

1. God Sets Himself Against Those Who Covet With Power (1-5)

- a. "Woe" is a pronouncement of doom and judgment
 - i. Micah gets specific about the sins that idolatry has produced within Israel and is coming upon Israel for the same
 - ii. Doom pronounced against those who "devise wickedness on their beds" and "carry it out in daylight"
 1. This is a poetic word-picture of those who are bent on evil, dedicated to oppression, planning and scheming to harm their fellow man in order to further their own power
 2. This is not about those who stumbled into sin, fell down and gave in to weakness, but rather are determined oppressors
- b. This Wickedness is Covetousness (1-5)
 - i. "They covet fields and seize them"
 1. How can the powerful lose sleep over power?
 2. The answer is in v2: "they covet"
 3. Idols deceive us into believing that we have to have them, thus even when we possess our idols (here wealth or power), we are gripped by the insatiable fear of losing it and of needing more (because idols never save us)
 - ii. The sin is not wealth, nor the growth of wealth, but the coveting of one's neighbor's wealth (10th commandment)
 1. We are not all wealthy, nor powerful to attain our neighbor's goods
 2. But, we all covet – the 99% covet the 1%'s power and wealth while condemning it as attained through covetousness
 - a. Rom 7:7-8 – the Law spurs our coveting because sin is already present
 3. Coveting enslaves us to our idol
 - a. Whatever we must have rules us and becomes more important than God or neighbor
 - b. Thus, sin masters us (and God warned Cain about this)
 - c. We need a Savior to free us from our coveting
- c. The covetous were greedily prospering by exploiting and destroying their fellow brothers
 - i. "Covet...seize...take...oppress"
 1. This shows the means by which greater and greater wealth was attained
 2. Micah is not condemning honest, just, and proper acquisition of wealth (and the Word never does)
 3. What he is condemning is the cheating, lying, carless, loveless, selfish, greedy acquisition of wealth
 - ii. This was accomplished through land acquisitions
 1. Land buyers would take the land as collateral and when the least offense was made would take the land in full.
 - a. Thus, the poor's inheritance was oppressed from him
 - b. This not only affected the poor landowner, but his children and following generation
 2. There also seems to be an indication that the courts were corrupt, for these things were carried out in full daylight
 - a. This kind of blatant greed and oppression was socially acceptable
 - b. This is completely out of line with God's law, for in it He claims to own the land Himself and allots it to whom He will
 3. The law requires the return of the land to the family which inherited it from God every 49 years (Lev 25:10).
 - a. Land was allotted by God and was given as a place in the community
 - b. One's land was one's inheritance, the link between his fathers and his sons, placing this land ownership squarely in the familial, societal, communal structure of God's people

“In Israel’s societal order a man’s identity and status in the community rested on his household or family dwelling place and land...Lose it, and he lost all the rights which were based on its possession, he had no ‘place’ in the community.”
J.L. Mays

- c. Thus, Naboth would not sell his land to King Ahab even at a fair price (1 Kings 21:13) because, “The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.”
 - i. So Jezebel had him killed and took his land
 - ii. The perfect example of what Micah is deploring and that the prophet Elijah prophesied doom upon her
- d. Social justice is important to God (*do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God*; see 6:8)
 - i. Those who break covenant and abuse their power selfishly should expect God to act on behalf of the oppressed
 - ii. The punishment will fit the crime
 - 1. “You will lose your power and be bent under a yoke yourself”
 - 2. “You will not walk about haughtily”
 - 3. “Others will mock you for your weakness as I take your land and give it to ‘an apostate’
 - 4. “Just as you took others’ inheritances and their place in the community, I will leave you ‘no lot to cast in the assembly of the LORD’.
 - iii. Assyria did to them what they had done to the poor.
 - iv. The greatest doom was that they would be cut off from the land, from the life of God forever
- e. The promise of a ‘new covenant’ (Jeremiah 31:31) was all the more important, for the people had broken their old covenant
 - i. This New Covenant is in Christ, and “in my blood”, where there is a new city that “shall not be overthrown or uprooted anymore forever.” (Jer 31:40)
 - ii. This is the eternal city, the New Jerusalem, where Christ dwells with His people, even in them through His Holy Spirit, it’s building being the purchased and procured saints of God

2. False Preachers Preach in Half-Truths (6-11)

- a. The prophetic voices of the day tried to shut Micah up because he was preaching of God’s judgment
 - i. “Stop preaching annoyingly”, they annoyingly preach! (root of ‘preach’ here is the word ‘to drip’)
 - ii. The best way to stop a preacher is to set his colleagues upon him with dissent
 - 1. These preachers didn’t want to hear about bad news, only sweet promises of future peace and safety
 - 2. They didn’t want truth, they wanted comfort, even if it was false comfort
 - 3. This has always been the case: when people preach the truth that includes God’s holiness, there are a litany of false prophets who condemn him and work to counter his message
 - a. Micaiah and King Ahab – 1 Kings 22:8
 - b. Amos and Amaziah – Amos 7:17
 - c. Jeremiah and Hananiah – Jeremiah 28:1-4
 - d. “Peace, peace” they create superficial comfort, but there is no peace with idols (Jer 6:14)
 - iii. False prophecy usually includes a denial of God’s judgment against sin, thus the atoning work of Christ is diminished
 - 1. With a false sense of security, people are lulled into spiritual lethargy farther and farther away from the God who redeems truly from wrath and destruction
 - 2. False prophecy comforts people straight into God’s judgment
 - a. “You are good, you just need to love yourself more”
 - b. “You can do it yourself! God just wants you to try your best.”
 - c. “God’s love means that He just wants you to be happy and healthy and wealthy.”
 - 3. The wages of sin is death...we need a Savior who brings life from death, not a mere guru to teach us wisdom, or a mere example of how to live.

“If God had perceived that our greatest need was economic, he would have sent an economist. If he had perceived that our greatest need was entertainment, he would have sent us a comedian or an artist. If God had perceived that our greatest need was political stability, he would have sent us a politician. If he had perceived that our greatest need was health, he would have sent us a doctor.

But he perceived that our greatest need involved our sin, our alienation from him, our profound rebellion, our death; and he sent us a Savior.”— D. A. Carson

b. False Prophets Cheapen God’s Grace

i. “Has He grown impatient” (Ex 34:6-7a)

1. The danger with this kind of preaching is not what it claims (God is patient), but in what it leaves out
2. “...but who will by no means clear the guilty.” (Ex 34:7b)
3. Bad theology always leads to ungodly social practice.
 - a. Every worldview, by nature being faith-based and therefore religious, inevitably determines one’s social behavior.
 - b. This misrepresentation of God as *never* acting with judgment created a safe haven for the abuse of power, the exploitation of the poor, the corruption of the courts, and the general profligacy of covetousness.

ii. “Are these His deeds?”

1. God has always blessed us and protected us! He won’t stop now!
2. Appealing to half-truths, partial revelations of God, a deliberate obtuseness to the history of God’s working with His people, they sound biblical and relevant
3. “God is love”, He wouldn’t bring destruction or judgment upon our idolatry!
 - a. It is BECAUSE GOD IS LOVE that He brings judgment and discipline upon our idolatry!
 - b. It is because God is love that He hates sin, that which leads us away from Himself
 - c. It is because I love my child that I hate in them the liar, the thief, the selfish, the greedy, the drunk, the brutal, the deviant

“Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness with requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

iii. “Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly?”

1. It is true that God is full of grace and mercy
2. Therefore, His commands to love Him and love our neighbors we ought to receive with an attitude that He is for us and His commands are for our good.
3. Rather than try and twist His Word into delivering for our idols, we should cling to His Word as the wisdom by which He draws us into true joy, rest, peace, and life IN HIM

c. False preaching hardens hearts to act like enemies of God

i. “Lately My people have risen up as an enemy”

- ii. The working of unrighteousness, opposed to the commands and revelation of God, means that we live like enemies of God
 1. False preaching not only allows this, but encourages it
 2. Puffs up our pride, our ego, makes us the center of our world, so that Christ is pushed out, forced out at arms from the central position of Master over us
- iii. So we act like enemies of God and thusly enemies of His people
 1. He cares for the widow, enemies take their homes
 2. He cares for the orphans, enemies take them away from His splendor
- iv. God judges false preachers and those who set themselves against Him as enemies

1. "run from here, for there is no rest"
2. Grievous destruction is on its way
- v. Like an enemy, false gospels muddy the waters, fog up the mind like wine and strong drink, mixing the elixirs of pleasure and self-honor that stupefy people and lead them to destruction, the addiction to their idols
- d. Integrity is important to God (love God, love neighbor, *walk humbly with your God*)

3. God is the Sovereign Shepherd-King Who Gathers and Leads His People (12-13)

- a. YHWH promises to be gather His people as the great Shepherd-King
 - i. The one who shepherds as his prophets should have
 1. "pastor" means shepherd, which the primary role of leaders
 2. Feed, Lead, Care for the flock
 - ii. The King who exercises power righteously
 1. "The Breaker goes forth before them" – statement of God's powerful rule
 2. When the poor become poor by their own foolishness, they need a Savior to save them; when poverty comes through an environmental disaster, such as floods or drought, he needs the Creator to intervene for life; when the powerful destroy him by unjust tyranny, he needs a Judge to work justice on his behalf.
 3. Thus we need a Savior-King who has the power and rights to restore Creation, the Righteousness to Judge rightly and truly, and the heart to save His people powerfully and effectively
- b. Jesus is the Good Shepherd promised to graciously gather, powerfully protect, and lead His people as King
 - i. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep (John 10)
- c. The gospel of Jesus shows us how God is both just and merciful at the same time at the cross of Christ
 - i. We are live in the light of both of these realities of God's nature
 - ii. God is holy, just, righteous – He does not minimize these aspects in the gospel
 - iii. God is gracious, merciful, patient – He does not minimize these aspects in the gospel
 - iv. In Christ, and through His cross and resurrection, God is fully ALL
- d. How do I love my neighbor?
 - i. SEE JESUS!! Cross Chart
 - ii. Firmly plant your identity in Him as "belonging to God" because of His gracious sacrifice
 1. Because you belong to Him, you don't *need* people's approval to make you important, wealth to give you security, honor to give you status, or toys to make you happy
 2. You can love people for their sake, even when they act as your enemy, because you have more than enough in Christ, who is your life
 3. As you cling to Him, believing His promises, you will find the power to love others in spite of their sin toward you, seeking their good in humble trust in Christ
 4. Thus, you do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God