

THE HABAKKUK PESHER, 1QpHAB Eisenman Translation (modified)

Column I

1 (The Vision which Habakkuk the Prophet saw: How long O YHWH, shall) I cry out for help and You not
2 (hear? [1:2a]. Its interpretation concerns the beginning of the Last
3 (Generation ... and what is coming) to them.
4 if cry out to You, "Violence!" and You do not deliver me [1:2b] ...
5 Why do you show me Evil and cause me to look upon suffering f
6 because robbery and violence are before me [1:3a]. Its interpretation concerns those who rebel
against) Elohim with oppression and Treachery
7 (... th)ey rob Ri(ches. There) is strife
8 {and division roused up [1:3b]. Its interpretation is because of this str)ife and ... because of this the
Torah falls into disuse,
9 {and Judgement does not go forth triumphantly [1:4a]. The interpretation) is that they rejected the
Torah of Elohim
10 (... because the Wicked encompassed the Righteous [1:4b].
11 (Its interpretation is the Wicked is the Wicked Priest and the Righteous) is the Righteous Teacher,
12—13 (... because) of this judgement goes forth {perverted See the Nations and behold, marvel and
be astonished, for I 14-15 will work a wonder in your days, which you will not believe even if it)

Column II

1 is told you [1:5]. (Its interpretation concerns) the Traitors with the Man
2 of Lying, because they did not (believe what the) Righteous Teacher expounded from the mouth
3 of Elohim. (And it concerns) the Trai(tors to the Laws of Elohim and the New Covenant), since they
4 did not believe in the Covenant of Elohim (and defiled His) Qadosh Name.
5 Likewise the interpretation of the passage (concerns the Trai)tors to the
6 Last Days. These are the Violent Ones and the Covenant-Brea)kers, who did not believe
7 all that they heard that was (going to happen to) the Last Generation from the mouth of
8 the Priest, (in whose heart) Elohim put (the intelligence) to interpret all
9 the words of His Servants the Prophets, (through whom) Elohim foretold
10 all that was coming to His people ... For behold, I raise up the
11 Chaldeans, a (cruel and aggressive) Nation [1:6a].
12 Its interpretation concerns the Kittim, w(ho ar)e swift and strong
13 in war, causing many to perish (by the sword and all the world to fall under) the Dominion
14 of the Kittim ... and the Evil Ones ... they do not believe
15 in the Laws of (El ... who march to the ends of the earth
16 to take possession of populated places which are not their own [1:6b]. Interpreted, this means ...

Column III

1 And they march across the plain, smiting and plundering the cities of the earth.
2 For this is what is meant by taking possession of populated places, which are not their own. They are
frightening
3 and terrible, for their Judgement and Majesty proceed from themselves [1:7].
4 Interpreted, this concerns the Kittim, the fear and dread of whom is upon all
5 the Nations. And in their Council, all their Evil plotting is planned in advance. They deal with all
Peoples with cunning and deceitfulness,
6 Their horses are swifter than leopards and more swift than
7 wolves at night. Their horsemen ride and hurl themselves from afar,;

8 and they swoop down like an eagle anxious to eat. All come to do violence and the breath
9 of their faces is like the East wind [1:8—9a]. (Its interpretation) concerns the Kittim, who
10 trample the earth with their horses and pack animals.
11 And they come from afar, from the islands of the sea, to consu(me2 a)ll the Peoples like an
insatiable eagle.
12 And they speak to all the Peoples with anger, ill-will, fury, and livid
13 faces, for this is what is
14 meant by the breath on their faces is like the East wind, and they gather captives like sand [1:9bl
15 ... its interpretation ...

Column IV

1 They scoff at Kings and they ridicule Leaders [1:10a]. Its interpretation is that
2 they jeer at the mighty and sneer at honorable men. They deride
3 kings and ministers, and they make light of large armies.
4 They laugh at fortified cities, and they batter down earthworks and capture them (1:10b).
5 Its interpretation concerns the Leaders of the Kittim, who despise
6 the Fortresses of the Peoples,³ laughing at them contemptuously.
7 With a mighty host, they encircle and capture them, and through terror
8 and fear, they surrender (them) into their hands, and they destroy them because of the sins of their
inhabitants.⁴
9 Then the wind shifts and passes by, and he makes of this, his power
10 for his god [1:11]. Its interpretation concerns the Leaders of the Kittim,
11 who, in their guilty Council House [“the Senate”], pass by one man
12 following another. Their Leaders come one after the other
13 to despoil the ea(rth. Th)is is his power for his god.
14 Its interpretation ... (t)o the Peoples ... (Are You not from Everlasting,
15 O YHWH Elohi, my Qadosh One. We shall not die. O YHWH, you have)

Column V

1 ordained them for Judgement. O Rock, for chastisement You have established them. Your eyes are
too pure
2 to view Evil and You cannot look upon iniquity [1:12—13a].
3 The interpretation of the passage is that Elohim will not destroy His people by the hand of the
Nations.
4 But rather by the hand of His Elect, Elohim will execute Judgement on all the Nations, and with their
chastisement,
5 all the Evil Ones of His (own) people, who kept His Commandments only when convenient, will be
punished.
6 For this is what He meant when He said: Your eyes are too pure to look
7 upon Evil. Its interpretation is that they did not lust after their eyes during the Era
8 of Evil. Why do you stare, O Traitors, and remain silent when the Wicked swallowed
9 one more Righteous than he [1:13b]? Its interpretation concerns the House of Absalom
10 and the Men of their Council who were silent at the time of the chastisement of the Righteous
Teacher
11 and did not aid him against the Man of Lying, who rejected
12 the Torah in the midst of all their Assembly [“their Church”]. And You deal with man like the fish
of the sea,
13 like creeping things, to rule over him. All of them he takes up with a fishhook, catching them in a
net

14 and collecting them (in a dragnet. This is why he sacrifices to his net.) This is why he rejoices
15 (and celebrates, and burns incense to his dragnet, since by them) his portion is fat
16 (and his eating is plenteous [1:14—16]. Its interpretation concerns the Evil Ones of the Rulers)

Column VI

1 of the Kittim, who collect their Riches with all their booty
2 like the fish of the sea. As for what was said about thus sacrificing to his net
3 and burning incense to his dragnet, its interpretation is that they
4 sacrifice to their standards and worship their weapons of war,
5 since it is because of them his portion is fat and his eating plenteous.
6 Its interpretation is that they parcel out their yoke and
7 their taxes,⁶ consuming [literally “eating” or “devouring”] all the Peoples⁷ year by year,
8 giving many countries over to the sword. Therefore, his sword is always unsheathed
9 to decimate the Nations mercilessly [1:17].
10 Its interpretation concerns the Kittim, who destroy Many by the sword,
11 Young men, grown-ups, and old people, women and children, and have no pity even on the fruit of
the womb.
12 But I will stand up upon my watchtower
13 and take my stand upon my fortress⁸ and spy out to see what He will say
14 to me, and wh(at I shall ans)wer when I am reproved [2:1]. And YHWH answered
15 (and said, “Write down the vision and make it pla)in on tablets,⁹ so that
16 he may read it on the run [2:2].

Column VII

1 And El told Habakkuk to write what was going to happen
2 to the Last Generation, but He did not inform him when the Age would end.
3 And concerning what He said about reading and running
4 Its interpretation concerns the Righteous Teacher, to whom Elohim made known
5 all the Mysteries of the words of His Servants the Prophets. For there shall yet be a vision
6 of the Appointed Time, and it will speak of the End and will not Lie [2:3a].
7 Its interpretation is that the Last Era will be extended and shall exceed all
8 that the Prophets have foretold, since the Mysteries of Elohim are astonishing [the “Delay of the
Parousian in Christian theology].
9 If it tarries, wait for it, for it will surely come and not
10 delay [2:3b]. Its interpretation concerns the Men of Truth,
11 the Doers of the Torah, whose hand will not slacken from the service
12 of Truth,¹⁰ though the Final Age be prolonged before them. Because
13 all the Eras of Elohim will come to their Appointed End, as He determined
14 them in the Mysteries of His Intelligence. Behold his (soul) is puffed up and not Upright
15 (within him [2:4a]). Its interpretation is that their sins will be doubled upon them,
16 and they will not be pleased with their Judgement.
17 And the Righteous shall live by his Faith [2:4b].

Column VIII

1 Its interpretation concerns all the Doers of the Torah [“Torah-Doers”] in the House of Judah [that is,
all Jews] whom
2 Elohim will save from the House of Judgement because of their works and their Faith¹²
3 in the Righteous Teacher. And furthermore the arrogant man is betrayed by Riches which
4 cannot comfort, but rather he opens his mortal soul as to Hell and like death cannot be satisfied.

5 But rather all the Nations are gathered to him and the Peoples are collected unto him.
6 Do they not all satirize him and make up sayings against him.
7 And they say, “Woe to the man who multiplies unto himself that which is not his. How long will he
continue to burden himself
8 with debts [2:5-6]?” Its interpretation concerns the Wicked Priest, who
9 at the beginning of his Office [literally “Standing”] was called by the name of Truth. But when he
ruled
10 in Israel, his heart became puffed up and he deserted Elohim and betrayed the Laws for the sake of
11 Riches. And he stole and collected the Riches of the Men of Violence, who rebelled against Elohim.
12 And he took the Riches of the Peoples, heaping upon himself guilty Sinfulness,
13 and he acted in the Ways of Abominations of all unclean pollution. Will not suddenly
14 Your torturers arise and your tormenters awake? You will be their spoils,
15 since you spoiled many Nations, all the Remainder of the Peoples will plunder you [2:7—8].
16 (Its interpretation con)cerns the Priest [meaning, “the High Priest”] who rebelled
17 (and bro)ke the Ordinances of (Elohim ...)

Column IX

1 They afflicted him with the Judgements upon Evil and inflicted upon him the outrages of Evil
pollutions¹³
2 in taking Vengeance upon the flesh of his corpse [not the redundant “body of his flesh” one often
sees here]. As for the words, since you spoiled many Nations, all
3 the Additional Ones of the Peoples will plunder you, its interpretation concerns the Last Priests of
Jerusalem,
4 who gathered Riches and profiteered from the spoils of the Peoples¹⁴.
5 But in the Last Days, their Riches, together with their booty, will be given over to the hand of
6 the Army of the Kittim, because they are the Additional Ones of the Peoples [Yeter ha- Amim¹⁵].
7 Because of the Blood of men and the violence done to the land, the township, and all its inhabitants
[2:8].
8 Its interpretation concerns the Wicked Priest, whom, as a consequence of the Evil he did to the
Righteous
9 Teacher and the Men of his Council, El delivered to the hand of his enemies to afflict him
10 with torturing (and) to consume with bitternesses of soul, because he condemned¹⁶
11 His Elect. Woe to the profiteer's profiteering, Evil unto his house, who places his nest
12 high up to escape the power of Evil. You have devised shame
13 for your house by cutting off many Peoples and sinned against your soul. For
14 the stones will shout from the walls and the beams of wood will answer it [2:9—11]
15 (The interpretation of the passage) concerns the (Priest), who ...

Column X

1 Its stone will be for oppression and its beams of wood for stealing. And concerning what
2 it says, cutting off many Peoples and the sins of your soul,
3 its interpretation concerns the House of Judgement,¹⁷ which Elohim will deliver in
4 (rendering) His Judgement in the midst of many Peoples, and He will arraign him [literally, “lead
him”] there
5 and condemn him in their midst and judge him with Fire and brimstone.¹⁸ Woe
6 unto him who builds a City on Blood and establishes a township on Unrighteousness. Behold, does
7 this not come from YHWH of Hosts, that the Peoples labor for the sake of Fire
8 and the Peoples tire themselves out for the sake of Nothingness [2:12—13]?
9 The interpretation of the passage is about the Spouter of Lying, who leads Many astray,¹⁹

10 in order to build a Worthless City upon Blood and erect an Assembly [even possibly “Church”]
upon Lying,²⁰

11 for the sake of his Glory, tiring out Many with a Worthless Service and instructing them
12 in works of Lying, so that their *amal [“suffering works”]²¹ will be of Emptiness [or “count for
nothing”—cf. the famous “Empty Man” allusion in James 2:20]. And they will be brought
13 to the (same) Judgements of Fire, with which they insulted [even possibly “blasphemed”] and
vilified the Elect of Elohim.

14 For the earth will be filled with the Knowledge of the Esteem of YHWH like waters
15 covering the s(ea [2:14]). The interpretation of the passage is that
16 in their return (to E)l ... (The Spouter)

Column XI

1 of Lying, and afterwards this Knowledge, like waters of the sea, will be abundantly revealed to them.
2 Woe to the one who causes his neighbor to drink, pouring out
3 his fury unto drunkenness [also, possibly “to make them drunk”] in order to look upon their Festivals
[2:15—in the received Habakkuk, this is “look upon their privy parts”].

4 Its interpretation concerns the Wicked Priest, who

5 pursued after the Righteous Teacher to swallow him in his hot [“venomous”]

6 anger in [“with”] his House of Exile [or “Exiled House”]. And at the completion of the Festival of
Rest

7 of the Day of Atonements, he appeared to them to swallow them,

8 causing them to stumble [literally “and cast them down”] on the Fast Day, the Sabbath of their Rest.
You are satiated more

9 with shame than Glory. Drink also and stagger [in the received version, this is “Let your foreskin be
uncovered”]!

10 For the Cup of the Right Hand of YHWH [playing on “the Cup of Trembling”] will come around to
you and shame

11 shall cover your Esteem [2:16].

12 Its interpretation concerns the (High) Priest, whose shame was greater than his Esteem,

13 Because he did not circumcize the foreskin of his heart [here the “foreskin”/“privy parts” imagery,
but now harking back to “the Zadokite Covenant” of Ezek 44:7—9] and walked in his Way of
14 satiety, in the way of drinking his fill.

15 But the Cup of the Wrath of El will swallow him,²² adding to (his shame and dis)grace, and the
pain ...

16 (Because the violence of Lebanon shall overwhelm you and the destruction of the dumb beasts)

Column XII

1 shall terrify you, because of the Blood of Man [literally, “Adam”²³] and the violence to the land, the
township, and all its inhabitants [2:17].

2 The interpretation of the passage concerns the Wicked Priest. He will be paid

3 the reward which he rewarded the Poor [Ebionim],²⁴ because Lebanon

4 is the Council of the Community and the dumb beasts are the Simple Ones of Judah doing

5 the Torah [here the language of “doing”/“Doer” of vii.11 and viii.1 above]. Just as he conspired to
destroy the Poor [Ebionim],²⁵

6 so too Elohim would Judge him [the Wicked Priest] to destruction. And as to the saying, because of
the Blood

7 of the township and the violence of the land, its interpretation is: the township is Jerusalem.

8 where the Wicked Priest committed his works of Abominations [or “Abominable works”], polluting

9 the Temple of Elohim. The violence of the land relates to the cities of Judah, where

10 he stole the sustenance ["Riches"] of the Poor.²⁶ Of what use are graven images, whose makers formed
11 a casting and images of Lying, in whom, the craftsman puts his trust when he
12 creates dumb idols [2:18]. The interpretation of the passage concerns all the
13 idols of the Nations, which they create in order to serve and bow down
14 to them. These will not save them on the Day of Judgement.²⁷
15 Wo(e, to anyone saying) to pieces of wood, "Awake!" and to dumb (stone), "Arise!"
16 This can guide? Behold, it is covered with gold and silver,
17 and there is no spirit at all within it, but YHWH is in His Qadosh Temple,

Column XIII

1 be silent before him, all the world [2:19-20]. Its interpretation concerns all the Nations,
2 who serve stone and wood. But on the Day
3 of Judgement Elohim will destroy all the Servants of idols
4 and Evil Ones from off the earth.²⁸

NOTES

- 1 The first use of "amal" / "suffering" or "works", which will become so important later in the document vis a vis the ideologies of the "Righteous Teacher" and "the Liar".
- 2 The verb here is literally "eat", important in terms of the predatory activities of Herodians and Romans.
- 3 Since we identify "the Peoples" as a circumlocution for Herodians, these would be Herodian Fortresses like Cypros, Hyrcania, Machaeros, etc.
- 4 This, of course, is the mea culpa cry, turned against the Jews in New Testament theology, as for instance in Mt 27:25.
- 5 Here, a variation of the "nets"/"fishermen" imagery applied in the Gospels to Jesus' Apostles.
- 6 An overt clear allusion to Roman "tax-farming" which we interpret to apply to Herodians.
- 7 Again, "eating" used seemingly to describe Roman conquests.
- 8 This is the explanation for the curious passage in the Damascus Document (iv.10- 12): "And with the Completion of the number of these years, there will be no more joining to the House of Judah. But rather a man will stand up upon his own watchtower", where "mezudo"/"net" has been mistakenly transcribed instead of "mezoro"/"watchtower" as here in Hab 2:1.
- 9 The same "tablets" reappear in Paul's "fleshy tablets of the heart" attack on the Jerusalem Leadership of the Church in 2 Co 3:3—6. In attacking written credentials, not the Apostleship by the Holy Spirit, Paul states that on these "fleshy tablets of the heart", one writes not "with ink, but with the Spirit of the living Elohim, not on stone ... not on the letter, but the New Covenant of the Spirit". He then goes on to assert, in an attack not calculated to win him many friends in Jerusalem, "for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life".
- 10 See Ga 4:15, where, as Paul sees it, he is reckoned "the Enemy" by his communities for telling them " Truth", i.e., he "does not lie", also reiterated elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. This "Enemy" terminology is generally reckoned as having been applied to Paul by "the Ebionites" or "Jewish Christians".
- 11 Paul uses this same terminology, "being puffed up", in 1 Co 4:18 and 8:1. The latter is extremely important, because it occurs in the context of criticizing those whose "consciences are so weak" they will not eat "food sacrificed to idols" and are vegetarians— an attack on the Jamesian Leadership of "the Jerusalem Church".
- 12 Cf. the Letter of James 2:22. Literally the word "works" here is that "amal" found in Is 53:11—in this context "suffering works".
- 13 We translate this "pollutions" not "diseases", because of the verb "they inflicted upon him"

connected with it. Diseases are not “outrages”, nor are they “inflicted” by anyone on anyone.

14 In our view, Herodian “tax-farming”. Again, that the “Chief Priests” profiteer from these activities proves the point.

15 Here the definite article “he”/“the” is deliberately added. This concretizes the parallel between “the Peoples”/Herodians and “the Additional Ones of the Peoples”/ Romans.

16 As in ix.1 above.

17 This is the same “Beit ha-Mishpat”/“House of Judgement” as in the exposition of Hab 2:4 in viii.2 earlier, which makes it clear that the meaning is eschatological and akin to the decision of Judgement.

18 I.e., “the Last Judgement”.

19 “Leading astray” is the opposite of the proper “justifying” activity “making Many Righteous” of the Righteous Teacher.

20 Here the meaning of “Blood” is esoteric and symbolic, because the “Spouter of Lying” is being described.

21 Now this “amal” or redemptive works are those taught by the Liar, which are “Empty” of saving efficacy. See also the allusion to the individual, who teaches Salvation by Faith as the “Empty Man” or “Man of Emptiness” in Ja 2:20. The “works” this individual teaches are “Empty” ones just like here in the Habakkuk Peshet.

22 See Rev 14:6 and 16:9.

23 The actual Hebrew here is “Adam” which some could have seen as having to do with “the Blood” of the Messiah and a possible covert or esoteric reference to the “Jewish Christian” or Ebionite “Primal Adam” ideology.

24 The language here is taken directly from Is 3:9—11, applied in all early Church literature to the death of James.

25 The note of “conspiring against the Poor” is very important. There is conspiracy here.

26 Because this has to do with “the Wicked Priest” and not “the Spouter of Lying” and his ideology, the “Blood” here now is real again. This is the “stealing Riches” and “plundering” we heard about earlier.

27 Now we really have the “Day of Judgement” referred to. Compare this with the Koran 82:17-19, also on the “Day of Judgement”.

28 Again, as in Islam, “Servants of Idols” are “idolators”. The allusion to “Evil Ones” probably refers to backsliders, accommodators, and “Traitors” among non-idolators or Jews. Josephus, Paul, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zacchai (the proverbial founder of Rabbinic Judaism), the Herodian Agrippa II (if he was even considered to be Jewish, which is doubtful), his sister Bernice (Titus’ mistress), and Philo’s nephew Tiberius Alexander (whom even Josephus says, deserted the religion of his fathers), Titus’ military commander at the siege of Jerusalem, would be good examples of these from a Qumran perspective.