

# Habakkuk 1:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it.

## Analysis

**And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it.** Babylon's contempt for human authority is absolute. **Scoff at the kings** (יִתְקַלַּסוּ בַּמְלָכִים hu bammelakhim yitqallas)—they mock royalty. Earthly monarchs, whom subjects revere, are laughingstocks to Babylon. **Princes shall be a scorn** (רֹזְנִים מִשְׂחָק לוֹ roznim mischaq lo)—nobility and aristocracy are mere entertainment, objects of ridicule. This disdain for established authority reflects Babylon's supreme confidence in its own power.

**Deride every strong hold** (לְכֹל-מִיטְזָר יִשְׂחָק hu lekhol-mivtzar yischaq)—fortifications inspire laughter rather than caution. Judah's carefully constructed defenses, which took years to build and seemed impregnable, were trivial obstacles to Babylonian siege engineering. **Heap dust, and take it** (וַיִּצְבֹּר עָפָר וַיִּלְקְדָהּ vayitzebor afar vayilkedah)—they pile up earthen siege ramps and capture cities. This describes Babylonian siege tactics: building massive earthworks against city walls, allowing troops to climb over defenses.

The verse exposes human pretension: kings, princes, and fortifications inspire awe among humans but are powerless before instruments of divine judgment. What humans trust for security—political authority, social hierarchy, military defenses—proves worthless when God decrees judgment. Only trust in God Himself provides genuine security.

## Historical Context

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Archaeological evidence confirms Babylonian siege methods. At Lachish, excavations uncovered massive siege ramps used by Nebuchadnezzar's forces. These earthworks—literally heaped dust—allowed Babylonian troops to breach walls that defenders thought impregnable. When Babylon conquered city after city throughout Syria-Palestine and Egypt, kings who seemed powerful were captured, humiliated, and exiled. Jehoiachin of Judah was taken to Babylon where he lived as a pensioner dependent on Nebuchadnezzar's mercy. Zedekiah was captured fleeing Jerusalem, forced to watch his sons executed, then blinded and taken to Babylon in chains (2 Kings 25:7). These grim fates fulfilled Habakkuk's prophecy—kings and princes became objects of scorn, their authority revealed as empty before God's ordained instrument of judgment.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What false securities—earthly authority, defenses, status—do modern people trust that prove worthless under divine judgment?
2. How does Babylon's mockery of human power illustrate the ultimate powerlessness of all earthly authority before God?
3. What is the difference between appropriate respect for earthly authority and idolatrous trust in it for ultimate security?

## Interlinear Text

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וְהָיָה	בְּמֶלֶךְ יָם	וַיִּתְקַלְסוּ	וְרִצְנֵי יָם	מִשְׁחָה קִי	לֹא
H1931	at the kings	And they shall scoff	and the princes	shall be a scorn	H0
	H4428	H7046	H7336	H4890	
וְהָיָה	לְכָל	מְבַצֵּר	יִשְׁחָקוּ	וַיִּצְבּוּ	
H1931	H3605	every strong hold	unto them they shall deride	for they shall heap	
		H4013	H7832	H6651	
וְעָפָר	וְלָקַחְתָּ:				
dust	and take				
H6083	H3920				

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Chronicles 36:6** (Kingdom): Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon.

**Isaiah 14:16** (Kingdom): They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

**Jeremiah 32:24** (Parallel theme): Behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest it.

**2 Chronicles 36:10** (Kingdom): And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.