

## Habakkuk 2:5-20: From Lament to Praise

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Habakkuk / Habakkuk 2:6–20

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### Introduction

- College football season back: best game so far was Georgia/Tennessee - Quickly move from frustration/anger/complaining to praising team for their resilience... I'll praise until Georgia lets me down, then I'll lament.
- God is not like my team. He does not fail. In Christ we have ultimate victory, present assurance, and living hope. That means God's people can practice continual praise—not because life is easy, but because God is faithful.
- That doesn't erase lament. We bring God our questions and we grieve real injustice. But even our laments can be rooted in worship, because God will always keep His Word.
- You may be here this morning and feel like your life is a big lament. Today, God invites you to move from prayer to praise. What if you could leave our time of worship this morning with a new outlook on life that is filled with joy and amazement of the God of all creation?
- While there will always be seasons of lament in your life, I want those laments to be undergirded by a heart that trusts God and rejoices in Him.
- In chapters 1–2 he wrestles with evil and with God's use of Babylon. In 2:6–20 God answers with five woes—'I will make it right'—and then 2:20: 'the LORD is in His holy temple.' Next week, chapter 3, Habakkuk responds in worship.
- From this text, two ways to move from lament/despair to praise:

## See God's glory as your ultimate prize.

- Last week, a key verse in the book: “The just shall live by faith.” A reminder to Habakkuk that God will always keep His Word. For Habakkuk and us: don't despair, God will do what He has promised.
- vs. 5 - Habakkuk complained about Babylon. Why would God use a nation “more wicked” than Judah as a tool of His judgement against Judah? vs. 5 - God knows the wickedness of Babylon, and in His time, God would bring judgment on Babylon.
- God knows Babylon - they're given to a lavish lifestyle - wine and a huge appetite. Babylon is set on global domination - like death or Sheol, won't be satisfied until it takes every life. BUT - wine betrays. God knows Babylon is not as powerful as they think.
- vs. 6 - a day coming when Babylon, who has taunted and oppressed many, will be taunted... “Na na na na, Goodbye...” An ungodly superpower will be defeated.
- They will say: “Woe” Five woes follow. In OT, “woe” expresses grief. E.g., [Isaiah 6](#) - “Woe is me...” Or, woe announces judgement. In the prophetic books, woes are God grieving over the sinfulness of people and announcing judgment. These five woes anticipate God's judgment on Babylon. Babylon will not get away with how they have rejected God and treated the nations treacherously.
- As we briefly think about these woes, think about how all the ways Babylon acted are repeated over and over again throughout all human history. These woes are warnings against anyone who lives like Babylon. (In a sense, Judah had lived like Babylon - that's why they were judged.)
- Vs. 6-8: Woe 1: Babylon plundered the nations. Babylon claimed what did not rightly belong to them. But, a day would come when Babylon would be defeated and Babylon would be plundered instead of being the

plunderer. A heart of greed characterized Babylon. A warning: how often do you see greed showing up in your life?

- vs. 9-11: Woe 2: Babylon has a false sense of security. They plunder and take to build homes for themselves on the high places - looking for security to avoid disaster. It's the sin of self-reliance: "We can get what we want and make ourselves secure/safe." But, in their attempt to make themselves safe from devastation, they were only reaping shame and destruction upon themselves. A warning: How often do you look to this world or your own gain to provide security? Do you look to yourself and your resources for safety? Or, do you look to God as your source of security?
- vs. 12-14: Woe 3: Babylon used military violence, injustice, and the shedding of blood to build their empire. Babylon was looking to fill the world with the glory of Babylon. THIS is the sin of man: pride. "I want to fill the world with my glory. I want to be known. I want success. I want affirmation." We'll even take advantage of others in order to get out of life what we want to get out of it. We want glory!
- BUT... vs. 14 - The earth will be filled with the Lord's glory as the water covers the sea. A flood of glory - but not Babylon's glory, or America's glory, or your glory - What WILL happen is that the glory of God will cover His creation as the water covers the sea. What a beautiful promise!
- One day, what will NOT be left on this earth are great empires, great nations, nor the great accomplishments of man - but the whole earth will be filled with the glory of God. That has always been God's plan since the Garden of Eden - but our sins put us in a glory war with the God of all creation.
- THIS is how we move from lament to praise - by knowing that God's glory is the only glory that will last. Since this is true, His glory is worth

laboring for. Your glory is NOT worth laboring for. Empires/human achievements fade, God's glory is forever.

- You move from lament to praise by seeing God's glory as your ultimate prize. The prize is knowing that God's Kingdom will fill the earth, and you are invited to be in HIS Kingdom - to dwell with Him, to partake of His glory.
- No wonder Paul writes: "But everything that was gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ" ([Philippians 3:7](#)). What are your accomplishments compared to God's glory?
- To prize anything else other than God's glory is a WOE to you.
- One big challenge:
- **Stop building Babylon and labor to build God's Kingdom.**
  - We build Babylon when we rebel against God's plan.
  - We build Babylon when we take advantage of others for our gain.
  - We build Babylon when we let greed over take us.
  - We build Babylon when we take and hoard resources to try to secure ourselves.
  - We build Babylon when comfort, wealth, and success are the things we live for.
  - We Labor for God's Kingdom when:
    - We prioritize open-handed living. (What are you holding back?)
    - We prioritize living in God's presence instead of the presence of God's enemies. (What gets more of your attention? Relationship with God, or pursuit of something of this world?)
    - We prioritize God's mission over selfish-gain. (Is the desire of your heart to see God's glory fill the earth?)

- Which kingdom are you laboring for? Babylon? Or, God's Kingdom?

## **Bow to God's rule as your ultimate authority.**

- vs. 15-17: Woe 4: Getting others drunk, pouring out wrath on others. Picture of drinking wrath shamefully. vs. 17 - reference to Lebanon? A case where Babylon had attacked the weaker. They would not get away with it. NOT literal drunkenness - the idea is shaming people. Babylon, who has shamed, will ultimately be shamed. A warning: Do you glory in putting people to shame? Slander, talking down, gossip, hurtful words, using text messages/social media against someone, etc.
- vs. 18-19: Woe 5: Idolatry - Babylon known for their idolatry - Judah had done the same thing. What use is an idol? It's only an image - it's a teacher of lies, etc. In the end, the foolishness of idolatry is evident. Saying to a mute stone: "Wake up! Come alive!" Or, expecting it to teach you is ludicrous. A warning: idolatry is worshipping created things - expecting the things of this earth to give you ultimate meaning, hope, security, etc. We turn to idols all the time.
- vs. 20 - The LORD is in His holy temple - be silent in His presence. This world trying to find satisfaction, trying to rule, trying to fill the earth with its own glory, while God is in His temple - ruling and reigning over all - working to bring about His ultimate plan.
- Be silent - We're constantly running our mouths - talking about our greatness or talking about whatever idol it is that we have made great in our lives. BE SILENT - it is the living God who rules and reigns who we need to hear. Listen to Him. Surrender to Him. He is in control, and He will bring about ultimate justice. His people - the righteous who live by faith - will be vindicated and enjoy His presence forever.

- This is GOOD NEWS that takes us from lament to praise. There will never be a moment that God will NOT be in His Holy Temple reigning and ruling over creation bringing about His will.
- Are you living under the authority of the true King? This week:
- **Ask someone: “Where do you see me resisting the authority of the King?”**
  - Is it how you choose to worry instead of trusting the Lord?
  - Is it in the way you waste (time, resources, abilities) instead of using what God has given you for His purpose?
  - Is it in the way you rush through life trying to get your way instead of slowing down and learning how to abide in Christ?
- **Ask yourself, “How would my life be different if I embraced the King’s authority?”**
  - Less worry and more faith?
  - More joy and satisfaction?
  - More focused on being used by God to build His Kingdom?
- **Praise God for being a good, just King.** Move from lament to worship because you know even when life doesn’t make sense that God is on His throne accomplishing His plan so that ultimately every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
- Babylon isn’t just a singular ancient nation. Babylon is the blueprint for life without God. Babylon is any person or nation that opposes the rule of God.
- Babylon will ultimately fall - Babylon will drink from the cup of God’s wrath (vs. 16). Everyone who rejects God’s rule will receive the judgment of God they deserve - they will drink from God’s wrath.

- The only way to escape judgment of God is to turn to the One who drank the cup of God's wrath for us. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked the Father to remove the cup from Him, but in the garden, Jesus also prayed, "Not my will, but your will be done." Jesus willingly went to the cross and drank from the cup of God's wrath. He was judged in our place, dying the death we deserve, only to rise from the dead three days later, so we can receive what we do not deserve: entrance into God's Kingdom. Have you placed your faith in the One who drank the cup of God's wrath so you will never have to?
- Some day, this one who died and rose again and ascended to heaven will return. And when He returns, he will once and for all judge Babylon - every world power and person who has opposed His rule.
- [Revelation 18](#) - Babylon's funeral dirge. [Revelation 19](#) - the marriage supper of the Lamb. [Revelation 20](#) - the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven and fills the earth. It WILL happen - the glory of the Lord WILL fill the earth. And you will see it - you will experience it by faith.
- Revelation does not end in lament - it ends with praise - God's people in God's presence forever.
- Lift your eyes to heaven. I know life is hard. I know sometimes life doesn't make sense. But your lament can be turned to praise because you now the glory of God - the glory of the One who is love, who is merciful, gracious, kind - and who ultimately is ruler and King will fill this earth with glory like the water covers the sea.
- As a follower of Jesus, your story is bound in His story - you get what God has promised - life with Him as He intended from the beginning. Trust Him. Surrender to Him.

