

Sermon #26 — *Habakkuk Series*

Title: **BABYLON'S WOES**

Text: Habakkuk 2:4-20

Subject: *Babylon's Fall*

Date: Tuesday Evening — April 26, 2011

Tape # *Habakkuk #25*

Readings: *Larry Brown and Bobbie Estes*

Introduction:

The title of my message is **BABYLON'S WOES**. In the 2nd chapter of Habakkuk the Prophet of God denounces four great woes upon Babylon. These are woes that were pronounced upon the ancient city of Babylon. Yet, a careful reading of the chapter makes it obvious that the mere destruction of that ancient city is not all that the passage asserts. By the Spirit of God, Habakkuk here speaks prophetically of Mystical Babylon, the great whore of the earth by which the truth of God is prostituted and immortal souls are damned.

Proposition: Babylon represents all false religion; and all false religion is under the curse of God.

FOUR WOES

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Here are four woes denounced upon Babylon, four woes that fell from the very mouth of God, woes which shall be executed upon that wicked city.

1. **Woe to Babylon, woe to all false religion, woe to all free-will, works religion, God's wrath shall destroy you because you spoil the nations of the world** (vv. 6-8).

(Habakkuk 2:6-8) “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.”

2. **Woe to Babylon, woe to all false religion, woe to all free-will, works religion, God's wrath shall**

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destroy you because you make men swell with pride (vv. 4-5, 9-11).

(Habakkuk 2:4-5) “ Behold, his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. 5 ¶ Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, [he is] a proud man, neither keepeth at 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:”

(Habakkuk 2:9-11) “**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 stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.”

3. **Woe to Babylon, woe to all false religion, woe to all free-will, works religion, God's wrath shall**

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destroy you because you are the universal destroyer of men's souls (vv. 12-13).

(Habakkuk 2:12-13) “**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?”

4. **Woe to Babylon, woe to all false religion, woe to all free-will, works religion, God's wrath shall destroy you the teacher of all lies** (vv. 16-19).

(Habakkuk 2:16-19) “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 afraid, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. 18 What

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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.”

1. BETTER DAY COMING

Things look very bad now. False religion abounds on every side. Papacy has risen again to the position of prominence and acceptability throughout the world.

- **The idolatrous superstitions of Rome** have become acceptable and pleasing, even in those churches which were born in the great Reformation under the leadership of Luther, Calvin, and Knox.
- **The poisonous errors of Pentecostalism** have spread throughout the world, to the ruin of millions of unsuspecting souls.
- **The doctrines of easy-believism, decisionism, free-willism, and works salvation,** parading

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through the world under nearly every denominational name, have spread darkness throughout the world.

- And **liberalism**, in its many pompous forms, continues to sway the minds of multitudes who are ready to embrace anything other than the Word of the living God.
- Add to these heresies the increased acceptability of **Islam, Judaism and the mystic religions** of the world, and one might almost sink in utter despair.

The world today is more religious than it has ever been. But the world today is **more godless than it has ever been.** As history (ancient and modern) has proved, the more popular false religion is, the more perverted society is. The more men preach up the free-will of man, good works, and law righteousness, the more man exercises his free-will to do evil and live in lawlessness. **It appears that we are living in that day when God's true witnesses lie as dead men on Main Street in the City of False Religion, which is called Sodom and Egypt** (Revelation 11:7-8). The religion of the world appears to have trodden

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down the holy city of our God. It seems that Satan has been loosed out of his prison for a little season to once again deceive the nations of the world (Revelation 20:7). The time of apostasy has come (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). But there is no cause for despair.

There's a better day coming! The Spirit of life from God shall once again enter into His Church. His faithful witnesses shall once again stand forth upon their feet. And by the power of the Gospel we preach fear shall fall upon our enemies (Revelation 11:11). **The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church of God. Truth shall prevail at last.** Without political force, without legislative power, without carnal weapons of any kind, the cross of Christ, the simple preaching of free-grace by God's appointed, all-sufficient Substitute, shall destroy the religion of antichrist. **Babylon and all her daughters shall fall like dominoes before Zion, by the mighty arm of the Lord, when the everlasting Gospel is preached "unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"** (Revelation 14:6). This is the great and

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marvelous sight which John saw in heaven and describes for us in Revelation 17:1-19:21. Throughout the vision John is telling us “**There is a better day coming!**” In the end, Christ and His church shall triumph by the Gospel.

Yes, we shall be victorious over antichrist and all false religion. Turn to Revelation 18, and you will see. Here is the Holy Spirit's own commentary of Habakkuk 2. Here is...

2. BABYLON'S END.

Satan has always opposed the Lord Jesus Christ. In the beginning, his heart was lifted up with pride against the Son of God. He inspired, organized, and led a rebellion among the angels of heaven, attempting to overthrow God's throne, frustrate His purposes, destroy His works, and prevent the triune God from executing and fulfilling His eternal covenant of grace. **Satan's revolt was totally unsuccessful.** He didn't even shake God's throne, much less overturn it! (See Isaiah 14:24, 26, 27). Yet, the old serpent has never ceased to oppose the

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purpose of God. He knows he has but a short time until Christ shall cast him forever into the pit (Revelation 12:12). Yet, he continues his rebellion. He continues to inspire, organize, and lead men and women in rebellion against the God of heaven. **And his primary means of opposition to Christ is organized false religion.**

That religious system, inspired, organized, and led by Satan, the religion of antichrist, is portrayed as a great harlot patronized by the whole world and a great city of worldwide influence and wealth. The name of that great harlot and that great city is Babylon. **Babylon represents the world, especially the religious world, in opposition to Christ.** The religions of the world have many names. But their essential tenets are always the same. The religion of the world, the religion of antichrist, the religion of Babylon, is the religion of free-willism and works salvation. **The religion of Babylon, the hell inspired religion of antichrist by which the souls of deceived multitudes are destroyed, always proclaims that salvation is ultimately decided and determined by man.** Free-will, works religion is

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satanic. It is antichrist. And it is damning to the souls of men. Both the preachers and the adherents of such religion, like Nimrod, are rebels against God, utterly lost, without the knowledge of the living God. And, like Nimrod, they all shall perish under the wrath of God.

It is popular. Men love it, support it, promote it, and defend it. It has always been the religion of the world. **It is wealthy.** The world's most famous, most well respected religious leaders are the servants of this great whore. **And the religion of Babylon so thoroughly controls the minds of men that it controls the political, economic, academic, and philosophical powers of the world.** The whole world, by the deception of Satan, cherishes free-will, man-centered, Babylonian religion. But, thank God, the religion of Babylon, all opposition to the Church of Christ, the truth of Christ, and the glory of Christ shall be destroyed. That is the subject of Revelation 18.

3. A CALL FOR SEPARATION

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Revelation 18 opens with an announcement, an admonition, and a warning (vv. 1-8). Here our God and Savior calls for all His elect to make a clear distinction, separating themselves from Babylon.

(Revelation 18:1) “And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.”

John saw a great, mighty angel come down from heaven, whose glory lightened the earth. These mighty spirits, who were created by God to be ministering spirits to those chosen and ordained of God to be the heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14). But these mighty angels are also the instruments by which God executes His judgment upon His enemies. Those holy beings who, by divine direction, have protected God's Church from their enemies in every age shall destroy our enemies in the end.

This mighty angel announced the fall of Babylon as if it had already occurred (vv. 2-3).

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(Revelation 18:2-3) “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. 3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.”

This is just exactly what Habakkuk said would happen. “*Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, [he is] a proud man, neither keepeth at 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:*” (Habakkuk 2:5). — “*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 stone shall cry out of the wall,*

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and the beam out of the timber shall answer it”
(Habakkuk 2:9-11).

So sure and certain is God’s judgment upon Babylon that it is recorded as a past event. **Notice how the angel describes Babylon. It is not a literal city, but a religious system that encompasses and includes everything opposed to God.** It is the habitation of devils, the home of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hated bird! **Babylon is the idolatrous religion of the world** (Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 50:2).

(Isaiah 21:9) “And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, [with] a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.”

(Jeremiah 50:2) “Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, [and] conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her

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idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.”

The gods of Babylon are the dung-gods of freewillism and works salvation. The dung of Babylon's religious solemnities has smeared and defiled the whole earth. Had it not been for the Lord's free, preserving grace, we all would have been swallowed up in Babylon. But God would not allow us to have our way (Jeremiah 51:7-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-13).

(Jeremiah 51:7-10) “Babylon [hath been] a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. 8 Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. 9 We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up [even] to the skies. 10 The LORD hath brought forth our

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righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:10-13) “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 13 ¶ But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

Yet, even Babylon serves the purposes of God. Though the heresies of false religion are hatched in hell and set in opposition to the throne of God, they are under the rule of God and serve only to accomplish His purpose of grace toward His elect (1 Corinthians 11:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:3).

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

(2 Thessalonians 2:3) “Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”

By the spreading fame and popularity of free-will religion, God's elect are proved. Though all the world goes after Babylon, God's own will not fall for her lies. When Babylon has served her purpose, she shall be brought to utter destruction. By what means God will publicly destroy false religion, we are not told. But these things are plainly revealed:

- **Babylon will fall suddenly.**
- **Her destruction will come from within.** — “*And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17 For God hath put in their*

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hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.” (Revelation 17:16-17)

- **And God's judgment upon Babylon is just and well deserved.** — *“For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.”* (Revelation 18:3)

When the world's religious system is destroyed, the whole earth shall be thrown into chaos and confusion, because it is the religion of the world that governs the economics, philosophy, and politics of the world. When Babylon falls, everything falls.

COME OUT OF HER

In verse 4, John records an admonition from the mouth of Christ Himself. This is a call which the Lord our God repeatedly issues to his Church in all ages. It is an urgent call to separation, *“Come out of*

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her, my people!” (Read Isaiah 48:20; 52:11; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:54; Zechariah 2:7.)

(Revelation 18:4) “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

(Isaiah 48:20) “Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it [even] to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.”

(Isaiah 52:11) “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean [thing]; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.” — (**Compare 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1**)

(Jeremiah 50:8) “Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.”

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(Jeremiah 51:54) “A sound of a cry [cometh] from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans.”

(Zechariah 2:7) “Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest [with] the daughter of Babylon.”

The Lord does not say, “Stay in Babylon and heal her.” He does not say, “Find a way to get along with Babylon.” He does not say, “Love Babylon, pray for Babylon, and try to help Babylon.” God says, “*Come out of her, my people!*” (Jeremiah 51:7-10). And all of God’s people will deliberately come out of Babylon (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).

(Jeremiah 51:7-10) “Babylon [hath been] a golden cup in the LORD’S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. 8 **Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed:** howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. 9 We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: **forsake her,** and

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let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up [even] to the skies. 10 **The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.**”

(2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1) “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 **Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you,** 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 7:1 ¶ Having therefore these

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promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

To remain a part of any church or denomination that denies the Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ is to line up with the Lord's enemies and court eternal damnation. To come out of her is to have no fellowship with her, give no support to her, offer no hope to her, and publicly repudiate her doctrines and practices by identifying with Christ, His Gospel and His Church.

4. A SOLEMN WARNING

Next Revelation 18:5-8 issues a solemn warning to those who set themselves against Christ, His Church, and the Gospel of His grace. **The God of heaven is a God who can, must and will punish sin. Here the Lord Himself tells us five things about Divine judgment.**

1. **God remembers all the iniquities of His enemies.** He has forgotten the sins of His people,

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because they are thoroughly removed by the blood of Christ. But He will never forget any iniquity of His enemies (Revelation 18:5).

(Revelation 18:5) “For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”

2. God will punish sinners exactly in proportion to the evil they have done, according to strict justice (Revelation 18:6-7).

(Revelation 18:6-7) “Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. 7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.”

There are no degrees of reward in heaven. But there are degrees of punishment. And the hottest fires of hell's lowest pit are reserved for those who despise

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the free grace of God and trample under foot the precious blood of Christ revealed in the Gospel (Matthew 11:20-24).

3. **Divine judgment comes suddenly, swiftly, without warning.** (Revelation 18:8).

(Revelation 18:8) “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong [is] the Lord God who judgeth her.”
(Revelation 18:8)

4. **It is thorough, complete, without mercy.** — “*She shall be utterly burned with fire*” (Revelation 18:8).

5. And (5.) **God is both willing and able to punish sin,** “*for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her*” (Revelation 18:8).

5. A THREEFOLD LAMENTATION

Revelation 18:9-19 describes a threefold lamentation for Babylon. The kings of the earth, the merchantmen

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of the earth, and the seamen of the earth, when they see Babylon fall by the hand of God, shall all wail because of her fall.

The kings, the mighty men of power and influence, in the earth wail for Babylon
(Revelation 18:9-10).

(Revelation 18:9-10) “And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, 10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.”

They have laid in the bed of this great harlot for so long that they have come to love her and depend upon her. By yielding to her influence, honoring her name, and defending her, they have made themselves rich and powerful. Slick politicians (conservative and liberal) have always used religion to promote

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themselves. But when these mighty men see their whole religious foundation in ruins, they wail for her.

Then the merchants of the earth wail for her
(Revelation 18:11-16).

(Revelation 18:11-16) “And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: 12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. 14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her

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torment, weeping and wailing, 16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!”

These merchants represent something more than businessmen. They represent all men and women who set their hearts on the wares and luxuries of this world. When everything they cherish crumbles before them, or becomes worthless in their eyes, they wail in agony (Luke 12:16-21).

(Luke 12:16-21) “And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, [and] be merry. 20 But God said unto him, [Thou] fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then

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whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So [is] he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Without question there is a direct reference here to false prophets, preachers who for covetousness make merchandise of men’s bodies and souls, bringing them into the slavery of the world’s religion to enrich themselves (cf. v. 13 and 2 Peter 2:1-3).

(2 Peter 2:1-3) “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 ¶ And **through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you**: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

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The third lamentation comes from the mouths and hearts of seamen (Revelation 18:17-19).

(Revelation 18:17-19) “For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What [city is] like unto this great city! 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.”

Like the kings and merchants, the seamen have spent their lives seeking the wealth, power, luxury, and pleasure of the world. But when God brings everything to ruins, when men see all their hopes and desires utterly destroyed, they weep like babies in torment, with broken hearts. **The destruction of Babylon is the destruction of the world, its religious, economic, political, and philosophical foundations.** When the unbeliever sees everything he

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has lived for, worked for, and trusted in completely destroyed, he is utterly devastated. Let all be warned. Lay not up treasures upon the earth (Matthew 6:19-21). The fashion, the outward appearance, and the glamour of this world is perishing (1 Corinthians 7:31). Make provision for your immortal soul (Mark 8:36-37).

6. A CAUSE FOR GREAT JOY

But Revelation 18:20-24 tells us that this destruction of Babylon is a cause for great joy in the anticipation of it and shall be a cause for great joy in the final accomplishment of it.

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

Again, this is exactly what Habakkuk prophesied (Habakkuk 2:8).

(Habakkuk 2:8) “Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall

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spoil thee; because of men's blood, and [for] the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein."

Babylon's fall and the world's destruction is God's just retribution poured out upon those who have despised and persecuted His elect throughout history. Therefore, all of God's elect are called upon to rejoice over her.

The final destruction of Babylon will be total, climatic, and irreversible (Revelation 18:21-22).

(Revelation 18:21-22) "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast [it] into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft [he be], shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee."

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A mighty angel appears to execute God's judgment upon Babylon. He picks up a huge millstone. With one mighty, angry thrust, he hurls it into the sea and says, "This is what shall become of Babylon. It shall be hurled into the sea of God's wrath forever, never to be retrieved. This wicked world, particularly, this religious world system, with its leaders and its followers, as the center of seduction, shall perish forever." — **Notice the symbolism that is used to express thorough destruction.**

- All false religious comfort and hope, Babylon, will be gone!
- All joy, symbolized by music, will be gone!
- All skill, art, talent, craftsmanship, self-satisfaction will be gone!
- All food, symbolized by the mill, will be gone!
- All light shall be gone!
- All relationships of love and unity will be gone!

This destruction of Babylon is a matter of strict justice (Revelation 18:23-24).

(Revelation 18:23-24) "And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice

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of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.”

Babylon's merchants are the men received and made great by the earth, both worldly and religious leaders! By her sorceries, the world has been deceived (Galatians 3:1). Babylon, primarily false religion, has upon her hands the blood of all God's saints and prophets (Luke 11:47-51).

The destruction of Babylon will be a cause for great joy (Revelation 18:20).

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

But why are God's saints called upon to rejoice when the wicked are damned? This joy is not at all a vindictive joy over the torments of personal enemies.

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It is a righteous agreement with God. It is God's saints taking sides with God, vindicating Him in His justice, and saying, "Amen," to all that He does, because of their hearts' agreement with Him (Psa. 139:21-22). God's saints will rejoice when God's enemies are destroyed, because God's name and honor will then be vindicated.

7. LESSONS

What are we to learn from Habakkuk's prophecy and John's vision? There are many, many things taught in the picture before us. But I want to give you just five things to remember for the comfort and strength of your soul.

- 1. The Lord our God is sovereign over all things.**
He is in control. He is performing His will.
- 2. Popularity is no indication of the will of God or the truth of God.** If you would follow Christ, you must be prepared to swim against the tide, always be in the minority, and always face bitter opposition from the world.

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3. **God's elect are secure at all times, being kept by the power of His grace** (Romans 8:28-39).

4. **The religion of this world will prove to be empty, frustrating, and loathsome in the end.** Those who revel in it today will despise it at the last. But it will be too late! There will be nothing but hatred in that day, when the lost mother meets her lost son, the lost wife meets her lost husband, and the lost preacher meets his lost hearers in hell! In eternity, all who have served Babylon shall despise her and shall themselves be despised.

5. **The knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall yet fill the earth** (Habakkuk 2:14). — He has sworn, “*As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD*” (Numbers 14:21).

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

(Habakkuk 2:20) “But the LORD [is] in his holy

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temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.”

Amen.