CHAPTER TWO

TRANSLATION AND NOTES

THE TRANSLATION

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

The First Complaint
1:2 How long, O Yahweh, shall I cry out but you do not hear? I call to you, ‘Violence!’ but you do not deliver?
1:3 Why do you allow me to see iniquity? And (why do) you look upon trouble? Destruction and violence are in my presence. Strife exists! Indeed, contention rages!
1:4 Therefore, law is weak. Indeed, order does not ever go forth, for the wicked one surrounds the righteous one. Therefore, order goes forth crooked.

The First Oracle
1:5 Look at the nations and see! Be astonished! Be astounded! For I am doing a deed in your days.

You will not believe even if it were told,
1:6 for behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that nation bitter and skilled, the one walking on the broad places of the earth in order to dispossess the one whose dwellings are not his own.

The First Response
1:7 He is too terrible and dreadful for us. His order and his rage go forth.
1:8 Swifter than leopards are his steeds, Sharper than wolves in the evening. Prancing are his horses.
His horsemen come from far away.
They fly as an eagle, acting quickly to devour.

1:9 The whole (host) comes for the violent one.
The multitude of their faces are forward.

He gathers captives as sand.

1:10 Indeed, he lays kings low
and rulers are a joke to him.
He laughs at every fortified city
and heaps up earth and captures it.

1:11 Then he sweeps along (like) the wind and passes by.
This, his power, devastates for his god.

1:12 Indeed, you are from primeval times, O Yahweh,
My holy God, we shall not die!
O Yahweh, for order you established him.
O Rock, for adjudication you founded him.

The Second Complaint

1:13 Too pure of eyes to see evil,
and to look upon trouble you are not able,
why do you look upon the treacherous ones and keep silent
when the wicked one swallows the one more righteous than himself?

1:14 And why do you make man as the fish of the sea,
as creatures, none ruling over them?

1:15 All with a fishhook he brings up.
He drags him away with his net.
He gathers him up with his seine.
Therefore, he is glad and rejoices.

1:16 Therefore, he sacrifices to his net and burns to his seine,
for by them fat is his portion and his food is fatness.

1:17 Therefore, he will indeed empty his net continually.
From slaying nations he shall not refrain.

2:1 Upon my post I will surely stand,
and I will surely station myself upon (my) watch.
I will watch closely to see what he will speak against me
and what I will reply to my prosecutor.

The Second Oracle

2:2 But Yahweh answered and said:
Write the vision! Make it clear upon the tablets
so that the one reading it will run!