

THE KINGDOMS
OF
JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Scale of English Miles

**TRUTH,
PROPHECY,
and MESSIAH**

A Study of the Minor Prophets



What are we studying?

- The Minor Prophets is a collection of twelve Old Testament books, known simply as “the Twelve” or “the Book of the Twelve” in the Hebrew Bible.
- **The title “minor” refers to length, not significance or value.**
- Roughly in chronological order, each of these short books gives a glimpse into the spiritual landscape and history of Israel, challenging the status quo through prophets called to speak on God’s behalf.
- In the Hebrew Bible, these works are counted as one book.

<https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/minor-prophets>





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We have already studied Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum

Book of Habakkuk

Historical Setting

- The southern Kingdom of Judah (tribes of Judah and Benjamin) was all that remained after the 10 tribes of the northern Kingdom of Israel were deported to Assyria many years previous. The two kingdoms had been separated by civil war. The southern Kingdom of Judah should have repented and followed God with all of their hearts after having witnessed the deportation of the 10 tribes but they failed to do so. Instead, idol worship became common place. The fall of the Assyrian Empire had taken place. The prophet, Nahum, had prophesied that.
- Then a power struggle took place between Egypt and the Babylonian Empire. Two great armies were going to clash in an epic battle. As the Egyptian armies marched north through Judah, King Josiah of Judah, a righteous man, fought them in battle and was killed in action. The Egyptians continued north and fought the Babylonians at Carchemish in 605 BC. The Babylonians won this war and conquered much more territory. They eventually conquered Judah, now ruled by Josiah's ungodly son Jehoiakim, burned Jerusalem, and deported the people of Judah to Babylonia as slaves. The Babylonian Empire lasted from about 612-539 BC.
- When this book was written the Babylonians (Chaldeans) were beginning their conquests towards the west (Habakkuk 1:6) but had not yet conquered Judah (Habakkuk 3:16).

http://www.7-star-admiral.com/0235_Habakkuk_commentary.html





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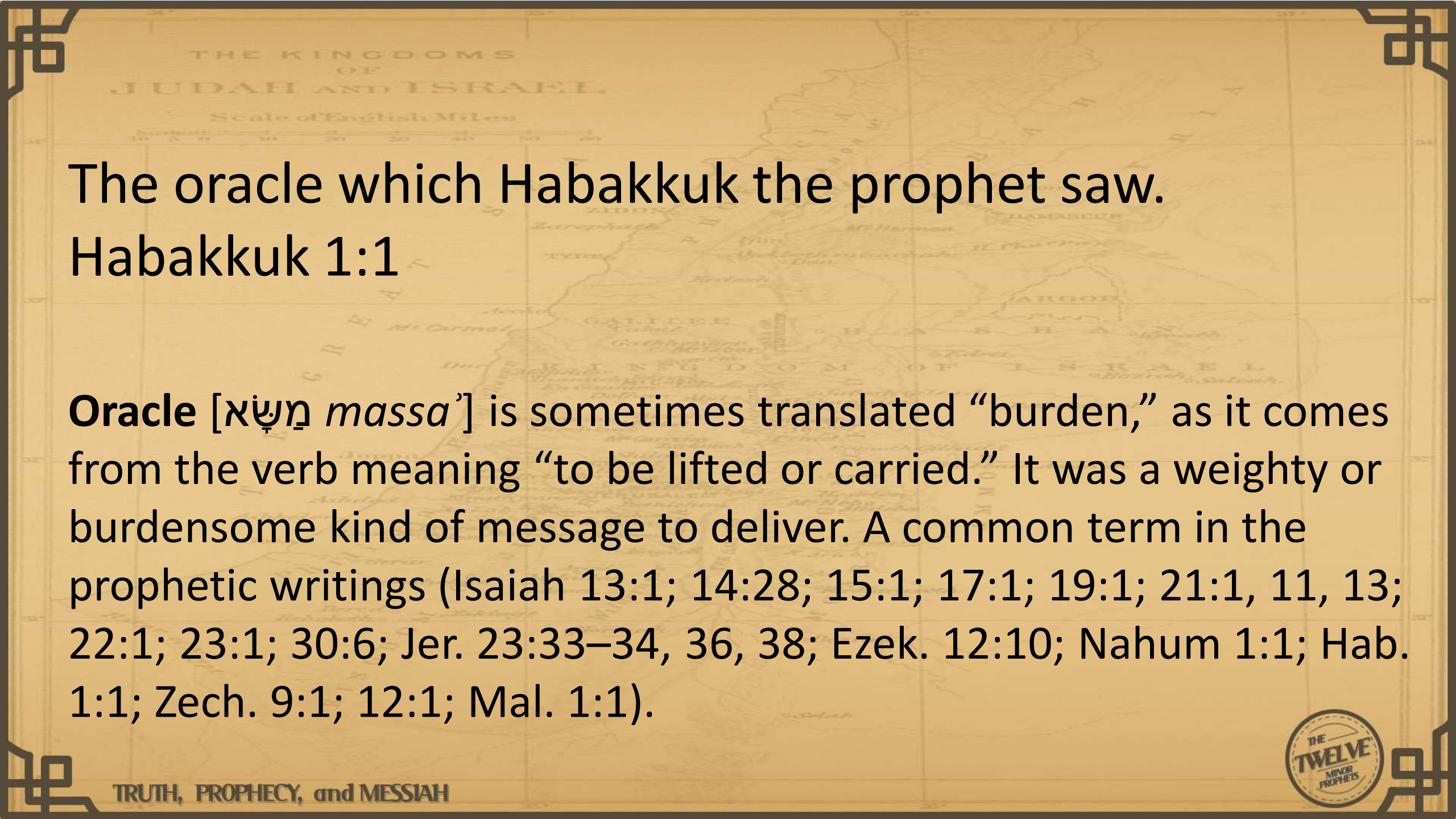


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The Bible describes the Babylonian victory over Judah in 2 Chronicles 36 and 2 Kings 24 and Jeremiah 39

The Chaldeans (Babylonians) also burned with fire the king's palace and the houses of the people, and they broke down the walls of Jerusalem. As for the rest of the people who were left in the city, the deserters who had gone over to him and the rest of the people who remained, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard carried them into exile in Babylon.

Jeremiah 39:8-9

A background map of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel, showing geographical features like the Mediterranean Sea, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea. The map is titled 'THE KINGDOMS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL' and includes a scale of English miles. The map is framed by a decorative border with geometric patterns in the corners.

The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw. Habakkuk 1:1

Oracle [$\chi\psi\eta$ *massa*] is sometimes translated “burden,” as it comes from the verb meaning “to be lifted or carried.” It was a weighty or burdensome kind of message to deliver. A common term in the prophetic writings (Isaiah 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1; 30:6; Jer. 23:33–34, 36, 38; Ezek. 12:10; Nahum 1:1; Hab. 1:1; Zech. 9:1; 12:1; Mal. 1:1).

Have you ever felt this way?

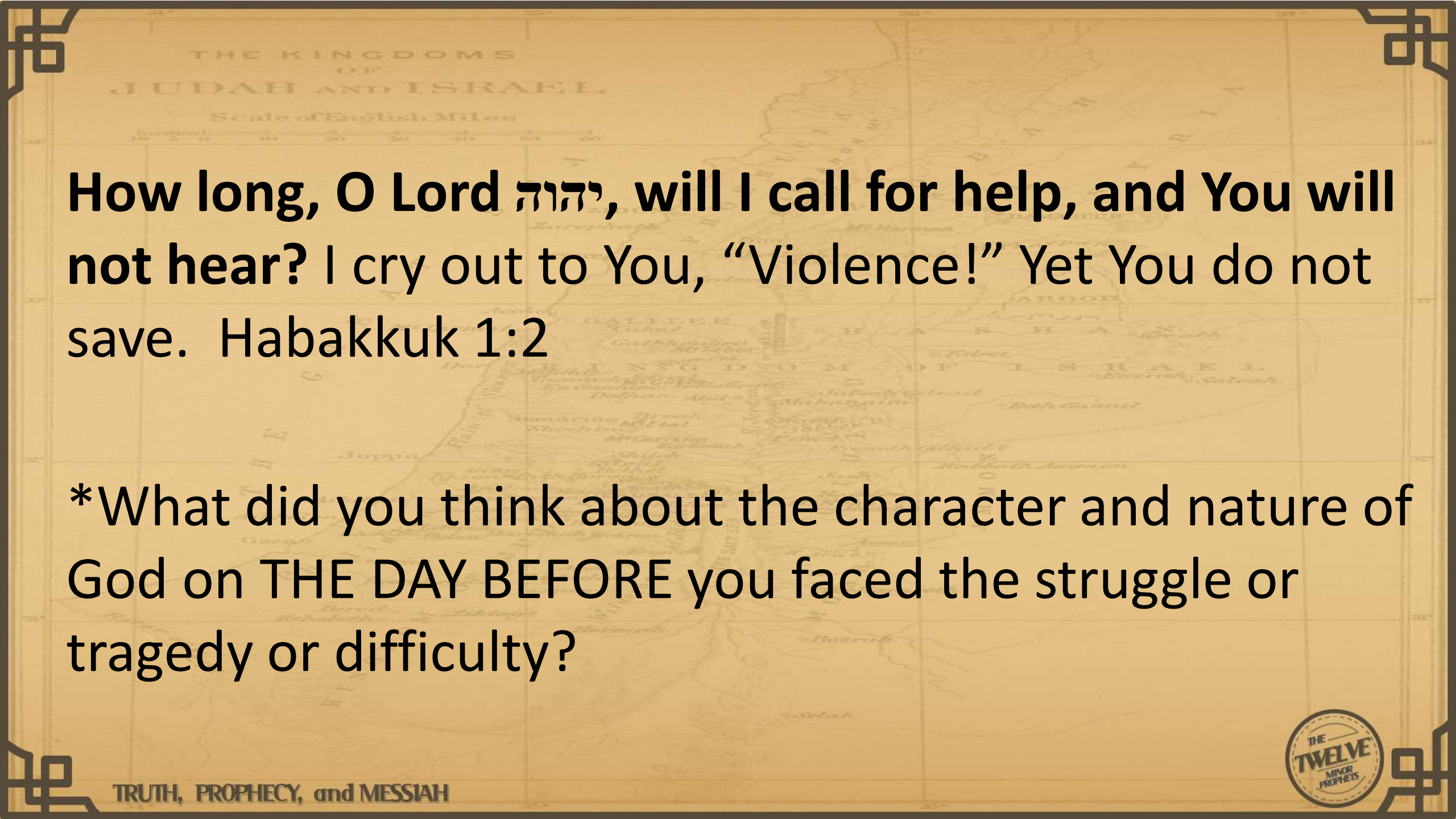
How long, O Lord יהוה, will I call for help, and You will not hear? I cry out to You, “Violence!” Yet You do not save. Habakkuk 1:2

*Habakkuk couldn't understand why God seemed to do nothing about the wickedness in society. - Life Application Bible

*Habakkuk the prophet teaches us that questioning God is acceptable; it is refusing to trust God that causes our downfall. – New Bible Commentary

Have you ever felt this way?

- How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me? Psalm 13:1-2
- My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. Psalm 22:1
- Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Psalm 22:11
- O God, why have You rejected us forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture? Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old, which You have redeemed to be the tribe of Your inheritance; and this Mount Zion, where You have dwelt. Psalm 74:1-2



How long, O Lord יהוה, will I call for help, and You will not hear? I cry out to You, “Violence!” Yet You do not save. Habakkuk 1:2

***What did you think about the character and nature of God on THE DAY BEFORE you faced the struggle or tragedy or difficulty?**

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Scale of English Miles

Why do You make me see iniquity, and cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; strife exists and contention arises. Therefore the law is ignored and justice is never upheld. **For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore justice comes out perverted.**

Habakkuk 1:3-4

The Lord replies... “Look among the nations! Observe! **Be astonished! Wonder!** Because I am doing something in your days— you would not believe if you were told. For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans [Babylonians], that fierce [ruthless] and impetuous people who march throughout the earth to seize dwelling places which are not theirs. They are dreaded and feared; their justice and authority originate with themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards and keener than wolves in the evening. Their horsemen come galloping, their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swooping down to devour. All of them come for violence. Their horde of faces moves forward. They collect captives like sand. They mock at kings and rulers are a laughing matter to them. They laugh at every fortress and heap up rubble to capture it. Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on. But they will be held guilty, **they whose strength is their god.**” Habakkuk 1:5-11

God responds that the Babylonians are soon to bring judgment on the wrongdoers, an apparent reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BC.

– New Bible Commentary

Habakkuk declares...

Are You not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O Lord, have appointed them to judge; and You, O Rock, have established them to correct. **Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor on those who deal treacherously?** Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they? Habakkuk 1:12-13

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Why have You made men like the fish of the sea [helpless, easy prey], like creeping things without a ruler over them? The Chaldeans (Babylonians) bring all of them up with a hook, drag them away with their net, and gather them together in their fishing net. **Therefore they rejoice and are glad.** Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net and burn incense to their fishing net [they worshipped the tools that brought military success]; because through these things their catch is large, and their food is plentiful. Will they therefore empty their net and continually slay nations without sparing? Habakkuk 1:14-17

Habakkuk declares...

I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; and **I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me**, and how I may reply when I am reproved. Habakkuk 2:1

דָּבַר *dabar* Hebrew verb “to speak” or “to say”

God wants to speak to me. Am I ready to listen?

My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, **make your ear attentive to wisdom**, incline your heart to understanding;
Proverbs 2:1-2

For the Lord gives wisdom; **from His mouth come knowledge and understanding**
Proverbs 2:6

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“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God,
the Lord is one!” Deuteronomy 6:4

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד.

Sh'ma Yisra-eil, Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad.

If I will listen, then God will answer

Then the Lord answered me and said, “Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. **Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay.**” Habakkuk 2:2-3

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, **He who is coming will come, and will not delay.**

Hebrews 10:36-37

If I will listen, then God will answer

“Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him;
but the righteous will live by his faith [אֱמוּנָה *Emunah*].”

Habakkuk 2:4

To “live” meant to experience God’s blessing by enjoying a life of security, protection, and fullness. – Bible Knowledge Commentary

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17

Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall live by faith.” Galatians 3:11

“Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man, so that he does not stay at home. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, and he is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all nations and collects to himself all peoples.”

Habakkuk 2:5

The Babylonians were said to be very addicted to wine. For example, Babylon was conquered while Belshazzar and his leaders were feasting at a riotous banquet (Daniel chapter 5). – Bible Knowledge Commentary

“Will not all of these take up a taunt-song against him, even mockery and insinuations against him and say, ‘**Woe** to him who increases what is not his— for how long— and makes himself rich with loans? Will not your creditors rise up suddenly, and those who collect from you awaken? Indeed, you will become plunder for them. **Because you have looted many nations, all the remainder of the peoples will loot you**— because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, to the town and all its inhabitants.” Habakkuk 2:6-8

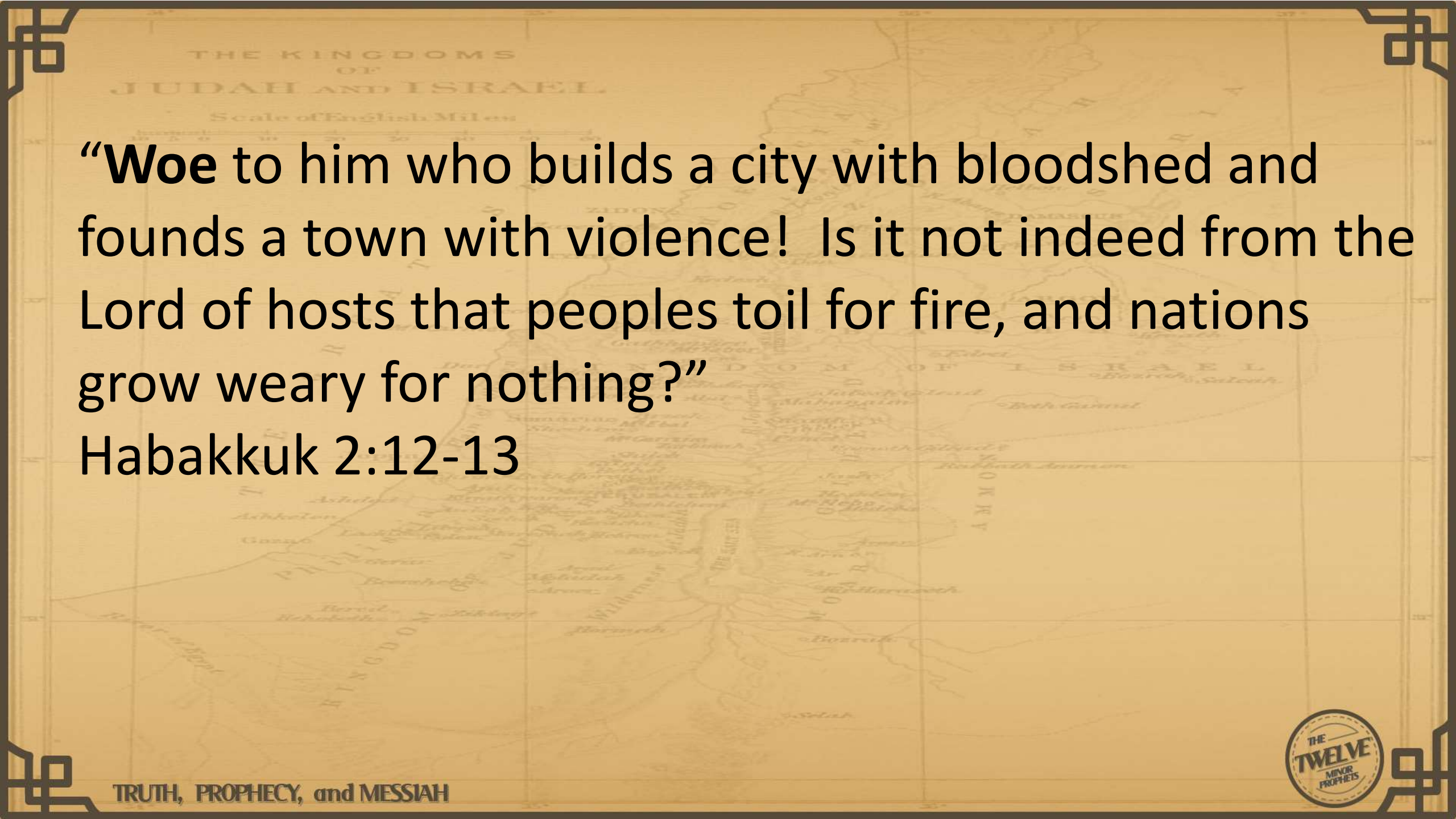
*Woe is an interjection of distress pronounced in the face of disaster or in view of coming judgment (Isaiah 3:11; 5:11; 10:5) because of certain sins. “Woe” was used frequently by the prophets (22 times by Isaiah, 10 times in Jer. and Lam., 7 times by Ezekiel, and 14 times in the Minor Prophets). - Bible Knowledge Commentary

A Reminder

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for **whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.** For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” Galatians 6:7-8

“Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house to put his nest on high, to be delivered from the hand of calamity! You have devised a shameful thing for your house by cutting off many peoples; so you are sinning against yourself. Surely the stone will cry out from the wall, and the rafter will answer it from the framework.”

Habakkuk 2:9-11



“Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and founds a town with violence! Is it not indeed from the Lord of hosts that peoples toil for fire, and nations grow weary for nothing?”

Habakkuk 2:12-13

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Habakkuk 2:14

“They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ **for they will all know Me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Jeremiah 31:34

In the time between Messiah’s first and second comings, the Lord is spreading the knowledge of His glory through the work of followers of Jesus to disciple all peoples. We are engaged in the greatest work possible and are used by God to fulfill prophecy when we seek to take the knowledge of God’s glory in the gospel to all peoples. <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/coming-knowledge-of-gods-glory/>

“**Woe** to you who make your neighbors drink, who mix in your venom even to make them drunk so as to look on their nakedness! You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor. Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness. The cup in the Lord’s right hand will come around to you, and **utter disgrace will come upon your glory**. For the violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, and the devastation of its beasts by which you terrified them, because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, to the town and all its inhabitants.” Habakkuk 2:15-17

Babylon is not without blame, since its barbarity will also come under God’s judgment, the Persian conquest of the area in 539 BC. – New Bible Commentary

THE KINGDOMS
OF

“What profit is the idol [“graven image,” idol carved out of wood or hewn from stone] when its maker has carved it, or an image [“molten image,” idol made by melting metal and casting it into a shape of a false god], a teacher of falsehood [lies]? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork when he fashions speechless idols. **Woe** to him who says to a piece of wood, ‘Awake!’ To a mute stone, ‘Arise!’ And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all inside it.”
Habakkuk 2:18-19

What idols are in our culture? In our hearts?

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“But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.” Habakkuk 2:20

The Lord is in His holy **temple**; the Lord’s throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. Psalm 11:4

In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His **temple**, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears. Psalm 18:6

Will we wait in faith for God to show up?

For Habakkuk, the message was clear. Stop complaining! Stop doubting! God is not indifferent to sin. He is not insensitive to suffering. The Lord is neither inactive nor impervious. He is in control. In His perfect time Yahweh will accomplish His divine purpose. Habakkuk was to stand in humble silence, a hushed expectancy of God's intervention.

A Hymn of Praise

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth [frenzied, emotional]. Lord, I have heard the report about You and I fear. **O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.**
Habakkuk 3:1-2

The prophet makes two requests of the Lord:

1. He asked God for a prompt fulfillment of revival
2. He pleaded for mercy

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God comes from Teman [a place in southern Edom], and the Holy One from Mount Paran [wilderness area south of Judah, west of Edom, and north of Sinai; these are references to the area around Mount Sinai where God established His covenant with Moses and the Jewish people]. **Selah.** His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise. His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand, and there is the hiding of His power.

Habakkuk 3:3-4

Before Him goes pestilence, and *plague comes after Him. He stood and surveyed the earth; He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered, the ancient hills collapsed [crumbled]. His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan under distress, the tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling. Habakkuk 3:5-7

*Remember the 10 plagues on Egypt, Exodus 7:14–11:10

Witnesses to God's appearance at the Exodus and in the wilderness wanderings were Cushan and Midian, nations that lay on either side of the Red Sea. God's wondrous acts at the Red Sea (when He led His people from Egyptian captivity) threw neighboring nations into terror and they experienced distress (fear) and anguish. – Bible Knowledge Commentary

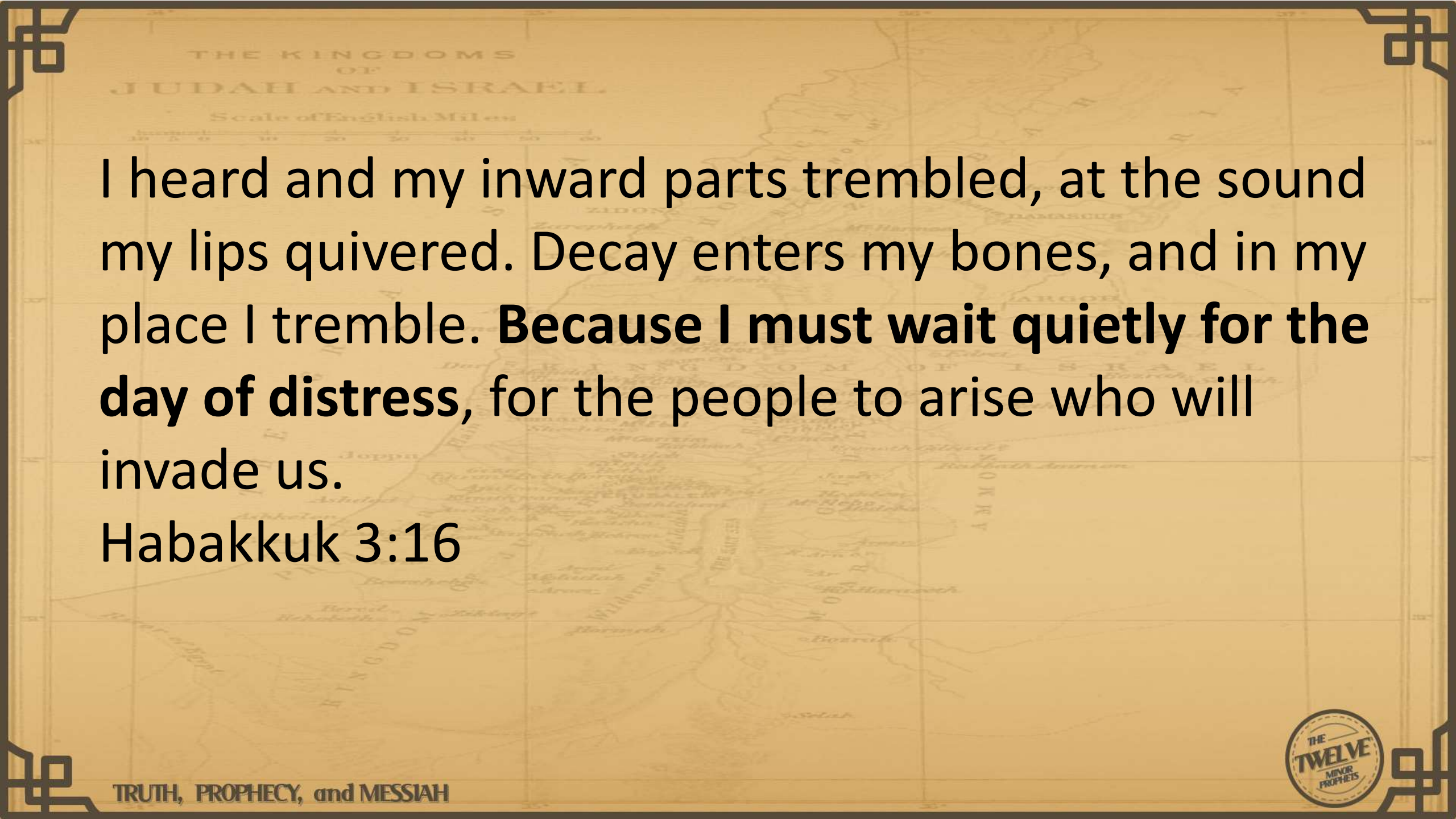
Did the Lord rage against the rivers, or was Your anger against the rivers, or was Your wrath against the sea [was God angry at the Nile River or Jordan River or Red Sea?], that You rode on Your horses, on Your chariots of salvation? Your bow was made bare [uncovered, made ready for battle], the rods of chastisement were sworn. Selah. You cleaved the earth with rivers.

Habakkuk 3:8-9

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The mountains saw You and quaked; the downpour of waters swept by. The deep [underground waters] uttered forth its voice, it lifted high its hands. Sun and moon stood in their places; they went away at the light of Your arrows, at the radiance of Your gleaming spear. In indignation You marched through the earth; in anger You trampled the nations. **You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for the salvation of Your anointed** [preserving the line of the coming Messiah]. You struck the head [leader] of the house of the evil to lay him open from thigh to neck. Selah. You pierced with his own spears the head of his throngs. They stormed in to scatter us; their exultation was like those who devour the oppressed in secret. You trampled on the sea with Your horses, on the surge of many waters [the Egyptian army destroyed by the Red Sea]. Habakkuk 3:10-15

*My faith can wait for God's future deliverance when I remember His past deliverance



I heard and my inward parts trembled, at the sound
my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, and in my
place I tremble. **Because I must wait quietly for the
day of distress,** for the people to arise who will
invade us.

Habakkuk 3:16

Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food [crop failure], though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls [loss of all livestock], **yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation** [Elohei Yishi יְשׁוּעֵי אֱלֹהֵי]. Habakkuk 3:17-18

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. **But even if He does not**, let it be known to you, O king, that **we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.**” Daniel 3:17-18

Do we have faith like this?

The Lord God [Adonai Yahweh אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה] is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places. For the choir director, on my stringed instruments.

Habakkuk 3:19

Much as a deer can quickly bound through a dark forest, so the prophet said he could move joyfully through difficult circumstances... Not only would he bound through trials; he would also climb to the mountaintops of victory and triumph. – Bible Knowledge Commentary

Lessons from the Book of Habakkuk

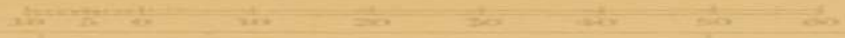
- God can handle all of our questions, but He may answer only a few.
- The bottom line of faith is not to silence all of our doubts so that we never struggle again, but it's to make us sure of God and confident of His care.
- Waiting strengthens our patience and lengthens our perspective.
- The Sovereign Lord gives triumph over circumstances to those who trust Him.

- Pastor Charles Swindoll Bible Knowledge Commentary

In some ways, Habakkuk's role and message is the opposite of that normally found among prophets. Instead of chiding Israel on God's behalf, he confronts God Himself, demanding an account of his actions, or lack of them. The covenant at Mount Sinai was between two parties, God and Israel, and neither can ignore his obligations. Habakkuk reminds God of the promised curses should Israel renege on her duties (Deut. 28:15–68), curses which seem a long time coming. He is confident that God will hear his prayers and act mightily towards Israel and Babylon. **He is so aware of the justice of God that, even with no response, even if God did not bless His people in general, or Habakkuk in particular, He is still worthy of praise.** - New Bible Commentary

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A Time To Respond

