

# Habakkuk 2:6-20

2:6 – “Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing and riddles for him, and say, ‘Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own— for how long?— and loads himself with pledges!’ ”

1945 [e] hō-w	559 [e] we-yō-mar,	lōw;	2420 [e] hî-dō-wî	4426 [e] ū-mə-lî-šāh	5375 [e] yîs-šā-'ū,	4912 [e] mā-šāl	5921 [e] 'ā-lāw	3605 [e] kul-lām,	428 [e] 'ēl-leh	3808 [e] hā-lō-w-	6
ווי	וַיֹּאמֶר	לוֹ	חִידוֹת	וּמְלִיצָה	יִשְׂאוּ	מְשָׁל	עָלָיו	כֻּלָּם	אֵלֶּה	הֲלוֹא	
Woe	and say	against him	a riddle	and taunting	take up	a proverb	against him	all	these	Will not	
Interjection	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjImperf-3ms	Prep   3ms	N-fp	Conj-w   N-fs	V-Qal-Imperf-3mp	N-ms	Prep   3ms	N-msc   3mp	Pro-cp	Adv-NegPrt	

5671 [e] 'ab-ṭîṭ.	5921 [e] 'ā-lāw	3513 [e] ū-maḵ-bîd	4970 [e] mā-tay	5704 [e] 'aḏ-	lōw,	3808 [e] lō-	7235 [e] ham-mar-beh	
!	עֲבָטָיִט:	עָלָיו	וּמְכַבֵּד	מַתִּי	עַד-	לוֹ	לֹא-	הַמְרַבֵּה
	with many pledges	to him	and who loads himself	long	how	[What] is his	not	to him who increases
	N-ms	Prep   3ms	Conj-w   V-Hifil-Prtcpl-ms	Interrog	Prep	Prep   3ms	Adv-NegPrt	Art   V-Hifil-Prtcpl-ms

- Here is a list of five woes that will return to those drunk with arrogance and addicted to conquest.
- “**Woe**” from **how** or **hoy** in Hebrew is often translated “woe”, but is closer to the English “**Ahah!**” or “**Ah!**”
- “all these” refers to the “nations” and “peoples” who had been “gathered” and “collected” by the arrogant.
  - In this case it was the Persians and the Medes who had enough of Babylon’s oppression.
  - Here is a list of the things Babylon will be mocked for by the very nations that Babylon had oppressed.
- The five woes include these three parts identified with three technical terms:
  - “a proverb” or “taunt” in ESV, NIV - **Masal** – a proverbial saying, a figurative speech or a mocking byword
  - Sometimes these *masal* (“sayings”, “ridicule”, “scoffing”, “taunting”) in Habakkuk come right from the wise “sayings” in the book of Proverbs.
  - “taunting” or “scoffing” ESV, “ridicule” in NIV - **Melisa** – which is a word that comes from the Hebrew root *lis* which means “to scorn, to deride or to mock.”
    - An ambiguous, allusive saying that needs interpretation
    - Used in Proverbs 1:6 – “to understand a proverb and a saying (*umelisah*), the words of the wise and their riddles.”
    - All three of these words are in Proverbs 1:6:

2420 [e] we-hî-dō-tām.	2450 [e] hā-kā-mîm,	1697 [e] dîb-rê	4426 [e] ū-mə-lî-šāh;	4912 [e] mā-šāl	995 [e] le-hā-bîn	6
וְחִידוֹתָם:	חִכְמִים	דְּבָרַי	וּמְלִיצָה	מְשָׁל	לְהַבִּין	
and their riddles	of the wise	the words	and an enigma	a proverb	To understand	
Conj-w   N-fpc   3mp	Adj-mp	N-mpc	Conj-w   N-fs	N-ms	Prep-l   V-Hifil-Inf	

- d. “riddle” or “riddle” in ESV, “scorn” in NIV - **Hidot** – this is the idea of a riddle or an elusive saying. It includes an enigma or a paradox. The riddle may include words that have a double meaning.
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## **FIVE WOES:**

**Woe #1 – 2:6b-8 – payback for stolen treasure = you will be in debt and plundered**

“Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own—for how long?—and loads himself with pledges!”

Will not your debtors suddenly arise, and those awake who will make you tremble?

Then you will be spoil for them.

Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.”

**Woe #2 – 2:9-11 – payback for building house with evil = loss of life, dwelling, dynasty**

“Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm!

You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many peoples; you have forfeited your life. For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond.”

**Woe #3 – 2:12-14 – payback for building with blood and iniquity = nothing remains, but the Lord**

“Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity!

Behold, is it not from the Lord of hosts that peoples labor merely for fire, and nations weary themselves for nothing?

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

**Woe #4 – 2:15-17 – payback for using your glory to shame others = Lord’s wrath brings you shame**

“Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink—you pour out your wrath and make them drunk, in order to gaze at their nakedness!

You will have your fill of shame instead of glory.

Drink, yourself, and show your uncircumcision!

The cup in the Lord's right hand will come around to you, and utter shame will come upon your glory!

The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

**Woe #5 – 2:18-20 – payback for searching for answers in deception = Be silent before the Lord**

“What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies?

For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols!

Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, ‘Awake’; to a silent stone, ‘Arise!’

Can this teach?

Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in it.

But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.”

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Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing and riddles for him, and say,

### Habakkuk 2:6b-8 –

“Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own—for how long?— and loads himself with pledges!”

**7** Will not your debtors suddenly arise, and those awake who will make you tremble? Then you will be spoil for them.

**8** Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

1945 [e] hō-w וְהוֹי	559 [e] we-yō-mar, וַיֹּאמֶר	lōw; לוֹ	2420 [e] hī-dō-wt חִידוֹת	4426 [e] ū-mē-lī-sāh וּמְלִיצָה	5375 [e] yis-śā-ū, יִשְׂאוּ	4912 [e] mā-śāl מִשָּׁל	5921 [e] 'ā-lāw עָלָיו	3605 [e] kul-lām, כָּלֵם	428 [e] 'ēl-leh אֵלֶּה	3808 [e] hā-lō-w- הֲלוֹא	6
Woe	and say	against him	a riddle	and taunting	take up	a proverb	against him	all	these	Will not	
Interjection	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjImperf-3ms	Prep   3ms	N-fp	Conj-w   N-fs	V-Qal-Imperf-3mp	N-ms	Prep   3ms	N-msc   3mp	Pro-cp	Adv-NegPrt	

5671 [e] 'ab-tīt. עֲבֹטָיִט!	5921 [e] 'ā-lāw עָלָיו	3513 [e] ū-mak-bīd וּמְכַבֵּד	4970 [e] mā-tay מַתִּי	5704 [e] 'ad- עַד-	lōw, לוֹ	3808 [e] lō- לֹא-	7235 [e] ham-mar-beh הַמְרַבֵּה
with many pledges	to him	and who loads himself	long	how	[What] is his	not	to him who increases
N-ms	Prep   3ms	Conj-w   V-Hifil-Prtcpl-ms	Interrog	Prep	Prep   3ms	Adv-NegPrt	Art   V-Hifil-Prtcpl-ms

4933 [e] lā-mōw. לָמוֹ:	1961 [e] lim-śis-sō-wt לְמִשְׁסוֹת	2111 [e] we-hā-yī-tā וְהָיִיתָ	6974 [e] me-za'ze'e-kā; מִזְעֲזְעִיד	5391 [e] we-yiq-šū וַיִּקְצְאוּ	5391 [e] nō-šə-ke-kā, נֹשְׂאֵי כְעָר	6965 [e] yā-qū-mū יָקוּמוּ	6621 [e] pe-ta' פְּתַע	3808 [e] hā-lō-w הֲלוֹא	7
their	booty	and you will become	who oppress you	and will they not awaken	your creditors	rise up	suddenly	will not	
Prep   3mp	Prep-I   N-fp	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjPerf-2ms	V-Piel-Prtcpl-mpc   2ms	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjImperf-3mp	V-Qal-Prtcpl-mpc   2ms	V-Qal-Imperf-3mp	Adv	Adv-NegPrt	

5971 [e] 'am-mīm; עַמִּים	3499 [e] ye-ter יֵתֵר	3605 [e] kāl- כָּל-	7997 [e] yə-śāl-lū-kā יִשְׁלֹוּךָ	7227 [e] rab-bīm, רַבִּים	1471 [e] gō-w-yim גוֹיִם	7997 [e] śal-lō-w-tā שָׁלוּתְךָ	859 [e] 'at-tāh אַתָּה	3588 [e] kī כִּי	8
of the people	the remnant	all	shall plunder you	many	nations	have plundered	you	Because	
N-mp	N-msc	N-msc	V-Qal-Imperf-3mp   2ms	Adj-mp	N-mp	V-Qal-Perf-2ms	Pro-2ms	Conj	

ḡ פ	3427 [e] bāh. בָּה:	3605 [e] yō-šə-bé יֹשְׁבֵי	7151 [e] we-kāl וְכָל-	776 [e] qir-yāh קִרְיָה	2555 [e] 'e-reš, אֶרֶץ	120 [e] wa-hā-mas- וְהַמָּס-	1818 [e] 'ā-dām אָדָם	mid-də-mé מִדְּמַי
-	in it	who dwell	and of all	[and] the city	of the land	and the violence	of men	because of blood
Punc	Prep   3fs	V-Qal-Prtcpl-mpc	Conj-w   N-msc	N-fs	N-fs	Conj-w   N-msc	N-ms	Prep-m   N-mpc

1. This is the first of five oracles of judgment
  - a. The crime or sin is identified
    - i. Piles up stolen goods
    - ii. Makes himself wealthy by extortion (or, pledges)

- iii. You plundered many nations
- iv. You have shed human blood
- v. You have destroyed (mankind and environment):
  - 1. Lands
  - 2. Cities
  - 3. Everyone in them
- b. The fair retribution or just payback is identified
  - i. Creditors will suddenly arise
  - ii. Creditors will make you tremble
  - iii. You will become their prey
  - iv. People left of those you plundered will plunder you
- 2. “extortion” or “pledges” is *abtit* refers to collecting pledges taken as security by a creditor. This often includes exploitation and enslavement
  - a. The Hebrew word *abtit* literally means “a cloud of dirt” which gives this a double meaning. They collected pledges or extortion, but they were really collecting “a cloud of dirt”
  - b. This also doubles back on them because what you sow you will reap.
    - i. What they took by extortion in time actually became a loan that they owed interest on.
    - ii. So, the oppressed actually become the creditors.
    - iii. In time Babylon will owe interest to the people they oppressed.
- 3. Similar, memorable sounds:
  - a. 2:6b *lo* and *low* sound the same, but different meanings
  - b. 2:8b *middeme adam* in Hebrew “for the bloody gorings of men” is easy to remember in Hebrew.
- 4. Double meaning:
  - c. “Your creditors” means “to bite”. This is a good word for “creditor” because he “bites” his portion from the borrower. Babylon’s biters/creditors will suddenly rise up
  - d. “pledges” in 2:6b means “weight of pledges, heavy debts” and also “heap of mud” or “thick clay”
- 5. Proverbs or proverbial truth:
  - e. Multiplying ill-gotten gain:
    - i. Proverbs 28:8 – “Whoever increases wealth by taking interest or profit from the poor amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.”
    - ii. Proverbs 22:16 – “One who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and one who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty.”
    - iii. Proverbs 13:11 – “Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.”
  - f. Sudden disaster
    - i. Proverbs 6:15 – “Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.”
    - ii. Proverbs 29:1 – “He who is often reproved, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing.”
- 6. Justice/vengeance
  - a. Because you have pillaged many nations, all that remains of the people shall pillage you
  - b. The concept of all of these is poetic justice will come to Babylon or reciprocation

## Habakkuk 2:9-11

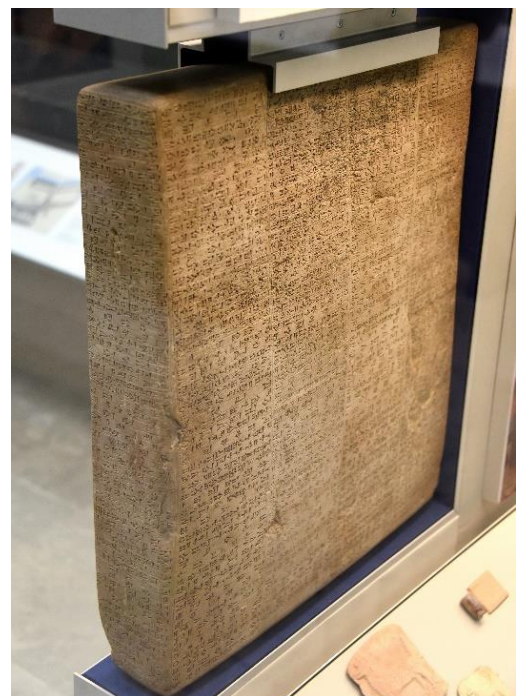
9 “Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm!

10 You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many peoples; you have forfeited your life.

11 For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond.

7451 [e] rā'	3709 [e] mik·kap-	5337 [e] le·hin·nā·šél	7064 [e] qin·nōw,	4791 [e] bam·mā·rō·wm	7760 [e] lā·šūm	1004 [e] le·bê·tōw	7451 [e] rā'	1215 [e] be·ša'	1214 [e] bō·šê·a'	1945 [e] hō·w,
! רָע:	מִכְפֵּי-	לְהִנָּצֵל	קִנּוֹ	בְּמַרְוֵם	לְשׁוֹם	לְבֵיתוֹ	רָע	בְּצַעַע	בְּצַעַע	הוֹי 9
of disaster	from the hand	that he may be delivered	his nest	on high	that he may set	for his house	evil	gain	to him who covets	Woe
Adj-ms	Prep-m   N-fs	Prep-l   V-Nifal-Inf	N-msc   3ms	Prep-b, Art   N-ms	Prep-l   V-Qal-Inf	Prep-l   N-msc   3ms	Adj-ms	N-ms	V-Qal-Prtcpl-ms	Interjection

- They used evil prophets to ensure they and their future generations would be safe, but in reality all they did was prepare shame and downfall of their family and dynasty.
- By corruptly protecting themselves, they violated reality/truth to forfeit their life.
- Underlined “gain” or besa means gain associated with wrongdoing or “gain made by violence”. Notice it is double up with the word for “evil” – ra – which would be like saying “evil extortion” or “bad theft”.
- The “house” refers to two things (again, a double meaning):
  - The Babylonian dwellings will be destroyed
  - The Babylonian dynasty will be destroyed
- Proverbially they were practicing “evil” (ra) to prevent “ruin” (ra).
- The judgment is equal to the sin:
  - Evil gain for your house = shame for your house
  - Cutting off many peoples = you forfeited your life
  - Set nest (dwelling) on high = stones from your wall and beams from your woodwork will cry out and respond
- Matching Proverbs:
  - Proverbs 15:27 – “Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live.”
  - Proverbs 1:18-19 – “These men lie in wait for their own blood; they set an ambush for their own lives. Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain; it takes away the life of its possessors.”
- Nebuchadnezar’s inscription on The East India House Inscription which is a 22x20 inch stone tablet engraved with cuneiform that includes the statement:  
 “Merciful Marduk, may the temple I have built endure for all time and may I be satisfied with its splendour; in its midst may I attain old age, may I be sated with offspring; therein may I receive the heavy tribute of all mankind; from the horizon of heaven to the zenith, may I have no enemies; may my descendents live therein forever and rule over the people'.



## **Habakkuk 2:12-14**

12 “Woe to him who builds a town with blood founds a city on iniquity!

13 Behold, is it not from the Lord of hosts peoples labor merely for fire, nations weary themselves for nothing?

14 For the earth will be filled the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

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