

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part XXI: Micah - Taking Leadership's Great Influence Seriously"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) After last Sunday's message on God's love and capacity to judge people in hell, an article from the previous Saturday's, Feb. 3rd Hartford Courant was left on my desk. It was entitled, "Cooling the Fires of Hell", and reports that the Church of England has some theologians on a doctrinal commission **denying** an eternal hell! They are quoted as saying: "Annihilation might be a truer picture of damnation than any of the traditional images of the hell of eternal torment." Why the change in doctrine? The commission states that "Christians have professed appalling theologies which made God into a sadistic monster and left searing psychological scars on many ... the imagery of hell fire and eternal torment . . . often sadistically expressed, has been used to frighten men and women into believing ... "

Well, why is this change in theology occurring in the Church of England when its 1611 King James BIBLE teaches in Revelation 20:15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"? WHO is responsible for the mix-up, and WHY? What can be done about it?!

(2) Thomas Sowell, a **black** man and syndicated columnist, wrote an opinion in the June 24, 1994 Torrington Register-Citizen paper decrying as a "bogeyman" story an errant idea floating around the American black community. He knocked the idea existing in black ghetto schools "that trying to learn is 'acting white,' so that many students take pride in doing badly and even retaliate on their fellow black students who do well. It is considered to be 'acting white' to learn trigonometry, for example -- even though trigonometry originated in Egypt, involves numbers that originated in India, and is printed on paper in books, both of which originated in China. Were whites 'acting black' when they took advantage of the opportunity to learn trigonometry and put it to a thousand uses in advancing themselves?"

Well, why is this errant thinking circulating through black ghettos and hindering the real advancement of blacks in America?! WHO is responsible for the mix-up? WHY?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "When moral and ethical decline OR advance comes to an institution (government, church, business, family, marriage) who is most responsible for it?! Why, and what's the answer?"

- I. **Micah ministered in Judea just before and when the Northern Kingdom, Israel fell to the Assyrians for failing in her mission:**
 - A. Though God created the world and set man up as His deputy, sin deposed him, so Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
 - B. The Lord renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gn. 6:1-9:7.
 - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy opposing God's rule of the earth, Gn. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 12:1-3.
 - D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to check this sin, Gn. 12:1-3
 - E. Yet, after many challenges en route, that nation, Israel failed to curb Nimrodian error, itself becoming so seduced by it that judgment fell:
 1. Because of Solomon's apostasy, God divided Israel's kingdom, giving most of the tribes to his servant, Jeroboam, 1 Kings 11:1-13.
 2. But Jeroboam started an idol worship to keep people from turning to Solomon's side. That led later kings to sin, so God sent Jeroboam's nation into Assyrian captivity, 1 K. 12:25-2 K. 17:41!
- II. **God had Micah name those most responsible for this tragedy -- the leaders (G. Campbell Morgan, Voices of 12 Heb. Prophets, p. 61):**
 - A. After calling for witnesses of Israel's violation of the Mosaic Covenant in preparation for judgment, God fingered **Samaria, capital of the Northern Kingdom, Israel and Jerusalem, capital of the Southern Kingdom, Judah as kingpins** of the apostasy involved, Micah 1:1-5.
 - B. The **sins** caused by people in these **capitals** of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms are listed through Micah's prophecy as follows:
 1. They influenced Israel to delve into immoral idolatry, Micah 1:6-7.
 2. They influenced the poor people to be financially defrauded in legal maneuvers in their court systems, Micah 2:1-5.
 3. The godly had been swept from the land by this legal abuse so that only the vile were in power, and **they** were bent on destructively suing others in court to their selfish advantage, Micah 7:2.
 4. Distrust thus ran rampant in the social structure so that it was no longer safe to trust even those of one's own **family**, Micah 7:5-6.
 - C. These **kingpin capitals** were run by various **LEADERS**, so God indicted these **LEADERS** for causing national apostasy to flourish:

1. Because **WEALTHY OVERSEERS** abused the poor in court to add to their riches, God would plan disaster for **them**, Micah 2:1-5.
 2. Because **FALSE PROPHETS** distorted truth to exploit hearers for gain **resulting in** their hearers going into judgment for believing **lies**, the **prophets** would be publicly shamed & slain, 2:6-11; 3:5-7.
- D. In legal format, **God** made **His** legal case against these sinners, 6:1-7:
1. Micah relayed His case of judgment against the sinful in the nation:
 - a. God asked Israel to plead its cause of escaping judgment, 6:1.
 - b. God charged them with failing to live up to their obligations to Him **though He had initially given them GOOD LEADERS, and protected them from EVIL OVERSEERS**, Micah 6:2-5.
 2. Israel's response was to ask what she could do to appease God by way of sacrifice to **manipulate** Him to **relent** from **judgment**, 6:6.
 3. God's reply through Micah was that He desired **obedience** in **humility** to His Word **above** their **sacrifices**, Micah 6:7-8!

III. Micah adds to the "thread of redemption", showing God's final MESSIANIC solution to irresponsible, sinful human leadership:

- A. The lowly Micah, afflicted by his evil national leaders, looked for **GOD'S personal** intervention in **his** behalf, Micah 7:7.
- B. He also predicted **Israel's** purging to gain her Messianic Kingdom blessings, 7:8-13. Then Israel and Judah would be reunited, **resolving** her **leadership** failure that had **divided** them, 5:3 (cf. "I,E,1-2" above)
- C. Finally, Micah foretold the **end** to **all** leadership failures by the coming of **Messiah** from **BETHLEHEM** (5:2) to establish **world** blessing in a **Messianic** reign, 4:1-5:15! As this **leader** comes from **eternity**, **He is God INCARNATE**, and **thus above failure** like a **mortal, sinful** leader, being **God's Solution** for **world** leadership failure, Micah 5:2!

Application: *If living in any institution's spiritual decline, (1) believe on Christ for salvation from sin, Jn. 3:16. (2) Then, (a) confess any sins we do (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) rely on the Spirit for behavior control (Ga. 5:16-23) to (c) obey Scripture (1 Jn. 2:1-6). (3) Then, (a) as a subordinate, hope in and obey Christ when the overseer is errant, Mic. 7:7. (b) As an overseer in a marriage, family, church, business or government role, assume its oversight as being responsible to God for the institution's spiritual welfare and do Christ's will in that leading role so that He can bless the institution through us!*

Lesson: *(1) It is the LEADERSHIP in the marriage, family, business, church or nation that is most responsible for its spiritual vitality, (2) and since mortal leaders are sinners, they must commune with the sinless God Incarnate Messiah for there to be hope for their respective institutions!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Trans World Radio's current periodical, TWRadio reports that the continent of Africa is reeling from war and bloodshed so much that "In nations such as Angola and Mozambique, where millions have been afflicted by war, many young people find themselves displaced and . . . Many of them don't even know **where** they **came** from. They are looking for peace and security, but security is nowhere to be found." (Ibid., p. 6)

But the power of the Gospel to give direction and character to such a vacuum for solid national leadership was reported in this testimony in that same article: "One fellow in Angola, who didn't have enough money to buy food, decided to steal from a neighbor whom he knew to be a Christian. He said he thought it was better to steal from Christians because they don't seem to complain.

One night he went to his neighbor's house and entered through a window. He stole a rather large, portable radio. When he got home, he decided that instead of trying to sell it right away, he would listen to it . . . On the twelfth day (of listening to various stations), he tuned in to Trans World Radio and a minister was speaking on Galatians 6:7, which says: 'Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.' The Lord used that verse to bring him under conviction. This man began to weep uncontrollably. He said he cried so much after hearing this message that he decided to return the radio to its owner. **So that night, he entered the house the same way he did the first time -- through the window -- and put the radio BACK.** Today, he is a **new person in Christ** and a member of a local church, faithfully serving the Lord."

The entrance of the spoken Word of God transformed a thief in the nation of Angola, Africa which is wallowing in a dearth of solid, edifying national leadership. We need the presentation of the Word of God to those in troubled marriages, families, businesses, churches, and governmental institutions in our own land for the similar transformation!