

Beware of Covetousness **Lesson 7**

Habakkuk 2:9-14

Introduction:

As the Prophet Habakkuk stood on his watchtower, he saw the hordes of Babylonian soldiers, like hungry animals, sweeping down upon the helpless people of Judah.

Would anything stop them? Would their sins ever be judged? God would one day judge Babylon for her sins, just as one day He will judge all people and all nations that rebel against Him.

In Habakkuk 2:4,5 we looked at the basis, the fundamental cause, of their sin—their _____.

They had gone from victory to victory. They were the great nation of Babylon! Their pride led to selfish ambition (vv. 6-8).

That is the first of five woes in Habakkuk 2. God pronounced woe upon them because of their selfish ambition, for taking that which did not belong to them and using it for their own selfish purposes.

In verses 9-11 He pronounced woe upon their covetousness, and then in verses 12-14 He pronounced woe upon their exploitation of people.

I. Woe Upon Covetousness

Habakkuk 2:9-11

What is covetousness? Covetousness is the desire for _____.
_____ is the last of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:17).

Because people are covetous, they will be idolators.

Because people are covetous, they will blaspheme the name of God.

A. Building an Estate

The picture here is of a very successful man building his estate. He covets more land and more houses. The word "house" in verses 9 and 10 may refer to the physical structure. It also may refer to the _____.

The Babylonians were going to be the greatest nation on the face of the earth. What did they do? They got their real estate by stealing it from others, by force and by murder. Babylon was taking land that did not belong to her.

In verse 8 we discover that the Babylonians were taking land by blood and by violence. They were capturing cities and forcing the people in the cities to become their _____.

So this is a picture of a man building his _____. He wants to add more property. People want security. They want to know that their money is secure in the bank.

B. Building a Nest High

Babylon wanted to "set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the _____ of evil!" (Hab. 2:9).

Daniel pictured the Babylonian empire as a lion with wings. The Babylonian said, "I'm going to set my nest on high. I'm going to be like the eagle. I'm going to get where nobody can touch me. I am going to be safe and secure."

Obadiah 1:4 says, "Though thou exalt thyself like the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, from there will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." So Babylon sat very secure, but then along came the _____ and _____ and defeated them.

Actually, there is no security in covetousness because the covetous person always needs a _____. His problem is not security, his problem is _____. Covetousness is born of _____ and insecurity.

What's so dangerous about covetousness? Well, it makes us treat people like _____. Covetousness gives us a false sense of _____. We begin to think that we don't need God anymore.

Turn in your Bible to James 5:1-4:

In other words, the money the employers should have given in wages they kept. But..... that very money witnesses against them. All the gold and silver they have collected witnesses against them, and they cannot enjoy it. Covetousness is a terrible sin.

II. Woe Upon Exploitation

Habakkuk 2:12-14 deals with another sin: exploitation of the people. "Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood [bloodshed], and establisheth a city by iniquity [crime]!" The sin here is forced labor. The Babylonians would capture people and make slaves out of them.

The Egyptians did the same thing with the Jews. You have no idea how much blood went into the building of those great projects of Babylon!

Habakkuk 2:13

"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?"

You exploit somebody when you take more than you _____, when you treat people like _____.

Babylon had great building projects, but they were built on _____. To them things were more important than people.

That's an interesting statement. What's going to happen to all of these things? They'll be _____ up.

Many people are being exploited so that a few people might be able to get what they _____.

Habakkuk 2:14--*"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."* God says that one day there will be glory. See Numbers 14:21; Isaiah 6:3; Psalms 72:19.

Whatever you do for the glory of God is going to last. Whatever you do in obedience to the will of God is going to last. People are not going to fill the earth with their glory. God is going to fill the earth with His glory.

And yet..... we do not see much glory in the world today. Do you know why?

Man's glory is so temporary, but God's glory is eternal. The promise is given to us that *"the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"* (Hab. 2:14).

When will this happen?

This will happen when our Lord Jesus _____.

May the Lord help us to be part of the answer and not part of the problem.