

Sermon #20 — *Habakkuk Series*

Title:                    **FIVE WOES**

*or*

**FALSE PROPHETS EXPOSED**  
**AND CONDEMNED**

Text:            Habakkuk 2:4-20

Subject:        *False Prophets and False Religion*

Date:            Tuesday Evening—February 15, 2011

Tape #          *Habakkuk #20*

Readings:      *Darin Duff and Allen Kibby*

Introduction:

**ALLEGORICAL EVENTS**

When we read about the many events of history recorded in the Old Testament, **we miss the intent of the Inspired Record if we do not read and interpret those events allegorically.** Yes, the Scriptures must be understood literally; but **a literal understanding alone misses the intent of Inspiration altogether.** The historical record of Sarah and Hager is historically factual and true as recorded in the Book of Genesis. And God the Holy Spirit who inspired the Book of Genesis tells us in the Book of Galatians that Sarah and Hager and their

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sons Isaac and Ishmael are an allegory, a spiritual picture.

**If we would understand the Old Testament Scriptures we must always remember that Christ crucified is the message of the Old Testament,** just as Christ crucified is the message of the New Testament (Luke 24:27, 44-45). **Everything in the Book of God speaks of Christ and the salvation of God's elect by His obedience, His blood, and His grace.**

- This is not a book about history. This is the Book about Christ.
- This is not a book about science. This is the Book about the Savior.
- This is not a book about prophecy. This is the Book about Propitiation.
- This is not a book about religion. This is the Book about Righteousness and Redemption.

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- This is not a book about morality. This is the Book about mercy, and grace, and salvation in Christ!

**Everything in this Book is about Christ.** The written Word of God is all about Him who is the Living Word.

- Every prophecy is about Christ.
- Every ceremony of the law typified our Savior.
- Every commandment of the law pointed to Christ, shows us our need of Christ, and shuts us up to the Lord Jesus Christ as our only Hope, our Savior, our only Salvation!

And **every event recorded** in Old Testament history was brought to pass by God's providence that it might serve as an allegory, type, picture of God's great grace and of the salvation of our souls by Christ Jesus (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11).

(Romans 15:4) "For whatsoever things were

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written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

(1 Corinthians 10:11) “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Tonight, I want you to open your Bibles to Habakkuk chapter 2. The title of my message is — **FIVE WOES** *or* **FALSE PROPHETS EXPOSED AND CONDEMNED**. Here is a prophecy of an historic event, Israel’s Babylonian Captivity. It literally came to pass, exactly as it was prophesied. But the whole thing is a portrayal of God’s grace and the salvation His elect in overthrowing mystical Babylon, the Great Whore; and that Great Whore, Babylon, represents all false religion in the world. **Remember, there are just two religions in the whole world** (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

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- Free-will and Free-grace
- Works and Grace
- Self-salvation and God Salvation
- Jerusalem and Babylon

**CHRIST'S COMING**

Habakkuk's prophecy begins with a declaration of God's sure accomplishment of salvation for His elect by the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Substitute (1:5; Acts 13:41).

(Habakkuk 1:5) "Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you."

Then the Lord God tells His prophet about the coming of the wicked, idolatrous Chaldeans, whom He would send to judge and correct His chosen

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people. — “For, lo, I will raise up the Chaldeans” (1:6-17).

Then, in chapter 2, the Lord God assures His prophet that Christ will surely come and perform the wondrous salvation He promised from eternity at the time appointed (2:3; Hebrews 10:37).

(Habakkuk 2:3) “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

In the light of God’s promised salvation by Christ, Habakkuk understood that the Babylonians and all that God raises up in this world against His church and Kingdom for a time, all the fire of hell’s dragon breathed out against God’s people (Revelation 12:1-17), are in reality God’s horses and God’s chariots of salvation (3:8). God’s prophet, Habakkuk understood

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what I want so much to convey to you in this message...

**PROPOSITION:** In His wise, adorable, good providence, our great God, the God of all grace, uses everything in history, everything in His creation, even Satan, false religion, and false prophets, even the man of sin himself for the salvation of His elect. — **“Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for the salvation of thine anointed”** (Habakkuk 3:13).

(1 Corinthians 11:19) “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.”

Now, let’s read our text (Habakkuk 2:4-20). I told you, the title of my message is **FIVE WOES** *or* **FALSE PROPHETS EXPOSED AND CONDEMNED**. That’s my subject. Let’s read the text together. As you read, understand these words as

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a description of mystical Babylon, that Great Whore of the earth, described so graphically in the latter chapters of Revelation.

**INTOXICATED PROPHETS**

*First*, the Lord God condemns all hireling prophets, all preachers of Free-will/works religion as intoxicated idolaters (vv. 4-8).

(Habakkuk 2:4-20) “Behold, his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”

**The just live by faith in Christ; but not these wicked, self-righteous, prophets of deceit, who are so self-inflated that they are like bubbles ready to burst.**

“5 ¶ Yea also, **because he transgresseth by wine**, [he is] a proud man, neither keepeth at



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home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and [is] as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people: 6 Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, **Woe to him that increaseth [that which is] not his!** how long? and to him that **ladeth himself with thick clay!** 7 Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and **thou shalt be for booties unto them?** 8 Because thou hast spoiled many nations, **all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee;** because of men's blood, and [for] the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.”

**Be sure you understand who I mean when I speak of false prophets and false religion.**

- I am not just talking about Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism.

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- I am not just talking about Mormons, Campbellites, and Russellites.
- I am not just talking about Papists, Witch Doctors, Palm Readers, and Moonies.

**Every form of religion that teaches that salvation is in some way determined by and/or dependent upon man is false and damning.** These false prophets, all who teach you that you must **add your works** to the grace of God, that you must **add to your will** to the will of God, that you must **add your righteousness** to the righteousness of Christ, that you must **add your decision** to the blood of Christ —  
— All who teach that **God tries to save** everybody, but cannot save without your cooperation, that **Christ died to redeem** everybody, but fails to redeem some because they do not choose to be redeemed, that **the Holy Spirit draws all to Christ and tries to save everybody**, but some people just will not come —  
— **All who teach such heresy are here anathematized and condemned by God because...**

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1. They are condemned because **they are lifted up with pride and are not upright** (v. 4). — Like the peacock, they spread their tails and show their feathers. Swollen with self-righteousness they turn away and draw back from Christ and the Gospel of the free-grace of God in Him (Hebrews 10:37-38). — Pharisees! — Judaizers! — Legalists!
2. All are condemned because they are **intoxicated with the wine of Babylon's fornication** (Revelation 14:8). All false prophets are drunk on free-will religion!
3. **Like all drunks, false prophets are faithless, treacherous, deceitful, perfidious, dishonest, disloyal, and traitorous, and cannot be satisfied.** — They will not keep at home because they cannot be satisfied. The false prophet's desire is as large as hell (Proverbs 27:20). So he

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encompasses land and sea to gather disciples to follow him (Proverbs 7:24-27).

4. Habakkuk condemns the false prophet for his covetousness, too. — “**Woe unto him that increaseth that which is not his...that ladeth himself with thick clay!**” (v. 6). — Just as idolaters in ancient times covered wood with gold and silver and called the works of their own hands gods, so idolatrous false prophets are notoriously covetous, self-serving, self-enriching men.

Men who get rich preaching are no more God’s servants than politicians who get rich by their political careers are servants of the State. But those who spoil the nations of the world shall at last be the spoil of those who live by faith in Christ. **Just as Egypt and Babylon were spoiled by Israel, Babylon the great whore shall be spoiled by God’s**

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**Holy Nation, the Israel of God** (Revelation 18:1-2, 20; 21:1-2, 26).

(Revelation 18:1-2) “And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”

(Revelation 18:20) “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.”

(Revelation 21:1-2) “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of

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heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

(Revelation 21:26) “And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.”

**COVETOUS DESTROYERS**

*Second*, in verses 9-11, the Lord God anathematizes and condemns all false prophets, all preachers of free-will/works religion, because they are destroyers of the souls of men. **They destroy their own souls by their religious covetousness; and they destroy all who follow them.**

(Habakkuk 2:9) “**Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house**, that he may **set his nest on high**, that he may **be delivered from the power of evil!** 10 Thou hast **consulted shame to thy house** by cutting off many people, and hast **sinned [against] thy soul.** 11 For the

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stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.”

**Like the original Babylonians** (Genesis 11:4) **all will worshippers set themselves in the place of God and vainly imagine that they shall set their nest on high and save themselves from hell and everlasting evil.**

- By Keeping the Commandments
- By Doing Good
- By Religious Rituals and Ceremonies
- By Moral, Religious Reformation
- By Taking a Stroll Down the Romans Road
- By Making a Decision for Jesus
- By Saying the Sinners’ Prayer
- By Devoting Yourself to Fulltime Christian Service

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**Hear me, will-worshipping Arminian!** — By your religious tom-foolery you bring everlasting shame upon your house and sin against your own soul!

**BUILDS BY BLOOD**

*Third*, every false prophet is denounced, condemned, and anathematized by the Lord God because every false prophet has upon his hands the blood of the multitudes everlastingly damned by the religion of Babylon.

(Habakkuk 2:12) “**Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!** 13 Behold, [is it] not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?”

**But, blessed be God, His purpose stands sure and stands forever.** All hell can do nothing to hinder our



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God in the mighty accomplishments of His purpose. In fact, **the earth always helps the woman** (the Church), though the earth intends to destroy her (Revelation 12:1-17). **The dragon of hell knows he has but a short time.** So he is in a rage. He roars, and fumes, and spits fire; but he cannot harm God's elect or hinder God's cause! **As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses** to the face but could proceed no farther (2 Timothy 3:8), so it is today. **Hell and the religious world around us may oppose us with hellish violence and cruelty; but the gates of hell shall never prevail against God's church!**

(Habakkuk 2:14) "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

**INTOXICATED RELIGIONISTS**

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Verses 15-18 described the intoxicated religionists of this world, those who are intoxicated with free-will/works religion, intoxicated with thoughts of their own goodness —— (Isn't everybody you know?). — — And here the prophet pronounces God's *fourth* anathema, God's *fourth* irrevocable curse upon the false prophets of Babylon. **The false prophet is identified and condemned because makes people drunk with another spirit and brings them to shame** (Ephesians 5:18).

(Habakkuk 2:15-17) “**Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to [him]**, and makest [him] drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! 16 Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing [shall be] on thy glory. 17 For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts, [which] made them

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afraid, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.”

**SPIRITUAL WINE**

This cannot possibly be talking about a curse upon someone who serves a glass of wine with dinner. Our Lord Jesus provided a wedding party in Cana of Galilee with six huge kegs of excellent wine (John 2:1-12). **The wine spoken of by Habakkuk is spiritual wine, doctrinal wine, religious wine, the wine of Babylon!** Here are four things false religion always does, things the worship of Christ will never do, things true religion will never do.

1. **False religion exposes and looks upon your nakedness (your sin), like Ham** (v. 15). — (Confession Booths! — Church Discipline! — Public Repentance! — Testimony Meetings!) — **True religion covers it and refuses to look**

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**upon it.** — Any religion that gives you stairs to climb, steps by which you would ascend to God’s altar exposes your nakedness and will carry you to hell (Exodus 20:24-26).

(Exodus 20:24-26) “An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. 25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. 26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.”

2. **All false religion causes poor, ignorant men to glory in their shame.** — “**Thou art filled with shame for thy glory**” (v. 16). False religion teaches you to glory in your righteousness,

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which is nothing but a woman waving a vile monstrous cloth before people (Isaiah 64:6; Philippians 3:17-21).

(Philippians 3:17-21) “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. 18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] **the enemies of the cross of Christ**: 19 Whose end [is] destruction, whose God [is their] belly, and [**whose**] **glory [is] in their shame**, who **mind earthly things**.) 20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who **shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body**, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

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3. **By false religion the reprobate are confirmed as reprobate**, just as God's elect are confirmed as God's elect by faith in Christ (v. 16; Philippians 3:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-14; 1 Corinthians 11:19). **False religion is the uncovering of your foreskin**, demonstrating that you are not one of God's covenant children. The new birth is the circumcision of the heart, confirming that we are the circumcision, that we are God's true covenant people, who trust the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Philippians 3:1-3) “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed [is] not grievous, but for you [it is] safe. 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

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4. **All false religion, all free-will/works religion provokes the unmitigated wrath of God.** — **“The cup of the Lord’s right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory”** (v. 16). God Almighty will, at last, spit on all the imaginary righteousness of men. He will spit on all the religion of man. Yes, God will, in the Day of Judgment, spit on your glory! — Perhaps the prophet’s words mean that in that great day, God will cause you, like a man completely intoxicated, to vomit out and upon all you righteousness!

**IDOLATERS CONDEMNED**

*Fifth*, God’s prophet anathematizes and condemns all who the teacher of lies and trust in the work of his own hands (vv. 18-19). Yes, the blood of the damned shall forever be upon the hands of every false prophet. But, if you choose the way of Cain, if you run greedily after the error of Balaam, if you pursue

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the gainsaying of Korah, your blood will be upon your own head forever!

(Habakkuk 2:18-19) “What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? 19 **Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach!** Behold, it [is] laid over with gold and silver, and [there is] no breath at all in the midst of it.”

Your will can never save you, but it will damn you. Your decision will not redeem you, but it will ruin you. — O, may God the Holy Spirit turn you from the worship of yourself and give you life and faith in Christ!

**SILENT ADORATION**



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Then, lest we be overly concerned about all the evil we see around us, our prophet closes this second chapter with a call for our silent adoration of our great God and Savior. — Behold the solitariness of God and adore Him in His greatness!

(Habakkuk 2:20) “But the LORD [is] in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.”

(Isaiah 41:1-2) “**Keep silence before me**, O islands; and **let the people renew [their] strength**: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment. 2 **Who raised up the righteous [man] from the east**, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made [him] rule over kings? he gave [them] as the dust to his sword, [and] as driven stubble to his bow.”

(Isaiah 41:10-11) “**Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed; for I [am] thy**

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**God**: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. 11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.”

(Isaiah 41:13-14) “For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, **Fear not; I will help thee.** 14 **Fear not, thou worm Jacob, [and] ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.**”

Amen.