

# Habakkuk

Verses 9 – 20, Week Four

**Hab 2:9 - “Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, That he may set his nest on high, That he may be delivered from the power of disaster!**

**Isaiah 14:14; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’**

What is the evil here Isaiah is addressing if not a covetousness attitude of one who plots with evil intentions. This one would not be satisfied even if he cheated others out of all they have, he seeks to be high and regarded, worshiped as all mighty. This writing is a twofold verse, it is addressing Nebuchadnezzar but also and more so Satan, both the unrighteous rise and the pending fall of both individuals. The woe implies a warning to get one's attention to rid the evil before the fall or the punishment. Picture it like this, the movies and a runaway stagecoach, the driver is pulling hard on the reins trying to get the horses to stop, he screams out, “Woe” fearful of a wreck that may soon take place. This was both Satan and Nebuchadnezzar.

The warning gives reason as to why one should change their course, that they may be delivered from the disaster to come. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, Ezekiel 33:11.

*Ah! sinful nation Isaiah 1:24* **Ah! I will ease me of my adversaries; especially preparatory to a declaration of judgment,** *Isaiah 10:5 הוֹי שִׁבְטֵי אֲשׁוּר הוֹי*, *Isaiah 17:12; Isaiah 28:1, often followed by a participle Ah! those that...,* *Isaiah 5:8, 11, 18; Isaiah 29:15; Isaiah 31:1; Isaiah 45:9, 10; Jeremiah 22:13; Amos 5:18; Amos 6:1; Habakkuk 2:6; Habakkuk 2:9; Habakkuk 2:12; Habakkuk 2:15; Habakkuk 2:19; Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon*

So the word Woe as used in Habakkuk and numerous others, is the declaration of pending judgment. A quick study of the verses listed demonstrate well the negative warning that may soon take place.

**Hab 2:10 - You give shameful counsel to your house, Cutting off many peoples, And sin against your soul.**

As we look back to Adam and Eve we find a perfectly painted picture of creation in which they lived with our Lord God. Six times God creates and each time the Scripture says, “and God saw that it was good,” What happened? God created all things to perfection but Satan gave shameful counsel and Adam and Eve were cut off from the place where they were at home with God and all was right. God has chosen to allow freedom of choice and they faltered by asking not of God but instead were deceived. It seems a good thing that man was given this

**Proverbs 3:5-6; Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.**

Look here at the next verse now,

**Proverbs 3:7; Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.**

Eve should have known this just in her relationship with God, why would she not wait on God in a moment of confusion? Why do we not wait on God in those same moments, we seek to solve the problems and get it out of the way right now, but those decisions far too often come back upon us in a bad way.

Are we to accept Eve fully appreciated or had a grasp of all she had in her relationship with God... that she was so easily deceived? Did God orchestrate the fall? This has been a point of contention since people have had a Bible. Was the fall of man by design? Does man ever have freedom to choose, these are all issues that lead us to question the freedoms a sovereign may have extended to His creation. All of this is also the very issue with Adam and Eve. The risk is, that should we miss what is actually taking place here with Adam and Eve, then we can easily believe we have no free-will. If that be the case then the lost may never be found and all were destined for destruction. There is here a miss-teaching of Calvin and free will, here is one place amongst many in which Calvin discusses choice and free will.

**“They tell us (see chap. v. sec. 4), there is a great repugnance between organic movements and the rational part of the soul. As if reason also were not at variance with herself, and her counsels sometimes conflicting with each other like hostile armies. But since this disorder results from the depravation of nature, it is erroneous to infer that there are two souls, because the faculties do not accord so harmoniously as they ought. But I leave it to philosophers to discourse more subtilely of these faculties. For the edification of the pious, a simple definition will be sufficient. I admit, indeed, that what they ingeniously teach**

**on the subject is true, and not only pleasant, but also useful to be known; nor do I forbid any who are inclined to prosecute the study. First, I admit that there are five senses, which Plato (in Theæteto) prefers calling organs, by which all objects are brought into a common sensorium, as into a kind of receptacle: Next comes the imagination (phantasia), which distinguishes between the objects brought into the sensorium: Next, reason, to which the general power of judgment belongs: And, lastly, intellect, which contemplates with fixed and quiet look whatever reason discursively revolves. In like manner, to intellect, fancy, and reason, the three cognitive faculties of the soul, correspond three appetive faculties—viz. will—whose office is to choose whatever reason and intellect propound; irascibility, which seizes on what is set before it by reason and fancy; and concupiscence, which lays hold of the objects presented by sense and fancy.**

**Though these things are true, or at least plausible, still, as I fear they are more fitted to entangle, by their obscurity, than to assist us, I think it best to omit them. If any one chooses to distribute the powers of the mind in a different manner, calling one appetive, which, though devoid of reason, yet obeys reason, if directed from a different quarter, and another intellectual, as being by itself participant of reason, I have no great objection. Nor am I disposed to quarrel with the view, that there are three principles of action—viz. sense, intellect, and appetite. But let us rather adopt a division adapted to all capacities—a thing which certainly is not to be obtained from philosophers. For they, when they would speak most plainly, divide the soul into appetite and intellect, but make both double. To the latter they sometimes give the name of contemplative, as being contented with mere knowledge, and having no active power—(which circumstance makes Cicero designate it by the name of intellect, ingenii) (De Fin. lib. v.). At other times they give it the name of practical, because it**

variously moves the will by the apprehension of good or evil. Under this class is included the art of living well and justly. The former—viz. appetite—they divide into will and concupiscence, calling it  $\alpha\beta\gamma$ , whenever the appetite, which they call  $\delta\epsilon\zeta$ , obeys the reason. But when appetite, casting off the yoke of reason, runs to intemperance, they call it  $\eta\theta\iota$ . Thus they always presuppose in man a reason by which he is able to guide himself aright. From this method of teaching we are forced somewhat to dissent. For philosophers, being unacquainted with the corruption of nature, which is the punishment of revolt, erroneously confound two states of man which are very different from each other. Let us therefore hold, for the purpose of the present work, that the soul consists of two parts, the intellect and the will (Book II. chap. ii. sec. 2, 12)—the office of the intellect being to distinguish between objects, according as they seem deserving of being approved or disapproved; and the office of the will, to choose and follow what the intellect declares to be good, to reject and shun what it declares to be bad (Plato in Phædro). We dwell not on the subtlety of Aristotle, that the mind has no motion of itself; but that the moving power is choice, which he also terms the appetive intellect. (Note: Underscored portions of data are unknown as yet. This is due to a translation issue with the original text in Kindle and/or transposition errors.)

Not to lose ourselves in superfluous questions, let it be enough to know that the intellect is to us, as it were, the guide and ruler of the soul; that the will always follows its beck, and waits for its decision, in matters of desire. For which reason Aristotle truly taught, that in the appetite there is a pursuit and rejection corresponding in some degree to affirmation and negation in the intellect (Aristot. Ethic. lib. vi. c. 2). Moreover, it will be seen in another place (Book II. c. ii. sec. 12—26), how surely the intellect governs the will. Here we only wish to observe, that the soul does not possess any faculty which may not be duly referred to one or other of these members. And in this way we comprehend sense under intellect. Others distinguish thus: They say that sense inclines to pleasure in the same way as the intellect to good; that hence the appetite of sense becomes concupiscence and lust, while the affection of the intellect becomes will. For the term appetite, which they prefer, I use that of will, as being more common.

Therefore, God has provided the soul of man with intellect, by which he might discern good from evil, just from unjust, and might know what to follow or to shun, reason going before with her lamp; whence philosophers, in reference to her directing power, have called her  $\kappa\lambda\lambda\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\sigma$ . To this he has joined will, to which choice belongs. Man excelled in these noble endowments in his primitive condition, when reason, intelligence, prudence, and judgment, not only sufficed for the government of his earthly life, but also enabled him to rise up to God and eternal happiness. Thereafter choice was added to direct the appetites and temper all the organic motions; the will being thus perfectly submissive to the authority of reason. In this upright state, man possessed freedom of will, by which, if he chose, he was able to obtain eternal life. It were here unseasonable to introduce the question concerning the secret predestination of God, because we are not considering what might or might not happen, but what the nature of man truly was. Adam, therefore, might have stood if he chose, since it was only by his own will that he fell; but it was because his will was pliable in either direction, and he had not received constancy to persevere, that he so easily fell. Still he had a free choice of good and evil; and not only so, but in the mind and will there was the highest rectitude, and all the organic parts were duly framed to obedience, until man corrupted its good properties,

and destroyed himself. Hence the great darkness of philosophers who have looked for a complete building in a ruin, and fit arrangement answer, that the degree conferred was sufficient to take away every excuse. For surely the Deity could not be tied down to this condition,—to make man such, that he either could not or would not sin. Such a nature might have been more excellent; but to expostulate with God as if he had been bound to confer this nature on man, is more than unjust, seeing He had full right to determine how much or how little He would give. Why He did not sustain him by the virtue of perseverance is hidden in his counsel; it is ours to keep within the bounds of soberness. Man had received the power, if he had the will, but he had not the will which would have given the power; for this will would have been followed by perseverance. Still, after he had received so much, there is no excuse for his having spontaneously brought death upon himself. No necessity was laid upon God to give him more than that intermediate and even transient will, that out of man's fall he might extract materials for his own glory.” (Note: Underscored portions of data are unknown as yet. This is due to a translation issue with the original text in Kindle and/or transposition errors.)

**Calvin, John. The Institutes of the Christian Religion (With Active Table of Contents) (p. 65). Kindle Edition.**

Let us now look at how Calvin uses the term predestination which is often tied to free-will.

Thereafter choice was added to direct the appetites and temper all the organic motions; the will being thus perfectly submissive to the authority of reason. In this upright state, man possessed freedom of will, by which, if he chose, he was able to obtain eternal life. It was unseasonable to introduce the question concerning the secret predestination of God, because we are not considering what might or might not happen, but what the nature of man truly was. Adam, therefore, might have stood if he chose, since it was only by his own will that he fell; but ***it was because his will was pliable in either direction***, and he had not received constancy to persevere, that he so easily fell. ***Still he had a free choice of good and evil***; and not only so, but in the mind and will there was the highest rectitude, and all the organic parts were duly framed to obedience, until man corrupted its good properties, and destroyed himself.

What Calvin is here implying is that Adam had free will to eat of the fruit or not, to sin or not sin, he chose sin. In the act of defying God's command, Adam and Eve being parents to all mankind we have been born into Adam's sin. Adam was responsible for all who would come after him. Unlike Pelagius would like to have us believe, we can choose not to sin. However, we are born sinners and so we sin. To not sin man no longer has that choice, and it is only God who can change us. When God calls we have a choice, we can turn to Him or we can keep on the path of destruction.

**“The power and office of the intellect and will in man before the fall. Man's free will. This freedom lost by the fall—a fact unknown to philosophers. The delusion of Pelagians and Papists. Objection as to the fall of man when free, refuted.” Calvin**

This writing of Calvin above is addressing that free will was refuted and is trying to let us know we have no free will not to sin, but the calling and the response to salvation were made open for us to accept the offer. While we have no free will to not sin there still remains the choice to choose God.

**Deuteronomy 30:19; I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: *therefore choose life*, that both thou and thy seed may live:**

**Proverbs 4:4; He also taught me, and said to me: “Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live.**

**Proverbs 9:6; Forsake foolishness and live, And go in the way of understanding.**

**Amos 5:4; For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: “Seek Me and live;**

These are merely a few examples, there are many more.

Woe; Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries; especially preparatory to a declaration of judgment, [Isaiah 10:5](#) אֶפֶי נִשְׁבֵּט אֲשׁוּר הוּא, [Isaiah 17:12](#); [Isaiah 28:1](#), often followed by a participle *Ah!* those that..., [Isaiah 5:8, 11, 18](#); [Isaiah 29:15](#); [Isaiah 31:1](#); [Isaiah 45:9, 10](#); [Jeremiah 22:13](#); [Amos 5:18](#); [Amos 6:1](#); [Habakkuk 2:6](#); [Habakkuk 2:9](#); [Habakkuk 2:12](#); [Habakkuk 2:15](#); [Habakkuk 2:19](#);

Here in our verse we see that God is addressing those who give shameful counsel which is exactly what Satan did in his cunning deception of Eve. And so it is with rulers of armies as with Nebuchadnezzar, what drives a person who will never achieve or conquer enough? It is for the reason they fail to believe in the promises of our Lord God and so rush off trying, and continuing to find a joy they have never found.

As Adam and Eve were cut off from the Lord and expelled from the garden. Today we find this happening to people, see Romans chapter 1 verse 20 and up, being dismissed from the presents of God, not for what God has done but for what they themselves have done. Again we look to the sovereignty of God. Perhaps we need to be looking more toward the depravity of man, God wants all to come to repentance and live, however, He also desires us to desire Him but He will not force that upon any man. Love, Hope, and Faith must be exercised in the freedom of heart. **Psalm 10:17-18; LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear, To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, That the man of the earth may oppress no more.**

**Hab 2:11; For the stone will cry out from the wall, And the beam from the timbers will answer it. 12 “Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed, Who establishes a city by iniquity! 13 Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts That the peoples labor to feed the fire, And nations weary themselves in vain? 14 For the earth will be filled. With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.**

**Matthew Henry, “The stones and timber cry to heaven for vengeance, as the whole creation groans under the sin of man and waits to be delivered from that bondage of corruption.”**

That they have labored to feed the fire, this is addressing all the work of the people who suffered to build all they had, and here comes one who will destroy and burn it, wondering after the destruction, was this all done in vain? Woe to you who does such a rapacious act, who puts himself above all things, who are you but one headed for destruction.

**“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing him to your bottle, Even to make him drunk, That you may look on his nakedness! 16 You are filled with shame instead of glory.**

This is referring literally to nakedness and addressing the drunken sloppy condition of man. In your stupor you bring only shame upon yourself, you will receive no Glory.

**You also—drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the LORD’s right hand will be turned against you, And utter shame will be on your glory.**

This idea of being uncircumcised here addresses the condition of the man, as a gentile who knows nothing of God, but pretending to be a believer he brings only ruin to others. His reward is shame.

**Hab 2:17; For the violence done to Lebanon will cover you, And the plunder of beasts which made them afraid, Because of men’s blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it.**

God promised Habakkuk in verse 2:8; **Because you have plundered many nations, All the remnant of the people shall plunder you, Because of men’s blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it.**

**Hab 2:18; “What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, The molded image, a teacher of lies, That the maker of its mold should trust in it, To make mute idols?**

**Hab 2:19; Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Awake!’ To silent stone, ‘Arise! It shall teach!’ Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, Yet in it there is no breath at all. 20; “But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”**

I love verses 18 and 20, it addresses the nothingness of idols, worthless, repugnant pieces to trash that have no power, no abilities except to take up room on a shelf somewhere, but they are worthless.

You can try this at home, throw a board on the floor and ask anything of it, sit there until it gives you a command or a word and then call me.