

Habakkuk – How Long Will I Cry and You Not Answer?

In Psalms 5, David cries out to YHWH.

He then states he will watch.

- 1 Give ear to my words, O YHWH; consider my groaning.
- 2 Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray.
- 3 O YHWH, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.



What is he watching for?

The prophet Habakkuk asked the same question as David and then says he will watch and wait for YHWH to answer.

Let's examine this vision that was preserved until the appointed time – the book of Habakkuk.

In chapter 1, Habakkuk lays out two complaints.

- 1) I cry to you, "Violence!" and You do not save! (vs1)
- 2) Why do you look to those who act treacherously while they devour one more righteous? (v13)

This second complaint seems to be a continuance of an earlier discussion because Habakkuk knows YHWH plans to send the Kasdim to punish Israel.

Habakkuk does not like YHWH's plan. In verses 8-15 he makes his case against the Kasdim. Yes, Israel should be punished but not by a more wicked nation!

In 2:1 Habakkuk waits for YHWH to respond.

Chapter 1 – How long will Violence be allowed?

A. Question: I cry to you (1:1-4)

B. The Kasdim go out to possess what is not theirs (5-7)

C. They (the Kasdim) are like leopards and wolves (compared to animals) (8)

D. They (the Kasdim) all come for violence (9-11)

*** Are You not from everlasting, O YHWH my Elohim, my Set-Apart One:**

You do not die! O YHWH;

You have appointed them for right-ruling, O Rock,

You have established them for reproof. (12)

D. You are not able to stand wickedness – why are You waiting? (13)

C. The men (Israel) are like fish and creeping creatures (compared to animals) (14)

B. They (the Kasdim) will catch them (Israel) in their (the Kasdim) nets (15-17)

A. I will stand my watch - Waiting for answer (2:1)

The ends of this chiasm let us know that Habakkuk is frustrated by the evil and violence surrounding him. How long will YHWH allow it to continue?

The Center demands: It is time for them to be corrected!

The use of pronouns in the center allows for this verse to read two ways:

You have appointed them for right-ruling

You have established them for reproof.

Who is the “them”?

1) Has Israel been appointed to receive right-ruling and reproof

or

2) Have the Kasdim been appointed to deliver right-ruling and reproof

Both are equally distressing.

In Chapter 2 YHWH answers Habakkuk: If I linger, you need to wait. I will discipline the people. Israel has built up possessions by blood and greed and they will be punished.

Chapter 2 – YHWH Answers Habakkuk

A. You need to wait, I will not delay (2:2-3)

B. The proud are not made right, the just live by faith (4)

C. The proud are never satisfied (5)

D. Woe to him who increases what is not his (6)

E. You are plunder for him (the wicked) (7)

*** Because you have plundered many nations,
all the remnant of the people shall plunder you,
because of men's blood, and doing violence in the land,
to the city, and all who dwell in it. (8)**

E. Woe to him who is getting evil gain (9)

D. Woe to him who increases through violence (10-15)

C. You shall be filled with shame (16-17)

B. The maker trusts what he has made, it has no spirit (18-19)

A. Be still (20)

In this section, we see that *Israel* is the wicked one. *Israel* has done violence. What is the violence? They have been greedy (vs 5,6,9). They have built their cities on the blood of men (vs 5,12,15). Note: *Israel* is not being chastised only for how they treat each other, but how they treat the NATIONS (vs 5). *Israel* has done violence in order to satisfy her appetite to build towns and establish cities and set up her nest. YHWH will repay. He will fill them with shame, great shame. He will expose them as uncircumcised.

Violence is mentioned 6 times and greed is mentioned 10 (using different words). In contrast, idols are only mentioned one time in verses 18-19. The idols are part of a contrasting parallel with verse 4: the just (righteous) shall live by faith. This implies *Israel* no longer trusts YHWH to provide; they are providing for themselves. This need to provide for themselves is tied to greed and a disregard for the cost in human life for the world *Israel* has built itself.

Chapter 3 – Habukkuk’s Response to YHWH

In chapter 3 Habukkuk accepts the will of YHWH and looks forward to His deliverance – His salvation.

A. O YHWH, renew Your work! (1-2)

B. His praise shall fill the earth (3-4)

C. Before Him goes pestilence (5-6)

D. Shall YHWH burn against the rivers (7)

E. Your arrows fly (8)

*** You shall go forth to save Your Anointed.**

You shall smite the head from the house of the wrong. (13)

E. You shall pierce with his arrows (14)

D. You shall tread the sea with Your horses (15)

C. Day of distress comes upon the people of the world (16-17)

B. I rejoice in the Elohim of my deliverance (18)

A. YHWH is my strength. (19)

Habbakuk has heard YHWH's response and is afraid. He asks YHWH to remember His compassion. Habbakuk reminds YHWH of how He saved this people from the chariots of Egypt. Habbakuk then speaks confidently of YHWH's good work of salvation. Instead of the earth being emptied to fill the appetite of the wicked, the earth will be filled with His praise.

In conclusion:

Habbakuk begins his prophesy by sharing his struggles. He questions YHWH's ways. Perhaps this is familiar to you. Maybe you are looking for YHWH to move in your life in a certain way or within a certain time frame. Consider the words of YHWH: "If (my ways) seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come."

In the end, Habukkuk looks forward to the unnamed salvation of His Anointed. We know the name is Yashua – salvation. Yashua has smitten the head of the wrong. He has passed over. He will usher in the day of distress. And through Him, because of Him, we can be still. We can wait for YHWH and we can rejoice in the Elohim of our deliverance.