# Pride's Woeful End

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*Scripture: Habakkuk 2:6-20*

6 Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing and riddles for him, and say,

"Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own—
for how long?—
and loads himself with pledges!"
7 Will not your debtors suddenly arise,
and those awake who will make you tremble?
Then you will be spoil for them.
8 Because you have plundered many nations,
all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you,
for the blood of man and violence to the earth,
to cities and all who dwell in them.

9 "Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house,
to set his nest on high,
to be safe from the reach of harm!
10 You have devised shame for your house
by cutting off many peoples;
you have forfeited your life.
11 For the stone will cry out from the wall,
and the beam from the woodwork respond.

12 "Woe to him who builds a town with blood
and founds a city on iniquity!
13 Behold, is it not from the LORD of hosts
that peoples labor merely for fire,
and nations weary 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 makes his neighbors drink—
you pour out your wrath and make them drunk,
in order to gaze at their nakedness!
16 You will have your fill of shame instead of glory.
Drink, yourself, and show your uncircumcision!
The cup in the LORD's right hand
will come around to you,

and utter shame will come upon your glory!
17 The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you,
as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them,
for the blood of man and violence to the earth,
to cities and all who dwell in them.

18 “What profit is an idol
when its maker has shaped it,
a metal image, a teacher of lies?
For its maker trusts in his own creation
when he makes speechless idols!
19 Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake;
to a silent stone, Arise!
Can this teach?
Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver,
and there is no breath at all in it.
20 But the LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth keep silence before him.”

## Introduction

Habakkuk, as we discovered last week, has given us a summary of the gospel and a firm reminder even as he's going to pronounce these woes, as the Lord would pronounce these woes upon the Babylonians. It's a reminder of what and where righteousness comes from, what it is, and where it comes from. It it certainly by faith - the righteous shall live by his faith. It is a gift. As the Apostle Paul would tell us, faith is a gift. It's not something that you earned. It's something you receive. And righteousness is a declaration from God to sinners. And it's received through faith. It is by faith just like Abraham, as the author of Hebrews will note, and Paul in several places.

And so it's a reminder even as you read these woes, it's a reminder of who the righteous are. They are not those who declared themselves righteous but those who were declared so by God because of their faith, through their faith in the Redeemer. And so Habakkuk, like the rest of us, is being taught to live in this world and in the same way to live by that same faith to carry on by the same view and vantage point of faith. And here this answer from the Lord in response to Habakkuk's second complaint, as it's often said, is not only are are the Babylonians going to be God's instrument of his judgment, his discipline of his of his people, but they would themselves be the object of his judgment. And that's what Habakkuk is being told here.

And so God's people would need to continue to trust, to live by faith, to live in this world. And so there are these five woes that are pronounced. It's more of an interjection. It does not mean the same thing as curse, but it carries that connotation. It's a woe against Babylon, really against all that is proud. And it is meant to be a rebuke and a warning and a call to repentance certainly to those who are proud and set themselves against God. But it's also meant to be an encouragement and comfort to God's people. Not only showing them, those who are righteous in Christ by faith, showing them their safety from God's coming wrath, but also showing the destiny of the proud. The Lord knows what he's doing. It's no mere coincidence that you find in the book of Revelation chapter 17-19 Babylon being used to describe the proud in general. All that is set opposed to God in this world and what God will do to such. The proud will not have the last word. It is a firm reminder. It is like Psalm 73 with Asaph discovering something as he goes before God in worship.

what their end is. And here Habakkuk is shown pride's woeful end, if we can say it that way. Why does it have a woeful ending? Well, it's because of the judgment of God, plain and simple. Therefore, there four aspects to this judgment, you might say.

## I. God's Judgment Plunders the Proud | Habakkuk 2:6-8

And first, we see that God's judgment plunders - it plunders the proud. You find this in verses 6 through 8. And we see exactly what the Lord thinks of pride and of the proud. This is not the only place we find this in the Bible. Of course, in many ways, this is an echo of what we find in the beginning, what the Lord thinks of pride. We only have to see this in the opening chapters of Genesis.

And to see the fall of man, to think of the devil, that serpent in the garden and his pride, and to see man sinning against God, and to hear and see what God thinks of this pride. And you find it all through the Old Testament, all through the Bible, what the Lord thinks of pride. And the book of Proverbs refers to it as an abomination. And so, we see what the Lord thinks of pride is his hatred of it, His woe pronounced upon it.

And in many ways this is meant to be a welcome by God's people as an answer to Habakkuk's complaint - to think about what the Lord is doing with these wicked people. And they ought not do it with pride in their own hearts, but to remember why they are the righteous. But he's telling him what what is going on, telling Habakkuk and us what he's doing. And he's going to bring them to judgment, the the Babylonians to judgment in a plundering sort of way.

It's the terminology that's used in verse 6. Shall not all these? Who are these? They are all the people, the nations. shall they these take up their taunt against him with scoffing and riddles for him and say, “woe to him who heaps up what is not his own.” He's going to be plundered in verse eight “because you have plundered many nations all the remnant of the people shall plunder you.” - this great reversal. And in fact, the entire text is filled with this idea of reversal and that concept of God's retributive justice. The Lord is going to heap up upon them. The Lord is going to plunder them. Babylon accumulated wealth by by plundering others. So that will be reversed and returned upon them. You find that explanation of the proud back up in verses four and five of of greed and never having enough. There was a sense in which the Babylonians saw that as some sense of security to take over the whole world basically to aim at that in a sense. There's an irony there, isn't there? God is saying you can do that all you like. In the end, you will be plundered. It will come to naught. It is not the safety and security that you think it is. It's a great message to all those who are proud, if you will. This is divine retribution, by the way. This is not the people of God taking matters into their own hands. This is the Lord pronouncing woe upon the wicked, upon the proud.

You know, in many ways, it’s the same thing that the Apostle Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 1. It's giving assurance to God's people. The Lord knows how to deal with the people who abuse his people, the apple of his eye. He knows how to take care of them and will repay affliction to those who afflict his people. He knows how to give relief to his afflicted people. And so the apparent success of the wicked is only apparent. It is temporary. They might accumulate much, but they cannot keep what God has not given them. And so God's judgment here is not something that the the righteous merely tolerate.

It's meant to be a comfort in knowing God will finally deal with those who oppose and oppress his people. It's a call to trust him so that we might not fear the Babylonians as it were. They were not to envy or fear them, not to take matters in their own hands, but to trust God who would in fact

overturn and plunder the plunderers. But secondly, you see something of God's judgment in that he frustrates their plans. There's a a thwarting nature.

## II. God's Judgment Thwarts the Proud | Habakkuk 2:9-14

God's judgment not only plunders, but it thwarts. I don't know, maybe that's terminology that we don't always use, but it's something of the idea of the futility that's built into it, the frustration that's built into it. And certainly, all of these things point us to the final judgment that's to come. And you'll see these things traced out in that way.

But even here and now, you can see these elements at work. God thwarting. You notice in verses 9-14 Babylon's great ambition and sense of safety and security. The one who sets his nest on high, getting evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high to be safe from the reach of harm. There's a sense of security and permanence and dependence, self-exaltation. It's a description, a picture if you will, of what pride looks like.

Seeking self-glory through unjust gain, seeking to secure. It's sounds strangely familiar to the Tower of Babel and all that was going on there. And it's the epitome and essence of pride and where it leads, what it seeks. and yet there's nothing in it. That's what he's describing the entire time in verses 9 through 14. You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many peoples. You think that you're gaining something, but what you're doing is heaping up shame for your house.

While you think it's glory, it's going to result in shame. It will never satisfy. The stones will cry out. The beams from the woodwork respond. Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity. That pronunciation of woe is that reminder that it will never give you security or satisfaction. And God has built in a sort of frustration and futility of it. It will never bring satisfaction. It will never offer security. You can possess the world and still have no security and peace or satisfaction. Isn't that what Jesus says? What will it profit you if you gain the whole world and yet forfeit your soul? The whole world will do nothing for your soul. It will grant no security, no peace, no satisfaction even in this life and certainly in that which is to come.

It's why Solomon takes us down what one theologian called sort of theological cul-de-sac in the book of Ecclesiastes. One culde-sac after the after the next of what you might seek after for satisfaction. And it's just a cul-de-sac. It never leads anywhere. It doesn't last. It is never meant to satisfy. And possessions and reputations and accomplishments, all those things cannot provide ultimate security.

That's what the Babylonians thought. They thought they were going to save themselves, if you will, making themselves God, to be God. They could never do it. It's perhaps like the older sibling who puts his hand on the younger sibling's head who's trying to get at them. The little can never reach the older child, the older sibling's arms are just too long, and it thwarts all the energy of the younger sibling. It's a frustration about it. And God has built that into this world and to those who seek after such things - to the proud. It is a judgment in and of itself. You see in verse 13, he says it explicitly.

All of this spinning of the wheels, all this pursuit after glory and possessions and all of that. Behold, is it not from the Lord of Hosts that peoples labor merely for fire? And nations weary themselves for nothing? It's all for nothing. He's saying it might look impressive. It might seem impressive. It's for nothing. It's, as we say sometimes, wood, hay, and stubble.

It will burn up. And in the here and now, it never gives lasting satisfaction. Solid joys and lasting treasures, none but Zion's children know, by God's grace. And so God's judgment has this element

of thwarting or frustrating futility about it. And why? To what end? In verse 14, we're told, "For the earth will will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." See, the proud, these Babylonians were seeking to spread their own glory, their own name, making a great name for themselves. And the Lord is here saying that will never happen. You can try as hard as you want with all your might.

It will never happen because this is God's great purpose of history that his glory fills the earth - spreads far and wide. Babylon's project contains the seeds of its own frustration. God will ultimately overturn it and all pride. And you see this certainly at the cross. No doubt the the great work of the devil, the evil one, and all of his wicked schemes and beginning in the garden and thinking about all of that pride and seeking glory for self. It's overturned and certainly see this at the cross. But the Lord does this, doesn't he? He gives pictures of this in the Bible. We see it. Certainly, you can see it played out in history even in our own day.

You think of Haman and his gallows. You think of Balak and Balaam and the frustration factor that the Lord imposes there. You think of figures like Hitler and Stalin and and many others who will seek to do their wickedness and their dirty work and the Lord frustrates their plans. The wicked die even. He will frustrate the plans in the here and now, but they will come to nothing. that this is God's predetermined program for history. Verse 14, his glory will fill the earth. And we see that happening as the as the gospel is preached, as Christ is proclaimed far and wide, the Lord says it will be this.

All of pride, all those who take up their will against the Lord, they will run into the the meat grinder as it were or the concrete wall of God's desire for his own glory to spread in all the earth. He will have no rival. It's why when Isaiah is shown that vision of Jesus on the throne in Isaiah 6, he's shown that the train of his robe fills the temple. There is room for no other.

He will have all the glory. There is going to be a day when every knee will bow and tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. You see, this is what God is saying to Habakkuk. And it's a call for us to to live by faith in that kind of way, seeing from his perspective what he has set in motion and what he is going to do, what he is doing now, what he is currently accomplishing.

The Lord will thwart. He knows how to. He will ultimately thwart all of all of that which is proud and against him.

## III. God's Judgment Humiliates the Proud | Habakkuk 2:15-17

But thirdly, God's judgment humiliates. You see in verses 15 to 17, God's judgment humiliates, plunders, thwarts, humiliates, brings low. Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink in order to gaze at their nakedness. There's a sense in which the Babylonians wanted to shame people and shame everybody, wanted to expose their nakedness in that way. It's an expression of shame and there's a cruelty to it. Not just to win, not just a defeat, but to humiliate. There's a malice behind it, a cruelty to it. And the Lord is here saying what you do is going to come back around in even a worse way. That, verse 16, you will have your fill of shame instead of glory. Seeking your own glory, it's going to come crashing down.

It will crash and burn. The Lord's going to reveal your shame. The cup in the Lord's right hand will come around to you and utter shame will come upon your glory. You know, we before I move on from this, certainly those who are trusting in Christ, we ought to remember, we don't gloat.

We remember that we are what we are by the grace of the Lord. And there's a sense in which maybe if we're honest with ourselves, we can have a touch of cruelty in our own hearts towards others.

Have you ever wanted someone, you knew it in your own heart, you really wanted to embarrass someone when they were wrong. You wanted to shame them, make them know it. There's a certain cruelty sometimes in our own heart if we're honest. It's a bit like the Babylonians. It's comes from a place of pride. We want someone to feel their sin and be shamed by it. Maybe we disguise it with righteous indignation, but sometimes there's cruelty in it. We might delight. Maybe little children sometimes delight in saying mean things and laugh at someone while they're crying. And we adults perhaps do it too. Want to embarrass and shame and exploit someone's weakness, delight in another person's failure, resent someone else's success, feel ourselves a little bit righteous.

Well, this text is a certain reminder for us of what pride is like and where pride lurks - maybe in our own hearts, but it certainly points us to another, doesn't it? If you think of the shame and humiliation that Jesus experienced on on the cross, the way the Bible describes what he endured and his own nakedness on the cross, experiencing shame, humiliation for the likes of us, for sinners such as us, drinking down to the dregs the full wrath of God, that cup of his wrath.

Well, the Lord is saying he will deal with the Babylonians. He will deal with all pride and it's a reminder for us to trust in Christ. It's certainly a call for those who are proud to repent - to look to him who alone can save. It's a reminder too for those who are righteous. We are so by faith because another drank the cup of God's wrath.

## IV. God's Judgment Silences the Proud | Habakkuk 2:18-20

Well, lastly, notice God's judgment silences. It it silences, verses 18 to 20.

He wants to highlight certainly the the futility of idolatry. It's a climax, if you will. What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it? He's getting down even to the bottom of things and all of the pride and seeing it maybe in a climactic way of making idols and the foolishness of it. You read it. This is found elsewhere in Scripture. We sang it earlier in Psalm 135 and and there it's written down in other places. How tragic it is.

How wicked. How foolish. One who says to a wooden thing, “Awake” - to a silent stone, wood stone, talking to it as if it's God. It's has no breath in it at all. He's wanting to show the futility of it, the foolishness of it, the utter tragedy of it, that while the Babylonians might look to those idols to save them and put their hopes there, there is no hope. That's what Habakkuk's being shown. There is no hope of salvation, of avoiding judgment in these idols.

The idols are already silent. He's saying the problem is that idolaters are still listening to them. They are empty and vacuous. Same as riches and possessions. Paul would say, unless we think that there’s no idolatry in our own day, he would say covetousness. Covetousness is idolatry. Perhaps we see it in our day too.

Seeking riches and possessions, reputation, power, and things that have no breath in them. Idolatry is simply pride carried to its logical conclusion, you might say. But there's a contradiction here or a contrast. There is no hope in those things. And if there is any hope of protection from judgment, it must come from the judge himself, from the Lord, the living God in his holy temple. In verse 20, that's why it says, "But the Lord is in his holy temple." There's another option, if you will, the living God.

The phrase there, “let the earth keep silence before him.” It's really the idea of “hush”. Hush now, hush before the face of the Lord all the earth. Why? Well, it's certainly a call to the proud sinner to stop resisting, to stop boasting, to bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ, to turn from self-glory, to take refuge in that one who bore the curse. But it's also a call of of silence, if you will, to the

righteous by faith, to keep trusting, to trust the Lord who is on his throne, who will make all things right, who's always dwelling in his holy temple. Remarkably, in Christ and by the Holy Spirit, his people are his temple, His dwelling place.

## Conclusion

What a wonderful reminder it is that the Lord Jesus reigns and rules over all. You know, we read this text. It's a little bit difficult in some ways. And we know some of these verses and they certainly point out some difficult things, some hard things. But they remind us of the gospel, of the one who deserves all glory, He was taunted, mocked, ridiculed, shamed on the cross.

Verse 16 talks about this cup of the wrath of God against the sin of the nations. Well, Mark 14 reminds us that Jesus took essentially the same cup and drank it empty - its contents to the fullest. And that cup in a sense lies empty at the foot of the cross. And there alone is shelter and safety from the wrath of God.

That hush, that silence of God's holiness was certainly seen at the cross of Christ. And Jesus was taunted, mocked, ridiculed for sinners, for our sin. And the cross of Christ is God's holy display of pride's woeful end, and calls us to trust, to trust him, to trust him fully, the one who is on his holy throne, in his holy temple, that we might keep silence before him, trusting in our savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. May He help us to do so.