

Habakkuk's Prayer

Words by David Pawson; music by Ludwig van Beethoven

Lord, your fame has gone before you from the time your arm was bared,
Tales of deeds so overwhelming, even listening makes me scared.
Now today, O Lord, repeat them, prove that you are still the same-
But in wrath remember mercy for the honour of your name.

Look, this Holy God descending spreads the sky with glorious rays,
Trailing from his hand of Power, earth is filled with sounds of praise;
But the guilty nations tremble, plague and pestilence their fears:
Even ancient mountains crumble when the infinite appears.

Are you angry with the rivers? Is your wrath upon the streams?
Do you rage against the ocean with your horse and chariot teams?
Writhing hills and flooded valleys, sun and moon stand still in fear
At the glint of flying arrows, lightning of your flashing spear.

Striding through the earth in vengeance, threshing nations till it's done,
All to save your chosen people, rescue your anointed one.
You have crushed their wicked leader, stripped him bare and split his head;
So his storming, bloating water years scattered to the wind instead.

Having heard the final outcome, knowing all and not just part,
Great emotion grips for my body, quivering lips and pounding heart:
Trembling legs give way beneath me, yet with patience will I wait,
When the foe invades my country, certain of his dreadful fate.

Though the fig tree does not blossom and the vine is void of grapes,
Though the olive trees are barren and the fields produce no crops,
Though no lambs are in the sheepfold and no cattle in the stall-
Yet will I enjoy my Saviour, glad that God is all in all.

Joyfully I face the future with my failing strength restored
And my angry questions answered by this marvelous sovereign Lord.
See my heart and feet are leaping like a deer upon the heights-
Set my words to holy music, voices and stringed instruments.

Set to the fourth movement of Symphony No. 9 ("Ode to Joy")