

THE BOOK OF MICAH
Lesson 6, Chapters 3 and 4

When last we met, we ended with Micah 3 verse 8, and I used Isaiah 11:1 – 5 to help us to get the gist of what Micah was claiming about himself, in that he is a true prophet who brings a message of true, covenant-based divine justice to Israel. An Israel who simply did not believe that God's justice applied to them in the same way it applied to the world. That is, as those who professed Yehoveh as their God, this was sufficient to insulate them from God ever punishing them for their wrong behaviors.

I'll remind you... because it is so essential to our understanding the Bible correctly... that the background story here, is that living in Judah was increasingly difficult and barely sufficient. God was telling them through Micah that the cause of all this might have seemed to them to be bad luck or the wickedness of an oppressor...maybe even just part of their destiny... but in fact it was Yehoveh that was causing it all to happen as a direct punishment for their rebellion and idolatry. First, these destructive events were going to happen to Samaria (the capital city of the Northern Kingdom). But in time they would also happen to Jerusalem and Judah. The leaders and the people refused to believe this. Rather, they liked and preferred hearing from the scores and scores of false but cheerful Jewish prophets running around telling them how pleased God was with them, and that prosperity was just around the corner as a blessing.

I used this to explain that this is precisely one of several false messages of Constantinian Christianity that the false prophets of Micah's day were proclaiming; it is something that we must not ignore. The false message is that once we come to faith in Christ, then our behavior counts for little to nothing. Bad things that happen to us can never be traced back to an action of God due to our sins, because Christians were from here on to expect nothing but blessings. Even more; when we do commit sins, God sees Christ instead and so in some amazing way, our sin is essentially invisible to God. Thus, any preacher or Bible Teacher that tells a Christian of God's displeasure with them or brings a warning of coming punishment if they do not change their ways, is a heretic or pretend Believer. Just as Israel had decided that God is a God only

of love and blessing towards Israel, so Christians believe that God is a God only of love and blessing towards Christians. So as to be clear, I'll simply say this is just as false now as it was in Micah's time. It is not biblical. Micah is one of several prophets to prove this point. The Epistle of James in the New Testament presents a similar message and warning as the Old Testament Prophets, and so, not surprisingly, he was deleted from the Protestant Christian Bible until only a couple of hundred years ago, and his book remains a sore point of controversy within the Church because he warns of catastrophe even for Believers who continue to sin.

Let's re-read Micah 3: 8 to the end of the chapter.

RE-READ MICAH 3:8 – end

So, verses 9 and 10 are:

CJB Micah 3:9-10 ***⁹ Hear this, please, leaders of the house of Ya'akov, rulers of the house of Isra'el, you who abhor what is just and pervert anything that is right, ¹⁰ who build up Tziyon with blood and Yerushalayim with wickedness.***

Clearly, verses 9 and 10 were one continuous thought and never should have been separated into 2 verses. Where we find the word "please" in the CJB, we find "I pray you" in most other English versions. Some versions leave this thought out altogether, probably because translators decided that to include it would dilute the emphatic nature of the thought. That is, this is not Micah being polite or humbly asking. It is rather a way of expressing a strong desire for the hearer to take what they are hearing seriously... that what is about to be said is so very critical that if you hear little else, hear this. And so that it is clear for us about just whom it is that is being addressed, it is **all** of Israel's civil and religious leaders, and anyone of Israel who rejects what God says is just and right in favor of what they think is just and right. It is all of those of Israel who believe that their ideas and personal convictions of right and wrong, good and evil, mercy and justice are better than God's written instructions in the Torah and from the prophetic oracles.

Micah says it is His God-given assignment to declare to Israel the nature of their egregious sins, and why and how God is punishing them for it. No Bible prophet displays any personal pleasure for such a task. All the true prophets are commissioned to bring these sorts of unpleasant messages to God's people. History informs these God-appointed prophets that there will be negative consequences for them in telling the truth, because people generally don't want to hear the truth. People want to be humored and hear only positive things. Things they agree with. Things that make them feel better about themselves. Pleasant words that say even if things are bad now, we can be assured it will get better. God's true prophets weren't usually welcomed into towns; but they were quite likely to be run out of them upon delivering the message.

Even worse, these civil and religious leaders of the Jews were building up the religion and the holy city through extortion, coercion, and sheer robbery. The blood of rightful property owners was spilled to satisfy the greed of wicked interests of Israel's leadership. So, whatever improvements and flourishments were added to the Temple and to the city of Jerusalem was too often little more than ill-gotten gain and thus less than worthless in God's eyes. The Judges and magistrates were making their verdicts based on biases and personal rewards. Impartiality and fairness were long gone from the justice system and replaced with lawlessness and greed.

The result was that then, as now, many of the common people began to sour on the words of the false, but cheerful, prophets that they thought were legitimate. And those many began to wonder: "Is there no reliable word from God any longer?" The good news is that yes, there was and there is! There were and remain a handful of Bible preachers and teachers that tell the truth. And those teachings are available to modern folks who are seeking the truth, just as for the folks in Micah's day that were seeking answers to the realities and causes of their current poor circumstances. Unfortunately, just as there were few who would speak it, there were also few who would believe it and act upon it. Yet, such is the way that the Lord separates the wheat from the chaff.

Micah's accusation against the leaders continues in verse 11.

CJB Micah 3:11 *Her leaders sell verdicts for bribes, her cohanim teach for a price, her prophets divine for money- yet they claim to rely on Yehoveh! "Isn't Yehoveh here with us?" they say. "No evil can come upon us."*

It is the middle part of this verse that troubles me so. The priests teach for a payment of money, and so do Israel's prophets give their prophecies for self-enrichment. YET... they claim to be getting their instructions and information from God! My instant reaction is... of course! Of course, popular teachers and evangelists claim special intimacy and messages from God that others are not privy to. Of course they want money in exchange for their services. God has no problem with His prophets and clergy being given money to live on. The issue is to what level are they to be paid. Are the prophets and teachers and leaders to take it up in order to become wealthy? Is their motive in prophesying and teaching to make it a lucrative profession... a secure occupation... that is materially beneficial to them? What is it that they are teaching and preaching? Is it God's truth taken from God's Word or from a divine oracle given to them? Or is it a bunch of manmade doctrines or nice-sounding falsehoods designed to keep people paying? Such a thing is problematic to determine about teachers and preachers for the 21st century, and it was even more so in the 8th century B.C. The problem is that despite the sincere sounding statements of the prophets and teachers, God knows their hearts. He knows their motivations and goals. And here in Micah, Yehoveh is coming down hard on these leaders because their goals are corrupt and not righteous.

Yet, these leaders are so certain of their own goodness and wisdom and message that they feel they are safe. God would never bring evil, or allow evil, to come upon them. Therefore, in response, Micah says:

CJB Micah 3:12 *Therefore, because of you, Tziyon will be plowed under like a field, Yerushalayim will become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the house like a forested height.*

Think of it! God just told the leaders of Israel that Zion is going to be destroyed (this means the historic religious and spiritual significance of the

Temple Mount will disappear), and Jerusalem (the city and its walls) is going to be left in ruin, and the very mountain that the Temple sits on will become a place for vegetation and not a Temple complex. I can't even imagine the shock of those common Jews and their leadership who heard this, and how few took it to heart. Likely some did...and so while it was too late for Ephraim/Israel... their fate had already been sealed... good kings of Judah like Hezekiah did listen and take heed. We read of this in a few places in the Old Testament such as in this passage in Jeremiah.

CJB Jeremiah 26:18 *"Back in the time of Hizkiyahu king of Y'hudah, Mikhah from Moreshet was a prophet. He told all the people of Y'hudah, '-Tzva'ot says, "Tziyon will be plowed under like a field, Yerushalayim will become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the house like a forested height.""*

What Micah uttered, the Prophet Jeremiah remembered and wrote down in his own extensive prophetic work. The fulfillment of Micah's prophecy... at least its first fulfillment as concerned Jerusalem... would finally come about in the early 6th century, when Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Judah and Jerusalem, and did exactly as Micah said would happen and for precisely those reasons. So, I speak now to every type of leader and teacher and preacher who claims the God of the Bible as their God, and therefore I, of course, speak it to myself. God will hold us responsible when the terrible events of the End Times come around and millions of supposed worshippers enter times of unimaginable horror and tribulation, and finally God's wrath. We are collectively and individually responsible to tell God's worshippers who listen to us the truth... God's truth... and not to tell a bunch of falsehoods and half-truths that we claim are what the Bible says. Our jobs are not to be comedians or to bring entertainment or false comfort to people who are desperate for the truth. Our job is to tell **hard** truths that more often than not challenge God worshippers to look inward and to return to the Holy Word of God and to obedience. Whether by ignorance, or in order to protect long-standing Church or Judahistic doctrines and traditions that contradict the Word of God, it doesn't matter. We leaders will be the cause of it as God sees it, and we will pay an awful price for it.

But non-leaders... regular everyday God worshippers... you in modern times cannot escape responsibility and shove it all upon the shoulders of your leaders. You have at your fingertips the Bible. You are literate and you can read it for yourself. You are not obliged to believe a religious leader without fact-checking what he or she says by using God's Word. It's only a question of whether you choose to read, study and seek, and then to believe what is truth and to discount the remainder. Therefore, we all have a role to play in God's economy, and we will all bear some measure of accountability for what we choose to believe and in how we choose to live and obey (or not obey) God. As the Torah so perfectly explains:

CJB Deuteronomy 30:15-20 ¹⁵ *"Look! I am presenting you today with, on the one hand, life and good; and on the other, death and evil- ¹⁶ in that I am ordering you today to love your God, to follow his ways, and to obey his mitzvot, regulations and rulings; for if you do, you will live and increase your numbers; and your God will bless you in the land you are entering in order to take possession of it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, if you refuse to listen, if you are drawn away to prostrate yourselves before other gods and serve them; ¹⁸ I am announcing to you today that you will certainly perish; you will not live long in the land you are crossing the Yarden to enter and possess. ¹⁹ "I call on heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have presented you with life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants, ²⁰ loving your God, paying attention to what he says and clinging to him- for that is the purpose of your life! On this depends the length of time you will live in the land swore he would give to your ancestors Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov."*

Let's move on to Micah chapter 4.

READ MICAH CHAPTER 4 all

We just finished up that part of Micah that many academics call The Book of Doom. Chapters 4 and 5 are called The Book of Visions. Both of these names

are human contrivances that are there to help us study, and there is nothing wrong with that.

The focus of this section of Micah is on the restoration of the Kingdom of David at a time in the future, complete with a descendant of David on the throne. And yet, there is a kind of paradox or mystery in these passages due to the repeated use of the Hebrew word **atta**, which indicates “now’... the present. In other words, the grammar has a *present* sense to it, but the vocabulary words carry a definite *future* sense. We know that this has a strong future sense because several times we run into the Hebrew code-word for the future or, more precisely, for the End Times, which is **wehaya**. It means “and it will come about”. This unusual literary form we find in Micah has baffled and bothered Jewish and Christian Scripture experts for centuries, leading some to speculate that the book as we have it is the result of a textual corruption. However, other than for this single grammatical oddity, there is no other credible reason to think that some type of redaction or editing or repeated error in copying has occurred. Therefore, we must work our way through this Book of Visions dealing with this mysterious problem of the both “now and then later” nature of the oracle.

I want to pause for just a moment to talk about the nature of mystery. Biblical mystery refers to divine truths and realities that are hidden or unknown, some of which were revealed as Redemption History unfolded; as well as things about God's and the spirit world's infinite nature that humans are not equipped to comprehend no matter how much time might pass or how intelligent we become. A number of my secret mentors (meaning, they have no idea that they were a mentor to me), are often disposed to say that the more they learned as the years went by, the more they realized some things in the Bible were just unknowable. I have had the same experience.

Bible narrative often speaks of mystery meaning that what is said is true, but attempting to understand it to any depth beyond merely accepting it as fact is not helpful and might even be presumptuous to think we *can* understand. These are the things we must take on faith and allow ourselves to at times walk away unsatisfied. A simple example of this are the terms soul and spirit. Are they essentially synonymous and interchangeable? Are they two distinct

things? If so, then what exactly is a soul? What exactly is spirit? Or what, precisely, does each of these things do? Don't get me wrong; each denomination's Systematic Theology has come up with a nicely packaged answer for all this, with all other possibilities labeled as error or even heresy. But that's the troubling nature of Systematic Theology itself; it refuses to allow for mystery. And when we read the Bible and try to apply these neatly packaged answers provided by Systematic Theology, often we can get some strange doctrines as a result.

The Israelites of old couldn't possibly have understood what God's true Messiah would be or do or look like prior to His advent. How can a single person be both a fierce military leader who rules the land of Israel forever from his throne, and at the same time be a sacrificial lamb, that will be pierced and die an ignominious death? And that is only the beginning of the conundrums and mysteries of (for the ancient Hebrews) a coming deliverer. So, the religious leaders over time came up with rigid solutions and if you followed a particular leader, you were obliged to believe what he taught. No mystery or other answer was tolerated.

Then we have the issue of explaining spiritual matters and spiritual beings in physical terms. That is understandable because all we have to relate to as humans is a material, physical world and human language with its many different vocabularies. Usually, these spiritual things are presented biblically in symbolism form (sometimes as poetry) as about the only way to deal with it. And the propensity is for each denomination to determine exactly how to understand each symbol and then insist that this must be the only and correct way.

I think we need to learn to let some things remain mysterious. If everything of God and spirit could be explained in concrete, readily understandable terms that meets with our rational human logic, then where is the faith component? Can we really know as much as God? Can we understand the invisible spirit world of eternity the way we understand the visible physical world of finite time? I think not. We ought to work to take things as far as we can in prayer and study to discern answers to tough questions; but, when the results remain gray or very hazy, accept it as such and move on. That is the case here with

the mystery of the future wording but the present grammar of Micah chapters 4 and 5. It isn't a mistake. It is what it is, and we shall attempt to unpack as much from it as we can... and leave it there.

The first verse of chapter 4 reads:

CJB Micah 4:1 *But in the acharit-hayamim it will come about that the mountain of Yehoveh's house will be established as the most important mountain. It will be regarded more highly than the other hills, and peoples will stream there.*

Most literally, the Hebrew term **acharit-hayamim** means "the end of days". There is no mystery here; this term means exactly what it sounds like. It is referring to the End Times... to the end of the current age when our planet and the human condition will change radically. To use another common term, it speaks specifically of an apocalypse and the consummation of history. Here in Micah, this is the converse of what the prior 3 chapters were all about.

The thing that we must watch out for is NOT to interpret this term to mean "the end of time" as is often done. This is NOT the end of time. What comes next is a time-based period of 1000 years where the world will be ruled from Jerusalem by Yeshua, as God's divine agent. The idea of **acharit-hayamim** is as the achievement of a long-held goal. We find this goal established as early as Genesis.

CJB Genesis 49:1 *Then Ya'akov called for his sons and said, "Gather yourselves together, and I will tell you what will happen to you in the acharit-hayamim.*

We even find this same thought of **acharit-hayamim** coming from the mouth of a gentile later in the Torah.

CJB Numbers 24:12-14 ¹² *Bil'am answered Balak, "Didn't I tell the messengers you sent me*

¹³ *that even if Balak would give me his palace full of silver and gold, I could not of my own accord go beyond the word of ADONAI to do*

either good or bad? that what ADONAI said is what I would say? ¹⁴ But now that I am going back to my own people, come, I will warn you what this people will do to your people in the acharit-hayamim.

So, this term ***acharit-hayamim*** by no means is “the end of the world” or “the end of time”; rather it marks a new time of dramatic change. So, while Zion will be destroyed and trampled on by heathen gentiles for a long period of time as punishment upon Israel for their rebellion and at the cause of their vapid leadership for not telling God’s truth, here at the time of the ***acharit-hayamim*** we find Zion restored to its fullest majesty. And not just for the Israelites. This same thought right down to the wording is nearly identical to a prophecy of Isaiah.

CJB Isaiah 2:1-5 This is the word that Yesha'yahu the son of Amotz saw concerning Y'hudah and Yerushalayim: ² In the acharit-hayamim the mountain of YEHOVEH's house will be established as the most important mountain. It will be regarded more highly than the other hills, and all the Goyim will stream there. ³ Many peoples will go and say, "Come, let's go up to the mountain of YEHOVEH, to the house of the God of Ya'akov! He will teach us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths." For out of Tziyon will go forth Torah, the word of YEHOVEH from Yerushalayim. ⁴ He will judge between the nations and arbitrate for many peoples. Then they will hammer their swords into plow-blades and their spears into pruning-knives; nations will not raise swords at each other, and they will no longer learn war. ⁵ Descendants of Ya'akov, come! Let's live in the light of YEHOVEH!

Isaiah and Micah lived in the same era (at most 20 years apart) and so, nearly certainly, knew of each other and it ought not be surprising to sometimes find them sharing the same divine messages. Frankly, this passage and idea must have been nearly impossible for the Hebrews to take-in and truly believe. It seems like the epitome of the impossible dream, and not the least because it is clearly planet-wide in its scope. That gentiles would be involved was unthinkable. And, the reality is that much of Christianity also does not believe it, although for somewhat different reasons. Gentile Christians can't believe it because Israelites would be involved, just as Israelites couldn't believe it

because gentiles would be involved. Today, the result is that Christians think this is a prophecy that was overridden by the coming of Christ and thus has been “spiritualized” such that Temple, mountain, and even Zion aren’t literal but only symbols for the gentile Church and its doctrinal beliefs.

As for the Jews of Judah, who lived in a time of the imperialism of great gentile empires whom they saw as oppressors, no path seemed possible for such a thing to happen. Gentiles were going to change and come to join Jews in worshipping the Jewish God at a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem? Outlandish! A fantasy of deluded prophets!

The entire nature of this section of Micah’s prophecy revolves around the mountain that supports God’s Temple in Jerusalem. This itself causes modern Bible interpreters and most of Christendom to reject any literal connection to a coming reality. If any mountain is reasonably acceptable for Christians to think about it is the Mount of Olives, because doctrine says Christ’s feet will stand on it and the mountain will split in two. But that is assuredly not where the next Temple in Jerusalem will be built for one has never existed on the Mt. of Olives, nor is it literally prophesied, and thus cannot be the mountain that Isaiah and Micah are speaking about.

One of the conundrums Bible scholarship faces can be highlighted by the way the CJB translates verse 1. It says that ***“the mountain of YEHOVEH’s house will be established as the most important mountain”***, with the key word being “most important”. The issue is that “important” is not what the verse says. It says “the ***rosh*** of the mountain”. ***Rosh*** means a couple of things in Hebrew. It can mean the “cap” of mountain or hill (the peak of it), it can mean the chief or head of a mountain or of a group of people, or it can mean the highest elevation. As mentioned, Christians spiritualize it to mean something like most important, while Hebrews keep it more literally to mean actual elevation.

Now, the reality is that in ancient times as today, this mountain (which is called Mt. Moriah), is **not** the highest mountain in Judah, and not even in Jerusalem. But Micah seems to say it will be. What could make it such? Listen to the Prophet Zechariah.

CJB Zechariah 14:1-10 *Look, a day is coming for YEHOVEH when your plunder, [Yerushalayim], will be divided right there within you. ² "For I will gather all the nations against Yerushalayim for war. The city will be taken, the houses will be rifled, the women will be raped, and half the city will go into exile; but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city." ³ Then YEHOVEH will go out and fight against those nations, fighting as on a day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which lies to the east of Yerushalayim; and the Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, to make a huge valley. Half of the mountain will move toward the north, and half of it toward the south. ⁵ You will flee to the valley in the mountains, for the valley in the mountains will reach to Atzel. You will flee, just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of 'Uziah king of Y'hudah. Then YEHOVEH my God will come to you with all the holy ones. ⁶ On that day, there will be neither bright light nor thick darkness; ⁷ and one day, known to YEHOVEH, will be neither day nor night, although by evening there will be light. ⁸ On that day, fresh water will flow out from Yerushalayim, half toward the eastern sea and half toward the western sea, both summer and winter. ⁹ Then YEHOVEH will be king over the whole world. On that day YEHOVEH will be the only one, and his name will be the only name. ¹⁰ All the land will be made like the 'Aravah, from Geva to Rimmon in the Negev. Yerushalayim will be raised up and inhabited where she is, from Binyamin's Gate to the place where the earlier gate stood, and on to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hanan'el to the king's winepresses.*

At the time Micah is talking about, Zechariah speaks of a huge and cataclysmic eruption and movement of the geography of Jerusalem. This is literal. So, it pushes me to believe that not only from a status aspect, but also literally, in the last days Mt. Moriah will be pushed upward to become the highest elevation in Jerusalem. This is why we must read ALL the prophets in order to get a more complete picture of prophesied events.

Not only will Mt. Moriah with the Temple become the highest elevation in Jerusalem, it will become higher in status than all other hills. Since this is a

time when gentiles will begin to worship the God of Israel and forsake their pagan gods, then the mention of Mt. Morah being more highly regarded than the other hills is because these other hills are where the pagan temples stood in various other nations.

CJB Micah 4:2 *Many Gentiles will go and say, "Come, let's go up to the mountain of YEHOVEH, to the house of the God of Ya'akov! He will teach us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths." For out of Tziyon will go forth Torah, the word of YEHOVEH from Yerushalayim.*

Whereas the CJB begins with "many Gentiles" nearly all other English versions begin with "many nations". Both are arguably correct. The difference is only in that the CJB speaks of gentiles as individuals, while the other translations interpret this to mean nations of gentiles; that is, gentiles corporately. The term nations always infers that it is *gentile* nations.

Why would the nations go to Jerusalem and appear before Yehoveh (actually, it will be to Yehoveh's Son and agent, Yeshua)? The given answer is so that He (the God of Jacob) will teach these gentiles His ways, and the nations' goal, then, is to learn how to walk in His paths. But with that, there are some questions that need answered. What, exactly, are God's ways and where do we find them? The answer: the Torah. Whereas nearly all English Bibles will substitute the word "law" for "Torah", the original Hebrew text literally says "Torah". God will teach gentiles the Torah. Clearly all the gentiles that go to Jerusalem to learn the Torah already believe in God and in Yeshua to some basic level. Since that is the case, then why don't they already know the Torah since it's been around and unchanged since Moses? I'm sure you probably already know the answer. The vast majority of those who go up will be denominational Christians. Christians who indeed believe in God and in His Son, but they have been taught wrongly about pretty much everything beyond that basic belief. The Torah is nowhere present in Constantinian Christianity and never has been since its inception in the 4th century A.D.

I continue to bring the Church into this in order to expose the reality that the gentile Church is but the mirror image of the Israelite institutions that God has been condemning in Micah. First, the Israelite religious institutions are being

decimated by God, and in the end, gentile religious institutions will be decimated by God for identical reasons: the Torah is ignored in favor of manmade doctrines that are counter to the teachings found in the Torah. Both institutions claim purity and righteousness. Both institutions deny that are run by deceived charlatans who teach false, but popular, doctrines. Yehoveh began early on by warning after warning to His people to recognize what they are doing, sincerely repent, and change to doing what is right. Sometimes this happened but quickly reverted. Only later did God finally say that He has determined that the institutions are so corrupted that only their destruction remains.

This passage in Micah is most specific. It is referring, unequivocally, to the Law of Moses, the Torah, that will be taught to all those who have known to some small measure who God and His Son are, but they do NOT know His ways. These ways are laid out in the Torah and there is not some alternative or later "law". The Torah will be the Law over which all nations on earth will be governed and judged by. The gentile religious leadership will be the first to learn it. This was never meant to be something new; it was always supposed to be this way when Yeshua first came, and then when His disciples were instructed to fan out and begin to take the message of the nearness of the Kingdom of God to the world. At first Jews were the leaders of the Jesus movement. But by the end of the 1st century A.D., gentiles had overtaken the Jews in numbers of adherents and so began pushing out Jewish leadership and replacing it with gentiles. This is not speculation. The Early Church Father Eusebius in his book *The History of the Church* written around 320 A.D., lays this all out. He quotes from 2nd century Church Fathers like Papias and Irenaeus, and even those a little later such as Origen. By the mid-300's A.D., Constantine was Emperor of Rome, and he urged the Bishop of Rome to call a council of gentile Bishops from Northern Africa to Asia to the Middle East to the Mediterranean to come to form a new entity: a universal gentiles-only religion that was dubbed Christianity. Before the end of the 4th century, it was called "Catholic", which in its generic form simply means "universal". Jews were excluded as was the Torah and the entire Old Testament. Adherence to any part of it brought either excommunication or death.

Micah was not just calling out the corrupt Hebrew institutions and leadership of his day, but also that of Judaism that would come later. He is also calling out the gentile religious leadership that arose from Constantine and is in control today. He expects us to hear and to repent. He expects us to spend our hours learnings His ways, and not the ways of Judaism or the Church or any other organized religion. Let's determine that we will open our ears and listen, for not to brings with it much heartache and also great dissatisfaction from God.

We'll close here for today, and resume in Micah chapter 4 next time.