

Eternal Kingdom

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back to the chapter we had for a very brief look at Micah chapter 4.

I hope you all did your homework for last week. We were the Gallic Communion last Sunday evening so we went over chapter 3 and we said we would read chapter 3 in our own time.

I won't test you but I did that one day. In chapter 3 we see that Micah is continuing on from chapter 1 and chapter 2. Chapter 3 continues on with condemnation from God, with God telling his people again how they sinned against him.

Chapter 3 we see God condemning the leaders, the leaders of the nation and the leaders of the church, those in charge of the material things and those in charge of the spiritual things and again much like in chapter 2 and in chapter 3 we see that they are being condemned for their constant false teaching, their constant lies, their constant misguided ideas and truths about God.

Their living lives focus on material gain rather than caring for the people they are supposed to have. In chapter 3 we see this interesting graphic description.

[1 : 27] Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets, who lead my people astray, those who cry peace when they have something to eat but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths.

Men who weren't leading as God wanted them to lead men and women who weren't living lives as God wanted them to live their lives.

Now in chapter 4 which we have this evening we see as we read and as we see ourselves just now a real shift in tone taking place. Look at the previous three chapters were all judgement, all wrath from God being shown justifiably to his people.

But here in chapter 4 we are coming out of that cycle of judgement and now we are seeing something new taking place in chapter 4. Micah in chapter 4 and God speaking through Micah he is promising something of real judgement, he is promising now something amazing.

In chapter 2 we saw some hope, in chapter 1 we saw a wee bit of hope, in chapter 2 more hope, in chapter 3 not much hope now, in chapter 4 we find our most hope filled chapter so far in our study in Micah.

[2 : 55] In chapter 4 Micah is not just jumping ahead a few years or even a few decades in chapter 4 the prophecy Micah is given to the people this prophecy is jumping right to the end.

Micah is not just giving a wee look into the next year, God has revealed to Micah what is going to take place in the last days and indeed even in the very last day of all time itself.

In chapter 4 it is a prophecy, it is veiled, it is hidden in so much mystery for us, it is metaphors and imagery that is so heavy to understand for us but it is clearer in chapter 4 we are dealing with a situation that is beyond the days of Micah, but even one thread of a situation that is beyond our days, the final day of the Lord.

What we see in chapter 4 is being partially completed right now as we sit here this evening. Chapter 4 is in a sense now and wants to come in the future, we will see that as we go through it.

What is even more amazing is that as we look at chapter 4 we see that we are living in this chapter.

[4 : 27] Before chapter 1 chapter 3 it applied to us in various ways but we knew that these chapters talked about the people of Micah's day but now in chapter 4 we come in to focus our generation and those if God wills it will come after us.

Chapter 4 we see being completed, currently fulfilled in our age of the New Testament, we are living in this new age.

Chapter 4 will be fully completed in the coming day of the Lord, in the new heaven and the new earth and my friends this is amazing, the Bishop blows away.

As we read chapter 4 we are reading about our own time. Written long before our time but it is about our time, this prophecy could not be more relevant to us.

So a very quick look this evening, looking in two different ways, first of all looking at verses 1 down roughly to verse 5 looking at God on the throne and then verse 6 to the end looking at God our rescuer.

[5 : 40] God on the throne and God our rescuer. If as we are reading verses 1 down to verse 4 I wonder if you are thinking have we read this before somewhere else, have I heard this before somewhere else and the answer is well we have.

If you have read Isaiah you have read chapter 4 verses 1 down to 4 you have read these verses before. In Isaiah chapter 2 we have exact same words as here in Micah chapter 4.

Now remember we said that Micah and Isaiah were contemporaries, they worked at the same time, they prophesied at the same time, two different kingdoms, two different situations.

You see no mention of each other in each other's writings but here in Micah and Isaiah we find the exact same prophecy being written we assume and we know really at the exact same time.

Now perhaps a few shared words in order, even one sentence that was the same we could pass away as mere coincidence perhaps but not a whole prophecy matching word for word.

[7 : 10] Some will try and dispute the fact that they copied of each other but how many point out the fact they just couldn't have done that.

We know Micah and Isaiah are writing at the same time, we know they are miles apart from each other but how on earth did they copy the same prophecy writing at the same time.

Micah 4 Isaiah 2 and what's clear, we trust in God, what's clear is God of course is giving the prophecy to Micah and Isaiah because they're both talking to the same group of people, both the north and the south, both kingdoms had to hear this prophecy.

As one to three in Micah the rest of Micah applied to his people, the rest of chapter Isaiah applied to his people but chapter four we see applies to the people of God as a whole.

They should fill us with wonder. At the same time we shouldn't be surprised in the slightest. The same message was given to God's people north and south in both kingdoms.

[8 : 20] It makes perfect sense that God would reveal this incredible message to his people. Again just a small example of a wonder of our God, how he shares his word with his people.

Again as we heard it we're reading prophecy, prophecy veiled in many ways in imagery and in metaphor, just as Jesus taught in parables the method of delivery has no impact on the truth that's being delivered.

We do have to read more carefully and take more time and understand what it is.

Much of what we see in Micah 4 we can say of confidence would have made little sense to them at the time. The privilege today of having thousands of years since this time and we see that what Micah is talking about in chapter four is partially being fulfilled in the coming of our saviour.

It's fulfilled in us here in Carly sitting here listening to the Gospel, thousands of miles away, thousands of years away.

[9 : 37] That a king is coming. One who will rule and reign. The mountain of the Lord will be the only place of good news.

The message of chapter four of that there is one coming who will rule and reign and gather his people together forever.

Micah knew someone was coming. We today know who that one is. For Micah what was writing in a veiled sense we see the light of Jesus so much more clearly.

The one that speaks about in this chapter is not just some vague saviour, not some vague Lord, it's our Lord.

It's the first of all looking at the first five verses of that first section. God on the throne.

[10 : 37] Like I said in the morning if you have a Bible please have it open in front of you. Go through it as it comes in general. You see it starts off with this image.

The latter days the mountain of the house of the Lord establishes the highest of the mountain. There will be no other mountain to compare to this mountain of the Lord.

This place where God will sit. None will be as high as God. None will rule as God rules. Why is he talking about mountains? Why is he talking about hills here?

Who sits on mountains to the pagans? Who sat on the mountains? It was our gods. If you went to a town or an area you would face the highest mountain and worship there as a safe bet that's where their local God was staying.

And God's saying you have your mountains, you have your wee gods. I live above all these gods. It will be established as the highest of the mountains lifted above, up above the hills.

[11 : 45] All your wee gods, all your wee hills, they're nothing compared to our gods. Your gods reign from your wee hills. Our God reigns above your gods.

Your so called gods. What do we see? See the end of verse one, people are what they are flowing up to it.

Literally flowing up to the mountain of God. The word used here, people shall flow, that word flow, it's used elsewhere exclusively to describe as you may imagine water.

That's why the translators use the word flow here. The word gives a sense of a flowing stream. Here we see this stream of people flowing uphill towards the top of the mountain towards God.

Nothing's going to stop these people. Nothing's going to stop the spread of the good news. Nothing's going to stop the spread of people coming to worship God.

[12 : 49] So many off of them in such a forceful way as described as a flow and a flow is flowing uphill such as the power of the God who reigns and rules.

Nothing will stop it. Like a saying, whatever's coming, this coming day, this coming hope, it will grow and grow and grow.

This coming mountain, this coming kingdom will be expansive and grow and grow and grow.

Where these folks when we're going to worship their King, we're going to worship the one who's enthroned as aware on top of his highest mountain, the one who's got the highest place of authority on all earth.

We're going to see their savior. In the first verse here, we're seeing a picture painted to us off the wonder and power of the gospel, the unstoppable plan of God to save his people.

[13 : 58] This is the first time we're seeing scripture or something like this being described. That a day is coming when people will flock to worship God.

And now we're time just now that's happening. We're here in caroling nation that we're in a nation that didn't exist at this time.

Speaking of a language that didn't exist at this time. Here we are worshiping God fulfilling this promise, fulfilling the promise we see in verses two and the first half of verse three.

What do we see in verse two and verse three, we see a further description of this mountain who's a for is for all nations and many nations shall come and say, come, let's go up the mountain of the Lord and so on.

To us, this is just some we're reading it's obvious to us, but think, mind yourself in the shoes of a reader who wrote this or who heard this at the time of Micah.

[15 : 04] All people, all nations, we are the people of God. The people of Israel, we are the people of God. People of Judah, we are the people of God. All nations, who are these folks?

They've got nothing to do with us. Pagan nations, uncaring nations. Why on earth are they coming near God's mountain? Where are they coming near the hill of God?

It gets worse. Why are they talking about him? Why are they worshiping him? Why are they learning from him? To the listener of the time, this is, I made no sense whatsoever, Gentiles, unbelieving those who are in Jews, could no place at the hill of God.

Here we see the wonderful example, even now, even at this time when Micah was prophesying these things, a saviour would come and that saviour, a saviour to his people, but yes, to those also who were far off.

The gospel would spread out into the darkness, spread out into nations, different languages, spread out east and west, spread out far beyond these nations.

[16 : 22] So one day, the day would come when God would save people out with the people of Israel.

In reality, we see this as nothing new. It's all through Scripture, all through Isaiah. My goodness, to be about time to hear of this prophecy, to those listening, Micah was a sinner who had even lost his mind.

Here we are tonight, like we said, on this wee island. How many years were our ancestors here on this island living and worshiping false gods?

We have the evidence of it in Kalinish, in other places around the island. To us, to those attractions, to our ancestors, a place of worship, where they worship their gods, false gods, our island, the island full of darkness.

Plenty of evidence, and this is not for tonight, the evidence that our island was a centre of worship for the rest of Scotland in many ways.

[17 : 29] We were a centre of pagan worship, centre of false worship. And yet here we are tonight talking about the gospel.

The gospel has flowed out from this place where Micah is talking about, even out to here.

Gospel for all people, for all nations. Incredible stuff. And we see from the second half of verse three down to verse four, we see in every verse a wonderful image.

Imagery, I'm sure we know so well, the idea of people beating their swords and deploys and their spears. This imagery of warfare, ceasing of the tools of war being turned to tools of farming, of peace raining in the land.

Micah said it last three chapters telling them war is coming to your shores. War is coming. You're going to be destroyed.

[18 : 44] But a time will come. Not now, not soon. But a time will come when all war will cease.

I have a fulfilment of all things. I have a latter day as you say is in verse one, a time will be. There's no more need for swords, no more need for spears, no more need for any of these things.

Peace will rain.

The gospel offers peace. We know that. Gospel offers us eternal peace. Offers us current peace. Right now as Christians, if you hear tonight as Christians, we have peace that our future is certain.

We have peace that we are known and loved by our God. We have peace that our sins, the punishment of our sins been taken away from us. We have peace that our savior reigns. We have peace that our savior incest is for us.

[19 : 46] We have peace of all these things, the many more things. We know these things. These things should give us peace. But also in a real sense, the gospel brings peace.

Real stories, stories of people I know and people we all know of, couples or parents or siblings or whatever situation may be, each other's fruits and problems of each other and issues taking place.

The gospel comes into the house, the gospel comes into the family, the gospel comes into the area and lines are changed. We have problems, we still have issues.

Peace now reigns in that family or in that area, in that house, in whatever situation may be. Peace, gospel brings peace.

And then the final day, it will be complete and total peace. We have that even more in verse four, please look at me to verse four. We see this wonderful image that they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree.

[20 : 54] And never forget, last year, our Old Testament and our Hebrew teacher, Daniel Sladek, Professor Sladek, came into the class, came to the class, to the front and he asked us, why does a Jew sit under his tree?

We thought Daniel's lost his mind, he's asking us some odd jokes here, okay? It's a serious question, why does a Jew sit under his tree?

Why does a Jew sit under his vine? What does that mean? Daniel's making the point, we're talking about Jonah, he's making the point where for a Jew to sit under his vine, this is the ultimate sign of peace.

The work's been done. You can relax for a while. There's no threat, no danger. He can sit under his vine, under his tree.

What else happens under a tree? The Jews would pray under trees when they went on scripture. You can sit and pray and relax. Perfect safety, perfect rest.

[22 : 00] It's honestly, it's equivalent to day of us on the couch or a feet up. The relaxing thing you can think of, that was what the verse was trying to say.

When the gospel comes fully, when the day of the Lord comes, when it's all complete, the people of God can sit under their vines, they can sit under their trees and pray and relax.

No more worries, no more concerns, no more pain, no more misery, no more loss. It's done. Peace now reigns.

It's only the transformation of the gospel in our lives, in our country, in our villages that will bring about this peace.

There we have it, verse 5, following on from this wonderful proclamation of peace.

[22 : 59] What do we see? The three, taunt, chant, truth. For all the peoples walk each in the name of its God, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.

The nations have their gods, the people worship their gods, but our God is the Lord our God who reigns forever and ever. See, one thing we see in chapter 4 is the name of God.

How has God addressed or talked about in this chapter? Chapter 1, chapter 3, we see Godly mentioned very often. He's been called God with G-O-D. He's been spelled Lord, L, capital, L, and small, O-R-D.

In chapter 4, how do we see Godly described more often? He's described with the capital, L-O-R-D, the personal with God. He's been called Yahweh.

Chapter 1, chapter 3, God is impersonal. He is distant. He is judging these people. Chapter 4, God is now again using his personal name.

[24 : 15] Before there was this distance, but now in chapter 4, the personal name of God is being used, the covenant name. The name how God used to reveal himself to his people.

God is now close to his people. On that day, I will be Yahweh to you, the covenant God, the God who has a people of his own.

See, they worship their gods. They're fleeting lives and they're passing gods. But we, the people of God, will walk in the name of Yahweh, our God.

Our God. Forever and ever. And that phrase, forever and ever, that's the good translation here, the best translation we can do in English.

That's eternity. That's the biggest concept you can write in Hebrew. Forever and ever. It's, quite literally, it means forever and dot dot dot.

[25 : 17] This is it. This peace is not something passing. This peace is for now and forever. Why? Because our God is for now and forever.

He will follow him now and forever. He will be with us now and forever. That is the hope making us giving these people. Distant hope, but hope.

There we see these verses, God on the throne, God is in charge, God is bringing these things to pass as verse one tells us, that he will be established, his house will be established, the gospel, the good news established, that all nations will flow to him, people will flow to him, peace will spread, the gospel will spread.

And very briefly we see in the second section here God our rescuer. See that in verse six, in that day declares the Lord, I will assemble the lame, gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted.

One day God will come and gather his people together. His promise was to the people of Micah's day, one day their time of war would end, one day they would find peace.

[26 : 47] This verse, verse six follows on from verse five and the verse before it. So it tells us this verse is talking to Micah and his people but also talking about what is happening at this final day.

It applied to them and applies to us, it applies until the end. In that day, what day will the latter day, the final day, that final glorious day, what is going to happen?

I will assemble the lame. God gathers the lame. God gathers who have been driven away, those who have been afflicted in various ways.

And he gives them a promise that he will be their God.

And he will reign and rule over them. In verse seven the same image here.

[27 : 43] God is the God of the lame. God is the God of the broken and the damaged. If one person here tonight thinks that any of us are otherwise you are wrong. We put on good shows, we look good, we talk the part, we look the part but in reality we are all damaged, we are all lame.

And God says, I know. But I am the God of the damaged, I am the God of the broken, I am the God of the afflicted and I promise I will take my people together one day.

And that day is coming soon. It's coming soon for Micah, it's even closer for us. In this kingdom it's what is the eternal kingdom.

Again, at the end of verse seven, at the same phrase that had really been used, as is used at the end of verse five, forever and ever, this time forth and forevermore.

It's almost exactly the same phrase being used, the same idea being used. Forever and no end to this new situation.

[28 : 45] You were once scattered, you were once lame, you were once afflicted but now no more and forever no more.

The prophecy in verse six and verse seven, it finds fulfillment tonight. If we hear tonight as God's people, we are afflicted, we are the lame, we are the broken, we are the sinful, useless, whatever else we may describe ourselves, truthfully as, but yet here we are.

In the power of God we are here this evening as living examples that God takes what is broken, who is afflicted, he takes those of us who are lame and he heals us, he transforms us.

On that final day, we look forward to that final day when we see that being shown in its fullness, when the whole of God's people will be eternally changed in perfection forever.

We only have verse nine. Verse eight just compliments the previous two verses and then verse nine, we, as much as we say a bit verse eight, I was going to say one day we might come back to verse eight, but in the meantime verse nine.

[30 : 08] Verse nine we see the questions being asked. All this is promised, but now the tone has changed again. Now why do you cry out loud?

Why do you cry? You're crying because there's no king. Your king has gone. Micah now is reminding them of the previous three chapters.

All this is taking place one day, but right now you are going into slavery. Babylon is coming, you're going to Babylon. We see that in verse 10, you're being exiled.

You're going away. The war is coming. That's unavoidable. Pain is coming. Death is coming.

But all this is being said in the context of the previous verses where but one day, one day it'll be over. Look with me please to the end of verse 10.

[31 : 09] All this is happening. You shall go to Babylon. There you shall be rescued and there the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.

That was through the people of Micah's day. Eventually they would be rescued by God. But surely, I said already, this is talking to them, but I was talking about the latter days.

The promise here to God's people of the promise to us. Where has God rescued us from? He's rescued us from Babylon. He's rescued us from our captivity. He's rescued us from where we were lost and without Him in darkness.

What has God done to the person who tonight who believes in Him, who loves Him? He's rescued us. He's redeemed us from the hand of our enemies.

This is no small thing. You will suffer. Captivity will come.

[32 : 19] God will be the covenant God. He will keep His promises to you. The Gospel is the same for us today. You may suffer and may have hard times and go through tough situations which only perhaps you know about just now.

But the promise is the same. We will be rescued. God will redeem us from the hand of our enemies.

We see that in verses 11 down. Verse 11, now many nations are assembled against you saying, let her be defiled, let her eyes gaze upon Zion.

There's nations surrounding you people and they're after your blood. You're surrounded by enemies. They want to destroy you.

But what's the hope in verse 12? But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord.

[33 : 28] Again note the Lord word being used capital L-O-R-D, Yahweh. They don't know the thoughts of Yahweh. They don't know the thoughts of your covenant keeping God of the God who knows you and who loves you and calls you his own.

They don't know his plan. See they've planned to destroy Micah's people. But God will destroy them.

And in Micah's day we know what happened in the end. We'll get there eventually but we know the enemies of the people were eventually destroyed in various ways.

This was for the people then because of course again it is for us too this evening. Like we said this prophecy was now and then into the future.

It was fulfilled for them, if being fulfilled in us it would be fulfilled ultimately in the latter days if we had them verse 12.

[34 : 39] Right now we are surrounded church by enemies. For the people of God we are surrounded by those who are dying to tear us to bits.

That's no surprise to any of us. But the promise is the same.

That the God, the covenant keeping God, the personal God who spoke so loving to his people in Micah's day speaking the same words to us this evening.

They don't know the thoughts of a Lord. We don't understand his plan. And the promise in verse 13 is what? That those who persecute the church and those who try and stop the gospel, that God turn and will turn that situation around so his people will triumph over all their enemies.

I'm just for a second peeking eyes down if you have ESC to the title even of chapter 5 when we see what's coming next.

[35 : 53] The title of chapter 5, the summary of ESC Bible is the ruler to be born in Bethlehem. The last few weeks we've been leading up to this pinnacle. What's happening?

What's happening? What's happening? It's all darkness. It's all bad. God saying one day there's one coming. Then chapter 5 we see who is the one that's coming?

Well it's going to be born in Bethlehem. Verse 4 of chapter 5, we'll cover next week global.

Chapter 5 verse 4, who is the one that's coming and he will stand and shepherd his flock and his strength as a Lord. They will dwell secure for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth and he shall be their peace.

So on. Chapter 4, God promised his church one who would bring peace. Chapter 5, we see who that one was going to be.

[37 : 01] God rescues his people. And the challenge is this evening, as we look at verses 12 and verse 13, what happens to those who are outside of the church?

It's not a nice image. It's not a nice description. Those outside of the church are destroyed by the one who loves the church.

Jesus is coming again. In the latter days our Savior will return. He will come as conquering King. He will come and gather his people up to be with himself forever.

He will come and tenderly, we see up behind his people, tenderly take us home to himself. What else does he do?

What else does the reigning King do? Second Sam, Sam 2. The King comes, loving his people but destroying his enemies.

[38 : 10] We said this this morning, I'll say it again. We stand this evening with Jesus as our King. It makes no difference whether you believe that or not, whether you believe in him or not, whether you care that fact or not, he still reigns and rules as King.

And in the latter days, and the days Micah's talking about, he will return one day as King. On that day, he will either find you as a servant who has loved him and served him, or he will find you as an enemy of his.

And he will carefully, tenderly take in his people but destroy his enemies. Like we said this morning, there's no joy in his messages, there's no joy in sharing this, but we share it because we have to, it's in God's word.

We share it because it has to be heard. Christians hear this evening with his hope in this wonderful chapter, that all along God had his plan, working it out.

That even to Micah, God was telling him, a future is coming through tonight, and the Christians hear tonight, a future is coming where peace will reign. A future is coming where we will rest under the fig trees, where we will rest and be secure.

[39 : 40] But also a future is coming for those here tonight who as of yet don't know Jesus. And your future is bleak, it's terrifying.

It doesn't have to be that way. Come to Jesus, cry out to Him. Speak to someone here you know is a Christian. Again, I'm in the man that's right there, doors open all day.

Come have a chat. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Lord, we come before you Lord, and we give you praise, the glory of who and what you are. We thank you that even to your people of old, even to your messengers of old Lord, that you shared the wonderful news, the good news, the hopeful news, that a day is coming.

A day is coming when you will gather your people. A day is coming Lord, when you will return and peace will reign forever. A day is coming when you will reign, new heavens and new earth.

Lord, that in mind help us to come before you just now and humble ourselves and give you praise. And we do pray for all those here this evening who as of yet don't know you Lord, that they would be with us in that day, worshipping you, praising you.

[40 : 48] Lord, that you would give them the sense to come to you and to cry out for salvation from you. Help us as we come to sing our final item of praise to do so. Hearts and minds set on you, hearts and minds full of worship towards you.

It's always things in Christ's precious name.