



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

How Long God?

Part 4: A Fork in the Road

Habakkuk 2:2–20

Tim Badal | August 13, 2017



In this series, we've been looking at times when life is difficult and we ask God to answer our prayers, usually coming with preconceived ideas about how He will respond. When we're sick, we go to God and say, "God, heal me. God, take away this issue my body is dealing with today." When we have emotional troubles, we ask God to take away the depression or anxiety, and we expect that He will do that. When we have relationship issues, we ask God to fix the other person or address the problem between us—and we expect that He will do what we ask.

At the end of the day, our assumption is that when we pray—just like in the fairy tales—the story line will end, "And they lived happily ever after. They were healed. They no longer had emotional distress. The relationships were mended." And then everything is tied up with a nice, neat bow because God answered our prayers. But what happens in those emotional moments or those medical moments or those relational moments when you get on your knees and ask God to intervene and meet those needs—and God answers by doing the exact opposite of what you're wanting? You ask God to heal you, and God allows the medical issue to get worse. You have a relational issue, and after you pray the marriage continues to deteriorate or the friendship dissolves.

When you ask God to take away your feelings of depression, but instead He answers, "I'm going to allow trials to come. If you thought you were anxious before, buckle your seatbelt—it's only going to get worse." That is what the book of Habakkuk is all about.

I know some of you haven't been here for the whole series, so let me review what we've covered so far. Habakkuk lived about 200 years after King David and King Solomon. He's proclaiming a prophetic message to the southern nation of Judah. Israel and Judah were divided, with ten tribes going north and two tribes staying in the south. It was a time of great disarray in the nation of Israel. Instead of following God they had pursued the gods of their neighboring countries, becoming almost as pagan as the countries around them. Habakkuk has knocked on God's door and God is going to speak to him. In chapter one, Habakkuk asks God, "How long are You going to allow violence, perversion, seduction and all kinds of corruption to continue before You're going to deal with it? The God I know doesn't let sin go by. He addresses it. He brings it to a stop and He makes sure people are living in obedience to Him. And God, it sure seems now like You're looking at sin and not caring."

God, in His faithfulness, responds to Habakkuk's lament. He tells Habakkuk, "Here's what I'm going to do. You're right—I'm not going to stay idly by and watch this take place. I'm going to deal with it. But Habakkuk, I know you've been praying for one thing, but I'm going to do something so different that you'll have trouble believing it." Then God tells him in Habakkuk 1:5, "I'm raising up the Babylonians, the Chaldeans"—an empire in northern Iraq—"a wicked and violent people. They'll come and overtake you. They'll pillage your land and enslave your people. This is My discipline of My people so they'll know what I think of their disobedience."

Habakkuk is aghast. He says, "Wait a minute. I prayed for revival and You're bringing discipline? I prayed for rebirth and You're talking about our nation being knocked down? That's not what I prayed for. That's not the answer I wanted." But God tells him, "That's what's going to happen."

From a human standpoint, God's plan seems insane. Think about it. God says to His people, "You are wicked and sinful people. You're not following My ways, so this is how I'm going to fix it. I'm going to bring a more wicked and sinful and idolatrous people,

and they're going to give you the spanking of a lifetime." If Habakkuk had lots of hair, he was probably pulling it out, thinking, "How can this happen? God, how can You do this?"

Yet Habakkuk shows his faith. At the end of chapter one and into chapter two, he says, "I'm going to trust You, God. I don't understand Your plan and I don't understand Your purposes, but You are the everlasting God. You are the loving and merciful God; a God Who does exact judgment. I'm going to wait until You are ready to address this situation." But the underlying issue for Habakkuk is the question of why God would choose an even more sinful people to execute judgment on the people of God. It didn't make sense to him, so he asks God, "But what about them?"

Growing up, I remember a specific instance when my brothers and I were wrestling on the living room floor. It was okay to wrestle in the family room, but the living room was where Mom had all her nice things. But we were wrestling and things were getting knocked down. Our dad came in and yelled, "Cut it out! Get to your rooms!" We all scattered like a bunch of rats to our rooms. I heard my dad coming and he came to my room first. I said, "But Dad, I didn't start it. Dad, they were the ones who did more of it. Why are you in my room first? It's not fair that you would bring judgment against me when others are far more guilty. What about them, Dad? When are they going to get it?" My dad said, "In due time, son. In due time." And my older brother said, "Dad, take all the time you need."

You see, when we are put under the discipline of God, sometimes God uses very odd things, humanly speaking, to accomplish His will. In a sense He allows evil to prosper and the faithful to be knocked down. And like Habakkuk, our reaction in those times is to ask, "But what about them? When are they going to get it? When are You going to address their corruption? Why do some of these people seem to get away with murder?" And God says to Habakkuk, "In due time I'm going to address them."

I want you to know that this is not a fun passage of Scripture. In fact, today's scripture will include five "woes" that God speaks to the Babylonian nation. He's turning His attention from His people in Judah to describe what He plans for the Babylonians. He says, "I'm going to raise them up for a season, but because of their sin, idolatry and disobedience, here's what I will do to them in the future." He tells Habakkuk, "In due time, I will address the sins of your enemy." In five woes, God tells him what will happen. In some ways, as it says in verse six, this is a taunt. God is taunting the Chaldeans, in essence saying, "You just wait. Your day is coming." I will tell you that the language God uses here is the harshest language He ever uses with people.

Jesus, God's Son, also spoke woes. In Matthew 23 He says over and over, "Woe to you, Pharisees." He unloads on them. He smacks them around. "You've done this and you've done that. You look clean, but you're dirty. You look alive, but you're dead. Woe to you." And then in Matthew 11 we read where Jesus uses woes against a whole people group. He says to whole cities, "Woe to you, Bethsaida. Woe to you, Sidon. Had the miracles that you've seen happened in other places, they would have believed—but you didn't. You are rebellious and fought against Me. So woe to you."

These are the most severe words God can give. I want to remind you: God promises that woe will come on the day of judgment, for every name that's not found written in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire. God will say one of two things to you. He'll either say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," or, "Woe to you." That leads us to this passage now and to some questions we need to ask. First we must ask, "What way are we going to go?"

We just got back from a trip toward the east coast. We were in the countryside of eastern Ohio and the worst thing that could have happened to us in our technologically-advanced day did happen. My phone that I had connected to the car speakers, that was telling me exactly where I needed to go, gave me these sad words: "Cell phone coverage gone." Oh boy. I had this wonderful robotic woman telling me exactly where I needed to go. "Turn left here, then in 100 feet turn right." As long as I followed her instructions, then the non-robotic woman next to me wouldn't be mad. But now she said, "I'm out. You're on your own, big guy."

So I came to a fork in the road. I sat there and I had no idea what to do. Do I go to the left? What happens if that takes me right back where I was before? I had no idea. Those roads spun around and did a lot of crazy things. If I go to the right, I'll get even more lost. What do I do?

Life is like that. We go through life and get to a point where we have to make a decision. There are decisions in our lives that aren't that big. Today you decided to wear what you're wearing. It's not going to impact you deeply. You made the decision whether or not to eat breakfast, and what to eat if you did. You made a decision on what movie you watched last night. Today you're going to decide what you'll do with your afternoon. These are pretty small decisions that don't require much thought.

But there are bigger decisions that are true forks in the road. If you go left, your life will turn out one way. If you go right, your life will turn out differently. These are decisions like which college to go to, or who you're going to marry, or how many kids you expect to have, or what job you'll take. These are big decisions.

In Habakkuk 2 we find a fork in the road. There are two ways to go. The Bible is clear that life is full of spiritual decisions. Think about Joshua as the people were entering the Promised Land (Joshua 24). He said, "Choose this day who you're going to serve. Are you going to serve God, or are you going to serve the gods of the Amorites? You've got to make a decision."

Jesus said, "There are two ways (Matthew 7:13–14). You can go the broad way that leads to destruction, that's filled with lots of people, or you can go the narrow way. You have a decision to make." Elijah the prophet said, "You've got to stop vacillating between two opinions. Either God is God, or the god of the Baals is God" (1 Kings 18). As God declares these woes to Babylon, we need to ask ourselves, "Are we going to go the way of Babylon as a people, as a nation, or will we go the way of the prophet who lives by faith and trusts that God has a plan and a purpose?"

So after that long introduction, let's look at the opening verses of Habakkuk 2 and we'll look at the individual woes as we go. We'll begin in verse two:

And the Lord answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. ³ 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.

Here's path number one.

⁴ Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith. ⁵ Moreover, wine [or wealth] is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest. His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations and collects as his own all peoples."

We can forsake God and pursue our sin.

So we have a choice to go one of two ways. The first way we can go is clearly seen in the five woes. Will we forsake God and pursue sin? Babylon is a type of rebellious men and rebellious nations. We can see that the people of Babylon have made a decision. They had seen God in His creation and in His power revealed to Israel. But they decided that instead of pursuing His ways and His word, they would make a name for themselves instead of seeking His plans and purpose in their lives. As a result, God says, "I will cut you down. I will bring you low." He gives them five woes. Why? Because they were sinning grievously against God.

Their sins were seen in their evil deeds.

When people forsake God, they don't have to say anything—we can just see it in their lives. These people were committing great evil. Scholars say we can draw out two applications from the nation of Babylon. First, we can examine our own nation and ask, "Is the evil of Babylon the same as the evil deeds of the United States?" Second, they say this rebuke was directed to a particular Chaldean leader named Nebuchadnezzar, who was the greatest of their kings. Besides asking if these things are true of our country, our question is are these things true of us as individuals?

I want to move quickly through these woes, then I want to show you the second path we can take and why it would be better to go that route. The first sin that comes is the sin of pride. The Babylonians were filled with arrogance. They thought they were the best people in the world.

Nazi Germany believed they were the best and that they deserved to rule all of Europe because they were a superior race. It didn't bother them to murder six million Jews, since they saw the Jewish race as inferior to them. Both the Nazis and the Babylonians believed that because they were superior, they could treat other people however they chose.

That universal sin of pride in them led to evil deeds. First, it made them insatiable. In verse five we read, "*His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough.*" When you think you're number one, you think you deserve everything. Babylon conquered lands because they believed they deserved the plunder of these lands. They would take all the gold and silver, then take it back to their own country. But they could never get enough. They were always hungry for more. They conquered without concern for the people they were destroying.

I think about our country and our debt that has run to billions of dollars. We are a consumer nation. Like the Babylonians, we never have enough. "I've got to have more and more and more." We build bigger homes. We build bigger garages. We build bigger barns,

just like the foolish farmer in Luke 12. We accumulate more stuff and then we buy storage sheds to put it in. Or we rent storage space. We never get to the point where we can say no to ourselves. The sin of insatiability was true in Babylon, and it's true in America today.

Second, beyond being insatiable, Babylon considered themselves to be invincible. In verse nine we read, *"Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high."* That's an important phrase. Why would they rest their nest on high? It was *"to be safe from the reach of harm!"* The Babylonians had built massive fortifications around their cities. They were known to have walls more than 30 feet high and wide enough to have two lanes of traffic on top of them. The armies would perch up on these walls and scoff at people who might try to invade their cities. What's more, they would dig moats around the walls, much like those in medieval castles. They considered themselves to be completely invincible. They believed no one could touch them—not even God Himself.

How far back in human history do we need to go to remember that man who built the RMS Titanic and said, "This is a boat so strong, so powerful, so magnificent that not even God can bring it down"? What happened? It was brought down. I'm not presuming God brought it down, but we can definitely say it was not invincible.

As a nation here in the United States, do we not struggle with an air of invincibility? We're laughing right now at the idea that a dictator in North Korea might be able to hurl a missile to the little island of Guam, let alone to our mainland. We don't think it will ever happen. But that's why we were so shocked at 9/11. We asked, "How could this have happened?" Like Babylon, we in America are filled with a sense that we'll never be touched. We maybe even think God won't bring us down. But as we'll see, the nation of Babylon came down hard and fast. It was not invincible.

What about us as individuals? Especially when we're young, we think we're invincible. We think we're going to live forever and can do anything. But I learned very quickly this past week that an elevated blood pressure can bring this big boy down real quick. I'm not as strong as I think I am. Just a little blip on a screen can change my whole day and maybe even my whole life. We're not as strong as we think we are. So if we arrogantly think we can trail-blaze our own path away from God, that's total idiocy. We are finite and frail creatures. God tells us, "Your life is short. Rather than making a kingdom of your own, you need to follow Me."

Next we read about the woe coming from injury in verses 12–14: *"Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity! Behold, is it not from the Lord of hosts that peoples labor merely for fire, and nations weary themselves for nothing?"* God says to the nation of Babylon, "You're using people." The Babylonians overtook a nation and, as we read in Daniel, they took the strongest and most capable people back to their homeland. They had these captives build their cities, fortresses, museums and gardens. But then they would never let the captives experience the fruit of their labor. Rather, as the text indicates, the captives labored to the point of death, never enjoying the museums or palaces or roadways.

But I have to ask if this is true of our nation as well? Consider what we do to the undeveloped parts of the world—how we as a superpower have pillaged places like Africa, using people for our benefit. I know we can't right every wrong, but think about the clothes we wear or the shoes on our feet, or things we use in everyday life. Think of the slavery that goes on so we can have the nicest of things. We live in a culture that promotes injury against the marginalized and the weak.

Then asking the question personally, do I injure people for my own gain? Would I ruin someone's reputation to even the accounts? Do I step over someone to get a promotion? Have I belittled another kid so I can sit at the popular table? What am I willing to do and who am I willing to hurt so I might build my own kingdom? You see, the heart of Babylon is in the United States—and it's beating in our chests as well. We are willing to injure for our benefit and our glory.

The next woe results from incitement. We see this in verses 15–17: *"Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink—you pour out your wrath and make them drunk, in order to gaze at their nakedness!"* Wow, God really gets into sensitive and delicate subjects. But in essence He's saying the Babylonians were winning through seduction. They would go into neighboring territories and pretend to be friendly and hospitable. They'd say, "Hey, let's get along and live life together." But all the while they had a nefarious plan, deceiving the people into thinking they cared about them but eventually overtaking and destroying them. God painted this picture, over 2,500 years ago, in which the Babylonians gave their neighbors a drink spiked with something that drugged them, making them so intoxicated they couldn't stop what the Babylonians intended to do.

This describes exactly the same thing that will soon be happening on college campuses everywhere. Unsuspecting women, maybe even some men, will go to a party and think they're having a good time. They'll think someone likes them—and little do they know when they're handed that drink that they'll soon be in a place they don't want to be, doing things they never wanted to do. They'll wake up with regrets and brokenness as a result. But what was the promise that "I'm your friend; I care about you"? All of it is a lie.

That's the lie the Babylonians used with their own neighbors. "Here, have a drink—and little do you know that once you drink this, you'll lose all your inhibitions, then we are going to expose and exploit you in whatever way we wish." They incited sin by intoxicating their neighbors. And God says, "This is not good."

One final woe is that of idolatry in verses 18–20: "What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies? For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols! Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake; to a silent stone, Arise! Can this teach?" God says to the Babylonians, "You've created a kingdom so vast and impressive that you have become a god unto yourselves." Looking back to Habakkuk 1:11, God describes them as "guilty men, whose own might is their god!"

The Babylonians had created such a vast empire that they began to believe they themselves were the eternal, everlasting God. There's no better picture of this in modern times than Nazi Germany. Hitler believed he was so great and powerful that his nation, the Third Reich, would last for a thousand years. Where did he get that idea? The Millennial reign of Jesus Christ. Hitler actually thought that he in essence was the second coming of Jesus Christ and that he was bringing heaven on earth with the Arian nation. Even yesterday in Virginia, we saw people who still espouse that kind of hate and the belief that they are God, because they are superior in their own assessment.

So I ask the question: is America so invincible, so enamored by our own commerce and power, that we think what we've created will be eternal? Will no one be able to stop us? Haven't we created gods of our own? Prosperity is our god, so we pursue wealth. We pay homage to money and the things it will buy: cars, houses, clothing and technology. We have ten times what the rest of the world has, but still we can't get enough to satisfy us, because these things are our gods and we worship them. We have created the god of pleasure. More than a quarter of all internet searches are for one's own pleasure. We can't get enough of it.

God's response is this: when you need your gods the most, they will fail you. How many times do we need a stock market bubble to crash to realize that our trust and hope cannot be in money? How many broken marriages and other broken relationships will it take until we realize that seeking pleasure never accomplishes what we want in life? There is a lot of Babylon in the heart of America, and there's a lot of Babylon in the heart of each of us.

Here's the crazy thing. In verse 17, God says something that I think is quite remarkable. "The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them." Wow. What was Lebanon known for? The Bible clearly says it was known for its vast forests, the "cedars of Lebanon." Scholars believe the Babylonians thought the earth was theirs, so they had total disregard for animals or trees.

Listen, I'm not a tree-hugging, PETA-loving pastor, but should we not have regard for the earth we live in? Should we treat animals humanely? Yes, we have dominion over them, but history records our great abuse. I have a picture of thousands of buffalo lying dead, killed only for their skins. Whole animal groups have been decimated because we wanted one portion of them.

This is what God is speaking about regarding the Babylonians. And He's asking about us, "To what lengths will they go? Will they decimate the forests or entire animal groups? Will they take out anything in their path—plant, animal or human—to build their kingdom? Each of us must decide, "Will I disregard God and all He has made to live life all for myself, because I'm god and no one else is."

Their sins were seen in their eventual demise.

The Babylonians chose to forsake God and pursue their own sins, which resulted in their evil deeds. However, those same sins resulted in their eventual demise. God tells them throughout Habakkuk, "You're going to fall." Because of their insatiable appetites, God says in verse eight, "You will be devoured until there's nothing left of you, Babylon." Because of their injustice, He says in verse 11, "The very walls you build will cry out against you and your corruption, calling you guilty." Remember the idea of walls crying out, as I'll mention that again in a moment.

Regarding the injury of others, we see in verse 13 that God tells them, "Those cities you built on the backs of other people—you will see them destroyed by fire." In response to their incitement and intoxications, verse 16 says the Babylonians themselves will be shamed. Literally, their bodies will be put on display for all to see. They will be dishonored and mocked by other nations to their utter shame. And because of their idolatry, their gods will be mute and impotent, unable to deliver them in their times of need, and they will be destroyed. In a nutshell, the rebellious people of Babylon—in a moment of God's choosing and at a place they did not expect—will receive God's judgment. And in that day it will be too late to repent.

Let's pivot to the book of Daniel for a moment to see how this comes about. Turn to Daniel 5 where we can see the trustworthiness of God's message. About a hundred years after God spoke through Habakkuk, exactly what He promised did take place. Daniel describes the Chaldean invasion of Israel and Judah, bringing the people back to Babylon as slaves. For decades, the nation of Babylon was the most powerful kingdom on earth. Because of their wisdom and talents, Daniel and his friends were taken to serve in the king's court so that the nation of Babylon would become even greater. In fact, their king, Nebuchadnezzar, got to the point where he thought himself to be god. He had them build a statue of himself before which everyone in the kingdom was compelled to bow down. You remember the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The Babylonians were doing exactly what God said they would do.

Do remember what we read in Habakkuk about the walls crying out their guilt? In Daniel 5 we read the story of the next king, Belshazzar, and a great feast that he gave. Everybody was drunk—incitement through intoxication. Thousands of the lords of the Chaldeans were there. They were having a great party, much like the pagans do in our own day. They were eating, drinking and being merry. But little did they know that that very day God would demand their lives. As they were partying, suddenly the wall began to speak. You may know the story of the hand that started to write on the wall, *"Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin."* King Belshazzar was terrified: "Whose hand is that and how is it writing on the wall?" They brought in all the wise men of the kingdom, but none could understand it. But the queen remembered Daniel: "His God is different from our gods and he understands mysteries. Let's bring him in."

We see Daniel's interpretation in Daniel 5:25–28: *"This is the writing that was inscribed: Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. This is the interpretation of the matter: Mene, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; Tekel, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes."* Fast forward to verse 30: *"That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom."*

Pagan unbelievers may live like it's a party, but in a moment they cannot know God will say, "Your life has been found wanting and it's too late." Immediately after that they will stand before the Almighty God, who will say to them, "Woe." So don't go that way—it ends in demise. Then what is our other choice? What should we do?

We can follow God and wait for the Savior.

Instead of forsaking God and pursuing our sin, we follow Him and wait for our Savior. Habakkuk knew he couldn't go the way of the Babylonians. Listen to what he says in Habakkuk 2:1: *"I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint."* God answers him, *"Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so 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."*

Some of you might be thinking, "But the way of the Babylonians seems fun and everything was going right for them." But God says, "Wait. Wait. Their demise is coming." They were to wait for the promises of God to be fulfilled. In verse four He says we must live by faith. Instead of living for ourselves, we must live in accordance with God's plans and purposes, waiting for Him. It may seem like a long time, it may seem like He's delaying His return—but we must wait. God promises the day will come. The woes to the Babylonians are a reminder to us as New Testament Christians that although it seems like God had delayed for a long time, just as He had brought down the nation of Babylon, so one day He will depose the kingdoms of this world that are hell-bent against Him. We need to trust that.

There are three things we must wait patiently for and trust that God will do.

He wins the hearts of men.

We must believe and live with this thought in mind: while the world is going to hell, God is winning the hearts of men. In verse 14 we see that, amidst all the things the Babylonians were doing, God still promises, *"The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."* God says, "While you're living for yourself and building your own kingdom, I'm winning people from all nations, tribes and tongues. I'm changing their hearts from stone to flesh so that men will glorify and obey Me."

We watch that work take place in baptisms here. People are being changed from sinners to saints. They're no longer living for themselves, but for God. What an on-going testimony to God's faithfulness to work in the world until the day of His return. He's winning the hearts of people. We can put our faith and hope in that reality.

His wrath is poured out against all wickedness.

Second, we can be sure that one day His wrath will be poured out against all wickedness. But with Habakkuk we still ask, "When, God? How long, God?" God answers him in verse 16 regarding the future of Babylon: "*The cup in the Lord's right hand will come around to you, and utter shame will come upon your glory!*" The cup of God's wrath will one day be poured out, and even now it's being poured out against all wickedness.

But one day, in one fell swoop, God will address all the wrongs, all the sins and all the debauchery we have endured as the righteous King and Judge. Do you believe that? Do you trust in that? One of the reasons we as followers of Christ don't live as the Babylonians did is we know there's a day of reckoning that will come. We know we're going to have to stand before God. Our desire is that when we stand before Him, He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21) not, "Woe to you." So we live differently because we know there is judgment coming. "God cannot be mocked; a man or woman will reap what they have sowed" (Galatians 6:7).

His name is worshipped by all.

We put our faith and trust in the hope that God's name will be worshipped by all. Verse 20: "*But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.*" It sure does seem like Babylon is going to have its day. It sure does seem like Babylon gets all the good stuff. It sure does seem that sin prospers and obedience suffers. But I want you to know there's a day coming, as Philippians 2:10–11 tells us, when every knee will bow—every Babylonian will bow—and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. There won't be anyone who will say, "I'm not sure," "I don't know," or, "I don't want to." The world will be silent before the Almighty God. We believe God is moving in the hearts of people. We believe that God's wrath will come and we believe that one day we will stand before God. Then all the earth will be silent in the presence of His glory and majesty.

In light of Habakkuk 2, we must examine ourselves.

So what must we do with this passage of Scripture? We must examine three things.

We must examine our profession.

Am I truly one of the righteous who lives by faith? A lot of us would say we are. We would say, "Yes, I'm a follower of Jesus Christ. I want to do His will." But is our profession valid or does it fall on deaf ears? Do we really live out what we say we believe about Christ?

We must examine our practices.

As we listen to the woes of the Babylonians, as New Testament Christians under grace, we have to ask ourselves this very hard question: do I sound more Babylonian than I do Christian? Is there more Babylonian blood in me than Jesus' blood? Do I pursue injury and insult? Do I have an air of invincibility? Am I building a kingdom for myself?

Here's the crazy thing. Judah would be upset at God, because they knew they weren't as bad as the Babylonians. Some of us may also be looking at our neighbors or friends, thinking, "I'm not as bad as they are." So maybe you're not as bad. But are some of your practices—your entertainments, your activities—revealing you to be more Babylonian than Christian?

We must examine our priorities.

Babylon built themselves up for their own glory. But at the beginning of Habakkuk 2 we see what we are built for. Verse two says, "*Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.*" God wants Habakkuk to be a proclaimer, a living announcement of what He is doing. If we are the righteous who are living by faith, and if we are living differently from the world, our priority should not be to build a kingdom of our own, but rather to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing that all the things we worry about getting will be added unto us (Matthew 6:33).

So what is our job? We are to be salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13–16), to proclaim the excellencies of Him Who called us out of darkness and brought us into His wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9). We have been called to be prophets and priests, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to all who will listen.

Are you going on the road of Babylon, or are you going the way of Christ? The choice is yours and your eternal destination is determined by that choice. There's a fork in the road—which way will you go?

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

Note: This transcription has been provided by Sermon Transcribers (www.sermontranscribers.net).