



## [Habakkuk 1:2-4](#)

(2) O LORD, how long shall I cry and You will not hear? I cry out to You of violence, and You do not save! (3) Why do You show me wickedness, and trouble? For destruction and violence are before me; and there is strife, and contention rises up. (4) Therefore the law has become ineffective, and judgment does not always go forth, for the wicked entraps the righteous; therefore judgment goes forth perverted.

*A Faithful Version*

The anguish in his voice is palpable. "[God](#), I've been crying out to You day and night, and still violence, perversity, and all these terrible things are happening in the land. How long will this evil last? How much longer must we endure this constant wickedness, this corruption? When are you going to act, God?" We have probably prayed similar prayers ourselves: "We need You, God. How long, O Lord?"

Ezekiel was a slightly later contemporary of Habakkuk. In [Ezekiel 9:1-6](#) is a prophecy, a vision, that he saw while a captive in Babylon. The vision describes what God was doing in Judah and answers, at least in part, Habakkuk's question: "Why have You not judged all this evil, God?" His reply in Ezekiel 9 is, "I am going through the land, through My chosen people, and I am marking each one who sighs and cries over what is happening. I am searching out and seeing who is righteous, who has character, and whom I must destroy."

It is good that we mourn over all the corruption, wickedness, and abominations that are happening in this land. It tells God something about our heart and our character. He is seeking out those who are concerned, distressed, and repulsed by what is occurring around them, and He is setting them apart for deliverance. All the while, we must endure it, but it is a necessary wait, because it takes time for God to evaluate our character, to see what we will do over the long haul. As [Jesus](#) advises in [Luke 21:19](#), "In your [patience](#) possess your souls."

So we must ask ourselves, "How do we react to what is happening in our nation?" How

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do we react to sex and violence on television, movies, and magazines, in books, on billboards, and in just about all advertising and entertainment? How do we react to terrorism, to drug use, to [abortion](#), to oppression? How do we react to our court system, which allows so much injustice to stand? How do we react to racial inequalities? Have we become numb and hardened to all of these things, or do we still [sigh and cry](#) over the depths of this nation's depravity?

Habakkuk is certainly concerned, and so he asks God for answers, crying out, "Save us!" God replies in [Habakkuk 1:5-11](#), and His reply is very interesting.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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