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

- 15 The enemy catches all of them
with hooks and nets.
The enemy catches them in his net
and drags them in.
And the enemy is very happy
with what he caught.
- 16 His net helps him live like a rich man
and enjoy the best food.
So the enemy worships his net.
He makes sacrifices* and burns incense*
to honor his net.
- 17 Will he continue to take riches with his net?
Will he continue destroying people
without showing mercy?

2 “I will stand like a guard and watch.
I will wait to see what the Lord
will say to me.
I will wait and learn how he answers
my questions.”

God Answers Habakkuk

²The Lord answered me, “Write down what I show you. Write clearly on a sign so people can read it easily.* ³This message is about a special time in the future. This message is about the end, and it will come true! [It may seem like that time will never come.] But be patient and wait for it. That time will come. It will not be late. ⁴This message can’t help people that refuse to listen to it. But a good person will believe this message. And the good person will live because of his faith.”

⁵[God said,] “Wine can trick a person. In the same way, a strong man’s pride can fool him. But he will not find peace. He is like death—he always wants more and more. And, like death, he will never be satisfied. He will continue defeating other nations. He will continue to make those people his prisoners. ⁶But soon enough, all of those people will laugh at him. They will tell stories about his defeat. They will laugh and say, ‘It’s too bad that the man who took so many things will not

get to keep them! He made himself rich collecting debts.’

⁷“Strong man, you have taken money from people. One day those people will wake up and realize what is happening. And they will stand against you. Then they will take things from you. And you will be very afraid. ⁸You have stolen things from many nations. So those people will take much from you. You have killed many people. You have destroyed lands and cities. You have killed all the people there. ⁹Yes, it will be very bad for the person that becomes rich by doing wrong. That person does those things to live in a safe place. He thinks that he can stop other people from stealing from him. [But bad things will happen to him.]

¹⁰“You have made plans to destroy many people. But those plans will bring shame to your house. You have done bad things, and you will lose your life. ¹¹The stones of the walls will cry out against you. Even the wooden rafters* in your own house will agree that you are wrong.

¹²“It will be very bad for the leader that does wrong and kills people to build a city. ¹³The Lord All-Powerful has decided that a fire will destroy everything that those people worked to build. All their work will be for nothing. ¹⁴Then people everywhere will know about the Glory of the Lord.* This news will spread like water spreads out into the sea. ¹⁵It will be very bad for that person that becomes angry and then makes other people suffer. In anger, that person knocks other people to the ground. And he treats those people like they are naked and drunk.

¹⁶“But that person will know the Lord’s anger. That anger will be like a cup of poison in the Lord’s right hand. That person will taste that anger and then he will fall to the ground like a drunk person.

“Evil ruler, you will drink from that cup. You will get shame, not honor. ¹⁷You hurt many people in Lebanon. You stole many animals

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Write clearly ... easily Or, “Write clearly on tablets so the person that reads it can run and tell other people the message.”

rafters Boards that support the roof.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. It was like a bright shining light. See Ex. 16:6; 40:34–38.

there. So you will be afraid because of the people that died and because of the bad things you did to that country. You will be afraid because of the things you did to those cities and to the people that lived in those cities.”

The Message About Idols

¹⁸That person’s false god will not help him. Why? Because it is only a statue that some man covered with metal. It is only a statue. So the person that made it can’t expect it to help. That statue can’t even speak! ¹⁹It will be very bad for the person that says to a wooden statue, “Get up!” It will be very bad for the person that says to a stone that can’t speak, “Wake up!” Those things can’t help him. That statue may be covered with gold and silver, but there is no life in that statue.

²⁰But the Lord is different! The Lord is in his holy temple. So all the earth should be silent and show respect in front of the Lord.

Habakkuk’s Prayer

3 The Shiggayon prayer of Habakkuk the prophet.*

² Lord, I have heard the news about you.
Lord, I am amazed at the powerful things
that you did in the past.
Now I pray that you will do great things
in our time.
Please make those things happen
in our own days.
But in your excitement, remember to show
mercy to us.

SELAH*

³ God is coming from Teman.*
The Holy One is coming from
Mount Paran.*

SELAH*

The glory of the Lord covers the heavens!
His praise fills the earth!

Shiggayon ... prophet Or, “The prayer of Habakkuk on the Shiggayon.” The exact meaning of “Shiggayon” is not known.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause or that the music should be louder here.

Teman One of Edom’s important cities in the south, maybe its capital.

Mount Paran This is probably an important mountain west of the Gulf of Aqaba and north of Mount Sinai.

⁴ Rays of light shine from his hand,
a bright, shining light.
There is such power hiding in that hand.
⁵ The sickness went before him.
And the destroyer followed behind him.*
⁶ The Lord stood and judged the earth.
He looked at the people of all the nations.
And they shook with fear.
For many years the mountains stood strong.
But those mountains fell to pieces.
The old, old hills fell down.
God has always been like that!
⁷ I saw the cities of Cushan were in trouble.
The houses of Midian trembled with fear.
⁸ Lord, were you angry at the rivers?
Were you angry at the streams?
Were you angry at the sea?
Were you angry when you rode
your horses and chariots to victory?
⁹ Even then you showed your rainbow.
It was proof of your Agreement
with the families of the earth.

SELAH*

And the dry land split the rivers.
¹⁰ The mountains saw you and shook.
The water flowed off the land.
The water from the sea made a loud noise
as it lost its power over the land.
¹¹ The sun and the moon lost their brightness.
They stopped shining when they saw
your bright flashes of lightning.
That lightning was like spears and arrows
shooting through the air.
¹² In anger you walked on the earth
and punished the nations.
¹³ You came to save your people.
You came to lead your chosen king*
to victory.
You killed the leader in every evil family,
from the least important person
to the most important in the land.*

SELAH*

The sickness ... behind him This probably refers to the diseases and the Angel of Death God sent against the Egyptians when God freed Israel from slavery.

chosen king Literally, “anointed one.”

You killed ... in the land Literally, “You struck the head from the evil house. From the foundation to the neck they were laid bare.”

- 14 You used Moses' walking stick
to stop the enemy soldiers.
Those soldiers came like a powerful storm
to fight against us.
They thought they could defeat us easily,
like robbing a poor man in secret.
- 15 But you marched your horses
through the deep water,
stirring up the mud.
- 16 My whole body shook
when I heard the story.
I whistled out loud!
I felt weak deep down in my bones.
I just stood there shaking.
So I will wait patiently
for the day of destruction when they
come to attack the people.

Always Rejoice in the Lord

- 17 Figs might not grow on the fig trees.
Grapes might not grow on the vines.
Olives might not grow on the olive trees.
Food might not grow in the fields.
There might not be any sheep in the pens.
There might not be any cattle in the barns.
- 18 But I will still be glad in the Lord.
I will rejoice in God my savior.
- 19 The Lord, my Master,
gives me my strength.
He helps me run fast like a deer.
He leads me safely on the mountains.

*To the music director.
On my stringed instruments.*