

The Minor Profits

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[0 : 00] If you will open the scriptures please to the prophecy of Micah. We will remind you that it was your choice that we undertake the minor prophets and we are attempting to do so in a chronological order because as they are found in our Bible, they are not chronologically in order and we are attempting to place them that way so that what we are dealing with perhaps will make a little more sense to you.

However, I do want to mention that in virtually all of the prophets and we will see that this is the case with Micah also there is a perpetual switching back and forth from the time they were dealing with at the time the prophet was ministering which usually had to deal with the prophet delivering a message of judgment and of retribution that is coming from the Lord because of the sin, particularly the idolatry of the people and the prophet was calling them back to a purity of Judaism which they had abandoned.

But of course they were not of a mind to listen and as a result the judgment that God had promised was going to come upon them and it had already taken the northern ten tribes into Assyrian captivity and now they are prophesying against the southern two tribes Judah and Benjamin and warning them that God is going to deliver them to the Babylonian heathen for judgment and of course they were ignoring that message as well so what we have is some assurance of coming judgment and also a like assurance of coming blessing and prosperity because the time is going to come when the nation of Israel will get turned around and they will be able to say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord but that will be future and we'll see that as it develops.

Yeah. Mark, always been a curious question and I don't know the real answer but how did they do this? I mean, you know, like in England if Hyde Park had set up a box and start talking how did they do it back then?

Did he just go around the streets and preach all the way around the field? You know, just a curiosity question. Well, very often they had different ways of delivering the message and on some occasions it was they would simply go right out to what was considered the public square and they would begin preaching.

[2 : 42] Sometimes they would be walking down the street and deliver the message but the point that needs to be made is that what we have is actually a distillation, a distilling of the message they delivered and they probably delivered it several times over a period of time sometimes encompassing even months because the threat of coming judgment was ongoing and the hope would be that the people would understand the message and would turn around and exactly that's what they did.

That's what they did when Jonah took the message to Nineveh. The people believed the message they repented of their sin and the Lord spared the city. I am confident that as prophets delivered their message as Micah is delivering his that would be what he was hoping for that the people would listen and sometimes they did and there was a temporary reprieve a withholding of the judgment of God and sometimes they would just mock and scoff at the prophet reject his message sometimes abuse the prophet sometimes become physical even as they did with Jeremiah matter of fact our Lord addressed the Pharisees and scribes one time and he said which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute and kill and you that current generation to whom he was ministering when he was here for just three or three and a half years he said you are following in the train of your ancestors who abused the prophets that God sent unto them and this generation is doing the same thing and they had already done it with John the baptizer and had him executed under Herod and they were persecuting Jesus and they would be persecuting the twelve apostles and so on so nothing is new and the principle of the prophet is this the prophet was always called of God to deliver warnings

I don't know of any case where any of the prophets ever came on the scene and said something like God sent me to tell you that he is really pleased with the way everything is going and you are doing just great there was no need to raise up a prophet to deliver that message because that was never the reality and fellas what we get what we get through all the prophetic messages and it actually begins way back in Genesis what we get is a picture of the failure of humanity and their devoting themselves to sin and a sinful lifestyle behavior that is completely contrary to the nature and character of God for which there has to be a reckoning and the reason there has to be a reckoning is because of the holiness of God and the provision that was made to bring fallen sinful man back to a position where God could accept him starts way back in Genesis 3 and verse 15 with the seed of the woman that will crush the head of the serpent and that prophetic message is delivered as early as Genesis 3 and the manner in which it is going to be played out is found all through the rest of scripture even including the book of Revelation which indicates that what this thing is all about is creation redemption restoration as Genesis opens we find paradise that is created that God pronounced very good after he created and then the disruption entered through sin and the dominion that was given to Adam and Eve was forfeited to Satan who became the prince of this world

John 12 John 14 John 16 Jesus describes Satan as the prince of this world Paul describes him as the god of this age in 2 Corinthians 4 and the world is thrown into chaos because of this failure and abandonment of the original principles that God instilled within us and the prophets are called upon to remind the people of that and to call them to repentance and the only one that I can think of that actually met with any success was Jonah and Jonah delivered his message to a non-Jewish element interesting a bunch of pagans and yet they turned around which by the way reminds me of a statement that our Lord made in the gospels when he said woe unto you Chorazin Bethsaida these were cities in ancient Israel that were located on the sea of Galilee these were fishing villages and he said woe unto you

Bethsaida and Chorazin for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented long ago but not you well what was peculiar about Tyre and Sidon they were pagans they were not Jews they were Gentiles they were over on the coast they were kind of reminiscent of Nineveh people who were out of the loop and yet they responded and Jesus said you have turned your back upon the revelation that God has given you and the miracles that Christ performed he performed to authenticate his message and his messiahship and they should have picked up on it right away some did most did not one who did was Nicodemus when Jesus came to him he came to Jesus at night and Nicodemus made the admission

[9 : 20] Rabbi we know that you are from God for no man can do the miracles that you have done except God be with him and Nicodemus had some rare insight that the vast majority of the Pharisees did not have so let us get into our text now in Micah chapter 4 and we see if you will back up excuse me and be reminded that the text as it was originally given was not broken down into chapters and verses they didn't even exist it was just one continuous scroll writing and if you will back up just a little bit because we lose the continuity here and I want you to see in verse 11 that he's talking about judgment and the sad sorry condition that existed in Israel at the time and in verse 11 he says her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe her priest instruct for a price and her profits divine for money yet they lean on the Lord saying is not the Lord in our midst and of course he wasn't calamity will not come upon us and of course it will therefore

Micah says through the spirit of God therefore on account of you Zion will be plowed as a field Zion was the mountain upon which the temple was located it was upon Mount Zion and he's saying Zion will be plowed as a field that is not good news Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins and the mountain of the temple that's Zion will become high places of a forest and I want you to note the abrupt change that is going to take place between chapters 3 and 4 and it will come about in the last days now when Micah says the last days he is talking about a time that is far into the future from the time he was addressing as he spoke to the people of Israel he is looking now into the future and he is saying this is the judgment the wreck the ruin the destruction that is coming upon Israel because of your sin but there is a bright note and that is it will come about in the last days and that would be a time far into the future because when Micah wrote this under inspiration of the spirit of God it was approximately 500 years before Jesus would be born in Bethlehem and that will come up in chapter 5 and verse 2 where Bethlehem is referred to as the birthplace of the Messiah so he is talking about a leap far into the future that is described as the last days we call those the prophetic

future that is the time of Jacob's trouble it is the time of the millennium it is the time of the judgment of the Lord sometimes referred to as the day of the Lord and then he continues in saying and this is the bright spot for

Israel this is the promise of their future and he says in the last days that the mountain of the house of the Lord now he already talked about that in the preceding chapter and described it as Zion where the house of the Lord is established the temple of the Lord that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains he's saying Mount Zion which is the highest point of elevation in Israel so that no matter where you are in Israel if you're going to go to the temple you must go up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem and the temple mount was situated on the highest point of elevation in the whole area that's one reason it was built there selected for that and he is saying the mountain of the house of the Lord this is the Jewish temple which today of course doesn't even exist will be established as the chief of the mountains the chief of what this is going to be the chief of the mountains of the whole planet of planet earth this is going to be the singular place of importance on the whole globe well that certainly isn't now in fact this mountain doesn't even exist now or there's no temple upon it and he goes on to say it will be raised above the hills and the peoples will stream to it and these peoples will not be tourists like there are streaming to it today this will be a recognition of

Jerusalem and Mount Zion as being the capital of the entire earth this is going to be the principal place this is where Jesus Christ is going to be situated during the millennial reign of Christ when he is ruling and reigning the earth with a rod of iron it will be raised above the hills and the peoples will stream to it and many nations and these of course will be other than Israel these will be Gentile nations nations will come and say come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob these are Gentiles expressing this sentiment which is completely unheard of because they are talking Micah is talking about Israel the Jew and the

[15:57] Jewish people and the Jewish government that will be situated here and then when that time comes all of the nations of the earth will be on board how divided are we now oh my it's the division now is just indescribable and it always has been Joe why wouldn't all the nations get on board because God has just destroyed all their armies and all the ones that were against him he showed to the whole world how powerful he is and righteous he is absolutely so wouldn't everybody go to him they will be you're right they will be absolutely persuaded no question about it and this will be what we're talking about here is millennial content this is a time not of war not of conflict but of peace that will pervade the entire globe let us read on let us go to the house of the God of Jacob that he may teach us about his ways and that we

Gentiles may walk in his paths for from Zion will go forth the law even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem this will be Christ established with his throne there in Jerusalem David the king will be vice regent and will rule over the nation of Israel the twelve tribes will be established and the twelve apostles of whom Jesus spoke when he said you who have followed me in the regeneration when the son of man comes into his kingdom you also shall sit upon the twelve thrones of Israel judging the twelve tribes so that the original twelve apostles minus Judas of course who will be replaced will be judging over Israel and David will be judging over the tribes and

Christ will be ruling with a rod of iron over the entire globe this will be the millennial reign of Christ and he continues in verse three saying he will judge between many peoples and the he of course is in reference to the Messiah and render decisions for mighty distant nations then then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and that does not necessarily require literality but he is utilizing things in that day with which the people were familiar and as he talks about swords and spears these are both elements of militarism these are war implements swords and spears but they won't have any place in this new order because they will be hammered into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks these are items of peacefulness this is domestic prosperity this is man as he was intended to be not at war but at peace one with another nation will not lift up sword against nation well he didn't have any intercontinental ballistic missiles to talk about then but he was talking about the things that were common elements of warfare and they would be lifting up sword against nation never again will they train for war every now and then they have what is referred to as maneuvers where nations will gather together usually on the border of an unfriendly nation and they conduct maneuvers and it makes that nation very nervous because of the gathering of all the troops there and they are wondering are they amassing there preparing for an invasion and it's designed to be threatening and intimidating and so on and

this has been done it's gone on for about as long as humanity has been in existence but nation will not lift up sword against nation never again will they train for war boy is that not a different day than what we're talking about today with

Russia and the threat of nuclear activity there with the arsenal of nuclear devices that Russia has at their disposal and here in the United States we've got these missile silos strategically placed throughout the country and well fortified so that if and when the command comes from the White House they can push the proper buttons and launch intercontinental ballistic so fast to another nation that can literally obliterate a nation or capital the size of Tokyo or Moscow or whatever that's the capability that we're dealing with now and why is it this way what's wrong with the world anyway it all goes back to this singular issue it is the sin of humanity and what we have as a consequence of the fall perhaps more than anything else other than death that results from it is the self-centeredness of the individual that is something that was taken unto humanity instilled in our first parents when originally

God was their focus and when they rebelled against the authority of God their focus shifted from God to themselves and Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel became not God-centered individuals they became self-centered individuals and it was passed on it demonstrated itself in Cain slaying Abel and you may be sure that there was self-centeredness involved there whether it was jealousy hatred or whatever Cain focused upon self and reached out in violence to his brother and took his life because of his self-centeredness and fellas we are all self-centered we all automatically will walk in the flesh that Paul is talking about but when

[22 : 58] Jesus Christ comes in at the point of salvation and takes up residency with the spirit of God in our hearts and minds gives us a new nature that enables us to walk away from self which is the flesh and embrace the spirit which means to produce the fruit of the spirit love joy peace long-suffering gentleness goodness meekness all of these things characteristic as they are to be of each individual believer so that we have a new nature because we are a new creation in Christ we have a new capacity for living a life that is pleasing to God that we did not have before Christ came in now when you take this self-centeredness that is the curse of all humanity and realize that it's an individual thing and that nations nations are made up of nothing more than individuals it just depends on how many that determines the size of the nation and when you take the self-centeredness of an individual and multiply it by the millions that occupy a country you have a nation that is self-centered because the self-centeredness of the individuals is transferred to the whole nation and we become a nation of self-centeredness that's what enabled Japan to attack

Pearl Harbor in 1941 they were serving their national self-interest and by the way this is exactly what the United States is doing and we are doing that largely from a posture of self-defense when President Trump says that he's going to put America first what is that but national self-centeredness but it is part and parcel of our fallenness and the reason we have to have a national self-centeredness is because other nations have a national self-centeredness and that creates conflict just like it does between two people Cain and Abel so we've got the same thing expanded on a wholesale schedule but it is nation against nation and this is exactly what he's talking about here when he says in verse 3 and nation will not lift up sword against nation and never again will they train for war

I remember well I don't remember but you can read in the history books that you can too how that in the first world war when nations entered into it and it became an enormously bloody conflict actually began with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Serbia that kicked off World War I and that was 1914 and the United States did not even get into that war we did everything to stay out of it we did not get into it until until the Germans sunk the Lusitania and that brought the United States into the war war and it was dubbed as the war to end all wars what a pipe dream did it of course not it didn't even come close and then when World War II came along it was dubbed as the war to make the world safe for democracy did it of course not of course the problem is that old self centeredness that lurks in us as individuals that is transferred to nations but this time when this comes it's going to be different never again will they train for war in verse 4 and each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree with no one to make them afraid this is a time of peace and prosperity the likes of which the world has never known

I remember reading about one of the mottos that was given by I think it was FDR when we were coming out of the depression and some credit his policies with pulling us out of the depression but I think most of the astute students of history would disagree and say that it wasn't FDR's policy or

Washington's policy that brought us out of the depression at all it was world war two that brought us out of the depression because that foisted a necessity upon the nation for everybody to get to work and begin producing the war implements and so on and we know that that had an enormous impact upon the whole nation because whereas so many people were unemployed boy once December 7 1941 happened just about everybody was employed the men were off to war and Rosie the Riveter was working in the defense plants that's what pulled us out of the depression but this time that is spoken of here is a time of peace and prosperity they will not train for war it will be a time of blessing and peace the likes of which the world has never known and the expression that is given here is one with which the people were familiar at the time when you could sit under your vine and under your fig tree with no one to make them afraid that is you're secure you're not worried about anybody invading you're not worried about anybody dropping bombs or shooting off missiles or anything of the kind it's going to be a time of peace and prosperity yes

Dana is that a reference to the vine and fig tree is that a reference to Jonah I'm sorry is that a reference to Jonah he sat under the vine well well well it could you can see the connection because Jonah was sitting under this this vine that God miraculously raised up to provide him with the shelter and the peace and you can you can see the parallel there but what it's talking about is that Jonah was relaxing and was at ease and was enjoying the shade and it was the best that the world under those circumstances at that time had to offer and here it is a time of international blessing and prosperity for the mouth and this is what's going to cinch it this is what's going to make sure that it comes to pass the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken though all the peoples walk each in the name of his God that is the pagan deities and so on as for us we will walk in the name of the [29 : 58] Lord our God forever and forever and in that day declares the Lord I will assemble the lame and gather the outcasts even those whom I have afflicted I will make the lame a remnant and the outcast a strong nation and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on and forever well there isn't any way in the world that we can see anything close to this ever having been realized on the planet but the time is coming we are assured that is as certain as the judgment of God that the peace and prosperity that will follow is something that we can count on and this is the assurance and the blessing that is given to

Israel so we've gotten about halfway through chapter four and the Lord willing we will resume that when we gather together in our next session and feel free to bring any questions or comments you may have to it we'll be glad to entertain them as best we can