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C1101 – January 5, 2011 – Micah 4:9-5:1
The Near & Far Siege

Okay, we've been out of Micah for five successive Wednesday nights so let's take some time to review. Micah 1:1, **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.** Now **the word of the Lord** came to **Micah** over a period of about 50 years, a period which covers the reign of three **kings of Judah**. Notice all kings of Judah. Judah is the house of David so these are Davidic kings. No mention is made of the kings of Israel. There were kings in Israel at this time but why didn't Micah mention them? Because they weren't recognized by God, they were not anointed by prophets. Always the prophet would anoint who God chose to be the king. And since God didn't choose any of Israel's kings during this period then the prophets didn't recognize them and didn't mention them, just like Hosea, they were not recorded.

The only kings Micah records are kings of Judah in the south. These are men from David's line, they are all in David's family and they were all anointed by the prophets. And they all reign during the 8th century BC. What's the 8th century BC? If we think in terms of our Framework we divide the OT into three sections. Always study the Bible this way. Whenever you study a book of the Bible you want to find out when was this book written and what is the basic theme of this era of history? You can't study it simply as an isolated piece and get the biblical meaning. You have to study it inside its historical context because all the pieces fit together in a coherent whole. So always look at the historical context. What is the historical context of Micah and what is the basic theme of this period of history? What is God teaching the human race through the events of this era?

What I've done is divide the OT into three sections. This is not be the only way to do it but it gives you a tool in studying the Bible that will help you understand what the Bible is teaching. The first section of the Old Testament is Genesis 1-11 in this section we title the buried truths of origins. Buried because men have suppressed these truths deep in their conscience; truths of Creation, the Fall, the Flood, and the Noahic Covenant. The truths embedded in these events all relate to origins and teach the basic doctrines of God, man, nature, sin and suffering, judgment/salvation and because these truths are deeply offensive to fallen man they have been actively buried and replaced with mythological explanations of origins like evolution.

The second section of the Old Testament is Genesis 12-2 Samuel and in this section we have essentially what are disruptive truths. What we mean by this is that man, after the Flood, paganized very rapidly, distorting the earlier truths of origins. And in that environment God disrupted the paganization by forming a counter-culture. This is a gracious disruption. Were it not for God's intervention in man's sinful course of rebellion then the world would have very rapidly reached its full measure of sin and God would have judged. So, God intervenes by Calling Out Abraham. That's a disruption because Abraham was a nice happy pagan and God interfered by electing him and Abraham responded with faith, then we have the Exodus and this is very clearly an intervention, then Mt Sinai, God disrupts by giving his law, the Conquest and Settlement, also very clearly an intervention and then the Rise and Reign of King David. Another intervention - man would never have chosen David to be king. He didn't look the part. So, all these are interventions. We call these disruptive truths of the kingdom.

Finally, the third section of the Old Testament is 1 Kings-Malachi and in this section we have the disciplinary truths of the kingdom. So here we're moving into God's house and we're interested in observing how God as King rules His subjects. So, whereas the prior two sections deal with God and the whole world this section deals with God and a subset of the world, namely His chosen people. And we learn how God reigns over His chosen people. And we have, the Golden Era of Solomon where we see that God blesses obedience to His law and He curses disobedience to His law; then we see the Divided Kingdoms, the kingdom is ripped apart, two tribes in the south, we call these Judah, and ten tribes in the north, we call these Israel. Then came the Kingdoms Decline, both kingdoms decline spiritually and as both kingdoms

decline God disciplines. God disciplines because he loves with a *chesed* love, a loyal love, a contractual love. And so God disciplined both Israel and Judah. Then, when both kingdoms did not respond positively to His discipline there was Exile. Both kingdoms went into Exile, Israel in 722 BC to the Assyrians and Judah in 586 BC to the Babylonians. Finally there was a Partial Restoration of the southern kingdom from Babylon. And we'll be seeing more of these truths that relate to the Exile of the southern kingdom of Judah to Babylon and the Partial Restoration later. But these truths that extend from the Golden Era of Solomon down to the Partial Restoration at the end of the Old Testament basically are disciplinary truths. They answer the question of how God disciplines within his own house. And so the principles revolve around discipline.

So, if we look at Micah 1:1 we see that Micah is a prophet who writes during the disciplinary truths of the kingdom. And in particular he writes during the reign of three Kings of Judah; we find the reign of **Jotham**, (following Edwin Thiele's chronology). Thiele dated **Jotham** from 750-735BC; then we have **Ahaz**, he was Jotham's son. These are all in the David's dynasty, very important to remember. **Ahaz** reigns in some capacity from 744-715BC. Finally the third King, **Hezekiah**, and **Hezekiah** was a good King, the other two were terrible, Hezekiah made reforms and he reigns from 715-686BC.

So Micah prophesied during the reigns of all three of these Kings, a period of more than 50 years. Micah is in a long line of Hebrew prophets whose lives overlap, and that is laying down a pattern in history so we know not to believe some joker who comes along and says I got a word from God. When God speaks he speaks to a whole series of Jewish men whose lives overlap so that each prophet is able to check the claims of other prophets and detect false prophets. And so God built a system of checks and balances built into the way He revealed Scripture. That way we can easily see that people who claim to be prophets like Mohammed and Joseph Smith are false prophets. They do not sit in a long line of Jewish prophets whose lives overlap.

Micah did sit in a long line of Jewish prophets and verse 1 tells us he was from the town of **Moresbeth** which most commentators say is Moresheth-Gath because it was close to the Philistine city of Gath over in the low, coastal lands near the modern day Gaza strip. It's about 20 miles SW of Jerusalem as the crow flies. So **Micah** is from the southern kingdom of

Judah and he's going to minister to both the northern and the southern kingdom but primarily to the southern kingdom, his own country. And he's the first prophet to predict the destruction of Jerusalem. Up to this point we've heard prophets rail against the northern kingdom and Samaria, its capital city. That was clearly revealed by Amos and Hosea. But now, for the first time, a prophet predicts the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah. And as a patriot this broke Micah's heart. Micah loved His country and Micah loved the God who formed his country and preserved it around the Davidic dynasty. So to see his great country go to destruction caused Micah much grief. And we can identify with him because we're having to see our great country go to destruction systematically. The basis of this country is being dismantled and overthrown and in place of the Christian foundation is being laid a pagan foundation. And we look and we weep because we realize that our children and our grandchildren are going to live in a very hostile environment. They are not going to enjoy the peace, security and freedom that we have enjoyed. They're going to have to live in very tumultuous times if the Lord tarries. So we can identify with Micah who had to actually stand in the capital of his nation and predict its destruction. And you can imagine that didn't go over too well with the leadership, but at least there was one King during this who responded positively to Micah's message. And that was King Hezekiah. King Hezekiah was not perfect, but he did issue in a series of reforms that delayed the destruction of Micah's country. And so Micah got to see some response, some positive response to his message and this must've been an encouragement. Later prophets like Jeremiah, who also predict the destruction of Jerusalem, did not get to see a positive response. And this is why Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet. He laments that his nation is crumbling, it will go to certain destruction and nobody listened to him. But in Micah's day there was one godly King who listened and responded and this staved off destruction.

Now as far as the outline of Micah is concerned it is quite simple. Micah can be divided into three cursing-blessing cycles. Each cycle begins with cursing and concludes with a short blessing. So the majority of Micah is cursing and the reason, very clearly, is because both kingdoms are in stiff rebellion against the Mosaic covenant and are therefore coming under God's discipline. And it's the prophet's responsibility to act as a prosecuting attorney and announce discipline. But there are also short notes of blessing because finally God will bless Israel but the basis of the blessing is His own character. He

made promises in the Abrahamic covenant and He is faithful to His word, He cannot deny Himself. So God will finally bless Israel but not because of anything Israel is. Only because of who He is. So you have both themes, cursing and blessing.

The first cursing-blessing cycle is chapters 1-2; the second cycle is chapters 3-5 and the third cycle is chapters 6-7. Those are your three basic divisions. It's a general outline. We've been through chapters 1-2 and the theme of this section is what? Theological evil is the root of social evil. All the social evil in societies that breaks out is breaking out of theological chaos in men's hearts. When men reject the word of God as the basis of truth then inevitably chaos breaks out in society. So we can say that to solve the social problems you have to first solve the theological problems. You can't just throw money at the problem, you can't throw education at the problem, you can't throw a new political party at the problem, and the only way to solve social problems is to solve theological problems that nobody wants to talk about. And that is to get right with God through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Then in chapters 3-5 we have another theme arise and what theme did we see there? When the leadership of a nation is corrupt the whole nation is corrupted. This is not to say that human government is an evil institution. God instituted human government. But the point God teaches the human race is that human government cannot Save. It's not the solution to all of man's problems. Man has tended to make the State or Government ultimate, to declare Government a Savior and yet every time the government has been given this status as Savior it has oppressed and destroyed people. Only God can save and the only way into God's government is through the cross work of Jesus Christ. So the theme of both sections points to the need of God's Savior to come. The nation needed to look forward to the promised Messiah. The church looks back to the completed work of the Messiah.

Tonight we come to Micah 4:9 and we see more failed leadership. You can't put your hope in a fallen human leader. This section extends down to 5:1 because in the Hebrew text chapter 5:1 is actually 4:14. So the section is really from 4:9-5:1 and the chapter division is unfortunate. This is in a cursing section mixed in with blessing; it's transitioning to blessing so we'll be looking at disciplinary truths, how God reigns over His own house and the blessing that only He can bring about.

Now, we're going to see a principle of interpreting prophecy tonight. The principles of interpretation are what we call hermeneutics. Hermeneutics are the rules of interpreting literature. It can be any piece of literature. It can be the Bible, it can be the Constitution, it can be a news article. There are rules to interpreting literature.¹ A text cannot mean anything. Sure an idiot can make it mean anything he wants. But we're not talking about idiots. In our passage tonight we are going to discover that one of the ways that God speaks into history through the prophets is a hermeneutical principle called Double Reference. This is a rule to observe when dealing with prophecy. Double reference means that God, through the prophet, often speaks of two events or persons that are separated by a long gap of time. But in the passage they are blended together in one picture and the gap of time is not revealed in the text itself. Now God in His plan has placed a gap of time between these two events but when He spoke to the prophet He did not reveal the large gap of time between the two events. So you have a near event, a gap of time and then a far event. And if we were living in Micah's day we might have interpreted it all as a single event. But if we were good Bible students then we would be able to recognize from the context, certain contextual hints, that there are two events here predicted and not just one. Now it would take a very good Bible student in Micah's day to see it. It's there, it's just that most people are not very close to the text. Most people don't pay too close attention to detail. God pays great attention to detail and expects us to discover it. And we know that God expects us to discover it because Jesus chides the Pharisees and the Sadducees for not discovering the details of the OT. He basically says what's wrong with you? I gave you the text and you don't understand the text? Maybe you ought to get off your duff and do a little bit of Bible study. I mean actually study the text rather than just gloss over it. So a good Bible student could see two events spoken of here and not just one.

Today we have it easier because Bible study is always easier Monday morning quarterbacking. After things have happened we say, yeah, I see that. But we may not have seen it when we are in the thick of it. So we are Monday morning quarterbacks to half of the events described in 4:9-5:1 tonight.

So, our outline is: 4:9-10 will reveal a near prophecy of a military siege against Jerusalem when she has no Davidic king that results in defeat and Exile to Babylon and 4:11-5:1 gives the far prophecy of a military siege

against Jerusalem when she has a strong Davidic king that results in victory and blessing.

And this reveals another principle about the prophet. Earlier we said that the prophets lives overlap over several generations and this formed a checks and balances system so that one prophet could check another prophet who could check another prophet and that way they could detect false prophets. Now we learn another principle about the prophet that helps detect false prophets. And that is that a true prophet would make both near and far predictions. Think about the problem you might have if a prophet only made distant far predictions. How would you ever test him according to Deuteronomy 18? Deuteronomy 18 says that if a prophet predicts something will take place and the thing *does not* come to pass, in other words, it's the negative test. It doesn't say if he predicts something and it *does* come to pass then he is the true prophet. It says if he predicts something and it *does not* come to pass then he is a false prophet and you should execute him. But the problem is if someone claims to be a prophet who makes only far prophecies, predictions to occur far beyond our life spans, then we have no basis to verify whether he is a true or false prophet. So to override this problem, God is omniscient, and He knows we need a solution to a problem before we know we have a problem, what He did was He gave the true prophets both near prophecies and far prophecies.

That way the near prophecy can be fulfilled within the lifetime of the prophet. For example, if prophet A makes five near prophecies, prophecies that are fulfilled in and around his lifetime, and all of these were fulfilled, that is 100%, he was five for five, then prophet A is a true prophet and whatever far prophecies he made we can also expect to be fulfilled 100% in later generations. But if prophet B makes five prophecies and they're all far prophecies we have no means to verify if he's a true or false prophet. The Bible says he's a false prophet, execute him. This is not a thing the Lord has spoken.

So God always gave the true prophet near prophecies to confirm him inside his own generation. You don't have to wait 500 years to see if the person is a true prophet or not. You could tell while they were still alive if they were a true prophet.

So the near prophecy is in verses 9 and 10. And the far prophecy is in verses 11 through 1. The last verse of this section is the first verse of chapter 5. So let's look at the near prophecy. Verse 9, **“Now, why do you cry out loudly? Is there no king among you, Or has your counselor perished, That agony has gripped you like a woman in childbirth? ¹⁰“Writhe and labor to give birth, Daughter of Zion, Like a woman in childbirth; For now you will go out of the city, Dwell in the field, And go to Babylon. There you will be rescued; There the LORD will redeem you From the hand of your enemies.** Now it's obvious from verse 10 that this speaks of the Exile of Judah to Babylon. We said earlier that Micah was the first prophet to predict the Exile of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem. He already predicted it in 3:12 so let's look at it. This is the first prediction that Jerusalem would fall. "Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the Temple will become high places of a forest." That sent a shock through the people of Judah who saw themselves and their capital as invincible. That verse, 100 years, later is going to be cited by the elders in Jerusalem when Jeremiah predicts the destruction of Jerusalem. They're all upset with Jeremiah for saying bad things about Jerusalem until a few of them remember, hey you know, Micah said bad things about Jerusalem. So maybe we better pay attention to what Jeremiah says. And here we come to another prophecy by Micah of the destruction of Jerusalem and their Exile to Babylon. It was fulfilled in 586 BC.

Actually there were three stages in the Babylonian Exile. Nebuchadnezzar led a three stage campaign against Judah. He first attacked in 605BC and he tried to allow the Judeans to serve as a vassal state. So he deposed King Jehoiakim and installed the puppet King Jehoiachin. And when he rebelled he attacked again in 597BC and deposed King Jehoiachin and installed the puppet king Zedekiah. And finally Zedekiah rebelled and so he attacked again in 588BC and he took Zedekiah prisoner to Babylon, took his whole family and if you turn to Jer 52:9 you get more background for our passage. This is 588BC. Nebuchadnezzar had enough of Judah and her kings and he realized that allowing the Judeans to have the Judeans King and serve as a vassal to Babylon was never going to work. So he said the heck with that method, I'll destroy Jerusalem and take you all into Exile. Verse 3, "Zedekiah rebelled against the King of Babylon." Verse 4, "Now it came about in the ninth year of his reign," that's Zedekiah's reign. His reign began in 597 so if

you subtract 9 years you come to the year 588BC. "On the 10th day of the 10th month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall around it. 5So the city was under siege until the 11th year of king Zedekiah." The siege was from 588BC to 586BC, three years. Verse six, "On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land." Josephus says that the famine was so severe that mothers ate their own babies and gangs of hoodlums would come down the street and reach in their mouths and pull out the flesh. Psychologically they went insane. That's the social chaos that breaks out of theological chaos in the heart. Verse seven, "Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war fled and went forth from the city at night by way of the gate between the two walls which was by the King's guard, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah. 8But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the King and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him. 9Then they captured the king and brought him up to the King of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence on him." Now pay attention because this is the way they handled rebels in Babylon. You want to rebel against the king? Fine, go ahead, but we're going to teach you a lesson. Verse 10 "The King of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and he also slaughtered all the princes of Judah in Riblah." Now how would you like that to be the last thing you saw? This is the last thing King Zedekiah ever saw with his eyes. They tied his arms and legs down, strapped his head against a tree, held his eyeballs open forcing him to watch. Then they brought his sons out and slaughtered them. And the word means they either beat them with hammers so that the blood just gushed out or they flayed them with knives while they screamed bloody murder. Either way, this is the last thing Zedekiah ever saw with his eyes. Verse 11, "Then he blinded the eyes of Zedekiah;" so they gouged his eyeballs out and at this point you wish they would just kill you, just kill me, put me out of my misery. But they're not going to give him the pleasure. He had to live with all the memory of his sons being slaughtered. Look at the rest of verse 11, "and the king of Babylon bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon and put him in prison until the day of his death."

Now that's some of the severe discipline that God lowered on the house of David. Zedekiah was in the Davidic dynasty. And you say God got real close

to breaking his promises to David. God promised David an eternal throne and said David would never lack an offspring to sit on the throne. And now we have no Davidic King sitting on the throne. This shows you how far God can go with the discipline. He's on the brink of breaking His word. God's word in the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7 says, "My lovingkindness shall not depart from him... Your house and your kingdom shall endure before me forever; your throne shall be established for ever." So you read this and you think God, what are you doing here? Are you about to destroy your word? Yet another part of 2 Samuel 7 was that "when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men," so there's a disciplinary function built into the covenant. God disciplines those whom he has chosen. God chose the house of David and God is disciplining the house of David. So ultimately it looks forward to a godly Davidic King who won't sin. That's the subject of Micah 5.

So let's return to Micah 4. Remember this section of Micah 3-5 is all about the importance of godly leadership. Godly leadership leads to godly people and God's blessing but godless leadership leads to godless people. That's the principle and Micah is rubbing their nose in this principle.

So now read verse 9 and see if that doesn't make more sense to you. **Now, why do you cry out loudly? Is there no king among you, Or has your counselor perished,** What king, what counselor is Micah talking about? Zedekiah. He's the one Nebuchadnezzar captured and poked his eyeballs out. Now if you're one of the people hanging around in the land and you're king is dragged off, you have no leadership, no King to solve your problems what's going to be the state of society? Terror. And that's the picture of v 9.

Actually the picture is a woman in childbirth. **Now why do you cry out loudly? The agony has gripped you like a woman in childbirth?** This is the terrors and the screams of horror as the Babylonians invaded with no king to rescue them.

Verse 10, **Writhe and labor to give birth, Daughters of Zion, Like a woman in childbirth; For now you will go out of the city,** what city? Jerusalem. **Dwell in the field, And go to Babylon.** That's all the Exile. One of the great events we study in the framework, which demonstrates that

God is serious about His people learning loyalty to Him and if we do not learn loyalty to Him then He lowers the paddle.

The parallel to Exile in the New Testament for the Church is that if a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ rebels and rebels and rebels and refuses to confess his sin and develops habitual sin patterns over and over and he repetitively violates God's commandments then God will lower the ultimate boom which is the sin unto death, premature physical death and it's taught by example with Ananias and Sapphira and by principle in 1 John 5:16-17 and 1 Cor 11:30. God disciplines those whom He has chosen. And He is not going to endlessly give you love pats. If you continue to rebel against Him He will heighten the intensity of the discipline to get you to respond to his authority. And if you refuse to respond then finally He'll say, I've had enough of you and He'll just take you home. You don't lose your salvation but you do lose rewards.

Now with Zedekiah God said, I gave you the Davidic throne and I established the Davidic dynasty forever but you have so severely rebelled against Me and rebelled against Me that My anger has reached the brim and I'm going to remove you from the throne of David and the throne is going to be vacant. This shows you how close God gets, how far He can go to almost violating his promises. It's amazing to watch how seriously God handles sin. He'll go right up to the point where it looks like He's destroyed his word. But He never does.

Notice the end of verse 10. At the middle of verse 10 they're in Exile in Babylon. But then observe. **There you will be rescued; There the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.** Where? From where will they be rescued? From where will the Lord redeem them? From Babylon. So now we move to another event in our framework. We've seen the Exile. The southern kingdom of Judah will go into exile to Babylon and then there will be a Restoration. The southern kingdom of Judah will be restored. She'll be brought back into the land. So we refer to this great event as the Partial Restoration and we refer to it as partial because the northern kingdom went into exile in 722BC and they had no promise of restoration, they were not restored. So only a part of the nation, the southern part had this promise of restoration. And the basic reason has to do again with the Davidic covenant. God promised an eternal Davidic dynasty and while God may come to the

point where it appears He's destroyed His covenant with David He never destroys His covenants. Some way God will fulfill His obligations to the house of David; which means that the throne will not remain vacant. Someday a king from David will arise that takes the throne. And since that King in the line of David must be born in Bethlehem as per Micah 5:2 then the house of David must be partially restored to the Promised Land. They can't remain in Babylon because then the Messiah would be born in Babylon. And the Messiah is scheduled to be born not in Babylon but in Bethlehem. So we have the promise of a Partial Restoration.

Now to see who was instrumental as a world power to restore Judah, to send her back to the Promised Land turn to Isaiah 43:14. Isaiah, who ministers in the same time as Micah, prophesied that God would destroy Babylon through another world power that would result in the return of Judah to the Promised Land. "Thus says the Lord your Redeemer, the holy one of Israel, For your sake I have sent to Babylon, And will bring them all down as fugitives, Even the Chaldeans, into the ships in which they rejoice." And that is to say that Babylon will be defeated militarily. Turn to Isaiah 44:28 to see the instrument of military defeat. As you read this who is sovereign over all nations? Who raises one nation to punish another and then another nation to punish the former? Isaiah 44:28, "It is I who says of Cyrus, he is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire. And he declares of Jerusalem, she will be built, and of the Temple, your foundation will be laid." Verse 1, "Thus says the Lord to Cyrus his anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, To subdue nations before him and to loose the loins of kings; To open doors before him so that Gates will not be shut: 2I will go before you and make the rough places smooth;" we could go on but you get the point that God is going to raise up Cyrus the Persian to perform all He wants him to do, which is to defeat the Babylonians and establish the Persian kingdom, and Cyrus when he does this in 539BC, he does it without shedding a drop of blood, he diverted the canal of water and went into the city and his men snuck into the canal and to the city without spilling any blood. And Cyrus took over Babylon and sent Judah back to the Promised Land, ultimately so the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Now we come to the far prophecy of Micah 4:11. And we know this is a far prophecy because of the grammar. All we have to observe in verse 11 is that we are no longer dealing with one nation, singular, Babylon, but we're

dealing with what? Nations plural, multiple nations. And in this picture the nations of the world are coming against Jerusalem. And so we know from the grammar that this is a distinct military conflict. And it has a distinct outcome. Whereas in the former military conflict Babylon was victorious, in this military conflict Israel is victorious. And so we have moved far ahead into the day which is even future from our standpoint with Israel being victorious over all nations which turn against Jerusalem and try to destroy God's chosen people.

Verse 11, **And now many nations have assembled against you who say, let her be polluted, and let our eyes gloat over Zion.** This occurs during the second half of the 70th week of Daniel. The 70th week of Daniel begins with the Antichrist signing a peace treaty with the leadership of the nation Israel. That's Daniel 9:27. In the middle of that week Jesus taught in Matt 24:15 the Antichrist would break this peace treaty committing the abomination of desolation in the Temple and then the great conflagration of what is known as the campaign of Armageddon would begin when the nations would begin to assemble themselves in the great plains a Megiddo to annihilate the Jewish people. Such events require the establishment of the state of Israel in the Promised Land. And such requirements were met in 1948. Other conditions which are not yet met are that Jerusalem be the capital of Israel, (they claim that but nobody else recognizes it), an altar must be built and sacrifice re-instituted and of course the Antichrist must rise to power. So Israel will have peace during the first half of the 70th week of Daniel but verse 11 describes Israel at war in the second half of the 70th week of Daniel. This is the great tribulation of Matt 24:21. And while they are gloating over Zion verse 12 says, **but they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, and they did not understand his purpose;** they understand their own purpose of assembling in the plains of Megiddo, their purpose is to annihilate Israel. But they do not understand God's purpose in their assembling in the plains of Megiddo. God's purpose, and while they think they have assembled on the basis of their own free choice, God says in verse 12 that He **has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.** God has gathered them for total destruction. It's the irony of unbelief. Unbelief in its autonomous rebellion against God thinks that it will be victorious but actually by the very means it thinks it will have victory it will suffer defeat. God is a master chess player and He will allow you to position yourself in such a way that you think that you are going to put Him in check mate. But

when you reach the position of your final move into checkmate He turns the tables and you're in checkmate. This is the brilliance of our God and an everlasting declaration of His ultimate and total sovereignty over all of history and a proclamation that His purposes can never be thwarted.

Verse 13, **Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion, for your horns I will make iron and your lips I will make bronze, That you may pulverize many peoples**, and so the instrument that God will use to destroy the nations in the campaign of Armageddon will be the nation Israel. Now, evidently this presupposes that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ at the second coming and His leading them forth in this battle as the "Breaker" of chapter 2:12.

Then in verse 13 we have a description of the war booty and its purpose, its use in the coming millennial age. **That you may devote to the Lord their unjust gain And their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.** Just like when they came out of Egypt they took the gold and silver and many possessions, so when they come out from under a Gentile powers they will take the gold and silver and many possessions and dedicate it to the **Lord of all the earth**. That is Jesus, the Messiah who will reign over **all the earth**.

Chapter 5:1, **Now muster yourselves in troops, daughter of troops; They have laid siege against us; With a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek.** And this we think returns to the near prophecy of verses 9-10, the Babylonian invasion and the military preparations of Israel as King Nebuchadnezzar leads the Babylonian army in siege against Jerusalem. And again they will smite the King of Israel, here referred to as the **judge on the cheek** and that again refers to Zedekiah and their treatment of him by slaughtering his sons and plucking his eyeballs out.

And so we have seen that God through the prophet Micah has revealed two military conflicts. The near conflict in verses 9-10 refers to the Babylonian invasion against Jerusalem in 588-586 BC when King Zedekiah in 586 BC was captured so that the people in the land were left without kingly leadership and sent to exile. But also a glimmer of hope in that they would be partially restored to the land so that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and not Babylon. And secondly, the far conflict in verses 11, 12 and 13 where many nations invade Israel to assemble against Jerusalem in

the Valley of Megiddo which is yet future. In this invasion the Lord counters the invasion and while they perceive that they are gathering to annihilate Israel, God is gathering the nations to annihilate them. God's covenants cannot be broken and the King *par excellence* of David's house will rise to rule over all the earth.

The application to us so far as being members of His church is that as His chosen people we can also come under the severe discipline of the Lord if we remain in rebellion and refuse to learn loyalty to him. However, though this discipline may be very severe we can never be cut off from Christ. Ultimately God's promises to us remain secure and we can never be separated from the love of Christ.

ⁱ Where do these rules come from? They come from the grammar and syntax. They are embedded in the language itself. It's not up to you. It's not up to me. It's up to God who constructed language and built into every language a grammar and syntax. He did that at Creation and He did that at the tower of Babel. All languages today stem from the division of languages at the tower of Babel. And all languages have a grammar and syntax that is capable of carrying truth. That's why the Bible can be translated into other languages and people of other languages, other than Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic, can come to Christ. If God was limited to the languages of Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic then for someone to come to salvation in Christ would require them to learn Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. But God is not limited to those languages. The tower of Babel teaches that the word of God can be translated into other languages which are adequate to lead someone to salvation in Christ. So the Bible concludes in the book of Revelation by saying people of all tribes, tongues and nations are present in heaven.

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