Kings and Prophets 15-05-01a

The calendar date as I speak is 1 May 2015, 5-1-2-0-1-5, 1st of May, May 1st, four days before Cinco de Mayo. First day of the month of May and we continue our study in the Book of Micah as part of our larger study of Kings and Prophets. We're going to try to finish Micah and do a final survey of these prophets that we've looked at in the days of Jeroboam and Jotham and kind of synthesize why these things exist.

I think in my entire Christian put together I never really figured out what the minor prophets were for. I successfully made it through years of Sunday school, years of church, years of seminary, and I do mean years, and never really got a grip on why these guys are in there. Jonah and the great fish is a good precursor, harbinger of the Lord being three days and nights in the heart of the earth and beyond that I couldn't tell you much about them at all.

I thought Gomer was a terrible name for a woman, still do. Anybody that looked down in a cradle at a gorgeous baby daughter and named her Gomer should be in the minor prophets somewhere to be held up for an example for the ages. But we'll pick up, we've come to the threshold of Micah chapter 4. This is where we'll pick up tonight, see if we can push on through, get a good grip on the message in this great book, and hopefully it will be meaningful as the others can be meaningful to us in terms of application.

It's not always easy to turn the corner into answering the question, so what? It might be interesting, it might be something to answer a few questions, but then when we pack up and leave, so what? Does it make a difference? Every part of the Word of God is inspired and is profitable for doctrine to reprove us, show us where we're going wrong, to correct us, show us how to do right, and to instruct us in positive righteousness. So we've got those four areas that we look for in any study, and particularly in this one which has been quite in-depth and somewhat lengthy, but a wonderful historical survey of God's dealings with His Old Testament people. He is the same God, He has the same standards, and it can be very helpful and instructive for us.

So let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, and we will resume at Micah chapter 4. Father, how grateful we are to be called by Your name, to be identified as belonging to You, and in that status to have the special and unique opportunity to be Your gift to the Lord Jesus Christ, a victory gift, a celebration gift, a unique people, and a unique ministry. Called out from all those people of faith throughout history to belong exclusively and especially to the Lord Jesus, to represent Him on this earth as His body now, to be united with Him and to serve alongside Him, at least that's our hope, in His kingdom and then in Yours. We thank You for the scriptures that illuminate these truths and show us the path to entering into and exploiting that potential, and we pray that as we look at this portion of Your Word tonight, that God the Holy Spirit will impress it on each heart and help each of us to see just how living and how powerful Your Word is in lifting us up out of the mire and dirt that is this world, the darkness and the corruption into which we are born and in which we live by default unless and until Your grace sets us on high

and solid ground.

We thank You for this opportunity. We pray that we can each be a blessing to those that have attended and those who join us at a distance. We pray that in all things the Lord Jesus will be glorified as we spend this time together in fellowship and in the study of Your Word.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. So again, as we have done many times, we quickly remind ourselves that as a major phase of God's plan draws to a conclusion with His Old Testament people, and it's a great thing to be a dispensationalist, don't you think? Isn't it good to have dispensations to hang your hat on and to see God's various hats hanging on those hooks? You've got the age of, and I would probably invent my own names for these just to be different, but the classic dispensational labels start out with the age of innocence, meaning not being experientially familiar with sin in the garden, and then conscience, where knowledge of good and evil, expulsion from the garden.

You have the various times going down until you get to the patriarchs, and then to the age of Israel. I think they call it innocence, conscience, human government as the city-states begin to form, and you get the Tower of Babel and the scattering and whatnot. And then with Abraham, the inception of the major portion of the Old Testament that we study, which is the time of Israel.

And that is what we are now studying. We've seen them transition from being a people led out of bondage, turning from slaves and the oppressed into conquerors and the dominant people of God, given an inheritance, given blessing, given military victory, given security and peace. I was thinking about what is the classic definition of the land that was given to Israel? It is a land, what? Flowing with milk and honey.

And I probably mentioned this before, but it occurred to me afresh this past week, that those are two substances where nothing has to die. You don't have to kill a plant, you don't have to pick a fruit. Milk and honey, nothing dies.

You can have a land that is completely free of death, flowing with milk and honey. Nobody dies. Nothing is cut down, nothing withers, nothing has to be replanted.

They are renewable, and it is such a wonderful picture, not just of prosperity, but of peace. People keep wanting to be in harmony with the environment and Mother Earth and all of that. Well, God got there well ahead of the environmentalists, and it is a spiritual attainment.

That blessing that was pictured as physical in the land is spiritually possible for us. Our spiritual soul, the environment within, regardless of the storms that rage, can be a land flowing with milk and honey. And we are at peace with God and man.

We can be at peace with our environment. We can be at peace even though the storm is raging. We are inside the house that is built on the rock.

And it is inevitable that if your house is going to be tested and your foundation is going to be shown to be secure, there has to be storms. But we are inside. We are safe.

We are in the ark. And while the entire world may be getting devastated, Noah and family are in there with plenty to eat, and good fellowship, and the security of knowing that God's promises cannot fail. Well, that is dispensational understanding.

We understand that God has moved in history and has organized his dealings with people in various ways. And when we come to this age, what a wonderful thing it is to be in this age and to see and learn the lessons from previous times without having to live through them. Have you ever thought about what it would be like if each of us at the point of our faith had to basically live through all the dispensations? When you are first saved, you are like Adam and Eve.

And then when you commit your first sin after salvation, you get expelled and there are whirling swords and all kinds of doom and gloom pronouncements made on your head. And then you have to go out and scratch your bread out of the dust of the ground and dust thou art, unto dust thou shalt return. And then you have to live under the law for a while and then you reach some particular level of spiritual attainment and an angel comes and says, well, you are free from the law now.

You are now in the age of grace. And somebody else hasn't got that far and they look at you and they are envious and jealous because you are in grace and they are still under law. What I think is great is God has done all of this historically.

We just look at it in the Word of God. We don't have to live through it. I don't have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years by way of some analogy in my own life.

I can look at other people that did that and learn from their achievements and from their mistakes. And that's what the Old Testament is for us. It's a safe distance.

It's like the instructional films they showed you, if you are old enough, when you were in school. Remember those streaky things they would show about hygiene and, you know, driving and wrecks and various bad things that could happen. They are sort of the scary instructional films.

I think a lot of those are now on YouTube. I saw one or two up there. And they have the same effect now as they did when you were little.

You watch one of them and talk about dental care. They show people with their rotten teeth all falling out. Hazards of smoking and they drag some poor cadaver's black lungs out and show them to you.

And it just puts the fear into you like nothing else. But we look at that and we learn from it. We are instructed by it and we don't have to do it ourselves.

I think this is great. I think this is just such a gracious thing God does. Put these other people

out there.

Let them die in the wilderness. Let them get preoccupied and greedy and self-centered and insensitive to the poor and all that. And watch God judge them historically and learn from it so I don't have to go through that my own self.

We don't have to go through it ourselves. That's what this is. So we have come now, the people of God who are united, who are given this land flowing with milk and honey, wonderful permanent inheritance, fumbled it away, couldn't focus, couldn't maintain the spiritual priorities that would guarantee that blessing in perpetuity.

And give us a king. So they got Saul and they learned what a bad king was. Then they got David and they learned what a good king was.

They got Solomon and they learned what happens when you get over prosperous and over engrossed in your blessings and Solomon fumbles away the kingdom. Jeroboam and Rehoboam, northern and southern kingdoms. And from that point it is, you begin to detect a swirl in the water.

And pretty soon there's a depression in the middle of the swirl. And pretty soon you notice that floating objects are beginning to go down and disappear in the center. And before long the entire thing is just flushed out of sight.

But it begins in sort of a calm circle and people say, well this is not too bad. And it just kind of gradually gets worse. Well we're at the pretty bad part now.

The kingdom has been divided for several hundred years now. It divided circa 900, the high 800s BC. And we come down to 800 and then 750 BC.

We're circa that time. And we've seen that Jeroboam II is on the throne in the north. Jotham and company are down in the south.

Already having lived through the likes of Ahab and Jezebel in the north. Athaliah in the south. And various other malfeasing kings down there.

Is malfeasing a verb? It is now. Misbehaving kings. So at this time we see the beginning of the writing prophets.

The proclaiming prophets and their proclamations have been set down in writing and have survived to us. And once again real quickly Yonah, Jonah the dove. What's the big idea there? It's kind of twofold.

Repentance. The nature of repentance. The occasion for repentance.

And the rebuke to the nation of Israel where the people of Nineveh are pictured as being so much more responsive to the call of God for repentance. And secondly it is a reminder of the

responsibility that God has assigned His people to be a light in the world. A light shining to the Gentiles.

To be sensitive to and aware of the opportunity to reflect God's glory on this earth. And to lose sight of that is a terrible thing. And it is possible for us to also lose sight of that.

Well that's Jonah. And so it is primarily a cross shape in Jonah. And it's not without significance that as Jonah was in the heart of the sea, in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, the Lord Jesus will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights following the cross.

If you also think about Jonah as a harbinger or as a portent, a forethought, a foreshadowing of what will happen to Israel. Because as Jonah abandons his God given mission and then gets in trouble with his fellow human beings, i.e. the sailors. And the judgment of God causes him to disappear out of sight.

And he is alive. He is not destroyed. But he is not having any possibility.

He is not visible and he is not functional. And for all intents and purposes he is gone on the world above. And then he emerges with a fresh mission to go to Nineveh.

And there is a bit of a foreshadowing of the nation of Israel itself that existed, had a mission, decided to go the other way, has been taken out, seemingly gone, never to return and yet is about to return and will be viable and visible again just as Jonah still wiping off the fish saliva and digestive juices of previous judgment. So it will be in the millennial kingdom when there is the opportunity for that kingdom in Israel headed by the Davidic king to be the light to the Gentiles it is supposed to be and to encourage repentance and obedience. And their example will serve as an encouragement and a warning for that thousand year period.

That's Jonah. We saw Hosea and you remember the emphasis there? It is real easy to remember because of Gomer and because of the children this focused on relationships. So the first one, if you are going to quickly summarize, Jonah is all about attitude.

Attitude toward God. Is it rebellious or repenting? Attitude toward others. Is it sensitive or insensitive? Is he concerned at all about this city that has got all of these children and animals in it? Do you care nothing? Are you disappointed that God didn't wipe them out? What's the matter with you is the idea.

So it's attitude. Attitude in the vertical. Attitude in the horizontal.

For Hosea, it's relationship, covenant responsibility, promise and in that presentation Gomer represents Israel and the fickleness and lack of dedication, lack of loyalty, lack of commitment, lack of recognition of the opportunity to be lifted out of a bad situation and a bad profession and given respectability and given opportunity and given so many things and completely oblivious to that and going back like a dog returning to its vomit and the pig returning to the wallow, so to speak. Relationship. Then we saw in Amos the whole idea of materialism.

And if you think about this, these are kind of also turning aspects of subjectivity. Jonah, eyes on self. In Hosea, it's eyes on people.

And in Amos, it's eyes on things. Amos is the great book on materialism, isn't it? Talking about those people who are greedy. God has suspended judgment.

He's stopped beating them black and blue and given them a chance to get their priorities straight. And in that calm, when God preoccupies the surrounding nations, gives them a chance to recover, instead of looking to spiritual things, they look to material things. How many times – this is like a Popiel Pocket Fisherman commercial or like a Vegematic commercial – how many times has this happened to you? How many times have we come out from under testing or trial or something that has really driven us to the arms of God and we come out in the clear? We've navigated the rapids, our canoe, our raft didn't tip over, and we come out to that wide, broad part of the river where the water is placid, and it's an opportunity to really grab hold of our spiritual identity and spiritual things.

But instead, we're so impressed with the peace that we get preoccupied with it. We begin to look around and think, well, I could decorate this raft and I could catch me some better food here to eat, and we miss the opportunity. God gives them in Amos the opportunity.

He sends them this man who tends fig trees and who prepares sacrificial lambs and goats for offering, bearing fruit, being pleasing to God, and says, this is your opportunity. God has suspended judgment for a while. Turn, turn you at my reproof.

Why will you die, O house of Israel? And so from the south, he goes up to the north and pleads with them. This is your chance to forestall future judgment. You don't have to go out in 721 under the Assyrians.

You don't have to be scattered and dispossessed. Wake up. And of course, they don't.

So instead, they become materialists. They think, well, this is the chance. It's economic recovery.

It's prosperity. It's a chicken in every pot. And all they can do is think about fields and houses and lands.

And there is no stronger condemnation of materialism and of covetousness than in those last couple of chapters of Amos. And he says, shame on you. Here God has graciously given you a few things back, and now you're so preoccupied with them, you can't see anything having to do with spiritual truth.

So lots of ways to remember these prophets, but we want to remember them. When you think back on Jonah, it's like they say about Moby Dick, it's not just a story about a whale. Jonah is not just a story of getting swallowed and spit out.

It's a story about responsibility, about attitude, attitude toward God, attitude toward the calling.

Hosea is not just, wow, look at that unfaithful wife. It's relationship.

Focus on relationship. Remember the opportunity we have and the wonderful, gracious relationship that God has established with us through Christ. It's incredible.

Amos, don't get caught up in the things of this life. Materialism, it is ashes in the mouth. People that bite that apple find that it is wax.

It does not satisfy. It does not fulfill. Ask any insanely rich celebrity if their money and fame has made them happy.

Ask Robin Williams how happy he was. And now we're in Micah. So we've had attitude in Jonah.

We've had relationship in Hosea. We have had materialism and preoccupation with things primarily in Amos. And now we're in Micah.

And Micah is the judgment of God. And we're looking for the big idea here in Micah. What is the big message? What can we remember about it? One thing that has been prominent is insensitivity to the poor, both the rulers and the well-off.

And this is now down in Judah. Micah is talking to the people in Judah. The others were largely preoccupied with those in the north.

But how did this one start? How did Micah start? The beginning and the ending are good clues. You know, you get to the end of the Gospel of John, what does he say? So many things Jesus said and did, I can't write them all down. But these are written why? That ye may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that believing you might have life through his name.

These are written that you might have faith. It tells you in the book what it's for. Here, remember that survey of the cities? How interesting was that? We'll do a real quick review of those because this is the key to understanding what the book is about.

And you have those towns. Interestingly, we've got the city of Jerusalem. We have five towns on one side of Jerusalem, five towns on the other side of Jerusalem.

Five are given first, then Jerusalem is mentioned, then we have five more. So we started out with Beth-le-Aphra. This was, if I could recast it a little bit, this is Dusty Town.

It's Dusty Town. So he says people in Dusty Town are going to be rolling in the dust. And what would this represent? What does dust typically suggest in Old Testament days, in ancient Near Eastern days? It's a sign of mourning.

It is a sign of being preoccupied with some event, usually negative. People didn't say, oh the army just won a great victory, the walls of Jericho fell down, well let's cover ourselves in dust and ashes. Dust and ashes is usually a sign of mourning and a sign of reflection, of evaluation.

I repent in dust and ashes. Anybody been to a funeral lately? What is the scripture that is uniformly quoted at a funeral? For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return. It really puts life in perspective.

It causes us to reevaluate priorities and what things mean. Dust. Well Dusty Town is the first one mentioned.

And you're going to be rolling in the dust. Instead of the dust being an opportunity for repentance, an opportunity for reflecting on the brevity of this life, grass withers, the flower fades, it's the Word of God that will stand, live and abide forever, get some eternal perspective. No, they're just going to be rolling in the dust.

What was the second one? Remember Shaphir? That's beauty town, that's fair town. Instead of genuine beauty, inner beauty, seeking the things which are above and not the things on this earth, they're going to pass over, they're going to be left in shame and nakedness. They're pursuing external facade type appearances.

You think about all the plastic surgery going on today and all of the injections in your face and the billions of dollars in trying to look good, get your spots to fade and get your hair to... Dr. Krizzles has said something interesting this past week that I've heard a lot, but I've never heard this before. He said, when a woman's hair turns gray, she wants to stain it. She wants to stain her hair.

And I thought, I've heard a lot of different things about, you know, Clairol and that, but staining your hair, she said, staining. But Shaphir is beauty town. It's superficial good looks town.

And he says, all of your pride of appearance, you're going to be marching forth, you're going to be passing over in shame and nakedness. And when you start looking at these towns, you realize these are emblematic of attitudes that God is going to knock the legs out from under. It is going to be Romans 1 and 2. You choose these things, you're going to be victimized by them.

So if you, I have my own personal thing about dust as well, because, you know, God says, I made you out of dust. And when your life's over, you're going to turn back into dust. And it has the idea of origins.

And, you know, we've got a lot of people who think that life is, is if you can figure out origins, you've got the tiger by the tail, you know, where it came from, what the rocks mean, what the fossils mean. It doesn't pertain in daily life. It doesn't give value.

And again, referring back to Dr. C, one of his favorite remarks is when somebody's on their deathbed, they don't say, bring me that geology book off the shelf for my comfort. Bring me on the origin of species. Let me read a little bit more about the finches on Galapagos before I pass away.

People, when they get to the end of their life and are realizing that they're about to go into

eternity, read me the Bible. Bring me a chaplain. Let me get my heart right and get spiritually prepared for the future.

If they haven't done before, many of them staring over the abyss into eternity, realize that a science book ain't going to give you any comfort. And it's just as true in life. Facing the challenges, trying to draw meaning and purpose and so on, you don't get that out of origins.

And that's dusty town. What is, did we all come up from the dust? Did the, you know, happy combination chemicals, regardless of the answer to that question, regardless of the answer, it doesn't invest your daily life with meaning. And in many cases, if you're a pure materialist, it robs it of meaning.

It's, you know, the poor players strutting and fretting, you know, sound of fury signifying nothing is, you know, eat, drink and be merry. Tomorrow we die. And we're, you know, rotten meat and that's it.

So people typically want a little more out of life. That's why there's poetry and music and the arts and people trying to grab hold of something beyond the material. Science is limited to the material.

You can't get answers to the great questions of life from science. That's like asking your carpenter to advise you on the best way to proceed in marriage and in career. And then he's a builder.

He built, he nails boards together. He puts in plumbing. He, he nails shingles and stuff.

Why would you go to the carpenter to answer the deep questions of the heart? It would be silly. Well, it's equally silly to go to a scientist. Scientists can't even figure out what makes thought work.

Why are we sentient? They got no, no clue and they're not going to have a, so dust town, dusty town occupied with the, with the dirt, with the mundane, with the earthly, with the, the, the clay and, and you're going to be rolling in it and you're going to be in Shafir, the town, beauty town. If, if you make beauty your thing, I saw this gal. I could never figure out.

And I still can't figure out. Um, Kardashian, Kim Kardashian. I saw her as I was looking for something meaningful.

Uh, last night I saw her being interviewed on a thing and I thought, you know, she, she, even her jokes and things were about her team of cosmeticians. And she said when her ex step father in law turns into a girl or something, she doesn't want Bruce Jenner to get her team of makeup artists or, uh, you know, it's just all about her, her whole life. She's, her whole thing was taking selfies and she's, she's just published a book of nothing but pictures she's taken of herself.

I took every picture in the book. They're all of me. And I didn't use a selfie stick.

I did them other ways. And she's got advice for people on how to take your own pictures of yourself. Shafir, she lives in Shafir.

And I'm telling you that is a town where you're going to be marching out in nakedness and shame. If you make that the, the ethos of your life, if that's your meaning, you are going to be so disappointed. That's what the word of God says.

Third, remember Zanon, this is marching town. This is army town. This is okay.

Strength of, of arms and forces. So it's, uh, it's, uh, you know, Fort Zanon, it's the, it's the garrison town, the, the, uh, marching out town. And he says, they're not gonna march forth.

Um, there's no point in marching. The cause is hopeless. The town's destroyed.

There, there's nothing to march for. There's nothing to defend. And, uh, they have, uh, you know, why, why do they fail? That it's, there's no point.

You know, your army, they, they have, uh, stories now about the Ronin and their, their master is dead and they're just roving bands of ninjas and, but they don't have anybody to tell them what to do. They're just kind of running around looking for something to fight because their purpose is gone. The, the, the meaning and the, the function of it is gone.

They're just running around, you know, it's like being a mercenary. Well, my country doesn't have a war to fight, so I just go fight somebody for money or whatever, but it's just pointless. After that bet, a Zell member, a Zell, this is, uh, uh, talking about your neighbors, about helping one another and, and, uh, being mutually supporting and they will no longer be able to do that.

Uh, they can't assist Zanon. Zanon's marching forth, but there's nothing to march for. And, and, uh, the neighborly town there, Philadelphia, the brotherly love town.

And you think about these towns, what do they mean to us? We talked about dust town, what it means. We talked about superficial beauty town, what it means. We talked about, well, I'm, I'm, uh, strength is my thing.

I will march forth. I will tackle all comers. I'm, I'm self-sufficient.

Marching forth has the idea of self-sufficiency and in and of itself, self-sufficiency doesn't satisfy. You're sufficient for what you suffer like everybody else. You're, you're pointless like everybody else.

You're all hat, no cattle like everybody else. Then people say, well, it's all in, in neighbor neighborliness. And believe me, Beth Azell is Facebook.

Beth Azell is Twitter and stumble upon and pin, pin it to the donkey. And, and the, uh, uh,

what's the other one? Um, well, all of those social media people. Now it's incredible.

Nobody can drive a car. Nobody can walk through the store. Nobody can do anything without their arm bent at a 90 degree angle because there's something pointed at their face.

You look around there, they've, there's, I've told you before, there's actually a whole new set of medical syndromes. People are having thumb problems because they overuse them. They're having neck problems because little kids are bent over like this all the time.

The ergonomics of those things are just awful. Nobody can drive anywhere. Anytime somebody doesn't start up when the light turns green, count on it.

They look like they're, they look like they're in prayer, but they're not. They're texting. Anytime they're doing 40 in the passing lane, they're texting.

Used to be, they were putting their eyelashes on. Why don't you have to do that anymore? Now they're all texting and it's, it's connectedness. I can't bear to not be talking to somebody all the time.

Isn't it a great thing that I'm never alone. I'm never alone with my own thoughts. I had a pastor once that said, if you want to know what you're like, look at yourself when you're alone.

What are you like when you're alone, when there's no accountability, when there's nobody to talk to you, what kind of thoughts do you have? Who are you when you're not conditioned and colored and chameleonized by what is around you? Well, nobody gets that test anymore. You're never alone. Uh, people, I saw a snippet of the NFL draft, so I don't know who it was.

I didn't, I didn't have the sound up, but some guy got drafted and he's given the thumbs up. He's got earplugs in his ears. He's on national television, getting an NFL team to draft him in one of the first rounds.

And, but I got to have my tunes. I got to have my music. This is being connected.

I've, I've got to listen to the words of others. I've got to let them express my thoughts. It's, it's my music.

It's my mix. It's my mashup. It's my, my circle of friends.

It's my, my connectedness. That's neighbor town. You're not going to be able to do it.

It won't be there. You wait till the global internet goes down. You're going to see a bunch of people coming out of the ground like moles in the bright, bright sunlight who will not be able to find anything, won't be able to say anything, won't be able to operate anything because Google is down.

Social networks are down. All of my knowledge was stored on the net and it's gone. I had all my

stuff in the cloud.

I can't even get into my car. I don't know where the store is. I trust me.

It's coming. After that, you had my wrote member Mara bitter, uh, Ruth, Naomi, don't call me Naomi anymore. Call me Mara bitter, bitter town.

There are people who get through life. And do you notice that these are whole segments of our society now where this is the priority? There are people who their, their, their thing is to have a chip on their shoulder. Well, I am of some color, so that's my definitional attribute and I'm going to go around being bitter because you know, great, great, great granddaddy didn't get a fair shake or you know, I'm a choice I've made in terms of who I hang out with.

Uh, we're, we're getting short shrift. We're not getting respected and people are saying bad things about us. This is my definition.

I can be occupied with the dust. I can be occupied with beauty. I can be occupied with marching forth and self-sufficiency.

I can be occupied with being interconnected with everybody or I can be occupied with my own gripe. You know, you got people that this is their career. These are your Jesse Jackson's and your Al Sharpton's and your, uh, well, your Ralph Nader's and, and some of the days gone by, it's not restricted just to, to one issue.

There's people that, uh, they're gripers. There's something wrong and, and they're out of business if there's not something wrong and there will be no relief. There will be no, you're not going to get that fixed.

Life is hard and then you die. And if you're waiting for your social issue to get fixed, these people are so used to waking up in the morning wanting to tangle with somebody about their deficit and how they didn't get a fair shake that when they do get a fair shake, they got to find something else. And it doesn't matter what you say.

These people will not be pacified. I just had an experience this past week with some of that. Um, and then you have a reference to the, to the gate of Jerusalem, the, the disaster that Maroth is going to face, uh, reaches all the way to the gate of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is Shalem Shalom. It's the city of peace, right? Well, there will be no peace when they say peace and safety, sudden destruction will come upon them is the idea. Um, but the get the calamity, uh, is this is Michael one 12, by the way, is only going to come to the gate of Jerusalem.

And this is foreshadowing what will happen in the days of Hezekiah. You're going to be encamped outside, but then something's going to happen and it's going to stop at the gate. Uh, this, this is going to be fulfilled in 701 BC.

King Hezekiah gets shut up like a bird in a cage there, uh, in, uh, Jerusalem, but, but it doesn't, they don't take the town. Then beginning of verse 13, you have the other side of Jerusalem, you've got the other towns and it's going to go through the, the rest of the Shephelah that we had the map that we looked at Lakish, uh, the beginning of sin and, uh, the transgressions of Israel are found in it. And this is people that just have no morals.

They say, I'm going to get my jollies in life by flouting, flouting the rules, flaunting my independence. I, I don't need anybody to tell me what's right and wrong. I'll do what I like.

This is Lakish. Then, uh, Moresheth Gath, uh, and remember this was the, the wedding feast and the gift idea and the, the, uh, hometown of, of, uh, Micah himself. And, and this is, uh, you know, the celebration town party town.

It's, it's, it's the, the time for celebration and gift giving. And, and it's all in giving. It's all, you know, it takes a village and all the rest of it.

Then third, you have, uh, Akzib, which is a deceit lying town. This is falsehood town. And, uh, you're going to get by and get through life by false dealing, false front, uh, keeping up appearances and so on.

Then the fourth one was, uh, Moresheth, which is inheritance town. There are people who it's all about their heritage. It's who I'm from.

It's my people, it's my culture, it's my, my roots. And, uh, I'm defined by my roots and you know, my 16th great grandpa was the King of Scotland. So I'm going to wear, you know, a kilt or something.

Um, or you know, my people came over from some far off place. And so I'm going to, you know, get back to those. It's, it's heritage.

It's, it's ancestry. I take pride in, in my genetics or whatever. And, uh, they are going to be disappointed.

The Assyrians are going to be, uh, the ones who take their heritage and their heritage isn't going to save them. Then finally you have a Dullam. This is the cave of a Dullam.

This is where David took refuge. Uh, this is, well, I'm going to plan ahead. I've got my, I've got my storm shelter.

I've got my bomb shelter. I've got my basement. I've got my, I've got my investments.

I've got my savings. I've got my plan. Uh, when, when the storm comes, I've got my Heidi hole, my, my Frady hole.

Uh, I've, I've buried a shipping container and I'm going to dive into it when the tornado comes. Uh, and the glory of Israel is going to be lost in that case. So these things, this is Micah.

Micah is talking about the judgment of God is coming in. There is no refuge. Whatever people think is important, whatever people think is definitional, whatever people think makes them who they are and they pick these different areas of life and it happens equally as much today as it did in that day, if not more so count on disappointment.

There is one and only one source of deliverance, of peace, of blessing, of inheritance, of genuine beauty, a genuine reflection of purpose and meaning. And it is the Lord God there in, it is in him and in no other. And all of these false fruits that the devil throws in our path that hang from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil disappoint and frustrate and are going to come under the judgment of God.

It is as inevitable as the dissolution of this universe. God's spoken into existence and he's going to speak it out of existence. The elements are going to melt with a fervent heat.

The heavens are going to roll up like a scroll. This old heavens and old earth will be done away and there will be a new heaven and a new earth and it will come about in the same way this one did at the behest, at the command of the Lord God of the universe who is so transcendent we can't even imagine him. It is a failure of imagination to think that this puny universe just kind of is a happy accident and there's nothing beyond it.

Nothing is smarter than us. We're figuring it all out. We will soon know all of the answers.

It's pathetic. We are earthworms looking at the vast city and we have no concept of just how big and how great and how grand God is. You look at the Hubble and all of these galaxies that it has revealed.

God holds that stuff in his hand. He is, this would be, the only analogy I can think of is you can imagine the most powerful computer that we know how to build and you create a little virtual character in a game. And the virtual character looks around and he says, well, the little world that I'm in and my existence and everything that I can perceive and learn, we're only taking up like six megabytes of RAM here.

And I look around at the space and I see that in this universe that this computer defines there's 16 gigabytes of space. I'm only taking up a few megabytes. So this makes no sense.

It makes no sense that there's a machine that's got 16 gigabytes of RAM and I'm only taking up six megabytes of memory. It makes no sense. Well, moron, virtual character, that's pretty stupid.

I, as the operator of the machine and the one who built it and who equipped it with all that know that I'm doing a lot of other stuff that the little character knows nothing about because I am so infinitely smarter than he is. And I've got purposes beyond his complete ability to comprehend. And he, he looks and says, look at all that wasted RAM.

And I think, who are you to talk about why I built my computer? Arrogant and, and limited

imagination, limited thinking. Well, this is, this is science looking at the universe and saying, well, you know, and when they say we can't be the only thing, this one little blue speck in one around one star in one galaxy. Well, they're probably right about that, but it's not accidental.

God flung the stars into space. God has arranged this stuff and he's got multiple purposes that we don't need to know about and are incapable of understanding anyway. But it is sufficient to know that it's a safe bet that there's, there's a God that's way smarter than us.

And these people have gotten so preoccupied just as the picture in Jonah, just as the picture in Hosea, just as the picture in Amos. Preoccupation is subjectivity, preoccupation with self, preoccupation with materialism, preoccupation with relationships. And here they're all stacked up in order because Micah is the last great harbinger of judgment.

And he brings it all together. And he says, look at these towns. Each of these is going to be judged in succession, in order.

It is all going to be flattened. If you don't turn, if you don't wake up and realize that there is a God who is in charge above and beyond all of these things, that's God's message to us. Remember who you are.

Remember who God is. Remember what is at stake? There is not salvation in any other. There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be delivered, not only delivered from our sins, but delivered into life of meaning and purpose and blessing.

Well, we'll pause there and take our break. This is the lead-in. All the rest of Micah makes perfect sense once you parse those cities.

That's what we'll pick up when we come back.