If you have your Bibles with you this morning, please turn with me to the Old Testament Book of Micah. The Book of Micah is toward the end of the Old Testament right after the Book of Jonah.

Our text is found in Micah chapter 3. Please follow along as I read all twelve verses.

READ: MICAH 3:1-12

P R A Y E R

Introduction

Two hundred and thirty four years ago today (2010) 56 Noble Statesman gathered in Philadelphia to sign one of the most historical documents ever written: The Declaration of Independence.

* The first, largest and most famous signature on that historical document was that of John Hancock, of Massachusetts. He was the first President of the Continental Congress.

* The oldest man to sign the Declaration was 70 year old Benjamin Franklin. And the youngest to sign was 26 year old Edward Rutledge from South Carolina.

* The signers of the Declaration also included the names of two future Presidents of The United States: John Quincy Adams, our second President. And Thomas Jefferson, our third President.
Every 4\textsuperscript{th} of July since then, the citizens of this great country have celebrated that historical event with picnics, parades, fireworks, outdoor barbeques and musical concerts.

But while today is a day of celebration it must also be a day of sober reflection.

Many people in this country seem to have a growing sense of uneasiness and doubt about AMERICA’S future.

........Are America’s days numbered?
........Have we passed the point of no return?
........Is God’s judgment going to fall upon this nation?
........Has God already turned His back on this nation?
........Can anything be done to save America?

These are certainly questions I have given a lot of thought to and I would imagine many of you have as well.

George Santayana once said, “Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it.”

The pages of history are filled with stories of nations that were born and flourished for a time, then floundered and died.

IS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA DESTINED TO BECOME THE NEXT GREAT NATION TO FALL?
Ancient Judah & The U.S. Strikingly Similar

In this 3rd chapter of MICAH the nation of JUDAH, the Southern Kingdom in the divided land of Israel, finds herself in a situation that is strikingly similar to the situation we now find ourselves in right now here in AMERICA.

Any time a nation begins to decline people start pointing the finger of blame. Well its one thing for people to point fingers at other people, but it is a totally different matter when GOD POINTS THE FINGER OF BLAME.

As the Prophet Micah warns JUDAH of GOD’S IMPENDING JUDGMENT, he points a bony finger at THREE DISTINCT GROUPS OF PEOPLE, and tells them: “God says this is YOUR FAULT!”

First, Micah points his finger and says……

I. This Is Your Fault You Corrupt Politicians vs. 1-3

READ: verses 1-3

1. Lord Acton once said, “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

2. That was certainly true of the politicians governing the citizens of Judah.
(A) First Micah denounces their **CORRUPTION**

**vs. 1,2a** Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel. Should you not know justice, you who hate good and love evil.

These politicians were interpreting the law in such a way as to benefit themselves rather than the people they served.

While using the LAW to crush the spirit of the citizens of Judah, they considered themselves above the law.

They were using their political position to pad their own pockets.

They were guilty of all kinds of corruption, bribery and scandal. They were dishonest and dishonorable men. Men of low morals and low character.

(B) Secondly Micah denounces their **CRUELTY**

**vs. 2,3** You who hate good and love evil; who TEAR the skin from My people and the flesh from their bones; who eat My people’s flesh, strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces; who chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot.

What Micah was saying was “you corrupt politicians treat the people the same way a butcher treats a carcass.”

You have taxed the people to death, you have cheated them and robbed them and literally stripped them down to the bare bone. You have crushed their spirit. You have killed their morale. You have stolen their hope.

**PROVERBS 29:2 When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.**

3. Throughout history, any time a nation has crumbled and met her demise, much of the blame rests squarely on the shoulders of **CORRUPT POLITICIANS**.

That was true of JUDAH in Micah’s day and it is true of the United States of America in our day and time.
Next, Micah points his finger and says…..

II. This Is Your Fault You Compromising Preachers

VERSES 5-8

1. These “prophets”……these “preachers” in Micah’s day were proclaiming “peace” even in a time when the judgment of GOD was about to fall upon Judah.

   They were a bunch of compromising……back-scratching ..........ear-tickling preachers who knew the truth, but were afraid to proclaim it for fear they might step on someone’s toes or hurt someone’s feelings.

2. Brothers and sisters I believe with all my heart there is a direct correlation between what is being preached in our pulpits and the health of our nation.

   I believe STRONG PREACHING produces STRONG CHURCHES........STRONG CHURCHES produce STRONG FAMILIES........STRONG FAMILIES produce STRONG COMMUNITIES......and STRONG COMMUNITIES produce A STRONG NATION.

   And by the same token I believe WEAK PREACHING produces WEAK CHURCHES. WEAK CHURCHES produce WEAK FAMILIES........WEAK FAMILIES produce WEAK COMMUNITIES and WEAK COMMUNITIES produce A WEAK NATION.

3. Leonard Ravenhill once said, “We have too many dead preachers giving out dead sermons to dead people every week.”
4. WOE to the preacher who compromises the TRUTH that is found in the Word of God!

WOE to the preacher who refuses to PREACH AGAINST SIN for fear of losing his job.

WOE to the preacher who is more concerned with the approval of people than the approval of GOD.

WOE to the preacher who tells people what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear.

5. Like the late Vance Havner used to say, “We need more preachers who tell it like it is rather than tell it like it ain’t.”

-Can you imagine NOAH telling the people in his day that everything is fine and dandy and you don’t have a thing to worry about?

-Can you imagine ABRAHAM telling the people in Sodom and Gomorrah, “You all are basically good people except for that homosexuality thing. You all just keep on doing what you’ve been doing.”

6. Brothers and sisters, I would love nothing more than to stand before you on this Independence Day and tell you that “Everything is fine and dandy in the United States of America!” I would love to tell you, “America can look forward to a bright and glorious future!”

But the truth is, OUR NATION IS IN GRAVE DANGER! The truth is: our ECONOMIC problems and our SOCIAL problems and our POLITICAL problems are just the outward symptoms of a more serious illness that is threatening the life of our nation and that is the CANCER OF SIN.

The truth is, A NATION cannot treat GOD as we have treated Him and survive! The truth is, if this nation doesn’t repent and go back to God, our days as a great nation are numbered!
7. And when that time comes that AMERICA falls from the ranks of one of the greatest nations in history, much of blame will rest squarely upon the shoulders of every COMPROMISING PREACHER.

Micah points the finger of God’s judgment and says,

“This is your fault you CORRUPT POLITICIANS!”

“This is your fault you COMPROMISING PREACHERS!”

And thirdly, Micah points the finger of God’s judgment and says,

III. This is Your Fault You COMPLACENT PEOPLE.

VERSE 11

1. The word “they” in that 11th verse is where the COMPLACENT PEOPLE appear.

   The period just before God brings His judgment upon a sinful nation is often characterized by a complacency in God’s people.

2. English Philosopher Edmund Burke once said, “All that is necessary for evil to succeed is for good men to do nothing.”

   The people of Judah knew their POLITICIANS were corrupt. And yet they did nothing!

   The people of Judah knew their PREACHERS were compromising the truth. And yet they did nothing!
3. They adopted a “que sera, sera” attitude: “Whatever will be will be.” And soon God’s judgment fell hard upon the land of Judah.

Listen to the prophet Micah’s indictment against the complacent people of Judah in verse 12.

_Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets._

4. Have we American Christians become a complacent people?

You tell me………

5% of those on Church rolls don’t even exist.

10% of those on Church rolls can’t be found.

20% of those claiming to be Christians never pray.

25% never read their Bibles.

30% never attend a Church service.

40% never give to their Church.

50% never attend Sunday School

60% never go to Church on Sunday evening

70% never get involved in the work of the Church.

80% never have any kind of family devotions.

And over 90% never win one soul for Christ.
CONCLUSION

Alexander Tyler, a Scottish History Professor at the University of Edinburgh, has done extensive studies on the great civilizations throughout history. His conclusions are both interesting and disturbing at the same time.

Tyler writes:

“A democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. A democracy will continue to exist up until the time voters discover they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority will always vote for the candidates who promise them the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result being that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship.”

Tyler notes that, “The average age of the world’s greatest civilizations from the beginning of history until now is about 200 years. During those 200 years, those nations have always progressed through a similar sequence:

The nation goes ...........

From bondage to spiritual faith.
From spiritual faith to great courage.
From great courage to liberty.
From liberty to abundance.
From abundance to complacency
From complacency to apathy
From apathy to dependence
And from dependence back into bondage.
This morning we have learned from GOD’S WORD that when a nation falls under the judgment of GOD there is plenty of blame to go around.

CORRUPT POLITICIANS who misuse and abuse their position must shoulder a great deal of the blame.

And so must COMPROMISING PREACHERS who fail to preach the truth and speak out against sin.

And so must COMPLACENT PEOPLE who sit back and do nothing as they watch their nation move closer and closer to destruction.

Is there any hope for America? Or is it too late?

As long as there is a God in heaven there is always hope.

I want to close with a brief portion of a PRAYER that was prayed by author Max Lucado, shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

(prayer on next page)
Dear Lord,

We don't ask you for help; we beg you for it. We don't request it; we implore it. We know what you can do. We've read the accounts. We've pondered the stories and now we plead, Do it again, Lord. Do it again.

Remember Joseph? You rescued him from the pit. You can do the same for us. Do it again, Lord.

Remember the Hebrews in Egypt? You protected their children from the angel of death. We have children, too, Lord. Do it again.


You changed Daniel from a captive into a king's counselor. You took Peter the fisherman and made him Peter an apostle. Because of you, David went from leading sheep to leading armies. Do it again, Lord, for we need counselors today, Lord. We need godly leaders. Do it again, dear Lord.

Most of all, do again what you did at Calvary.

Do it again, Lord! Do it again!

Through Christ we pray,

AMEN