

# Habakkuk 1:12–17

## Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

### II. Habakkuk's Second Prayer

Hab 1:12–17

#### A. *The Eternal God Appointed Him for Judgment* (1:12)

[5.5]

1:12	Are you not / <sup>a</sup> eternal / YHWH my God / my Holy One / who never dies //	16 3	5 5 0
		<u>9 2</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		1:10c–12b	<b>23 13 10</b>
	O YHWH / for judgment you appointed him / indeed, O Rock / for accusation you / <sup>b</sup> established him //	10 2	3 0 3
		<u>13 3</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		1:8–12	<b>59 33 26</b>

#### B. *Why Do You Remain Silent as the Wicked Swallow the Righteous?* (1:13)

[4.5]

1:13	Your eyes are too pure / to look on evil / and to watch wrong / you are not able //	14 2	4 4 0
		<u>15 2</u>	<u>5 5 0</u>
		1:12–13b	<b>23 17 6</b>
	Why do you look on / treacherous people / and remain silent / when the wicked swallow / those more righteous than they //	15 3	4 0 4
		<u>14 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		1:13	<b>17 9 8</b>

#### C. *You Made Humans Like Fish and He Caught Them with His Net* (1:14–15b)

[4.4]

1:14	You have made humankind / like fish of the sea // like reptiles [ / ] who do not have a ruler //	14 2	4 4 0
		<u>11 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		1:11–14	<b>47 26 21</b>
1:15	All of them / with a hook he brought up / he dragged out / <sup>a</sup> each one with his net /	12 2	3 3 0
		<u>11 2</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		1:12–15b	<b>44 26 18</b>

#### D. *He Rejoiced over His Catch and Worshiped His Mesh* (1:15c–16b)

[5.4]

	And he collected each one / with his mesh //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		1:13–15c	<b>32 20 12</b>
	That is why / he was happy and < / his heart > <sup>b</sup> rejoiced //	{+1b} <u>13 3</u>	<u>5 0 5</u>
		1:12–15	<b>51 28 23</b>

1:16	That is why / he made a sacrifice to his net /		<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>		<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
		1:13–16a				41	24	17
	He burned incense / to his mesh //		<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
		1:14–16a				26	17	9

**E. Will He Continue Consuming Nations without Qualms? (1:16c–17) [5.5]**

	For with / his portion / <sup>a</sup> was fat /		15	3		4	0	4
	and his food / was “calorious” <sup>b</sup> //		<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
		1:14–16				32	17	15
1:17	Will he therefore / empty his net //		11	2		4	4	0
	and forever / slay nations / without qualms? //		<u>17</u>	<u>3</u>		<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>
		1:16–17				17	10	7
		1:12–17				<u>72</u>	38	34
		1:1–17				199	106	93

Scansion in SAS Units: (5.5).(4.5) . 4.4 . (5.4).(5.5) = 19 + 8 + 19 = **46** (= **23** x 2)

**Notes:**

- 1:12<sup>a</sup> Reading the *munah* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 1:12<sup>b</sup> Reading the *mêrəkâ* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 1:15<sup>a</sup> Reading the *munah* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 1:15<sup>b</sup> Adding the word *libbô* with LXX (see F. I. Andersen, AB 25 [2001], p. 185).
- 1:16<sup>a</sup> Reading the *munah* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 1:16<sup>b</sup> The word “calorious” is used to suggest consumption of excess calories so as to put on weight.

## Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Habakkuk 1:12–17 has 7 strophes: 1:12, 13ab, 13cd, 14–15b, 15cd, 16ab and 16c–17.

A	1:12	2 balanced dyads:	[16 + 9] + [10 + 13]	= 25 + 23	morae
B	1:13	2 balanced dyads:	[14 + 15] + [15 + 14]	= 29 + 29	morae
X	1:14–15b	2 balanced dyads:	[14 + 11] + [12 + 11]	= 25 + 23	morae
B'	1:15c–16b	balanced dyad:	[12 + 13]	= 12 + 13	morae
	1:16ab	balanced dyad:	[12 + 10]	= 12 + 10	morae
A'	1:16b–17	2 balanced dyads:	[15 + 12] + [11 + 17]	= 27 + 28	morae

2. The 1<sup>st</sup> strophe (1:12) is a single part with two subdivisions: 1:12ab and 12cd.
  - Nah 3:19–Hab 1:12a **153** (= 17 x 9) words [153 = triangular 17]
  - 1: 8–12 **26** words after *atnach*
3. The 2<sup>nd</sup> strophe (1:13) is a single part with two subdivisions: 1:13ab and 13cd.
  - 1:12–13b **23** words and **17** words before *atnach*
  - 1:13 **17** words
  - 1:12–13 **17** words before *atnach*
4. The 4<sup>th</sup> strophe (1:14–15b) is a single part with two subdivisions: 1:14 and 15ab.
  - 1:11–14 **26** words before *atnach*
5. The 5<sup>th</sup> strophe (1:15c–16b) has two parts with four subdivisions: 1:15c, 15d, 16a and 16b.
  - 1:12–15 **51** (= 17 x 3) words and **23** words after *atnach*
  - 1:14–16b **26** words and **17** words before *atnach*
6. The 7<sup>th</sup> strophe (1:16c–17) is a single part with two subdivisions: 1:16cd and 17.
  - 1:14–16 **32** words and **17** words before *atnach*
  - 1:16–17 **17** words
  - 1:15–17 **17** words before *atnach*

## Observations

1. The 5 strophes in Hab 1:17–12 may be outlined in a menorah pattern on prosodic grounds:

### ***Habakkuk's Second Prayer (1:12–17)***

A The eternal God appointed him for judgment	[4.4] 1:12
B Your eyes are too pure to look on evil	[2.2] 1:13ab
C Why do you remain silent as the wicked swallow the righteous?	[3.2] 1:13cd
X <b>You made humans like fish and he caught them with a net</b>	[4.4] 1:14–15b
C' He collected each one with his mesh and his heart rejoiced	[2.3] 1:15cd
B' He sacrificed and burned incense to his mesh	[2.2] 1:16ab
A' He gorged himself—will he forever slay nations without qualms?	[4.4] 1:16c–17

2. In terms of the 72 words in Habakkuk 1:12–17, the **arithmological center** falls between the words **כרמש לא** (“like reptiles / not”), in 14b, with 36 words on either side.

The **meaningful center** is found by including 13 words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

	<b>למה תביט בוגדים תחריש</b>	Why do you look on treacherous people and remain silent,
	<b>בבלע רשע צדיק ממנו</b>	When the wicked swallow those more righteous than they?
14	<b>ותעשה אדם כדגי הים</b>	You have made humankind like fish of the sea,

- 15      **כרמש לא** משל בו      Like reptiles who have no ruler,  
          כלה בחכה העלה      All of them with a hook he brought up;  
          יגרהו בחרמו      He dragged out each one with his net.  
          ויאספהו במכמרתו      And he collected each one with his mesh.  
          על כן ישמח      That is why he was happy.

In this instance the **concentric compositional formula** becomes:

$$72 = 23 + 26 + 23 \quad [\text{word count— for Habakkuk 1:12–17}]$$

3. The 28-word **meaningful framework** (with the 10-word framework highlighted in gray) reads as follows:

- 12      **הלוא אתה מקדם יהוה אלהי**      Are you not eternal, YHWH my God?  
          קדשי לא נמות      My Holy One, we will not die!  
          יהוה למשפט שמתו      O YHWH, for judgment you appointed him;  
          וצור להוכיח יסדרתו      Indeed, O Rock, for accusation you established him.

- 17      בהמה שמן חלקו      With his portion was fat;  
          ומאכלו בראה      And his food was “calorinous”.  
          העל כן יריק חרמו      Will he therefore empty his net,  
          **ותמיד להרג גוים לא יחמול**      And forever slay nations without qualms?

4. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae for Hab 1:12–17:

$$72 = 27 + 18 + 27 \quad \text{word-count}$$

$$72 = 23 + 26 + 23$$

{with others in between}

$$72 = 14 + 34 + 14$$

$$72 = 5 + 62 + 5$$

$$46 = 19 + 8 + 19 \quad \text{SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units}$$

$$20 = 8 + 4 + 8 \quad \text{briques (primary SAS units)}$$

5. It is interesting to note the fact that the word **כלה** (“all of them”) appears in the **meaningful centers** of both 1:12–17 [in 1:15a] and in Habakkuk 1 as a whole [in 1:9a]. In this regard, the situation is similar to that of Zephaniah and its use of the word **קול** (“hark!”), which also appears in the **meaningful centers** of both Zeph 1:10–18 [in 1:14b] and in Zephaniah 1 as a whole [in 1:10a]. This suggests the rather surprising possibility of common authorship of these two adjacent books within the Book of the Twelve, at least in regards their numerical composition.

6. In the prosodic structure of Hab 1:17–12, the basic building blocks in each poetic verset are the **briques** (primary SAS units). These sub-units are delineated by the Masoretes, who marked most of the boundaries with one of the following:

- **Soph Pasuq** A large colon following a word signifies the end of a verse, which does not always coincide with the end of a sentence.
- **Atnach** A small caret-like mark (like ^) beneath the consonantal text, pointing upward, is used to divide most verses. Its primary importance for our purposes concerns its use in the matter of numerical composition—i.e., the total word-count in each line is divided into the number of words before and after *atnach*.

In the prosodic analysis presented with the translation (above), the presence of these two primary disjunctive markers is indicated with a double slash (/). Habakkuk 1:12–17 has 20 **briques** (primary SAS units), 18 of which are marked by:

- *soph pasuq* 6 times, at the end of each verse
- *atnach* 6 times, in each verse
- *zāqēp qaṭan* 6 time (vv 12, 13, 15 [bis], 16 [bis])

The boundaries of the remaining two **briques** are marked by:

- *zāqēp gadōl* 1 time (v 13)
- *təḥîr* 1 time (v 12)

7. The prosodic structure of Habakkuk 1:12–17, in terms of its **briques** (primary SAS units), may be displayed as follows: [: represents *soph pasuq*; ^ represents *atnach* and † indicates any other such boundary marker]:

- A 12 *hālōʾ ʾattāh miqqeḏem yhwḥ ʾēlōhay†* *qəḏōšî lōʾ nāmût ^*  
*yhwḥ ləmišpāt šamtō †* *wəšûr ləhōkīah yəsdōt :*
- B 13 *ṭəhōr ʿēnayim mērəʾōt rāʿ †* *wəhabbîṭ ʾel-ʿāmāl lōʾ tūkāl ^*  
*lāmmāh ṭabbîṭ bōgəḏim taḥrîš †* *bəḥallaʿ rāšāʿ šaddîq mimmennû :*

X 14	<i>wattaʿāseh ʾādām kidgē hayyām ^</i>	<i>kəremes lōʾ -mōšēl ḥô :</i>
15	<i>kullōh bəḥakkāh hēʿālāh †</i>	<i>yəgōrēhū bəḥermō †</i>

- B' *wəyaʾaspēhū bəmiḳmartō ^* *ʿal-ken yíšmah wəyāgīl <libbō> :*  
 16 *ʿal-kēn yəzabbēah ləḥermō †* *wīqattēr ləmiḳmaratō ^*
- A' *kî bāhēmmāh šāmēn ḥelqō †* *ûmaʾākālō bəriʾāh :*  
 17 *haʿal kēn yārîq ḥermō ^* *wəṭāmîḏ lahārōg gōyîm lōʾ yaḥmôl :*

8. The 20 **briques** are distributed in five strophes in Habakkuk 1:12–17 as follows:

$$(4 + 4) + \boxed{4} + (4 + 4) = 8 + 4 + 8 = 20$$

The **arithmological center** of Hab 1:12–17 falls between the words *kəremes lōʾ* (“like reptiles not”) in v 14, with 36 words on either side. There are 46 SAS units, 20 **briques**, 10

versets, and 7 strophes. The **arithmological center** is in the middle strophe, the middle two versets, the middle two *briques*, and the middle two SAS units.

9. According to the "Word-Count in the Book of the Twelve—Progress Report" [written April 16, 2002], a net total of five words has been subtracted from the original text in the book of Habakkuk in Codex L (and BHS)—one word before and four words after *atnach*. The proposed corrections to restore the Hebrew text of Habakkuk to its original form, as a numerical composition, are:

1:5b adding the words  $\text{ʾānî}$  ("I") before the sequence of the two verbal forms, so as to read  $\text{<ʾānî> } \text{pō}^{\text{c}}\text{al } \text{pō}^{\text{c}}\text{ēl}$  ("I am doing a deed") with LXX and Syriac.

1:15b adding *libbô* ("his heart") with LXX [see F. I. Andersen, AB 25 (2001), p. 185].

The others will be added to this list as we proceed through the rest of the book of Habakkuk.

10. Ernest McClain notes here in Hab 1:12–17 what he calls an open allusion to the matrix, with mankind as "fivers," and human beings as "fishes" caught in God's net. As John Holthouse has put it, "The matrix is the whole ball of wax!" Thus it does constitute an object of worship.

As for the groupings in five or seven strophes, as the case may be here, McClain argues that five tones permit five pentatonic modal permutations, and seven permit seven heptatonic modal permutations, but other groupings [i.e., three plus alternative pairs from the four above and below] also provide other pentatonic tunings. Plato's are displayed in *The Pythagorean Plato* (1978), pp. 24–25. McClain argues that perhaps all of these different groupings are acceptable as typical Pribram "holographic" alternate perspectives in a complex and changing world. As McClain puts it:

"The main point is that people who lived in these Great Early Cities probably were generally proud and grateful to be part of them when they were "ascendant" and therefore relatively rich and safe—and Israel is more alert to being everybody's "punching bag" (center of pressure from stronger neighbors, none of whom could be trusted for long). Neither God's creativity nor destructive power could be ignored, and Bible authors appear to take the extreme stance that "Chance" is ruled out; "bad luck" means that you "deserved it." In this sense, they are "overly superstitious" about "monotheism." Every number and every grouping in your list occurs significantly in the narrative. In brief: Sumer shows a pentatonic preference with its double system (and largest counter of 3600 (=  $60^2$  years at which the younger gods rebel). Marduk extravagance exploits a heptatonic model (via his favorite "7-headed *mušhuššu* dragon," which Dalley defines as a 'red/furious snake,' "a dragon or composite monster, symbol of Marduk" (*Myths from Mesopotamia* [Oxford UP, 1989], p. 325; see fig. 2:6, p. 316). (This agrees with Berossus preaching.) However, YHWH inherits ALL powers to infinity; but the Chosen are "set-apart" first by factors of 100 (not merely ten, or sixty), AND the Levites are set apart by a factor of 7 (employed in "God's work among all the tribes.")

11. David Crookes gives us a provocative representation in art in *Habakkuk and the Angel*.

**[The angel points the way down the Path of Illumination]**



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