

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church

107 East Austin

Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

C1035 – October 6, 2010 – Micah 2:1-11 – The Sins Of Theft

Tonight we want to go into Micah chapter 2 and deal with the sins of theft that both kingdoms committed that led to Exile. In chapter 1 God has a lawsuit against His people and He summons all the nations, the Gentile heathen to jury duty. The basis of the lawsuit is the contractual document of the Mosaic Law given 700 years before at Mt Sinai. That contract had certain terms or laws spelled out in the Torah and the nation was to keep the laws of Torah and learn loyalty to God. But the nation had failed to learn loyalty and now God testifies against the divided nation to this failure. Now the verdict of the nations is that both nations were guilty and therefore both nations would go into Exile. Exile means they are expelled from the Promised Land. It was the 5th degree of divine discipline as outlined in Lev 26 and Deut 28. So this was not something new, this was well-known, or should have been, for both Jewish kingdoms. God had revealed this seven centuries before and He had sent prophet after prophet to both kingdoms to warn them: if you rebel against Me, if you reject My statutes and disobey My commandments, then I'll kick you out of the land.

Now the reason God takes such serious measures is because of the doctrine of election. God chose Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and came into a covenantal agreement with them that they were His people forever. God made certain promises to them that He would give them a land, a seed and a worldwide blessing. But the enjoyment of those promises depended on the nations learning loyalty to God. Their position as God's people was secure forever but the enjoyment of the position was conditioned on obedience which fluctuates. And therefore to get the elect people to learn loyalty to Him God disciplined them. Discipline is a very loving thing because it means I care enough about you and how you live your life to correct you when you're not living the right

way. I want you to get in shape and I want you to learn loyalty to Me. And therefore if you do not learn loyalty to Me then I will discipline you.

And as we study Micah we are observing this prophet pronounce discipline on both kingdoms. This whole section of Scripture, written during the 8th, 7th and 6th centuries, (books like Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah) are pronouncements of discipline and therefore we refer to this period as the Disciplinary Truths of the Kingdom. And you want to learn that discipline is a corollary truth of election. You can't separate these out too far. One of the truths of God's election is that God disciplines His elect. So election is not some truth where you go around boasting I'm the elect and you're not; it's not an arrogant truth, it's a humbling truth because it means now I'm subject to His discipline. God has a destiny for all His elect to be conformed to the image of Christ and He will get you there come hell or high water. And God is going to get the nation there come hell or high water. He hasn't done it yet but God has a plan and in the future God is going to develop loyalty in His elect nation and if you are an elect member of the church God is going to get you in shape. So a corollary truth of election is discipline.

Now the nation Israel was in rebellion during these centuries, stiff rebellion and they're going to come under severe divine discipline because God is going to teach them the lesson of loyalty. They had failed to learn loyalty to Him. Notice the rebellion in chapter 1:5, "All this is for the rebellion of Jacob And for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the rebellion of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?" What kind of rebellion is this? What's the charge? Idolatry. They built high places. Notice again in verse 7. This is just a review of the kind of rebellion they were involved in. "All of her idols will be smashed, All of her earnings will be burned with fire And all of her images I will make desolate." That's all talking about idolatry in the northern kingdom and because of it they're scheduled for destruction. The northern kingdom went down in 722BC. Scan down to verse 13 for the southern kingdom; it identifies where the idolatry of the northern kingdom entered into the southern kingdom. This is the entry point, the gateway. "Harness the chariot to the team of horses, O inhabitant of Lachish—She was the beginning of sin To the daughter of Zion—Because in you were found The rebellious acts of Israel." The city of Lachish there, about 25 miles SW of Jerusalem, was the first city infected with the idolatry of the northern kingdom and from there it spread to Jerusalem from which it

infected the whole nation. So chapter 1 is all about the idolatry of both kingdoms, how it started in the north and then spread to the south so both kingdoms were infected and scheduled for destruction. The northern kingdom went down in 722BC and the southern kingdom went down in 586BC. Those are your two dates to remember, 722 and 586. We said the delay in the southern kingdom was because of Hezekiah's reforms. Hezekiah came in and he responded to the word of God and he reinstated the Levitical priesthood, he cleansed the Temple, he reinstated Passover, he tore down the altars and the high places throughout the land and because of this God's graciously delayed the judgment. But then his son Manasseh came to the throne and he rebuilt all the altars and high places and in 586BC they were destroyed.

The point of chapter 1 is that both kingdoms had a problem with idolatry. So what is idolatry? Turn to Exod 20. Idolatry is a violation of one of the Ten Commandments. The first one, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make any graven images." That's the first concern. Now by idolatry we mean what? That God's glory or attributes are transferred over to the creation. So we're back to God's attributes. God has a character. We have our acronym, SRJLOOOIE. God is sovereign, He controls whatsoever comes to pass, God is righteous, His character is the standard for what is right and wrong, God is just, He never compromises His standard of righteousness, He doesn't bring the standard down for you because you're pretty or you did a good deed last week; His standard is uncompromising. God is immutable, His character never changes, He's forever perfectly stable; God is omnipresent, meaning He's wholly here and wholly there, He's not confined in space, He's everywhere simultaneously. And we can go through all the attributes this way and what we're doing is we're describing God, we're not exhaustively defining Him, and we're partially defining His glory. These things belong only to Him and they are divine attributes. Now what we've done in idolatry is we've taken one or more of these attributes and we've attached them to something down in creation. Say we take the idea of an infinite universe, one of the pagan ideas in our day. Now wait a minute, God is the only thing that is infinite. How can the universe be infinite? Nothing created is infinite and the universe is a creation. And therefore we have to say that's wrong, that's stealing God's attribute of infinity and applying it to the creation and once you've done that you're an idolater. It may be something simpler, it may be money and you think that money is going to supply all your needs and so if you just get the money then your problems will be solved and that's your

altar of worship and then you finally get the money and you still have the problems. It didn't solve a thing because your ultimate need isn't money, your ultimate need is God. Only He can satisfy because everything else is temporal. He is eternal and you're trying to attach an eternally satisfying principle to a temporal thing like money and it won't work. Now the tendency of all men since Adam is to rip off these divine attributes and apply them to something in creation, usually in a diminished form, but nonetheless we transfer them to something in creation and that's idolatry.

Now this is what both kingdoms had done according to Micah 1:5. They had committed idolatry which is not social evil. This isn't some big bad thing that hits the 10 o'clock news. This is plain and simple theological evil. It's ripping off God's attributes and attaching them to sex or to the universe or to power or something in creation. And this was what the nation Israel was doing. It was theological evil and theological evil is always the root of the problem.

So the thing to observe about Micah 1 is that it's describing the consequences of theological evil. Micah 2 describes the social evil which is where everyone focuses their attention - the theft, the murder, the power struggle, the corruption. The things that top the 10 o'clock news every night of the week and get people all bent out of shape. That's what the news covers every night. When was the last time you saw on the 10 o'clock news the focus on theological evil? Well, today the Education Board approved idolatry in the Public School textbooks! You never heard that. Nobody wants to talk about that. But as long as you avoid that kind of talk you never can solve the social problems because the Bible insists that the social problems are consequences of theological problems. In other words, theological problems are the root and social problems are the fruit. Man is a dirty rotten scoundrel but if you avoid the fundamental reason man is a dirty rotten scoundrel and you don't want to talk about theology and solve spiritual problems then you can forget about solving the social problems. They will just continue and continue and continue to break out in society and they will get more and more bizarre and society will go completely into chaos. And since we are so bombarded with social evil and injustice by every source of media, we as Christians have got to train ourselves to keep the focus on the theological evil or else we're not thinking the way the Bible thinks and we're not understanding the root of the problem. And then we rush headlong into a social justice crusade to fix all the social problems and when you've done that you go on another crusade for this

social ill and in the end it doesn't amount to a hill of beans. Why? Because the root problem has never been dealt with. You're just treating symptoms. I agree the social evil is terrible. It's horrible and I lay in bed many nights thinking about it. But the answer isn't a crusade against the social evils. The answer is to solve the theological problems underneath the social evils by orienting society to the word of God. So here we're not organizing to fix the social issues, we train to focus solving theological issues and once those are solved then the social issues will fix themselves. It works family by family and then God raises someone up out of that structure to bring society around theologically.

So chapter 2 describes one of the social issues, the problem of theft. Theft is also a violation of one of the Ten Commandments? Exod 20:15, "Thou shalt not steal." That's the eighth commandment. So we have the first commandment in Micah 1 and we have the eighth commandment in Micah 2. And the characteristic of the first part of the tables of the Law is theological evil. The characteristic of the second part of the tables of the Law is social evil. How does the NT put it? What's the first and greatest commandment? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." That's a summary of proper theological orientation, the first part of the tables of the Law. And what's the second commandment? "And the second is like it, "Love your neighbor as yourself." A summary of proper social orientation, the second part of the tables of the Law. So this is nothing new. And the relation of these two parts, always and everywhere is that the theological evil is the root and the social evil is the fruit. And therefore it follows that the only way to fix the social evils is to get to the root of the theological evils. Solve down on the root level and the fruit will be good. But you can't just try to correct the fruit. As long as theological rot has set in the root the social fruit will be bad. So this is our approach and as you turn back to Micah understand that's the connection between chapter 1 and chapter 2. It comes right out of the tables of the Ten Commandments.

Micah 2:1 Woe to those who scheme iniquity, Who work out evil on their beds! When morning comes, they do it, For it is in the power of their hands. Verse 1 is describing sin and how sin works among the government, the politicians, the legislators, the judges, the rulers. Notice this person is in his bed and he's restless, he can't sleep so he starts to scheme evil. Ps 4 says you're supposed to meditate on the word of God in this situation but he's thinking through how he's going to acquire certain objects

of his sinful desire and this is what the mentality of the flesh does. If it's woken in the night it starts scheming, starts devising a plan of how to get it, right there in the bedroom and he knows all kinds of people and he starts going through his rolodex, who can I get over here to do this and who can I get over there to do that and he has influence to pull it off. Notice it says **it is in the power of their hands**, and so these are the elite people with power and they think, I'll get the president of the bank to do this and I'll get the county tax assessor to do this and I'll get the city judge to do this and he's getting all these people involved in the scheme. He's going to commit a complex theft by using a team of people that are in high places.

Verse 2 describes the complex theft. By complex theft we mean a scheme that involves multiple people, it's very involved. But before we go into it notice also verse 8 involves a second kind of theft, **Recently My people have arisen as an enemy— You strip the robe off the garment From unsuspecting passers-by, From those returned from war.** This is simple theft, one person or a whole gang of people are involved in trapping innocent people along the highway and stealing their assets. And that's not all, in verse 9 we have more theft, and that of the vilest sort. **“The women of My people you evict, Each one from her pleasant house. From her children you take My splendor forever.** This involves more complex and legal theft. Here the two people in society who are defenseless, **women and children** are preyed upon.

So we have three kinds of theft in the passage; first we have simple theft that involves just one or two people committing a direct crime, a robbery of some sort. We have complex theft that involves multiple people in high places; it can involve politicians, corporate giants, the crime syndicate, the judicial system, the police force, gang members, and any complex group that organizes a crime. Third, we have legal theft and that means the channels of law are somehow used so that the crime is substantiated by the court system or by passing a law that steals from the rich, the poor or the middle class to give it to someone else which makes the state the agent of crime under the pseudo-moral cover of law.

Now we're going to go through some of the verses, back in the Law, that explain what it means, “You shall not steal.” You think you know what it is until you start looking at these details and then you start realizing just how

far this went and you realize I didn't really understand "You shall not steal." I thought it just meant don't take someone's stuff. Oh no, not at all, "You shall not steal" goes much deeper than that, way farther than just you taking something. So we go back and look at some verses about stealing. And what we're doing is just amplifying what God meant by the 8th commandment, that's what these details of the Law did.

So the Holy Spirit is showing Israel how they broke the commandment "You shall not steal." And since we're dealing with property and property rights then ultimately it gets traced back to Gen 1:26-28: the 1st divine institution. The first divine institution is responsible labor or dominion and God commands man to go forth and subdue and have dominion over the earth and that is work and out of the work comes a product. Now to even get going God has to give man property over which he is responsible. So God gave man the earth as his property to work and make productive; that's the whole purpose of the 1st divine institution. God has made man in His image to work the earth which is man's domain. Now that work is what will later be protected under the commandment "You shall not steal." So back in Genesis 1:26 we have the origin of the concept of private property, that's where it all began. Don't ever compromise this point when you're in discussion. Private property is an axiom of the Christian faith. Said another way, socialism is anti-Biblical and can in no way be reconciled to Scripture. The Christian socialist hasn't read the Bible very carefully because on page one the whole theory is destroyed. How could someone steal something if there was no private property? The commandment not to steal presupposes private property available to steal. Then we have the various means man has conjured up to steal and this is simple, complex or legal theft. All three of these are means used to steal.

Contrast that, the means of theft, with some more truths of the Scripture as to property and stealing. There are three ways that the Bible speaks of as the proper way to acquire property. There are basically only these three ways; all other ways are illegitimate. The first way is to work for it, again 1st divine institution, work and earn money so you can purchase property. Second is to inherit it. In the nation Israel each family was given a plot of land and it would be passed down through family inheritance. They didn't have inheritance taxes. Inheritance taxes are a form of theft. You're taking away the hard earned goods of a family. Scripturally you have no right to do that.

So we have working, inheriting and the third way is by gift, someone can give you property. These are three godly ways of acquiring property. Theft is always the fourth way; theft wants to skirt around these three legitimate means of acquiring property.

So let's turn back to Exodus 22 and have a short study of what is theft; examples of theft. This is what is meant by "You shall not steal." As we go through this passage I want you also to notice something; notice how theft is dealt with inside the nation Israel. There is a Biblical solution to the theft problem and it is not locking someone in jail for six months. They didn't do that because that doesn't solve the problem. Every time someone steals there is destruction of wealth so what good does it do to confine a person. The wealth hasn't been restored. In fact it's been further destroyed because now we, the people, have to support the thief with three hot meals a day, electricity, color TV, a library, etc...so it's not solving the problem that we have wealth destroyed here. Restitution is the Biblical answer to theft; if someone comes and steals your car the answer in Scripture is not only does he buy you a car, he buys you four cars, four-fold restitution. It's no wonder today when a person gets caught and the court lets them off why they do it again and again and again. They have no respect for labor and what labor can produce.

In the Mosaic Law if you steal you're not walking out debt free, there's restitution so watch for it. Exod 22:1, "If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep." Several things to notice about verse 1. First, they've gone onto somebody else's property, taken property away and sold it or killed it and in that case he must pay restitution four or five times what he stole. There are several reasons for this. One is because you have to replace the goods stolen, but the additional is that there were lost profits for the time the goods were gone. All the time it was gone the owner couldn't use it for whatever he used it for to generate profit. You also have the fact that just because your goods were stolen doesn't mean you can always get an equal replacement. So to cover all those things as well as the emotional turmoil of having to deal with the situation the Bible puts the mark at 400%-500% restitution. You see, this has a built-in wisdom to it. When you go through this I don't want you to say oh well, that's Exodus 22, that's something about the law and that kind of stuff. Look at it for wisdom principles. There are certain reasons why the Law

was designed this way, and if you think through a moment you'll see why the law harps on this restitution concept.

Further, verses 5-6, now this gets into an area that you never think of when it comes to "You shall not steal," but this is part of that commandment so pay attention to it and see how far reaching these commandments were. There's a sensitivity about the Ten Commandments that we don't get by reading them fast. Now watch, "If a man lets a field or vineyard be grazed *bare* and lets his animal loose so that it grazes in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard. ⁶"If a fire breaks out and spreads to thorn bushes, so that stacked grain or the standing grain or the field *itself* is consumed, he who started the fire shall surely make restitution." This deals with what we'll call accidental liability. This would be considered in Scripture as part of "You shall not steal."

Now you see, we think we understand the commandment and all of a sudden the Bible goes way beyond just someone physically taking an item. The Bible says you steal when you don't care for another person's property. It's just the act of neglect for the other person's property that is stealing. You don't have to be guilty of physically removing an item; you can be guilty of stealing just by not taking care of someone else's property, being neglectful. That's basically the underlying concept of theft; you don't care about other people's stuff.

There are some more crimes which we'll look at, Deut 19:14. When the people Israel went into the Promised Land with Joshua at the Conquest and they came out on the other side the land was divided up among the twelve tribes and the land was further divided to families. The land appraisal district came out and they marked the boundaries with piles of stones, took their notes, kept records. Now notice a form of theft right here in verse 14, "You shall not move your neighbor's boundary mark, which the ancestors have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess." That's another form of theft, moving boundaries, that's why we have land appraisal offices today. Someone has to keep up with the boundaries because people keep trying to move them.

So as we return to Micah and look at these thefts tonight understand that theft is more than just taking another man's property. The law went far

beyond that, just being neglectful of someone's property was theft. Inflating the currency by creating fiat money is theft. Being lazy while you're on the clock is theft. It's just details of "You shall not steal."

Verse 2 is a complex theft involving people in high places, people who have the money and the influence to pull off big jobs. **They covet fields and then seize them, And houses, and take them away. They rob a man and his house, A man and his inheritance.** Now this is obviously land theft, each family had an inheritance. If you turn to Num 27:8 you see how serious God was about keeping the inheritance in the family. The family, the 3rd divine institution was the core unit of society, not the individual. The family was given the land by God and God was very serious that the land stay in the possession of the family. The basic reason is because private property is essential to freedom. You can grow food on it and live. You can't do that if you don't have private property and therefore you can't survive and you're at the mercy of whoever owns the property. Verse 8, "Further, you shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. ⁹If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. ¹⁰If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. ¹¹If his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his nearest relative in his own family, and he shall possess it; and it shall be a statutory ordinance to the sons of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses.'" That covers about every what-if you can imagine because God plans history and He already knew all the questions that would arise, so he covered them right there. The land is to stay in the family structure.

Turn to Ezek 46:18, fallen man has the urge to have dominion and power but by illegitimate means, by theft and look what Ezekiel said, he's heading off a sinful tendency right here. "The prince shall not take from the people's inheritance, thrusting them out of their possession; he shall give his sons inheritance from his own possession so that My people will not be scattered, anyone from his possession." People get the idea because they're the leadership they ought to have all the perks, but God says just because you're the leadership and you have power does not give you the right to steal people's private property. You remember the story of Naboth's vineyard and King Ahab. King Ahab just had to have Naboth's vineyard and so he offered him a fair price. And what did Naboth say? "The LORD forbid me that I

should give you the inheritance of my fathers.” It was forbidden and what it means is the laws of eminent domain that we have today are anti-Scriptural. The law of eminent domain means you do not have private property. Oh, we’ll give you a fair price. It sounds good but it’s the State’s property and if they want to use it they’ll take it, they’ll find a way. Which is what Ahab did - Ahab got it, his wife had to murder through the legal system to get it but he got it. He’s the king. And that’s what verse 2 of Micah is describing, the leadership going in and taking people’s land. They had no right to do that, it was theft. And God saw it.

Let’s summarize the biblical ideas. Here’s Rushdoony who studied the OT laws for years. “Both...taxing power, and...eminent domain exercised, are anti-Biblical. Eminent domain is a divine right. It belongs to God alone. The “right” of the state to eminent domain has no place in Biblical law. The state has a duty to protect man and his property, but not to tax or to confiscate it.”ⁱ It’s interesting that some of the Tea Party candidates have recognized the illegitimacy of property taxes. And I think it’s great. What owning your property free and clear does, with no taxes, is it produces stable communities and families. And when someone in the family dies, ownership of the land isn’t transferred, it’s still in the family which means there can’t be any inheritance taxes. Inheritance taxes were introduced, ironically enough by Karl Marx. And Marx’s purpose behind inheritance taxes wasn’t for raising revenue. It was designed to break down the family. Here’s Rushdoony in another place, “Taxation of property is a means of destroying property and is a form of robbery. Taxation makes for the speculative use of land, and it destroys the stability of communities.”ⁱⁱ It’s anti-community, it’s anti-family, it’s robbery. So this isn’t just some ancient law code, there are wisdom principles embedded in them that produce stability if followed.

Let’s go on to Micah 2:3, **Therefore thus says the LORD**, Now watch the judgment. They disinherited people by the illegitimate use of eminent domain, now God disinherits them by the legitimate use of eminent domain, only He has that right. **“Behold, I am planning against this family a calamity From which you cannot remove your necks; And you will not walk haughtily, For it will be an evil time. ⁴“On that day they will take up against you a taunt And utter a bitter lamentation *and* say, ‘We are completely destroyed! He exchanges the portion of my people; How He removes it from me! To the apostate He apportions**

our fields.’⁵“Therefore you will have no one stretching a measuring line For you by lot in the assembly of the LORD. God says, you guys like to play like your sovereigns of the earth. I alone am sovereign and therefore I alone have the authority of eminent domain and I decide that you guys have been poor tenants so I’m going to remove it from you and give it to the heathen nations. God does not like men to try and play sovereign and when we do He may let it go on for awhile, that’s grace, but after grace is always judgment. Grace before judgment, grace before judgment always, it’s a constant theme of Scripture. But when the judgment comes don’t be surprised if it’s a reversal of your own crimes, don’t be surprised if there’s a reversal of fortunes. The Bible calls that the Law of Retaliation, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, life for life, and here it’s land for land, you disinherited, I disinherit you.

Verse 3, **Behold I am planning against this family a calamity**, that is the family of Jacob, all twelve tribes even though divided into two kingdoms were really only one family. And God is **planning against this family a calamity**. We’re not told the human agency of the **calamity** but historically speaking it was the Assyrian and Babylonian armies. The point to pick up on is who controls history? Who is sovereign over all the nations? God is. He’s not just sovereign over Israel. He’s sovereign over Egypt, France, Russia, North Korea, Iran, the US. He’s sovereign over all the nations of the earth. What did Isaiah say? “The nations are like a drop from a bucket” to God. “All the nations are as nothing before Him, They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.” To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him? He reduces the rulers to nothing. He merely blows on them, and they wither.” You can’t stop God. If and when he wants to draw forth the rules of Assyria and Babylon with their entire military forces against Israel, He will. That’s a piece of cake for Him. And so because He’s in covenant with this family and this family is in violation of the covenant God is going to correct the family with the rod of men. That’s what he told David, that’s what he told Solomon, if you disobey my commandments and do not keep my statutes I will correct you with the rod of men. And so in a demonstration of His sovereignty over all nations God is going to draw the Assyrian army out in 724BC to discipline the northern inhabitants of this family and He’s going to draw out the Babylonian army in 605BC to discipline the southern inhabitants of this family.

He say's **a calamity From which you cannot remove your necks;** God has planned it, He will do it. Truly He has spoken, Truly He shall bring it to pass. There's nothing anybody in this family can do to stop it and the reason is because at this point they are beyond the point of no return. The family has sinned and sinned and sinned. At this point the nation is not in need of confessing one or two blemishes, they have an entire heap of sins, generation after generation have piled more sins upon more sins and the family is now at a point there's ultimately no possibility of repentance. They can't, they've got so much scar tissue built up on their souls, their hearts are so hardened by sin they'll never repent. It's impossible. There's a point we can reach if we sin and sin and sin that we become hardened in our sin and it becomes impossible for us to repent. That's the point of Heb 6 where it says it is impossible to renew them to repentance. People say, oh, that means they lose their salvation or they were never saved to begin with. No, no, they're believers, it's just that they have had such great revelation of God and they sinned and they sinned and they sinned and they didn't confess any of it and finally sin has taken its toll on the human heart and all this scar tissue is built up and they can't repent. They're believers thoroughly steeped in sin to the point it's not possible to repent, they've damaged their souls irreparably, and they've gone past the point of no return. And at that point God is going to judge sin unto death. That's the NT parallel to this OT family, they are beyond the point of no return and they will go into Exile. So don't let sin build up in your life. When you sin, confess, otherwise you get all screwed up like this family.

Verse 3b, **And you will not walk haughtily, For it will be an evil time.** They walked arrogantly but what the Assyrian army would do, if they didn't stake you down alive and peel the skin off of you with knives, if you survived they would put a stock around your neck, strip you naked, chain you to the prisoner in front of you and march you hundreds of miles to a new land. So yeah, they're going to be brought low.

Verse 4, **“On that day they will take up against you a taunt And utter a bitter lamentation and say, ‘We are completely destroyed! He exchanges the portion of my people; How He removes it from me! To the apostate He apports our fields.’ On that day, the day they're marching out naked in chains and stocks as the Assyrian soldiers oversee the march they'll take up a taunt against them and speaking in the Hebrew**

language from the perspective of the Hebrews they'll taunt them, Oh, **We are completely destroyed! He exchanges the portion of my people; How He removes it from me! To the apostate He apportioned our fields.** It's an enemy taunt and it's degrading. But that's God's judgment. God's judgment is to shame them and take her land which she inherited and disinherit them giving it to the apostates of all people.

Verse 5, **Therefore you will have no one stretching a measuring line For you by lot in the assembly of the LORD.** The point is they're not coming back, that generation that was removed from the land is not coming back to the land to stretch the line on it and re-apportion the land. They're going to die a bitter death in a foreign country.

Now verses 6-7 return to the fact that God had sent them prophet after prophet warning them but they rejected. **'Do not speak out,' so they speak out. But if they do not speak out concerning these things, Reproaches will not be turned back.** ⁷**"Is it being said, O house of Jacob: 'Is the Spirit of the LORD impatient? Are these His doings?' Do not My words do good To the one walking uprightly?** In other words you had two prophets walking around; you had true prophets and false prophets. The people rejected the true prophets because the true prophets spoke the word of God, they called the nation back to the Mosaic Law and their messages were not pretty little homilies, they were stern warnings of judgment that if they didn't turn back to the word of God they would be destroyed. But they didn't like the messages of destruction, they didn't like hearing over and over how they were breaking this law and in rebellion against that statute, they got sick and tired of these kinds of messages. They wanted to hear pretty messages, nice fuzzy warm messages and so the false prophets they loved, the false prophets they paid the big bucks. As for the true prophets they did two things to them. First, they outlawed them (Amos 2:12; 7:12-13, et al). They went down to the legislature and passed legislation that forbade anyone from prophesying anything bad about the government. You can't say bad stuff about the government; you can say good stuff, which we like, but no bad stuff. They had media control back then just like we do, and they enforced it. Which brings us to the second thing they did. They murdered the prophets (1 Kgs 18:4-5; 2 Chron 24:20-21; Neh 9:26; Matt 23:35). If they didn't like your message they'd just murder you on the spot. Jezebel had a whole slew of prophets destroyed; Jeremiah's life came within

an inch of being destroyed; Zechariah was slain between the temple and the altar. God sent the prophets to them because He loved them and He wanted them to return to Him, but they rejected Him, they hated the word of God and they loved the word of man. It's just like today. People hate the word of God. Paul told Timothy, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths" (2 Tim 4:3-4). So we live in such times when theological evil abounds, no one wants to hear the truth, the church accommodates to human view point, accommodates to the culture at large and the church loses it's witness in the world and comes under the judgment of God. There's no other way back than to go back to the word of God. That's what verse 6 is all about, **But if they do not speak out concerning these things, Reproaches will not be turned back.** There is no other solution. The word of God is the only solution; it's not part of the solution, it is the total solution; not the Bible plus gimmicks, not programs, the word of God alone.

Verses 8-11 return to the sins of theft. **"Recently My people have arisen as an enemy— You strip the robe off the garment From unsuspecting passers-by, From those returned from war. 9" "The women of My people you evict, Each one from her pleasant house. From her children you take My splendor forever. 10" "Arise and go, For this is no place of rest Because of the uncleanness that brings on destruction, A painful destruction. 11" "If a man walking after wind and falsehood Had told lies and said, 'I will speak out to you concerning wine and liquor,' He would be spokesman to this people.** In verse 8 they've become God's enemy by committing sins of theft against God's people. Here we have simple theft in verse 8. Simple in the sense it's just one or two people, maybe a small gang of people directly robbing you on the streets. **You strip the robe off the garment,** the word **robe** means ornaments, the expensive ornamentation on a person's garment they would strip off. This depicts highway robbery. You'd just be walking along the ancient roads of Israel and they'd be hiding behind the rocks or around the corner and you're totally unsuspecting and they'd jump out and rob you. By parallel it's somebody robbing you at gunpoint in a dark alley. And **From those returned from war.** These are their own military, the soldiers that have been out fighting battles to keep them protected. And after fending off the

enemy the soldiers pay was the war booty. Here they're coming home with their booty and they're robbed by gangs of street thugs. People they're protecting and serving! That's the kind of social sins that were going on. It was chaos, you couldn't go anywhere, you couldn't do anything, it became too dangerous to travel the major highways.

In verse 9 it gets worse. **The women of My people you evict, Each one from her pleasant house. From her children you take My splendor forever.** Here they're using legal theft to evict **women** and **children**. Legal means to evict them from their homes. They'd go into the legislature and say, hey, I'd like so and so's house, it's a very nice property so can we implement a law that gets the woman in a financial bind. Sure, next week they take the properties. They were preying on the weak and defenseless. These are the two classes of society that God charges us to take special care of; **women** and **children**, and here they're preying on them. They don't care.

Verse 10 is the judgment on these thieves. **"Arise and go,** that is, go into Exile, **For this is no place of rest,** society was chaos; social chaos had resulted from the theological chaos. They didn't have clear theological thoughts about God. They had corrupted, evil thoughts and the whole society came unglued. It was chaos, no place of rest. **Because of the uncleanness that brings on destruction,** that's theological uncleanness that ultimately brings about social uncleanness and final destruction, **A painful destruction.** It doesn't feel good to be under the judgment of God.

Verse 11, **"If a man walking after wind and falsehood, Had told lies and said, 'I will speak out to you concerning wine and liquor,' He would be spokesman to this people.** In other words, **If a man walking after wind,** *ruach*, spirits, false spirits, demonic spirits who are the authors of falsehoods, lies and deceptions. And if a demonically inspired man came to the people they would listen to him. So this is the false prophet and they were open to the false prophet and the reason, it cannot be too strongly emphasized, was because of the rejection of the message of the true prophets. When you reject the word of God you are always opening yourself up to the word of man. And the people loved the word of man, they loved false prophets. They tell the people what they want to hear, they flatter them. Despite the fact he's the town drunk, everyone listens to him because they're so hardened by sin, he could tell them anything and they'd go along with it.

We have no lack of such men in the church today, charlatans, frauds who are not teaching the word of God.

Alright, we've seen the sins of theft tonight and God's hatred for the social crime of theft. But don't lose the forest for the trees, it's the theological crime of idolatry that's at the root and ultimately the theological problems have to be solved if the social problems are going to be solved, always theology first, then we'll talk about social issues. The nation was corrupt in both and heading into Exile. But there's a solution and we'll talk about that next week. That concludes the first cursing section, next week blessing, a small glimpse of blessing.

Rushdoony, R. J. (1973). *The institutes of Biblical law, volume one* (492). Nutley, NJ: Craig Press.

Rushdoony, R. J. (1973). *The institutes of Biblical law, volume one* (492). Nutley, NJ: Craig Press.

[Back To The Top](#)

Copyright (c) Fredericksburg Bible Church 2010