

Kings and Prophets 15-04-24b

We pick up our study here in Micah chapter 2, we're looking at verse 10, where God says to his people, the same people that he promised prosperity, peace, and rest in a land of safety and security, arise and depart for this is not rest, this is not your rest, because it is defiled, it shall destroy. This gives the reason why God's promise is not fulfilled. The word here translated defiled means unclean.

It literally, one way to translate this is, uncleanness will destroy and the destruction will be severe. It reminds us of another place in scripture where it says, but when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, when it is fulfilled or completed, bringeth forth death. This defilement, this uncleanness is what caused people in Israel to have to leave the assembly.

Remember, if you were unclean, you had to go outside the camp and wait until a ritual of purification or a certain amount of time had passed. If you touched something dead, remember when Miriam was rejected for bad-mouthing her brother Moses, let that be a lesson to siblings who get crossways, Moses tries to intercede on her behalf and God says, if her father had spit in her face, she would have to go outside and be separate from the assembly for a period of time, and he sends her out. But this was defilement, uncleanness was not to be found in the camp of Israel.

It has to be purged, it has to be expunged, touch not the unclean thing. It's the reason, by the way, that the Lord Jesus was crucified outside the gates. This was symbolic of the fact that it was a representation of the rejection of that sin and that defilement that he bore on our behalf, outside the camp, suffered outside the gate.

Get up and leave, depart, get up and depart. This is not your rest, the land is defiled and this defilement will destroy, the destruction is going to be complete, it will be thoroughly destroyed. If a man should walk in a false spirit and speak a lie, saying, I will prophesy to you of wine and drink, he would be the prattler of this people.

That's a little bit obscure, I like the way the NET has rendered this, let me read you the NET. If a lying windbag should come and say, I promise you wine and beer, he would be just the right preacher for these people. Makes a little more sense out of it, doesn't it? And I think they've really gotten at the force of the Hebrew here.

If a lying windbag should come and say, I promise you wine and beer, he would be just the right preacher for these people. Wine and beer, Miller High Life, it's Miller time, go for the gusto. Self-indulgence, self-gratification, self-centeredness, that is the motif.

And if you find a preacher who will cater to that, and by the way, we have him today, we have him on television, we even have him here in great television ministries coming right out of the great state of Texas, down south. We've got guys that are just mouth full of teeth, that promise

people exactly what they want to hear. Has nothing to do with glorifying God, has nothing to do with furthering the plan and purpose of God, or bringing credit to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is, I get what I want, I will feel good about myself, and God will bless me. I'll bring my tithes into the storehouse, and God will open the windows of blessing, and become the great genie of the lamp for me. And this is the constant preaching of the prosperity gospel.

Well, beer and wine, wine and beer, just the right preacher for these people. Look at verse 12, I, God says, will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel, I will put them together like sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of the pasture. They shall make a loud noise because of so many people.

They'll be very noisy when I bring them all together. The one who breaks open will come up before them, in other words, the one who can break through barriers will lead them out. They will break out, pass through the gate, and leave.

Their king will advance before them, the Lord himself will lead them. The Lord is at their head. So, what's he saying here? Because he is condemning the people in verse 10 and verse 11.

And then he says in verse 12, I will gather all of you, O Jacob, I will assemble the remnant of Israel. And sadly, this is where I don't really care for the net translation because they kind of fuzz up what I think is the idea here. What's the difference in Jacob and Israel? What does Jacob mean? What does Yaakov mean in Hebrew? Chiseler, cheat, conman, supplanter, the one who takes what rightfully belongs to others, big deals them out of it.

What does Israel mean? This actually is kind of easy to remember. You know the El part is God, El Elohim. But the first part, Yitzra, right in the middle of that you have Tsar.

And this is where the Russians get the word Tsar, T-S-A-R, Tsar, it means prince, it means ruler or leader. And the Yitzar or the Tsar is prince, prince of God, Israel, prince of God, ruler at God's behest and on God's behalf, Yitzra'el. So God says, I will gather all of you, O Jacob.

This is the entire group of the people, bar none. They are believers, but many of them are no better than the scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites in this generation. I will assemble the remnant of Israel, those who are worthy to be called Israel, those who have followed Jacob into the faith that changed him from Jacob to Israel in line for blessing.

Remember Jacob is trying to wrestle his way into blessing, I will not let you go until you bless me. And God says, look, you're going to be blessed. You'll eventually be Israel, but you're going to have to go through some things first.

I will bring them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in the middle of a pasture. There'll be so many of them, it'll be noisy. Then he says, the one who breaks through, the one who is capable of smashing barriers will lead them.

The one who breaks open and comes up before them and breaks out and passes through the gate is the one who takes them out of a kind of captivity. What is going to happen as a result of the condemnation that has been described in these early portions of Micah? They are going to go into captivity. It is a pronouncement of judgment.

But as I said in the introduction to this book, Micah is interleaved with future harbingers of deliverance and of blessing beyond the judgment. God, like a good parent, is careful to remind his children, his people, that although he is judging them and judging them harshly, this isn't the end of relationship. This isn't the abrogation of the covenant.

This is a necessary intermediate judgment, but it doesn't derail God's final fulfillment of his covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the ones that came through Moses, the ones that were given to David. And so even as he judges them and says, you're going to have to leave, your land is not secure, you don't listen, you follow the wrong kinds of leaders who preach a false message, I will still eventually assemble you, I will separate the remnant from the crowd that still hasn't learned their lesson, and the Lord himself will break through the boundary of that captivity and lead you out. This brings us to chapter 3, I said, Here now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel.

And once again, when you see Jacob and Israel, we're watching for the distinction, the heads of Jacob and the rulers of the house of Israel. You think, well, those are just synonymous, he's just being redundant. God is never redundant.

I don't believe. I just don't think God wastes his words. It's too big a task to put this treasure in earthen vessels and preserve it down through the years to waste words.

And they're here for a reason. That's why we note a distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. It's not just stylistic variation.

There's a reason why Jesus is sometimes called the Son of Man or calls himself the Son of Man, and other times he says he is the Son, and he doesn't say Son of Man, and it implies he's the Son of God. There's a reason for it. It's significant.

And it's the same thing here. Here now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel. The house of Israel, the remnant, is actually going to be a much smaller contingent.

Everyone is to listen, but they're going to be listening in different ways and for different things. You think about the impending demise of this country, certainly economically, if not worse. And as we look at the signs of the times, as we recognize that hardship is coming, we do not grieve as others who have no hope.

Why? Because God will not suffer the righteous to be moved. We will experience what the nation experiences. We will go through what everybody else goes through, but we will go through it in a different way for a different reason, with different goals, with different resources, and with a different outcome.

What is judgment for some is opportunity and deliverance for others. What can be meant for evil for some can be good for others. It is all in our attitude toward God, our pursuit of faith and obedience.

God converts cursing to blessing. What is an evil day for some becomes a day of triumph and overcoming for others. I think all of us would like to be overcomers.

We see the promises to the overcomers, to him who overcomes. Jesus says in the letters of Revelation 2 and 3, to him that overcomes I will grant, and they are wonderful privileges and blessings and promises. Well, how can you be an overcomer if there is nothing to overcome? If all you had to do was step over a shallow ditch, if all you had to do was get your foot to clear a small rock, that is not really overcoming.

Overcome means there was something serious, something potentially dangerous or disastrous, and we overcome. We overcome by faith. Well, big faith requires big challenges, and it is all in the invisible, in the spiritual realm.

To the eye of those who look on the outward appearance, two people can be going through exactly the same difficult circumstance, but one of them has peace, has encouragement, has future hope, recognizes that there is a plan and a purpose, and has a much more fulfilling time in those circumstances than someone who is strictly operating at a base human material level and has no recourse, has no hope, has no perspective. Like a two-year-old being taken to the doctor for shots, no concept of what is actually going on. Can't grasp it.

Can't see the bigger picture. Incapable. The carnal mind cannot understand the things of the spirit because they are spiritually discerned.

So, hear now, O heads of Jacob and you rulers of the house of Israel, is it not for you to know justice? You who hate good and love evil, who strip the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones, who also eat the flesh of my people, flay their skin from them, break their bones and chop them in pieces like meat for the pot, like flesh in the cauldron. Then they will cry to the Lord, but He will not hear them. He will even hide His face from them at that time because they have been evil in their deeds.

There are those who provide us an opportunity to help. We look out not only for our own interests, but also for the interests of others. If we are insensitive, in other words, we are failing the horizontal love test, the love of God is not shed abroad in our hearts by God the Holy Spirit.

We are inherently self-indulgent and self-centered. God, in a sort of poetic justice, will place those people in a situation where they need help from others. They need something from the outside and it will not be there.

This is your rich man and Lazarus scenario. Lazarus is suffering at the man's gate. He walks by him in blatant violation of the encouragements and ordinances of the Law of Moses that say, look out for your brother.

He is not a Gentile. He is not an outcast. When you see your brother in need, you are to love your neighbor as yourself.

The rich man blatantly tramples that whole idea. Well, in the future, Lazarus is comforted and he is tormented. Why is he tormented? He is experiencing in that classic divine reversal what Lazarus experienced.

He did not get help from Lazarus, so Lazarus is not allowed to come, even dip his finger in water and cool his tongue. This is the principle. If you are going to ignore the grace of God, if you are going to reject the opportunities that God provides, it is *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

The justice of God without mitigation, without moderation, is going to fall. Rightfully so, because we know better. We are not ignorant.

We know. If we fly in the face of what we know, there is no moderation of the judgment. It is going to be severe.

Judgment is coming to the house of God. There is not a more ignored, overlooked, and underpreached truth in our day than the judgment of God on believers. It is explained away.

It is waved away as applying to unbelievers. Well, that is going to be the people in hell. The warning, the skinning alive with a whip of every son that he receives that is talked about over and over again in scripture is just ignored.

I just can't believe God would do that, so they don't. Well, you are going to find out the hard way. We are accountable as children of God, and God as a Father is going to correct us for good, and he will judge us when we are rebellious and committing the sin of the high hand as some of these people are.

So, he is going to gather and deliver as promised, but there is going to be two groups in that deliverance. There is going to be the house of Israel, and there is going to be the Jacob bunch. There is going to be the herd, and as they pass through the gate, their king will pass before them, and he is going to know which of his sheep hear his voice and respond and follow, and which don't.

And these who are insensitive to the needs of others, who oppress the poor and ignore their plight, strip the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones, they will cry to the Lord in verse 4, but he will not hear them. He will hide his face from them at that time, because they have been evil in their deeds. Galatians 6, 7 and 8 says what? Be not deceived.

There are plenty of believers who are deceived. They swallow the prosperity gospel. They think God is not in his heaven.

They don't find this side of the promises of God to be reality. God is not mocked. Whatever you

sow is what you will reap.

He that sows to the flesh, sows to materialism, sows to the short-term mundane earthly goals and values of this life will reap corpse rot, will reap stench. That word for corruption in Greek, this is as bad as it gets. And this is at the judgment seat of Christ.

This is New Testament. It's Galatians. And Paul tells the people in Galatia, if you're going your own way and doing your own thing, you will reap rotted corpse stench at the judgment seat of Christ.

Because God is not mocked. He that sows to the Spirit of the Spirit reaps life everlasting, life in the fullness of God's eternal blessing. And there is a great gulf fixed between those two, just as there is between the rich man and Lazarus.

That's what he's talking about here. It's shocking language. These images are shocking as Micah delivers them to the people of Judah.

Will you wake up? Will you listen to the word of the Lord? Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who make my people stray, who chant peace. And if you don't think there are pastors doing the same thing to the church today, just turn on any of your Christian television stations. Search on some spiritual topic on YouTube and listen to the... There's an infinitude of guys willing to talk on YouTube.

Pastors of churches have all got their channels. Everybody's going Internet. The Internet is a great thing in some ways, and it is a disaster in others.

One of the ways it is a disaster is it is unfiltered and unmoderated. In the sense that the greatest preacher of our day could be on YouTube, and the worst, lamest, most mixed up guy in the world could be on there, and there's no way to tell them apart. They say, well, we'll use feedback.

You can't even read the feedback because there's so many people posting profanity and inanity and off-topicality and all kinds of other stuff. It's just like you can't go buy reviews in a product on Amazon or anywhere else because people who work at Amazon pose as users and go up there and give everything five stars. Go to some of these real scam things like some of these wrinkle-defying age cream deals, and you go and say, well, show me some reviews.

Oh, there's all of these incredible reviews saying how great it is, and then there's other people saying this guy has used this same language on seven different websites with seven different names. He's obviously a stooge. He's a fake.

He's artificially trying to pump this stuff up and fool people into thinking that this is great. There's no discrimination between good and evil on the web except you just have to wander in there and try to do your best based on your horse sense, but it's very difficult. There is probably some great Bible teaching on YouTube, some guys that are really teaching great classes, but

how would you find them? How would you know? You'd have to sit and listen to a number of them.

And one time a guy is great, and the next time you find out he's a flaming post-tribulationist or a amillennialist or a Jesus-wasn't-really-God type. I heard a really good class by a guy, and I thought, well, maybe this guy's on the right track. I heard another one, and then it turned out he didn't believe Jesus was God.

I thought, wow, talk about some area, some area being right and some area being terrible. Oh, he's in line for the judgment of some area. So we ask God, we seek, we knock on the door knowing that God will honor that promise.

Those who seek will find. Those who don't seek are going to be turned over to what they choose instead. Read Romans chapter 2. And that is what is happening to these people.

They are turned over to the preachers that say, I promise you wine and beer. Pay no attention to the fact that I've got lying windbag tattooed on my forehead. Listen, God says, Here now, heads of Jacob, rulers of the house of Israel, is it not for you to know justice? Is it not for you to receive judgment? You should know what is right, yet you hate what is right.

Another great translation from the NET. You know what is right, and you hate what is right, and you love what is wrong. Some day, verse 4, these sinners will cry to the Lord for help, but He will not answer them.

And then they'll blame God. See, I told you God wasn't there. I told you God was a waste of time.

I pray to Him and nothing happens. Well, there's a reason for that. He will hide His face from them at that time because they have done such wicked deeds.

People want to follow their own way and then use God as a last resort when they get in trouble. This is what the Lord says, verse 5, concerning the prophets who make my people stray, who chant peace while they chew with their teeth. This is a very literal picture of what happens to shyster ministries that big deal little old ladies out of their social security money in the name of ministry and in the name of the gospel and then spend it on themselves.

They're chewing the people of God in their teeth. And if you don't think there's going to be a harsh judgment on some of the ones that have been doing this, I want to have some kind of asbestos suit on me when God starts judging those folks. I want to be standing at a safe distance.

Light fuse, get away. It's like the firecrackers say, because it is going to be a hot time at the judgment for those who take advantage of people who don't know enough to perceive their fallacies who are getting chopped up like meat in the pot. If someone gives them enough, they will give an oracle of peace, he says in verse 5. But they prepare war against him who puts

nothing in their mouth.

What doesn't profit them, they condemn. Therefore you shall have night without vision and you shall have darkness without divination. In other words, it's going to be dark and you're going to have no light.

You will not be able to see your way. You won't be able to find the landmarks. You won't know which way to go.

Sun will set on these prophets and daylight will turn to darkness over their heads. They will be ashamed. The omen readers, the ones who claim to be guides, remember how Jesus condemned the Pharisees as blind guides and the blind leading the blind and both falling into the ditch? This is a similar pronouncement.

They will be humiliated. They will be embarrassed and ashamed. They will have to cover their mouths because they will have nothing of value to say.

There is no answer from God. It's their job to communicate what God says but God's not going to give them anything to say. But I, verse 8, truly am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord.

And I am full of justice and might to declare to Jacob his transgression. And it takes courage to tell everybody else the truth when they are in error, to stand against the tide. A lot of our young people have to go into public education and into the swamp of their peers.

And if they stand for what is true and stand for what is right, it takes courage because they are going to be vilified. They are going to be looked down upon. They are going to be scorned and condescended to and made fun of.

But this is how Micah does it. He says, you know what? I cultivate the presence and power of God's Spirit. And in that, I am full of power and justice and might.

And I will declare, I will say, this is wrong. If you are asking me, gay marriage, it's wrong. If you want to go marry somebody of your own gender, go be warm and be fed.

But if you are asking me, it's wrong. Then declare to Israel his sin. Now, hear this, and by the way, you have Jacob and Israel there once again.

Transgression for Jacob and sin for Israel. What's the difference? All of us need our sin identified and pointed out to us, right? The difference is, Israel will respond. Israel will repent.

Israel will confess and ask for cleansing. Will pray the prayer of Psalm 51. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me. Make me white as snow. I want the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse me from all sin.

I want to walk in the light. I want to be restored and renewed. We all sin and we all need that

declaration so that we can identify it in ourselves.

The difference is, what do you do with that identification? If you don't have humility, you reject it. That's not me. That doesn't apply.

I reject the whole premise. Well, your day will come, a day of no comfort, a day of darkness and not light. You heads of the house of Jacob, rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity, her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money.

You know what big business Christian ministry is today? Christian publishing, Christian broadcasting, big money, big proceeds. Yet they lean on the Lord and say, is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us. It's all self-serving and self-centered.

But any time judgment is threatened, they say, oh, the Lord will protect us. It's just non-sequitur. It doesn't even compute.

Disaster can't come on us where the Lord is among us. Therefore, because of you, Zion will be plowed up like a field. Jerusalem will become heaps of ruins.

Now, when did this actually happen? When did Jerusalem become heaps of ruins? Not till the days of Daniel, the days of Ezekiel, when Nebuchadnezzar came in and razed the city. That was the destruction of Solomon's temple, remember? That's why Ezra and Nehemiah and Zerubbabel and that whole crowd had to come in and the second temple. People saw it and cried because it was such a lame substitute for the glory that had formerly been there.

And it's never been the same. The mountains of the temple will be like the bare hills of the forest. And this is one of the passages people appeal to to say that the ground upon which the temple originally stood may not even be at the temple mount anymore.

That mountain is like the bare hills of the forest. The mountain has been reduced. It's not as high as it used to be.

And there's very interesting theories about that in terms of the ground actually not even being there that Solomon's temple originally sat on. Well, it brings us to chapter 4, and that's where we need to begin next time. But we're taking our time going through this because Micah in many ways sums up what we saw in Jonah in terms of self-centered insensitivity personified in Jonah, reflecting the heart of Israel.

It reflects the lack of sensitivity to relationship and responsibility and opportunity that we saw in Hosea and Gomer's infidelity and her prostitute ways. It reflects the message that we saw in Amos where there is a lack of recognition of responsibility and duty and service to God. All of these things are wrapped up in the finality and the severity of this judgment.

And all of those aspects are mentioned in sensitivity to their fellow Israelites, especially their

fellow Judahites is mentioned here, their flip and cavalier attitude toward God and their tacit assumption that, oh, God will never let anything bad happen to us because we still claim His name while they tear His people to pieces, crush their bones between their teeth and tear their flesh and build Jerusalem on their blood. And losing the opportunity to reflect the glory of God, to worship God, to be a light shining to one another and to the Gentiles as we saw in Amos, all of this is summed up in Micah. And it is here for us to take to heart because the same God is in His heaven with the same expectations of His people, offering the same opportunity for rest and the same promise of judgment if we pass it by and decide that we've got a better plan.

We're smarter. We've got better things to do. We belong to Him.

We have been purchased with a precious price. And if we squander what the blood of Christ purchased, God the Father takes it personally and takes it seriously. Thankfully, we are not of those, remember how Paul says, I'm confident that you are not of those that draw back under perdition, but of those who by faith and patience inherit the promises.

It's good to see the warning. It's good to not want to get anywhere near that which defiles and to be aware of where the sin begins, to stop it in its nascent and incipient state and not let it get to this point. And it is good for us to remember who God is.

There are so many people who are going to be shocked and dismayed when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back and blood runs all over the place. And there are people who are driven far from Him who are believers in the rapture and are far from the Lord Jesus. And people will just be shocked because they don't know the Lord Jesus.

They don't know God. They don't understand that He is not only loving and compassionate and merciful, He is righteous and just and He has no tolerance for willful sin, none. And He will judge it and judge it harshly and severely and rightfully so.

And we know this ahead of time. There's no excuse. Well, we'll pick up, as I say, at chapter 4 where it talks about the Lord's reign in Zion, just as He should reign in our hearts.

We'll pick up there next time. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word and how powerfully and graphically You communicate to us Your will, Your purpose, the provision and the opportunities that You grant to us. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will keep us ever mindful, convict us where we are failing, encourage us where we are succeeding, so that in all things, in every area of our life, the Lord Jesus will be glorified and You will be pleased in us.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.