

# Habakkuk 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!

## Analysis

**Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his!** The conquered nations will **take up a parable** (לִישׁוּא מִשָּׁל/yis'u mashal)—lift up a proverbial taunt song. The term לִישׁוּא (mashal) can mean proverb, parable, or mocking poem. The oppressed will mock their former oppressor, pronouncing **Woe** (הוֹי/hoy)—a prophetic cry of judgment and lament.

**To him that increaseth that which is not his** (לֹא-לוֹ מַרְבֵּה/marbeh lo-lo)—accumulating what doesn't belong to him. This describes imperial plunder—seizing the wealth, land, and people of conquered nations. **How long?** (אֶד-מַתַּי/ad-matai) echoes Habakkuk's original complaint (1:2)—the cry of all oppressed peoples wondering when justice will arrive. **And to him that ladeth himself with thick clay** (עֲבֹטִיט עָלָיו וּמַחְבִּיד/umakhbid alav avtit)—loading himself with heavy pledges or debts. Some translate עֲבֹטִיט (avtit) as 'pledges' (ill-gotten goods held as collateral), others as 'thick clay' (burden). Either way, the image is of someone weighted down with stolen wealth that will ultimately crush them. Proverbs 13:11 warns that wealth gained hastily will dwindle—Babylon's plunder becomes its burden.

## Historical Context

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Babylon's wealth came almost entirely from conquest and tribute. Nebuchadnezzar plundered Jerusalem's temple (2 Kings 24:13, 25:13-17), carried off treasures from Egypt, Tyre, and countless other cities. The Ishtar Gate and Hanging Gardens—Babylon's architectural wonders—were built with slave labor and plundered materials. Yet within decades, this wealth couldn't save Babylon from Persian conquest. The treasures flowed to new masters. The same pattern recurs: colonial empires built on plunder eventually lose their wealth. The taunt song proves prophetic—history remembers Babylon as the great oppressor whose fall is celebrated, not mourned.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does accumulating wealth or success through exploitation of others create a burden rather than a blessing?
2. What does it mean that ill-gotten gains become 'thick clay'—a weight that drags down rather than lifts up?
3. How should the certainty of this woe affect how believers pursue wealth, success, and influence in this world?

## Interlinear Text

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הָלוֹא	אֵלֶּה	כָּל־	עָלֶיּוֹ	מִשָּׁ ל	יֵשׁ אֹ
H3808	H428	H3605	H5921	a parable H4912	Shall not all these take up H5375
וּמְלִיצָה	לֹא	חֵיד וְ	וְיֹאמַר	הִנֵּה	
against him and a taunting H4426	proverb H2420	H0	against him and say H559	Woe H1945	
הַמֵּרְבֶּה	לֹא	לֹא	עַד	מֵת י	
to him that increaseth H7235	H3808	H0	H5704	H4970	
וּמִכָּבֹד יָד	עַל יוֹ	עַבְדֵּיטִי:			
that which is not his! how long and to him that ladeth H3513	H5921	himself with thick clay H5671			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 50:13** (Parallel theme): Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.

**Jeremiah 29:22** (Parallel theme): And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire;

**Numbers 23:7** (Parallel theme): And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

**Micah 2:4** (Parallel theme): In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields.

