

Who knew that God must send them into exile for their sin and knew that they as members of the nation were implicated in the sin and who therefore would tend to give way to despair, more than the wicked would because they believed the prophet's words were to come from God.

It is as if the prophet after speaking to the mass of people and condemning them for their sin and rebuking them for it then looked to the smaller group of the godly, and he spoke to their hearts to comfort them, and he says to them, It is true these terrible things must come but beyond the punishment God still has plans for His people; God is not through with Israel. God says, If my covenant with heaven and earth can be broken, the day and night stop succeeding one another, if the planets stop going around the sun, if all these wonderful things God has made are going to just stop then you can believe that my covenant with Israel will stop too! But I have promised always, He says, to be faithful to Israel and to keep my promises.

So He says, You godly people, You will go into exile, yes you will have this to go through, but beyond this there is great blessing. So sometimes the prophet after giving the rebuke and telling of the present sin looks beyond to their return from exile at the return from the Babylonian exile. Sometimes after giving it he looks beyond to the coming of Christ, and to the answer that Christ gives, the permanent answer to sin. Sometimes He looks beyond it to still more distant events in the future. There is this progression which we find over and over in the prophets. Sometimes the break in it comes very very sudden!

Now we are interested tonight in the second portion of the book of Micah, the portion that begins with ch.3 which begins a section of rebuke to the Nation for its sin and some of the rebuke there really sounds as if it would exactly fit conditions in our world today.

Look at v. 5 of ch.3. "Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bit with their teeth and cry, Peace." You hear people today who are calling for peace all the time, always talking about peace. Well, we want peace, but we want righteous peace, just peace. But look at these people he speaks of here. He says, The prophet that cries peace and he ~~XXXX~~ that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. Isn't that a picture of the false prophets in the day of Micah? Isn't it a picture of many false prophets in our present day?

Then he goes on and declares how God is going to punish them for this, and he speaks of his punishments against the false prophets and against the false leaders of Israel, and he continues until you get to v. 11 where he says, Her heads judge for reward and her priests teach for hire and her prophets divine for money, yet will they lean upon the Lord and say, Is not the Lord among us; no evil can come upon us." Thus he has rebuked them for their sin and shown them their wickedness, and now he tells the terrible result that is to come from it. He says, Therefore(v.12) shall Zion for your sakes be plowed as a field and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest." Now Zion was the section of Jerusalem where David's palace was. When Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians that part was just ruined and left desolate. They had a yoke of oxen go across it and plow it to show that it was no longer to be a city, just a plowed field. In the providence of God when the Medieval city of Jerusalem was built up, that section of Zion was left outside the wall. When I was there in 1929 you could see farmers plowing across that very area outside the present walls of Jerusalem where David's palace had been!