

# When God Delays

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**Habakkuk 2:2-20**  
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Well, hello, Redeemer family. How are you this morning or afternoon? You're doing all right. I know I can ask this service, that question and actually get a response. So thanks for being here. Thanks for watching. And uh thank you if you are in our gym right now, mask only area. Thanks for being here. If you're a guest, I'm Jon, I'm one of the pastors here and the ushers, wherever they are, there they are, they're going to come up right now. If you look in your lap and you don't have a program, or you need a pen to follow along, you need a Bible, they've got what you need. So just wave your hand to them and they will give you those things. And if you take a Bible, as I always say, keep it, it's our gift to you this morning, Merry Christmas. So I have loved this weekend for a couple of reasons.

The first is this. I'm seeing people this weekend that I haven't seen for a year now. And so it's just been very cool to see those things, to see those people and so it's wonderful. Also, this weekend, I want to let you know that we have uh this cool thing. The Lord has opened up a hundred parking places across the street here. And so, yes, for those of you. So far, I haven't had a problem with that with this service yet, but that that might be coming and so if you ever come here and you're like, I can't find a place to park, we're going to tell you which ones you can park and which ones you can't coming up, but just want to let you know, God is working to fix the parking issue here. Also in the last service, while I was greeting everybody, I also said a special greeting to what we're calling our microsite in the West Valley.

What that is a group of people spread all over the West Valley, all came together this morning to watch the service together in somebody's house. So we've got, I don't know if there's a picture going up or not, but we've got a picture of them. There they are. And they're all watching this service together. We couldn't have done this to any other service instead of this one. And so what we're doing is we've we've got these people all watching together in the hopes that God will send us a guy that we can train up and then go plant out there. So it's a reverse church plant. So, you typically send a guy to go plant a church and we got the church for you and we just need a guy to go out there. And so that's kind of what this is.

And so this is something that the Lord is doing. This is an idea that God is birthed and so we're just so excited about that. If you want to know more about that, just go to our website. It says microsites up at the top and you can, you can see more. Pretty awesome weekend so far. And now we get to go into God's words. Open your Bible to Habakkuk chapter two, Habakkuk chapter two, that is page 873 in those Bibles that we give away. Habakkuk chapter two. Now, if you are able, please stand for the reading of God's Holy precious word.

Habakkuk chapter two drop down verse two. This is God's word for us today. And the Lord answered me. Write the vision, make it plain on tablets so that he may run, who reads it for still the vision awaits its appointed time. It hastens to the end, it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come. It will not delay. Behold, his soul is puffed up. It is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith. We'll stop right there. You may be seated. And before we jump into the text, let's pray.

Father, you have used this text to start a revolution that is spread around the world multiple times. This text Habakkuk 2:4, you have used powerfully to open people's eyes to the truth of salvation in Christ alone. And like you've done before with the same heart that you've had for all these centuries. I pray that you would do it again. Do it today, do it here, please.

Revolutionize lives. Open eyes to the truth that are in this text and Father, I prayed that four times already this weekend for Compassion Church, for pastor Myron's preaching. And so now they're finished, I'm sure and I just pray for your blessing on his preaching this weekend. That his people have, have probably left the church now and are going back into their weekend. God would you use the truth that they heard today, would you use it powerfully in their lives?

Save people, make them more like Christ as a result of the time that they spent at compassion and do the same for us now because of the time we spent here do this for our good, do this please for the glory of your name. Amen. So the only person that has everything figured out is who? It's God, right? He knows the end from the beginning, he is bringing history to a conclusion that he's already determined. Like an author he's writing the story towards the ending, as the all-knowing knower of all things. Nothing surprises God. Nothing is unknown to him. Nothing catches him off guard ever. But as the sometimes-knowing knowers of some things, we often get surprised. We're often caught off guard. One of the most frustrating things about life is we don't have everything figured out. We don't know the future. We don't even know one second from now, but we really, really want too though, right? Just ask all the psychics and horoscope people, right?

People spending hundreds, thousands of dollars just so that they can know the future. We want to know where our lives are going. We want to know where history is going. We want insight into what's coming around the corner of history. Now, all that is true for our lives. Yes, but isn't that also true for our nation. We want to know what's going to happen with our country. We know that war is an economic disaster and the increase of evil. We know what that will do to us. We know that will do to those we love. Habakkuk is seeing this on the horizon, actually not on the horizon in his country. At the time of writing, he knew something needed to be done. There was an escalation of disobedience to God's word, escalation of injustice and deception and violence with open idolatry happening and and just wicked forms of evil.

The Jews looked more like Satan's people than God's people and he's deeply disturbed by this. He knew they were breaking God's covenant. He knew that God would have to do something about it, to get them back on track spiritually. And he's wondering, God, do you see this God? Why are you silent about all of this? And then he learns that that God did know all about it and that what God was going to do about it was severely punish them through a Babylonian invasion. And at that now Habakkuk is reeling and going, God, you don't make any sense anymore. How can you use an evil people like them to punish a less evil people like us and by using them to do that, nobody can stop them. So is there tyranny going to just go on and on forever? See here he is trusting God, but he's confused about God's ways at the same time. He needed answers.

God, what are you doing? I don't understand it. And if we're honest, isn't that where many of us are when it comes to America. Like Habakkuk aren't we seeing an escalation in violence and injustice and rage and traders going unpunished and lies being promoted is truth. Aren't we seeing all of that and going like, wait a minute, I prayed about this. I fasted you know back in the day for for for America to turn itself back to God and it's turning itself more and more away from God. What in the world is going on? America's gotten so bad that according to Romans one, I think America is under God's judgment. Just like this Jewish kingdom was in Habakkuk's day.

As you see all of that, don't we wonder God, do you see this? I mean, you got to see this or are you going to do anything about it?

And as we've seen so far in the book of Habakkuk because God is God, he's far more aware of the evil going on in the world. And because we are not God, he responds when he wants to not what, not when we want him to. So as people who can't know the future, how should we respond? Today and really the rest of the series in Habakkuk, we're going to learn how to respond to being a nation under God's judgment. When God delays, when we see all of this going on and God doesn't stop it, how do we respond to this?

How do we respond when we know he should fix all of the evil, but at least it seems to us, God is slow. He's preoccupied or maybe he's just taking his sweet time but all things go from bad to worse. What do we do when God doesn't act according to our timetable but according to his. I mean, we know he's going to act right. He's he's going to write every wrong. He's going to punish every trader, every cheater, every liar, every single one of them. We know he is going to do that. We just don't know when. When God doesn't act according to our timetable, what do we do? I mean, you've noticed that right? That God tells us what he's going to do in His word. But he doesn't tell us when. For instance, Jesus taught that He'd come back, but says only the Father knows when. Ever wonder why he does that?

Why does God do that? I'm going to do this, but I'm just not going to tell you when I'm going to do it. You know why he doesn't tell us when. He doesn't tell us when in verse four, but we're going to start in verse two. God came while Habakkuk was waiting, waiting for God to answer and God verse two answered me Habakkuk said and here's God's answer. Write the vision, make it plain on tablets so he may run who reads it? This text is critical for understanding the message of this book. Habakkuk is given divine insight into future. He knows this is what's going to happen because God told him this is what was going to happen, but he doesn't know when it's going to happen. Notice verse two, it is the Lord who answers him. That is Yahweh. That is God's covenant name, the the covenant keeping loyal, faithful to His word, faithful to the people that He loves and is that God that graciously responds to Habakkuk.

The response is so important. Notice God says, write it down, make a record of this, make the text large and legible enough so that people can read it easily. When it comes to pass, by the way, that'll be proof that God is real and God does what he says when you write down this vision of the future. It'll be proof when it comes to past that I'm real, that I work in the world, do this Habakkuk. Notice verse two, so he may run who reads it. Make this easy to understand so that people can take this truth and spread it far and wide. That's what that phrase means so that he can run who reads it. The idea of running with God's word means proclaiming it, spreading it to everyone and everywhere. Well, what is the vision being talked about in verse two? I think the vision is verses four to 20 and in verses four to 20, what God says is this, yes, I'm going to discipline my people and I'm going to do that through the Babylonian empire. But the Babylonian empire will pay for the destruction and evil that they cause.

So verse four, how should you respond Habakkuk when you know all of this is coming, when it's all future, from what I say right now, verse four, "you are to trust me." Now Habakkuk spread this prophecy of the future far and wide. Verse three for still the vision awaits its appointed time. What I'm going to tell you right now is not going to happen right now. It's on schedule though. It's coming. It hastens to the end. It will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come. It will not delay. When God says something is going to happen, it is more certain to happen than

the sun rising tomorrow. And it will happen, notice verse three at an appointed time, there's a schedule, there's an appointment. This appointment is not going to be missed. There's a day marked on God's timetable, His calendar and that is when it will be fulfilled. Not a day before, not a day after, that day. Notice what God wants, the vision.

Notice, it hastens to the end, that idea that the word hasten means to pant. The idea there is that there is a drive for this to be fulfilled that God is working this. He's not sitting back watching, going, I'll get to that when I get a chance. No, that there's, there's an impulse for God to accomplish His will in the world. Notice it says that this vision will not lie. The idea there is that I'm not going to announce this to you and then not do it. If it seems slow, notice verse three, it only seems to be slow. So just wait for it. Why? Notice the text. Because it might come, is that what your Bible says? It will surely come. God's will in the world will certainly undoubtedly be done. It will not even delay. It's not going to hesitate. It's coming and nothing can stop it. What does that mean? What it means is that God will use the Babylonians to discipline His people. And then He will punish the Babylonians for disciplining His people.

And He will do, He will do all of that at the exact time and in the exact way that God wants to take place. So as we take a step back from these words and think about it for our day, when God's not acting according to our timetable with whatever it is that we are wrestling with, whether it's personal or whether it's worldwide, when things seem to be getting worse, because His action seems to be delayed. Point #1) ***Expect God to work His timetable, not yours. Expect God to work His timetable, not yours.*** This is another way of saying verse three, wait for it. Put yourself under God's authority and be patient as he does things his way, in his time, not ours. In other words, let God be God instead of trying to be God for him.

You make a horrible God compared to him, right? right! You can see from verse three, there's no disappointment for those who wait on him, he will do what he says. He'll do everything he says. He will right every wrong. He will punish all evil. He will dethrone every tyrant. So be patient as God acts when he sees fit, not when we see fit. Galatians 5: 22, patience, putting up with difficult people and difficult circumstances. Patience is evidence of God's spirit, living inside of you and molding and shaping you into the image of Jesus. Colossians 3:12, impatient Christians are commanded "put on", which means start being patient. Now it's one thing to call Christians to be patient with difficult people who can be wicked or ignorant or selfish. It's another thing entirely to quote, be patient with God who is anything but wicked, ignorant and sinfully selfish. Patience mean submitting to his will not demanding ours.

Our need for "patience" with God is evidence that we demand our will to be done instead of resting and waiting on his will to be done. But every ounce of our theology, right, sometimes it just screams, God, are you going to do anything about this? Are you going to show up? When are you going to act? I mean, how many more millions of abortions have to happen before you do something about it? I mean, how much tyranny is going to spread into other countries? How much exploitation, how much false religion, how much senseless, killing, how much more evil and injustice and rage has to happen until you just do something? How much more pain in my own life? How much more pain in the people that I know. When are you going to just stop it? See, we know God should act and end all of it. Right? We know it. That's why we pray. That's why we beg and fast, God do something. However, thinking we know when God should end it all is where we go wrong. Just because we don't know the time, doesn't mean the time should be now.

We never have the whole picture. We never have everything figured out. We never see the end from the beginning. So things seem delayed. Things seem off schedule. They seem like God did you fall asleep? Are you on vacation? No. Everything is working perfectly according to God's timetable. So be patient. I mean, how many times have you gotten frustrated with a friend or a spouse because we are going to be late only to find you had plenty of time to spare. So we were like that just happened right now. Were you in our car? How many times did you think you had plenty of time when in fact you were late. I remember talking to my grandma once. She told me that she arrived at the airport so late, the plane had left 24 hours earlier. She was there on the wrong day. So listen for people who often get our timetables wrong. Why do we think that God should submit his timetable to us for approval? When God says he's going to do something, it's up to him to make it happen.

So let's quit the speculation and the guessing and the supposed insights into the world and uh giving money to liars who say, well, yeah, God spoke to me and this is what's going to happen. Well, like if the Father didn't tell Jesus, why is he going to tell them what their bad hair and their bad clothes and their horrific theology? Like why would God do that? He wouldn't. So what am I saying? I'm saying, let's relax a little bit while our country's going to hell in a hand basket. Why? Because God knows what he's doing. He has set things up for a goal that could happen tomorrow or could happen a million tomorrows from now. Now, in saying that I don't mean, don't hear me as saying relax at fighting evil or relax at getting involved to promote truth and justice and decency in the world. I mean, relax on demanding that God do things the way you want him to. If your requests are in line with his word, listen, he will bring your request to pass.

He will. So let's wait. Let's be patient while he works his timetables toward the appointed time that he's already laid out for your life, for America and for world events. Instead of putting our security and our hope in some human timetable or idea what we think should happen and when it should happen, God tells Habakkuk, put your hope, put your security, put your trust in him instead. Verse four, behold, listen up. His soul is puffed up. It is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith. This states the fundamental principle of reality that there are only two responses to God. There is arrogance and there is acceptance and that's it. In history, the Babylonians and the rebellious Jews, they were the ignorant who disregarded God in his word. In history there was a remnant though, like Habakkuk who accepted God's word, even though they didn't understand what God was doing. Notice that phrase in verse four, puffed up. It's a great word picture, right? These people are bloated with pride. They have a growing tumor inside of them called self. Because they're going to hold God at arm's length.

Yeah, I know that's what you say, but I've got some special thing with it. I don't have to follow what you're doing. I'm trusting in myself. I'm self-made. He's not right with God. Notice the verse four. He's not upright. He's crooked compared to God's standards. Now this is likely talking about the Babylonian people probably they're king, but this truth can be applied to anyone who doesn't trust in the God of the Bible. On the other hand, though, notice the righteous shall live by his faith. God's justice and punishment will not come for him. He will be safe from the wrath to come. He will live. The righteous, those who do what's right according to God's word. They keep trusting God, even though listen, invasion, carnage, deportation, and slavery, we're all future. God is saying, all of that is coming for you Habakkuk. But the people who do what's right, are the people that trust me anyway.

Come what may this faith is a strong, steadfast commitment that might bend like we've been seeing in Habakkuk. His faith is bending. He's confused. He doesn't understand, but it never

breaks. It stays firm regardless of circumstances. So again, as we, as we pull out from the text, the the ancient context of 2,600 years ago and think about our lives now. Like Habakkuk, we don't understand what God is doing. When we want him to act and act decisively, but he doesn't. He delays. We must point #2) ***Trust God, not yourself. Trust God, not yourself.*** Everything in Habakkuk before chapter two, verse four has been leading up to this point and everything after verse four in Habakkuk is an outworking of this point. Trust God, no matter what. This verse is an encouragement to wait on God's action in the future when Habakkuk did not understand what God was doing in the present or planning for the future. This is, this is a an encouragement to trust him when he finds out, oh, this is what you're planning, God, I don't like what you're planning and I'm scared of it.

Now in verse five, this scene shifts away from the people who trust God to focus specifically on the Babylonians. And again, probably their king. When God says, moreover wine is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest. His greed, probably the king of Babylon, his greed is as wide as shale like death. He has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations. And so, you know this is a king and military conquering and collects as his own all people. The idea here is that like wine, the Babylonian king was intoxicated with pride and like the grave that shale there, like the grave, he was greedy for more and more victims of his military success. So what God is saying here is listen the wicked are going to have their day. They're going to advance. This is this is just the nature of reality.

But like Abraham who didn't know when God's promise of his son would come, but he trusted God that he would come and had to wait over a decade for his son to come. In Genesis 15: 6 says, because he believed God, the Lord counted it to him as righteousness. So Habakkuk doesn't know when God's promise of discipline is coming for the Jews and doesn't know when Babylon will be overthrown for all of the evil that they that they propagate. What is he supposed to do? Trust God anyway. This is what marks those who are right with God, they trust in him regardless. And this verse Habakkuk 2: 4 has been called the greatest text in the Bible. It's been called the central theme of all of scripture. It's been called the text that holds the whole Bible together. Paul actually quotes this verse in in Romans chapter one and Galatians chapter three, he quotes it as as proof that the Old Testament taught the idea that salvation safety from God's wrath being declared right by God is received by faith alone.

So what is it that he saw in this text that told him that? Well, first that word righteous is an important word. It's a legal term. It refers the decision of a judge who has a defendant on one hand and the law on the other. And as he's listening to the defendant, he's comparing the defendant's life to what the law says and when the defendant's life and the law match he's right. He's righteous. There's no deviation. His life conforms to the standard and he's righteous. Well for sinners like you and me, heaven's judge is not going to find us to be righteous when comparing our lives to his law. Right? No, he'll find every one of our lives to be crooked, deviated, out of out of place compared to his law. Won't he? So how can unrighteous people be declared right when God knows we aren't right when he compares our lives to his law?

Well, the answer most people give to that question is, hey, I'm a good person. I know I've done a lot of bad things, but I've done a lot of good things too. And don't my don't my good things kind of cancel out my bad things. I know I stole that TV, but I gave to that charity that I saw on TV, isn't that you're going to have that scale, right. And I'm going to stand before God I'm just going to cross my fingers and hope it's 50.1% good. And then he's going to let me in because of all the good things that I've done. All of that is really a disguise for arrogance, trust and self, self-reliant

self-sufficiency I can do it. I can do what I need to do to save myself, which is the opposite of verse four, the word faith. Faith is a solid, strong commitment. A devotion that trust in Jesus as savior and submits to him as Lord. Faith is not you know thinking some things are true, like, oh yeah, God exists or Jesus died for my sins.

Faith is trusted. It's giving yourself to Jesus. It's entrusting your life and your death, now and in your future, your everything to him and to him alone. It's not well, Jesus, you did your part and I do my part. It's, if there's another way to heaven, I'm not going because all my hope is in you. All of it, no more self-sufficiency. I'm stripped of all pride. I deny myself everything except Jesus. Humbly come to him, naked and needy with, hear this, is this good work good enough to go to heaven? What about this? Can you take this bribe so that you can let me in the doors? I got none of that. I'm naked. I bring nothing. I just simply give you my life and Grace He gives you His. So that God would look at your life and declare you righteous. Not based on your record of evil, but based on his record of perfect obedience, perfect righteousness.

That verse four is life. Rescue from God's wrath. It's its safety. It's salvation from the penalty we deserve for our sins. Life then is not just physical. Yes, there will be a remnant who trusts in God through these horrible times, they will go into Babylon. They'll be protected. Yes, it's not. But it's more than that notices soul. There's there's more than just the physical, there's this soul idea that that this is spiritual. This is eternal life in heaven with Christ in God's house forever. And while this is a one-time commitment, trusting in Christ is your savior. That commitment to trust in him and not yourself has then lived out every day of the Christian's life. That's why Hebrews 10: 38 refers to Habakkuk 2:4 to talk about the Christian life that we continue to trust.

And we continue to demonstrate that we're right with God, by trusting in him, being faithful to him. We receive eternal life by faith and we live the Christian life by faith from the beginning of our spiritual lives, all the way to the end of our physical lives. Those who are right with him, trust him. They live by faith. Now faith ends at death, you know why? Yeah, because one day faith will give way to sight. You won't need faith anymore. Because you will see him as he is. This is what the Christian longs for, to be with his savior. So like Jesus in the garden we embrace. That's what the name Habakkuk means. We embrace, we trust a God who always does what's right regardless of my feelings, regardless of my circumstances, when I don't understand the future, I have no insight into that. And I just say, okay Lord, come, what may I will trust you?

Now remember Habakkuk had some questions in chapter one and verse 13. His question was basically God, how can you use a wicked nation like Babylon to discipline your people who are less wicked than they are? And in verse 17 of chapter one, the question was, God if you're behind the Babylonians, will anyone be able to stop them or is their oppression just going to go on forever? Well, starting in chapter two verse six, God graciously gives his answer. Look at verse six, "Shall not all these", what is the word these refer to? It refers to the nations and peoples at the end of verse five, "Shall not all these nations, all these people that the king of Babylon has defeated and was collecting for himself, shall not all these take up their taut against him, was scoffing and riddles for him. In other words, those that the Babylonians mistreated and conquered and caused to suffer, they will have their day.

What follows in verses six to twenty you see there in verse six is a taut. Anyone ever taut you, ridicule you, mock you. That's what these series is from verse six to twenty. It's these mockery sayings, this ridicule of the Babylonians but that it is meant to make them an object lesson for

any other tyrant who would come along after Babylon and would have no respect for God and no respect for mankind. This passage is meant to warn them too. This taunt is clearly expressed by five statements that I'll begin with the word or use the word, *whoa*. Whoa is a cry of mourning, heard at funerals. So these statements are are curses that are pronounced on the Babylonians here. The nations that God conquers want, they want to make sure that the Babylonians know and any other supposed Babylon in the future, that they need to know that if you act like the Babylonians did, that God will consider you as good as dead for your evil ways.

That's because in each of these five whoa statements, there's a reversal of fortune. It's called the justice boomerang. How you treated people is what, how you will be treated. What you did to others, that's going to be done to you. What you planted with your life will be what you harvest. In other words, so we again take a step back. Think about this for our day, for our lives. When God delays, when he doesn't answer our prayers to end evil and establish peace and justice and truth in the world, we must point #3) ***Realize justice is coming. Realize justice is coming.*** Though it looks like God is asleep at the wheel, while evil men go from bad to worse. The book of Habakkuk is clear. He not only sees everything that's going on, but he's going to address all of it. He will do so thoroughly and so thoroughly that everybody who looks at his judgment will go, that was right, that was good.

Look at verse six. Justice is coming for five sins. Five acts of wickedness. First justice is coming for extortion, extortion, verse six, woe to him who heaps up what is not his own? What is that? That is called stealing, extortion. For how long and load himself with pledges will not your debtors suddenly arise? And those awake who will make you tremble. Why? Because they want their stuff back. Then you will be spoil for them because you've 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. In other words, the day will come when Babylons conquered enemies will reclaim what is rightfully theirs that the Babylonians stole from them, the oppressor will become the oppressed.

All the spoils of war that were stolen from all of their enemies will be taken back by their enemies when the Babylonians are defeated. They're looting is pictured here as the Babylonians being indebted to their enemies and their enemies will want payback. Second justice is coming for evil gain. Evil gain, verse nine, woe to him who gets evil gain for his house for his dynasty. He's doing it. He's accumulating all of this well through evil means to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm. You've devised shame for your house by cutting off many people's. You have forfeited your life for the stone will cry out from the wall and the beam from the woodwork, respond. Babylon made their money in evil and scrupulous, wicked ways. They thought they'd have this glorious, rich, safe, and long-lasting dynasty. But for killing many nations humiliation would actually be their future. They gained the world and forfeited their souls.

Verse 11, the picture there of stones and beams is the idea that you went into that city and you destroyed the buildings and you took some of those materials back to Babylon and then built your buildings with them. And so that stone that you took from that city and and you put into your wall, that stone is screaming at you about the evil that you did in that city you conquered. And as and as the house is creaking with the cries of your guilt, the empire will collapse on itself because of the violence that made them prosperous. The glory of Babylon would end in ruin. Next justice is coming for exploitation. Exploitation, verse 12, "woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity. Behold this is not from the Lord of hosts that people



labor merely for fire and nations weary themselves for nothing. Translation, they destroyed their empire while they were building it because they built it with brutality.

They abused the nations that they conquered and brought them back as slaves. And they worked them past exhaustion and utterly harsh conditions they treated them like animals, not image bearers and that's how they built the Babylonian empire. So visitors would've walked into Babylon and they would've been amazed at the magnificence and the beauty. They would've stood in awe. God sees Babylon and sees victims and is enraged. The violence that they perpetrated on others is going to boomerang back on their heads. Everything the Babylonians wanted, everything they thought was permanent at substantial and glorious, notice verse 13, it's merely for fire. It's all going to go up and smoke and verse 13, notice who it is. Who's the one that's going to do this to them. God is the one who will destroy them. Destruction quote is from the Lord of hosts.

The captain of God's undefeatable army is coming for you Babylon and you have no hope of stopping them. In fact, no wicked kingdom will last. When verse 14, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. There will be no room for anything, but God's kingdom one day on the earth. All that opposes him, all that brutalizes people cannot win. It will all be destroyed. So live it up while you can now, tyrant live it up while you can popes and Kings and all of you exercising your your limited authority over people live it up. God is going to destroy you as he extends his reign over the whole world. Now that reality was future for Habakkuk but what it's also future for you and me.

So listen, if that day is still coming, going back to the first two points, let's trust God in his timetable, okay. Let's be calm in the face of change and rage knowing whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's and God's unstoppable kingdom is coming and Christian, guess what? You're going to see it with your own eyes. You're going to be there. And if that is true, then grab hold of that truth then bring it into this day and let that be the way that you view what's going on in your life, in our world, whatever.

Fourth justice is coming, for enticing people into sin, enticing people into sin, verse 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. You will have your fill of shame instead of glory. Drink yourself and show your uncircumcision. The cup in the Lord's hand will come around to you. There's the boomerang and utter shame will come upon your glory. Babylon used its power to entice others to sin and degrade themselves. They amuse themselves while demoralizing their victims. But again, as they treated others, so they will be treated. The shame and humiliation that they inflicted on other people will be inflicted on them. Though god used their evil, God never endorsed their evil and in a great reversal the cup here, in verse 16, this cup of God's wrath, which he was pouring out through the Babylonians, he is going to pour on the Babylonians as well. And verse 17 says the violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you. What you did, the violence that you did there, that's coming on you as well as the destruction of the beast that terrified them. You're going to be destroyed. Why for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them, translation.

You will be overwhelmed just like the forests and the animals that they slaughtered to feed the expansion of their kingdom. So God is coming for you. That is because they put all of their hope and emptiness. Justice is coming for emptiness, which the Hebrew word for idol, it's, it's not real. It's nothing. Verse 18, what prophet is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image,

a teacher of lies for its maker trust in his own creation. When he makes speechless idols. Woe, to him who says to a wooden thing awake, to a silent stone arise, can this teach? Behold its overlay with golden silver and there's no breath at all in it. These so-called gods that they trusted in, these gods that they sacrificed to and they did all of this, this victory and this destruction in the name of their gods. All those gods will prove to be empty. All those people that trust in idols are idiots because nothing can't do anything. So as you're screaming for them to awake, because destruction is coming for you, they're not going to do anything. They don't have any power. They can't get up. They can't teach. They can't arise at all. They seem to be these supernatural things, but they're nothing. They can't guide. They can't help. They can't do anything. Their promises are lies. It's not alive at all. It's just a piece of wood or stone or metal. Verse 20, but the Lord in contrast to those dead idols, those nothings. The reality is this the Lord is in his holy temple. He's on his throne in heaven. He's alive. He's uncreated. He speaks. He does what he wants, but Babylon ignored him. They dishonored him. In fact, read Daniel chapter five.

They knew that God was behind all the victory that they were receiving and they knew God was behind all of that. And they dishonored and blasphemed him instead. Therefore, verse 20, let all the earth keep silence before him. This vision ends with silence. Silence in the Bible is a prelude to judgment. The idea here is that the verdict has been given and punishment is coming and everybody stands back mouth shut. Oh no. So when when God's work seems to be delayed, he's not following the timetable that we think he should be. When we think it should happen this way and at this time and in this way, sometimes the best thing for us to do is just shut up. No more questions, no more protest. God, why do you do it this way? Not that way. Why are you taking so long? Why? No, put your hand over your mouth. You just be quiet as an act of trust and submission that you know what you are doing. And even though I don't understand why I'll be quiet about this now. So as we take the step back from this nation that died over 2,500 years ago, what's the point for us today? Well, to all nations, to all kingdoms, if you treat people this way, if you extort money from them, steal their goods and plunder their riches. If you build your empire through making money of ways that are just absolutely evil. If you treat human beings like animals to get what you want, if you entice people into rebellion against God, because you're trying to fulfill the will of false demon gods. If that's what you're trying to do instead of worshiping the one true God, then just know justice is coming for you too.

Babylon is not an isolated incident. It is a picture. It is a picture in this text for all future tyrants to evaluate themselves by and go. I better not go that way, because if I go that way, the same fate that happened in Babylon will happen to me. Yeah, it may seem like justice is coming slowly. It may seem like it's far away, but to all tyrants and false rulers and petty dictators. You know, people in your own homes or your jobs, you treat people like they're slaves and not humans like image bearers. One day justice will be breathing down your neck too. To nations and individuals, the only hope you have is to repent. God graciously sent Jonah to Nineveh. A wicked people, just like the Babylonians. What did they do when they heard the word. They repented and God relented of the disaster. God is patient. He's not willing that any should perish, but then all should come to repentance. But his patience has a limit, it will run out.

So turn from your rebellion before that happens. Fall on your collective face, you evil nations before the God and beg God of the universe and beg him from mercy and your wickedness. And maybe God will relent. Was that what the Babylonians did? Did they respond like the Ninevites or did God's judgment surely come? It sure did. Do we know how? Do we know when Babylon came to its appointed end. We do. Babylon only lasted as an empire about 70, 80 years. They

were actually defeated in 539 BC. Go to Babylon Iraq on Google maps today when you get home. You know what you're going to see? Nothing. You're going to see sand and a bunch of ancient ruins. Keyword what? Ruins. Everything God said would happen to them in detailed specificity happened exactly as God said, it would happen. It fell just like the justice boomerang showed us it would in verse six to twenty.

Nations that had oppressed, namely the Medes and Persians, peoples that the Babylonians had destroyed previously, they rose up in power and defeated them. And then all the riches that the Babylonians had accumulated went to the people that they had defeated, including the Jews, right? The Jews get some of that money and the Persians give it to them and then they go back to Jerusalem and rebuild their city and their temple with money that the Babylonians had taken from people, they conquered crazy, just like the text said. Every single thing God said, those who plunder will be plundered. That's exactly what happened. But here's what we do. God may have done that in the past with some people, I don't even know who they are.

But I don't have to worry about God's justice. I'm a fill in the blank. I'm an American, I'm a pastor's kid. I'm a pastor. I'm a good person. No, you're not. No, you're not. Without Christ, the truth is you're hanging over the pit of hell every second of every day. You live in an illusion that you are safe when you are in the worst possible danger. And it may be 12 years that he gives you or 112 years that he gives you, but every second of time, you are dangling over justice and only the sheer mercy and kindness of God keeps you from falling to hell under the weight of your own sin and staying there forever. Oh, preacher, you're trying to scare me. Just trying to scare you with the truth. Justice is coming for unrighteous nations. Absolutely. Justice is coming for unrighteous people like you and me who like the Babylonians steal from people, use people, entice people into sin, exploit them and use them while propping yourself up. Trust. We we trust in false gods. Don't we? Instead of the one true God.

They're not so distant in the past. Are they? And yet Jesus steps in between us. Jesus takes the bullet of God's justice, which by the way was correctly, rightly and justly aimed at your heart. And that's good news, right. That's the best possible news That God would punish Jesus for your sins and that by faith, by trusting in Jesus, you would receive his righteousness so that when God, when your court case comes before God, he says case thrown out for lack of evidence, not guilty. Why? Because your life and God's law perfectly matched, not because of your resume, but because of his. The greatest obstacle to you experiencing all of that is you, your pride, your illusion that you can do a lot of good things to be right with God. I've done a lot of good things to be right with God. Listen, you haven't. You can't make yourself right with him. If you could, Jesus died for nothing. But in fact, Jesus does it all. He doesn't leave anything for you, not a single thing for you to do in order to be right with God. He did it all a hundred percent. So put all your hope in him, put all your trust in him, not in yourself, put all your trust in him and him alone and listen, do it now. Do it today. Do not wait. If that's you, please come talk to me at the end of this service. Let's pray.

Jesus, we stand in awe of you. We do, once we understand the importance, the significance of God's justice, you become so much more wonderful and so much more glorious. And so here's this book that I'm I'm preaching because I want you to help us understand the world that we're living in right now and put steel in our spines and conviction in our hearts so that we can live faithfully to you no matter what comes but will never miss the point that in spite of all of that, you are still rescuing people from a fate worse than a destruction of a nation, the destruction of a soul in hell. So my prayer is that for those who have not trusted in Christ, believing in him for

their salvation, from your wrath, I pray that these truths would rest very heavily on their hearts until they do business with you. And for the rest of us may these truths, fill our hearts. This story comes back up here and sings all glory be to Christ. Into your name, we pray Jesus. Amen.