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God Has A Case Against Israel

I want to start tonight by making a few more comments with respect to Micah 5:7-15. We said Israel is going to become the greatest superpower in the world. It's at that time, in the future kingdom, the kingdom of God when it comes upon the earth that Israel will be the head and the Gentiles will be the tail. So a major power shift begins to occur when Israel receives Jesus as their Messiah at the midpoint of the 70th week of Daniel. It's at that time in heaven that Jesus Christ is crowned the King of kings and Lord of lords. But he's not going to take David's throne until the end of the 70th week of Daniel. And so it's at that point that the times of the Gentiles have run their course and then it will be the times of Israel.

A lot of theologians don't like that. They say that makes the church an afterthought. So here's where people get bent over the place Israel has in the plan of God. They don't like that the end of history is a return to Israel at center stage. That, in their minds, means that the church is off of center stage. That's not it at all - but simply that God has a different program for Israel than for the church. God made certain promises to the nation Israel in verbal contracts and God is going to fulfill these verbal contracts to the T. And God has made certain promises to the church in the New Testament epistles and God is going to fulfill his word to the T to the church. There's no contradiction between these two programs. God has one single plan for history with multiple programs. It's not just Israel and the church. It's also the Angels. God has a program for the angelic hosts. God has a program for the pre-Israelite people. What is God's program for people who lived before the flood? What is God's program for the people who live in the millennial kingdom? There will be whole series of programs that God is simultaneously working as one great plan. And all these programs are like threads being weaved together in a brilliant tapestry. God is not doing one thing, he's never

doing just one thing, and he's usually accomplishing a whole complex of things that work together. So it's not a problem at all to say that God has certain promises he made to Israel and he's going to fulfill those promises to the believing remnant of the future which has merged to be the entire living nation at that time. And that presently God has a program for the church and has made certain promises to the church and he's going to fulfill those promises to the church. In the end when you come to the new heaven and new earth you see the 12 foundation stones which represent the 12 tribes of Israel and you see the 12 gates to the city which represents the apostolic founders of the church. Again you still see this distinction between Israel and the church even in the new Jerusalem. Where there would be a problem is that if God said no I'm not going to fulfill the promises made to Israel in the covenants and I'm not going therefore restore her kingdom in the latter days such that she becomes the head of all nations. That'll be a problem because now we have no basis upon which to say that God will fulfill his promises made to the church. If he breaks his promises with Israel he will break his promises to the church. See that's the real problem with the placement theology. Replacement theology is the idea that the church has replaced Israel in God's covenant program. And the church is the one that is going to receive all the blessings made to Israel. And so the land, the physical real estate is transformed into a spiritual land called heaven. And it's not Israel that's the channel of worldwide blessing; Israel is transformed spiritually into the church. Replacement theologians love to take all the blessings for Israel and transform them into spiritual fulfillment of the church. The thing they never did is take the cursings that were for Israel and transform them into spiritual cursings for the church. We take all the blessing but we want none of the cursing. So it simply follows from the covenant structure, but God made certain covenantal promises to Israel and God is faithful, God has a certain character and that character is immutable, so he's not going to compromise his character. If he said he will do something he will do it. And that means that Israel will in the future be the head of all nations.

And the point we made last time was that when she becomes the head, when the times of Israel resume in the kingdom then all blessing will come through Israel. She will be the channel of worldwide blessing. There will be no blessing apart from Israel. In this time the nations that are in good foreign relations with Israel will have blessing channeled to them. But the nations that are in bad foreign relations with Israel will have cursing channel to

them through the nation Israel because remember, the promise is “ I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you.” It’s a double-sided promise. It’s not just blessing it’s also cursing for the one who curses. And the new point we want to bring in here is what is the nature of the original populations of these nations that enter into the kingdom? In other words, when the kingdom begins what will be the nature of the people who enter that King? They’ll be believing. All people on Earth at the beginning of the kingdom will be believers. That means there will be no unbelieving nations that go into the kingdom. Because all unbelievers are wiped off the face of the earth before the kingdom begins. So the kingdom is going to begin with the remnant of Israel which has merged into the entire nation. But every other nation on the earth will also be composed exclusively of believers. And so, as far as the mortal population of the kingdom is concerned, at its initiation all the people on the entire planet will be believers. And these populations will of course be able to reproduce and produce new offspring in the kingdom. And it's these offspring that will have to decide whether they can work up enough righteousness to please God their own flesh or whether they fail to produce a righteousness that would turn to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who died for their sins and rose again. So you are going to have tares growing up amongst the wheat, so to speak. Starting off all believers, mortal men who believe, but their offspring will have the choice to believe or reject. So you have believers and initially they give rise to a group of believers and unbelievers. That's how you can get situations described in verse 8-9 and 15. We'll just sample using verse 15; how can you get the situation of verse 15? You don't have stiff rebellion in the kingdom. "And I will execute vengeance and anger and wrath On the nations which have not obeyed." Where do all these rebellious nations come from? Obviously they grow out of obedient nations which are in the kingdom. And they had a choice to accept or reject Christ. And they rejected. By this time there are whole nations that are in rebellion. And it's ironic because every one of these nations began as a quote "Christian" nation, and yet they will turn totally non-Christian. And that should teach you a lesson about the depravity of man's heart. You can start off a world that is completely and totally full of believers and in a few generations the whole thing can totally go to pot. When did this happen before? This isn't new. This is a pattern of history. What happened in the world after the Flood? Here's Noah and his family. Anyone else survive the Flood besides that family? So we have the entire human population believing. What happened? In a few generations the whole thing went to pot. Why did it

go to pot? Because our hearts are desperately wicked. We really have very poor view of our hearts. They're not pretty little places. We'd like to think they are. But they're very dark, wicked places. And that goes for all of us. Don't deceive yourself and think that your heart can produce some pretty good stuff. Your heart can no more produce good left to itself than the moon can produce light left to itself. Until the light of the sun shines on the moon it's just a dark ball of dust. And until the light of God shines on our hearts it is just a dark wicked place.

Now let's back up to Micah 1 to introduce chapter 6. These seven chapters were not revealed to Micah in the order that we are studying them. Micah received these revelations across a period of 50 years and the sequence, as we have it, is not necessarily the sequence in which he received the revelations. It was arranged by the prophets down at the school of the prophets. Samuel had begun a school of the prophets, like a guild where you have people of one trade or craft join together, and one of the functions of the prophet's guild was to take the incoming claims of revelation and check them for consistency with prior revelation - is this really the word of God or is this person a conjurer. Another function was to organize the true revelation into a book form. And a third function was to make certain updates to the text if a word went out of use they might put a note in there explaining what the word meant, that kind of thing. They did it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, of course. And when Micah's revelation came in they arranged it not sequentially but cyclically, into three cycles of cursing – blessing. Each cycle is marked in the Hebrew text by the Hebrew *shema*, meaning “to hear.” It sets off or marks a cursing – blessing cycle. So, we read in Micah 1:2, cycle one, “**Hear**, O peoples, all of you; Listen, O earth and all it contains,” that introduces the first cycle in Micah 1-2. Then if you turn to Micah 3 we see the use of *shema* again to introduce the second cursing – blessing cycle. "And I said, **Hear** now, heads of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel. Is it not for you to know justice?" And he continues this cycle through Micah, 3, 4 and 5. Now we come to the final cursing – blessing cycle which begins in Micah 6:1 with the same introductory *shema*. **Hear now what the LORD is saying** and this will take us through the final chapters, Micah 6 and 7. So that's your three-fold structure given by the prophetic guild: the range Micah's prophecies.

As we said, Micah was written in the period of the Kingdoms in Decline and in this period the kingdoms are decaying spiritually. In that situation you have God who is the ruler of the house of Israel and he's not too happy with the way things are going in His house. God chose Israel to be His son and now they're in His family and His house and He is not going to just let them do whatever they want, live like the world and rebel against His authority. All this has parallels for us in the NT Church. God insists that we learn loyalty to Him. And so there are certain procedures God uses to nudge us along. One of those procedures that God uses is discipline. God has a big paddle and He doesn't just wave it around to threaten you. He swings it at the behind. And in OT Israel He'd clobber you with a foreign army and you'd suffer all the death, famine, disease and misery that comes with military defeat. What was His paddle on your behind? And the whole reason He did that was so you'd be convicted of your sin. If that word convict is too religious for you just substitute the word "convince". "Convince" is just another word for "convict," they mean the same thing, and the discipline was given to convince the nation of sin. The goal was that the nation would confess. Confession is necessary because then we're putting all the excuses away, we're done excusing ourselves, we're done blameshifting and we're admitting, alright God, I've sinned, against You and You only have I sinned. I'm not coming to You because I feel sorry about all the mess I've caused in my life, I'm not coming to you because my reputation is ruined. I'm coming to you because I sinned against You. That's when we're confessing our sin. We're not confessing our sin if we are just upset about the mess we've caused. And then of course when we are genuinely confessing our sin He restores us. The moment that genuine confession takes place God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and we're restored to fellowship with Him. So we have those four steps: discipline to wake us up to our sin, conviction when we are woken up to our sin, confession when we acknowledge our sin and finally restoration when we're restored to fellowship.

The prophets are written for the purpose of convicting the nation of sin and showing us how God convicts us. And the question is how does God confront the nation? How does He convict the nation of their sin so they'll confess? And if you keep asking that question as we work chapter by chapter it will gradually sink in how the Holy Spirit confronts you when you're out of it. So these are lessons on how God works, how He confronts us to convict us of our sin,

And I think by the end of tonight you'll have more insight into how God convicts us of sin. He's going to use a lawsuit and in the Book of the Twelve we've already seen the lawsuit format in Amos 3, 4 and 5 and Hosea 4 so this should not be an unfamiliar format. It's called the *rib* format. The word **case** there in verse 1 is *rib*, pronounced *reev*, Hebrew doesn't have a b sound so it's *reev*. Verse 1, **Hear now what the LORD is saying, "Arise, plead your case...and when this word is used its drawing our attention to the fact that God has had it with the nation and He's about to send them into captivity. So I point it out because it's a technical term. This is not a random term, this is a term used to refer to the covenant structure and it's being used to draw our attention to the contract. What contract? The Mosaic Contract. So the case is harking back to the contract God made with the nation at Mt Sinai.**

These contracts came in the form of a treaty called the Suzerainty-Vassal Treaty. The Suzerain was the Great King and the Vassal was the lesser king. In this kind of treaty both the Suzerain and the Vassal had obligations. So one side you a Great King, say Babylon, and he would come into a treaty with a lesser king, say Phoenicia, and both have obligations to the other. The Babylonian King may say, I have a superior military and I will provide military protection for you if you Phoenicia will provide grain and spices and gold and silver in certain quantities on an annual quota and as long as you meet the quota I'll give you the protection. So this is a covenant of works. You keep up your end of the bargain or else. And when two kings came into that kind of a treaty it was called a Suzerainty-Vassal Treaty.

Now when we come to the giving of the Law at Mt Sinai in Exod 20 and we come to the second giving of the Law in the Wilderness Wanderings in Deut 1-32 we find that the exact structure found in ancient Suzerainty-Vassal treaties between two kings is the structure in the Mosaic Law. On one side you have the Great King, YHWH, and He came into a treaty with a lesser king, Israel, and both have obligations to the other. YHWH, the Great King said, I will bless you in agriculture and public health and military victory and population growth, etc... if you Israel will obey My Law and as long as you obey My Law the blessing will keep coming. But if you decide you're not going to obey My Law and you rebel against My authority then I will curse you, I will wipe out your agriculture, the public health department will be a wreck, your military will be destroyed in battle, I'll close your wombs, people will go

psycho, etc...So this is a covenant of works. Israel, you keep up your end of the bargain or else. And they said, oh yes, we'll do all that you say great King. It was a Suzerainty-Vassal Treaty.

So as history went on under this treaty and Israel would obey God would bless, God poured wonderful blessing on this nation. But when Israel rebelled God would curse, God poured out terrible cursing on this nation. And yet before He would pour out the cursing He would have a lawsuit, *rib* proceedings, and this was to convict the nation of their sin so they would confess and be restored and that's what we see tonight.

And what you want to watch for is the way God appeals to His people in the lawsuit. God is the great King, the Suzerain, and He has done fantastic things for His people, the Vassal. Let's see how He presents the case. Verse 1, **Hear now what the LORD is saying, "Arise, plead your case before the mountains, And let the hills hear your voice.** When the LORD says in verse 1, **Arise, plead your case** he's talking to Micah and He's saying, get out of your chair and go plead the case. You want to have in your mind a courtroom and on one side you have the defense and on the other side you have the prosecution. On the defense you have Israel and on the prosecution you have Micah. Micah is the prosecuting attorney in the case. He's going to argue God's case against Israel. This is one of the major functions of the prophet. Primarily the prophet is not a foreteller of the future, though he does that, but what you want to have in mind when you think of the OT prophet is a prosecuting attorney. He's a lawyer. He's a Perry Mason or John Kecker, the great trial lawyer who was a Marine platoon leader in Vietnam or Joseph Cochet, another great trial lawyer. And they know how to push hard and be fearless in the court and that's the picture of the prophet. They're powerful trial lawyers. And it's their job to present God's case fearlessly, to prosecute the nation.

So God tells Micah, **plead your case**, that's the Hebrew equivalent of Isa 1:18, "let us reason together," let us reason on the basis of Scripture, which is the only sound basis and rationale for the faculty of reason. Let's reason on the basis of the true history captured in Scripture. God says Micah let us reason through this case with the nation. And I want you to do it **Before the mountains, And let the hills hear your voice.** In other words, I want you

to call forth certain witnesses. I want you to Invoke the Witnesses. You don't make charges in court without witnesses so God says, call the witnesses.

In verse 2 Micah responds by calling the witnesses, **Listen, you mountains, to the indictment of the Lord, And you enduring foundations of the earth**, Now why is he calling these witnesses? Who are these witnesses? They're the most ancient things, the **mountains** which were created in the aftermath of the Flood and second, things even more ancient than the mountains, the **foundations of the earth** which were created during creation week. So he calls forth witnesses that pre-existed Mt Sinai, witnesses that could actually witness the historical outworking of the Suzerainty-Vassal Treaty made at Mt Sinai. They go back to the Creation and the Flood. So this is the invocation of witnesses Why are the invoked? **Because the LORD has a case, a rib, against His people; even with Israel He will dispute.** So God is initiating the case, He's bringing forth the lawsuit and now we are told explicitly that He has lawsuit with **Israel**. So the **LORD** is the Prosecution, Micah is the prosecuting attorney and **Israel** is the defendant. The courtroom is set.

In verse 3, Micah gives the Lord's opening argument. **"My people, what have I done to you, And how have I wearied you? Answer Me.** Observe how he begins with two questions. Actually he begins by addressing them **My people**, showing that the Lord still considers them His possession. He hasn't cast them off. They're his people. He's saying come let us reason here, **what have I done to you?** Think with Me here. Have I broken the treaty? Did I do anything I didn't say I would do? **And how have I wearied you?** Did I wear you out? By putting so many commands on you? Did I grind you down? Did I ask too much of you? **Answer Me.** He saying alright, give me your defense, your apologia. Go ahead, **Answer Me.** It's an imperative, a command to give an answer, to give testimony against the Lord. They may have thought that they had a complaint against the Lord but actually He's the one who had a complaint against them.

By parallel this is how the Lord might come to us when we think we have some valid complaint against Him. Lord, why did you let this come into my life, why did you let this area of my life go to pieces, why are you letting me suffer so much, I'm getting clobbered over here and I look over there at Joe Blow and he's got it easy. Why am I getting so much suffering? I'm just not

sure you know what you're about. The Lord would say what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Did I give you too many commands to follow in the New Testament? Did I ask too much of you? You give me an answer. We don't go around telling Him to give an answer. He goes around telling us to give an answer. He's the authority. If we go around telling Him to give an answer what is it we're presupposing? That we know more than Him and we know best because if God really knew what He was about He wouldn't have let the things happened to us that have happened. And when we do that we're de-throning God and enthroning ourselves. We don't go to the Lord telling Him to give an answer for Himself. He comes to us and says, no, you give an answer. And when He brings the charges we don't have an answer.

Verse 4, now watch how He appeals to the nation by means of historical recital, backs off a bit and begins to go through a framework of biblical history. It is doing the same thing we're training to do so that in the privacy of our own souls we respond properly to God. If you don't train in biblical history then you forget what God has done for you and here God is reminding them. And by doing so He's appealing to them. It's the appeal of a loving Father for His children.

“My people, what have I done to you, And how have I wearied you? Answer Me. ⁴“Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt And ransomed you from the house of slavery, And I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam. ⁵“My people, remember now What Balak king of Moab counseled And what Balaam son of Beor answered him, And from Shittim to Gilgal, So that you might know the righteous acts of the LORD.” Look at that last phrase. Why did I do all this? So you might know Me. So you might know the Lord. You know the Lord through what the Lord has done in history. That's where we learn about Him. So here's what He did in history, verse 4, **I brought you up from the land of Egypt And ransomed you from the house of slavery**, what event of the biblical framework? The Exodus. God took his people who were in slavery and set them free. They didn't have to march up to Pharaoh's palace with M-16's. God set them free. The only example in all of world history of a nation who was enslaved by another nation being set free without armed conflict. And what are the doctrines we learn at the Exodus? What doctrine do we link? The doctrine of judgment/salvation. God judges and whenever God judges

he's also saving. Always and everywhere when you see judgment you'll also see salvation. Why is that? Because judgment is to separate two things. Judgment is saying there is right and there is wrong. And don't forget that people who say you shouldn't judge others just judged you. Everybody judges because we are made in God's image and we have a conscience. We can't help but judge. And here we have God judging. And whenever God's judging He's also saving. So you have judgment on one side and you have salvation on the other side. Always judgment is linked with salvation. Train yourself to link them and don't ever think of one without the other. God at the Exodus judged Egypt, but God at the Exodus saved Israel. Judgment/salvation. And He's saying remember this great thing I did for you, you didn't have to lift a finger. I did it all; out of mere grace I set you free.

Then He goes straight to another thing He did, **And I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam.** That is, I gave you great leadership. I gave you Moses who led you forth from Egypt to Mt Sinai and through Him I gave you a perfect Law. I gave you Aaron as a high priest who would mediate between Me and you. And I gave you Miriam, the prophetess, to lead the women in response to the men after the Red Sea crossing. It's all grace, grace, grace. Remember those great leaders? Where are those kinds of leaders today? Eight centuries later you don't have any leaders like that. The leaders I send you...you reject. So you appoint your own leaders and just look at them, they're sorry leaders. But look what I gave you.

Then He rushes on to another thing He did, **My people, remember now What Balak king of Moab counseled And what Balaam son of Beor answered him.** Remember the story in Num 21-23 where Balak, king of Moab wanted Baalam to go out and curse the sons of Israel? And every time Balaam would open his mouth to curse Israel out would come blessing on Israel. God turned attempts to curse into blessing. It's all grace, grace, grace. I did this for you, I loved you, I showered My grace on you.

Then He reminds them of more He did, **from Shittim to Gilgal,** that is, I led you from Shittim which is "the valley of the Acacias" on the east side of the Jordan River, **to Gilgal,** which is on the west side of the Jordan River opposite of Jericho. What did He do there? He parted the waters of the Jordan and led them across on dry ground. It was grace, grace, grace, all of it was grace. From the Exodus from Egypt to the leadership of Moses, Aaron

and Miriam to the cursings of Balak turned to blessings of Balaam to the crossing of the Jordan from Shittim to Gilgal God had shown them grace, grace, grace, grace.

What's the argument the great King is making to His vassal Israel? Rather than saying you better do what I say or else how does He appeal to them? He says look at all I did for you. I did this and I did that and I did this and I did that. And it's an argument the Great King is making for the vassal Israel to obey. And so instead of saying you *are* going to obey me, the great King would say, you *should* obey me and here's why. I brought you out of Egypt at the Exodus, I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam, I turned the cursings of Balak into the blessing of Balaam son of Beor, and I led you from Shittim to Gilgal. I did all this for you...now shouldn't you obey me? What's He appealing to? Their conscience. Where does conviction occur? In the conscience. Because God has made us in His image we have a finite analog to God's justice and righteousness called conscience. And when this kind of argument is put forth it pricks our conscience. What happens? We're being reminded of our ingratitude and that convicts. Yeah, we should obey and we didn't. So God is doing what? He's bringing conviction. Why? So they'll confess and be restored to fellowship. God wants to have fellowship with His people. And so He says remember what I've done for you, remember the Exodus, remember Moses, remember Balak, remember Shittim to Gilgal. I've done great acts for you over and over and over. I've shown you grace, grace, grace, now is it too much for Me to ask you to confess and obey?

Let's think about how we could transfer this argument to the New Testament to see how God the Holy Spirit might convict us of sin and then we'll talk about a proper response to what God has done for us. "My people, I sent My Son, My only begotten Son to die for you. And He saved you from the eternal penalty of sin. And I sent My Holy Spirit and I put Him inside of you to live through you. I sent you pastors and teachers who would study the word and lead you into all righteousness. And when Satan prosecuted you at My throne, over and over for this sin and that sin, My Son interceded for you. And I have been with you all along to lead you and to direct you so that you might know me through My mighty acts." See how it's all I did this for you and I did that for you. It's all grace, grace, grace and see, what He's doing by that kind of argument is He's appealing to our conscience. When we think of all the great things God has done for us it convicts us. Hey, maybe I should confess all the junk in my life

and start obeying Him. It's not too much to ask because look at all that God has done for me.

Another point we want to draw out from the text is that it's obvious Israel didn't care. They weren't thankful for all God had done. Thankfulness, or lack thereof, is like a barometer that measures how you're doing spiritually. If you think about your life and over here you have your thankfulness barometer...you might want to see what it's reading. Because if you don't have any thankfulness then you are probably way out of fellowship. And if you're remembering to thank Him then you're probably alright. There's a proper way to respond to what God has done for us. We should thoughtfully reflect upon what He has done for us and give thanks. We ought to praise Him, there ought to be tremendous thanksgiving that flows from our hearts. We ought to think through points of doctrine. For example, take the doctrine of justification. Alright, what happened here? Well, first, justification depends upon God being the Creator. If God is not the Creator then He's not righteous Himself. Second, justification depends upon Man's Fall. If man isn't fallen then there's no need for Him to justify. Third, justification is the first step in redemption. I can't grow spiritually before I'm legally declared righteous. He did that. Fourth, justification requires an outside righteousness. The righteousness that is imputed to us doesn't come from us, it comes from outside of us, and it comes from God through Jesus Christ. And we have to go through these things and meditate upon them and when we do then we say, wow, God, you've done all this for me and then thankfulness begins to pour out of our hearts. I can say thanks God, but real, heartfelt thankfulness only comes when I'm meditating on these points of theology and I'm mulling them around and then boom, I'm thankful because my focus is up there, not down here, *up* and *out* there, not *down* and *in* here. I'm looking up and out at Him.

But do we even care? Do we even slow down in life to reflect on what He's done. Or are we all tied up around our present circumstances and I've got this wrong in my life and over here I'm frustrated and we can never get our eyes off the circumstances and back where they're supposed to be, on God. God says look at Me. Stop worrying about yourself and look at Me. Look at what I've done for you. They have a whole hymn about it - Count your Many Blessings. Count your many blessings see what God has done, Count your blessings, name them one by one. Why did the hymn writer want us to count

the blessings? Because we don't just do it, we have to make a conscious effort to do it. Satan is busy knocking you off balance. He's got you busy looking at everything down here and counting your blessings puts it back where it belongs up there. It gets you to stop looking down and in, those two prepositions have to be exchanged on a daily basis, down and in for up and out! And that's what God is trying to get Israel to do here. Stop looking down and in, start looking up and out, look at Me! Because when we do we're convicted, now we can confess, now we can get restored to fellowship, but not as long as we're looking down here.

Now in verse 6 we get Israel's answer, Israel's defense. The Lord said Answer Me. Here's their answer. And they're asking Micah what do we do? **With what shall I come to the LORD And bow myself before the God on high?** What does God want from us? We know it's a confession. But they have not a clue. Watch how screwed up these people are. These are people that have the attitude, alright, just give me the quickie solution so I can go on with my life, you're interrupting things. Look at their first question. **With what shall I come to the LORD?** In other words, what kind of present does God want? Does He want a big box of candy? What does He want? How much will it cost to pay the Lord off? And what it shows you is how ignorant they were of the word of God. These people had no clue what the Bible taught. They had no concept of who God is. They have just interpreted this great historical review of all that God had done for them in the Exodus, and Moses, and Balaam, to mean, well, I guess God wants us to pay Him back for all the things He's done for us. That's how illiterate they are biblically. They're stupid. They missed the whole point. But that's what people who are really out of it do to the Bible; they distort it, they twist it.

So, watch how they do it. They want to pay God off. So they start with things that don't cost so much then they start upping the bidding. Like most people they're looking to get out cheap. So let's start the bidding. **Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings?** This is the cheapest bid; how about 50 cents. Is that what God wants? Then someone ups the bid. **With yearling calves?** This is like two dollars. But verse 7, **Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams,** you know, what's the price here for satisfying God? \$500? How much money does it take? **In ten thousand rivers of oil?** How about that? Will \$5000 work? Is that enough? That's a high price. I hope we don't have to pay that. Then the bidding goes higher. **Shall I present my**

firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Here we have the ultimate price, the cruel sacrifice of your own child. Shall we take our own sons down to the fires and sacrifice them? Light them on fire alive? Will that satisfy God? It's all revealing how foolish and ignorant of God's word these people are, all they can do is reason within a depraved frame of reference. They're not interested in confessing, they're interested in buying God off.

So Micah answers in verse 8, **He has told you, O man, what is good;** in other words go read this book. God already told you **what is good.** He's not going to go repeat it just for you because you're so lazy you won't pick up the word of God and read it for yourself. It's like people today that want a fresh revelation from God. Oh, I want to hear God's voice. If God would give them the satisfaction He'd say I already told you, I'm not going to tell you again, now buzz off. Go read the book. God is not entertained by these lazy people. And I'm not either. I have very little patience for believers who are lazy. There is no excuse. God has spoken and He's given you a brain and He's given you the Holy Spirit and He's given you a pastor teacher and now you're saying, oh God, whisper in My ear? I don't think so, go study this book. He already told you what He wants.

And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God? Now this is called "the greatest saying of the Old Testament." I don't know if it is. The people who said that are the Liberals and they said what it means is we're going to be good little boys and girls now, we're going to do social justice and then God will be satisfied. The orthodox Jews today think that too. But it's wrong because it's all works. It's saying nothing more than the people in vv 6-7 said, we're going to buy God off. So if it's not saying do something to please God what is it saying? It sounds like it's saying do this stuff? But why is Micah answering this way? Because He's trying to get a conviction of sin. Anyone knows, who's thinking correctly, that you can't do these things. That's the whole point. Micah is putting up the standard of righteousness and the conclusion when you look at the standard is I can't do that. So I'm convicted that I can't reach the standard. And if I can't reach the standard then what? I resort to faith. See, he's not saying do these things to earn righteousness, he's saying this is what the Lord requires, this is the standard. And the proper response is I can't do it. Good, now we're talking.

It's the same story when the rich young ruler came to Jesus "and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. ¹⁹"You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.' " ²⁰And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." ²¹Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." Now, is Jesus telling him that he could earn eternal life by selling all his stuff? Of course not. He's trying to show this individual that there's nothing he can do to earn eternal life. Eternal life is not something you can earn; it's only something you can receive. Eternal life is a free gift. But before you can realize this you have to realize that there's nothing you can do to earn it. Once you realize that then you're in a position where you can receive the free gift. And that's all God is doing here through the prophet Micah. He's trying to get a conviction and that's what God does with us through the commandments. We know we don't measure up - so what? We don't try harder. We confess we screwed up.

Alright, next time we'll push on to the Indictment, God's indictment of the nation and the Pronouncement of Judgment. The nation will be judged.

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