

# How Long?

## Read Habakkuk 1:1–4

*How long, LORD, must I call for help,  
but you do not listen?—Habakkuk 1:2*

Have you ever cried out to the Lord because of the evil you have experienced or seen around you? Have you wondered why God is silent and whether He'll stay that way forever? If yes, then the book of Habakkuk is for you.

This short book gives us insight into a series of conversations between the prophet Habakkuk and the God of the universe. It offers hope to readers struggling to understand God's long-suffering with evil and encouragement to trust the Lord at all times and wait patiently for Him.

Habakkuk opens, like many prophetic books, by introducing the prophet and describing the book: "The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet received" (v. 1). Rather than a message *from* the Lord, though, the next verse is a question *to* the Lord: "How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, 'Violence!' but you do not save?" (v. 2). He asks two more questions in the next verse: "Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate

wrongdoing?" (v. 3). You can hear Habakkuk's longing and his broken heart as he turns to the Lord, the only One who can help.

In the rest of verse 3 and verse 4 the prophet explains more fully what is causing him such angst. He expects righteousness and justice to characterize God's people. But that is not his experience. "Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds" (v. 3). He expected Israel to walk faithfully with the God who had rescued them from slavery in Egypt and gave them His Law at Mount Sinai. Instead, "the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted" (v. 4). Tomorrow we will learn God's response to the prophet's cries.

### Go Deeper

Do you bring your struggles to the Lord like Habakkuk does? If not, to whom do you turn in times of despair, and why?

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### Pray with Us

Father, as we start the book of Habakkuk today, the prophet with many questions who refused to be silent before You, we come to You with our own hard questions. We ask You to give us patience and faith to trust in Your timing.