



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Micah 4:9-13

“God's Counter Plan for Jerusalem's Enemies”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the prophecy of Micah, for its applicability to so much of our present life many hundreds of years after the prophet wrote it. We thank Thee for the lessons that we learn and particularly those lessons of trust in Thee in the midst of the difficulties and trials of life. And we thank Thee also for the lesson that Micah sought so earnestly to get across that it is truly a sin of great proportions to turn away from the Lord God.

And we pray that in our own particular lives that Thou wilt deliver us from the backsliding and turning from the Lord, the indifference to the things of the spirit that lead to fruitlessness, and loss of communion, and loss of the joy of life. And we pray Lord that if there should be some who have not really come to know the Lord Jesus as their own personal Savior that they may come to know him and be delivered from the unbelief and disobedience to the revelation of God that has characterized all of us at one time in our Christian and in our non Christian experience.

We pray now that Thou wilt be with us as we study again in this great prophecy. May be we responsive. Give us illumination. May the Lord Jesus Christ the Messiah be glorified in the things that are said. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight the subject, as we turn again to the prophecy of Micah, is "God's Counter Plan for Jerusalem's Enemies". And we're turning to Micah chapter 4 and we're reading for our Scripture reading verse 9 through verse 13. So turn with me to Micah chapter 4 verse 9 through verse 13. The prophet writes,

"Now why dost thou cry out aloud? Is there no king in thee? Is thy counselor perished? For pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. Be in pain and labor to bring forth, O Daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail. For now shalt thou go forth out of the city and thou shalt dwell in the field. And thou shalt go even to Babylon, there shalt thou be delivered, there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies. Now also many nations are gathered against thee that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord neither understand they the is counsel. For he shall gather them as sheaves unto the floor (or into the floor). Arise and thresh O Daughter of Zion, for I will make thine horn iron and I will make thy hoofs brass. Thou shalt beat in pieces many people and will consecrate their gain unto the Lord and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."

"God's Counter Plan for Jerusalem's Enemies" One of the great principles of human existence is the ancient one expressed by Asaph in the seventy sixth Psalm. "Surely the wrath of men shall praise Thee, the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." Notice the statement, "Surely the wrath of men shall praise Thee." We have a very vivid illustration of it in the sixth war that Israel has just fought and is in the process of finishing up in Lebanon. Since they became a nation this is the sixth of their wars and it's a foretaste of the future. There will be in the future enemies that shall surround the nation Israel. There will be aggression against them. And there will be victory and it will be, as is the case today, victory for Israel.

As we look at this section of verses, beginning with verse 9 through verse 13, the five verses, one notices if he reads very carefully these verse that there are two oracles of divine deliverance in chapter 4 and then one more in chapter 5, which concludes with verse 6. Each of them presents a crisis, and although there are different solutions to the crisis, there are three of these crises; two in chapter 4 and one in chapter 5.

Now, if we were to analyze this section here we would say that verse 9 expresses a crisis, "Now why dost thy cry out aloud?" And then there is a forecast in the first part of chapter 10 of the things that Israel is to do. And finally, a description of deliverance in the latter part of verse 10, "There the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies." And again a crisis in verse 11, "Now also many nations are gathered against thee." The Lord's strategy is set forth in verse 12. And finally, the deliverance again in verse 13. We have the same thing in chapter 5 verse 1 through verse 6, and we are reserving that for our study next week the Lord willing.

I'd like for you notice that you can tell these are three oracles if you will just simply watch the language very carefully. Notice how the ninth verse begins, "Now why dost they cry out aloud?" Verse 11, "Now also many nations are gathered against thee." And then chapter 5 verse 1, "Now gather thyself in troops, O Daughter of troops." These are just little things that help us to understand the structure of the passages that we are reading. When you are reading the Bible it's very very helpful if you will notice little points of structure like this. It will help you to put each of the sections in proper relationship to one another.

The importance of the divine counter plan in the world and in Middle East history is set forth here and in many places in the word of God. Israel's ethnic future rests on the immutable foundation of the word of God. We have many passages in the Bible that tell us that the nation Israel has a future because of those immutable prophecies and promises that God has given to the nation. For example, in Deuteronomy chapter 32 in the great song of Moses, you might turn there for a moment; particularly verse 1 and then the last

verse of the song in verse 43. This is one of the great chapters in the Pentateuch. And one of the reasons you can tell it's one of the great chapters is because in the New Testament it's one of the passages from the Old Testament that is frequently quoted by the writers of the New Testament; and not simply by one of them but by more than one of them.

Now, remember it was given by Moses just as the children of Israel were ready to go into the land and it was a chapter by which they were expected to measure their spiritual relationship to the Lord and the future. Notice the universality of it in the very first verse. "Give ear O ye heavens and I will speak, and here O earth the words of my mouth." This then is a universal prophecy and is of great importance. But as he concludes in verse 43 he says, "Rejoice O ye nations with His people for He will avenge the blood of his servants and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land and to his people." Notice that last statement, "He will be merciful unto his land and he will be merciful to his to people."

Now, when we turn over to the New Testament we have questions raised concerning the immutability of these promises that God gave to the nation. When, for example, the Apostle Paul states in Romans chapter 2, that there is really no difference between an unbeliever whether he be of Jewish descent or of gentile descent. The question arises, as Paul begins the third chapter he puts it down, "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?"

Now, the apostle, remember he was writing in the days of the New Testament church. He was writing after the day of Pentecost. He was writing in the present age in which we live and asking the question, "What advantage hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?" If there really were no profit in being a Jew, if there were no advantage in belonging to Israel why obviously the answer would be, "None." In fact, that is the reason he raised the question. Some might think because he said in verse 28, "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward

in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit and not in the latter whose praise is not of men but of God."

Now, someone might say, "Well then there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile. If a man doesn't believe, whether he be Jew or not, well he's not going to possess the promises." But that overlooks the fact that promises were given to the ethnic future of the nation as a whole. So he asks the question, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" And with the Christian church in existence with many all ready in the Church of Jesus Christ and believers and with the nation of Israel in unbelief Paul answers his own question, "What is the profit? What is the advantage?" by the words, "Much every way." Well, what do you mean Paul? Much every way? Well, he goes on to say, "Because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Some of misunderstood that text and have thought what Paul is saying that to the Jews were given the Bible and thus they had the responsibility of being simply the transmitters of the word of God. As a matter of fact that was not true. There are some gentiles who have offered sections of the word of God, witness Job for example most likely.

So what Paul means by oracles is not simply the Bible as a whole. What he means by oracles are the sayings of the Lord with respect to the nation Israel. He means the Messianic promises. So "oracles" means "Messianic promises." Later on in the ninth chapter he will expand this when he says, it's a terrible thing that Israel is in unbelief because think of the advantages that they have, chapter 9 verse 4, "Who are Israelites to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises (You see the promises pertain to the nation as a whole.) whose are the Father's and of whom has concerning the flesh Messiah came who is overall God blessed forever.

Now, he says then that Israel has a great advantage in every way because they are the recipients of the Messianic promises. Well someone says, "But they didn't believe." And Paul answers that question, too. Verse 3 of chapter 3, "For what if some did not

believe? Shall their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?" In other words, because the nation did not respond to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and rejected him, crucifying him, and has persisted in this day in their unbelief as a nation does not that void the promises of God? Many amillennialists contend that that is precisely what has happened. Those promises were conditional and since Israel did not believe; those promises are canceled.

What does Paul say? God forbid. "Ye, let God be true but every man a liar as it is written that thou mightiest be justified in thy sayings and mayest overcome when thy art judged." So the apostle believed that Israel the nation had an ethnic future, a future as a nation, and he looked forward to the time in the future when Israel would come into the possession of the Messianic promises. And he reaches the climax of his argumentation in chapter 11 when he says in verse 26, "And so all Israel shall be saved." Not every single individual Israelite, for some are unbelievers, but the nation as a whole. All Israel shall be saved. The same "all Israel" that rejected him, not everyone, there were believers. The early church was a Jewish church, but the nation as a whole rejected him; the great mass of the people and the leaders. So in the future the great mass of the people and their leaders shall be saved. And then to prove it he cites a combination of three texts, one having to do with the Abrahamic covenant, one having to do with the Davidic covenant, and one having to do with the new covenant in support of the idea that Israel has an ethnic future.

Now, it's well to bear that in mind when reading through the prophets because you will not understand them if you do not understand that fact that the promises of God given to Israel are enviable promises. Now, it is true that if they persist in their unbelief they will not receive the benefits of the promises. But the Old Testament says that one day he will communicate to them faith. "He will pour out upon Jerusalem and Judah the spirit of grace and supplications and they shall look unto him whom they have pierced and then they shall mourn for him as the promises of God are fulfilled by God for them."

Now, bear that in mind as we look now at the first of these oracles in verse 9 and 10 of Micah chapter 4. Remember the connection Micah prophesied during the reigns of the men that are mentioned in the very first section of his book. He prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and these are prophecies which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. Prosperous times had existed in northern Israel in the days of Jeroboam II and also in the days of Azia in Judah, but now in Micah's day the Assyrian threat was growing. I'm sure it must have been very much like the PLO and Israel in the since that on their borders were nations that were unfriendly to them. And so naturally they were beginning to panic over it, be disturbed by it, and so the crisis is described by Micah in verse 9, "Now, why dost thy cry out aloud? Is there no king in thee? Is thy counselor perished? For pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail," so he looks and asked them the question now. The catastrophe of the nearby forces is right before you and he rather ironically asks them the question, "Is there no king in thee?" Did not Zion have a king? Why yes they had a king. Now, the king was the visible representative of the Lord God. Has he perished? Is thy counselor perished? So he satirizes the failure of the human leadership.

There is always a tendency when we are pressed by the circumstances of life to seek the aid and the comfort of fleshly endeavor. That's what Israel did. They were pressed by the Assyrians. And so what did they do? They thought that perhaps they could get some help down and Egypt. Listen to some of the texts that Isaiah, who prophesied remember at the same time, writes in his book. In chapter 30 and verse 1 of his prophecy he says, "Whoa to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel but not of me, and that cover with covering but not of my spirit that they may add sin to sin." And then in chapter 31 verse 1, "Whoa to them that go down to Egypt for help and stay on horses and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but look not unto the holy one of Israel neither seek the Lord." Well, you could translate that into present day. "Whoa to them that go over to the United States for

help and stay on ornaments, and missiles, and trust in," and then you list all of the types of ornaments that the nations trust in and particularly Israel. "But they look not unto the holy one of Israel, neither seek the Lord." There's always a tendency to do that and that principle that is found here is also a principle that one finds in the church. If you'll look at the Christian church and examine the testimony of many of them you will find that that's what they've done. They've sold out to fleshly counsel.

I can remember one church in the southeast which had a certain ministry. They set up a new church and then in the preaching of the word of God they became a little restless and impatient because the church was not growing quite as well as they thought it should be, and so they took a trip to California. That's like going down to Egypt for help. They took a trip to California and went out to absorb the kinds of churches that they have in California and came back and sought to introduce that in Atlanta. Well, you could almost predict the results. About a year or two later the church collapsed and the individual goes. What it really was was a case of failure to trust in the word of God, it seemed to most people who examined it, and a tendency to lean on the arm of the flesh in order to draw more people into the church. Thinking that because you have more people in a church you're therefore a growing church; that is very superficial and very very unscriptural thinking. Many are like that. You can think of the individual tendency, too.

One of the greatest of the Scriptural illustrations is the illustration of Sarah and Abraham and the promise of a son. And finally, when Sarah could not wait she suggested that Abraham go in unto Hagar her slave. And as a result of the intercourse Ishmael was born. The result was nothing but trouble, not only for Abraham, but also for Sarah and for the children of Israel from that time on. And in fact, even to this present day Isaac is fighting Ishmael and Ishmael is fighting Isaac. That's really the heart of the conflict in the Middle East today so far as Israel and the Arab nations about are concerned.

"So why dost thy cry out aloud? Is there no king in thee? Is thy counselor perished?" And panic has gripped them, panic just like a woman who is about to give birth to a baby. You cannot help but be sympathetic with the many who have lost children in the wars in Lebanon, and Syria, and in the land of Palestine. And our media love to focus on those who've lost their children; the women agonizing over the loss of a child or a member of a family. Well, that's the kind of picture that you have here because that same kind of picture is the picture of a woman who is in birth pangs to bring forth a child. "For pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail and panic then has come to the children of Israel."

And then the prophet goes on to make a forecast with reference to the future. He says, "Be in pain and labor to bring forth, O Daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail for now shalt thou go forth out of the city and thou shalt dwell in the field. And thou shalt go even to Babylon." So in a kind of conventional language of reaction to bad news he says, "Be in pain and labor to bring forth," be like a woman who is about to have a child and in birth pains. But there is going to be no immediate alleviation of your difficulties." In fact, the reaction of the description here, "Be in pain and labor to bring forth, O Daughter of Zion," is just since worse news is to come. Not only are the Assyrians to be at your gates, but the time is coming when you're going to have to leave the city of Jerusalem and leave Judah and go out and get on the weary road of deportation to Babylon.

And then finally in verse 10 and the latter part of verse, he makes a forecast with reference to the future. He says, "There shalt thou be delivered. There the Lord shall redeem thee from the land of thine enemies."

Now, I think that's rather interesting because there is a rather deliberate stress on Micah's part of the adverb "there". Did you notice it? "There shalt thou be delivered. There the Lord will redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies." In other words, instant deliverance is not always the intent of the Lord. Instant deliverance is not always the

promise of the Lord either. Instant deliverance is not something that one can say is the automatic right of God's covenant people. In fact, there may become a time which God's covenant people in right relationship with him shall still have to pass through some very difficult circumstances. So he tells them in effect, "It's from Babylon that you will be delivered. It's from there that the Lord will redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies." Anyone with spiritual understanding would have known at that point that our state is such that there's not going to be a repentance on the part of the nation and we are going to have to go into captivity.

I wonder how popular Micah was for prophesying like this. Remember Micah has all ready talked about those prophets who like to prophesy for money. He said previously, "If you give them something to bite (That is something to it. That is some financial reward.) they'll give you a nice prophecy. But if you don't give them something to bite they'll give you a very bad prophecy. They'll prophesy judgment."

Now, here is a man who prophesying judgment whether men give him something to bite or not. And the chances are after he prophesies judgment not anybody's going to give Micah anything. But Micah's the one who's giving forth the truth of the word of God. You see in the final analysis it's not whether something is pleasant to us or not. Something very unpleasant might not be the word of God. Something very pleasant might not be the word of God either. The question is, "What does the Bible teach?"

Now, Micah was a true prophet of the Lord God and he prophesied the Lord's words. That is important for us. It's important that we pay attention to what the Bible says. It isn't whether a person gives us a nice sweet message which we enjoy and go out and say, "My the time passed real quickly didn't it?" Sometimes that kind of message is the worst thing that you could possibly have if it's not truthful. It's the truth that ministers to us. I'm sure that Micah was probably a candidate for most unpopular man of the times in the city of Jerusalem and in Judea. How different from modern Liberalism?

Today I was reading, don't tell me friends I read this but I do read this to find out what they're saying, I was reading in the *Christian Century*. The *Christian Century* is a well-known liberal publication. It comes about twice a month, always has something interesting in it. Usually it gets me angry and irritated. It's one of those things that the Lord uses to calm me so I figure if I can get by that without having to say I'm sorry I thought that, "Lord then I'm making progress in spiritual life." Well, there's an article in the present *Christian Century*, which is entitled "Not All Cats Are Gray: Beyond Liberalism's Uncertain Faith". And here is a paragraph in it written by a man who is a professor in one of the theological institutions of our day. He says, "The Bible is not to be read as a book in which answers to life's vexing questions can be found." Liberals cringe when they hear remarks such as the one by an executive of a major conservative publishing house explaining the durability of his firm's Bible sales, "Our product has the answers." To the liberal the Bible is neither a product or an answer book, it's rather a question book where we go not to find the right answers but to find the right questions; questions that we evade at our peril. The Holy Spirit then works. Isn't that interesting? We don't go to the Bible to get answers; we go to the Bible to get questions.

Now, the impression you get is it's wrong to be sure about these absolutes that you find in the Bible. Of course, they're very sure that the Bible is not that kind of book; just as sure as those conservatives are that it is that kind of book. But they don't really see often that their certainty is just as certain as the other certainty. And again it's a question not of certainty and uncertainty but of truth. Is the Bible a book of questions or is the Bible a book in which we have answers? But now having said that he says, "The way we go to the truth is we read the Bible and we find the questions." Now, where do you think we go to get the answers? Well, we go the Holy Spirit. Well, that's not bad really. Of course, we go to the Holy Spirit. But if you don't have the Bible how can you be sure you have the message of the Holy Spirit? His words are always wedded to the truths of Scripture. He never violates Scripture. He's the author of Scripture. So if we go

to the Holy Spirit we are going to one whose advice and counsel is going to be according to Scripture it would seem to be since he wrote it. But listen. That's not all. I didn't reach the end of the sentence. He said, "The Holy Spirit then works according to Paul Tillich and other to help us ask these right questions and to find answers which will be both personal and provisional.

So here is what he offers us. He says, "The Bible is not a book of answers. It's a book of questions. So we go to the Bible to get the questions. But to whom do we go to get the answers? Well, to that well known adulterer Paul Tillich who lived most of his religious life philandering. He's the person to whom we go." He didn't name the others. He said, "We go to him. He's prominent enough to mention. We go to him and to others." Well, can you imagine getting the answers from Paul Tillich, the philanderer whose own wife has testified to that and written books after he died to that effect, and others too; a well known fact. This is the man to whom we should go. We conservatives don't go to the Bible and don't claim that the Bible has the answers. Go the Bible for the questions. What good are questions if you don't have any answers. And Paul Tillich doesn't have any answers. You can be sure of that.

The Bible, well it may of course contain a lot of questions that we are to wrestle with. Obviously, it does. But at the same time the Bible is a book that does contain some answers that are very important, and one of the most important of them is that it does give us the way of life through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now then, that's the end of the first oracle, but we have a second one and it begins in verse 11. And now the prophetic satire, "Where is your king? Where is your counselor?" becomes divine irony. And oh, what irony is here? Uncertainty over the king becomes certainty over the Lord's counsel. "Now also many nations are gathered against thee that say, Let her be defiled and let our eye look upon Zion." Now, he talks her about the gathering of the nations against the city of Jerusalem. By the way, this chapter

began incidentally with the spontaneous gathering of the nations to Jerusalem for instruction. Look at verse 1,

"But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths for the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people and rebuke strong nations of far off. And they shall beat their swords into plow shears and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn more anymore."

In other words, a magnificent picture of the future when the nations shall gather after the Messiah has come to the city of Jerusalem in order to be instructed in the way of the Lord. But in verse 12 it's quite different. Here they are gathered against the city of Jerusalem, not for instruction but for satanic destruction of the Daughter of Zion. "Many nations," now it is possible that this is reference to the last days. It's also possible that he's talking about the many nations that were vessels of the kingdom of Assyria. It was customary in those days when a nation like Assyria conquered another nation that in the peace treaty that they signed they forced upon those that they had conquered; they forced them to sign that in case Assyria was involved in war that they would support Assyria.

And so it was possible for Assyria to be raged against the city of Jerusalem and representatives of many others nations; be there. It's possible that that is the meaning of verse 11, "Now also many nations are gathered against thee." On the other hand in verse 2 we had the expression, "Many nations shall come and say, Come let's go up to the mountain of the Lord," and the reference is to the future, even from our time, the

Messianic days. And so it seems to me a bit more likely that that is what is in mind here. In other words, the prophet looking down into the future speaks of the time when many of the nations shall gather against the city of Jerusalem and the fact that they all wear different uniforms will increase the panic that will exist in the city itself.

"They all gathered against Jerusalem," the prophet says, "and they say, Let her be defiled and let our eye look upon Zion." Now, what is so ironic about this is that Micah is really ironically picturing their reasoning because he knows who the gatherer is. They're there and they don't really understand why they're there. They're there, they think, in order to destroy Israel. But no. That's not it. We read here, "Now also many nations are gathered against thee." They're ignorant of the one who has actually brought them there. "And they say, Let her be defiled." A blatant disregard of the holy city of God, something that the prophets and the psalmists speak so strongly against. It is God's holy city. And when a person desecrates God's holy city he will come under the judgment of God. So they say, "Let her be defiled."

Now, if we have any application of this today one of the most significant applications of it is the fact that surrounding the little land of Israel today is a group of nations who if you ask them what one thing would they rather have than anything else they would say, "Jerusalem destroyed," meaning, "Israel destroyed." Saudi Arabia would love to see Israel destroyed. Syria would love to see Israel destroyed. Iraq would love to see Israel destroyed. Implacable enemies; Egypt has come to something of a *rapprochement* simply because they had to. They would love to see Israel destroyed. Nasser over and over and over again when he was in power that, "Israel should be driven into the Mediterranean Sea and that they had no right to exist there." Iran would love to see them go. All of the rest of those nations there, and the only reason Lebanon is happy is because they've been delivered from the PLO, everyone of them would love to see Israel go. They are gathered around her borders and anxious to see her defiled and look upon Zion as a destroyed nation. That's one of the saddest things and yet one of the

most revealing things of human nature. Why is it? Why is it that they should be so angry with this one nation? Because ultimately Ishmael is still shooting arrows at Isaac.

Ultimately men don't like the distinguishing grace of God.

Now, Israel is in unbelief. I'm not denying that at all. But Israel has the promises. They are destined to be the head of the nations again, and not the tail. So they're all gathered against the city and the prophet says, verse 12; God has a counter plan, "But they know not the thoughts of the Lord neither understand they his counsel for he shall gather them as sheaves unto the floor." They are gathered to destroy the city but actually it is God who has gathered them. And they are just like the wheat that is gathered into the threshing floor in order to be threshed by that iron instrument with which wheat was threshed in those days. You know what that is? That's divine providence. That's the divine control of circumstances. That's what they think and the other is what God is doing. They've forgotten the master strategist is God. And he's going to snatch the cup of victory from the invaders.

You know God is an Alexander, a Caesar, a Napoleon, a Stonewall Jackson, a Moshe Dion, a Moore, and a Sandy Woodard, and all of the rest of the outstanding military men all gathered into one. He's graduated from all of the military colleges that count; the one in heaven. And consequently when the time comes it's going to be what he thinks that really counts.

And you can see Micah, he's just savoring the irony of this situation. Now, imagine he's having to say, "Lord, keep me from rejoicing too much over this. I don't want to sin in my rejoicing. They don't know the thoughts of the Lord. They don't understand his counsel because he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor." So they thought they were drawn to Jerusalem by war or lust, but they were actually drawn to Jerusalem by the providential will of God in order that he would demonstrate his great delivering power by what he would do.

You know in the earlier days of the Christian church some of the church fathers thought of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ as the means by which Satan was defeated, and that's a biblical idea. But they thought of it something along these lines. They thought of it as if man had by his sin given himself over into the hands of Satan. And so God dickered with Satan and he dickered with Satan in this way; he offered the Lord Jesus Christ for the deliverance of the captives that Satan held. "And so Satan looked at the Lord Jesus Christ," so Gregory of Nisa says in his explanation of the atonement, "Satan looked at the Lord Jesus Christ and he saw an individual who was a miracle worker and a good man. And he said, 'Yes. I'll take him and let the captives go. But,'" and then Gregory said, "it's just like a fish hook; the fish that takes the bait but discovers that in the bait there is a hook and he's hooked." So the Lord Jesus Christ was accepted by Satan as sufficient payment, but he discovered that there was a hook. He took the bait and it was his own destruction that came from the work of the cross; kind of an unsuspected trap into which Satan fell. An interesting theory of the atonement; of course it's not set out in Scripture like that.

But at any rate it's almost like this in future because they all gather around Jerusalem to destroy Jerusalem thinking that they're there to destroy that city and God's brought them there and he's trapped them, and there's going to be a great victory that he's going to undertake. And so he says, "Arise and thresh, O Daughter of Zion, for a I will make thine horn iron and I will make thy hoofs brass."

Did you notice what happened in the last war? Or this present war still going on? Did you notice how the Syrians fared with the Israelis? Well, I think it was, "They shot down seventy nine of the Syrian planes and did not even lose one plane," Time magazine said. Why? Well, God gave them some weapons that were secret. In fact, one of the things that has come out of the war so far should be very comforting to every American. The Russian technology is not up to our technology. The Israelis really blew the Russian technology to bits. That should be a comfort to us in that sense. But the magnificent

thing about it is what they were able to do. Fantastically accurate, fantastically well-trained, and their equipment; do you now that they had equipment that could see the Syrian planes two hundred miles away? Not only that, they saw them when they taxied to take off on their fields. They had an advantage; superior technology. I think that's what we have here except it's probably going to be far greater.

Listen, "Arise and thresh, O Daughter of Zion, for I will make thine horn iron and I will make thy hoofs brass." Incidentally, one of the prophets of Ahab's day brags about that. He takes out the things and he brags about he's made them iron and how he's going to thresh the enemies of the king. Well, actually Micah leans on that terminology here and says, "That's what's going to happen." "And thou shalt beat in pieces many people and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord." Now, in other words he says, We're going to destroy them and furthermore we're going to take the spoils of war and we're going to consecrate those things to Lord." You know usually that's what they did? They got rid of all the things that weren't of great importance and they took the silver and gold and they took it into the temple as a kind of trophy room. That's what they're going today over in the land of Palestine; 500 trucks of ammunition, various other kinds of equipment that they've taken. These are just little foretastes of what is described here by the prophet. "Great spoils will come from that war," he says, "and they will be consecrated to the Lord of the whole earth."

Do you know what the Assyrian king called himself? He called himself, according to ancient Near Eastern texts, Sennacherib called himself the "king of the world". Isn't that interesting? The king of the world? The Lord of all the earth is Jehovah God who is given unconditional promises to his people, to the nation Israel, and of course to us who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. That means that when we have put our trust, by the grace of God, in him those promises are inviolable. They are unchangeable. They are unconditional. And when we have him we have a permanent salvation. So why should

we flee to the world? Why do we need to go down to Egypt for help? Why do we have to lean on Egypt's horses and chariots and not look to the Lord God?

As a church, as in individual, in fact as a nation, our hope and our trust and our salvation is in the Lord of all the earth. May God help us to apply the principle to our lives. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent statements by the prophet Micah. And Lord if he was an unpopular man in his day give us something of the same spirit of faithfulness and commitment to the word of God regardless of what our friends and neighbors and others may think. May, Oh God, in the day in which we live...

[RECORDING ENDED ABRUPTLY]