

September 27, 2026 - Habakkuk 2:12-14 "Lesson 3: Your Glory will Burn"

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[0:00] Please turn with me to Habakkuk 2. We'll be reading from verse 12 to 14. Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity.

Behold, it is not from the Lord of hosts that peoples labor merely for fire, and nations weary themselves for nothing. For the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

This is God's word. Thanks be to God. Praise the Lord. It's always a joy to get the acoustics in this building working as they were built to with the singing. Amen to that.

I think the cops are on their way from that second song that we sang. Quiet those Christians down. But it's a joy to be singing with you.

What's that? We shall not be silent. That's a sermon for another day. But I want to begin this morning, actually, with some revered words.

[1:26] Revered words from one of the great cultural thinkers of my generation. Let me quote him. Look what I can do.

For those of you who remember MADtv. Yeah. That was Stuart.

All right. I'd like to call a volunteer to come do the Stuart kick. No, I'm just kidding. I don't want us to get too distracted here. But for those of you who don't know who Stuart is and wondering what we're laughing at, you need to picture a fully grown man with rosy cheeks and this odd attachment to his mother, carrying himself like a child.

And he never graduated from childhood, whether emotionally or actually visually, with his diaper. And he's constantly demanding everyone stop and to watch him, to look at what he's doing, which is literally every time something utterly unimpressive.

Just look at him. Look what I can do. Go ahead and look that up when you get home. For any parents, you have a lot of stewards probably in your house.

[2:59] You eventually enter into parenthood as the Lord wills, and you realize that that comedy character from MADtv seemed more like a documentary that God has for you.

As your kids call you out to watch me. And dad, watch me jump. Oh, great. Wonderful. You know, mom, watch me do this.

Watch me ride my bike. Look what I made. You see, there's something almost instinctive in all of us that is captured in Stuart, that we observe in our children, that something instinctive within us has a desire to be seen.

And I am not sure that any of us have ever truly grown out of it. I actually think that maybe we have adopted a more sophisticated way of how we say it.

Think about this. We build careers. We've been talking about that over the past couple weeks with these woes in Habakkuk. We build careers.

[4:22] We collect accomplishments. We cultivate our reputations. We want successful families. We want successful fruitful ministries.

We want successful lives. And somewhere along the way, doing something meaningful can subtly become needing other people to recognize what we did.

And it is subtle, I think, in a lot of us. But it's an instinctive way, I think, within every human heart that we have to battle with.

And that's sort of along the trajectory of where this third woe takes us today. In that instinctive nature within all of us to look at us.

Look what we did. Looking at Babylon, Babylon doesn't merely want more stuff. We saw that in the first woe. They don't merely want security that we saw in the second woe last week.

[5 : 32] But today we see Babylon wants glory. They want glory in this third woe. In other words, it wants the world to look at everything that Babylon has accomplished and conclude.

Look at Babylon. I don't know if they do the little leg kick or not. But look what they can do. How impressive. But unbeknownst to Babylon, God is about to tell them whose glory the world will actually know.

And how their glory will end. What I want us to understand is this simple point. By the end of our times, we unpack this.

Is to spend your life for the glory that will last. Spend your life for the glory that will last. And I'm going to break this up into three separate sections.

And the sermon title, I'm kind of going with these lessons as we've been developing. And this lesson that we have today is your glory will burn.

[6 : 46] I know it's quite a jarring statement. I knew Carmen would like it. Carmen's the executive pastor here looking nice and dapper today.

But yeah, thanks. We always say that Carmen is the, he says he's the Timu version. But I think he's the original and I'm the Timu version. Because he always looks more well shaven.

And I'm just kind of like a bird that just got out of a nest. But at least in my mind. Your glory will burn. Let's look at this third lesson that we have. But before we break this up into three separate sections, I want us to pray. Because there's a serious lesson that I think that we can learn from Babylon's failings.

In trying to see, have all the world look upon them and see their glory. And let's really focus in on submitting ourselves to God's word this morning.

[7 : 49] Let's pray. Father, we praise you for the singing. Lord, I just pray that every heart that sung those words today, all glory be to Christ, isn't just lip service to what we're supposed to be doing.

But that it is something that our lives are overflowing in actually doing. Help us, Lord, to see Babylon today and also to see ourselves.

Help us to be corrected where correction needs to be. And help us to be encouraged where encouragement needs to be. We pray that you do this by the power of your Holy Spirit working in all of our hearts and mine as well.

Praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Spend your life for the glory that will last. Let's see this. The first section, we see this.

Human glory is built with blood. And we see this specifically in verse 12. Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity.

[8 : 58] And I'm not sure if you caught the difference between the second woe and the woe today. If you were here last week or on the live stream, there's quite an expansion that happens.

The imagery expands once again here. In the previous woe, we were looking at just a house. Babylon was building their house. And now, we're looking at an entire city.

It's like the landscape has opened up and not just one house, but many houses that are being built. This is full of houses. And the scale has grown because Babylon's ambition has grown.

Woe to expose Babylon's desire to become secure. And we saw them as they're building their house in that house language from verse 9 through 11.

And now, woe 3 exposes Babylon's desire to become significant. Think in the terms of empire language.

[10 : 03] Think of the terms of reputation. Look at Babylon the great. It's taking the words of Nebuchadnezzar from Daniel chapter 4 where he says, There it is.

For the glory of human majesty. That is verse 12 with the heart exposed because Babylon wants an audience.

Babylon wants recognition. Babylon wants significance. Pride does not merely want to possess things. It wants to possess things.

Pride in our lives and our hearts want to possess things. But eventually, pride wants to be recognized for those things. Verse 12 tells us what sits underneath of all that prideful glory with blood on iniquity.

Babylon's greatness came at somebody else's expense. People became material for Babylon's agenda.

[11:34] That agenda being their glory. The pursuit of glory becomes dangerous, doesn't it? When people become props. Props in the story that we're telling about ourselves.

I mean, it's sad to know pastors who essentially look at ministry in these ways where the congregation they serve, they start out from maybe a youth pastor.

We'll just start it there. And then they become a lead pastor. But the church is smaller just to get a little bit of resume built. And essentially, they're using that congregation to build their resume to get a quote-unquote bigger church.

And then after they're done exhausting the resources and the people at that bigger church, they might go on to maybe a multi-campus church. It is pathetic.

And really, really sad. How even pastors miss that mark. I mean, that's God's people. Like, think about Babylon. Wasn't just the only ones with that problem.

[12:45] Pastors today, Babylon, but even the nation of Israel, Judah even, rather. Micah condemns Judah's own leaders in Micah 3.10. The leaders who built Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity.

You're starting to see this common thread of the human heart, don't you? And we ought to see the consistency of God's judgment. This isn't just a problem with those people out there who don't love the God of the Bible.

But it hits home with each one of us in our own hearts here today. Like, our church, our version can look remarkably innocent as, like, you know, social media has given us, like, this unusual ability to put our lives on display.

And there is nothing inherently sinful about, you know, sharing your children, you know, doing funny things or an accomplishment, your Bible reading or sharing your vacation plans and something that you're thankful for.

I think that's the social part of social media, right? But the heart issue begins when people, when the people and the gifts God has given to all of us, the families that we've been given, the talents we've been given, sort of become evidence of our greatness.

[14:15] Right? Like, practically speaking, a child's accomplishments becomes proof that you're a successful parent. Right?

A ministry success becomes proof that you're an important pastor, and whatever that means. Or even spiritual disciplines can become part of an image that says, look how serious I am before God. And so, the question isn't merely, like, legalistic, like, should we post these things? Or post this or that? The deeper question is, am I loving these people and receiving these gifts from God?

Or is this maybe starting to be a warning sign that I'm beginning to use them to build a version of myself that I really like people to admire?

It's a heart question. It's a heart evaluation. Because pride can turn good gifts into advertisements for our own glory.

[15:15] Isn't that so true? I wrestled with that. That gets painfully close to Babylon here. The city said, look at us. And although our monuments may look a little bit different, we're not building cities on blood.

Right? But the heart can still whisper, even in our day, and even in our hearts, even when we go home this week, look at me. And this is where the pursuit of glory becomes really dangerous.

Because people that we're called to love slowly become props. The children we raise can sometimes become props in a story that we want others to believe about us.

Why? Because human glory has a terrible habit of making other people serve our name. And in verse 13, God tells us what ultimately becomes of this exhausting pursuit.

And we see in the second section, and I was torn between combining 13 and 14. So just kind of like roll with this.

[16:37] There's still a second part of the story. We see human glory exhausts and empties. And we see the nature of glory and the end of glory. It says, behold.

Like, literally, look. Pay attention. Stop staring at Babylon now. We're done with Babylon. Behold. Turn your attention for a moment.

And I need you to look higher, God says in this verse. Because now for the first time in all of these woes, the divine name enters explicitly.

The Lord of hosts. Yahweh. You see all those uppercase letters, Lord. That means Yahweh. Like, Babylon commands armies.

Well, Yahweh is Lord of hosts. Babylon, behold. Babylon appears to be directing the nations, building their empire.

[17 : 38] Well, Yahweh directs history. You should see the weight of that one word, behold. It should get a hold of your attention to look away from Babylon and the greatness that they perceivably are building and look upon something else.

Yes, Babylon may possess extraordinary power here for a season, but then God gives his verdicts on all the exhausting labor.

People's labor merely for fire. And the Lord goes on to say, and nations weary themselves for nothing.

I mean, that's devastating to any project manager within any industry. You're saying all this work for nothing? Hmm.

The labor, the planning, the administration, the military campaigns, all the lives, all the years, all the human strength.

[18 : 47] And God looks at glory accumulated for Babylon, and he says, all is just fire. All will end in nothing.

We learned something theologically true about human glory. Human glory is combustible. If only we could understand that.

It would save us a whole lot of trouble. And that's the tragedy of living for recognition, even if you get it. Like, people may know your name. You may reach for positions, receive the applause, and actually become someone important.

And how sad it would be to spend your life gaining something that God has no intention of preserving. What a waste of a life.

Church, I think about how exhausting the pursuit of recognition can become. Like, being so concerned about what other people think about you.

[19 : 59] Always comparing yourself to others. Proving yourself. Feeling the need of checking to see who's noticed things in your life.

Needing affirmation. Wondering whether somebody else is maybe doing it better than you, and you need to step your game up. Or afraid of just becoming irrelevant.

I've got to ask you. Whose praise are you exhausted from chasing? Some of us are exhausted because we have just made other people's approval feel like oxygen.

We depend on other people's approval over our lives and the choices and the name, our recognition, and all this stuff. We depend on it. Whether you want to admit it or not, you know your heart.

You depend on it like oxygen. Verse 13 reminds us that we can receive the applause and still have God call that pursuit nothing.

[21 : 03] Isn't that crazy? In other words, you could spend your whole life becoming impressive and still miss what your life was for. Why will Babylon's glory become fire?

You might ask. Well, why will the labor ultimately prove empty? Well, because God has already announced that, announced what glory will fill the world.

And that's where that second part of that coin starts here in verse 14. 14. And we see this third section. It starts with four. A conjunction.

God's glory will be known. For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Human glory ends in fire because there is only one glory that intends to fill creation.

That's the reality of history. And I think something deeper is happening here that runs throughout Scripture because fire and glory repeatedly meet in the holiness of God.

[22 : 21] I want to take a trip over to Exodus 24. You don't have to turn there. I'm going to summarize it well. Just notate it. Check my theology later. But at least stay on track with where I'm going with this.

And I want you to see this. I don't just want this to be something that I'm just conjuring up. I want you to see it. Exodus 24, 17. Moses describes God's glory like fire.

This is Mount Sinai. The appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire. God's glory is like fire.

Then in Deuteronomy chapter 4, 24, the same holy presence that is radiant in glory is terrifying to everything exposed to him.

Where Deuteronomy 4 says, the Lord your God is a consuming fire. A jealous God. And even considering the context, the verses around in Deuteronomy chapter 4, the issue was idolatry. [23:24] That Israel was concerned about themselves. And the Lord says, the Lord your God is a consuming fire. A jealous God.

Giving God's glory to something else or trying to worship something created rather than the creator. That's idolatry. And you see the same holy God whose presence radiates in glory is also terrifying in everything that is set against himself.

God's glory consumes everything. Consumes everything that rivals his glory. Doesn't that theologically enrich this third woe?

To see that threaded through scripture of God's holiness. Piecing together with fire and glory. Babylon says our glory, but God says fire. It's the story of scripture. And then God says, my glory will fill the earth.

[24:38] I can't talk about the holiness of God without quoting R.C. Sproul. He says, glory is the manifestation of his holiness. It is his significance being displayed.

This means, church, when holiness encounters evil. When evil can't just stand before it and be okay and endure and last.

No. Sproul elsewhere describes the Lord as holy, high, and lifted up. Lord is a consuming fire. It's what it means to understand the holiness of God. And what I want us to do, church, is not mistakenly separate verse 13 and 14.

I don't want you to separate the fire that burns and destroys our glory from the glory of verse 14 as their unrelated ideas because they are not according to scripture.

[25:41] The holy God who consumes rival glory is the God whose own glory radiates throughout creation.

In fact, this story is woven through scripture at Sinai. Going back there, the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire. God's glory is magnificent.

But before sinful humanity, it may be magnificent, but it is also terrifying. It's a terrifying reality.

Looking forward into Numbers 14, in the middle of Israel's rebellion, God swears that all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

Meaning that human rebellion will not derail God's purpose. And Isaiah, it seems like Isaiah brings these ideas together. The angels cry out, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

And immediately declares the whole earth is full of his glory. His glory is his holiness on display.

[26:53] Then Isaiah promises that under another coming Davidic king, from the stump of Jesse, the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

I just quoted a lot of Old Testament passage, but see what I'm doing here. For the, look in verse 14 of chapter 2 here. For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

Here in Habakkuk, the Lord unites all of the great promises of Scripture together. He takes, literally, the Lord is quoting from Numbers, if you want to say that.

Where the earth is filled with the glory of Yahweh. And the Lord's also saying, okay, I'm going to take Numbers, I'm going to take Isaiah. He's saying the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Yahweh.

So, not only glory, but also knowledge. And now here he brings all of these two intact. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh.

[28:06] You might say, how comprehensive will this be? Hey, this sounds magnificent. And I think the emphasis is, as the water covers the sea.

You see the image? It's a beautiful image. Have you ever tried to find a section of the ocean that the ocean missed? You can keep looking.

You can keep looking, but you can't. You can't find anything that it's missed. And that's the emphasis here. It's the point.

There is coming. A day when God's glory will be universally known. And Isaiah connected that day with the coming son of Jesse.

The one who came as John wrote in John 1.14. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory.

[29:11] Paul would say in 2 Corinthians 4.6 that we see the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

This language should make Habakkuk ring in our ears. As Paul says, that glory shines in the face of Jesus.

Church, where do we behold the glory of the Holy God most clearly? Where do you behold that glory?

I'd say in Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ. And what he did for us upon the cross. In Calvary. Where God's holiness does not simply overlook sin.

And I think Calvary means everything but that God does not overlook sin. I think Calvary points that sin is taken too lightly in our world.

[30:16] Because the bloodstained cross testifies to the severity. The terrifying nature of God's holiness. He doesn't overlook sin.

Sin is judged. And Jesus Christ bore the punishment due to his people. And through faith, sinners are clothed now in not our own righteousness of our own works.

They're filthy rags. But in the righteousness of Christ. And we're not only that. Not only clothed in righteousness. But the Christian is brought near to this holy, all-consuming, fire God.

And maybe you're not in Christ today. But you need to understand something about the trajectory of your life.

You can't stand before this holy God on the strength of your name. You can't stand before this holy God on your achievements. Or your reputation.

[31:21] Or anything related to your righteousness. Those things cannot survive God's holiness. And so our only hope is to have faith in Jesus Christ.

And so the invitation for any unbeliever today. There's no shame in that. Just admit where you're at. Receive that invitation today.

Turn from building your own name and trust the one whose name alone can save you. And church, remember the picture at the end of the Bible.

John writes it in Revelation. Revelation 21 gives us another city. Babylon's building their city. It seems massive and great, but all is going to be firewilled.

Well, John has given us a picture in Revelation 21 of another city. Well, Babylon had its city built with human greatness and a city that said, look what we can do.

[32:27] John sees the city and essentially says, this city has no need of a sun. This city has no need of a moon to shine on it.

For the glory of God gives its light and the lamp is the Lamb of God. That's where all of this is going. If only we would remember that in all of our strivings, as we fall for the lie of the world to lift up our name, if only we could remember to lift the name of Jesus Christ along the path.

That's where we're going. So what are we doing with it today? So I got to ask you, whose glory are you living to make known? Whose glory are you living to make known?

The goal is that through every aspect of our lives, that people would see more of Jesus Christ. that they would look at Carmen and see more of Jesus Christ.

[33:32] Look at Duffy and see more of Jesus Christ. And Micah, see more of Jesus Christ. Spend your life for the glory that will truly last.

And may his glory shine brighter than our need to be noticed. Brighter than our need to be admired. Brighter than our need to make a name for ourselves. And whenever that old voice rises up of, Stuart kicking his leg of, look what I can do.

And that instinct comes back and that old voice comes. May our answer only be, look what Jesus Christ has done. Because human glory burns, church.

But the glory of Jesus will light his people forever. Now, and in Revelation 21 in that beautiful picture. Let's remember that.

[34:32] Let's pray. Let's pray.