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**C1105 – February 16, 2011 – Micah 6:9-16**  
**What The Rod Means**

All right, if you would turn in your Bible to Micah 6. This week we continue the covenant lawsuit or *rib* proceedings. God has a case against Israel. Micah is the prosecuting attorney in the case. The purpose of the lawsuit is to indict the nation Israel for violating the terms of the Mosaic contract given at Mt Sinai. Every lawsuit must have a standard of righteousness by which to judge. And the standard of righteousness is the Mosaic Law given by God at Sinai. On that day in 1445BC, at that Mt, YHWH the Suzerain, the great King, entered into a treaty with the nation Israel, the vassal. In that treaty YHWH promised blessing for obedience to the Law and cursing for disobedience. So now, seven centuries later God is bringing a lawsuit against Israel. Always when the nation is on the brink of going into Exile God will bring a lawsuit. And that's the *rib* format. The *rib* proceedings are harking back to the fact that Israel has violated the treaty and is on the verge of going into Exile.

Last week God appealed to the nation by opening the case with an argument that appeals to their conscience. He appealed by way of historical recital. He says I did this for you and I did that for you and it was all grace, grace, grace. I set you free from slavery at the Exodus, I gave you great leadership in Moses, Aaron and Miriam, I turned the cursings of Balak into the blessings of Balaam and I led you from Shittim on the east side of the Jordan to Gilgal on the west side of the Jordan. I did all this for you and you did not give thanks. He showed them grace, grace, grace and what had they shown Him in return? Ingratitude, disobedience and rebellion. And so by making this argument God is appealing to their conscience. You should have shown gratitude, you should have learned obedience, you should have loved Me. They have been unthankful, they should have obeyed Him. And what's He trying to get through this kind of argument? A conviction. God wants the nation to be

convicted of their sin so they can confess their sin and get restored. That's the whole point.

And yet we found that the nation was beyond the point of no return. When they reply to this argument they show that they didn't have the foggiest idea of who God is. They thought that they could pay God off, that maybe God would just let them get on with their life if they paid Him a sacrifice, go through some religious motion. And this kind of response shows you how pitifully poor the spiritual state of the nation was. They had no idea what the word of God taught.

And so in verse 8 Micah responds by telling them that they have the word of God and if they want to know how to do what is good they need to just look at what the word of God says. God is not going to tell them again what He already told them in this book. They had the whole treaty. There's nothing left to say except get up off the couch, turn the TV off and look at the treaty. I told you way back there at Sinai what you were supposed to do. And you were supposed to have this treaty read every seven years before the whole nation. So you should know what the terms are. So out of frustration Micah does what Jesus does to the rich young ruler. He puts forth the standard in verse 8, "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?" In other words, Micah reveals not the social gospel as Mr Liberal loves to make out of this verse, but a standard so high that no man in his flesh can accomplish it. What's the point? The point is to say you can't do this, therefore now are you convicted? Now will you confess your sin?

Now today we continue with the lawsuit in 6:9-16. And this easily breaks up in two sections, vv 9-12, further indictment and vv 13-16, the pronouncement of judgment. So he's going to use another technique to get a confession of sin. If last week he used historical recital to bring about remembrance of God's grace, God's grace, God's Grace over and over to the nation and their failure to be thankful, then this week God uses the technique of overt citation of sin: here's what you did, here's code 9.33 and you violated that, do you see that? And here's code 4.72 and you violated that, do you see that? And they're all glaring violations of what God required in the suzerainty vassal treaty. And then he goes on to the pronouncement of judgment. That is, the rod. God is going to lower the boom with the rod and He's going to explain what the rod

is. So when the rod spansks them they know Who it is that is spanking them and why. He's going to tell them how to interpret their future. It's a bleak future: it involves military defeat, agricultural distress, poor public health, psychological problems, all that God says is Me spanking you. Why? Because He loves them, He wants to walk with them in fellowship.

So let's start with verse 9, there are certain translation difficulties in the second expression of verse 9 but I think you'll quickly get the point. Now this is one way you can convict believers of sin, you can simply point out the sin. Just be sure if you do point it out you have some basis for the accusation. The last thing we need is another believer pointing out so-and-so's sins without any basis. But this is a valid thing in the church. There is such a thing as church discipline. Matthew 18 sketches the basic approach. If a brother sins against you then go and show him his sin. If he says well, I deny it then take two or three with you and you have a little discussion in find out is there any real basis here for the accusation, and if there is and he refuses to repent and be reconciled then you take it before the church. And this is not to be mean, has nothing to do with meanness, has everything to do with reconciliation, and has everything to do with cleansing the church of sin. We cannot permit sin to go on and on and on in the church body. Why not? Because it destroys the church's witness to the world. How can we who died to sin still live in it? That's not my question; that's Paul's question of Romans 6. The church is not supposed to live like the world. The church is to live counter to the world in order to be a witness to the world of the sufficiency of the gospel. So, when a brother sins against us we have to deal with this. Not for meanness sake, for friendship sake. What kind of a friend would just let you run into sin? What a stupid thing. If you're driving your car straight into a wall and I just sit by and don't warn you about it then I'm no friend. Now transfer that idea to church discipline and you understand it's a very loving thing to do. The whole point of it is to keep you from destroying your whole life. And in that situation sin has to be discussed. Church discipline may be involved. But the goal of church discipline is always the same; reconciliation, reconciliation, not beating up on someone, reconciliation.

And that's the whole point of God's convicting the nation by pointing out their sins and putting the rod to their little hineys. He wants His people to be reconciled to Him. And if it takes lowering the rod then that's what it takes. And if it takes church discipline today then that's what it takes. But if

everybody will just respond to the word of God then we can get reconciled and we can all press on to maturity, learn loyalty to God and be a tremendous example to the world.

Now in vv 10, 11 and 12 he points out certain social sins; fraudulent business transactions, deceitful practices, lying, etc...all social evils. So it behooves us to recall the connection between social evil and theological evil. Social evil breaks out of theological evil. Social evil doesn't just happen. Social evil is a byproduct of theological evil or rebellion against God, primarily in the form of idolatry. Rom 1 tells us the process. God makes Himself known to all men, men suppress this truth in unrighteousness, their mind is darkened, this invites demonic infiltration, they begin to worship the creature rather than the creator, this results in heterosexual immorality, then homosexual immorality and finally all kinds of social chaos begins to break out. But you notice the whole downward spiral into the social sins starts with theological sins. That's the thing you want to catch. If you see all this mess in your society, mass fornication, murder, gangs in the streets, heavy drug use, that's all bad, bad stuff. But the real perversity is theological, in men's hearts, there's been an exchange of worship, they worship and serve the creation rather than the Creator.

So look at the verse 10 social sins that are breaking out. **Is there yet a man in the wicked house, *Along with* treasures of wickedness And a short measure *that is* cursed? <sup>11</sup>“Can I justify wicked scales And a bag of deceptive weights? <sup>12</sup>“For the rich men of *the* city are full of violence, Her residents speak lies, And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.** You want to talk about a society that is so far gone. That's the society Micah had to live in and it's the society we have to live in. The only good thing about living in this kind of society is that the country has separated into black and white, there are no gray areas any more, it's clear where the lines have been drawn. Everybody is seeing real clearly which side of the fence they're on. The only problem is almost everybody is on the black side of the fence and that means you're not only a minority, you're the minority of the minority of the minority and eventually you'll find if you talk to people you're pretty much alone out there. But the point is to say that's a bad society and it's never going to reverse itself, it's on a downward slope and it is gaining speed, it is not going to turn around, it's doomed.

Now, verses 9 and 10 are difficult to translate, it's the most difficult section grammatically in Micah and there are many different translations. I don't know what translation you have. Usually most people here have the NASB, which doesn't even make sense in verse 9. And the reason it doesn't make sense is because these translations are put together by committees. And when the committees can't agree then you get compromises, some committee members get a part of what they like in the verse and the other committee members get a part of what they want in the verse. So I'm going to bypass all the committees because it just congests the whole verse and I'll give you my translation which will make a lot more sense. If you write in your Bible then you might as well just write the entire translation in the margin. It's too much to try to correct. Verse 9, "The voice of Yahweh calls to the city, And it is wisdom to fear Your name; Listen to the rod and He who appointed it. <sup>10</sup> Is there still in the house of the wicked treasures of wickedness and the ephah of scantness that is accursed? Shall I regard as pure, scales of wickedness and a bag of deceptive weights?" That's the translation we will be working off of for verses 9 and 10. So I'll leave it on the overhead here and you can write it the margin and all my comments will relate to this translation and not to whatever your translation committee decided.

**The voice of Yahweh calls to the city**, what city? The city of Jerusalem or perhaps Samaria but probably Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the capital city of the southern kingdom of Judah. So this is a warning to the city of Jerusalem. Evil seems to stem from the capital cities. Can anyone deny that? Washington DC is the center of the filth and they pass it along to the rest of the country. Politics is a dirty game because it's run by dirty people, people with sin natures, people that have selfish interests. It's not that a biblical Christian can't operate in politics, we need more biblical Christians in politics, it's just that the pressure to compromise the biblical position is much greater in politics. It's a tough area to live a sanctified life in because everyone is giving something to get something in politics and the way it works out is everyone is compromising. So if you don't go along with the program then you're not going to make it in politics. But we need biblical Christians who are shrewd, men who study the politician Daniel and learn how to maneuver in a pagan political environment with success, men who are able to solve problems with biblical wisdom and show the superiority of biblical wisdom to get their policy injected into societies. But know they are corrupt places. So God addresses the capital city.

And so **The voice of Yahweh calls to the city and it is wisdom to fear Your name**; he's talking to the man on the streets of Jerusalem. And he says **it is wisdom to fear** the name of **Yahweh**. What does he mean fear? This Hebrew word means “to have respect for” or “to be in awe of Yahweh.” It doesn't mean you have to run and hide in a corner. But it does mean that you respect Him for who He is. He is the authority in the universe and you better pay attention to Him because He is running the show, not you and your little lobby. And he says the man who respects Yahweh in the streets of Jerusalem has **wisdom**. Wisdom, “skill in living,” skill in the decision-making process.” The man who has wisdom starts off making decisions by respecting God’s authority. He doesn’t start off thinking, I have my interest group over here and this is what we want to accomplish because it’s going to line my pockets with money. He starts off by thinking, God rules history and He has a plan for my nation and a plan for my life and when I make decisions I make them on that basis. And a part of that plan is that I and my nation learn loyalty to Him. And if we do not learn loyalty to him then he's going to spank our behind. And so when I see him spanking our behind I’m going to be wise, I'm going to make decisions that figure in that - hey, this isn't just accidental, this is the voice of Yahweh to me and my nation, telling us we better get on the ball and confess, get restored to fellowship with Him. That’s the man of **wisdom**.

Then the last phrase in verse 9, **Listen to the rod and He who appointed it**. That is, pay attention to the spankings and He who appointed the spankings. In verses 12 through 16 he's going to tell the residents of Jerusalem what the spankings are going to be so they'll know that, hey this is God spanking us. Now are we going to listen to the spankings? Are we going to pay attention to the point He’s trying to get across?

Now God doesn’t do this for all nations the way He does it for Israel. Let me explain. Israel is God’s elect nation. No other nation is God’s elect. And a corollary truth to God’s election is discipline. God disciplines those He has chosen. So being elect doesn’t mean running around saying, I’m of the elect, I’m of the elect; it’s not a big platform for boasting. The doctrine of election is a platform for divine discipline. God disciplines those He has chosen. It’s very simple. If we weren’t elect He wouldn’t bother with us. And the same

principles are at work for the OT nation Israel as for the NT Church saint. He disciplines those He has chosen.

Now let me explain the difference between God's discipline of His elect vs His wrath upon the non-elect. When God's elect disobey God immediately lowers the paddle. He does not wait and wait and wait and wait and wait and wait and then finally lower the paddle. If He waited how would the elect connect what they did wrong with the discipline? Say the sin was committed in 1950 and in 2011 God lowers the paddle. Now, wait a minute, how do I in 2010 connect the paddle with something that happened in 1950? See the problem. God never does that to His elect. If the sin is committed in 1950 then the paddle is lowered in 1950. That's divine discipline and it grows out of God's love. It's very loving that He does that. But divine wrath, that's upon the non-elect, you will often find a great gap of time between the offense and the wrath. God lets it build up for the non-elect. He lets them sin and sin and sin and sin and then finally God's holiness looks down at this mass of sin and it pours forth wrath.

When it comes to the elect nation of Israel the Jews recognized this principle. Now we want to apply this to nations. Is America God's elect nation? No. We're over here in the non-elect category. So understand that God's wrath upon America is not closely connected to the offenses. There's a delay and that makes it hard to see what God is so upset about. But the Jews are God's elect nation so it's not hard to see. God doesn't delay the discipline and the Jews recognized this. So we're pointing out this difference so we understand something about the nation Israel and we understand something about our own nation and others. Alva McClain in his work *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, says, "This principle [of man's well-being condition by obedience or disobedience to God] holds good generally in all nations in every age. But its operation has often been obscured to humanize by the time "lag" between the moral breach and the infliction of the sanction. While it is always true that the nation which has "sown the wind" shall also certainly "reap the whirlwind" (Hos. 8:7), the harvest is generally and mercifully long-delayed (II Pet. 3:9); and for this very reason men often fail to see the causal connection. Furthermore, in the general history of nations, the divine penalties are inflicted through secondary causes behind the veil of providential control (Jer. 41:28-30). For these reasons the skeptical have been able to question the existence of any divinely ordained moral government in human history; the

Lord's own people at times have been greatly troubled and perplexed by the problem (Hab. 1:1-4). But in the case of the nation Israel," in other words now he showing a distinction between non-elect nations and the elect nation of Israel and how God handles them, how he reigns over them. God reigns over all nations but there's a distinction and how he reigns over his own house versus how he rules over the rest of the world outside of his house. "But in the case of the nation Israel in her Mediatorial Kingdom of history, the moral government of Jehovah was not only declared at Sinai but also was confirmed spectacularly in the recorded history of that kingdom by means of divine sanctions immediately imposed. And the sanctions were generally supernatural; either by the withdrawal of the promised supernatural protection from the ordinary hazards of human life in a fallen world, or by the positive infliction of supernatural punishment.... This close and immediate connection between the well-being of the chosen nation and their moral and spiritual attitude is most clearly summarized in Deuteronomy (cf. Chaps. 28-30)."

Now, with that distinction in mind, look at verse 9 and see if it doesn't strike you. **The voice of Yahweh calls to the city and it is wisdom to fear Your name Listen to the rod and He who appointed it.** He's saying pay attention to the spankings because the spankings have been appointed by Yahweh Israel. You're not just any other nation, you're My elect nation and I'm trying to correct your behavior, this isn't my wrath, this is my discipline. So God's discipline has a corrective goal. It's goal is to correct and it is administered only on God's elect. If you're not an elect nation then the principle is God's wrath and God's wrath has a destructive goal, its goal is to destroy.

Now let's make application to the church. The church is God's elect. Question? Does God discipline the church? Yes He does. He disciplines us to correct our behavior; to convict us so we'll confess our sin and be restored to fellowship. Now does God discipline the world? No He does not. He let's the world do their thing and they go on sinning and sinning and sinning and then finally God is going to be fed up with the world and He's going to pour out His wrath. Now do you see why the Church is not destined for wrath in 1 Thessalonians? Paul understood that God doesn't use wrath to correct the Church, He uses wrath to destroy the world system. Now do you see why we're so insistent on a pre-day of the Lord rapture? The day of the Lord is a

day of wrath. And God doesn't pour out wrath on the church. He does discipline the church. He disciplines you and he disciplines me. But that's different from wrath. I just wanted to use this tie to illustrate the difference. Do you see that?

Let's go back to verse 10 and point out some of the things that need correction in the nation Israel. And if you follow in my translation, **Is there still in the house of the wicked treasures of wickedness**, in other words, the wicked accumulated wealth by wickedness. This is wickedness in the area of business transactions and commercial activity. The wicked have used illegitimate means to accumulate wealth. They have not been honest in their dealings. He goes on, **And the ephah of scantness that is accursed?** In other words here we're talking about going down to the market place of Jerusalem and you want to buy some grain, you want to buy you an ephah of grain, which is about 6 gallons and the slick businessman would sell you a slightly smaller basket of grain say, 5 1/2 gallons of grain, so he'd rip you off. So, in that example if you thought you were getting 6 gallons and you got 5 1/2 then he would have stolen 9% from you. It's like today when you buy a cord of wood, half of these guys that cut the cord of wood don't even know how much a cord of wood is. A cord of wood is 128 cubic feet which is 4 feet by 4 feet by 8 feet. 4 feet high by 4 feet wide by 8 feet long or some other arrangement that gives that same volume. I'd venture that most of the time when you buy a cord of wood you only get about half to two thirds of a cord and that's stealing. If you advertise one thing and you sell another it's a theft. And God is very serious about this. The reason God is so serious about this gets back to Divine Institution #1: Responsible Dominion. God created man to work responsibly for his glory. He didn't say half ass it. He said do a job and do it right. Don't lie about what you're selling. They were lying about it, that's the **ephah of scantness**. And God says I hate it.

Then we have verse 11 will just go with the translation of the NASB here. Verse 10 is a question; it obviously requires a positive response. It has convicting power. Verse 11 is another question; it requires a negative response. It also has convicting power. **Can I justify wicked scales and a bag of deceptive weights?** The answer is no, I cannot. You can't fool around with the measurements again because then you're cheating the customer. And this is just a sampling of what was going on. It didn't take much to indict the city of Jerusalem. It's the same thing that Jesus was upset

about when he came into the Temple and turned over the tables. It was this kind of rip-off artist that He was upset about. Here they were in the house of God, so to speak, ripping people off. Just like a lot of these churches do today. They're not interested in your well-being, they're not interested in you knowing the truth, they're interested in getting in your pocket book. I just got an e-mail recently, in fact I get the e-mail just about every week, and the title of the e-mail is "how to pry open donors wallets" because here we are in a bad economic times and so everybody's holding onto their money, this guy says now here's what you need to do pastors, here's how you pry open the donor's wallets and get the money flowing again. I say baloney, "God's work done in God's time never lacks God support." So I don't worry about it, never have. I just teach the word of God. If you like the word of God, if it's blessed your life and you have an attitude of thanksgiving then you give what you can. But you don't go around trying to pry peoples wallets open. What a sham.

Now in verse 12 he summarizes the situation in Jerusalem. **For the rich men of the city are full of violence, Her residents speak lies, And their time is deceitful in their mouth.** So they are all corrupt, from the rich down to the common resident. Everybody was involved in theft and lying. And these are violations of two of the 10 Commandments that underlie the entire law. They fall in the second table of the Ten Commandments. There are two tables, commandments 1-3 which mark off man's relationship to God, we might say, theological sins, and commandments 4-10 which mark off man's relationship to his fellow man, we might say social sins. These come from the second table, "Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not lie." So when you see violations in the second table be assured there have already been violations in the first table. So what you're seeing here is simply the fruit, the theological evil underneath it all is the fruit. They're going under the most extreme form of judgment.

And so in verse 13 we come to the pronouncement of judgment. Why? Because they violated the terms of the treaty. So all this relates to the treaty back at Mt Sinai. They're all going to be cursings. So where are the cursings for violating the treaty found? What two chapters are key? Lev 26 and Deut 28. Two of the most important chapters for understanding the OT. Burn them on your brain. Verse 13, **So also I will make you sick, striking you down, desolating you because of your sins.** Where was this curse mentioned? This isn't new, this is old. The prophet is just pronouncing judgment, they should have known. Lev 26:25, "I will send pestilence among you." that's

disease, sickness. And he's saying the public health department will be in a wreck. Why? Just because people get sick? No because of **your sins**. Poor public health is due to people's sins. Try that one on people and see what kind of looks you get. The reason we're having epidemic swine flu is the amount of sin in our society. That'll get some interesting looks.

Verse 14, **You will eat, but you will not be satisfied**, where is that verse found? The very next verse in Lev 26. Lev 26:26, "When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied." It's a description of famine. There going to have food shortages. **And your vileness will be in your midst**. That sort of a problem for the public health department again because what this is describing is human waste in the streets of Jerusalem, human dung and animal dung running down the streets of Jerusalem. **You will try to remove for safekeeping, but you will not preserve anything**, in other words people are going to try to put things back, put food back, put money back, get prepared in advance for this destruction that's coming, but they're not to going to be able to preserve anything. And he says **And what you do preserve I will give to the sword**. In other words in the case that you were successful in actually preserving something when the foreign military invades they're going to get it all. So they will try the store up and they will try to be prepared in advance but it will fail. They've sown the wind, they will reap the whirlwind.

Verse 15, **You will sow but you will not reap**. What is this talking about? What area of life? Agriculture. So we have public health a wreck, now we have agriculture a wreck. Where is this curse? Lev 26:20. It's all harping back to the cursings of Lev 26 and Deut 28. "Your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit." You can go out and prepare the soil and you can put seed in the soil but you can't cause it to rain. So you will sow but you will not reap. Then he says, **You will tread the olive but will not anointed yourself with oil**; oil was one of the most basic needs. It's hot and dry in the Middle East, especially when you have no humidity because you have no rain and so what happens to your skin? It dries out. It gets sunburned. People needed oil to prevent both of these things. They needed oil to moisturize their skin and to keep them from getting sunburned. So now you have skin problems; eczema, they're going to have sunburn or so stupid in the 20th and

21st century that we now put ourselves under heat lamps until we turn orange and then we were 43 years old we're all wrinkled and we don't know why. Well maybe it is because you smoked and you took off all your clothes and got under a heat lamp. You think that might have something to do with it? So they would tread the olive but they would not anoint themselves with oil. Which, this passage by the way helps you understand James 5 where it says if somebody is sick let them call the elders and they will come they will pray for you and they will anoint you with oil. It didn't mean they came over and poured a big bowl over your head. It meant here you have a spiritually sick believer. What's a spiritually sick believer? A believer who is depressed. What do depressed people do? They stay home, they don't take care of themselves, they sleep all day, they don't take showers, they don't fix their hair, they're depressed. There's no reason to get out, my life is over. So when the elders would go over to this individual's house they would anoint them with oil meaning they would clean them up they would bring some oil so they could moisturize their skin so this person could get out of the house and be reunited to fellow believers in the congregation so he can grow spiritually and get out of this spiritual depression. That's all it refers to and today we have believers running around pouring oil on people's heads and it has nothing to do with that passage. If they really wanted to do what the passage in James says they would go over to this spiritually depressed person and get them out of bed and throw them in the shower and wash their clothes and tell them to get dressed and fix their hair and pray for them and then say, come on, we're going to Bible class, we're going to go listen to the word of God. That's how you pull a person out of spiritual depression. Not by pouring a bowl of oil over their head.

All right the end of verse 15, **And the grapes, but you will not drink wine.** In other words they'd tread grapes and it would run through the stone channel into the vat below and within about 24 hours in the sun it would be fermented and ready to drink. But he says you will tread the grapes; you will not drink the wine.

And finally in verse 16 it gets down to the root of the problem. Earlier in verses 10, 11 and 12 we saw the fruit, the social evil. Now Micah takes us all the way down to the root, the theological evil. This is where things really have to be solved and until they're really solved down on this level then you can complain about the social problems until you're blue in the face, you can

throw all the tax payer's money you want to at it, you can start another governmental agency, but you're not going to solve the social problems until you solve the theological problem of unbelief in the heart. And this is what everyone is trying to avoid. Nobody wants a heart confrontation. Then I have to stand before God naked in all my sin and that's not comfortable, I don't like that, so let's just throw some more money at the problem. But it'll never work. If you want to get rid of all the social problems then what do you have to do? You have to restore truth to that society, you have to inject the knowledge of God in that society and you have to start building loyalty to God in that society. And until that happens you're just wasting resources, picking off fruit, you're not getting down to the root.

In verse 16 God points out the root. It traces back to two men. Omri and Ahab. Omri was Ahab's daddy, they both ruled in the northern kingdom and they were both theological wrecks. Remember, the northern kingdom broke with the southern kingdom in 926 BC under Rehoboam. This was the first step down into apostasy. Rehoboam did a stupid thing and the northern kingdom rejected the Davidic dynasty. So now you have two kingdoms. Two Jewish kingdoms with two dynasties but only one religion centered in the Temple in Jerusalem. And King Jeroboam I in the northern kingdom decided to reject the Temple and form a new religion. This was the second step down into apostasy. Then came the two individuals discussed in Micah, Omri and Ahab. We'll focus on Ahab. Ahab imported his wife from up in Phoenicia. Not only did he import a pagan wife, but she was the daughter of the pagan king-priest, Ethbaal. And so she comes into the royal family and she was very zealous for her religion, she made Baalism the supreme state religion over all others. So instead of a mixed apostasy like Solomon or a man-made counterfeit of biblical religion like Jeroboam I, Ahab completely rejected the word of God and capitulated to pagan religion. This was the third step down, he had rejected the Lord himself. The kingdom was officially pagan. And that's what he's saying in verse 16, at the root of your problem is idolatry, all the idolatrous **statues of Omri, And all the works of the house of Ahab.** What are the works of Ahab? State seizure of private property. The laws of eminent domain. Ahab liked a certain property next door that belonged to a man named Naboth and he wanted to get his grubby little hands on Naboth's vineyard. And he couldn't get it and so he came home and he was having a little hissy fit and Jezebel went out and to make a long story short she had Naboth killed off and she said alright, now Ahab go get your vineyard. That's

**the works of the house of Ahab.** Governmental seizure of property. Big government, the government is sovereign, the government has replaced God as sovereign. And God says all these principles were still being observed, Ahab got the ball rolling, you guys never quit, you still seize property. And God is very upset about it because freedom is directly tied to ownership of private property. You take away ownership of private property through laws like eminent domain and you take away freedom. They are that closely linked. Land and Liberty, never forget it! But the point he's getting at is that the root of all the social evil was the theological evil these two crooks introduced and which they never got rid of.

And he concludes **Therefore I will give you up for destruction And your inhabitants for derision, And you will bear the reproach of My people.** In other words they will go into exile. And they will be ashamed, they will be looked upon as a reproach, and they will be embarrassed. This is the fifth degree of divine discipline. All of the things listed in the original terms of the treaty, right out of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, they were scheduled by God, they were revealed by Him that if they did not honor then He would lower the rod and these judgments were the rod.

And let me conclude by saying that all these things will come upon our nation. The only problem is we don't know when because we're not an elect nation. So like McClain was pointing out there's a time lag between our moral failures and the lowering of God's wrath upon our nation. These things have been building for a long time in our nation and if I'm not mistaken you can read the writing on the wall. It appears our time has come or rather the end of our time has come. It's unthinkable to most people but I warn you, the end of our time will come, America is not in prophecy, we must lose our position as ultimate superpower. How it comes about I don't know exactly, but that it comes about I do know.

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