

## II. *Coming Calamity*

11-Dec-05          Micah 1:2-16

*Theme:* God comes in judgment to announce coming calamity upon Samaria and Judah because of their sin of idolatry and impure worship.

*Key Verses:* Micah 1:2-4 <sup>2</sup>Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple. <sup>3</sup>For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place; He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. <sup>4</sup>The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place.

### Review

Last week we set the stage for our study of Micah's prophecy. Micah lived in a period of significant change and challenge. During his ministry, the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed and taken into captivity by the mighty empire of Assyria. In the southern kingdom of Judah, good king Hezekiah worked hard to reverse the religious and political corruption of his father Ahaz. With the support of the prophets Isaiah and Micah, Hezekiah restored the proper worship of the Lord. However, he had a harder time reforming the hardened and sinful hearts of Judah's people.

Hezekiah also rebelled against his Assyrian overlords, prompting Sennacherib to descend upon Judah in 701 BC with a campaign designed to crush the people of God. God had other ideas, however. Sennacherib looks unbeatable from a human perspective, so Hezekiah fights the spiritual war on his knees. God answers his prayers, and miraculously delivers Jerusalem from destruction. Sennacherib is forced to retreat to Nineveh, and Jerusalem is spared for another 115 years.

It is in this context that we meet Micah of Moresheth, the prophet of God. We know little about the man, except that he was from a small town in the Shephelah, southwest of Jerusalem. Our *hometown hero* received or experienced the word of the Lord, and he was not afraid to proclaim it in Jerusalem and the rest of Judah. Micah achieved some measure of success, for the prophet Jeremiah testifies 100 years later that as a result of Micah's ministry, Hezekiah sought the Lord and God averted the disaster He had proclaimed (until the time of Jeremiah).

### Introduction

That leads us directly into today's passage, which I've entitled *Coming Calamity*. Micah starts out his book by warning God's people that God is not sitting in his rocking chair sleeping while His people sin. On the contrary, Micah portrays God as active, involved, and angry with His people for their sin.

I've divided the text into two major sections. The first section, *imminent immanence* (1:2-9), describes the certain wrath of God descending upon His people. Although the date of the oracle is uncertain, it seems that it was given prior to the fall of Samaria in 722 BC. The second section, *twelve towns* (1:10-16), describes the mourning that will impact all of Judah. The likely date for this oracle is between 722 and 711 BC.

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

### Exposition

#### A. Imminent Immanence (1:2-9)

The first section of Micah 1 is all about the *imminent immanence* of God. What do I mean by that? “Immanence” refers to the nearness of God. It is the opposite of transcendence. God is both near to us and far above us. He is both Immanuel – “God with us” – and the Holy One of Israel enthroned on the cherubim – far above us. “Imminent” means that it will happen soon. Taken together, the imminent immanence of God is a promise (or threat) that God is coming soon to His people. In this case, He is coming in judgment upon their sins.

##### 1. Terrifying Theophany (1:2-5)

The *imminent immanence* of God takes the form of a *terrifying theophany*. What is a theophany? It is a material manifestation of God. The ultimate theophany was the incarnation of Christ:

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Here in Micah’s prophecy we don’t have a physical theophany, like the incarnation. Rather, we have a poetic theophany – a poetic description of God coming in judgment against His people.

Micah starts out his oracle by commanding the entire world to **hear** and **listen** (v. 2a). This message is not just for the faithful – it is for everyone. It is a summons for the entire world to come to the courtroom of God, where He sits in judgment. God is not only the judge; He is also the chief witness for the prosecution.

Where is the courtroom of God? Micah describes it as the Lord’s **holy temple** (v. 2b). In Hebrew, the word for “temple” can also mean “palace.” Thus the house of God implies both His Lordship and His Kingship. God sits enthroned in the heavens, worthy of worship as He rules the earth.

It is one thing to be invited up into the presence of God in heaven. It is quite another thing to witness Him **coming out of His place** (v. 3a). The Lord is coming – “Here come da Judge! Here come da Judge!” When the Lord comes in righteous anger, it is a fearsome and terrifying thing to witness.

Micah describes this descent of the Lord from heaven to earth in verses 3-4. Boice puts it this way:

Here Micah portrays the Lord as swooping down from heaven to do battle on earth. Micah’s language describes precisely what the judgment will do, namely, sweep away everything before it. The attacking foe is God, the sovereign Lord of the universe, and He is so angered at the wickedness He sees that He leaves His holy temple to do battle Himself. Notice the downward movement, from the temple in heaven to the high places of the earth, to the flowing of the waters.

Nothing can stand in the way, slow down, or stop the coming of God. Although Micah doesn’t use the expression, what he is describing here is nothing less than *the Day of the Lord*. Other prophets, such as Amos, Joel, and Zephaniah uses this phrase to describe the outpoured wrath of God upon sinners as He comes close to inspect them and their works. Joel puts it this way:

<sup>1</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for *the day of the LORD* is coming, for it is at hand: <sup>2</sup>A

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains (Joel 2:1-2a).

Why does God sally forth from His holy temple? Why does the earth melt and tremble before His awesome presence? Micah gives us the answer in verse 5: **All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel.** God is the righteous Judge, coming to judge the sins of His people.

Who are the people of God in view here? The first half of verse 5 calls them **Jacob** and **the house of Israel**. In other words, the entire people of God, both northern and southern kingdoms, are being judged. This is made explicit in the second half of verse 5 where Micah refers to both **Samaria**, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, and **Jerusalem**, the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah.

What is the sin of Samaria and Jerusalem? Micah gives us the key with the phrase **high places**. The “high places” are religious shrines that either are dedicated to other gods or are used in an adulterated worship of the one true God. Either way, they are abominations to the Lord, because they represent man’s method of worship rather than adhering to the revealed will of God concerning worship.

Remember, the kingdom of Israel split away from Judah after the death of Solomon. In order to prevent his people from keeping their allegiance to Jerusalem through the prescribed worship of God at the Temple, King Jeroboam set up golden calves and altars at Bethel and Dan as alternate sites to worship Yahweh. All of the kings who followed Jeroboam in the north followed in his footsteps and caused Israel to sin. Some of the kings, such as Ahab, were even worse and introduced Baal worship and other forms of idolatry into Israel.

These pagan worship practices also crept into the southern kingdom of Judah. King Hezekiah later removed them from the land, but the sinful hearts of man always found a way to keep rebuilding them.

<sup>3</sup>And he [Hezekiah] did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. <sup>4</sup>*He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan (2 Kgs. 18:3-4).*

Micah has already implicitly condemned the foolishness of pagan worship on the **high places**. When the true Lord of Heaven and Earth emerges from **His holy temple**, what is the first thing He does? He **treads on the high places of the earth** (v. 3). The high places are no match for the King of Heaven. They melt, split, and flow away from His very presence. The coming of God casts down the high places of men. The vain imaginations of men cannot stand the coming of the Day of the Lord.

God is not a grandfatherly figure, sleeping in His rocking chair on His front porch. He is transcendent – holy, righteous, and far above us in every way; but He also is immanent – close to us and involved in the affairs of men. Micah is teaching us that God does not remain distant, but that He comes to inspect the deeds of men.

This happens at special times in history, such as the one Micah is describing here. But it also happens weekly, in our worship services on the Lord’s Day. Each Lord’s Day is a Day of the Lord. God calls us into His presence and inspects us. We confess our sins. We offer prayer, and

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

praise, and gifts. God instructs us through His word and tells us how we are to live holy lives in obedience to Him. We share a fellowship meal with our Sovereign. And then He sends us out into the world, until He calls us again in His presence for inspection on the next Lord's Day.

### 2. Smashing Samaria (1:6-7)

Thus far we have seen God descending from heaven to earth to pronounce judgment upon His people because of their sin – particularly idolatry. In verses 6-7, we see that judgment unfold as God proceeds to *smash Samaria*. God promises to remove stone from stone until nothing is left but the foundations. Samaria will be nothing more than a **heap of ruins in the field** (v. 6). Allen points out:

Just as he had seen mountains dissolving beneath Yahweh's tread, so now he sees the superstructures built upon Mount Samaria collapsing before his eyes and tumbling into the *valley*. The cascade of water down the slopes turns into an avalanche of *stones* chasing one another to the foot of the hill, till all that is left are naked *foundations*. Such is the poetic justice that Samaria deserves from the Judge of Israel.

Micah does not leave the cause of this destruction to any doubt. It is because of **her carved images** and **her idols** (v. 7) that God is pouring down judgment. Borrowing language and themes from Hosea, Micah paints Samaria as a “painted lady” – a harlot who has committed spiritual adultery by chasing after idols. Hosea had portrayed God as a loving husband who called his adulterous wife – Israel – to return to Him. But Israel refused to listen. And so Israel will reap what they have sown.

The city of Samaria was overthrown in 722 BC by Sargon II of Assyria. The people of Samaria were carted off to various places in the Assyrian empire and the land repopulated with other displaced captives of Assyria. Within 10 years or less, Micah's message to Samaria had come to pass. Because of their spiritual unfaithfulness, God had smashed Samaria.

### 3. Judging Jerusalem (1:8-9)

Micah's Judean listeners no doubt had little problem with his message up and through verse 7. Samaria no doubt got what it deserved. Jerusalem on the other hand ... Jerusalem was the city of God – it was the location where He dwelt on earth. Samaria was an upstart city built by an upstart dynasty, but Jerusalem was the city of David. Surely Jerusalem had nothing to fear. Or did she? Once God has finished *smashing Samaria*, He turns His attention toward *judging Jerusalem*.

But first, Micah shows his fellow countrymen the proper response to such a message of terror and judgment. Micah is not content to remain smug and satisfied in the southern kingdom while God's wrath falls upon the northern kingdom. On the contrary, he acts in radical fashion to demonstrate the depths of his emotions upon receiving this word from God. Bentley summarizes it well:

What did Micah do? He performed a visual parable (1:8). Micah dressed himself only in a loincloth (which was as bad as being totally naked), and he walked stripped and barefoot through Jerusalem. He also howled like a jackal and moaned like an owl. The prophet of God did all this to demonstrate the awfulness of the sin of Samaria — indeed, the sin of all of God's people.

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

Far from feeling self-righteous, Micah mourns the sinfulness of Samaria and the impending judgment upon them. For he knows that the people of Judah are not exempt from the same sins. Micah describes it as an awful disease. Samaria's **wounds are incurable** (v. 9). It is as if Samaria has terminal cancer, and nothing can be done to save her. But even worse – her disease is contagious, **for it has come to Judah; it has come to the gate of My people—to Jerusalem** (v. 9). This is worse than cancer; it is the bubonic plague!

If the people of Jerusalem were inclined to be smug and hide behind the Temple and its associated worship, they had better think twice. For in fact, the Temple was little better than a **high place** of pagan worship that needed to be destroyed. Remember, king Ahaz had installed a Syrian altar at the Temple to replace the God-designed altar. Ahaz altered the altar and the rest of the Temple worship, preferring the latest trends from Syria rather than the express commands of God. The book of 2 Chronicles says that his imported worship ideas “were the ruin of him and of all Israel” (2 Chr. 28:23).

The disease of idolatry was upon them; their only hope to avoid the fate of Samaria was to purge it from their land and return in pure worship to the Lord. It took Ahaz' son, Hezekiah, under the influence (no doubt) of Micah and Isaiah, to remove the high places, idols, and false worship from Jerusalem. Thus, Micah's words here in the first half of chapter 1 appear to have had some impact upon Judah. If Jerusalem had continued in the sin of her sister Samaria, no doubt the end would have come much quicker. But God spared Jerusalem in 701 BC, and Jerusalem continued on for another 115 years before destruction finally came.

There is a lesson here for us. Sin is contagious. We need to be constantly on guard for sin creeping into our own lives. It does us no good to point out the sin in others, if we are blind to our own weaknesses and temptations. Let us not rejoice when others fall, because we are subject to the same frailty. Christ warns us:

<sup>3</sup>And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup>Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? <sup>5</sup>Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Matthew 7:3-5).

### B. Twelve Towns (1:10-16)

The second half of Micah chapter 1 has a different setting but the same theme: it is a message of *coming calamity*. This message takes the form of a travelogue through *twelve towns* of Judah. The first town is **Gath** (which is actually in Philistia, but should have been part of Judah). Since Gath fell to Assyria in 711 BC, it seems as if this oracle predates that event. Since the name **Israel** is used of the southern kingdom in verses 14-15, it implies that the northern kingdom of that name has already fallen to Assyria. Thus, the likely date of this prophecy is between 722 and 711 BC.

#### 1. Judean Jaunt (1:10-15)

To illustrate the coming calamity, Micah takes us on a *jaunt* through *Judah*, listing *twelve towns*. The location of these towns (except Jerusalem) is in the Shephelah. The Shephelah is a hilly region, ranging from 500 to 1500 feet in elevation, located between the coastal plain of Philistia to the west and the mountains of Judah to the east. This area southwest of Jerusalem was the stomping grounds for Micah, for it included his hometown of Moresheth-Gath. Most of the

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

place names in this list are with 10 miles of Micah's hometown. Furthermore, most of these locations suffered during the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BC.

Micah is warning these towns of the calamity to come. The order he presents the towns in does not make sense geographically, since it does not retrace the invasion route of Sennacherib. Instead, Micah arranges the names of the towns in a literary fashion; he reinforces his message by making puns in Hebrew on these place names.

If Micah were a modern-day Houstonian, he might have said something like the following: "You will be on your way down in Baytown. Friendswood will be friendless. I will divest you in West U. You will despair in Bellaire. Humble will be humbled. Piney point will pine away. Richmond will be rich no more. Life will no longer be sweet in Sugar Land. There will be no relief in Alief."

The first town in the list is *Gath*. Micah says **Tell it not in Gath, weep not at all** (v. 10a). *Gath* sounds like the Hebrew word for "tell," so Micah is essentially saying "Tell it not in 'Tell-town'" (Bentley). On one level, Micah is saying that they should not advertise their weakness and trouble, especially outside of the country, lest others mock them.

However, Micah likely has a deeper meaning in mind when he says **Tell it not in Gath** (*cp.* 2 Sam. 1:20). Micah is quoting from 2 Samuel chapter 1 – the elegy given by David after the deaths of Saul and Jonathan at the battle of Mount Gilboa. In that funeral song, David laments the death of God's anointed king amidst the national disaster of defeat at the hands of the Philistines. This simple phrase, **tell it not in Gath**, reminds the people of God of a national disaster in their past. But even more, it reminds them of the tragedy of King Saul, who refused to obey God and was cut off from God. The people of Micah's day will suffer a similar fate if they do not repent.

The next town is *Beth-Aphrah*, the "house of dust." Micah tells the inhabitants of this town to **roll yourselves in the dust** (v. 10b). Thus, the inhabitants of the house of dust will be covered in dust, a traditional sign of mourning (*cp.* 1 Sam. 4:12; Job 2:12; 16:15). For example, consider the mourning of Joshua after the defeat at Ai:

<sup>6</sup>Then Joshua tore his clothes, and *fell to the earth* on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and *they put dust on their heads* (Joshua 7:6).

One hundred years later, Jeremiah tells the people of Judah the same message:

<sup>26</sup>O daughter of my people, *dress in sackcloth and roll about in ashes!* Make mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation; for the plunderer will suddenly come upon us (Jeremiah 6:26).

The third town is *Shaphir*, which sounds like the Hebrew word for "beautiful." However, *Shaphir* will no longer be proud of their beauty. Instead, Micah tells them to **pass by in naked shame, you inhabitant of Shaphir** (v. 11a). The idea is one of humiliation through slavery. The people of *Shaphir* will be marched away naked and shameful into captivity.

The next town on our Judean jaunt is *Zaanan*, which means "go out." However, Micah says that the opposite is true: **the inhabitant of Zaanan does not go out** (v. 11b). Instead of leaving the city to go out and help their neighbors and oppose their foes, the people of *Zaanan* cower inside their city walls. No help was forthcoming from the cowards of *Zaanan*.

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

Micah tells the next town, *Beth Ezel*, to mourn. The name of this town means “House of Taking Away.” Like Zaanan, Beth Ezel will be unable to help others. Why? Because **its place to stand is taken away from you** (v. 11c). The House of Taking Away has been taken away. Likely this refers to its being overrun and conquered by an invading army, such as Assyria. No wonder they are commanded to mourn!

The sixth town on the list is *Maroth*, which sounds like bitterness. Variants of this name appear several times in Scripture. For example:

<sup>22</sup>So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. <sup>23</sup>Now when they came to Marah, *they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah [Bitter].* <sup>24</sup>And the people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” <sup>25</sup>So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet (Ex. 15:22-25).

<sup>20</sup>But she said to them, “*Do not call me Naomi [Pleasant]; call me Mara [Bitter], for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.*” <sup>21</sup>I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?” (Ruth 1:20-21).

Although the residents of Maroth **pined for good** (v. 12a), they would not receive it. Just like the bitter water in the wilderness, just like Naomi’s bitterness at her circumstances, the town of Maroth would only know bitterness.

**But disaster came down from the LORD to the gate of Jerusalem** (v. 12b). Jerusalem is the city of “shalom” or “peace.” However, Jerusalem would not know peace – disaster would come to its very gates. As Allen puts it, “Disaster would creep up to the very walls of the city whose name spelled blessing.” This occurred in 701 BC when Sennacherib’s army besieged the city.

After Jerusalem, Micah turns his attention to *Lachish*. This was an important fortified city about 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem and only 6 miles from Micah’s hometown. It had been a fortified city and military fortress for centuries. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon made it one of his fortified cities to protect his southern flank against Philistia and Egypt (2 Chr. 11:5-12). Lachish was home of the latest military technology – the chariot. In fact, the name Lachish sounds similar to *steeds*, and so once again we can see Micah’s play on words: **O inhabitant of Lachish, harness the chariot to the swift steeds** (v. 13a).

The people of Lachish trusted in their strength, in their military might, in their own ability. And yet in the day of their calamity, it would not avail them. The city of Lachish was captured by Sennacherib during his 701 BC campaign. Sennacherib considered the conquest of Lachish an important military victory; he later decorated his palace at Nineveh with scenes from his victory there. Boice points out that you can still see some of these relief images at the British Museum in London. Furthermore, Sennacherib made Lachish his Judean headquarters:

<sup>13</sup>And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, *Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.* <sup>14</sup>Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, “I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay.” And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. <sup>15</sup>So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

king's house. <sup>16</sup>At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. <sup>17</sup>Then the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah (2 Kgs. 18:13-17a).

Why was Lachish destined to fall? Because of her pride in military accomplishments. **She was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion, for the transgressions of Israel were found in you** (v. 13b). Lachish put their trust in chariots and horses instead of the true and living God. Once you begin to trust in yourself more than in God, you start down the slippery slope towards oblivion.

The ninth town on our *Judean jaunt* is no less than the hometown of our hero Micah – *Moresheth-Gath*. Imagine Micah's grief to realize that his hometown would not be spared from judgment via Assyrian invaders. Moresheth sounds like the Hebrew word for "betrothed." This is probably the key to understanding the phrase, **Therefore you shall give presents to Moresheth-Gath** (v. 14a). With the loss of the fortified city of Lachish, Moresheth-Gath would have been easy pickings for the Assyrian army. Like a wedding gift given at a marriage ceremony, Moresheth-Gath would be presented as a dowry to the invading Assyrians. In addition to this gift, we have already seen that King Hezekiah gave gifts of gold and silver to the invaders at Lachish (2 Kgs. 18:14-16).

Next on our itinerary is *Achzib*, which means "deception, deceitful, or disappointing." Micah says that Achzib will live up to its name: **The houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel** (v. 14b). Achzib was an important manufacturing town, and hence a good source of tax revenue for the kings of Judah. However, Achzib would ultimately disappoint them; when the invaders came it could no longer provide its dependable revenue. Achzib is a pointed reminder to us not to place our trust on wealth or possessions, because they ultimately will disappoint and deceive us.

Our penultimate stop on this tour is in *Mareshah*. Mareshah was another one of the fortified towns of Judah (2 Chr. 11:5-12), located between Lachish and Moresheth-Gath. Micah says **I will yet bring an heir to you, O inhabitant of Mareshah** (v. 15a). The name of the town sounds like the Hebrew word for "possession" or "heir." Micah is saying that a new heir will come to possess the town of Mareshah – the king of Assyria. As Allen puts it, "the right of inheritance is to be won by conquest."

The twelfth and final town on this list is *Adullam*. Micah says **the glory of Israel shall come to Adullam** (v. 15b). Like the first line of this poem (**tell it not at Gath**), this last line reminds us of David.

<sup>1</sup>David therefore departed from there and *escaped to the cave of Adullam*. So when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. <sup>2</sup>And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him (1 Sam. 22:1-2).

Fleeing from Saul, David escaped to the cave of Adullam, where he gathered around him a ragtag army of those who were distressed, debtors, and discontent. Micah predicts a similar

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

future for the **glory of Israel** – the aristocracy of the land (called “men of rank” in Is. 5:13). Like David, they would be forced to flee and hide because of the coming calamity.

### 2. Becoming Bald (1:16)

At the end of the first oracle, Micah demonstrates his grief at hearing God’s pronouncement of *coming calamity* by parading through the streets, disrobed and distressed (v. 8). Now at the end of this second oracle, Micah again calls on the people of God to lament and mourn. **Make yourself bald and cut off your hair ... enlarge your baldness like an eagle** (v. 16). Prior comments:

However trendy total baldness may be with certain folk today, in Micah’s day baldness (16) denoted disgrace and misery for the unutterable calamity threatening Judah and Jerusalem. When God decides to move in judgment, whole communities, towns, cities and nations are faced with the seriousness in His sight of their sins and transgressions — and feel the impact of His holy anger.

What is the end result of the coming calamity for Judah? They are told to mourn **because of your precious children ... for they shall go from you into captivity**. Same song, second verse. God brought destruction and exile upon Samaria in the first oracle (vv. 2-9). That came to pass. Now God through Micah is making the same prediction.

However, the story of Judah turned out differently than for her sister to the north. What was the difference? It appears that King Hezekiah listened to Micah (and Isaiah) and he led the nation in cleaning out the high places and reforming the worship in Jerusalem. It seems that Hezekiah was sincere in his mourning and his repentance. As a result, God turned away the armies of Sennacherib at the gates of Jerusalem. Disaster, exile, and captivity were postponed for over 100 years.

### Conclusion

God is not an absentee landlord. He is not a watchmaker who winds up His creation and wanders away. He is intimately involved in His creation. Yes, He is transcendent – holy and far above us. But He is also immanent – near to us. God draws near to us in covenant, displaying His grace. But He also draws near in judgment, when His covenant is violated. Micah makes that perfectly clear in these two opening oracles of *coming calamity*. There is nowhere you can go or hide to escape the coming of the Lord from His holy temple: not Lachish, not Moresheth-Gath, not Adullam, not Jerusalem itself.

There is only one thing you can do when you are faced with the Day of the Lord: follow Micah’s example and mourn and grieve for your sin. As we will see in the last verses of Micah’s prophecy, God is a gracious God who forgives iniquity and sin. Let us remember that as we come into God’s presence in just a few minutes. Do you mourn over your sin? Do you grieve over your transgressions? Christian, there is hope for you. Confess your sins to the Lord of Heaven and Earth. He is eager to forgive you and restore you. He listened to the prayers of Hezekiah in the days of Micah, and He will answer your prayers of confession as well.

Next week: Lesson 3 – Prodigal People – Micah 2:1-13

Close in Prayer.