

# Habakkuk 2:9-11

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/hab/hab-2/habakkuk-29-11/>

*The LORD denounces those who build extravagant and fortified houses from their dishonest gain*

God continues to answer Habakkuk's question, how a righteous God could judge the wickedness of Judah through the Babylonians/Chaldeans, who were even more wicked than Judah (Habakkuk 1:12-15). In Habakkuk 2:6-20, God is making clear that He will judge the Chaldeans in due time.

The second woe oracle in Habakkuk 2:6-20 tackles those Chaldeans/Babylonians who built their houses from their dishonest gain in order to protect their families from danger. The LORD began by saying, *Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house*. Ancient Israelites frequently used the term *woe* ('hây' in Hebrew) as a mourning shout at funerals (Jeremiah 34:5; 1 Kings 13:30). Here, the LORD used it to announce the destruction of the Chaldeans who enriched their *houses* through cheating and robbery.

The Hebrew term for *house* can refer to the physical building or the people living in it (the family). In our passage, it may have a double meaning, as the rest of the text indicates (vv. 10–11). The Chaldeans extracted from others to build *houses* to benefit their families. They secured their homes by putting their *nest on high*. A *nest* is the residence of a bird, especially an eagle (Deuteronomy 32:11). An eagle that builds a *nest* in high places is secure and stable. For this reason, the Bible often uses the *nest* as a symbol of pride and arrogance (Obadiah 1:4). Here also, it symbolizes the arrogance of the Chaldeans who built their *houses on high*. Their purpose was *to be delivered from the hand of calamity*.

The Chaldeans thought they and their families would be free from harm and danger through their clever construction of fortresses for their families. But since they did so by taking advantage of others, the LORD would not leave them unpunished. Instead of achieving security and fame, the Chaldeans would only bring shame and destruction upon themselves and their families. The LORD made that clear when He addressed the Chaldeans more directly by switching from the third person pronoun to the second: *You have devised a shameful thing for your house by cutting off many peoples; So you are sinning against yourself*.

The expression *cutting off many peoples* means to destroy them. Here again, the word *house* refers to someone's family and descendants. The Chaldeans thought they would benefit their families by exploiting other nations and people groups and destroying their life and existence. But such a cruel act only disgraced the Chaldeans and their families. And by destroying the lives of other *peoples*, the Chaldeans sinned against themselves. Sinning against others is always a form of self-destruction. In exploiting others, the Babylonians were laying the foundation for their own destruction.

Their luxurious and fortified houses would speak out against them. As the LORD declared, *Surely the stone will cry out from the wall and the rafter will answer it from the framework*. Their houses demanded judgement.

A *stone* is a strong material from which to build a *house*. It is an excellent material for a fortified structure. The term *rafter* refers to one of several internal beams used as part of a roof. The verb *cry out* means to accuse in this context. The wickedness and injustice of the Chaldeans against the nations were so great that even the inanimate objects with which they built their *houses* would accuse them, and demand their judgment. The Bible chronicles the demise of Babylon in [Daniel 5](#), where they fell to the Persians.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>9</sup>“Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house**

**To put his nest on high,**

**To be delivered from the hand of calamity!**

**<sup>10</sup>“You have devised a shameful thing for your house**

**By cutting off many peoples;**

**So you are sinning against yourself.**

**<sup>11</sup>“Surely the stone will cry out from the wall,**

**And the rafter will answer it from the framework.**