



## [Habakkuk 1:5-11](#)

(5) "Look among the nations, and behold and be amazed and stunned; for *I* will work a work in your days *which* you will not believe, not even if it is declared to you, (6) For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess dwelling places that are not their own. (7) They *are* terrible and fearful; their law and their majesty proceed from themselves. (8) Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves. And their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from afar. They shall fly like the vulture hurrying to devour. (9) "All of them shall come for violence; their faces are set sternly as the east wind; and they gather captives like the sand. (10) And they shall scoff at the kings, and the rulers *shall* be a scorn to them. They shall laugh at every stronghold, for they shall heap up dust and capture it. (11) Then he sweeps on *like* wind, and he transgresses and is guilty, *crediting* his power to his god."

*A Faithful Version*

[God](#) says, "You are not going to believe what I am about to tell you, Habakkuk, but I am already at work to deliver you and punish the sinners around you." Then what does He do? He tells the prophet that He is sending the ferocious, bloody, terrifying Chaldeans to conquer Judah!

The prophet must have been stunned! This was not the answer he expected in the least. What kind of deliverance is humiliating defeat at the hand of these utterly godless people who struck terror into the entire Middle East? In addition, they were Gentiles, and God was taking their side and cruelly punishing His own people. It must have shaken his [faith](#) to hear God tell him, "I am coming to spank this nation with the worst of the heathen."

And just as God said, Habakkuk did not want to believe it. In his eyes, the deliverance was worse than the original corruption—atleast that is what he thought at first. From what he understood of God, this made no sense. How could a loving God punish His

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own special people with a club like the Chaldeans?

To understand God's answer we have to understand what God's work is. [Psalm 74:12](#) says, "God is . . . working [salvation](#) in the midst of the earth." [Genesis 1:26](#) says God is creating man in His own image, building character in us so that we can live eternally as He does. What is astounding is *how* He chooses to do it because He does it far differently than we would. As the old saying goes, "God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform." To a man's way of thinking, His works are truly mysterious; sometimes, we do not have a clue how He works.

[Isaiah 55:8-11](#) explains that God sometimes does things in a very round-about way, but it has a kind of boomerang effect. At times, it seems God goes in one direction, off the beaten path, but that is merely our perspective of it. We find out later—after we have grown in [wisdom](#) and understanding—that He has been following His plan all along. We are the ones who have not kept up. Habakkuk deals a great deal with perspective—man's perspective versus God's. God always gets His job done. When He sends forth His word to accomplish a work, it always comes back to Him with the result He intends. It may not make much sense to us at the time, but it surely works because God is behind it. In the end, it is the best way.

Many have questioned why God has allowed the church to decline and scatter in recent years. What is happening here? Why has God had to do this in order to bring us into His Kingdom? Why must He destroy to make well? We have shaken our heads at the swiftness and brutality of it all. That is how Habakkuk felt with the Chaldeans breathing down the Judeans' necks. If God had told us a few decades ago that the church would lose, say, two-thirds of its members, would we have believed Him? Would we have even considered that a work of God? "Look . . . and watch—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you" (verse 5). Now we can understand how Habakkuk felt. He had prior warning, and it made him question God's very nature.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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[Habakkuk](#)



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