

Message #8**Habakkuk 3:8-15**

This past Monday an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.2 struck Iran near the border of Iraq. Reports have said that more than 50 people have been injured and many villages were destroyed. Last Saturday in Boca West Florida, a tornado touched down. We are hearing that the east coast is getting ready for a potential violent hurricane season and it is also predicted that the end of August will reach record levels of heat and humidity.

Now I don't know for sure exactly what God is doing with all of these weather things, but one thing I do know is that He is sovereign over them. There is no doubt that one of the key doctrines of the Bible, which is a major doctrine and not minor doctrine, is the Sovereignty of God. There is also no doubt that when you study the Scriptures, God is in complete control of weather and nature. He designed it and He uses it.

Now whenever God decides to use nature in some negative way, it is not to punish nature; it is designed to scare people. In other words, God, at times, uses nature in some very unusual ways in order to get people's attention that He is God. For example, when people see a rainbow in the sky, God wants people to remember that He has promised that He will never again destroy all things with a flood (Gen. 9:12-17). Now typically we see rainbows after there has been some violent torrential storm. So God uses a storm to get people to realize His power.

Habakkuk came to understand this about God. He came to understand that God was sovereign over everything, including nature. He was a prophet who also realized that God can, has and will again use nature for His judgmental purposes. In fact, in this text what Habakkuk reveals is that:

GOD'S WORD REVEALS THAT GOD HAS USED AND WILL USE HIS SOVEREIGN POWER OVER NATURE TO SPECIFICALLY TARGET AND DESTROY HIS EVIL ENEMIES AND SAVE HIS PEOPLE.

Now one thing that is very clear from this text is that God does intend to use His nature for His judgment purposes. God will use His nature for His wrath purposes. God displays His sovereign power by things He does with water and by things He does with land. He can cause hurricanes, floods, volcanoes, tornadoes and lightning to do exactly what He wants them to do. **The reason He uses these things is not to judge and punish nature, but to judge and punish people.**

During the Tribulation, God is specifically going to use the rivers, the seas and the mountains for His judgment purposes. There are eight sovereign realities brought out in these verses:

SOVEREIGN REALITY #1 – God's rage, anger and wrath were not against the water. 3:8a

God is the creator of all water. He made the water in the seas and the water in the rivers. When God stirs up the waters of rivers or seas in some violent way, He is not angry at the water; He is angry at sinful people who mock Him and His Word.

We could give several examples of this, but one such example is the story of Jonah. Jonah was running from God. He was on a ship in the Mediterranean running away from God. God sent a terrible wind and a huge storm out on the sea that was so violent that experienced sailors became very afraid. God was not mad at the sea; He was angry with Jonah and that is why He caused such a violent storm (Jonah 1:4-5).

When some violent wind blows through an area and knocks down trees, He is not mad at the trees; He is showing His power for people to see.

Now we know that during the Tribulation, God is going to do some horrible things to land with water. In the early part of the Tribulation, God will destroy 1/3rd of all sea water and all fresh water (Rev. 8:8-10). God is not doing this because He is angry with water, but He is pouring out His wrath on people.

When people see a ferocious storm in nature, if they think in ways that are theologically right, they should realize there is a powerful, angry side to God. He is a powerful God and when He gets angry, He can use nature for His purposes. That is what Habakkuk came to understand.

SOVEREIGN REALITY #2 – God uses His sovereign might to bring about salvation for His people. **3:8b**

The episode referred to at the end of **verse 8** is an episode found in the book of Exodus. We may recall that the Egyptians got on their horses and chariots to chase after Israel. Habakkuk realized it wasn't the Egyptians riding those horses and it wasn't the Egyptians riding those chariots; God was sovereignly behind every bit of it. God was bringing those Egyptians to the very spot He was going to destroy them.

So they rode the horses and chariots into the middle of the Red Sea, and in all reality they were salvation horses and chariots. God was in the process of saving His people and He sovereignly caused the Egyptians to ride out into the middle of the Red Sea so He could destroy them and save His own.

Remember when this book of Habakkuk began, Habakkuk was questioning God and alleging that He wasn't doing anything about the corruption and the evil. He has come to realize that God is doing plenty. He uses political and ethnic turmoil and he uses nature to accomplish His purposes. He is involved in everything.

There is a big racial mess right now in Missouri. The thing that has gone through my mind is that during the Tribulation one of the first things that will happen is civil wars will break out. In Revelation 6:4, it is predicted that very early in the Tribulation men will slay one another of the same kind. In other words, Americans will kill Americans. That stage is being set right now.

**SOVEREIGN REALITY #3 – God used His sovereign weapons as a means of chastisement.
3:9a**

Now the first part of **verse 9** indicates that these water things are God's weapons. In other words, God uses them to accomplish His purposes. In fact, Habakkuk was so focused on this thought that he interjected the word "Selah."

Selah—stop and think about this. Stop and think about what? God is sovereign over everything and He uses everything to carry out His purposes and His will. God uses storms, diseases, catastrophes, and tragedies for His sovereign purposes. Selah—stop and think about that.

SOVEREIGN REALITY #4 – God displays His sovereignty by His creation. 3:9b

It is interesting at the end of **verse 9** that Habakkuk brings out the fact that God has sliced the earth or "cleaved" the earth with rivers. This is absolutely true. If you look at any map in any place in the world you will see that rivers slice through the earth and the nations. They divide land. These rivers that slice through the earth are put there by God. They are used for sources of water and God may also use them as weapons of judgment.

SOVEREIGN REALITY #5 – God's creation responds to the Presence of God. 3:10-11

There are four responses brought out here:

Response #1 - The Mountains respond to God's presence and commands. 3:10a

Only the presence of God can cause the mountains to shake. Our presence won't do it. God's presence will. As we have mentioned throughout our study of prophetic books, when Jesus Christ was here He told His disciples that if they would have had just a small amount of faith in whom He actually was, they could have said to the mountain be moved and it would have been moved (Matt. 17:20). This idea of moving mountains is critical to the time when Israel gets her Kingdom. When Jesus Christ returns the next time, the mountains will be moved.

Response #2 - The waters respond to God's presence and commands. 3:10b

When God wants downpours of water to occur, those waters respond. When God wants the deep waters to surge, those waters respond. When God wants waves lifted up high, those waters respond. The waters of the heavens and the earth perfectly respond to the presence and the commands of God.

Response #3 - The sun and moon respond to God's presence and judgment of God. 3:11a

The sun and moon respond to the presence of God. Now the episode to which Habakkuk is referring comes from Joshua 10.

The Amorites had come up against Israel and Joshua had prayed to God for help and God said don't fear because God had given them into their hand (Josh. 10:8) and not one of them would live. So Israel started fighting and the Amorites started running away and God sent hail storms to kill many of them and then God actually caused the sun to stand still so Israel could be victorious (Josh. 10:11-14). At the end of this episode, Joshua said, "the LORD fought for Israel."

How did God fight? He sent hail. He caused the sun and moon to stay put.

Response #4 - The lightning flashes are the spears of God and display the power of God.
3:11b

Those flashes of lightning are not random electrical bolts that mean nothing. They are a display of the presence and power of God.

Now all of nature does what God wants it to do. The problem is with people. People do not realize the presence of God nor the power of God.

SOVEREIGN REALITY #6 – God's indignation will march through the earth and trample all nations. **3:12**

Now Habakkuk zeroes in on where he is headed with this. God is a Sovereign God and God is in charge of everything and all nature is at His disposal and what He will do is "march through the earth" and use His nature to pour out His wrath and anger. He will destroy nations by using His heavenly power. Read Revelation 16 and it is clear that God will, in fact, use the seas and the rivers and the sun to pour out His indignation and it is also clear that when He does, men will blaspheme God and not repent (Rev. 16:11).

SOVEREIGN REALITY #7 – God will sovereignly save His people. **3:13a**

This is a very significant point. Remember Habakkuk has been questioning God on the fact that those evil seem to be getting away with everything. God says I want you to know there will come a day when My people will be saved and My anointed will be exalted.

Now we may observe that one Person is brought up who is identified as the "anointed." Some have suggested that this refers to Israel. But there can be little doubt that this refers to the anointed Messiah who is none other than Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Savior. Jesus Christ is the Messiah. Jesus Christ is the Deliverer. Jesus Christ is God's anointed and Jesus Christ is coming back to save His people.

Israel will be nationally saved and will have every inch of her Promised Land.

SOVEREIGN REALITY #8 – God will sovereignly destroy His evil enemies. **3:13b-15**

There are five judgmental facts brought out here:

Judgmental Fact #1 - God will destroy the head of the evil. **3:13b**

God will literally strike down the head of the evil when He judges. That head may be some political leader like the antichrist, or it may refer to Satan himself. Both are true. The anointed will destroy any who are the head of evil.

Judgmental Fact #2 - God will slit enemies open from bottom to top. **3:13c**

Now it is clear that this cannot be some historical reference to Pharaoh, because God drowned him. This is a reference to what God will do to the one who will head the evil. He will lay him open from thigh to neck. All evil and all opposition to God will be completely destroyed by God from bottom to top.

In fact, notice Habakkuk again uses the word “selah,” which means stop and think about it. There are people who don’t want to think about a God who could judge and Habakkuk says you better stop and think about this right now.

Judgmental Fact #3 - God will use the enemies own weapons to destroy them. **3:14a**

God will eventually cause enemies to use their own weapons on themselves. He will cause such a confusion that enemies start killing each other. We saw that in Judges. When Gideon with his 300 men went up against the Midianites, God caused the Midianites to use their swords on each other (Judges 7:22). Apparently during the Tribulation, God is going to do very similar kinds of things.

Judgmental Fact #4 - God will destroy those who storm against His people. **3:14b**

The enemies of Israel will storm in against Israel to scatter her and they will proudly exalt themselves. But what they don’t realize is that God is leading them into a trap. The enemies of God’s people are proud and they think they are so successful. They oppress people in secret and they think they are getting away with it. God says no you are not.

Judgmental Fact #5 - God will completely trample and drown the enemies of His people.
3:15

Habakkuk came to realize that God is in sovereign control of everything and He is actually in the process of leading the evil and wicked into His destructive trap. Now there are plenty of evidences that God is sovereign and that He has a judgmental side. The question is are you saved? These evidences of judgment in nature are “chariots of salvation.” Are you saved? Have you personally believed on Jesus Christ? If you have, you have nothing to fear.

If you have not, every time you hear thunder or see lightning or hear of a hurricane or tornado you should tremble because it is nothing compared to hell.