

This delightfully disrespectful song integrates the plea of Habakkuk, “How long, Yahweh, am I to cry for help while you will not listen” (1:2), with the decision to live in trust of his God.

The text is replete with literary devices. The author uses simile, “brightness is like the day” and personification of plagues and fevers. He connects both the exodus (plagues) and creation itself (abyss/ waters under the earth) from his people's history with Yahweh. The major tone is set by the contrast between his ironic use of outrageous underplaying of God's presence: “I have heard of your renown...repeat it in our time”, a response to the silence of God, with the noisy tumult he was rather hoping God would throw down upon his enemies.

The song rises to a noisy crescendo using all his literary flash (v 15) then the stanza “I have heard...” brings the song down to the gentle sad repetitious acceptance of the situation in v17 despite which “I will rejoice in Yahweh / I will exult in God my saviour.”

This is Job and Jonah in song, an encapsulation of the venerable Hebrew practice of vigorously suing God while accepting the flawed outcomes of life.