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The Arrogance Of Babylon

I want to start by reviewing carefully the major hang-up Habakkuk is asking the Lord about and the Lord's answer to the problem. Habakkuk is the record of a running dialogue between a very perplexed prophet and a sovereign, holy God. He was lifted up as a prophet and enabled to see the intensity of evil in his own kingdom and that God was raising up an even more intensely evil people, the Babylonians to judge them. This seemed to contradict the fact that God is Holy, meaning He is righteous, His character is the standard for what is right and wrong everywhere in the cosmos, and God is just, He doesn't play favorites, His attitude toward evil is uncompromising, no matter who might be involved. So then how could God look favorably upon the Babylonians who were more evil than the Judeans and raise them up to judge them? It doesn't make sense. And we all ask the same question when we see those more evil prevailing over those less evil. Why God do the really nasty people triumph over those less nasty? That's a question of relative evil because you're comparing those more righteous with those less righteous according to some standard you are invoking. But we all struggle with that, the whole world struggles with that problem, we all invoke some standard and judge some people more righteous than others when really we'd have to know all things to be able to judge accurately and no one knows all things but God. But it's a fundamental problem we all face. The other, and more specific question of Habakkuk concerns the righteous, believing remnant of Judea. Why will they be caught up in the judgment along with the non-righteous, non-believing of Judea? He could accept and understand that the non-righteous of Judea would be judged, sure, God is just, they deserved judgment. But how is God just to let the righteous, believing remnant be caught up with the unrighteous? Why no distinction? I thought God perfectly discriminated.

So what are you going to do about the wicked Babylonians who you are sovereignly using as a rod to spank our nation and what about the believing remnant of our nation? The basic answer comes in Hab 2:4. “Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him;” This is the collective use of “one” and refers to the Babylonians. Their hearts are puffed up, swollen, enlarged due to their interpretation of their military victories as accomplished in their own strength, failing to recognize God as the source of their strength. Always behind pride is autonomous self-reliance and lack of thanksgiving to God. The text says, “His soul is not right within him” and the implication is that they will die. The Babylonians will not continue to prevail, they may prevail for a time but God’s justice will eventually be enacted and they will be defeated. “But,” verse 4, “the righteous will live by his faith.” So this refers to the righteous remnant, those who have been justified by faith. And if the justified by faith continue to walk by faith, then they will live. So there is a way of escape for the righteous and that way of escape is to continue walking by faith. So then the conclusion of this verse, which is quoted three times in the NT in a variety of ways and is not to be read back into this passage, the conclusion of this passage is that those already justified by faith, those declared righteous can survive the coming invasion if they walk by faith. It is not enough to merely be declared righteous in order to survive; those declared righteous must be living by faith in order to survive.

So then it is helpful if you realize there are various phases of salvation; phase one which is justification where we are declared righteous by God through faith; we are imputed the righteousness of Christ at an instant of time, through faith. At that point we are “the righteous.” And it does not mean that we become righteous in our interior, that’s Roman Catholicism: you are in the process of becoming righteous through the distribution of grace by the Church through the sacraments, baloney. This word in the Hebrew always and everywhere is permeated with the idea of a judicial sentence being passed by the Judge with respect to the one who has faith. And the judicial declaration is we are righteous at the same time we are a sinner. The Reformers used the Latin phrase, *simul iustus et peccator*, to describe this, at the same time just and a sinner. And those are exactly the people the Lord is referring to in 2:4b when He says “the righteous,” those who are at the same time just and a sinner. And that’s phase one of salvation, justification.

Then we have phase two which is sanctification where we grow spiritually as we walk by faith. And this is a process. We are called as the righteous to trust God. We don't always trust God but we are to grow in our ability to trust God and walk by faith and such growth occurs as we take in the content of God's word and then as we walk we can trust God and have rest, we can relax because we know God is in control of our life. And a result of walking by faith is that we enjoy the life God has given us, whether it be physical life or spiritual life; all life is a gift of God and we enjoy it as we walk by faith. And the promise here in 2:4b is exactly that, as the righteous walk by faith, they enjoy life; here it's physical life, that is, survival from the coming invasion. And the illustration is given by people like Daniel and his friends, Ezekiel and others who were righteous and when the invasion came were walking by faith and they survived and were taken down to Babylon to live out the rest of their lives as believers. So really the verse assumes phase one, justification, and develops phase two, sanctification, in order to answer Habakkuk's question. So the answer is God will rescue the righteous who live by faith and again this confirms that God is just.

Now this verse was picked up and quoted by NT authors and very famously noticed by Martin Luther when he was struggling with this righteous God as a sinner. He felt himself to be irreparably under the judgment of God but it was this verse that broke upon him when he realized that through faith He was declared righteous with God. He came to that when studying Paul's quotation of Hab 2:4b in Romans 1:17 and in Romans Paul quotes it to refer to the gospel which is both justification, phase one, and sanctification, phase two. His point was they were both by faith. Now Paul was at liberty to quote Habakkuk this way even though that's not exactly what Habakkuk said in his context, but under inspiration he is lifting the words out and applying them in a new context, giving them a fuller sense without jettisoning the original meaning in Habakkuk. The author of Hebrews does the same but his meaning is pretty much the same as Habakkuk's meaning, he applies it to sanctification as well.

It's very helpful if you get into the study of how the NT authors quote the OT because it happens so frequently, it's necessary to read the NT with understanding. And Robert Thomas sums up the issue which I think is very helpful, "That principle [single meaning] requires that every OT passage must receive its own grammatical-historical interpretation, regardless of how

a NT writer uses it.” So in the instance of Habakkuk, we are interested in what Habakkuk 2:4 means in context. “The OT must not receive multiple meanings by being read through the eyes of the NT.” So we’re not reading Paul’s meaning or the author of Hebrews meaning back into Habakkuk to assign multiple meanings. “When this principle is applied—the results are enlightening. One then discerns two kinds of uses of the OT by NT writers. First, in some cases the NT writer abides by and applies the grammatical-historical sense of the passage. Second, sometimes the NT writer goes beyond the grammatical-historical meaning to assign a passage an additional meaning in connection with its NT context...It is an application because it does not eradicate the literal meaning of the OT passage but simply applies the OT wording to a new setting.”¹ That is very well said. I don’t think it’s ever been better said and I’ve read a couple of thousand pages on the subject.

And with that said I want to take you back to the idea of 1:17 where Habakkuk mentions his fear of global imperialism. He had the concern that Babylon would rise to be an imperial nation and how that fit with God’s promises to the nation Israel. How can Israel ever return to her former glory, as God promised, if Babylon continues imperial domination? “Will they therefore empty their net And continually slay nations without sparing?” You can see his struggle. And this introduces a discussion of the two Babylon motifs.

Let me try to sketch for you the Babylon motifs. You might think of these as the frame and the other as the picture in the frame. I’ll give you the frame first, this is the bigger idea. The idea is that Babylon characterizes the present civilization from the time of the Flood all the way to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It’s very interesting that during the 400 years between the Flood and the Call of Abraham only two events are recorded.? I don’t know about you but if you could only write two news stories that characterized the last 400 years what would you write? Something that captured the spirit of our age? Apparently what captures the spirit of our present age is encased in the two events recorded between the Flood and the Call of Abraham. And what are they? First, Noah getting drunk. What does this show? This is to show that Noah lapsed as Adam lapsed, they both fell into sin, so sin is still in the world and man is unable to subdue nature properly, both Noah and Adam were mastered by plants, did you ever think about that, both were dominated by nature when both were to have dominion

over nature. And what's the second event recorded? It's an event which grows out of the Noahic lapse; the Tower of Babel, the first attempt by man to build an autonomous kingdom. All the elements of our age are pregnant in those two events. One, the sinful elevation of nature over man, to worship the environment and a one world kingdom of man independent of God. Really the whole thing is captured in the city of Babel. And what's interesting is that Babel has persisted in our present civilization and won't be destroyed until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, Rev 17-18. Babylon seems to be the big issue. People talk about Greece and Rome but the dominant kingdom in our civilization is clearly Babylon. Even in the end times, even though Antichrist arises out of Rome he is called "the king of Babylon" (Isa 14:4). So the first Babylon motif you find in the Bible is that Babylon is the epitome of the present civilization from the Flood all the way to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The theme of our world is the autonomous kingdom building of man centering on worshipping the environment. That's the frame.

Now within the frame let's take a look at the second Babylon motif. This one gives more details, it adds economic complexities, it adds military complexities. This motif is mentioned by Jesus in Luke 21:24 as the times of the Gentiles. He says, the Jews "will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." So the times of the Gentiles are marked by Jerusalem being trampled under foot by Gentiles. When was Jerusalem first trampled upon by Gentiles? When guess who invaded? Not Rome, Babylon, not AD70 but 586BC. So the times of the Gentiles stretch from the invasion by Babylon all the way to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ when lo and behold, Babylon is mentioned. So we have the times of the Gentiles and they are characterized by Jerusalem being trampled under foot by the Gentiles. It doesn't mean there are not times when the Jews exercise temporary control or partial control of Jerusalem, there have been times like that; for example, during the Maccabean period and even during the Roman period. However, what it means is that even when they have some kind of control, they are basically operating under the thumb of Gentiles. Even right now with a state of Israel and control of Jerusalem it's all happening under the sanction of the UN, and there are a lot of reservations. So we still live in the times of the Gentiles today. Babylon is all around us because it's the system. And apparently a rebuilt city of Babylon will serve as the Antichrist's temporary headquarters during the

future tribulation until he makes his move on Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the ultimate goal; Jerusalem was the goal of Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC and it will be the goal of the Antichrist in the future tribulation. Jerusalem is everything because it is the only city where God chose to put His name and to put His Davidic throne and Satan wants to destroy God's name and put his throne there. So Jerusalem is the goal, that's why the prophets describe it as "a cup of trembling." Satan is vying through men to set up his central headquarters in Jerusalem and rule the universe. So we have two Babylon motifs, the frame giving the big picture of the world system from the Flood to the Second Coming, and this characterizes our present civilization, during which the kingdom of man is being built, centering on nature worship. The picture inside the frame is the times of the Gentiles beginning with Babylon in 586BC and ending with Babylon in Rev 17-18. The goal is for the Gentiles to take control of Jerusalem and establish worldwide rule. And with the environmental movement moving ahead at full steam I'd say we live in very interesting times.

Now in that light Habakkuk's question in verse 7 takes on greater significance than when you first read it, it includes the Babylon motif from the Tower of Babel up to his point in history, and the lesser motif is about to be developed. So his question really deals with whether Babylon will rise again to imperial status and dominate the entire world as it did at the Tower of Babel? "Will they therefore empty their net And continually slay nations without sparing?" That question, if you really think about it, can only be answered by going all the way to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The basic answer is contained in 2:4, pride will fall, but the elaborate answer of how it will all play out is vv 5-20. So everything in these verses is the first look at the time Jesus refers to as the times of the Gentiles. Now it's very general, there's no mention of all the details Daniel will see; Daniel's going to see four Gentile kingdoms, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, but at this time the whole thing is just seen in terms of Babylon. And actually the spirit of Babylon continues and is absorbed into each of the other Gentile kingdoms until they are all concentrated into one beastly kingdom which is still dominated by Babylonian arrogance. And when that arrogance is so widespread and so united in its goal to completely demolish God and set up a global kingdom of man centered in Jerusalem then it will be destroyed entirely by the kingdom of God which will fill the earth. So tonight is the first look in history at the times of the Gentiles, Habakkuk 2:4-20.

Notice first of all verse 5 where we left off last week, **Furthermore, wine betrays a haughty man**, that's the arrogant Babylon, when he gets on wine he thinks he can do anything, he thinks he can decide his own destiny and build his kingdom. **So that he does not stay at home. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, And he is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all nations And collects to himself all peoples.**

Notice the metaphor and the simile here, a metaphor compares two things without the use of "like" or "as," a simile compares two things with the use of "like" or "as." Both are describing the arrogant lust. His lust for imperialism is never satisfied. No matter how much Babylon conquers it's never enough, he wants more and more and more. Just like wine, drinking a little wine does not satisfy, you want more, and just like death, it is never satisfied, it always wants to pull more into the grave, so it is with the arrogant Babylon's lust for imperialist kingdom building, he is never satisfied and will never be satisfied until he takes over the entire world. So the Babylonian kingdom will continue in a way down through the times of the Gentiles to satisfy their imperialist lust and expand her empire.

But the taunt song beginning in verse 6 signifies it will all come to an end, the times of Gentile arrogance will be destroyed, but the righteous will live by faith and go into the kingdom. Verse 6, **Will not all of these take up a taunt-song against him**, that is, will Babylon not be made into an object lesson? Will her desolation not be a reminder that the arrogant are humbled, the strong are made weak, the first will be last, the blessed will be cursed? Does not he who sows disaster reap disaster himself? The answer is yes on every count. Babylon will be made into an object lesson for all the nations to remember in the kingdom, the end of this kingdom of arrogance.

Now in the middle of verse 6 he starts in on the specific sins of Babylon, and first of all economic sins. These things are all part of the world system, economics plays a role. And the Lord says, **Woe to him who increases what is not his—For how long—And makes himself rich with loans.** In these words is captured the economic problem the entire world is now facing! Credit. In a word this is at the heart of the Babylonian economic system that pervades every monetary system I know of. The problem is that when you buy on credit you can easily get lost in the lust of consumerism and then you can't even pay back the interest. The kingdom of Babylon and the

future ultimate kingdom of Babylon are built on the economic system of credit and it consumes him, he **makes himself rich** or “glorious” **with loans**. He’s building a glorious kingdom of man; a marvelous empire on credit. And the danger of doing this is summed up in the one word **Woe**. This section is known as the five woe’s because you have five woe’s pronounced in this section, verse 6 is the first woe, verse 9 is the second woe, verse 12 is the third woe, verse 15 is the fourth woe and verse 19 is the fifth woe. Five woe’s. Now basically the Hebrew word **woe** means a death wish, we could even translate it death. So verse 6 would read, “Death to him who increases what is not his,” verse 9, “Death to him who gets evil gain for his house,” verse 12, “Death to him who builds a city with bloodshed.” These sins all merit death. And in verse 6 we are looking at the death that comes to the one who **increases what is not his And makes himself rich with loans**. Babylon increases its luxurious kingdom. **For how long**, the righteous ask, a parenthetical remark showing that the righteous are frustrated living in this evil economic system of Babylon.

Verse 7, **Will not your creditors or lenders rise up suddenly? And those who collect from you awaken?** The answer is yes. The creditors are coming. America is 16 trillion in debt and the nightmare of the whole thing is when the creditors come to collect what are we going to do because the value of the dollar is decreasing. China has a lot of American dollars and they’re trying to use them up in buying gold because the purchasing power is gradually being lost, right now it still has power, it’s being propped up in my humble opinion, the dollar is the world’s reserve currency, but we could be living on the eve of an economic nightmare, and the Babylonians were too and the final Gentile kingdom will too. The expression **And those who collect from you awaken** in the Hebrew is the causative form, it should be translated **And those who make you tremble awaken?** In other words they are living in a nightmare because they know they’ve borrowed and spent, borrowed and spent and all the time interest has been building up and you have all this debt and you know you can’t pay it, so the worst nightmare, the thing that wakes you up in a cold sweat in the middle of the night, is the creditor knocking on the door demanding payment. But you don’t have the assets. Now tell me that’s not only the way America is going right now but the whole world. The resources are thinning out. This will come out more in the Book of Daniel and it comes out specifically in the prophecy of the statue Nebuchadnezzar sees with the head of gold, the chest and arms of silver, the

loins and thighs of bronze and the legs and feet of iron and iron mixed with clay. Those four metals represent the four Gentile kingdoms, but what do you observe about the four metals as you move through the Gentile kingdoms? Why does it move from gold to silver to bronze? What's happening to the value? It's decreasing. The point is inflation, you're medium of exchange is losing purchasing power bit by bit down through the times of the Gentiles, and yet the kingdom of man is getting larger and larger and so the amount of resources needed to support the kingdom gets greater and greater and therefore the whole system starts to get brittle and start to crumble. That's where the world is headed.

But it was starting here with Babylon who would become plunder he says in verse 7, **plunder for them.** The Medes and the Persians will invade the capital city of Babylon in 539BC and **plunder them.** So here we have introduced the principle of *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation, some people call it the eye for eye, tooth for tooth principle, the point is like for like, you plundered and looted, therefore you will be plundered and looted.

Verse 8 gives the three reasons. First, **Because you have looted many nations. The remainder of the peoples will loot you– Looted** refers to the war booty, the spoil of war. That was the way most armies paid their soldiers, whatever booty you could get was yours. And they looted many nations. Babylon became rich off war booty. Second, **because of human bloodshed** they destroyed human life, the image of God, non-stop, it was for sport, it was brutal, ruthless destruction of human life. They did not recognize man made in the image of God and they slaughtered the image of God. And when you spill human blood, you are defiling the land, it affects nature. Always as goes man, so goes nature. And third **violence done to the land, to the town and the inhabitants,** this refers to the rough treatment of people, the rape of women, things that often accompany the war tactics of brutal nations.

Verse 9 and we come to the second **woe, Death to him who gets evil gain for his house, To put his nest on high;** that refers to security. Now by **house** he could be referring to the kingdom of Babylon and he would be talking about using the evil gain to increase their security against enemies or he could mean by house, "dynasty," in the way that it was used in David's time, David wanted to build the Lord a house, by which he meant a Temple,

but the Lord said I'm going to build you a house David, by which He meant a dynasty. So this could refer to using the evil gain to secure the dynastic line of Nebuchadnezzar. I don't know, but either way **death to him who gets evil gain for his house, To put his nest on high, To be delivered from the and of calamity.** And it uses the imagery of the eagle who often puts his nest high up on the side of a cliff so it's secure, so no predators can and there's no doubt the Babylonians increased their security so as to make their name great and be in an untouchable position. This is a characteristic that comes all the way from the tower of Babel, they built a high tower reaching unto heaven and here we have that imagery in the background now cropping up again in their attempt to build a kingdom of man impervious to any outside interference.

Verse 10, God's attitude toward it hasn't changed; You **have devised a shameful thing for your house** he says, **By cutting off many peoples; So you are sinning against yourself.** A strange phrase but what it means is you destroy others but by doing so set yourself up for destruction. That which you sow you will also reap.

Verse 11, **Surely the stone will cry out from the wall, And the rafter will answer it from the framework.** Here we have the illegally acquired building materials used to build the kingdom of Babylon witnessing by personification, crying out against such violence.

Verse 12 the third **woe, Death to him who builds a city with bloodshed And founds a town with violence!** The same two causes mentioned at the end of verse 8, **bloodshed** and **violence** and it reminds you of the legend of the founding of Rome, Romulus and Remus. Romulus built a wall and Remus laughed at it and leaped over it so Romulus killed him and said so it shall be for anyone who leaps over my wall. That's the legend, Rome was founded on bloodshed, not family, Rome was not built on bloodlines but bloodshed. And the verse reminds you of that legend but the message is death to those who further build the kingdom of man by **bloodshed** and **violence!** This is how Babylon past and Babylon future builds its kingdom. Take this all in because in a moment we're going to turn to Rev 17-18 so you'll see the parallels.

Verse 13 and here he begins to shift to the far future, he begins to expand beyond the mere kingdom of Babylon in the 6th century BC, notice the

language gets more extensive. **Is it not indeed from the LORD of armies That peoples toil for fire, And nations grow weary for nothing?** Is it not the LORD who does this, who raises up Gentiles to labor for nothing, for fire, all their work of building a kingdom of man will burn up and come to nothing, just like the tower of Babel so the Babylon of the last days will be built but it will be built for nothing, they will labor and expend energy to build the kingdom of man but it will burn.

Verse 14, **For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.** That's the explanation for it, and clearly this did not come in 539BC, this has yet to come, this is the far future. Verse 13 is also the far future, he has moved from the near prophecy of v 3 where it says it hastens to the goal and will not delay to the far prophecy of v 3 where it says though it tarries and wait for it. Surely the times of the Gentiles will come to an end and the building of the kingdom of man will be interrupted once more. What was once interrupted at Babel in Gen 11 will be interrupted again in Rev 17-18.

So let's conclude by turning to Rev 17-18. Now we will not go through all the details but there are at least six chapters in addition to portions of Hab 2 wholly devoted to end-times Babylon, Isa 13-14, Jer 51-52 and Rev 17-18. So this is a subject of vast revelation. Here we have the final form of the Babylonian system that permeates our world. It is described in verse 1 as a "great harlot who sits on many waters" Those are the nations, she is sitting upon them, controlling the nations of the world, stirring them up, spawning fornication. Notice verse 2, "with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of fornication, and those who dwell on the earth," the earth-dwellers technically, those who have sided with the King of Babylon, Antichrist, "were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." They are following after their sin nature under this great influence. She's described as controlling the world in verse 3 and as extremely wealthy in v 4. She has gained wealth by corruption. Verse 5, "and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, **"BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."** She's the mother of it all, she spawned all the evil in our present civilization beginning at the tower of Babel where God interrupted the building of the kingdom of man, it has at this future time been trying to reorganize and rebuild and it is time once again for God to interrupt and destroy once and for all the kingdom of man. It goes on to

describe how she has become drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. Down through history she has persecuted the saints of God. It goes on to describe Antichrist who is the present ruler of the Babylonian system and how he fits in the grand scheme of Babylon and that he will go to destruction. Verse 14, before his destruction, "These will wage war against the Lamb and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful." 15 And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues." Don't fool yourself, we live in a godless system that cannot be repaired. All the people of the earth live in the same Babylonian system that is trying to build the kingdom of man. And the whole thing starts caving in in verse 16. Those in the kingdom are turning against one another because God has put it in their hearts to do this and to turn everything over to Antichrist. And verse 18, "The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth." Well who's the woman back in verse 5? She's Babylon. So the question is is Babylon a literal city? Is this a literal re-built city in Iraq on the Euphrates River or has Babylon by this time come to represent the Babylonian system? Does city here refer to a highly complex system? I don't know, I tend to lean toward it being a rebuilt city which is the central headquarters of the Babylonian system. Chapter 18, "After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. 2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird." During the kingdom it will be one of two places totally uninhabited. Verse 3, "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed *acts of* fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality." Notice all the wealth, just like we saw in Hab 2, gained by the credit system, gained by bloodshed and violence, gained by plundering by military conquest, and yet it will all come to an end. Verse 4, "I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; 5 for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities." See, it sounds like a city, get out. Verse 6 "Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back *to her* double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. 7 "To the degree that she

glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, 'I SIT *as* A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.'" This is the arrogance, the prideful boasting of arrogance just like Hab 2 described. Verse 8, "For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire;" What did Habakkuk say, "they toil for fire." They build a kingdom for nothing, it comes to nothing. "for the Lord God who judges her is strong. ⁹"And the kings of the earth, who committed *acts of* fornication and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning," because they put everything in it, their hard work in building the kingdom of man and now in one hour the entire thing is destroyed. Verse 10, "standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, 'Woe, woe,' death, death to the great city, Babylon, the strong city!" Oh, it is so strong, that's what the world thinks, they are building an impenetrable system, and undefeatable secure system. But "in one hour your judgment has come.' ¹¹"And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more— ¹²cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every *kind of* citron wood and every article of ivory and every article *made* from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, ¹³and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and *cargoes* of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives." Just look at the wealth, the glamour, the luxury, all come to naught in an hour. "The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and *men* will no longer find them. ¹⁵"The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, ¹⁶saying, 'Woe, woe,' death to "the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; ¹⁷for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!" All built on the pagan economic system. "And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, ¹⁸and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What *city* is like the great city?' Ahal, see, they worship the whole thing, this is their altar, the system they have built with their own hands, they're idolaters to the core. Verse 19, "And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships

at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!²⁰“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.”²¹Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.”²²“And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer; ²³and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.”²⁴“And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.” The kingdom of man is destroyed and the kingdom of God has come. That’s the lesson of Hab 2, the first look at the times of the Gentiles, started in Habakkuk’s day will grow and grow until the Second Coming and finally be destroyed. Then the kingdom of God will come in the earth, this is premillennialism. Hab 2:14, **For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.** A global kingdom is coming with Messiah ruling on David’s earthly throne. And we will be there, a kingdom of righteousness. As Jesus said, seek first the kingdom and all these things shall be added unto you.

ⁱ Robert Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics, The New Versus the Old*, 242.

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