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C1032 – September 15, 2010 – Micah 1:1 – Historical Background & Setting

Tonight we want to introduce the Book of Micah and to start let's review the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible. Remember the Jews didn't divide the OT the way Gentiles after the time of Christ divided the OT. Some of the early church fathers who weren't so in tune with the OT divided it differently; men who didn't have as clear a grasp of the OT as the Jewish men who wrote and compiled it. The Hebrew Bible falls nicely into three divisions, these three divisions are recognized by the NT authors under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they're recognized by Jesus and if that has any bearing on the proper way to divide the OT then I think these divisions are the proper way and we ought to ditch the Gentile way (Matt 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Lk 16:16; *24:44; Jn 1:45; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:23; Rom 3:21).

TRADITIONAL HEBREW CANON (70-200AD)		
24 SCROLLS		
<u>Law</u>	<u>Prophets</u>	<u>Writings</u>
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Proverbs
Leviticus	Samuel	Job
Numbers	Kings	Song of Songs
Deuteronomy	Isaiah	Ruth
	Jeremiah	Lamentations
	Ezekiel	Ecclesiastes
	Twelve Prophets	Esther
		Daniel
		Ezra-Nehemiah
		Chronicles

Frankly, it's easier to learn and remember than the Gentile way. The three divisions of the OT are the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. Why they did it that way was because it classified for them the three basic emphases in the OT; Law obviously emphasizes what? Law, its legal literature; this is where

the covenantal structure of the Bible comes in, and it sets us up for how to interpret the rest of the Bible. How do you interpret legal literature? How do you interpret contracts? You interpret them literally. So from the very beginning, the first five books we are set up for how to interpret the rest of the Bible. So the first division is Law; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, they called it Torah which is a Hebrew word for Law.

The second division is the Prophets or Nabiim. The prophet, in the Hebrew mind, carries three ideas. We're accustomed to thinking of only one of those ideas; the prophet is the guy who God reveals the future to. So he's a futurist. I try to distance us from that kind of thinking to compensate for a weakness here. Primarily he's not a futurist. Though he does tell the future his real interest is history not the future. Besides, telling the future is simply telling us what? History in advance. So the dominant characteristic of the prophet is he's a historian. The Hebrew prophets were the first historians. It wasn't the Greeks who started writing history; this is what you're fed on the university campus, Thucydides and Herodotus, these men did write history but they were not the first history writers. There had to be a reason to begin writing history. Why would you want to write a history? The Hebrew people were stimulated to write history? What was the stimulus? That God had a plan for history and that plan was revealed through covenants. God came into covenants with Israel. Dr William F. Albright, father of American Archaeology said, after all his travels, after all his research, he said there is only one people who ever made a contract with their God or gods and it was Israel. Actually God made a contract with them. But the point remains that no other people have a covenant with their god or gods. So what are the prophets basically about? They're about the historical outworking of the covenants. Is God or is God not faithful to His word in the covenant. It's the word of God in the covenant that governs and controls history, not political factors, not military maneuvers, not economic issues, those things are involved in history but those things do not control history. God's word in the covenants controls history. So the Hebrew prophets wrote history because they were interested in whether God keeps His word. If He does then what does that do for me? It gives me something to trust. Now I can trust Him because I can see He's trustworthy, He's faithful. So the prophets recorded history to chart the record of God's faithfulness so people could trust. And that idea has enormous repercussions for inerrancy, it has repercussions for

infallibility, a whole slew of doctrines fall out of this that we don't have time to go into tonight.

The second thing about the prophet is that the history he writes is a unique history. The reason its unique is because he's writing history from outside of the flow of history. The prophet himself is within the flow of history, but his analysis is not from within the flow history. He's lifted momentarily outside of the flow of history into the divine counsels to look in from the outside and give a divine analysis of history. What we mean by this is they're not putting man's spin on the facts. There were men of other kingdoms in the ancient world who wrote down facts with their spin on the facts, and there were men who just wrote down facts, but they're all writing and analyzing what happened from within the flow of history. What's utterly unique about the Hebrew prophets is they didn't write and analyze just from human intellect, they gave a divine interpretation of the facts. They were answering the big questions like, what's the relationship of this fact to another fact and how does this all play into where history is going with respect to the covenants. And so the Hebrew prophet was given the divine analysis of history. So always remember when you discuss the origins of history with someone that the world's first historians were Hebrew prophets and they gave a divine analysis of history.

The third thing about the prophet is that he's a prosecuting attorney. What you typically hear is the OT prophets were progressives, they were into moral and social reform and it couldn't be any more backwards. They're not calling for moral and social reform, they're not instituting a new moral code. They're reactionaries, they're calling the nation back, back to the Mosaic Law code. We've got to get back to the Law code that God Himself gave at Mt Sinai, we've got to get back to the word of God. That's where the contract, the second one at least, was entered into. So the prophets aren't giving a lot of new material, they're harking back to what was already revealed in the Law. So the Prophets look back to and build on the Law. See why understanding these divisions is so important?

For the Hebrew people the section of Scripture called the Prophets started with Joshua, they would say Moses was a prophet of course, but his literature they categorized as Law. Joshua they categorized as prophetic, Judges, prophetic, Samuel and Kings are prophetic. You say I don't usually think of

those books as prophetic. That's because you have the wrong idea of a prophet, the early prophets were primarily historical analysts. Then you have the later prophets, guys you normally think of as prophets; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, they're more prosecuting attorneys. Interestingly Daniel's not included. Daniel is over in the Writings, along with the Psalms and Proverbs. The Writings emphasize wisdom, skill in living and someone who had wisdom in the OT was someone who was able to take the Law and apply it to every area of life. Daniel imported principles of governmental administration from the Law into Babylonian and Medo-Persian administration. Esther took principles of civil disobedience from the Law and applied them to governmental affairs in Persia. So the emphasis of the Writings is that wisdom is applying the Law to all the details of life and organizing proper categories of thinking and handling problems. Then after the larger prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc...you come to the Twelve. The Twelve were smaller scrolls that were eventually rolled into one scroll, they also are basically prosecuting attorneys but they also give divine analysis of history. Micah is within this scroll and that's where our focus will be, Micah is writing in the 8th century. The liberal dates it in the 5th century. Why does he do that? Because liberals don't believe anyone can get out of the flow of history and see down through the corridors of time so they reject the 8th century date and shift it down the corridors of time after the events Micah predicted took place. That way it has no predictive elements, it's all just human analysis, after the fact.

Let's shift to the divisions of the book. The book clearly divides into three parts; chapters 1-2, chapters 3-5 and chapters 6-7. We'll start by focusing on chapters 1-2. I advise you to read through the Book of Micah, just take a modern translation, whatever translation you're comfortable reading, read it through for the big picture. It will help you tremendously if you actually are reading through the book as we are studying the book. It's not a tall order I'm asking of you. Just read the Bible. We're a Bible church, of all people we ought to be reading the Bible. But the tendency in Bible churches is we get the mindset that our pastor-teacher reads the Bible and tells us what it means and that's good enough, there's no reason for me to read it myself because I depend upon him to tell me what God says. I don't want that to happen because you're going to answer for yourself at the judgment seat of Christ. I'm not going to be there vicariously for you, I'm not going to be there to hold your hand, and you're going to have to give an answer for yourself. So

please read through the book for yourself. There is no substitute for hearing the word of God directly. One of the main reason Sunday Schools were started in the 1700's was so children could hear the word of God directly rather than second handed. And the idea was that if we teach them to read the Bible then the first words their learning to read are the words of God. That's why they called it school, it was where they learned to read, to promote literacy. But not literacy for literacy sake, literacy for the sake of hearing God's voice. So people could hear the gospel straight from God's lips. Two centuries later and we wonder why we can't pick up the Bible and understand it. Duh, we weren't trained to read from the Bible, we didn't hear the voice of God direct from the Scriptures, what His voice sounds like so now we're illiterate when it comes to the Scriptures. Well, one of the things that will help you read Micah is to read it with a basic structure in mind. Books used to have extensive Table of Contents, pages after page, and the reason they had that was because it shows the authors pattern of thought and it gave you a tool to analyze the logic of the author's argument. Today we just float along. That's why, if you have a Study Bible it will usually have an outline at the beginning of each book. That's to help you keep the whole book in mind, see the argument. I'm going to make it simple at first. Micah comes in cycles, three cycles of cursing and blessing, cursing and blessing, cursing and blessing. And if you can pick up on that cycle you're going to be way ahead in terms of understanding the book

So if you mark in your Bible, turn to Micah 1:2. If you don't, make a copy of Micah and mark it up. There's a Hebrew imperative that introduces each of the three cycles. Micah 1:2, "Hear, O peoples, all of you; Listen, O earth and all it contains." The Hebrew imperative is that first word, "Hear." Underline that word. That's the Hebrew *shema* and it means make your ear attentive, pay attention to what I'm going to tell you and then he goes into the cursing. *Shema* is one of the great words of the Jewish people. Twice a day the Jewish people proclaim the *Great Shema* of Deut 6:4 and it's that same Hebrew imperative, *shema*, from the *Great Shema*, that Micah uses to introduce a cursing-blessing cycle. Turn to Micah 3:1 for the second cycle and mark these in your text. "And I said, "*Shema* now, heads of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel." So underline it again, mark it, whatever distinguishes it to you and you might put a reference to 1:2 right above it so you remember to link those verses. 3:1 is the beginning of the second cursing-blessing cycle. And finally turn to Micah 6:1. "*Shema* now what the Lord is saying." There's the third

one, put the references to the prior two above it, 1:2 and 3:1. So that gives you your three divisions. And inside each division you have a cursing-blessing cycle, So when you begin chapters 1-2 you'll read the first cycle; cursing in 1:2-2:11 and blessing in 2:12-13. That's a single cycle. Then when you read chapters 3-5 you'll read the second cycle; cursing in 3:1-12 and blessing in 4:1-5:15. And finally, when you read chapters 6-7; cursing in 6:1-7:7 and blessing in 7:8-20.

Now because of the structure, this back and forth, cursing and blessing, the liberal commentators have come along and said, well, this Micah character is a schizophrenic. He goes back and forth, back and forth, he can't decide whether he's going to curse Israel or bless Israel and no one would write that way so he must be two people, there must be two authors who wrote Micah. So they conclude that Micah couldn't have possibly written all of this and their solution is to say that Micah wrote the cursing sections but not the blessing sections, somebody else wrote that, who knows who, but certainly not Micah, and that's the 'scholarly' consensus today. Even though Micah says he wrote it, with all our Ph.D's we now know more than those closer to these events. So we don't know who wrote it but we know for certain Micah did not write it. That's always the argument, we don't know this, we don't know that, but we do know with absolute certainty the Bible couldn't be right. Don't let that bother you, all it is is a statement "I don't believe the Bible." Two can play that game. We can state "I do believe the Bible." But being unbelievers their interest is, how, as a merely human book, how did Micah come together. In other words, here we're trying to explain the Bible in terms of humanism. So, in spite of the claim of the Scriptures that it is the revelation of God, that it's an inspired text, the Scriptures are arbitrarily, at step one in the discussion classified as a piece of humanly generated material. Now, given that fact how did it happen? And that's how they get into ripping and shredding the Bible to pieces. They're unbelievers, what else would you expect. Satan's not going to let this book go unchallenged. But just remember that's the presupposition of unbelief at work, there's an agenda at work to suppress the idea of a God who speaks.

The biblical explanation for the back and forth, cursing and blessing has nothing to do with two authors. It has to do with two covenants; what are the two great covenants of the OT?



The Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. Now go back to your framework. This is where the power of the framework way of thinking comes in. What event introduces the Abrahamic Covenant? The Call of Abraham. Abraham lived in the post-Flood world. He's a product of the post-Flood Noahic civilization. Noah and his family were geniuses who built modern civilization, they built brilliance on every continent, they build pyramids on multiple continents, they mapped the world in a few hundred years; there were brilliant men at the fountainhead of our civilization. But, despite their brilliance they were also depraved and what does depravity do to truth? It distorts it. So very quickly after the Flood the truths of the Noahic Bible were distorted and twisted by sinful hearts. And that's where the mythology comes from. The mythology is a distortion of the truths of Scripture. The Scripture is not a pure form of mythology, the mythology is a distorted form of the truth. So you have a massive paganization of the world as they deliberately forget the truth in the years after the Flood. So to preserve the truth what did God do? He started a counter-culture. Who did He start the counter-culture with? A man named Abraham. Abraham was a good pagan like everybody else, so the fact that God called a good pagan tells us what? It's all of grace. God initiated that relationship with Abraham. It was God's gracious election of Abraham, God calling out to this man who had on his mind, the last thing, the Creator God. God initiated with Abraham and this is what we call grace. God comes to us and God initiates a plan in history by His grace, not by man's works. Man tries to build his kingdom by fleshly works, by gimmicks, but God builds His kingdom by grace. And so by grace He calls Abraham out and Abraham believes God, Abraham has faith and Abraham is justified and in that justified state God makes covenantal promises to him. What did He promise Abraham? A land, a specific real estate, with

boundaries, a seed, a specific offspring who would rule over that real estate, and a world wide blessing, through this seed the nation Israel would be a blessing to the whole earth. So it's a covenant of grace, it's a covenant of blessing, it guarantees future blessing to the nation Israel and to the whole earth through a specific offspring that comes from the nation Israel. So the Abrahamic Covenant defines the position of the nation Israel, it gives them security, guarantees their survival. No other nation has this security. China doesn't have this security, America doesn't have this security. Brazil doesn't have this security. Only Israel has this security. It's the security of the covenant promises of God. So if God is going to fulfill those promises and we read Micah, cursing and blessing, cursing and blessing, back and forth, back and forth, what covenant is it that explains the blessing portions? The Abrahamic Covenant.

The covenant that explains the cursing portions is the Mosaic Covenant. Again we go back to our framework. What event in the framework introduces the Mosaic Covenant? Mt Sinai. Mt Sinai is 600 years after the Abrahamic Covenant. So we have the Call of Abraham then we have the people go down to Egypt, then there's the Exodus from Egypt, so at this point God is on the move to do what? Fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant, the nation is on their way out of Egypt to the Promised Land. This is how you train yourself to read the Bible, it's not just pieces arbitrarily thrown in a book. It's a grand revelation of history that records God's faithfulness to His word in the covenants. Now God takes them to Mt Sinai and gives them His Law. Why does He do this? Because the people are what? Sinners, they're hearts are depraved. So He's going to give them Law and the Law is to show them their hearts are depraved and they need a new heart. The depraved heart can't obey God's holy Law, it can't produce perfect righteousness. So they're going to have to resort to faith, like Abraham, they're going to have to trust that God will provide the righteousness to solve their sin problem, because you're never going to get human sinners together with a holy God in the Promised Land. God can't bless sinful man. So the enjoyment of the land, blessing in the land, is conditioned on obedience. The sinful heart can't produce obedience and the nation is going to have to learn through the Law that they can't produce the obedience God is looking for. So this Covenant is different from the Abrahamic Covenant because the Abrahamic Covenant used the verbiage, I will do this for you and I will do that for you, I will bless you. But the Mosaic Covenant used the verbiage, if you do this, then I will do that. If you disobey

Me I will curse you, if you obey Me I will bless you. And the legislation penetrated into every area of life because this was a nation God created and formed and gave them a Law that would cover all the details of life. So the Mosaic Covenant governs their experience, their enjoyment of the land. But the Abrahamic Covenant defined their position and ultimate enjoyment of the blessing. Somehow God would bring it about. Somehow God would provide the righteousness necessary and the new heart that is necessary for the nation to enjoy the land and the blessing.¹

Now the nation Israel was not in obedience in Micah's day, the whole thing was spiraling out of control, it was chaos. And what do you need when your life is spiraling out of control, when life is dark and your walking through what seems to be a never-ending tunnel of darkness, everything is crumbling to pieces around you, your family, your community, your nation, the politicians are corrupt, the economy is failing, what do you need as a believer to hang on? You need hope. So that's why Micah writes the way he writes. If they looked only at their present circumstances as a nation it was bleak, it was political intrigue, economic collapse, military defeat and all because they were violating the Mosaic Law and God was chastening them. He was disciplining them so they'd return to Him. So after going into all the disciplinary curses coming upon them Micah inserts these glimmers of hope, "There's light at the end of the tunnel nation. God has a plan for you in the Abrahamic Covenant, you are going to reach your destiny, come hell or high water, God is going to get you there." And the way He's going to get you there is one of the fantastic contributions of Micah.

The way God's going to finally bless Israel is He's going to send a great and righteous King. The theme of Micah is the coming of a great Messianic King. Look at Micah 2:12, this is the blessing section, we've had cursing up to this point, then Micah inserts two verses of blessing. "I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold; Like a flock in the midst of its pasture They will be noisy with men. ¹³"The breaker goes up before them; They break out, pass through the gate," and you say, who's the breaker, who's the one who goes before them?" Micah answers, "So their king goes on before them, And the LORD at their head." See the King-Messiah there? He's the Lord, He's YHWH. That's the King-Messiah being identified with YHWH. So the blessing is found in the King-Messiah-YHWH. Turn to Micah 5:2. No verse is

more well-known in Micah than this verse. “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.” That’s quoted by the religious leaders in Matthew 2:6 as the birthplace of the Messiah. So, Micah says, there’s hope, hope will come forth from the little town of Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a two-bit nothing town south of Jerusalem, it was hardly more than a KOA campground. It ought to startle you because you’d think the king of the universe would be born in His city Jerusalem. Jerusalem is where God chose to put His name and build His everlasting kingdom and yet here’s the King born in a town not too little to be put on the map! So He’s born in Bethlehem, that’s His humanity, but did you see the end of the verse? “His goings forth are from eternity,” He’s also eternal, that’s His deity. See how the OT presents both? It’s clear that the King-Messiah is both human and divine and He’s going to rule in Israel, He’s a King. So from whom will come the blessing? From the King-Messiah-YHWH. That’s Micah’s message of hope. He’s the One in whom the blessing must come. Otherwise it’s all cursing.

Now to see that the prophets searched and inquired for what time and place this King-Messiah-YHWH would come turn to 1 Pet 1:10. Peter’s talking about the blessing, he’s talking about salvation. Notice verse 10, “As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries,” now, who’s the subject of verse 10? The prophets. Who are the prophets? Micah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, these are the men who wrote the OT Scriptures. This is a classic reference in verse 10. We don’t know all the details of how it occurred. Did they get a vision, was it a dream, was it a voice out of the clouds, was it an angelic visitor, was it a visitation of the pre-incarnate Christ, we can’t tell in every instance the precise mode of revelation. But the word of God came to these men and the prophesied of the grace that would come, it hadn’t come yet, they were seeing ahead in history and notice what he says there in verse 10 at the end of the verse. What did the prophets do with this revelation? They “made careful searches and inquiries, ¹¹seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating,” This is their own revelation and what’s the implication? They didn’t understand it all; they were thinking about this, they were praying about this. Think what it must have been like to get these new revelations from God. You’ve got other pieces of revelation from prior revelation of God and then you get your piece and you’re trying to put this all

together, who is this person, when exactly is He coming? They had whole schools of prophets who dedicated their lives to doing this kind of thing. And they came up with two kinds of passages indicated at the end of verse 11, “as He” that’s the Spirit of Christ, it’s the Holy Spirit who gave them the revelation, but the revelation is about the Christ, so he says, as the Spirit of Christ “predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.” This is harking back to the number one question the OT prophets had. How could the Messiah suffer and die and then also be a glorious king? They couldn’t see how you could get this together. All they knew was that there were two apparently contradictory themes in the Scriptures; that the Messiah on the one hand was prophesied to die, He was prophesied to suffer, and on the other hand He would be the glorious king who would live forever. And Micah is one of these prophets; he must have been thoroughly confused as he worked on this because his message is of a glorious King-Messiah ruling forever, yet somehow He’s got to suffer and die. You want to talk about tough stuff. We’re looking back, we’ve got hindsight and hindsight is always 20-20. Micah didn’t have that. He had foresight but foresight isn’t always 20-20. He’s working with 30-40 vision here. They had a few ways of handling this but they could never all agree how this would be solved. Now we know how it’s solved, it’s solved by two comings, one to suffer by dying and the second to reign in glory. So we’ll see clearer than Micah did as we work through those passages. But the point we want to make is that the way to the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant is through the King-Messiah who generates the righteousness necessary and imputes it to all who believe so they receive a new heart, a heart that can obey. There is no other way. Until Israel receives the righteousness of the Messiah she can never have enjoyment of her land, it’s that simple. The way to Israel’s enjoyment of the land is through the cross, not peaceful negotiation, not compromise, not hand-to-hand combat, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and calling upon Him to be saved.

Now let’s look at Micah 1:1, this is the historical setting of the book. **The word of the LORD which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.** So right away we deal with the phrase **The word of the Lord** which signals we’re dealing with a prophet, a prophetic work. Now the **word of the Lord** is not something you experience, it’s not something I experience. Nobody has experienced this since John the Apostle penned the Book of Revelation in AD96. So this isn’t I had a feeling or something guided me. This

is God talked to Hosea in the Hebrew language so if we were Hosea we could have recorded it and we could have played it back over and over and over. This kind of revelation occurs only when the canon is open and this was a time when the canon was open; this was a time when historic revelation was occurring. It doesn't occur all the time. It comes in spurts in history. Take, for example, the period of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. God spoke to these men for the writing of sections of Genesis but then you have a 400 year silence between Joseph and Moses. 400 years the Jews tell us, God never spoke a word. Then God begins to speak. Then we have another 400 years of silence between the Old and New Testament. God didn't say a thing. The Book of Maccabees, written in the intertestamental period reports that no prophet was living; God had turned the loudspeaker off until the time of Christ. So it's not true that God is talking to every generation in an audible voice, yes in the word of God, but like this to Hosea, no. The normal pattern laid down in history is God talks for awhile and then He stops talking and He says remember what I said.

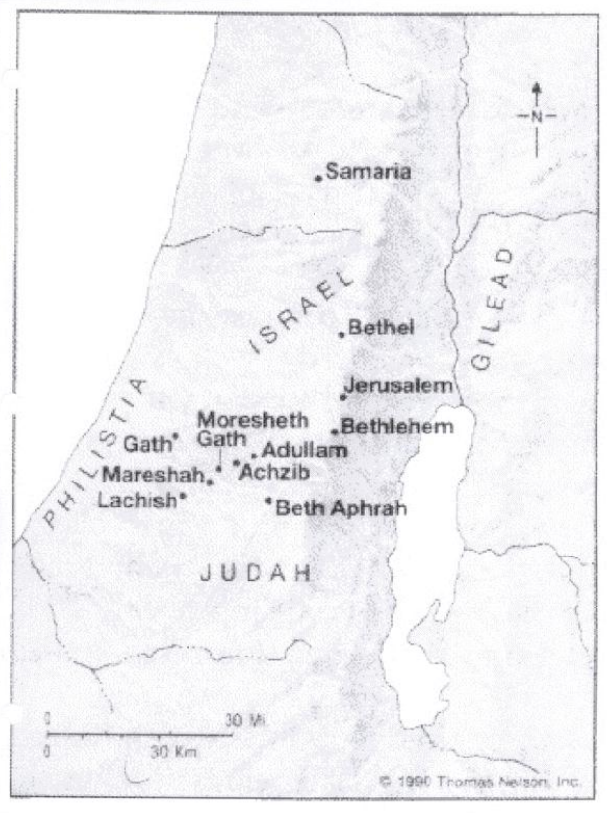
But at this time the Lord was talking and **The word of the Lord...came to Micah.** In other words, Micah didn't dream this up, Micah didn't wake up one day and say, you know, I'd like to be a prophet, I think I'll study how to be a prophet. That's not the way you enter this profession. **The word of the Lord came** to him, God chose him for this profession. And God sovereignly decided to speak to **Micah of Moresheth.**

Now why did God speak to Micah? We don't know why. I'm sure Micah wondered why, especially when we see later in the first chapter he's going to have to pull a stunt you'd never dream of. He's going to run around naked and howl like a coyote. See, everyone wants to be a prophet and have their own private revelation but when it comes right down to it nobody wants to do what these guys had to do. Hosea had to marry a prostitute. Who wants to do that? So it just de-legitimizes so quickly the modern claims of the prophet, they're nothing like the Real McCoy's.

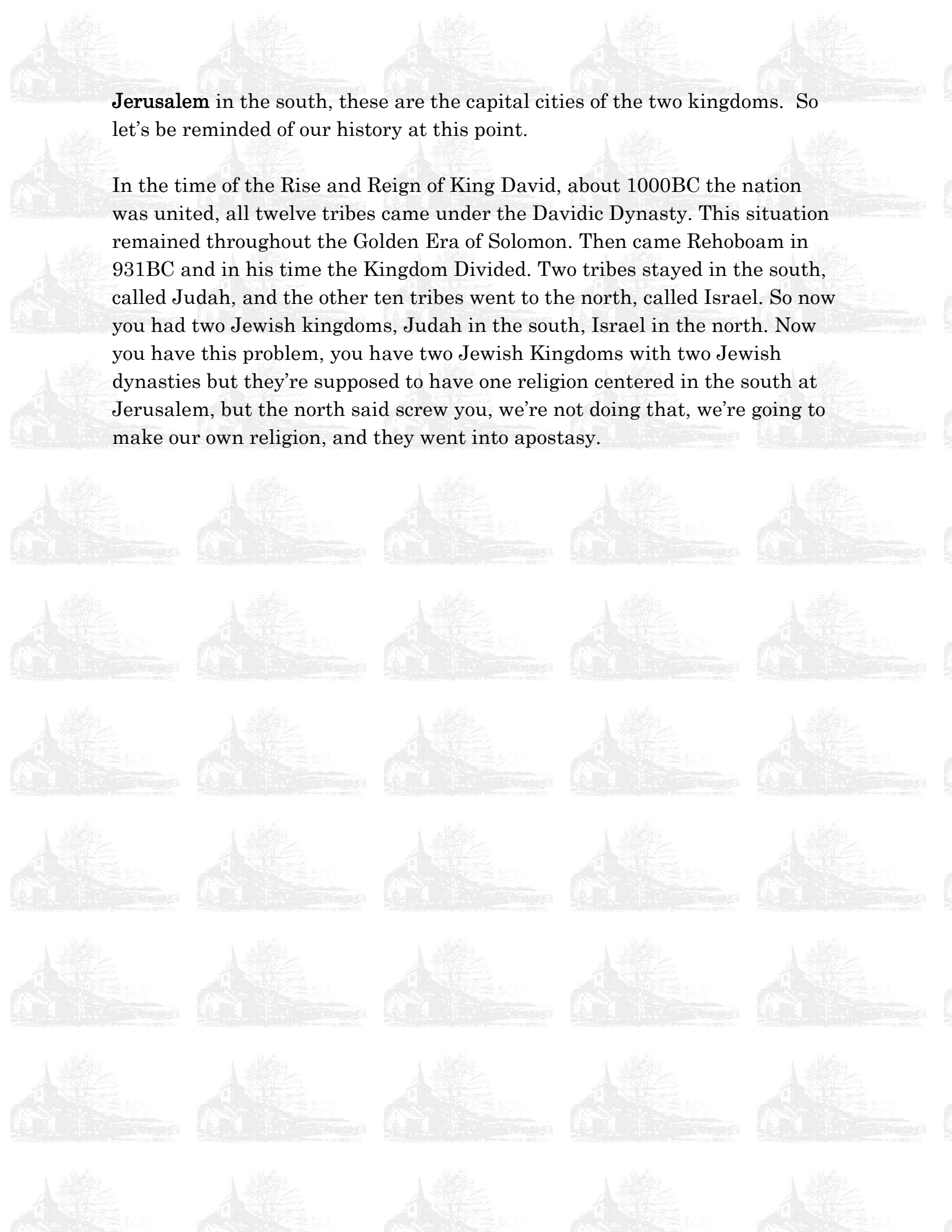
Turn to Micah 7:18. We don't know much about **Micah of Moresheth.** But like many of the prophets his name is significant. In particular Micah's name is significant because his name foreshadows the crucial question in the final chapter of the book. He asks, "Who is a God like you, who pardons iniquity?" See the great forgiveness of God in view there, "Who is like God?" And that's

what Micah's name means "Who is like God?" And it's a good question to ponder. It's the whole theme of the Creator-creature distinction. There's no one like the Creator. Only the Creator would come up with a plan that involves men and angels rebelling against Him and then providing a solution through incarnating Himself and providing forgiveness. That's the Creator coming to the creature, condescending to man, to the point of taking to Himself true humanity and dying for our sins. "Who is like God?" No one. And that's the truth Micah's name reminds us of.

Then we're told He's from **Moresbeth**. **Moresbeth** is over in the Shephelah, the coastal plains that descend from the hill country down to the area east of the Gaza strip.



This is one of the areas that gets heavy shelling today by Hamas operatives in the Gaza strip. So Moresbeth is from the southern kingdom, it's the kingdom of Judah and then he lists three kings giving the time period, **in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah**, so they're all from the south. (There are no kings mentioned from the north here and we want to ask why) There were kings in the north at this time but why are only kings from the south listed? Obviously from the end of the verse Micah is going to minister to both the north and the south, **Samaria** in the north and



Jerusalem in the south, these are the capital cities of the two kingdoms. So let's be reminded of our history at this point.

In the time of the Rise and Reign of King David, about 1000BC the nation was united, all twelve tribes came under the Davidic Dynasty. This situation remained throughout the Golden Era of Solomon. Then came Rehoboam in 931BC and in his time the Kingdom Divided. Two tribes stayed in the south, called Judah, and the other ten tribes went to the north, called Israel. So now you had two Jewish kingdoms, Judah in the south, Israel in the north. Now you have this problem, you have two Jewish Kingdoms with two Jewish dynasties but they're supposed to have one religion centered in the south at Jerusalem, but the north said screw you, we're not doing that, we're going to make our own religion, and they went into apostasy.

Kings of Judah and Israel and the Preexilic Prophets

JUDAH				ISRAEL		
Kings*	Dates	Years	Dynasty†	Kings	Dates	Years
Rehoboam	931-913	17	1st Dynasty	Jeroboam I	931-910	22
Abijah	913-911	3	"	Nadab ‡	910-909	2
Asa	911-870	41	2nd Dynasty	Baasha	909-886	24
Coregency‡ with Jehoshaphat	873-870	(3)	"	Elijah ‡	886-885	2
Jehoshaphat	873-848	25	3rd Dynasty	Zimri	885	7 days
Coregency with Jehoram	853-848	(5)	—	Tibni	885-880	6
Jehoram OBADIAH**	848-841	8	—	Overlapping reign‡ with Omri	885-880	(6)
Ahaziah ‡	841	1	4th Dynasty	Omri	885-874	12
Queen Athaliah ‡	841-835	6	"	Ahab	874-853	22
Joash ‡ JOEL**	835-796	40	"	Ahaziah	852-852	2
Amaziah ‡	795-767	29	"	Jehoram (Joram) ‡	852-841	12
Azariah's vice-regency under Amaziah	793-767	(23)	"	Jehu	841-814	28
Azariah (Uzziah)	790-739	52	5th Dynasty	Jehoshaphaz	814-798	17
Coregency with Jotham	750-739	(11)	"	Jehoash (Joash)	798-782	16
Jotham	750-735	16	"	Coregency with Jeroboam II	793-782	(11)
Ahaz's vice-regency under Jotham	744-735	(9)	"	Jeroboam II JONAH AMOS	793-753	41
Coregency of Jotham with Ahaz	735-732	4	"	Zachariah ‡	753-752	1/2
Ahaz	732-715	16	6th Dynasty	Shallum ‡	752	1/12
Hezekiah's vice-regency under Ahaz	729-715	(14)	"	Mansham	752-742	10
Hezekiah	715-686	29	7th Dynasty	Overlapping reign with Pekah	752-742	(10)
Manasseh's vice-regency under Hezekiah	657-686	(11)	"	Pekahiah ‡	742-742	(2)
Manasseh NAHUM	657-642	55	"	Overlapping reign with Pekah	742-740	(2)
Amon ‡	642-640	2	8th Dynasty	Pekah ‡	752-732	20
Josiah ZEPHANIAH	640-609	31	9th Dynasty	Hoshea	732-722	9
Jehoahaz	609	1/4	"			
Jehoiakim HABAKKUK	609-598	11	"			
Jehoiachin	598-597	1/4	"			
Zedekiah	597-586	11	"			

* Includes one queen (Athaliah).

† In coregency the kings ruled together; in overlapping reigns they reigned separately; in a vice-regency a son ruled with his father in a subordinate position.

‡ These kings and one queen were assassinated.

§ A dynasty is a succession of rulers who are members of the same family or a single ruler of a family different from those before and after him. (The kings of Judah were all of one dynasty because they were all descendants of David.)

** Evangelical scholars differ on these dates of Obadiah and Joel. Some place them at later dates (see the *Introductions* to Joel and Obad.).

Note: In some kings' reigns the dates (e.g., Rehoboam, 931-913), when subtracted, may vary from the number in the "Years" column for that king. This is because the beginning and ending dates for a given king may include only portions of these years in the Gregorian calendar.

The dates of the kings are adapted from Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 3rd ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983.

Kings of Judah and Israel and the Preexilic Prophets						
JUDAH				ISRAEL		
Kings*	Dates	Years	Dynasty†	Kings	Dates	Years
Rehoboam	931-913	17	1st Dynasty	Jeroboam I	931-910	22
Abijah	913-911	3	"	Nadab ‡	910-909	2
Asa	911-870	41	2nd Dynasty	Baasha	909-886	24
Coregency‡ with Jehoshaphat	873-870	(3)	"	Elah ‡	886-885	2
Jehoshaphat	873-848	25	3rd Dynasty	Zimri	885	7 days
Coregency with Jehoram	853-848	(5)	—	Tibni	885-880	6
Jehoram OBADIAH**	848-841	8	—	Overlapping reign‡ with Omri	885-880	(6)
Ahaziah ‡	841	1	4th Dynasty	Omri	885-874	12
Queen Athaliah ‡	841-835	6	"	Ahab	874-853	22
Joash ‡ JOEL**	835-796	40	"	Ahaziah	853-852	2
Amaziah ‡	795-767	29	"	Jehoram (Joram) ‡	852-841	12
Azariah's vice-regency under Amaziah	793-767	(23)	"	Jehu	841-814	28
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Ahaz	732-715	16	6th Dynasty	Shallum ‡	752	1/12
Hezekiah's vice-regency under Ahaz	729-715	(14)	"	Menahem	752-742	10
Hezekiah	715-686	29	7th Dynasty	Overlapping reign with Pekah	752-742	(10)
Manasseh's vice-regency under Hezekiah	687-686	(11)	"	Pekah ‡	742-740	(2)
Manasseh NAHUM	687-642	55	"	Overlapping reign with Pekah	742-740	(2)
Amon ‡	642-640	2	8th Dynasty	Pekah ‡	752-732	20
Josiah ZEPHANIAH	640-609	31	9th Dynasty	Hoshea	732-722	9
Jehoahaz	649	1/4	"	"	"	"
Jehoiakim HABAKKUK	609-598	11	"	"	"	"
Jehoiachin	598-597	1/4	"	"	"	"
Zedekiah	597-586	11	"	"	"	"

* Includes one queen (Athaliah).

† In coregency the kings ruled together; in overlapping reigns they reigned separately; in a vice-regency a son ruled with his father in a subordinate position.

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** Evangelical scholars differ on these dates of Obadiah and Joel. Some place them at later dates (see the *Introductions* to Joel and Obad.).

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The dates of the kings are adapted from Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963.

Now, here's what happened. On the left side of this chart you have Judah in the south, and you have this list of kings. Come down on the list to **Jotham**, okay, first guy in Micah's list, 750-735. So the word of the Lord came to Micah sometime during Jotham's reign. After him you have **Ahaz** and he reigns from 732-715. Then **Hezekiah** takes the throne and he reigns from

715-686, at the end of his reign his son Manasseh rules as vice regent. Now the vice regent ruled and the father took a subordinate position, this is important because while Hezekiah is still named the king and he's the king in Micah's list, but at the end of his reign Manasseh actually held the reigns and that's important for chapter 7 because Hezekiah was a good king, he brought a lot of reform to the nation, but during his reign which we think is described in chapter 7, the kingdom is going to pieces and the only way to explain this during Hezekiah's reign is to understand that Hezekiah is in a subordinate position at that time and his son Manasseh, who was one of the worst kings in Judah's history, is ruling as vice-regent. And it shows you a principle that you can have a really good thing ruined very rapidly. It can take generations to get a good thing going and you can ruin it in 15 minutes. And I hope people in this country now realize that. It's a simple principle of history after the Fall that it's much harder to build things than it is to destroy them and we get a taste of that in Hezekiah's reign. So these are the guys in Micah's list that reigned in Judah while he ministered; **Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.**

Now look at the right side of the chart, at the contemporary kings in the north. This is Israel's kings and what do you notice different about the right side of the chart? They have a whole separate column for dynasties; just trace them on down, 1st dynasty, 2nd dynasty, 3rd dynasty, 4th dynasty, 5th dynasty, 6th dynasty. Do you see that on the right side of the chart? Why not? It's a noticeable difference between the kingdom of Judah on the left and the kingdom of Israel on the right. How come you don't see all those changes in dynasties in Judah? Because of the Davidic Covenant, there's only one dynasty that can ever rule in Judah, the Davidic dynasty. That shows that whose word controls history? God's word. Specifically God's word in 2 Sam 7, the promise of a Davidic dynasty, that David would not lack a man on the throne of Judah.


But on the right side of that chart you don't have a Davidic Covenant, you don't have God's word controlling the dynasties, instead you have a mess. You've got serious problems on the right side of that chart. Kings are assassinated, the throne is taken by force, there's political intrigue, the rich prey on the poor. It was chaos in the north and Micah had to minister to them too. So if Micah began in Jotham's reign, then the ruler in the north at that time was Menahem (752-742BC). Then his son Pekahiah came to the

throne (742-740). Then Pekah who's a different dynasty (752-732). You can see the northern kingdom was already divided up, and finally Hoshea, then the northern kingdom goes into exile in 722BC. Just look at the instability. How would you like to be living in that kind of political turmoil? It was chaos, no one knew who was going to be sitting in the oval office next week, and the average person suffered under this deterioration. But in the south, the left column, look at the contrast, political stability, relatively speaking.

And Micah only mentions the kings from the south in his list. Anybody catch what Micah's doing? Micah is going to minister to both kingdoms but Micah is saying I only recognize the kings God recognizes. And during my prophetic ministry God recognized three kings in the south; Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. None of those guys from the north were authorized, none of them, they were all usurpers. See how in tune these guys were with the word of God. They didn't say, well, you have a crown on your head, I guess I'll recognize you. They didn't care if you had a crown on your head; they cared if God appointed you as king.

Another thing we can see from the chart: look at some of Micah's contemporary prophets. In the north you have Hosea. And in the south with Micah is Isaiah, a big boy and they knew of each other's writings because Micah 4:1-3 is identical to Isaiah 2:2-4. So there were other prophets during this time, some in both kingdoms.

And lastly from the chart, how long did Micah minister for? This is a fairly accurate chart, he started to minister under **Jotham** ~745 all the way into the latter reign of **Hezekiah**, ~690 or so, that's 55 years. That's a long time and Micah got to see a lot of things. Micah got to see the fall of Samaria in 722BC, he saw the Assyrians on the doorstep of Jerusalem in 701BC, but because of Hezekiah's faithfulness she doesn't fall for another 115 years, so he got to see that and he got to see some positive response to his message. He must have been somewhat encouraged, someone listened to the word of God. But the real hope of the book is not Hezekiah or any other mere human political rulers; it's the coming of the King-Messiah.



ⁱ It's the same thing in the Christian life, you have these two aspects. We have a position in Christ through faith and nothing can ever change our position. We have eternal security, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, if we are faithless He is faithful, there's about 101 different ways you can get the truth of eternal security. Just like the nation Israel's eternal destiny is secure, they will have the land, they will have the seed and they will be a worldwide blessing, the remnant at least, the promises were to the remnant of believing Israel, so we as the Church will be conformed to the image of Christ, there's no stepping off of this train. We have eternal security, that's our position. But on the other hand we have our experience and this is the ups and downs of the Christian life. We either trust the Lord and obey and there's enjoyment of life that comes out of that, we get to sit back and watch the Lord work and He does fantastic things, or we don't trust and we sin and we blow it and there are consequences for that, there's frustration, there's more problems and we get ourselves in a ball of wax. The nation Israel had the same thing. They were all in a ball of wax by this time in history. Their eternal destiny was secure but their experience was spiraling downward. It was a mess.

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