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Habakkuk

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Habakkuk

1 I am Habakkuk the prophet. This is the message that
Yahweh gave me in a vision.

[2] I said, "Yahweh, how long must I keep praying
to you for help
before you respond?
I ask you to rescue us from people who are acting
violently everywhere,
but you do not rescue us!
[3] Why do you make me keep seeing people doing evil?
Why do you not punish people who are
doing what is wrong?
I see people destroying things and acting violently,
and there is fighting and quarreling everywhere.
[4] No one obeys your instruction,
and judges never decide cases fairly.
Wicked people always defeat righteous people
in the courts,
so that no one ever gets justice."
[5] Yahweh replied to me, "Look at the completely amazing
thing happening among the other nations;
you will be astounded,
because I am doing something during this time
that you would not believe
even if someone told you about it.
[6] I am making the Chaldeans powerful; they are
fierce and swift soldiers.
They will march across the entire earth
and conquer countries that do not belong to them.
[7] They are terrifying people
who do whatever they want
and pay no attention to the laws of other countries.
[8] Their horses are faster than leopards
and fiercer than wolves at night.
Their horsemen gallop swiftly from distant places;
they swoop down like eagles rushing to kill their prey.
[9] They all advance with the purpose of acting violently.
They advance like a desert wind,
gathering prisoners as numerous as grains of sand.
[10] They mock the kings and rulers of other countries
and laugh at all the cities with high walls.
They pile up dirt against those walls
and climb up to capture those cities.
[11] They rush past like the wind and move on.
But they are very guilty,
because they think that their own military
power is their god."
[12] Then I said, "Yahweh, you have always been
God from ancient times.
You are my Holy One; we will not die.
You have appointed the Chaldeans to judge
us and punish us.
You are our Rock, and you have sent
them to correct us.
[13] You are pure, and you cannot endure seeing evil,
so why are you tolerating treacherous people?
Why do you say nothing
when wicked people destroy people who are
more righteous than they are?
[14] You treat us like fish in the sea
or like other sea creatures that have no one
to rule over them.
[15] The soldiers of Chaldea treat us like fish; they
pull us out with hooks
or catch us in their nets,
and they rejoice and celebrate.
[16] They worship the weapons with which they capture
people and offer sacrifices to them
and burn incense in front of them. They say, 'Those
weapons have enabled us to become
rich and eat expensive food.'
[17] Will you allow them to keep conquering people?
Will you allow them to keep destroying people of
other nations without showing any mercy?"

2 After I said that, I said to myself, "I will climb
up into my guard post,
and stand there in my watchtower.
I will wait there to find out what Yahweh will say,
to know how I should answer."

[2] Then Yahweh replied to me,

"Write plainly on tablets what I am revealing
to you in this vision,
and then read it to a messenger
so he can run with it to tell it to other people.
[3] In this vision I will talk about things that will
happen when I decide.
They will certainly happen in the future, I do not lie.
You want those things to happen immediately,
but they are not happening.
But wait patiently for them to happen!
When they occur, they will occur quickly,
and not slowly.
[4] Think about the people in that proud nation!
They are certainly not doing what is righteous.
But people who are righteous will live
because they faithfully do what I want them to do.
[5] Drunk armies are foolish,
they cannot stop pillaging.
No matter how much they kill and steal, they want more.
They will conquer every people group they encounter.
[6] But soon all those whom they have captured will
ridicule the soldiers from Babylonia!
They will make fun of them, saying,
'Terrible things will happen to you who have
stolen things from other countries!
You got many things by forcing people to
give them to you.
But you certainly will not keep those things for long!'
[7] Suddenly those you owe a debt to because you pillaged
them will come to pillage you.

You will be afraid.
They will recapture all the things that you
stole from them.
8 You stole things from the people of many nations.
You murdered people of many people groups,
and you destroyed their land and their cities.
So those who are still alive will steal valuable
things from you.
9 Terrible things will happen to you people of
Babylonia who build big houses
with money that you got by forcing others
to give it to you.
You are proud, and you think that your
houses will be safe
because you have built them in places where
you can easily defend them.
10 But because you have destroyed others,
you have harmed yourself and disgraced
your own family!
11 The very stones in the walls of your houses
and the wooden beams in your ceilings show that
you did evil things to get them
12 Terrible things will happen to you people of Babylonia
who kill people in order to build cities,
cities that you build by using money that you
have gotten by committing crimes.
13 But Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has
declared that fire will destroy everything
built by people who do things like that;
they will have worked hard uselessly.
14 But in contrast, just as water fills the oceans,
Yahweh will fill the earth with people who
know how glorious he is.
15 Terrible things will happen to you people of Babylonia,
who cause people who live in nearby countries
to become drunk.
You force them to drink a lot of drugged wine
until they are drunk and then they walk around naked
because you are happy when you see that.
16 But you are the ones whom Yahweh will soon
disgrace instead of honor.
Yahweh will make you drink so much wine that you
will also stagger around drunk and naked.
Yahweh will powerfully judge and curse you,
and everyone will see that you are weak
and not strong.
17 You did violent things to the people in Lebanon,
and you killed the wild animals there,
so you will be punished severely for doing that.
You have killed many people
and you have destroyed their lands and their cities.
18 An idol that someone carves or casts from metal
does not help anyone at all;
it only deceives the people who trust it.
The person who makes an idol trusts something
that he himself created,
something that cannot even speak! 19 Terrible things
will happen to you who say to lifeless idols
that are made of wood or rock,
'Wake up!'
Stone idols certainly cannot tell you what you should do;
they look nice because they are covered
with silver and gold,
but they are not alive.
20 But Yahweh is in his holy temple;
everyone on the earth should be silent in his presence!"

3 Habakkuk the prophet prayed this prayer, set to the tune called Shigyonoth.

2 Yahweh, I have heard reports about what you have done,
and I am in awe of all you have done.
Do again in our time what you did long ago!
Even when you are angry with us,
act mercifully toward us!

3 God came from Teman,
and the Holy One came from Mount Paran.
His glory covered the sky,
and praise for him filled the whole earth.
4 He shone like the sunrise;
his rays of light flashed from his hands,
and that is where he conceals his awesome power.
5 Sickness went ahead of him like a soldier,
and burning disease followed behind him.
6 He stopped and surveyed the earth.
He looked at the nations and made them tremble.
The mountains that have existed from the
beginning of time collapsed;
the ancient hills crumbled.
He has always existed and always will.
7 I saw that the people in the tents of Cushan
were distressed,
and the people of Midian were trembling
like tent curtains.

8 Yahweh, were you angry at the rivers and streams?
Were you furious at the sea?
No! You rode on your horses and on your chariots
to defeat your enemies and rescue your people.
9 You took your bow out of its cover, ready to shoot.
You made ready your arrows, just as you had promised.
You split the ground, and water gushed out in rivers.
10 The mountains trembled when they saw you.
A great flood of water rushed past.
The ocean depths roared loudly
and seemed to raise their hands high in the air.
11 The sun and the moon stopped moving
as your arrows flew through the sky like flashes of light
and your shining spear gleamed brightly.
12 You marched across the land in your anger,
and you trampled the nations in your fury.
13 You went out to rescue your people,
to save the king you had chosen.
You crushed the ruler of the wicked people,
destroying his power from his crown to
his very foundation.
14 With the enemy's own spear you killed their leader,
who had come rushing like a whirlwind to scatter us

and gloated like they were about to devour
helpless people in hiding.
15 You smashed through the sea on your horses,
churning through the great surging waves.

16 When I heard this, my stomach churned inside me;
at the sound of it, my lips trembled.
My bones felt like they were rotting,
and my legs gave way beneath me.
However, I will wait quietly for the time when disaster
comes to the people who are attacking us.
17 The fig trees may not blossom,
and there may be no grapes on the vines.
The olive trees may produce nothing,
and the fields may yield no crops.
The flocks of sheep and goats may disappear
from the pastures,
and there may be no cattle in the stalls.
18 Even so, I will rejoice because I know Yahweh.
I will be joyful because Yahweh is the
God who saves me.
19 Yahweh the Lord makes me strong.
He makes me as sure-footed as a deer
and enables me to go safely to the high places.

(This is for the choir director to use when the people
sing this prayer with stringed instruments.)