

Micah 2
God Takes How We Treat People Very Seriously
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Would you join me as we pray? Lord, we thank You so much. There is strength in Your name. There's power. And Lord, there's hope. We thank You so much, Lord, for this place that wow, You've blessed us with beyond anything we deserve, Lord, Would You bless the teaching this evening?

Be with Pastor JD, Lord. Give him strength. And would You give us understanding, Lord? And Lord, would You give us energy that we might stay awake and hear and receive all that it is that You have for us this evening? We thank You so much for Your word. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Jesus' name. Amen and Amen. And good evening and welcome. You can be seated. So glad you're here tonight. I don't know about that prayer. I just — does that mean I put people to sleep or...

For those of you that are joining us online, we're so glad that you are. We are going through the Book of Micah and getting to know this prophet. And tonight is *Chapter 2*. We're just going to take one chapter at a time for now. *Chapter 1* was about sinning against God. *Chapter 2* is about sinning against other people. And then next week, Lord willing, *Chapter 3* is going to be the sins of leaders.

So I kind of want to — I think there — there are lessons within the chapter that warrant us just taking one chapter at a time, even though they're short chapters. I think that we would be grossly remiss to run through them. How am I doing so far on the intro and explanation of why we're not rushing through this book? We're going to take our time.

As we're about to see, God is going to make it very clear in no uncertain terms that He takes very seriously and even very personally how it is that we treat people. That's what's in this chapter before us tonight. God, through the prophet Micah, declares judgment on those who take advantage of people, especially those who take advantage of the vulnerable, the fatherless, the widow.

Throughout Scripture, particularly in James, James goes as far, by the Spirit, as saying that you want to know what pure, undefiled religion is. It's taking care of the fatherless and the widow. And we're going to see that tonight and what they were doing to people, how they

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were treating people, especially the people who were the most vulnerable, they would take the most advantage of.

But God, as only He can and does, in the end, not only judges those who mistreat and take advantage of people, but He restores His people because — and I want you to listen to what I'm about to say because it's a game changer and a life changer. I'm not trying to be sensational, but I want you to listen very carefully to what I'm about to say because this has such a profound personal application to our lives. Our sin can never “out sin” God's grace because of God's covenant. Let me say that again. Our sin can never “out sin” God's grace because of God's covenant.

I think of the Apostle Paul who said, “that where did sin abound there did grace much more abound.” In other words, you can't “out sin” God's grace. You can try. But God's grace is sufficient. And God's grace, by its very nature, is — how do I say it? Undefinable. Is that a word? We'll just say it's a word for tonight. It — it — it — how do you define grace? Well, we make our feeble attempts and say, well, grace is unmerited favor. That's true. That doesn't even scratch the surface of scratching the surface, of scratching the surface.

Well, I could have went on with that, but you understand what I'm saying? I mean, God's grace, God's love, “**...where did sin abound there did grace much more abound.**”

How do you even begin to wrap your mind around that? Have you ever had those moments where you've just been like, “God, You're just too good. You're — that's — You're too much. That's too much. Just...God, I — I don't deserve this.”

God's like, “I know.”

“God, You're so good to me. You're so gracious to me. You're so merciful to me.”

“I know.”

“Is it because there's something special about me?”

“Absolutely not. It has nothing to do with you. In fact, it's despite you.”

That kind of came off mean. But it's irrespective of who you are or what you do. In other words, God's grace, if it were predicated upon our goodness and our obedience, then it would cease to be grace. That's the whole point of grace. So we're going to see that at the

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end. I love and have been looking forward to because, spoiler alert, this chapter doesn't end like last week. Thank you, Jesus. It ends with the grace of God.

And I — if you hear nothing else that I'm going to say tonight, please hear this. God loves you. Never question it. Never doubt it. And never predicate it upon what you've done or not done, how good you've been or not been. It has nothing to do with that. It has nothing to do with who we are or what we do. It has everything to do with who God is and what He's done.

So as we go through this, I hope that all of us, myself included — I always want to include myself — would take to heart and take heed to the warnings. There's some pretty strong stuff in here tonight. For those of you that read ahead to stay ahead, you already know what's ahead. But I hope that we'll take heed specific to how we treat others, our treatment of others because that's what this chapter is all about. So let's pray and ask God to bless our time in His Word.

Father, thank You so, so, so much, Lord. I thank You for this prophet, Micah. I thank You for including his prophecies and chapters like the one we have before us tonight in the canon of Scripture because this could be written to us today. It's so applicable. So Lord, we're just going to ask You, as we always do, for the Holy Spirit because absent the Holy Spirit, we're not going to get it. We're going to miss it. It's just going to be another chapter and another book of the Bible.

And that's the last thing we want. In fact, that's why we're here, Lord, is we're here because we want to hear You speak into our lives in and through Your word because You see our hearts, You know what we brought to this Bible study with us tonight, the struggles, the trials, the difficulties, the hardships, maybe the interpersonal relationships that have not been so good as of late.

Maybe it's us and how we're treating them, and not so much about them and how they're treating us. So Lord as convicting, not condemning, as convicting as it might be, we just ask that the Holy Spirit would speak very clearly in that still, small voice. Thank You Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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All right. *Verse 1.* **“Woe [Right out of the chute] Woe to those who devise iniquity and work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it [Put it to practice] because it is in the power of their hand.”**

In other words because they can. Well, we got a problem with *verse 1* right at the beginning here that we got to deal with. You mean there are actually people — not you, of course, not me because we're spiritual, godly people. But there are people who lay in bed at night cunningly devising and crafting iniquity.

Now remember, iniquity is not synonymous with sin. We talked about this last week. Maybe it's worth repeating this week just to get our — get calibrated here. Iniquity is deliberate, willful disobedience, and sin. In other words, you know it's wrong, but you do it anyway. That's iniquity. Sin, well, that's different. We sin. We all sin. We're all going to sin. There will never be sinlessness this side of glory until we get our new bodies, which, by the way, I can hardly wait, especially as of late.

But we — when we sin, that doesn't make us a sinner. We sin because we were born sinners. And so we're going to sin. We're going to stumble. We're going to fall. That's different than iniquity. They weren't — this is not a fall or a sin or a — because we're all fallen. No, this was a deliberate act of planning what they were going to put into practice the next day, and they were coming up with very creative iniquity laying in bed at night. (Chuckling)

Are they sleeping? Are they excited about morning light, which, by the way, was actually in that culture, and that day was when everything started up, right at morning light? And we're told that at morning light, man. they just — they planned it at night in bed. And then they put it into practice. And then we're told why. And this is interesting to me. It's because they could. They had the power, the ability.

Perhaps they fancied themselves as not only having the power to do it, the ability to do it, but maybe they would get away with doing it because they could. You know there are certain things, even if I wanted to devise iniquity, which I never would because I'm the pastor, I could never do it. Why? Because it is not in my power to do. It was in theirs.

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Now we're going to get even more specific details about the iniquity they devised beginning in *verse 2*. Watch this now. **“They covet. [*Hang on to that word, covet*] They covet fields and take them by violence.”**

By force. Kind of like what King Ahab did to, oh, what was his name? Nadab? Naydab? Took his field by force when he wouldn't sell it because he couldn't sell it. It had to stay in the family. And so Jezebel says, that's okay. I'll take care of it. She has him falsely charged and put to death. And then he gets — takes it by violence. That's what they were doing.

“Also houses, [*They were seizing them*] so they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.”

They're stealing their inheritances. They're grabbing their land. They're taking over their properties. And it's all because of one word. Covet. Do you realize that that's the 10th commandment? Do you realize that of all the Ten Commandments, that's the only one that is inward? All the other nine are outward. It's a sin of the heart. You can't see it. All the other ones you can see. They're outward: adultery, stealing, murder, et al. They're all outward.

But not covetousness. That's in the heart. And it — the seed of covetousness is planted, and then it germinates and sprouts. And this is the fruit of it. Covetousness, again, is not synonymous with jealousy because see, jealousy is I wish I had what they have. I'm jealous of them for having it. Covetousness is different. Covetousness says I don't want them to have that. I want it. You see the difference?

Covetousness — and this is a gross understatement — is deadly and dangerous. And if it takes root, if it's allowed to take up residence in your life, in your heart, inwardly, man, you can just write the next chapter in that horror novel. Because that is going to be what brings about the violence, the land grabs, the stealing of inheritance, the taking of people's houses and by force, by violence.

Verse 3, the Lord's response. Wow. It couldn't come any sooner. **“Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, [*Look*] against this family I am devising disaster.”** How about that? Ha! You're laying in bed at night devising iniquity. You know what I'm doing? Because I don't

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sleep. The Lord neither sleeps or slumbers. I'm devising disaster because you're devising iniquity. Who do you think's going to come out on the end of that one?

Well, He goes on, *verse 3*. **"...from which you cannot remove your necks..."** In other words, you're not getting out of it. The disaster I've devised for you there's nothing you can do. And get this. **"...nor shall you walk haughtily, for this is an evil time."**

Can we just stop before we get to *verse 4* and use our God-given imaginations? Can you imagine? You could pick these guys out when you were in town, you know, like at Foodland and stuff. They just have a cocky, arrogant, hearty, proud, "look-down-their-nose," "I'm superior/you're inferior," "I'm better than you" look.

And by the way, when we're told of these six things that God hates, nay, seven, the seventh being an abomination, do you know what one of the ones on that list is? A haughty look. A haughty look. All you have to do is look at them and, ho!

Haughtiness: different than pride. Again, boy, not synonymous with pride. And we get it backwards. We say pride comes before the fall. That's not what the proverbs say. The proverbs say that a haughty spirit comes before a fall and pride comes before destruction. So haughtiness is again more outward because you can see it.

And pride is, in a way, more inward because we can't see the heart. We see the outward appearance. Only God sees the heart. And if our hearts are full of pride, it will only be displayed or manifested with haughtiness and arrogance, a haughty spirit.

And he goes on to say at the end of *verse 3*, **"...for this is an evil time. In that day [Verse 4] one shall take up a proverb against you [They're going to write songs about you] [And this is interesting] [In the Hebrew, it translates better] and lament with a bitter lamentation..."**

In other words, they're going to lament with a lamenting lamentation That's not a redundant redundancy. It's an emphasis on the bitterness of their mourning. That's what lamenting means, to mourn.

"...saying: 'We are utterly destroyed! He has changed the heritage of my people, how He has removed it from me! To a turncoat He has divided our fields.'" [That's what they were doing to the people] Therefore [This is God's response again] [Whenever you see the

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“therefore,” the “therefore” is there for a reason] **Therefore you will have no one to determine boundaries by lot in the assembly of the Lord.”**

What does that mean? That means that don't bother with the original borders because you're not going to have the land that you've stolen. And even when you come back, you won't know. Don't even bother.

That's how they would determine the boundaries, by casting the lot. Because see, that was God's land that He gave as a gift to His people. So if you really think about it — check this out. They weren't just stealing from the people. Actually, God had the title deed to it. They were stealing from God. (Chuckling) Don't do that.

Now, *verse 6*; I have to spend maybe a little bit of time on this. I hope you don't mind. Maybe you'll see why here in a moment. **“Do not prattle...”**

Now, that is obviously a word that we don't use in our vocabulary. It basically carries with it the idea of do not babble on. Do not keep going on, talking, talking talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, prattling, babbling.

“Do not prattle,” you say [*These devising iniquity people*] **you say to those who prophesy.** [*You mean like Micah? Yeah*] **So** [*You know what?*] **they shall not prophesy to you. They shall not return insult for insult.”**

Okay, before we get to *verse 7*, bear with me. Let me just kind of — just hang in there with me, okay? Here's what they're saying, and it's reminiscent of what we saw with Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, all of the above. Stop prophesying doom and gloom. We don't want to hear it. Stop going on and on and on and on. So the Lord says, okay. That's fine.

Now we're about to see what the Lord's going to do. It's kind of a tit for tat. It's a — oh, what's the word I'm looking for? A retribution. It's a proportionate retribution. (Struggling to find the words) I think this is going to come up next week, but I kind of maybe want to prime the pump this week.

And I know we've maybe talked about it prior, but the more true prophets and prophecies that are declared, the more false prophets there will be to counteract it. And this is, in a way, it comports with what Paul wrote to Timothy about the last days. They won't want to

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hear it. They don't want to hear what you're saying. They won't put up with it. Stop prattling. Stop prophesying. Stop talking. You're not saying what our ears are itching to hear. So you know what we're going to do? We're gonna find somebody who will.

And there's no shortage, by the way, of those who will. In fact, it's almost a gauge. I think about the Prophecy Updates and the intensity, the growing intensity, better said in recent weeks. This Sunday is no exception. The more I prattle, go on and on and on prophesying, oh, the more there are who will say stop. Do not do that. We don't want to hear that.

We want to hear — and we're going to see this in a moment — something that makes us feel good. We want to feel good. When we leave church, we want to feel good. You know, sometimes feeling bad can be good. And sometimes feeling good can be bad. I'm not advocating for, you know, I want you all to leave church tonight, just, you know, flogging yourself and whipping yourself and, you know, beating on yourself. No. Grace; remember?

But I think about what Jesus said. **“Apart from Me, you can do no good thing.”** I think about what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans. And it's the way he writes it. At first read, you would almost get the impression that it's noble. He says, **“I know that within me [That is within my flesh] there dwelleth no good thing.”** I

t's like, wow, man, that's, you know, profound, Paul. Well, the New Living Translation basically gets it. It goes more like this. Here's what Paul is saying. I am a dirty, rotten, stinking sinner through and through. There's nothing good in me. And we talked about this last week or Sunday, I think it was, about Jeremiah. The heart is desperately wicked. Actually, it was last week in Micah, incurable.

Remember what he said, *Chapter 1*? Your condition, speaking of Northern Israel, is incurable, terminal. And that kingdom would come to an end, never to return again. When Israel returns to the land, it's not Northern and Southern Israel, Northern Tribes, and Southern Judah. That Northern Kingdom is gone forever.

But I just — it's almost become a litmus test. You know that you're doing something right when you arouse the ire of the enemy. And conversely, you know that you probably are no threat to him if you're not faced with opposition. Don't — you know resistance, opposition?

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Let me use an airplane illustration, which I know Arabs should never use Arab illustrations. You know those two wings on that plane? What keeps that plane in the air? Adversity, resistance, opposition. Without it, it ain't going to fly. Can I say it like that? I just did.

I think we do err greatly when we misinterpret opposition and adversity. We misinterpret the circumstances in our lives, failures, disappointments as wow, I must not be in the will of God. You could be right smack in the middle of the worst possible situation in your life, and still be right smack in the middle of God's will for your life. That's not how you measure it.

I mean, if everything was always smooth sailing — is that not what they said to Isaiah? Prophecy to us only smooth things. We don't want hear — this is — this is hard. You're really hitting us hard, man. Stop prattling. Stop babbling. Start telling us what we want to hear, that we're good people.

You know what they call — I know I mention this often. I hope you don't tire of me saying it, but it's so true. And it's such a great picture. You know what they call sunny days, every day, all day, no storms in life, no opposition, no adversity? It's just all blue sky and fun in the sun. They call it a desert. Barren desert. Nothing grows. You know when we grow? It's when the storms hit.

I know I've shared this. It's been a while, so let me have it. When we first moved here, we have a plumeria tree in our front yard. We live Kailua. We moved in the winter, and I'm looking at this thing. I'm thinking that it's dead. Have you seen a plumeria tree in the winter? This is all new to me. I didn't see my first palm tree until our honeymoon. Pine tree: All over the place. Palm tree: What's this? A palm tree. I'd never seen one. My family never took vacations. I'd never seen the ocean until our honeymoon. It was 36 — I'm not looking for pity here. I'm just trying to make a point here, okay?

So you know, I'm looking at this plumeria tree, and I'm thinking, man it's dead. And my Kailua girl wife comes up to me and says, "It's not dead. I said, "Honey, look at that thing. I mean, it's brown, and the branches are brittle." And she said, "No, you'll see." And I said, "It looks dead to me. I think we should cut it down." Problem is it's right on the property line. We hadn't met the neighbors yet. I don't think that would fly either. So that's maybe off the table, but....

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So January comes, February comes, March comes. Wait a minute. There's some green leaves! What? See where I come from, we don't have flowers on trees. We have lilac, but they're bushes. And then she said, "You just wait and see because there are going to be flowers on that tree." I go, "Okay."

So I waited; next thing I know, we got to trim the thing. It's just so full of beautiful leaves. By the way, the sap, some people are allergic to it. We found that out with our oldest son the hard way. And they're beautiful. And they make lei out of them. And I was just flabbergasted.

What's your point, Pastor? My point is this. During the winter, when it looks dead, and there's — the storms are hitting. How is that tree still alive? Because those storms make the roots get stronger and go deeper. And that's what God does in our lives when He allows the storms into our lives. Isn't it true that we learn more in adversity than we do in prosperity? In fact, prosperity can be just the opposite.

I have a book in my library titled, 'The Agony of Affluence.' One need look no further than to Solomon. Man, that messed him up, all that wealth. Not many people can handle that. And God knows where that line is. He's not gonna — He can't tempt us to evil. But how do I deepen and strengthen my relationship with the Lord? Through storms.

Isn't that what Paul said in *1 Corinthians 10:13*? We very loosely paraphrase it and just very cliché say, "God won't give you more than you can handle." I mean, thank you. Easy for you to say. Well, that comes from *1 Corinthians 10:13*, which basically goes like this. God has not tried you or tested you or tempted you — same word in the original — above that which you are able to bear up under. But through it, [*through it*] He will provide a way of escape so that you can bear up under it.

Paul to the — no, pardon me — James — he's worse, way worse when it comes to this. He's the guy that says, "**Consider it pure joy when you encounter various trials.**" Consider it pure joy? Yeah because — and don't stop there, by the way. Knowing [*is the key word*] what God is doing and where God is going in and through that trial. You can consider it pure joy because of what it's producing in your life. What's it producing? The thing you prayed for; you remember?

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Be careful what you pray for. “Lord, I need endurance.”

“Oh, no, he didn't.”

“Oh, yes, he did.”

“Lord, I need patience and I need it now.” Right?

“Lord, I need endurance. Lord, I need strength.”

“Well., okay. Are you sure? Because the way you're going to get the endurance, the perseverance, the strength, the patience, all the things you're asking Me for, is not a prescription. Oh, how I wish it were. It's a trial. I'm going to answer your prayer.”

I remember — I've shared this before too. Let me have this one too. When I was — when my boys were little, I prayed, “God, make me a man of prayer.” And then they became teenagers. And I became a man of prayer.

God's going to answer your prayer in a way that you may not understand because His ways are not our ways. And His ways are too high for our understanding. And by the way, they're always infinitely better. How many of you can think back to a trial, and while you would never in a million years want to go through it again, you would never in a million years trade what God did in you in that trial that you would never in a million years want to go through again, as painful as it was, the work that He did in you that He could not have otherwise done, had it not been for that opposition? It makes you stronger. It strengthens your resolve.

I'm getting all of this out of *verse 6* because I'm getting this off of my chest using *verse 6*. *Verse 6* reads like my inbox. It reads like a lot of emails. And so being the humble, compliant, shy, bashful guy that I am, I'm like, you know, it's just like I'm sorry. No, I go to the other extreme.

And I got to — I have my assistant pastors check me and hold me accountable, and I'm always, you know, wanting to be careful not to go to the other extreme. Because you know you've heard that term “double down.” Oh, yeah? You want me to stop talking about this? Stop prattling on? Well, all right, then; I'm gonna...

You wait and see this upcoming Update, baby.

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That's not — I've not done that. I just want you to know that I just — not that I'm above that. I'm very capable of that. Okay, we're done with *verse 6*. We're good. Are you okay still with...? All right. We're getting there.

Verse 7, **“You who are named the house of Jacob: [God of still responding to them] “Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted?”** Are you kidding me? Is the hand of the Lord so short it can't save? And then He asks another rhetorical question. **“Are these His doings?”** [*And I love this, what He says next at the end of verse 7*] **“Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly?”**

Ahh! Hey, if you're not walking uprightly, you want nothing to do with God's prophecies, God's word, God's nothing. But if you're walking uprightly not sinlessly, no such thing, but you're walking uprightly in integrity, in purity, in righteousness, obedience, pleasing to God, the word of God is gold. You love the word of God, and you love the God of the word.

But let's flip it around. If you don't, then you don't. You don't want nothing to do. It's been said, so apropos, “Sin will keep you from the Bible, and the Bible will keep you from sin.” David said in *Psalms 119*, **“Thy word have I hid in my heart, Lord, that I might not sin against You.”** His word is a protective shield.

Here's an example. If I'm exceeding the speed limit, I don't want to see a police officer. If I'm not exceeding the speed limit, obeying the speed limit, being a good, upstanding citizen, which I am, I see a police officer, and actually, I'm kind of, I feel better, I feel safer that there's a police there for the other people.

In other words, you don't — see — there's a — there's a phrase that you don't hear anymore. “God fearing.” And to fear God is to hate evil. And to fear God is the beginning of wisdom. And the fear of God is certainly, yes, a reverence for God, an awe of God. But I see it more like the fear of the Lord being fearing anything that would grieve the heart of the Lord. I love my wife, and I don't want to do anything to hurt her or grieve her. I love the Lord and I fear the Lord, and I fear doing anything that would grieve the heart of this God whom I love.

So that's why the Bible, by the way, which is in ample supply these days, if you haven't noticed, I think on your devices you have, what, 125,000 different versions. How about on

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your shelves collecting dust, don't you have about another 225-or-so-thousand? I'm not trying to beat up on us because I'm beating up on myself too. But the word of God is a friend to the one who is walking uprightly. But it's an enemy to the one who isn't.

Verse 8, "Lately My people..." I'm surprised He still says, "My people." I would have said, "Those people." But He says, "...**My people have risen up as an enemy.**" Stay with me. We read on. "**You pull off the robe with the garment from those who trust you, [That was the collateral] as they passed by, like men returned from war.**" These were believed to be, by some, refugees from Northern Israel when the Assyrians came. And *verse 9* is even unthinkable. "**The women of My people you cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children You have taken away My glory forever.**"

This, "**My glory forever**" carries, in the original, the idea of "and you have no shame." The women: These are widows, and the children are the fatherless. And when He says in *verse 8*, you have "**...risen up as an enemy,**" what He's basically saying is what Jesus echoes, is that when you do this to the least of these, My brethren, you're doing this for Me. This is the inverse of that. When you do this to My people, it's like you're doing this to Me. You're doing this to these women who are seeking refuge — they're refugees — — these children?

As they pass by, they're — by the way, these tunics — the outward — they have the outward and the inward. They weren't cheap, you know. They were just — you're walking by. Imagine this. I mean, just get this picture in your mind. Here, they're returning as refugees from the war. And you walk by, and these guys were just ripping their expensive tunics right off, right off them as they're walking. Isn't that like purse snatching? And you — you're doing that to Me. You have postured yourself as My enemy by doing that. You do that to them. That's doing that to Me.

Verse 10, "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest."

In other words, don't get too comfortable. Don't rest in, trust in, depend on. Why? "Because it is defiled..." You know what they were doing? They were making a lot of money off the backs of the people. They were ripping them off. They were literally taking the shirt off their backs. They were stealing from them, taking advantage of them, especially the vulnerable ones. And there's nothing wrong with having wealth. But it's not that they had

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the wealth. It's how they got the wealth. You devised iniquity. You planned this. And you carried it out.

And “...it is defiled, it shall destroy, yes, with utter destruction.” There's a proverb — I'm trying to think. I'll probably really butcher it. I hope I don't. It goes something like this. That wealth gotten quickly will diminish quickly. This is why it is, by the way, and I won't go into the whole lottery thing. But this is why the worst thing, by their own admission, lottery winners say the worst thing that ever happened in my life was winning the lottery. It destroyed my life. How you got it has defiled you, and it's going to destroy you with an utter destruction.

Verse 11. “If a man should walk in a false spirit and speak a lie, saying, ‘I will prophesy to you of wine and drink,’ even he would be the prattler of this people.” Now you're going to have to let me because we're going to turn a corner beginning in *verse 12* for the last two verses, and then we'll be done.

But let me just kind of expound on *verse 11* because this is happening today. This could be written of the church, especially in America today. Now I'm going to — just hear me out. You got a guy coming in with a false spirit. He's a false teacher, he's a false prophet, and he's speaking lies. This is not true. And he's prophesying. What are his Prophecy Updates about? Oh, party on. Wine and drink, plenty for all. And they just keep going on. You can have that prattler if you don't want my prattler.

Go ahead. You know God will just, at some point, just give you over. He's not going to ever give up on you. But sometimes the only way we learn is the hard way, not the easy way. I got the scars to prove it, by the way. So it's kind of like Paul when this guy is having sex with his stepmom and they're like, oh, we're so loving. And Paul says, no, that's not love. Kick him out of the church. Give him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. Whoa. Maybe he'll come to his senses. And when he does, restore him.

And he does! It works. And then *2 Corinthians*, he comes back. He repents, and they won't restore him. They go to the other extreme. This is a church that I probably would — first of all, I wouldn't be the pastor of it — but I don't think I would ever even want to attend it. They go the opposite extreme. Then Paul has to write and say no, forgive him, restore him.

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He repented. Yeah, but you told us the last time to give him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. No. He repented.

That was the whole — that's love, by the way, if you care about him. And that's where we get, as you know, the, what we affectionately refer to as the love chapter. You think that's what love is? That is not what love is. This is what love is. Love is *1 Corinthians 13*.

So you've got these false teachers that are prophesying the opposite of what Micah is prophesying. This is Jeremiah, this is Isaiah, this is Ezekiel. This is all of the prophets of God, were again, the more they prophesied, the more false prophets arise to counter with lies.

And again, it's — I keep referring to Paul's letter to Timothy about this is what's going to mark the last days. We're living this. We're living *verse 11*. You don't have to go very far to find a pastor telling you, hey! Ha! I don't watch them, so I can't do an impression of them, so you're just going to have to take that one. That's the best I got. But I mean, it's just a message of — no mention of man, have you — well, I'm not going to...

Have you noticed how 2025 is starting? That's what the Prophecy Update's going to be about. I mean, I had to walk away today from this document that I'm going to quote from Sunday because it's like, you know, they don't want to hear it. They want to hear people say, "Hey, we got plenty wine over here."

And then they're going to come over to my church and hear me say, "We're all — this is it! This is the end! Doom and gloom!"

"No. Speak to us only smooth things, not hard things. Why are you so doom and gloom, Micah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, JD?" (Chuckle)

[Laughter]

I have to confess, and then we'll finish it up, just...

and thank you, by the way. But I have to confess that of all the things that I struggle with as a pastor, *verse 11* is probably at the top of the list. I just, you know, I live *Jeremiah 20*. You know, I just — even if I wanted to, there's a fire that I cannot contain. You know when God calls you, God ruins you. And despite the opposition, and you know it's an unpopular message, and it certainly doesn't help when you've got the other guy down the street or on

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the other YouTube channel saying, lying, “There's going to be a great revival, a great awakening.”

That's New Age. The Great Awakening is a great delusion. “We're going to take control of the seven public spheres of influence, the Seven Mountain Mandate, the New Apostolic Reformation.” It's false! It's false! But go ahead, prattle on. Have them sip your wine. Got plenty wine. Happy, happy, happy, happy hour. Happy hour church.

Listen, I would love nothing more than to be able to tell you, “Hey, happy days are here again.” But they're not because that's a lie. The worst period in human history is about to commence. We are on the cusp of the 7-year Tribulation, closer than any of us could possibly imagine.

It's hard to compete, though. And that's what Paul was saying to Timothy because what he was basically saying to Timothy is don't be discouraged because what's going to happen is you're going to lose a lot of numbers. Because it's all about the numbers. They're going to flock in great numbers to teachers, liars, false teachers who will tell them, “Everything's going to be okay. Just have a glass of wine.” What their ears are itching to hear. I — my — I want to hear that, but not if it's not true. Don't tell me that if it's not true. Because I can be duped into believing a lie just like the next guy. Well, I'm done venting.

Verse 12. I love this. This is God's grace. **“I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob [That's Israel], I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of their pasture. They shall make a loud noise because of so many people.”**

In other words, I'm going to bring you back to the land. This is actually a triple prophecy. Here's how I get there. After the Babylonian captivity, they would return to the land. He would gather them back. That was the first time. The second time happened in the last century, May 14th, 1948.

And now we're going to read the third part of it where, *verse 13*, the last verse of the chapter we're told, **“The one who breaks open [Some of your translations, render it the breaker] [This is Jesus] will come up before them; they will break out, pass through the**

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gate, [This was a very shepherd-like language] and go out by it. Their king will pass before them, with the Lord at their head."

That is the Millennium when Jesus Christ rules and reigns. You know that's the whole purpose of the 7-year Tribulation is for the salvation of the Jewish nation. And they're going to flee to Petra, but He's going to bring them back.

And during the Millennium, I personally believe — I'm not dogmatic about it — that King David is going to rule on the throne. We're going to get to meet this guy, man. I can't wait. Man, those Psalms, David, they sustained me through some very painful times. What you went through with the whole Saul deal — is Saul here, by the way? I don't know.

Man, he's going to sit on the throne, and he will rule Jerusalem. But Jesus Christ will rule and reign on the earth in its pre-fallen state before sin entered the world. Try to wrap your mind around that. The Garden of Eden. I'm out of time. Cliffhanger. Maybe at some point we can talk more about the Millennium.

But you know, we're so excited about the rapture, rightfully so. And we're so excited about eternity future. But do you realize that for a thousand years — it's going to fly by, by the way — we still have a thousand years where we're going to rule and reign with Christ by His side as His bride for a thousand years. That's like the — that's like the appetizer before. That's just to whet your appetite for a thousand years. And then we have eternity future, the new heavens, and the new earth. Woah!

And that's what *verse 13* is saying. Again, I'm going to end the way I began. And we're done, and I thank you for your patience. We can never, ever, ever out sin the grace of God. They didn't deserve this after what they did. Yet God, but God brought them back in His grace, not because of them, but despite them because of who and how He is.

Listen, whatever it is you brought to this Bible study tonight, leave it where it belongs, at the foot of the cross. And don't sneak back in — we have security cameras — try to take it back, start worrying about it, being condemned by it, stress over it, become full of fear because of it. No. It's the grace of God. It's all of grace. It's all of grace. God loves you so much. God loves you so much. He's a restoring God. He's a forgiving God.

Okay, Kapon, come on up. Stand up. We'll pray and close in song.

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Father, I — wow, what a chapter. Very interesting and convicting as well because this is in the heart of every one of us. This is in the heart of man. It is incurably wicked, and we don't even know it. Lord, I pray that as we go our separate ways tonight, that we'll take with us just an introspective, heart searching, Holy Spirit understanding of the seriousness with which you take how we treat people. You don't just take it seriously. You take it personally.

And so Lord, if we've wronged, not have been wronged, but have we wronged someone, then Lord, would You — would You, just as You're always so gentle in doing, will You put Your finger on it, and then by the power of the Holy Spirit, enable us to make that right, if we've wronged somebody, to wrong the right? If we've mistreated somebody to restore that relationship, to reconcile that relationship? Lord, thank You for the lesson that's here that we can take home with us. In Jesus' name, Amen.