

God Responds

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[0 : 00] Last week we talked about the condition of the Judean society when Habakkuk was written.

! We talked about how people were disillusioned, society was agitated, there was rapid political! political change occurring, the world had become a place of increasing international! turmoil with bloody military encounters.

And to top things off, people were rebelling even more against God's demands. And if you remember, within this context, Habakkuk asked God four questions.

Those questions were, how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear? How long shall I cry to you violence and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity?

And why do you look idly at wrong? In the section we'll look at tonight, Habakkuk finally gets an answer to the questions that he's been asking God for so long.

[1 : 03] Let's read Habakkuk chapter 1 verses 5 through 11. In these verses, be aware that God is speaking here. So God says, starting in verse 5, Look among the nations and see, wonder and be astounded.

For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth to seize dwellings not their own.

They are dreaded and fearsome. Their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves.

Their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar. They fly like an eagle, swift to devour. They all come for violence, all their faces ford.

They gather captives like sand. At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it.

[2 : 04] Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men whose own might is their God. We'll break tonight's passage into three sections.

And the first comes in verse 5. And in verse 5 we see an unbelievable work. An unbelievable work is what goes in your blanks there.

And here is verse 5 again. God said, Look among the nations and see, wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told.

Before we look at the verse in detail, we need to fill in some information about God's answer. In Hebrew, the second person verbs in verse 5 are all plural. That makes it clear that the message is not just for Habakkuk alone.

The message is for all of those who shared Habakkuk's attitude toward the events of his day. God responds by redirecting Habakkuk's and the people's attention from local issues to international issues.

[3 : 08] God instructed them to get their eyes off their immediate havoc and look out on the international horizons. In other words, they needed to develop a worldview that included the nations more than just themselves.

Habakkuk's questions and God's answers seem unrelated. But God does give an indication that he heard the question. Habakkuk essentially said, Look at this God.

And God replied, Look at that. But in that answer, he actually uses the same verbs as Habakkuk used in his question. So he changed the question around a little bit, but he used some of the same words.

So that's the clue that he really did hear what Habakkuk was asking. So with that backdrop, let's dig deeper into what God wanted Habakkuk to look at and see.

It says there in the ESV, Wonder and be astounded. And that translates two forms of the same verb in Hebrew. Actually, astounded there could be translated as astounded, astounded, because it's written twice.

[4 : 11] And whenever you see a word written twice like that in Hebrew, that intensifies the word and highlights the force and the shock of it. So really what God is telling Habakkuk and the others is that they'll be numb with astonishment.

They're going to be so dumbfounded by all the events that they're never going to be able to imagine what will happen. And what he says is that the sight is going to be so horrifying that the very telling of it is incredible.

Probably about this point, Habakkuk was beginning to realize that the answer was going to be more than he bargained for, I would imagine. And the second part of the verse, though, does have some veiled good news.

God says there, For I am doing a work. This really is the closest that God comes to giving Habakkuk a direct answer to one of his questions, because one of Habakkuk's questions was, Why do you look idly at wrong?

And God lets Habakkuk know here that God is not looking idly at something. He actually is doing something. God is about to perform such a terrible work that even if a prophet of God announced it and described it in detail, or if it occurred in another place at another time, nobody would believe it.

[5 : 25] And it so far exceeds what can be imagined or expected, that that's why it defies the belief. God also says that the work will happen soon, because verse 5 says that the work will happen in your days.

And in your days is another way to say during your lifetime. The implication is that the events will take place soon, and the hearers will be there to see them for themselves. So the political development is about to be revealed to Habakkuk, and the people are going to stun them.

In fact, Habakkuk was dumbfounded. We'll see that when we get to his response next week. But what God was about to perform would be hard for them to believe, even though God was going to tell them exactly what would happen.

And like I said, we won't see Habakkuk's reaction until next lesson, but we will see that God's prediction of astonishment was completely accurate. So that summarizes the unbelievable work.

The second thing we'll look at tonight is an unexpected weapon. So an unexpected weapon is the second fill-in for you. And as we move into that second section of the lesson, we'll see God tell everybody about that unexpected weapon, and that's revealed in just the first phrase of verse 6.

[6 : 44] So look at what God says there. He says, For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans. The Chaldeans were the original inhabitants of southern Babylonia, but by the time of Habakkuk, this name carried a wider meaning.

And when we see Chaldeans in Habakkuk, the reference could also be to the Babylonians. So we'll use Chaldeans and Babylonians interchangeably as we go through the book. So Chaldea, or Babylon, was in central and southeastern Mesopotamia, between the lower stretches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and that's what is now modern Iraq.

It's close to the border of Iran, and it touches the Persian Gulf. So several Aramean tribes entered the area between 1000 and 900 BC, and they found a homeland with few natural resources.

It had a flat plain, marshlands, flooding, and hot summers. And they all rejected urban society and its customs and manners of life. But they developed eventually into a military power under Merodach Babylonian, and then a century later under Nabopolazar, who founded a Chaldean dynasty in Babylon.

And he's the one who defeated the Assyrians and captured Nineveh then in 612 BC. But look at the first phrase of verse 6 again. God says, For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans.

[8 : 09] And the I there is emphatic. So God is saying that I, the God of righteousness and the controller of all nations, who has been accused of neglecting justice, am stirring up into action the Babylonians.

And God says, I shall strengthen them to accomplish my purpose. We also can surmise why God told Habakkuk and the people to consider international events.

By this time, the Babylonians already were on the way to becoming a dominant world power. So God was telling his hearers that God was behind the rise of Babylon.

And if they looked, they could see it actually starting to happen. By this time, the Babylonians had already been mentioned by Isaiah as the city of Judah's exile. And that comes from Isaiah 39, 6, and 7.

And the Babylonians had subdued nations and become a conquering people. And the reference here might be to their swift rise to power. But this verse also gives us another indication of God's sovereignty because he's very explicit here in his identification of how he was going to bring judgment upon Judah.

[9 : 21] We see here the evidence of how he raises up kings and he brings them down. And in his wisdom, God dispersed his people among the nations so that they might bear witness to him among their captors.

And this really was part of the preparation for the coming Messiah in the fullness of time. But the timing was such that the spreading of this knowledge of the true God coincided with the need to discipline his people.

That God could use foreign nations for his purposes, even purposes of punishment for his people, really wouldn't have surprised Habakkuk because prophets long before him had taught that. The surprising, shocking piece of the news to Habakkuk was that God would use a people who acted like this and that God would actually underline and emphasize the terror and the violence that they would use.

And just in case the people have any doubt about whom the Chaldeans are, God spends the remainder of tonight's passage describing them. And that lengthy description of the Babylonians starts in the last part of verse 6 and continues all the way down through verse 11.

[10 : 27] So, so far we've seen the unbelievable work and the unexpected weapon. The rest of our time tonight will be spent on the unmerciful warriors. So, the unmerciful warriors is the third section.

And God describes those unmerciful warriors in that passage. So, let's read all of verse 6 through verse 11 again. God says these words, For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth to seize dwellings not their own.

They are dreaded and fearsome. Their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves.

Their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar. They fly like an eagle, swift to devour. They all come for violence, all their faces ford.

They gather captives like sand. At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it. Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men whose might is their own god.

[11 : 40] You probably didn't count there, but 20 features are noted about the Chaldeans in these verses. A lot of them come in pairs. And the focus is first on the Chaldean infantry, and then he moves to their cavalry, and then he moves to their attitude.

So we'll see their infantry, their cavalry, and their attitude here. The first reference is to a bitter and hasty nation. And bitter and hasty could also be described as angry and impetuous.

The Chaldeans were going to march through the breadth of the earth, is how the ESV describes it. And the picture here is of an army which advances swiftly, even recklessly, in all directions.

So throwing military caution to the wind, they would spread out in all directions so quickly that those in their path would have no time to escape. The Chaldeans would have the boldness to take on the whole world.

We mentioned some of their conquest earlier, but the early years of Nebuchadnezzar were devoted to conquest. As we talked about, Nineveh fell in 612 BC, then Pharaoh was crushed in 605 BC, Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 BC, and then Nebuchadnezzar even invaded Egypt in 568 BC.

[12 : 57] So they were very busy doing their conquering, and they really did march through the breadth of the earth. And it says while they marched through the breadth of the earth, they were going to seize dwellings, not their own.

So let's pause here a second and consider the situation in Habakkuk to when the Israelites were about to inherit the promised land. Remember, God promised the Israelite great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant.

All of those promises come from Deuteronomy 6, verses 10 and 11. But those promises also came with a warning. Listen to what Moses told the people in Deuteronomy 6, verses 12 through 16.

Again, this is Deuteronomy 6, 12 through 16. Moses said, Take care lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve, and by his name you shall swear. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you.

[14 : 11] For the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God, lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth. You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massa.

Here in Habakkuk, the bill is coming due. You can see that the roles are reversed. The Israelites are in a similar position to what the Canaanites were, but this time the Israelites are about to be displaced from the land because of their sin.

And the Babylonians, like the Israelites of old, stand ready to possess the promised land. So let's go back to the text and look at the next pair of adjectives that are used to describe the Babylonians.

That pair is dreaded and fearsome. And the word translated as dreaded also could be translated as terrible. So those would experience the dread, fear, and terror, and those people are the people of Judah.

Wherever they marched to impose their judgment, the Babylonians demanded submission to their will and obedience to their laws. They're totally self-sufficient, or at least they think they're self-sufficient.

[15 : 21] It says their judgment and dignity proceed from themselves. So in other words, they derive standards from no one. They set their own standards. They also give honor to no one, least of all God.

And they were a monument to themselves because of that. So the irony here is that God would use such a people like that because those people give him no honor.

And that would be the shocking thing to Habakkuk. Moving on to verses 8 and 9, that's where the description of the Chaldean cavalry starts. Horses would frighten and fascinate the people of Judah.

And it would also frighten the surrounding region because horses back then were scary in Judah. And they were also scarce as well. And the reason why they were scary is because they were symbols of war.

They didn't use them for farming like what we do today or for riding. So the Babylonian army is going to come in riding on their horses and suddenly attack the unprepared people of God.

[16 : 25] And if they try to flee, then they're going to be caught and ripped apart. It says also that the Babylonians are more fierce than the evening wolves. And the word translated more fierce means sharper cutting like you would do with a sword.

So it talks about the eagerness and cruelty of hungry wolves. Because the evening wolves likely would have gone without eating all day long. So they're even more hungry than what they normally would be.

And that would make their senses keener. And so once they finally caught their prey, there would be no mercy on that prey. They would devour them until they were completely satisfied.

So to the Babylonians, the battle is what the seizing of the prey is to a ravenous wolf. It was a savage delight. And they went to it with impatience. It talks about the riders of those horses as well. It says they're highly experienced and they're battle trained. And the reference to coming from afar likely is a reference to distance being no obstacle. And distance is no obstacle to them and it's no security for the people in Judah.

[17 : 34] Because the foreigners who don't understand the Jewish language, culture, and customs will be as strong and as hungry for blood on the day they arrive in Palestine as the day that they left Babylon.

And the end of verse 8 then mentions the eagle. And the eagle is known for its power and strength. So like the suddenness of a bird of prey, the Chaldean army would attack Jerusalem and end the wickedness of all the Jewish leaders.

So God indeed was doing a work in the world. And the Lord revealed that to the prophet that even in Habakkuk's day, that work would astound the world. And look at verse 9 again.

The description doesn't get any better. It says they all come for violence. All their faces forward. They gather captives like sand. Babylon's purpose there is clear.

They were bent on violence. And the same Hebrew term that Habakkuk used to describe the situation he complained to God about in verse 3 and which he cried to God about in verse 2 was used here.

[18:37] The army of Babylon would sweep into Judah bent on plunder and destruction. So it's almost like God is saying, you think you see violence now? Wait till you see what I'm going to do.

And more than the purpose was clear, the result also would be clear. It says the Babylonians were going to sweep into the region with their faces determined to take Jerusalem.

And the number of their captives would be so high that it would be like grains of sand. You almost couldn't count them. So are you starting to see now why God said that Habakkuk wouldn't believe what's going to happen even if he said what was going to happen?

And with verses 10 and 11 then, the focus shifts to the Chaldean leaders. It says, One of the comments I saw is that everyone should fear someone in whom no fear exists.

And that's probably not a bad statement because if someone is afraid of nothing, then they're also willing to do just about anything to another person. And the Babylonian army knocked kings of other nations and they made those rulers the objects of derision to them.

[19:51] They had contempt for all other authority. And the they, which could also be translated he, is emphasized in the Hebrew text. So some people think it may be talking about a specific leader rather than a group of leaders.

No one else may dare to do so, but the Babylonians were going to scoff and make sport of the rulers of the people that they conquered. And so the implication here is that if the army did not tremble even before other kings, the common people didn't stand a chance at all.

And the mentioned kings may refer more specifically to either the kings who tried to save Judah from Babylon or to the kings of Judah themselves, such as Jehoachin and Zedekiah.

We know that one of the ways the Babylonians derided captured kings was to gouge out their eyes and then throw them into cages and put them on display in public.

So again, the emphasis here is that nothing could stand before the Chaldean army because you see that the Babylonians, again, there's much emphasis here, the Babylonians laughed at the fortresses of the nations they tried to conquer.

[20:59] Jerusalem would have presented a formidable stronghold to them, but the Babylonians would scorn at the defenses and they would overcome them by throwing up temporary forts or other construction that would eventually overcome the city.

And one method of defeating a walled city like Jerusalem involved making a ramp of dirt and the attackers would climb up on this ramp and then overtake the city.

The Romans actually took a city with this strategy and then the Babylonians followed the practice that was developed by the Assyrians in besieging a city. Because after building that ramp or a causeway, the attackers constructed war machines that were mounted on four or six foot wooden wheels.

And from these, the warriors could shoot directly at the defenders on the walls of the city or they could even take the machine and use it as a battering ram against the wall. And at the same time, then they would start trying to dig a tunnel underneath the wall so that the walls would be weakened from underneath as well.

So once they felt like they had the walls weakened, then the full-scale assault would begin and the infantry that they talked about earlier would scale the walls using the tall ladders and then archers would increase the attack with their arrows and that would protect the infantry then.

[22:17] So you can see why the Chaldeans scoffed at other kings. They had perfected a strategy to take a city, even one that was heavily walled, like what Jerusalem was.

Notice here, though, the symbolism in God's message and His promised method. Because last week when we covered verse 4, we saw that the wicked in Judah surround the righteous.

And in verse 10, we see that the wicked in Judah who hem in the righteous are going to be hemmed in by the Babylonians. So God is turning the tables and doing exactly to the wicked rulers what they have been doing to the people.

Then verse 11 continues the description of the Babylonians' attitude. It says, And it's clear here that God ordained the Babylonians to carry out His purpose.

And we also see that the Babylonians only worshipped the might and the strength of their own hands. They bowed to no man and listened to no God. And so the person coming under their sway

had little hope.

[23 : 25] The same army that swept the earth like the wind also hurried on to plunge and plunder other nations. So such people like that have no accountability.

They never repent. And they offer no reparations. But they still violate even the most fundamental order of created life. But you see here that even while God is describing what is happening, He doesn't hide the fact that they're guilty.

And so the indictment of guilt shows that they have committed some offense, namely their worship of their own strength. And the word translated strength there means exactly what you think it would. It's talking about muscle strength or brawn. Elsewhere, the word is used to talk about Samson's might in Judges. It's talked about the strength of a wild ox in Job.

And Isaiah uses the same word to describe a blacksmith or a lone warrior. And Daniel talked about the strength of a goat or a man of brute strength is what Amos used that word for.

[24 : 28] So Babylon has a brute force that enables it to laugh at kings and the fortified cities. Not only do they have this power, though, they worship it. And that's why the strength is their God.

But the emphatic position of this statement about the godlessness of the Babylonians could encourage the reader to expect more. Because even in this dark passage here, there's a hint that surely God is not going to leave it at just that.

This can't be the entire answer to God or by God for Havoc's lament. So surely God eventually is going to deal with the godless. But we'll have to wait until we get to future passages to see that.

So the verses we've covered tonight are some tough verses. So we want to spend the rest of our time talking about how we can apply these verses and the lesson from them to our own lives.

And the main lesson to be drawn from God's response is the fact of divine control over what takes place. So divine control is the first lesson.

[25 : 36] God's rule is not to be thought of as a series of powerful responses to events that are initiated by others. Because events on the earth occur according to the purpose of him who works according to the counsel of his own will.

That comes from Ephesians 1 through 11. And this is true not only in the broad sweep of history, but also in the smallest details of the lives of individuals.

The same God who controls those major events of history knows the exact number of hairs each of us has on our heads. God's control is most evident at the incarnation when he sent his son when the fullness of time had come.

That is, just at the right moment when God decided that all the various strands of history had come together just as he had required and just as he planned. So in this age, God's purposes are determined by his plan to bring his people to holy perfection so that we'll be capable of worshiping him eternally.

One of the things we can learn from this too is that when we're baffled by what is happening, we're not to give way to despair, but we're to approach God even in our bafflement and ask that God sustain us during the difficult times.

[26 : 51] The forces that come against God's people are actually working out God's purposes even though we may not see it at the time. And God is able to bring good out of evil even though we may be blind as to how that can happen, especially when we're in the middle of the difficult times.

But just to prove that to you, let's look at other places in Scripture that teach about God's control over all events. The first few passages come from the life of the Old Testament Joseph.

And after Joseph was reunited with his brothers, Joseph references the brothers selling them into slavery. So we'll read parts of Genesis 45, verses 4 through 8.

Starting at the end of verse 4, Joseph said, I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.

And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

For the famine has been in the land these two years, and yet there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors.

[28 : 05] So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

So you see the illustration there. Joseph is clear that the brothers are the ones who sold him into slavery. Yet he also says, it was not you who sent me here, but God.

So even though they were doing what they wanted, they were actually doing what God intended to happen all along. So Joseph clearly understood that God was in control.

Listen to the first sentence of that last verse I read again. Once again, it said, So it is not you who sent me here, but God. And later, Joseph said these words to his brothers in Genesis 50, 20.

He said, As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

[29 : 05] The psalmist also understood that God is in control. Listen to this psalm by Asaph. Here's Psalm 76, verses 6 and 7.

And Asaph wrote these words. He said, For not from the east or from the west, and not from the wilderness comes lifting up. But it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.

And we see that illustrated here in Habakkuk passage tonight. God clearly says he's going to put down Judah by lifting up the Chaldeans.

It's not just an Old Testament concept that we see God's control. Moving to the New Testament, Peter's sermon in Acts 2 shows what the apostles taught.

And they also taught God's control over all things. Listen to Acts 2, verses 22 and 23. This is when Peter was talking about Jesus' crucifixion.

[30 : 07] He said, Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God, with mighty works and wonders, and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know, this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

And then in Romans 13, Paul also teaches that God decides which rulers will be in power. Listen to Romans 13, verses 1 and 2.

Paul said, Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. In our Habakkuk text tonight, God raising up Babylon is another example of how God institutes the governing authorities.

A second lesson we can learn from tonight's text is that God knows what is happening. So God knows what is happening. It may not seem like it when we're going through the difficult times, but God will act at the proper time.

[31 : 27] Remember the message of Habakkuk 1.5. Just when Habakkuk thought that God was idly looking at all the sin and the decay of society, God emphatically told Habakkuk, I am doing a work.

God had demonstrated His knowledge of events to the Israelites before, and we just need to look at a couple of passages to see that. Listen to Exodus 2, verses 23-25.

Again, this is Exodus 2, verses 23-25, and these verses reference the time when Israel was enslaved to Egypt. During those many days, the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help.

Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God, and God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel, and God knew.

So that is an important thing to remember. God saw the people of Israel in their struggles, and God knew. Listen also to David's words in the first six verses of Psalm 139.

[32 : 43] He says to the choir master, a psalm of David. O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know me when I sit down and when I rise up.

You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and You lay Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it.

It's both encouraging and scary, isn't it? The message of verse 4 when he says, Even before a word is on my tongue, You know it altogether. God knows what we're going to say before we say it.

So these and other references show what we saw in Habakkuk tonight. Not only does God know what is happening in the world, He also knows what is happening in our own lives.

[33 : 44] And one last cross-reference on this point is in Matthew 6, verses 7 and 8. Jesus himself is talking here, and he says in Matthew 6, 7 and 8, When you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their many words.

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Moving on to the third lesson from this passage tonight is that God's ways often are incomprehensible to us. God's ways often are incomprehensible to us. We've seen that already in one of the earlier cross-references. Remember what David said about God's knowledge in Psalm 139, 6. That's where he said, Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it. Other passages have a similar message about God's ways being incomprehensible to us. Perhaps the most famous passage illustrating this is Isaiah 55, verses 8 and 9. God, speaking through Isaiah, says, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

[35 : 03] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. When you think about it, it actually should be a comfort to us that God operates on a higher plane than we do.

But we can also have other illustrations of that in the Bible, and the same principle is illustrated in the New Testament as well. I'll just use one example here from Romans 11.

Paul writes these words in Romans 11, verses 33 through 36. He says, Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are his judgments, and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. With those thoughts in mind, here are some questions for reflection as we go through the rest of the week.

[36 : 11] The first one is, Is prayer always answered as we expect? Is prayer always answered as we expect? That's a fairly easy one to reflect on, but you have some scripture references too, to back up what the Bible says about that.

The second question gets a little tougher, and you see it there. It's, What do people give priority to when they rebel against God? What do people give priority to when they rebel against God? And then the last question is this, Considering God's purposeful control of all things, how should we respond to the challenges and difficulties we have to face?

Considering God's purposeful control of all things, how should we respond to the challenges and difficulties we have to face? We talked last week about how Habakkuk's times sound like our own times.

We need to learn the same lessons that Habakkuk is learning. And once again, those lessons are God is in control, God knows what is happening, and God's ways often are incomprehensible to us.

[37 : 25] If God was just like us, He wouldn't be much of a God. So when you don't understand what's happening, search the scripture, trust God, and then remember the words of Paul that we read earlier in Romans 11, verses 33 through 36.

That's where he said, Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable are His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor, or who has given a gift to Him, that He might be repaid? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank You for the reminder in Scripture tonight that sometimes the answers we get from You are not the answers that we would like, and sometimes those answers are unpleasant.

But help us remember, during the midst of those unpleasant answers, that You are in control, that You are aware of what's going on, and You are working Your purpose.

Help us to continue to trust You in that, and help us develop even more trust as we progress. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Thank you.