

# Habakkuk 2:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?

## Analysis

**Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?** The rhetorical question expects the answer: yes, absolutely. Those you oppressed **shall rise up suddenly** (יָקוּמוּ/yaqumu feta)—will arise unexpectedly, without warning. **That shall bite thee** (נֹשְׁכֶיךָ/noshkheikha)—literally your 'biters,' using imagery of creditors extracting payment with interest (the verb נָשַׁךְ/nashakh means both 'bite' and 'charge interest').

**And awake that shall vex thee** (יִקְצוּ מִזֶּמְךָ/yiqtzu meza'ze'eikha)—your 'shakers' or 'tormentors' will awaken from sleep. The oppressed, once passive victims, become active agents of judgment. **And thou shalt be for booties unto them** (לְמוֹת לְמַשְׁסוֹת לָמוֹ/vehayita limshissot lamo)—you will become plunder for them, suffering the same fate you inflicted. This is the lex talionis (law of retaliation) on a cosmic scale—oppressors become the oppressed, plunderers become the plundered. The principle is clear: violence breeds violence, oppression creates the conditions for future revolt. Those who live by the sword die by the sword (Matthew 26:52).

## Historical Context

Babylon fell exactly as described—suddenly and from within. In 539 BC, Cyrus the Persian diverted the Euphrates River and entered Babylon while its king Belshazzar feasted (Daniel 5). Former subject peoples within the Babylonian

Empire welcomed Persian rule as liberation. Some former Babylonian territories became Persian satrapies; others gained independence. The plunderers were plundered, the enslavers enslaved. History repeatedly demonstrates this principle: colonial powers face independence movements, slave societies face revolts, oppressive regimes face revolutions. Judgment comes through the very mechanisms of injustice employed—the oppressed rise against oppressors.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

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

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does injustice create the conditions for its own judgment through eventual backlash and revolt?
2. What does this passage teach about the self-defeating nature of oppression and exploitation?
3. How should awareness of this principle affect how individuals, businesses, and nations treat those with less power?

## Interlinear Text

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הֵל וָא H3808	פָּ תַע H6621	יָקִי וָמוֹ H6965	נֹשֶׁךְ יִבֶּ H5391	וַיִּקְצַץ ו H6974	מִזְעִזֵּץ יִבֶּ H2111
	suddenly	Shall they not rise up	that shall bite		that shall vex
יְהִי יְהִי H1961		לְמַשָּׁשׁ אוֹת H4933	לְמוֹ: H0		
	thee and thou shalt be for booties				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 29:1** (Parallel theme): He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

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