

# Habakkuk 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.

## Analysis

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Habakkuk describes Babylon's idolatry: 'Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous' (al-ken yezabbeach lechormo vayeqatter lemikhmarto ki-vahem shamein chelqo umaakalo beri'ah). They worship their weapons—literally sacrificing to nets and dragnets. Why? 'Because by them their portion is fat' (ki-vahem shamein chelqo)—military might provides prosperity. This is idolatry in its essence: worshiping created things (weapons, strength, success) rather than Creator. Babylon attributes success to its own power rather than recognizing divine sovereignty. This self-worship and military glorification characterized ancient empires and characterizes modern nations trusting in military might, economic power, or technological superiority apart from God. The passage warns that such idolatry, though temporarily successful, ultimately brings judgment.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern cultures commonly deified weapons and military power. Babylon's religion involved extensive rituals celebrating military victories and seeking divine favor for campaigns. But Habakkuk exposes the absurdity: they worship the tools they themselves created. This self-glorification would eventually result in Babylon's own destruction. Isaiah 10:12-19 articulates the same principle: God uses Assyria to judge Israel, but then judges Assyria for its pride in believing it succeeded through its own power. The pattern repeats throughout history—

nations trusting in military might rather than moral righteousness ultimately collapse. Babylon fell to Persia in 539 BC, proving that worshiping one's own strength provides no lasting security.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What modern equivalents exist to Babylon's worship of military nets—trusting in technology, weapons, or human power?
2. How does attributing success to our own abilities rather than God's providence constitute practical idolatry?
3. What does this passage teach about the relationship between national pride and eventual judgment?

## Interlinear Text

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עַל	כֵּן	יִזְבְּחוּ	לְחֶרֶם וְ	וְיִקְטְרוּ	לְמַכְמֶרֶת וְ
H5921	H3651				
Therefore they sacrifice		unto their net	and burn incense	unto their drag	
H2076		H2764	H6999	H4365	

כִּי	בְּהֵמָה	שֶׁמֶן	חֵלֶק וְ	וּמֵאֵל וְ	בְּרָאָה:
H3588					
because by them	is fat	their portion	and their meat	plenteous	
H1992	H8082	H2506	H3978	H1277	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Habakkuk 1:11** (Parallel theme): Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god.

**Deuteronomy 8:17** (Parallel theme): And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

**Ezekiel 28:3** (Parallel theme): Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee:

**Daniel 5:23** (Parallel theme): But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

**Daniel 4:30** (Parallel theme): The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

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