

The Minor Prophets #15

Micah

by: Ronald L. Dart

There is something about our society now days that just isn't right, it's not really new but it kind of feels new. I think maybe the reason it feel new is that since World War II or after World War II we were remarkable united as a country but that was an unusual circumstance in our history. In recent years we seem to live in hostile camps adversaries to one another everybody choose a side and glares at one another across the barriers. I was watching a biography about Alexander Hamilton one of the founders of the country and I was appalled at what we today would call the politics of personal destruction. His enemies his political enemies tried their dead level best to destroy the man and finally Aaron Burr in a duel killed him. So it isn't new, politics has been as vicious in the past as it is today but those who have been around for awhile it probably seems like a new thing. We went through a very unnatural period of peace of internal unity in the country during the days of World War II and it's been coming apart ever since.

Still the words of the prophet Micah could just as easily be said and written today. Micah wrote in Chapter 2 Verse 8: **Lately my people have risen up like an enemy, you strip off the rich robe of those who are passing by without a care like men returning from battle, you drive the women of my people from their pleasant homes, you take away my blessing from my children forever, get up go away this is not your resting place it's defiled it's ruined beyond all remedy.** I mean you would think he was watching our television and reading our newspapers.

Today these things are being done by the government primarily through the courts the abuse of emanate domain has led to a loss of lifetime homes. People with homes along the rivers with great views who have lived there all their life have had them come along and take your home away from you. We need to build a shopping center or a mall or whatever and it will pay more taxes to the city and it's tragic. Lawsuits can fall on a person who though he had or didn't have a care in the world and strip him of everything he has.

It was like that in Micah's days and here we are again. You take away my blessing God says from their children forever. We got the estate tax which takes money away from a person who has worked all his life, saved and builds up a good estate. They actually tax some of it away and his children don't have all the benefits of their father's labor and sacrifice. In living mental memory we've seen men returning from battle who have lost everything and they're not protected or cared for. Now what on earth accounts for this in a society, how did we get from there to here? I think personally it's the erosion of the Christian faith which has really allowed self interest to prevail over other values in society. It's not merely that people leave the Christian

faith and become secularist; it's that the Christian faith itself, people inside of the churches inside of the Christian institutions has lost its strength, its power, and its message.

Micah goes on to say in Verse 11: **If a lier and a deceiver comes along and says I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer, now there is just the prophet for these people.**

It's a statement of the values of the people. The people who like to get drunk and do drugs, that's what they live for, so I'll prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer. There will be in the future when God takes a hand till then you'll have to answer your own question about why it is he's waiting so long and you're not the first one to ask. It seems like every prophet and every writer of songs want to know when, O Lord when.

Micah in this situation has this to say, actually it's God speaking, **I will surely gather all of you O Jacob, I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel, I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture the place will throng with people, one who breaks open the way will go before them, they will break through the gate and go out, their king shall pass through before them and the LORD at their head.**

I think Micah is looking way off into the future when God takes a hand in the last days. In fact if you read on in the prophecy it becomes very apparent he is looking down into that area. Now there have been returns, small modest returns to Israel down through the generations, they seem to be types though of something much bigger something far more wide spread that still lies in the future for us today.

Micah Chapter 3 Verse 1: **Then I said listen you leaders of Jacob you leaders, you rulers of the house of Israel, shouldn't you know justice, you who hate good and love evil who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones who eat my people flesh, strip them of their skin, break their bones in pieces and chop them up for the pan like flesh for the pot, are you going to listen?**

Now of course this is a figure of speech he's not literally going to be chopping people up and eating them. His point is how come it is that the leaders the rulers who are suppose to have justice and protect us from people who abuse them, why they end up hating the good and loving evil?

I challenge you to pay attention to the things you see on television and what you read in your newspaper. There are people out there in high places that do not care for what's good, who love the bad and who take advantage of people to the extent of stripping the flesh from their bones. I recall in elections in seasons past when talking heads on television were raising what they called the character issue, should the character issue be important in electing the President of the United States. I would sit there with my mouth hanging open that anyone would ask that question, should we care about the character of the person.

There are those who seem to say it didn't matter if a man had fooled around on his wife because if he's a great leader, a great administrator and we need him in office, well we can

overlook the character issue. Do they understand that a man who would cheat on his wife would cheat you just as easily? Don't they understand an adulterer is of necessity a liar or amoral and if he will lie to his wife he will just as easily lie to you. He may be a very good liar but it's worth considering where a poor choice of a leader can take you.

Micah goes on, **Listen you elders of Jacob, you ruler of the house of Israel you who know justice you who hate good and love evil you who tear the skin of my people and the flesh from their bones** when all this stuff is turned around when power corrupts and our own leaders eat us up. Micah says then, the people will **cry out to the LORD but he will not answer them, at that time he will hide his face from them because of the evil they have done.**

Now I haven't done any evil, but the man you voted for, either your local mayor or your governor maybe your state senator or your national leaders such as your president. These people whom you voted for have they done evil and therefore you're a partaker with them in their deeds, do you think the character issue might actually be important. Now if you voted against him and he gets into office anyway and he does evil your quip, you're not to blame for what it was that he did.

This is what the Lord says, as for the prophets who lead my people astray and bite their teeth down, won't they proclaim peace, if he does not they prepare to wage war against him. Now understand that the word they use here prophet, actually means the preacher. The man who claims to speak for God he gets up in front of people and preaches a sermon. What do you get for yourself when you feed a false prophet, well he'll tell you what you want to hear. What do you get when you refuse to feed it, he becomes your enemy.

When you go that direction God says **therefore night will overcome you without visions and darkness without divinations, the sun will set for the prophets and the day will go dark for them. The seers will be ashamed and the diviner will be disgraced, they will all cover their faces because there is no answer from God.** Nobody wanted to hear God; they wanted to hear, hey! There's a lot of wine and beer for all of you, they wanted to hear O don't worry tomorrow will be like today and it will be even better than today. They wanted to hear all that stuff from these guys time after time and then finally God goes silent. It sounds a lot like the famine of the word of God spoken of by Amos.

Micah goes on to say, **but as for me I am filled with power with the spirit of the LORD and with justice and with might to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin.**

Now I'm no Micah but I've been handed this platform called radio and I talk to a lot of people every week, and it would seem important for me being given this to declare to the United States their transgressions, to declare to America her sins, because even though God has not spoken to me he personally has given me a message to bring to you. I've got the prophets where the message has long been sent but nobody listened and oddly I've had people take me to task for talking about politics on the air. You know people should realize every prophet in the Old Testament talked about politics. They criticized the king, they criticized the princes read that senators, they criticized the judges, they criticized everyone in power, they criticized the wealthy

the Donald Trump's of the world, they criticized governor's, senator's, president's, you name it and all they talked about was the corruption in the temples or politics, that is what their job was.

Micah 3 Verse 9: **Hear this you leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel who despise justice and distort all that is right. That You who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with wickedness her leaders judge for a bribe, her priest teach for a price, and her prophets tells fortunes for money:** and then they leaned upon the Lord and say well **isn't the LORD among us no disaster will come upon us.** Meanwhile Jeremiah is down at the city square saying, don't you say that this is the temple of the Lord and he will protect us, he won't.

I'm still trying to figure out why the people of one United States congressional district re-elected a congressman who had 100 thousand dollars worth of bribe money in his freezer and the whole world knew it at the time. He was caught in an FBI sting all the evidence was right there and as of this date he is still serving in congress. How? Why? I mean here we are going all the way back to Micah and he says your leaders your big preachers the people who lead the country they pervert justice for a bribe, the Best congressman money can buy.

Therefore because of you Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple mount overgrown with thickets.

It happened and then it happened again. As Jesus told his disciples on one day when they came around and said, wow, man would you look at that they're building the temple. He said I'll tell you the truth it's coming down, there will not be one stone left here on top of another that will not be thrown down.

I don't know I just sit here and read this type of thing and I see the pattern of the past being repeated again in the street and halls of our government and our own cities. I think if they can't escape what on earth makes us think we can.

You know it's said after the Romans destruction of the city of Jerusalem you could walk through the place and never know a city a temple or anything like it had ever been there. It was just grown over with grass and there was nothing to see. And I don't know as I read through the New Testament I can't help but wonder if it's going to happen one more time, I think it has to.

Micah lifts up his eyes and peers far into the future beyond his generation and many generations to come he looks in fact to the last days.

Micah Chapter 4: Now I'm reading today from the New International Version. **In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as a chief of the mountains, it will be raised above all the hills, and people will stream to it, many nations will come and say, come lets go up to the mountain of the LORD to the house of the God of Jacob he will teach us his ways that we may walk in his paths, the law will go out from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.** My, what a prophecy, now we run into this idea of icons again.

You're familiar with the icons they're all over your computer screen, you do a lot of your work with icons where you click on one symbol and it carries out a long list of instructions like when you're sitting there doing your e-mail. Well in the Bible there are verbal icons, there is little symbolism that stands for other things and the readers knew it just like you know what the symbols on your computer screen mean they knew what these verbal icons actually meant.

The idea of the mountains and the hills are nations large and small, so it comes to pass that in the last days that the mountain of the LORD will be established as chief among the mountains just above the hills, people from all over the world will stream to it. It's one of those times when the prophets talk about it in various languages and it's talking about a time when the whole world looks to the Gods of Israel and look to Jehovah in Jerusalem for judgment.

He says in Verse 3: **He will judge among many people, he will settle disputes for nations far and wide, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, nations shall not take up a sword against nations, neither will they train for war any longer.** Now we all know don't we, that we're not there yet. He goes on to say, he said **every man will sit under his own vine, under his own fig tree and no one will make them afraid for the LORD God almighty has spoken.**

What a picture, the fact that your home can be your home your land can be your land and it's your land not the governments it's not something that anybody can take away from you. Your vine that you grow grape on and make wine from your fig tree that you can make fruit salads with these gorgeous tree ripe figs they're yours and no one and no government can grab them away from you.

All the nations may walk in the name of their Gods but we're going to walk in the name of Jehovah our God forever and ever. That was the response of Israel to God. **In that day declares the LORD I will gather the lame, I will assemble the exiles those I have brought to grief, I will make the lame a remnant and those driven away a strong nation. The LORD will rule over them in mount Zion from that day and forever.**

You know when I read this in the light of history in the light of everything in the past I fear there is yet another holocaust in the future. Another carrying away of the peoples another exiling of peoples another destruction and it's only after that God will begin to assemble the exiles and to bring back those who have been brought to grief.

He continues in Micah 4 Verse 8: **As for you O watchtower of the flocks, O stronghold of the daughter of Zion, the former dominion will be restored to you, kingship will come to the daughters of Jerusalem, why do you now cry out loud, have you no king, has your counselor perished that pain seizes on you like that of a woman in labor? Writhe in agony O daughters of Zion like a woman in labor, for now you must leave the city and camp in the open field. You will go to Babylon and there you will be rescued. There the LORD will redeem you out of the hand of your enemies.**

You know there's a strange thing about that with all of the trouble Israel had its own land once they got to Babylon once they got carried away to Babylon. God preserved them there kept them safe there and after 70 years finally brought them back to the nation.

Verse 11: **But now many nations are gathered against you. They say, "Let her be defiled, let our eyes gloat over Zion!?" But they don't know the thoughts of the LORD; they do not understand his plan, he who gathers them like sheaves on the threshing floor. Get up and thresh, O Daughter of Zion, for I will give you horns of iron; I will give you hoofs of bronze and you will break to pieces many nations. You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD, their wealth to the LORD of the whole earth.**

You can easily see why many people point to the return of the Jews from Babylon as the fulfillment of this prophecy. But then we had another return after World War II when the United Nations gave the Israelis a state, one wonders what still lies in the future.

Micah 5 Verse 1 – **Marshal your troops, O city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod. But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.**

Now right here almost out of nowhere, in fact, I really think it is out of nowhere because it doesn't seem to have any connection to the context of this at all. Here comes a prophecy out of the New Testament about the birth of Jesus, in Mathews when Mathew writes the Gospels, he says this, now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king.

Matthew 2 Verse 1 – **behold there came wise men from the east of Jerusalem. Saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.** No one knows who these men were and nobody really understands what the star was, but there they were. **When Herod the king heard these things he was troubled and all of Jerusalem with him.** Why? Because it sounds like the Messiah. **And when he had gathered all the chief priests and all the scribes together he demanded of them, where should the Messiah be born. And they said to him, in Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it was written by the prophet. And you Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of you shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.**

So there it is, we're talking about Jesus in Micah and John has this same account another place actually. Many of the people when they heard this saying this is the prophet and others said no this is the Christ. Some said Christ should come out of Galilee doesn't the scripture say that he comes from the seat of David and out of the town of Bethlehem where David was. It was the full bore expectation of everyone that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem. Why, because Micah said so.

He went on to say, **therefore Israel will be abandon until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of the brothers return to join the Israelites.** Kind of vague but

it is an illusion of waiting for a woman to give birth even suggestive of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. **He will stand and Shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace.**

Well that's something to look forward to and something to take great comfort in but you know something that is troubling about it between here and there a lot of people are going to suffer a lot of people are going to die. Many of them will not live to see the peace not in the flesh that Micah spoke about that Isaiah spoke about. All the prophets prophesies that out there in the future the Messiah will come and he will bring peace on earth and goodwill toward men and it will reach the end of the world and that it will go everywhere. We're not there yet the Messiah has come and a great deal has been accomplished but he is far from finished. The challenge for you and me is how we make it from here to there because we are going to see things that are going to make us mad. Out of the side of our eyes when we see them coming down around our ears we are going to in our own lives endure terrible suffering. Then if you just remember Paul and Silas beaten whipped, jailed, feet in stocks in the middle of the night and nobody treating their wombs sore and uncomfortable and in great misery they sang songs in the night and God heard and opened the prison. Where can you find the peace of mind to know to sing song in the darkest of nights? Only in the hope that God gives us and that realization we are suffering for his namesake not for our own folly. Until next time I'm Ronald Dart.

This article was transcribed with minor editing from a message given by
Ronald L. Dart titled: "The Minor Prophets #15" (MP15) 5/17/07
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