

HABAKKUK CHAPTER 2(b)

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scripture might have hope. (Romans 15:4).

Yea, he takes occasion from hence to inform us of the general use of the Scriptures, that whatsoever is written, in this or any other place, is written for our learning and instruction; we are concerned not only by all the precepts, but in all the promises, Hebrews 13:5, menaces, Acts 13:40,41, rewards, Romans 4:24, and punishments, 1 Corinthians 10:11, therein mentioned and declared: and though this passage is more especially to be understood of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, yet it is true also of the Scriptures of the New Testament; they, being written by the same Spirit, are profitable for the same ends: see 2 Timothy 3:16. (Poole)

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

1

Be reminded: Beginning at verse 6 of Chapter 2, we are treated to a “parable” and “taunting proverb” of the cruel invaders, which takes us to the end of this chapter.

Just by their existence, all things have a voice. Here, stone and timber have voices. **The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handywork.** (Psalm 19:1). Think about that. You spend some time examining the vast and endless heavens and you experience a declaration of what God’s glory is like. You consider the universe in all its splendor, and you witness the results of God’s work efforts. **The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.** (Psalm

65:13). You heard that right; pastures and valleys shout and sing! And speechless things, such as stones, can cry out. **And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.** (Luke 19:40).

Here we have stone walls and wood beams talking to us. The meaning probably is that great buildings and structures built by these invaders are screaming to the world of their rapine, their violent and murderous seizure of property belonging to others.

Here the stones of the wall, whereby the building is raised, and the beam, the tye-beam, out of the timber-work wherewith it is finished, and which, as it were, crowns the work, join, as in a chorus, answering one another, and in a deep solemn wailing, before God and the whole world, together chant "Woe, Woe." (Barnes)

12 Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!

2

God disapproves of those mighty conquerors that ravage the world. Though he makes use of them for the wise purposes of his providence in chastising or punishing the wicked, yet they are hateful in his sight, and in the very midst of their triumphs he is preparing the sword to cut them off.

This town/city (America) of which we read *was built through cruelty to conquered nations, and especially God's people, and by oppression, against His holy Will. So there was an inward rottenness and decay in what seemed strong and majestic, and which imposed on the outward eye; it would not stand, but fell.* (Barnes)

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?

By God's appointment, the end of all their labor is for the fire. They have toiled to build ceiled palaces and gorgeous buildings, only for the fire to consume them.

A similar prophecy is found at Jeremiah 51:58: Thus saith the Lord of hosts; the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.

The news is filled with accounts of large sections of cities burning, long-established businesses being destroyed while law enforcement stands helplessly by as the criminal (the lying media calls them "protestors") rampages in the streets. The business owners are too weary to rebuild. And what if they do rebuild? Here comes another riot and fire event. Years of hard work gone. What is their reward? Emptiness! It's all food for the fire.

And, if you credit Revelation 17:16, more is coming: **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.**

14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Now this we long to see. Stop to think about it, perhaps we have seen a foretaste of it. The preaching of this small church, by all rights utterly

insignificant when compared to the world's population, has reached all parts of the globe. This cannot be denied. You cannot name a continent where WBC preaching has not been heard. Just try! At times, it seems to me our preaching is better known in other countries than it is here in America. This is the Lord's handiwork. We continue to be amazed.

The same promise posited here is found in Isaiah 11:9: **They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.**

Of course, all of this applies primarily to what was happening on the ground in those days, but it just as surely applies today, and we are to expect that bigger things are coming. Waters covering the sea suggests a saturation and permeation of the Lord's word, all over the earth. After all, the text says the **earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.** *Every eye shall see, or ear hear, or tongue speak what they know.* [Poole].

15 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!

Whatever else one might say about this verse, it presents a strong condemnation of excessive drinking and making one another drunk.

A severe woe is pronounced against drunkenness; it is very fearful against all who are guilty of drunkenness at any time, and in any place, from the stately palace to the paltry ale-house. To give one drink who is in want, who is thirsty and poor, or a weary traveller, or ready to perish, is charity; but to give a neighbour drink, that he may

expose himself, may disclose secret concerns, or be drawn into a bad bargain, or for any such purpose, this is wickedness. [Henry].

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.

The primary subject of this verse is shame. Shame, shame, shame! The idea here is that these people have feasted themselves on shame. They can't get enough of it! They spend all their time consuming that which is shameful, other than that which is decorous and honorable.

When a nation or a people make increased wealth, social status and human governmental power their glory, expect ultimate shame. As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame. (Hosea 4:7).

5

This concept is not limited to Old Testament times; it's true in all situations, places and eras. Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. (Philippians 3:19).

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.

This violence of Lebanon may be a reference to the coming temple destruction, because it was built, in great measure, with the cedars of Lebanon. So, Gill writes: *Lebanon was a mountain on the borders on the land of Israel, from whence cedar wood was brought, of which the temple was built, and for that reason is sometimes so called, as in Zechariah 11:1 and so the Targum and Jarchi*

interpret it. For your convenience and immediate reference, here is what Zechariah 11:1 says: **Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.** For more context, also hear Zechariah 11:2: **Howl, fir tree, for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down.**

Concerning the spoil of beasts, Benson says: *As thou hast spoiled other, without any sense of common humanity, so the army of the conqueror shall deal by thee, and shall tear thee in pieces as wild beasts do their prey.*

18 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?

The sin that the prophet takes notice of here, for which God will execute his judgments, is idolatry. But what he says here is not confined to the idols of that day; it is equally applicable to idols in general. What will these goofy idols avail their worshippers in the day of danger and when the Lord arises to take vengeance?

Nor is Habakkuk the only prophet of old who addressed idolatry. Consider these samples: **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 idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.** (Jeremiah 50:2). When God's people publish, idolatry is a fair topic. Here's another applicable verse: **Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her.** (Jeremiah 51:47).

Back to the text, it tells us these molten images carry the lie that God is like the work of men's hands. Moreover, it is unreasonable and foolish to trust in any god that man makes with his own hands. Such gods, made usually out of wood, stone or metal, can neither hear nor answer prayers; they are dumb idols, that is to say they lack the power of speech, they are unable to form thoughts from which talking would flow and they are silent! In short, these little gods are unable to answer any questions or inquiries, nor give direction in a strait. What a pathetic deity.

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.

This verse continues on the topic of idolatry. It declares a woe to those who call on wooden images or place hope in stone crafted into a semblance of perceived godhead. These condemned sinners addressed here are talking to wood and stone, hoping for light and direction. How silly for any human to be relying on anything that has no breath or truth. Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. (Jeremiah 10:14; repeated almost verbatim at Jeremiah 51:17).

We are daily astonished at what we see around us, people literally worshiping statues, groves, trees, nature, pictures, pane glass window drawings, and the like. But the Psalmist told us it would be so at Psalm 115:2-11: Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's

hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.

Trying to improve on that would only dilute it, so I leave you with those powerful words on idolatry and those that participate in it.

20 But the LORD *is* in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

Now while all this false idol worship permeates the world, the true World-Ruler abides and his presence is in his temple. To this Almighty Potentate Habakkuk's eyes are now turned. He ceases his castigations of the invaders and finds solace in contemplating the Almighty Creator, of whom much of the third chapter of this book is concerned.

The "but" in this verse is to contrast Jehovah, the true God, with these dead idols just mentioned. That God lives in the heavens from whence he beholds and governs all things, and is the fountain of being, life, power and salvation to his people. **The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.** (Psalm 11:4).

The earth will stand in awe of that God. **Keep silence!** That expression *is taken from the reverent behavior which young persons, servants and others are wont to manifest by keeping silence in the presence of their superiors. Or, it alludes to*

such a silence as is kept in courts of justice, when a judge pronounces the sentence. (Benson). Silence is a wonderful thing. Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further. (Job 40:4, 5). Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. (Zephaniah 1:7). Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation. (Zechariah 2:13). These blabbering so-called religious leaders we live amongst just don't know when to shut the heck up. Zip it! Just zip it!

Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen. (Colossians 4:18).