1:2 The closer we are to God, the more we will be able like Habakkuk to question Him, to have dialogue with Him, rather than accepting the principles of the Bible as His cold word to us which we simply have to accept without any response from us back to Him.

1:5 Paul appropriates the words of Hab. 1:5 LXX to his work of preaching (Acts 13:2; 14:26). Even if people don’t believe our message, God is still using us to work His work. In the process of preaching the Gospel we feel God working with us; the exercise of preaching is therefore largely for our benefit, and it is not therefore ever a failure even if people disbelieve the Gospel we preach.

1:6 God ‘raised up’ evil people in order to fulfil His purpose. The temporary ‘rise and rise’ of the wicked shouldn’t discourage us- it is actually of God, and they are merely tools in His hands.

1:12 If we truly believe that we are His people, not those of this world, and that we are truly part of His eternal family, then God’s eternity becomes a guarantee of our eternal salvation. If He lives for ever, so shall we (this is true also of Christ- if we are connected with His resurrection to eternal life through baptism, we too shall live for ever with Him, Jn. 14:19; Rom. 6:8; 2 Cor. 13:4; 2 Tim. 2:11).

2:2 *May run* – Running in response to God’s word is an idiom for obediently responding to it (Ps. 119:32,60; 147:15; Amos 8:11,12; 2 Thess. 3:1). The ‘plainer’ the word is made, the more clearly it is understood, the greater will be our response to it. Correct understanding of God’s word is therefore important because it is related to the extent of our ‘running’ in response to it.

2:3 The context is a prophecy concerning the coming Babylonian desolation of Jerusalem. There were some who felt that the fulfilment of these words of God was 'tarrying' so long that it would never come. We face the same temptation with regard to the prophecies of Christ’s return.

2:4 *The justified*- Much is made of this verse in the New Testament, to teach that we sinners are counted righteous, declared in the right as we stand in the dock before the judgment of God, on the basis of our faith in Christ- rather than our works (Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:38). The context of this verse teaches that living by faith is the antithesis of being proud. The life of faith, trusting thereby in grace, is a life of humility.

2:14 A clear prediction of God’s Kingdom coming on earth.

2:16 Being given the cup of the Lord is a double symbol- of blessing (1 Cor. 10:16,21; 11:26); or, as here, a symbol of condemnation (Ps. 75:8; Jer. 51:7; Rev. 16:19). This adds some intensity to the cup we take at the memorial service. We are drinking that cup either to our condemnation (1 Cor. 11:29), or to our eternal blessing. Hence the breaking of bread meeting brings us up to a T-intersection in our lives.

3:2 *In wrath, You remember mercy-* God’s anger and judgments aren’t the wrath of an offended deity who is more powerful than us, as it were hitting back at us because we have upset Him. His judgments incorporate mercy, and are aimed at bringing good out of evil, teaching others His ways through them (Is. 26:9).

3:16 After twice approaching God with the question of “Why?”, and each time being given fresh insights into the awful nature of the judgment to come as a response, Habakkuk ends up with a trembling body and lips that ‘quivered at the sound’ of God’s word… and yet, at the very same time, feels that he still “will rejoice in the Lord” (:18), even though he doesn’t fully understand. Faith involves an element of acceptance that God is right, even though we don’t understand.

3:17 These were all the blessings promised for obedience. Habakkuk had been obedient, but didn’t seem to have received these blessings. Yet still he had the faith to rejoice in God’s grace, even though he didn’t understand the exact relationship between obedience and blessing in this life.

3:18 *Yet will I*- Even if others amongst God’s people turn away and are punished for it, yet we personally can still rejoice in our personal relationship with God.