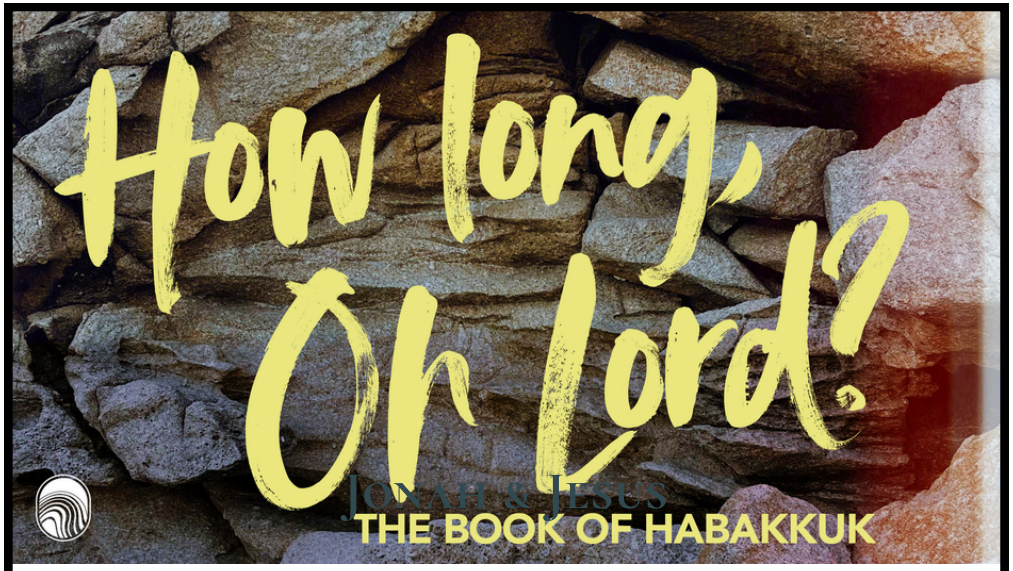


Question:

What does a warning to an empire 2,500 years ago have to say to us today?

Key Ideas:

1. **The Temptation:** Every nation is tempted to become like Babylon— an empire that mistreats people to maintain power, wealth, & status.
2. **The Warning:** God will reverse the fortune of the wicked nation. He will humble the proud and honor the humble.
3. **Our Calling:** Be a countercultural remnant who live as agents of blessing—embrace Jesus' way of life, not the way of Babylon.

Application:

1. **Countercultural Remnant**: What is one thing that is culturally normal in our society that your heart is tempted to imitate and embrace? How is Jesus calling you to be different?
2. **Agent of Blessing**: What is one concrete step you can take to be involved in helping the helpless or bringing justice to those who are oppressed?

Habakkuk 2:4-20

4 "See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright— but the
righteous person will live by his faithfulness— 5 indeed, wine betrays
him; he is arrogant and never at rest. Because he is as greedy as the
grave and like death is never satisfied, he gathers to himself all the
nations and takes captive all the peoples.

6 "Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn, saying,
"'Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by
extortion! How long must this go on?'
7 Will not your creditors suddenly arise? Will they not wake up and make
you tremble? Then you will become their prey.
8 Because you have plundered many nations, the peoples who are left
will plunder you. For you have shed human blood; you have destroyed
lands and cities and everyone in them.

9 "Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain, setting his nest on
high to escape the clutches of ruin! 10 You have plotted the ruin of many
peoples, shaming your own house and forfeiting your life. 11 The stones
of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it.

12 "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town
by injustice! 13 Has not the Lord Almighty determined that the people's
labor is only fuel for the fire, that the nations exhaust themselves for
nothing? 14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory
of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

15 "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the
wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies!
16 You will be filled with shame instead of glory. Now it is your turn!
Drink and let your nakedness be exposed! The cup from the Lord's right
hand is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory. 17 The
violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, and your
destruction of animals will terrify you. For you have shed human blood;
you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.

18 "Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman? Or an image that
teaches lies? For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation; he
makes idols that cannot speak. 19 Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come
to life!' Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!' Can it give guidance? It is
covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it."

20 The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.