

I. **Introduction**

- A. What is God's vision of the church?
1. When God formed His plan for the world, for salvation, and for the coming of the church, what did He have in mind?
  2. God must have had a vision of what He intended.
    - a. God had planned to send Jesus from "before the foundation of the world." (1 Peter 1:20)
    - b. God had planned to gather His people, the redeemed, into a single body.
    - c. Certainly, the God of heaven who knows all things had a vision of what He wanted the church to be.
- B. In Micah 4:1-5, Micah shares with us God's vision of the coming church of Christ.
1. It is sad, but this is a vision that is so often overlooked and misunderstood.
  2. Yet, it is a passage that ought to open our eyes and give us valuable insight concerning God's vision for His church.
- C. To understand this passage, we need to know the times when Micah is writing and preaching.
1. Judah has had a long succession of kings.
    - a. Some were good and some were bad.
    - b. But, on the whole, the heart of the Jews had been turned away from God to serve the idols of the land.
  2. The Northern Kingdom of Israel, on the other hand, has had nothing but a long string of evil and idolatrous kings.
    - a. The hearts of the people were completely corrupted, and they had abandoned God altogether.
    - b. During the time of Micah's work as a prophet, Israel would be carried off into captivity by the Assyrians, never to return.
  3. Micah was sent as a prophet to announce God's judgments against the wickedness of both Israel and Judah.

- a. In Micah 1, Micah speaks about God's anger with both Samaria (the capital of Israel) and Jerusalem (the capital of Judah).
  - b. In Micah 5, Micah speaks with certainty of Israel being carried away by Assyria.
  - c. Micah proclaims the various sins that they were guilty of committing.
  - d. Like the other works of prophets, Micah is a book of judgment and condemnation against the unfaithful children of God.
  - e. Like the other prophets, Micah also offers hope and redemption to those who would return to God.
4. It is within this turmoil of war and bondage that Micah gives a prophecy regarding the coming of the church of Christ.
- D. Tonight, we want to look briefly at the vision that God had for His church.

<sup>1</sup> Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. <sup>2</sup> Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more. <sup>4</sup> But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. <sup>5</sup> For all people walk each in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God Forever and ever. (Micah 4:1-5 NKJV)

II. ***God Envisioned a Global Church (4:1-3a)***

- A. We need to understand the time in which this was written.
1. God had made a special covenant with Israel.
    - a. He had commanded them to obey Him and keep His commandments.
    - b. If they would do so, then God would make them His special people.
  2. God then used Israel to destroy the idolatrous and wicked nations of the world.
  3. As Jesus told the Samaritan woman, under the Old Covenant, "Salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22)
- B. The glory of the New Covenant is that it extends to the entire world.
1. "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills..."
    - a. "The mountain of the Lord's house" is undeniably a reference to the temple of God.
      - (1) Under the Old Covenant, the temple was built upon a mountain in Jerusalem.
      - (2) A careful study of Scriptures will show you that mountains and "high places" were associated with the concept of worship.
        - (a) "High places" represented places where altars were made to various gods.
        - (b) The Samaritan woman speaks of the Samaritans worshipping upon their mountain.
    - b. The idea that Micah expresses here is that God's temple would be greater than all other temples.
      - (1) God's mountain would be established on top of all of the other mountains.

- (2) God's mountain would be higher than the hills on which the heathen worshiped.
  - (3) The world would exalt God's mountain above all other mountains.
- c. Clearly, this is not a reference to a physical mountain or place of worship.
- (1) The New Testament makes it clear that God "does not dwell in temples made with hands." (Acts 17:24)
  - (2) The Hebrew writer tells us that Jesus came "with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands." (Hebrews 9:11)
  - (3) The temple of God is not a physical place or building.
    - (a) Christians are the temple of God.
    - (b) The temple is the church!
2. "And the peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off."
- a. *Micah prophesies that people from all over the world will come to the church to learn about God.*
    - (1) The beauty of the church is that all people from all nations can come to know God.
    - (2) The world will not come to the city of Jerusalem to find the church; they will come to the house of God, which is the church.
    - (3) They come to the church desiring to learn the ways of God, so that they might walk according to them.
  - b. *Micah prophesies that the word of God would begin in Jerusalem and spread to the world.*
    - (1) When you look at Acts 2, where did the church begin?

- (a) It began with the apostles proclaiming the message of Jesus in Jerusalem.
- (b) Three thousand souls were saved that first day.
- (2) From Jerusalem, the word of God spread throughout the world.
- c. *Micah prophesies that it would be a global message.*
  - (1) Christ did not only judge the Jews of the first century.
  - (2) His message judges all people of all times.
  - (3) To this day, His standard will judge the nations of the world.
  - (4) No matter how strong they are, no nation can stand up to the word of Christ.
- C. God envisioned a global church that would include all people.
  - 1. All people can come to it seeking the truth.
  - 2. The church has the responsibility to reach out to all people.

### III. ***God Envisioned a Peaceful Church (4:3b-4)***

*“They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”*

- A. God envisions a church that is peaceful and prosperous.
  - 1. This is not a passage describing sometime in the future when the world will no longer know war.
  - 2. We live in a world that is plagued with war and conflict.
  - 3. Just look at the past one hundred years in our nation:
    - a. World War I.
    - b. World War II.
    - c. Korea.
    - d. Vietnam.
    - e. Cold War.

- f. Persian Gulf War.
- g. Afghanistan.
- h. Iraq.
- 4. We live in a world that is filled with violence and war.
- B. God does envision that His church would spread through the world by peaceful means.
  - 1. Consider the times of the Law of Moses, when children were trained from their youth to bear weapons to fight against the enemies of God.
    - a. When God led the children into the promised land, He gave them the commandment to destroy every living inhabitant of the land.
      - (1) Why?
      - (2) Because they were wicked, corrupt, and idolatrous.
      - (3) God did not want them to corrupt His children.
    - b. The Israelites showed the glory and power of the God of heaven over the idols of the land through their military might.
      - (1) God used three hundred men under Gideon to destroy an army that seemed to be “without number.” (**Judges 7**)
      - (2) God used Sampson and the jawbone of a donkey to kill one thousand Philistines. (**Judges 15:15**)
      - (3) God used young David to destroy the mighty giant, Goliath. (**1 Samuel 17**)
      - (4) God used the weak to defeat the strong, so that the world would know that only God could have given the victory.
    - c. War and weapons of war were a daily part of the Israelites' lives.
  - 2. Micah speaks of a time when the people of God would lay down the weapons of war to pick up instruments of peace.

- a. No longer would they use weapons of war to kill and destroy the enemies of God.
  - b. Instead, they would change the weapons of war for tools for farming.
  - c. The people of God are no longer concerned with destroying the enemies of God; rather, we are concerned with planting and growing the church of God.
    - (1) In that sense, the church is a church of peace.
    - (2) When we see someone who is completely given over to sin, we do not immediately run them through with a spear - as Phinehas did to the Israelite caught in adultery with the Moabitess harlot in **Numbers 25**.
3. Micah goes on to speak words of comfort.
- a. God envisions a time when His people would be able to rest under the vine and the fig tree.
    - (1) The vine and fig tree suggest a time of prosperity.
    - (2) The fact that God's people would be sit under them suggests that they would be able to enjoy the fruits of their labors.
  - b. More to the point, God envisions a time when no one would be able to make His children afraid.
    - (1) Even now, Christians enjoy that comfort.
    - (2) Certainly, the world is filled with violence and hate, and there are those who continue to attack and persecute God's people.
    - (3) The New Testament makes it clear that Christians have nothing to fear, so long as we walk according to the paths of God.
      - (a) Man can destroy the body.
      - (b) Man cannot destroy the eternal soul.
    - (4) Notice, we have no reason to fear, *because God has spoken!*

- (a) Our confidence is in the message of God.
- (b) God has promised us deliverance, so we have nothing to fear.

#### IV. **God Envisioned a Faithful Church** (4:5)

"For all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God."

- A. The coming of Jesus did not bring an end to idolatry.
  1. In spite of the fact that God had repeatedly showed His power to the nations of the world, they continued to build and serve their own gods.
  2. In spite of all of the evidence that Jesus showed while He walked on this earth, men continued to serve their own gods.
  3. In spite of all of the evidence that still exists today that Jesus is the Son of God, men continue to serve false gods.
  4. Everyone will choose his own god to serve.
- B. But we, the people of the God of heaven, will walk in the name of the Lord our God.
  1. The Israelites failed to remain true to God.
    - a. They continually abandoned Him for the gods of the land.
    - b. God destroyed them for it.
  2. Those who are truly a part of the body of Christ will always walk according to the ways of God.
    - a. We will be His faithful children.
    - b. We will be rewarded for it.

#### V. **Conclusion**

- A. Long before Jesus came to this earth, God envisioned the coming of His church.
  1. It was a glorious vision of a kingdom that would be superior to the nation of Israel.

God's Vision of the Coming Church

Micah 4:1-5

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2. God envisioned a church that was:
  - a. Global - all of the world could hear His word proclaimed.
  - b. Peaceful - it would not be given to war, but to growing and nurturing men's souls.
  - c. Faithful - always walking according to the ways of God.
- B. It is that church that we must be:
  1. We must be global in our outlook, reaching out to all men.
  2. We must be peaceful, seeking to nurture men's souls.
  3. We must be faithful, never leaving the paths of God.