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**C1220 – May 6, 2012 – Habakkuk 2:15-20
The Times Of The Gentiles**

Let's start with a short review of Habakkuk. When was Habakkuk writing? Look at your introductory notes if you have a study Bible. Let's get this in the greater context of the OT. Habakkuk is writing somewhere between say 615 and 605BC. So we're talking about 2,600 years ago. What period is this in the chosen nation's history? Was this in Abraham's day? No. This is 1,400 years after Abraham's day. So the nation has been around for quite awhile. If we go back to the Call of Abraham and the truths of election, justification and faith, God is creating a nation to basically give us two things; the Bible and the Messiah, those are the two big purposes of God calling out the nation Israel. So He starts with Abraham, the line of promise goes to Isaac, then to Jacob and the twelve tribes. They go down to Egypt for 400 years and at the Exodus the nation was born. About 2 million people came out of Egypt. They walk to Mt Sinai where God gives them the Law, which is the standard He wanted them to live by, the standard reflecting His character. And He said if you obey I will bless you but if you disobey I will curse you. The nation did pretty well under Joshua, they went into the Land at the Conquest and had a lot of success clearing out the idolatry so they could receive their inheritance and be a testimony to the nations, but it wasn't a complete conquest, it was partial. They enter the Judges period where the tribes were divided amongst themselves and God periodically raised up judges like Gideon or Samson to solve their problems but eventually it was chaos and the people wanted a king, so God gave them Saul, the first human monarch. Then came David; the tribes were united under David, the nation was consolidated and David becomes the king par-excellence in the OT. God promised Him an everlasting dynasty, so his line will give birth to the Messiah. His son Solomon sits on the throne of David and the nation enters the Golden Era, the kingdom expands, the reports of Solomon and the Temple go into all nations and they were coming to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Solomon started off a great king

but that generation was enjoying the benefits of David's obedience, toward the end Solomon blows it and God said He was going to rip the kingdom away from David's house but not in Solomon's days for the sake of David, so the kingdom comes to Rehoboam and the kingdom divides, it was a turn of events from the Lord, eleven tribes go to the north and one tribe stays in the south. Both kingdoms go into spiritual decline and this is where you find all the discipline. God is disciplining both Jewish kingdoms. Why is God disciplining them? Because He said He would discipline them if they disobeyed His Law given at Mt Sinai. So He's only doing what He told them He would do. They violated standards, they reap the consequences. So it should be no surprise when these prophets like Elijah come along prosecuting the nation. God said He was going to send prophets to prosecute and warn the nation of impending discipline. This is why Elijah shut off the rain. He wasn't doing that to be a meanie, he was pronouncing God's discipline. God had outlined five degrees of discipline in the Law. So shutting off the spicket is God just doing what He said He would do. How did God want them to respond to the discipline? First of all to be convicted of their sin, secondly, to confess their sin and thirdly, the results, to be restored to fellowship. That's all in the world the discipline is designed to do. And if they were convicted and confessed their sin then the nation would be restored to fellowship. But if they were not convicted and did not confess they would stay out of fellowship and build up more gunk in their soul, which is what happened. So God turned up the discipline and they rebelled more so He ratcheted it up more, and finally the nation got to the point of no return and that's the point when the nation would not confess no matter how intense the discipline and so God's discipline was Exile. We already saw the northern kingdom go into Exile to Assyria in 721BC. Now we're watching the southern kingdom and they are on the way out of fellowship, they've reached the point of no return so what's coming next for them? Exile. Except they're going to go to Babylon. So all the truths in this period center on what? Discipline. God disciplines those whom He has chosen. So we learn principles of discipline.

All Habakkuk is saying is hey God, I look at my nation and it's a cesspool. Are you going to do anything about it? Where are you? Oh, I'm doing something about it Habakkuk, I'm raising up the Babylonian's as a disciplinary rod in My hand. Now wait a minute, says Habakkuk, they're worse than us. How can you do that? Are you just going to let them gain imperial steam and conquer the whole world? And what about the righteous

people in our country? Are they going to get destroyed along with the unrighteous? This doesn't seem to fit with your justice. Oh yes it does says God because the Babylonians aren't going to get away with it. Don't worry, their judgment is coming, nobody gets off scot-free in my universe.

So Habakkuk is really a good book as far as getting some insight on the fact that God is just even though from our perspective it doesn't look like it all the time. There are inequities that we sometimes just wonder, God, why are you allowing this to happen and why aren't you doing anything about it? Don't worry God says, I am doing something about it, it's just that you can't see everything at once; I can, you're finite, I'm infinite, you have limited experience and observation, I am omniscient, I see everything, I know everything. I've got a plan here I'm working. And the proper response is to trust. The human condition is that we have got to trust Him. What are we going to do, tell God every time we can't understand something, draw me a map and then I'll approve of your plans and trust? He's drawn the map over and over in history and we still don't trust. How many maps does He have to draw before we'll trust?

We live in a time right now in history when basically God has already mapped out the rest of the story. He's told us where history is going and He's proven Himself to be faithful over and over and over. So when we get in our little personal jams why do we doubt Him? What is our problem? Why don't we trust? Well, we do trust, it's just that we move our trust over to our experience and observation. We trust our analysis is correct and God must be out to get us. It's a daily struggle. That's why we have to get back to this book and see His faithfulness, His integrity over and over and over. Otherwise you can't trust Him, you relocate your trust. You start to doubt God, you start to question God and blame God. Why God are you allowing this to happen to poor little me and what's next, what are you going to do to me next time, and why are you allowing all this evil to grow up in the world? I don't get it God. And if you're doing that you're in a bad way because He already told us evil was going to grow in the world. And He also said I'm going to take care of it in My perfect time and in My perfect way. Now trust Me. Well it doesn't seem perfect to me. I think you ought to judge now. Excuse me, but when did you become the standard of perfection? Do you see how rebellious it is to start judging God like that? Who made you the God of the universe? What do you know? You don't know anything. You're a grain of sand on the seashore and

you're going to tell God what's happening on the opposite shore and what He ought to do about it? Who do you think you are to make yourself so big? God is working on it and you're just going to have to keep your nose in this book so you can trust and relax when you think you're getting the raw end of the deal. And don't fool yourself, that day is coming and that's when the real test comes in your life. This is James stuff and when the trials hit are you going to trust God with the details of your life and cast your cares upon Him even when it doesn't feel like He cares for you, or are you going to get mad at Him and start blaming Him and going into a temper tantrum? There's only one way to respond to trials and that's faith in God, that He knows what He's doing and He's working all things together for good for those that love God. And that's what God told Habakkuk, the righteous will live how? By falling into pieces when the trial comes? No, by faith.

God told Habakkuk, I'm handling it, just relax, it's coming. I'm going to take care of this Babylonian cancer. I'm going to remove some of it in the short term and all of it in the long term. So it's a big answer and I want to start with a short article that came to me by e-mail on yesterday because it's so pertinent to what we introduced last week in Habakkuk about the whole story of Babylon and how it stays with us through the entire times of the Gentiles culminating in a rebuilt Babylon in modern day Iraq that will be destroyed as described in Rev 17-18. This comes from Joel Rosenberg, I don't hold to everything Rosenberg says, I think he does a little too much newspaper exegesis, but he's got some interesting information. This came out yesterday. "In April, I noted the nation we know today as the Republic of Iraq -- known variously in Scripture as Babel, Babylon, Babylonia, Mesopotamia and Shinar -- will emerge as the global center of wealth, power and terrible evil in the End Times, according to Bible prophecy. In Revelation 18, for example, we learn that Babylon will rise to become the most wealthy place on the face of the planet, and develop into an existential threat to Israel and the Jewish people, and then face divine judgment during the Tribulation."

Many cynics and critics over the years have dismissed such Bible prophecies. But those who are wise should be watching for Iraq to: 1) begin rebuilding its offensive military capability; 2) begin rebuilding its economy; 3) continue rebuilding the actual ancient city of Babylon. As I explained in April, all three of these trends are actually currently underway.

Now a fascinating story in the Sunday New York Times provides fresh evidence that Iraq is poised for explosive economic growth. The article indicates that:

- 1) Iraqi oil production has surged from less than 2 million barrels a day in 2003-2004 to nearly 2.5 million barrels a day;
- 2) Next year, Iraqi officials believe they will be producing nearly 3 million barrels of oil per day;
- 3) In the next five years -- by 2017 -- Iraqi officials project they will be producing upwards of 10 million barrels of oil a day, which if true would put Babylon on par with Saudi Arabia as one of the world's oil giants.

In a world of high and rising oil prices, this means Iraq could actually become a global economic superpower by the end of the decade, which would be stunningly consistent with Bible prophecy. These are trends worth watching." I'd agree, I don't know if I trust Iraqi officials, but I do agree we should watch Iraq because the Bible does indicate a future rebuilt Babylon in Iraq. And it's not just Habakkuk 2. Habakkuk 2 is just a general layout of the times of the Gentiles showing the age is marked by Babylon, it both begins and ends with Babylon. But Isaiah 13-14 also discuss a future rebuilt Babylon, Jer 50-51 discuss a future rebuilt Babylon and Rev 17-18. So I know of at least 7 chapters of the Bible that discuss a future rebuilt Babylon destined for destruction. And that's a lot of biblical material. Think of it, if the creation only receives two chapters and the virgin birth gets only 1, how important is Babylon? If proportion of material is any indication of importance then rebuilt Babylon is in the category of high importance.

And I find it interesting that Habakkuk and not Daniel introduced the times of the Gentiles. You don't get exposed to this in Seminary because you only study a few key books of the OT like Genesis and Daniel. Daniel has always been a popular book. But all Daniel does is amplify and give details to Habakkuk 2.

Now since we've introduced the times of the Gentiles let's make sure we understand that expression. Jesus introduced this expression in Luke 21:24 to describe the period when Jerusalem is trodden under foot by Gentiles; by

which is meant that Jerusalem is under the control of Gentiles. It doesn't mean there can't be times that Jerusalem is under temporary control by Jews or apparent control. Right now is one example. Since 1967 it has apparently been under Jewish control, but in reality this control is authorized by a UN Resolution. So it's really still under the Gentiles and you can see this by recent activity of the UN considering a unilateral declaration that Jerusalem be a divided capital. So we still live in the times of the Gentiles even though Israel is presently in control of Jerusalem. When did the times of the Gentiles begin? When Jerusalem was trodden under foot by Nebuchadnezzar in 605BC, some people might argue it wasn't taken until 588-586BC but when Nebuchadnezzar invaded in 605BC he defeated Judah and King Jehoiakim became a puppet king, when he rebelled in 597 Nebuchadnezzar set up Jehoiachin as the next puppet king and he only lasted three months till Nebuchadnezzar disposed of him and replaced him with Zedekiah and when Zedekiah rebelled that was it. No more kings of the house of David sat on the throne of David. So Nebuchadnezzar was the one really calling the shots and that leads me to think that the times of the Gentiles started as early as 605BC but I wouldn't be dogmatic about it, it could be 586BC. But the bottom line is the times of the Gentiles began ~2,600 years ago and we still live in them. Gentiles, under Satan, are trying to build a kingdom of man that will take over the whole earth. And interestingly it's not Rome that encapsulates that kingdom building activity, it's Babylon and it ties back in with the Babel, that early project to build a kingdom of man that God interrupted by dividing the language. So the dominant system that characterizes our age is Babylon, not Rome. Everybody wants to talk about Rome because the Antichrist has to arise out of the boundaries of the ancient Roman Empire. But Scripturally, Babylon is the key. After the time of the Gentiles then the kingdom of God can come and not one second before. We live in the times of the Gentiles.

So last week we said God's answer to the Babylonian question, what about Babylon, will they go on conquering forever and ever was answered in the negative. In the near term she'll be defeated, that occurred by the Medes in 539BC. Let's turn over to Dan 5 to see the near term collapse and to get comparisons of the language with Hab 2. This would answer to the near prophecy of Habakkuk. Now, there had been an ongoing siege against Babylon by the Medes for some time but the Babylonians thought they were safe because they had walls, they had the Euphrates River flowing through

the city, so they're having a big party, getting drunk while the Medes are carrying out a special op, diverting the Euphrates River and while they're doing this, let's pick up with verse 1, what's going on at the party.

"Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine," wine was a big thing for the Babylonians, they couldn't get enough of it, Habakkuk mentions wine, so this ties in real nice. Verse 2, "When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem," so uh oh, now we have an offense against God, look at the arrogance, did Habakkuk describe them as arrogant? He sure did. They just march in and take the vessels from God's temple. Then notice what they do with them in verse 4, "They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone," These people were idolatrous to the core, this is just a sampling of the gods they worshipped. Then these fingers come out of nowhere in mid-air and just start writing on the wall. Imagine it, you're at a party, you've been drinking wine and the fingers of a hand appear in mid-air writing a message. You want to talk about creepy. It creeped out the king. Suddenly he's sober. He wants to know what it means; nobody can read it so they call in Daniel. Daniel's been around for awhile, he's an old man now. He comes in and we won't go through it all but this guy was an amazing believer. He wasn't scared of anybody. This is a guy with integrity. Notice verse 17, the king said, tell me what it means and I'll make you a big man Daniel, I'll make you the third biggest man on my campus. What does Daniel say? Go suck an egg king, I don't get my status from you, you can keep your gifts. Now if you want to know what it means I'll tell you. And in verse 19 he starts by talking about his arrogant father, Nebuchadnezzar. Now is that what you do in front of the king and all his nobles? Start trashing his father's arrogance? Then he turns to Belshazzar himself in verse 22, so now he's looking at the king eyeball to eyeball. "Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you know all this, 23but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified." That's a whole series of charges; you had your chance buddy, you saw what your father had to go through on his hands and knees eating grass like a cow and you still didn't respond, you arrogant, arrogant

man. And Daniel is indicting this guy in front of all the important people in society. Just raking him over the coals and you have to have some guts to do that because the king can have your head at any time. So after that nice introduction he gives him the interpretation. God sent the hand, you're done, you're out of here, you're kingdom is given to the Medes and the Persians, verse 30, and "that same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. 31So Darius the Mede received the kingdom..." That's the fulfillment of the near prophecy of Babylon's defeat. It came in 539BC.

Let's go back to Hab 2 because you'll see these same elements predicted to be the downfall of Babylon. One of the characteristics was arrogance, one was wine and one was worshipping the gods of gold, silver, etc...And notice verse 4 the arrogance, "Behold, as for the arrogant one, His soul is not right within him," the arrogant one stands for the Babylonians. See how those parallel? Take a look at verse 5, the wine, "wine betrays the haughty man," and the haughty man is Babylon, so there's a connection there, the Babylonians were known for their wine but it led them to overstep their bounds and do stupid things. Again in verse 15, "Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk So as to look on their nakedness." These people knew all about drunkenness and I find it interesting that they were drunk the night they were defeated, they were so arrogant they were having a party while the Medes were invading the city. And finally, the worship of idols, the gods of gold and silver, verse 18, "Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, 'Awake!' To a mute stone, 'Arise!' And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it." 20But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him." What did Daniel say? You worship gold and silver that has no breath and you do not worship the Lord who gives you breath. So, I'm just trying to show you there are linkages between Hab 2 and Dan 5 that are interesting as far as the near fulfillment of this prophecy is concerned. And the same elements are apparent when the far prophecy is fulfilled which is still future. The world system is still arrogant, they are still drunks and they are still idolatrous.

So let's look at our passage again and the five woe's again, verse 4 is the basic dividing point, the arrogant will die, the righteous shall live by faith. Verses 6-8 describe Death to Babylon for Economic Sins, vv 9-11, Death to Babylon for Sins of Theft, vv 12-13, Death to Babylon for Sins of Injustice and today

we pick up with vv 15-17, Death to Babylon for Sins of Corruption and vv 18-19, Death to Babylon for Sins of Idolatry.

Let's look at verse 15, verse 14 has already introduced the kingdom which will come after all this concludes, so verse 15 returns to talk more about the sins of Babylon that merit death. Verse 15, **Death to you who make your neighbors drink, Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk So as to look on their nakedness! 16You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor. Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness. The cup in the LORD'S right hand will come around to you, And utter disgrace will come upon your glory.** So the law of retaliation will apply, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Babylon made the nations drink of their poison so Babylon will be made to drink of the same cup. Now some of this is very hard because there's a lot of imagery here. Obviously, the drink is not ordinary literal drink but figurative literal drink. So what is it that Babylon made their neighbors **drink?** I think it's the insatiable lust for military imperialism. As in verse 5 where "wine" was introduced as a figure for insatiable lust for military imperialism. Here he's just picking up that theme and saying that Babylon, by militarily invading other countries transferred their insatiable lust for imperial power to them. So one of the themes of all the kingdoms during the times of the Gentiles will be military conquest, attempts for global domination. And that has indeed characterized the last 2,600 years, attempts for various nations or peoples to conquer the world, whether it be the Medes and the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans or religions like Islam; they all share the same corrupt desire for global conquest. And Babylon is the nation that gave the other nations and people groups a taste of such conquest, death to them.

Now you'll notice there's a purpose here at the end of verse 15, it sounds intentional to me, why do they make them drunk for imperial power? **So as to look on their nakedness!** What does this mean? Obviously it's figurative. Nakedness after the Fall stands for shame in the Bible. That's why when Adam and Eve were married it says and they were both naked and not ashamed. Because that is a unique era of history before the Fall when nakedness had no connection with shame, now after the Fall nakedness is connected with shame. So they are wanting to look on their shame. Here's what happens, we try to hide our shame, that's what Adam and Eve did after they ate, they knew they were naked so they tried to hide their shame by

covering up with fig leaves. Now if you are ashamed you don't like to be in it alone, it's better if you can get someone else to do the same things so you can have someone to share the shame. It's just like drinking, it's not good to be drunk by yourself, it's better if you can get other people drunk with you. That way you feel better about yourself. So that's what's going on here. Babylon was ashamed of its lust for military conquest that it could never satisfy so they transferred this lust to the other nations so they could all share this together, this lust for military conquest and global dominion. And that's what we've had ever since - Gentile nation after Gentile nation trying to conquer the world, right now it's Islam. Why did they want to do this? Because Babylon released this poison. Why did they release this poison? Because it made them feel better about themselves. It's never enough for people to be corrupt, they want to corrupt you so they don't feel so bad about their corruption. And it's this corruption Babylon has sown among the nations that God is so upset about in verse 15.

So then verse 16, the consequences: **You will be filled** or "drunk" with **disgrace rather than honor**. Now you yourself drink and expose your own foreskins. They're going to get so drunk on their own lust for conquest that like a stupid drunk they overstep their bounds, take their clothes off, **expose their foreskins**. The Hebrew isn't pious, it's very raw here, **expose their foreskins** was to make it obvious they were alienated from God. Always uncircumcision in the OT was the badge of unbelief. David, you recall called Goliath, that foreskinned Philistine, an enemy of God. So it's a term for an unbeliever or enemy of God and the enemies of God will suffer military defeat. As the rest of the verse says, **The cup in the LORD'S right hand will come around to you**, it will tip in your direction, military defeat will come upon Babylon. **And utter disgrace will come upon your glory**. The Hebrew for **utter disgrace** means to vomit, to throw up and it's the picture that after you drink and drink and then you get drunk and what do you do next? You go outside and throw up, it's utterly disgraceful. Babylon will go too far, she will become excessively drunk in her rebellion against God and she will be utterly disgraced by defeat.

Verse 17, **For the violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, And the devastation of its beasts by which you terrified them, Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, to the town and all its inhabitants**. Now this is hard to translate from the Hebrew but

obviously Babylon has committed sins here, sins related to the environment it sounds like or maybe its metaphor, maybe the beasts are people that were treated like beasts. But let's make some of the easier identifications first and then we'll try to deal with the harder stuff. First of all, **Lebanon**, is this the actual **Lebanon** or is it standing by synecdoche for Israel because so much of Israel was built out of cedars from Lebanon? Probably it stands for Israel since much of Israel was constructed with cedar from Lebanon. Remember how Solomon had the Temple constructed with the cedars of Lebanon? Much of Jerusalem was also constructed with these timbers. So probably, and I wouldn't be dogmatic here, but Lebanon is standing for Israel because a large part of Israeli construction materials came from Lebanon. That would make **the town** at the end of the verse Jerusalem and **all its inhabitants** the people of Jerusalem. And that's what I suspect. That makes this a condemnation of Babylon for their treatment of Israel and you know Gen 12:3, those who curse Israel will be cursed.

Then we come to the second phrase, the hard one, **And the devastation of its beasts by which you terrified them**, since this is Israel then the beasts are of Israel, we'd say they are Israel's who were terrified by the Babylonians when they invaded. And some have argued that what's in view here is the capture of animals in a net. You know if you corner an animal or get it in a net it will go into a frenzy, they're just terrified. And that's what the Babylonians did to the Israel's when they attacked, they just terrified them.

So verse 18, and here we move to the fifth death sentence, death for idolatry, worshipping the creation rather than the Creator and this is mocking the enemies of God. **What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it**, obviously the idol can't do a thing. But what is obvious to you and to me is not obvious to those steeped in sin because of what happens to the human mind when it rejects what it knows about God in creation and conscience, professing to be wise they become fools, exchanging the glory of the incorruptible God for images in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. So God gives them over to a depraved mind, they think something they carve can benefit them. It can't do anything for you. Nonsense.

Or an image, a teacher of falsehood? There were priests that supported these idolatrous cults, they're the spokesmen for the system, priests of Baal, priests of Dagon, priests of Zeus, priests of Allah, there are always priests. Today they'd be the university professors, they're nothing more than Babylonian priests, teaching lies, propagating idolatry. The evolutionary, atheistic, materialistic worldview of the secular elitists in the West is nothing more than an image in their head used to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. But that's the consequence of rejecting your Creator, God gives you over to idolatry to set you for judgment.

For its maker trusts in his own handiwork, trust gets transferred to the image in their head, **When he fashions dumb idols.** It's nothing more than an image in their head that they are trusting; it's not real, it's a dumb idol in a textbook, can't speak, but they fashion it to suppress the truth of God that they know, there is a God outside of the universe to whom they are accountable.

Verse 19, **Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, 'Awake!' To a mute stone, 'Arise!'** And the mockery is the plan here. Reminiscent of Elijah when he set up the contest between himself and the Baal priests. Let's find out who is God, is YHWH God or is Baal God? How long are you people going to hesitate between two opinions? So they got two oxen, they set up altars, the Baal prophets went first, they jumped around the altar, they cried out to him but there was no answer. After several hours of this what did Elijah do? He Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god;" either he is busy or he's out of the office or he's on a vacation, maybe he's asleep and you need to wake him up. And the people were so into the system they started jumping around and getting louder and cutting themselves and bleeding all over the place. See, this is what happens to these people, they get involved in all sorts of crazy causes because they think somehow this is going to solve a problem. And you think and I think, boy, this is stupid, what are these people doing throwing all their money at that? What they're doing is reaping the harvest they've sown, they rejected God and there are consequences for that. And God is mocking them like Elijah mocked them. Oh, you tell a piece of wood to wake up. Hmm, that's going to do a lot of good.

And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it. It's just foolish but these are the

repercussions of rejecting the knowledge of God you have because God made it evident within them and God made it clear through creation. Every man has God perfectly clear to them in conscience and in creation even if they never hear the Bible. And they are accountable for that. Obviously, God is holding them accountable for that and He is going to judge them for that.

Alright, but the big point, the theological point I want you to catch as we get ready to go into the Exile is that this is the beginning of the times of the Gentiles, a period of discipline for Israel, beginning with the kingdom of Babylon, Jerusalem, the chosen city would be trodden under foot by Gentiles, then Medo-Persia, then Greece, then Rome and we still live in that time. Finally revived Rome will come along and only after all these Gentile kingdoms have run their course can the kingdom of God come. There's no kingdom of God right now. We live in the times of the Gentiles, we live in nasty times. Just look at the corruption and vice that Babylon has sown in the world described by Habakkuk; economic corruption, violent injustice, theft, idolatry, this is not a world fit for men to live in. Daniel is going to teach us that powerfully by his vision of the four beasts. And for Christians that think the kingdom of God is right now, that is ridiculous, there's no kingdom of God on earth right now. How do you have the kingdom of God with Christ reigning during the times of the Gentiles? There is nothing here that smacks of the kingdom of God and Christ reigning. What has to happen is the times of the Gentiles has to run its course and be destroyed, utterly, completely, then and only then can the kingdom of God come upon the earth. That is the only kingdom that is fit for man to live in. That's why it's called the kingdom of the Son of Man, because it is fit for man. And so I think verse 20 is looking to that kingdom when after the times of the Gentiles runs its course and is judged the King Messiah, YHWH, the Lord Jesus is sitting in His holy temple on earth. And there will be a reverential silence. Nobody's talking because they are in the presence of majesty unheard of; unseen to any king in the history of the world and the whole earth is stunned in the presence of His awesome glory when the Lord Jesus comes to reign on David's throne, the whole earth will be silent before Him.

And that issues forth Habakkuk's prayer of praise in chapter 3 because he is totally satisfied that God is just, God is going to solve this Babylon problem that marks the times of the Gentiles and the kingdom of God will come upon the earth

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