

240707pm Sermon Transcript

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Micah 4:1-13

(This sermon transcript is an extract of a video recording of the full service. The numbering is auto-applied and reflects the number of minutes into recording that the transcript relates to.)

37:14

What is the most stormy ferry trip you have been on?

37:21

So as I say that maybe you've got a memory of a particularly horrible journey.

37:24

I remember as a teenager going on what was only I checked it, it seemed like days.

37:30

It was only a three hour crossing when I checked how long it was, but it felt like a very long time.

37:35

I spent the whole time on the upper outer deck feeling very, very poorly.

37:42

But what carried me through the journey and my parents as they cared for me was the hope of the harbour ahead.

37:52

You knew the journey wasn't going to last forever.

37:55

And even though you have no idea why the ferry decided to go out in such a storm, the harbour is coming and all will be well.

38:06

Well Micah, Chapter 3 can feel a bit like a stormy harbour.

38:09

Can't stormy journey, can't it?

38:12

No, three Chapter 3 last week.

38:15

It feels like a stormy journey because it was, if you're with us, a sad and shocking chapter.

38:23

And I wonder what hit you most as you went through the chapter.

38:25

Was it the sins of the leaders of Israel, described as a kind of cannibalism because they thought so little of the value of human life that they chopped them up in that vivid picture of the evil they were doing?

38:40

Or maybe it was the threat of the removal of God's presence from God's people, a chilling thought.

38:50

Or perhaps it was those words in verse 12 right at the end of the chapter with that picture of Jerusalem with the temple there and the picture there in verse 12 of Zion plied like a field, Jerusalem becomes a heap of rubble and the Temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.

39:12

Well, whatever struck you most?

39:14

As we come to Micah chapter 4 this week, it is like a calm, warm and welcoming harbour of hope.

39:25

This chapter reveals God's wonderful plans for the future.

39:30

Here God is Speaking of of near term and long term things that He is going to do and His purpose in this chapter is to give His people hope.

39:40

It is to give us help as we endure present struggles.

39:46

So if you know anything about Micah chapter 4, you will know this chapter is a subject of a lot of debate and discussion and probably this evening you might not agree with me over all the details.

39:57

As you work through the chapter, you might have different views on timings of different things and that's OK.

40:04

That's OK because we should be humble about being definite or definitive about the interpretation of all the specifics.

40:12

I want to say some things I want to say.

40:14

It might be that it's this because I don't want us just to be vague this evening, but we can have a range of views about some of those things.

40:21

But in the midst of all that, I do not want us to miss.

40:25

And please don't miss this evening, the hopeful impact of this chapter, this chapter should make every one of us here this evening be optimistic about the long term future.

40:40

That's how it should affect us because Christians should be hopeful people.

40:46

Whatever your view of the end times, whether you're premillennial, amillennial, post millennial, or you're just not sure which of them you are, that's OK.

40:55

Because ultimately the big picture is that our God wins, that human history has an endpoint, and that the eternal Kingdom of God, the new heavens and the new earth is coming.

41:12

So Christian, you should be an optimistic person because of that truth.

41:16

And I hope that's one thing that will hit us and the way this passage will impact us this evening because this chapter contributes to the future hope we have as believers.

41:25

So let's see that this evening and be encouraged.

41:28

Well, what's the structure of the chapter?

41:30

We're going to see it.

41:30

The chapter neatly splits into two sections.

41:33

Verses 1 to 8 give us hope from knowing the long term future.

41:39

Verses 1 to 8 and then verses 9 to 13 tell us we can have hope from knowing details about the short term future.

41:49

Now, now this this chapter is spoken in terms that would have been understood by the people in Micah's day.

41:55

And so for that reason, there's distance for us as we look at this chapter.

41:59

So we're going to have to work hard to understand the details and to apply them to our lives, but it's going to be worth the work as we see how much hope there is for us here.

42:10

So let's turn first of all to verses 1 to 8 and see that the long term future is bright.

42:19

The long term future is bright.

42:24

On Friday morning and afternoon, there was a change of the Prime Minister and a change of the government in the United Kingdom.

42:33

And that the background to all that happens in that day is very carefully planned and choreographed.

42:39

There are specific instructions and timings for what happens at different times.

42:43

So Rishi Sunak left Downing Street just before 11:00 and he went to go and have an audience with the king.

42:51

And then at 12:00, Keir Starmer went to go and have his audience with the king.

42:55

And having been invited to form a government, he returned to Number 10 Downing St.

43:00

And the events that happened would have had a time stamp attached to them.

43:05

So everyone knew the plan for what was happening.

43:08

Now, in verses 1 to 8, God is describing things that are going to happen.

43:12

It's future prophecy, but there are no dates and no time stamps for us in this passage.

43:21

And that's one of the challenges to interpreting this chapter of Scripture.

43:26

But there are sometimes clues in the text, and there is a very important clue right at the start of verse one.

43:34

If you saw there in a reading, chapter 4 and verse one began with the phrase in the last days, in the last days.

43:43

And that means that the events of verses 1 to 8 are not just about the very end, but actually the last days are the period of time from Christ's birth right through to the new creation.

43:59

They are what we call the new covenant age.

44:02

They are the period of time we talk about of the Kingdom of God coming to this world.

44:08

It begins with the coming of Jesus and it extends right in to the new heavens and the new earth and the new creation that comes about when Jesus returns.

44:18

Now we know that's the case because in Acts chapter 2, if you remember, there's that occasion when the Holy Spirit is given to the apostles and God's word is spoken in all those different languages and the people say, what's going on here?

44:35

And Peter, one of the leaders of the early church, says what is happening is the Spirit is being given as God promised it would be given in the last days.

44:47

It's a quote from the book of Joel.

44:49

So the spirit being given at the beginning of that new covenant age is the beginning of those last days.

44:56

And those days start from the the birth of Christ and it's coming into the worlds and continue right through to Jesus second return and the new creation.

45:06

So it's a huge period of time that's being addressed in these first eight verses.

45:10

It it means that that we're looking at thousands of years and there will be multiple horizons and fulfillments of these first eight verses.

45:21

One of the things James spoke to us about at the start of the series in my career is he gave us principles for the interpretation of biblical prophecy is we thought of how when you look at a mountain range from side on, it seems like all the mountain peaks are just next to each other because you look side on and that's how perspective works.

45:40

But if you were to get in a helicopter and fly over the mountain range, you would see that those mountain peaks can be separated by hundreds of miles, great distance between them.

45:52

And we need to realise this, that that Mica is layering different moments of fulfilment on top of each other.

45:59

So as you work through this passage, we're going to see that working out as we look at these verses.

46:04

So the long term future is bright.

46:06

Three things to notice here.

46:08

First of all, a mountain transformed in verse one.

46:13

There we read in these last days, the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains.

46:21

It will be exalted above the hills and peoples will stream to it.

46:28

So Mount Zion, the mountain of God's temple here is stable and supreme.

46:35

Now it's a striking reversal, isn't it, As we think about the very last verse of chapter 3, verse 12, there you had Zion and Jerusalem, a temple hill were ploughed and in rubble and overgrown.

46:49

But now this mountain of the Lord's temple that comes in these last days is established.

46:55

It is the highest mountain.

46:58

It is exalted above all the other hills.

47:01

And the nations that attacked and drew Israel away from that mountain, what they do now, they stream to this mountain.

47:11

Now let's think about some of the details here.

47:12

We have this thought of the mountain of the Lord being the highest mountain.

47:17

And the, the thing that's being taught to us here is that this mountain is supreme.

47:24

This mountain is representative of the new covenant faith of, of coming of the Kingdom of God, of what God is doing in the coming of Jesus and the fulfilment of all those promises.

47:35

And, and it's the supreme mountain.

47:37

It's the highest mountain.

47:39

That's important.

47:40

The picture there is important because in the ancient worlds temples were built on different mountains and the temples were were put there to be the dwelling places for those nations gods.

47:56

And so if you had the highest mountain, what did that say about you?

48:00

It said you were the greatest God dwelling in the greatest house.

48:05

This is an exclusive claim of the Lord God.

48:09

It's saying that his mountain with his temple is at the highest place.

48:15

There is no hill for Zeus.

48:18

There is no hill for any other Pagan God like the owl.

48:22

He is the one true gods and knowing him is the one true religion.

48:30

So this, this mountain here in verse one, is symbolic of New Covenant faith.

48:36

It's symbolic of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

48:39

It is the pinnacle of God's dealings with people.

48:43

It is the one true hope of the nations.

48:47

And friends, if you are trusting in Jesus, that's the mountain you have come to this evening.

48:55

The writer, the Hebrews, tells us that very thing in Hebrews 12 and verse 22 where he says, But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem.

49:08

You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the Church of the first one whose names are written in heaven.

49:16

You have come to God the Judge of all, to the spirits, the righteous made perfect, to Jesus, a mediator of the new Covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

49:29

That's Hebrew 12 verses 22 to 24.

49:34

This is the mountain you have come to if you're a Christian.

49:38

But this, this, this possibility of knowing gods and this coming of the Lord Jesus and the promises of the gospel means that the nations are transformed.

49:49

And here we look at verses 2:00 to 4:00 because the new covenant era, God's new dealings, brings great change for the nations.

49:58

And look at the verses there and what we see.

50:00

We see that this mountain is attractive to the nations.

50:05

They are drawn to it.

50:07

What do they say?

50:08

They say, come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob.

50:17

Now as you hear that being said by the nations, that should ring memory bells to you.

50:23

And what should it make us think of?

50:25

Well, it should make us think of the Psalms of ascents, the Psalms that were sung by the Israelites as they went on their pilgrimage up to Jerusalem, because in Psalm 122 we read this.

50:40

This is one of the psalms of a sense that they sang as they went up to the temple to worship God.

50:46

I rejoiced with those who said to me, let us go to the House of the Lords.

50:52

But now see, it's not just the Israelites who are saying, let us go to the House of the Lord.

50:58

It's the nations who are saying that.

51:01

It's the nations who are saying, let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob.

51:08

And the nations are drawn to God's ways.

51:10

They desire to be taught His ways, and they want to walk in his paths.

51:17

And why do they come?

51:18

End of verse two.

51:20

They come because God's Word, God's law, has gone out from Zion to the nations.

51:28

God's truth has flown, has flows down to the nations, and because the truth of God goes out to the nations, which is what happens as the gospel goes to the ends of the earth, What do we see?

51:42

We see the nations flow up because they want to know more.

51:48

In the old covenant, God dealt largely just with Israel, but now the nations hear of the Lord and they seek the Lord.

52:00

Now the first fulfilment of this, we might say, is seen in the book of Acts, in Acts chapter 2.

52:04

We've already spoken of it.

52:06

When at Pentecost people hear the good news in their own language, what do they do?

52:12

They believe in great number and this work of the law of God, God's truth going out from Zion and the nation's coming to know the Lord.

52:22

Well, it continues today, doesn't it, in the work of missions, as God's truth goes to the nations.

52:32

And as we look at verses three and four, we see the blessing that comes from hearing and responding to God's Word because a restored relationship with God transforms lives.

52:45

Look at verse three.

52:47

Those who trust the Lord sit under His reign, and so he judges and resolves disputes between them.

52:57

Wars cease.

53:00

Swords and Spears, middle of verse three are beaten and turned into ploughshares and pruning hooks.

53:08

What's the picture there?

53:09

The picture there is that precious materials that were once used to stockpile weapons are now used for practical, productive use.

53:19

And there is no need to train for war because peace with God brings peace with others.

53:27

I was struck listen to James this morning as he took us through Romans chapter 3, verses 9 to 20.

53:33

And we looked at those seven ways in which sin corrupts people.

53:38

And we see here that God's truth coming to the heart and embrace.

53:43

And as the Spirit works, what does it do?

53:46

It restores people to our true humanity.

53:49

It's a reversal of the downgrade of Romans 3 as we see the goodness the gospel works in human hearts and isn't that the longing of all people for this peace and this end of war.

54:04

It's I learned this week that the most of verse three from the phrase they will beat their swords into ploughshares right down to nor will they train for war anymore.

54:16

That text is on the side of a wall as a Muriel, right next to the UN building in New York.

54:25

So they established the UN with this goal to bring peace to the nations.

54:31

And it reminds us the longing of humanity for peace and productive endeavours and the end of war.

54:36

And that's a worthy goal.

54:39

But ultimate peace only comes through seeking the Lord 1st.

54:44

And then that extends into wider life because when people know their Lord, know the Lord, there is great security and and prosperity.

54:52

Each one sits under his own vine, his own fig tree, that picture of prosperity and freedom to pursue good things.

55:00

And there's no reason to fear because God establishes and secures this Kingdom.

55:07

What good the gospel does in the world.

55:10

I read an article just recently about the effects, the sad effect of giving smartphones to an isolated tribe.

55:20

And they were given smartphones and suddenly they become lazy and unproductive and addicted to all kinds of horrible things.

55:27

But when the gospel comes to an unreached tribe, what happens as they believe there is huge change, isn't there?

55:36

The cannibalistic warring tribe changes and suddenly respects life.

55:43

Culture is transformed.

55:45

People become productive and positive friends.

55:50

Christianity has changed the world and continues to bring great change.

55:57

Do not believe when people say it's imperialistic work to be about worldwide evangelism.

56:04

It's not.

56:05

It is to bring good news of salvation with God and it is to bring good news of change lives and better lives.

56:14

So the nations are transformed.

56:16

We must keep moving on because we see in verses 6 to 8 that God's people are transformed.

56:23

The people of God might experience hardship, but that will change too.

56:28

Now some of this happens in the in the the age of Christ coming and the and the church and some of it is fulfilled only fully in the age to come.

56:37

But you see there that God gathers his lame, exiled, grieving people and they become his remnants.

56:44

Those who are once driven away become a strong nation.

56:49

They're established in the Lord Jesus Christ because he comes to rule over them.

56:56

He comes as the the shepherd of of God's people.

57:00

He comes to restore dominion.

57:02

He comes to be God's king, ruling in Jerusalem, being born in Jerusalem, ruling over all of God's world.

57:10

And we'll see more of that as we come to Micah chapter 5 next week.

57:16

But did you notice that the great hope for the people of God in verses 6 to 8, that as the Lord rules over them, He rules over us from that day and forevermore?

57:28

It's a great security of God's reign here.

57:31

It is an enduring reign.

57:33

The people of God don't need to fear because we have been, we have been saved and God rules over us.

57:39

Calvin said of this verse and of verse seven that if God was just going to rule over his people for a few months or for a few years and then stop, well, that would bring no lasting hope.

57:51

But God here promises to rule enduringly over His people.

57:56

He will never abandoned them.

57:58

He will never let them go.

58:00

He will protect and preserve them.

58:03

So there there is a promise those in those verses of of God's people transformed as well in their experience.

58:11

So in summary, these first eight verses, in these verses God promises He is going to do great things through Christ's coming and into the new covenant age.

58:25

It will bring great blessings for the nations and great blessings for God's people.

58:30

And we see some of this now, some of it comes now, and we wait for some of it in its fullness to come in the new heavens and the new earth.

58:42

But whatever our view, the time scales, the overall vision is so very positive.

58:50

And friends, Christians should be hopeful and positive people, not necessarily about the immediate, but always about the ends.

59:01

God calls us, the Bible calls us to realism about the presence.

59:06

But sure, optimism about the long term future.

59:11

Now I know sometimes we say, well, that person's just optimistic and that person's just pessimistic and that's just who they are.

59:17

But but this is not an issue of temperament.

59:20

It's an issue of biblical conviction.

59:24

Will you be a positive Christian about the long term because of God's great work?

59:29

But also, friends, let's remember that God is fulfilling these promises in our own day.

59:38

The word of the Lord is going out, and the nations are streaming to Mount Zion.

59:46

Praise the Lord I I received a letter this week from a a godly friend who does missionary work and shares about the Lord Jesus in Iran and among refugees across all of Europe who have come from that area of the world.

1:00:01

And he wrote in his letter of many who are turning to the Lord in those areas.

1:00:09

And we can be discouraged as we look at the lack of gospel progress in the UK.

1:00:16

And friends, as we look at that, what do we need to do?

1:00:19

We need a worldwide perspective on mission.

1:00:23

God's promises are worldwide promises, aren't they?

1:00:26

They're not just for this nation.

1:00:28

They're for every nation.

1:00:30

And we need a worldwide perspective on missions to protect us from discouragement.

1:00:37

God is working in amazing ways in this world.

1:00:42

Read missionary prayer letters to be encouraged about that, friends.

1:00:47

But then also, as we think about what this vision might mean for us, can I ask you, have you come to this mountain that's spoken of in this chapter?

1:00:58

Have you come to Mount Zion?

1:01:01

Have you come to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ?

1:01:05

If you long for a world where there will be no wars, if you long for a world where we will all have that that peace and freedom and No Fear, you're only going to find it through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the hope of what he can do.

1:01:25

Do not trust in finding that kind of world outside of the Lord Jesus.

1:01:33

That kind of change, that kind of universal restoration and that universal peace is only going to come through the Lord Jesus Christ, and it's only going to fully and finally come in the new heavens and the new earth.

1:01:47

And so if you long for that, your greatest need is to be right with God because your sin has been dealt with, because you're trusting in Christ, and then your hope can be of this world that is to come.

1:01:59

How many it is who are taken in by a secular worldview that seeks utopia just by human efforts.

1:02:08

You know, in our pride, humanity thinks that we can fix every problem that we can end every war that we can, secure unending progress and create a stable world without God.

1:02:21

And it's not true.

1:02:21

Friends, we need the Lord.

1:02:25

The Bible tells us that culture changes as God changes people.

1:02:31

So have you come to this mountain?

1:02:33

Have you come to know the Lord?

1:02:36

Have you sought the Lord?

1:02:37

Are you seeking to know Him because his word has gone out and you're responding and saying I want to know his ways.

1:02:44

I want to walk in his paths because I want to know peace with God and I want to know peace with my fellow human being.

1:02:55

But then as a another final application, we look at this section and then we move on.

1:02:59

How then should we live in light of these things?

1:03:02

Well, if you're observant, you'll notice there's one verse I've said nothing about.

1:03:06

Which verse is it?

1:03:09

Verse five.

1:03:10

Well done, Mark.

1:03:10

Yeah, verse 5.

1:03:12

And I missed that verse because that verse is the great command for us.

1:03:17

It tells us how we should live.

1:03:19

This is God's people responding to this amazing vision.

1:03:23

And what do they say?

1:03:24

They say all the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.

1:03:34

What does that mean?

1:03:36

It means that this vision we have seen of what God has been and is doing and will do in the future should shape your life today.

1:03:48

It should shape your life.

1:03:49

Now you should make it your resolve not to walk in the gods of the name of the gods of the nations in false gods, but rather to be committed to walk in the name of the Lord and notice the duration forever and ever.

1:04:07

And what does it mean to walk in the name of the Lord?

1:04:10

It means to live by faith.

1:04:12

It means to live the life obedience.

1:04:14

It means to live worshipping the Lord and the Lord alone.

1:04:17

Why?

1:04:18

Because God has done, is doing, and will do great things and we want to walk in His ways.

1:04:27

A long term vision of the future which is hopeful and bright.

1:04:31

Now we turn briefly and more quickly to verses 9 to 13 where we see a short term, a short term future.

1:04:42

The short term future may be hard, right?

1:04:46

You ready?

1:04:48

We've had all this glorious hope and then suddenly thud, you come back down to earth and you hit life in the world you hit tomorrow morning.

1:05:00

And all the struggles of life and all the trials that we face, all the difficulties that home, all the trouble in the workplace, all the, the car crashes and the car horns and, and all that goes wrong in our worlds.

1:05:14

And that's what Micah does in verses 9 to 13, having set this amazing vision of, of hope and brightness and joy, he takes the people back down to the immediate situation.

1:05:26

It's a big downshift, isn't it?

1:05:29

There in verses 9 through to 13.

1:05:32

Now, how do we know it's a downshift?

1:05:34

Well, do you remember in verse one we saw that that time stamp phrase in the last days and then in verse eight there was in that day, which is another reference back to verse one.

1:05:45

Well, look at verse 9, Micah says, why do you now cry aloud?

1:05:52

He's coming more immediate and then verse 11, but now many nations.

1:05:59

So Micah's going from the big scale long term to the immediate situation for the people of God.

1:06:08

And there in verses 9:00 and 10:00, and then in verses 11 to 13, there are going to be two cycles of trouble and hope.

1:06:20

There will be trouble for the people of God and then hope of God's deliverance.

1:06:26

And the big picture, the big message that God wants his people to hear is I'm telling you this so that you will endure, so that you will know it will not always be hard, but deliverance and help will come.

1:06:42

That that the thought he wants them to have is that God is still working when things go wrong.

1:06:49

God is still working when the car doesn't start in the morning.

1:06:53

God is still working when the letter from the doctor lands on the doorstep that says, I need to speak to you about those test results.

1:07:00

God is still working when there's a row in your marriage, God is still working.

1:07:05

And we see the world in so much turmoil and trouble.

1:07:09

When it seems like everything is lost.

1:07:12

God is still in control.

1:07:15

Don't panic.

1:07:16

Deliverance will come.

1:07:18

God is working out His plan.

1:07:21

That's the thought of these verses.

1:07:23

We see it in two cycles.

1:07:24

So the first cycle is rescue will follow captivity, verses 9:00 to 11:00.

1:07:31

Now verse nine is very tricky.

1:07:34

There are many options for how we might understand this verse, but perhaps it's a reference to the distress of the people at the removal of their king by the Babylonian invaders.

1:07:49

So the king was removed from Jerusalem by the Babylonians, and perhaps this is how the people are crying out.

1:07:55

So why do you cry having no king?

1:07:57

Has your ruler perished?

1:07:59

There is great turmoil in the people because they have lost their king and their ruler.

1:08:04

That may be what verse nine is speaking of.

1:08:06

Verse 1110 is much clearer and the message, though clear, is hard because it's saying great pain is coming.

1:08:14

Look at what's said.

1:08:16

Writhe and agony, Daughter Zion, like a woman in labour.

1:08:19

For now you must leave the city.

1:08:22

They're going to have to leave Jerusalem.

1:08:26

You will camp in an open fields and you will go to Babylon.

1:08:32

So what's this?

1:08:33

This is a prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonian invaders.

1:08:40

This is a prophecy of the exile of Jerusalem, the people from Jerusalem to Babylon.

1:08:48

Now that's really, really amazing when you think about it, because Micah is writing these words before the Babylonian empire really existed.

1:09:01

The major empire in the ancient Near East is not the Babylonians at the time that Micah's writing, do you remember, it's the Assyrians.

1:09:08

They're the ones coming down from the north and pressurising the people.

1:09:12

And, and it's so astonishing that Micah would prophecy the exile in Babylon that, that, that scholars who aren't Christians who need to find a way to explain this, say this could not have been written until after 586 BC when Jerusalem has fallen and they've gone into they've they've gone into captivity because how could Micah know?

1:09:38

It just couldn't happen.

1:09:38

It must be this has been added subsequently or the book was later because there's no way that they could talk about the Babylonians because the Assyrians are the are the major players in the ancient Near East.

1:09:49

And it's just impossible that he could write this.

1:09:53

Well, perhaps unless there is a God who knows and plans a future, a God who reveals these things to Micah, and a God who speaks these words to his people.

1:10:07

It's an astonishing thing, isn't it?

1:10:09

And how encouraged we can be as we read these verses, because we can know even more.

1:10:15

We can say that God did exactly as he said would happen here.

1:10:20

Every one of the promises of God's Word is fulfilled.

1:10:24

But but the key point for us to take because we're saying it's a cycle of trouble and then rescue.

1:10:31

The key point is, is verse middle of verse 10.

1:10:34

You will go to Babylon.

1:10:36

There you will be rescued.

1:10:38

There the Lord will redeem you out of the hands of your enemies.

1:10:42

He's saying you're going to go into exile.

1:10:44

You're going to go to Babylon, but I'm going to deliver you.

1:10:48

And God reveals this immediate future event to give hope because deliverance is coming.

1:10:57

So that when the Exiles realise they're going into captivity, they would say God is going to rescue us because he's promised it.

1:11:06

That's the first cycle.

1:11:07

But the second one is in verses 11 to 13, where we see that victory will follow gloating.

1:11:15

And here the picture is of the nations gathering against Zion to gloat over Zion as she falls.

1:11:22

But we read the Lord God will give his people victory.

1:11:26

He will breathe them victory over their enemies, though their enemies surround them and gloat over them as they think they're going to fall.

1:11:34

Now, this could be a reference to what happens when the Assyrian armies of King Sennacherib surround Jerusalem and you remember it's that impossible situation with many, many armies, and then the Angel of the Lord comes in the night and puts to death 185,000 Assyrian soldiers.

1:11:55

Astonishing rescue.

1:11:57

Or maybe it's something else.

1:11:58

We're not exactly sure about that, the time reference.

1:12:02

But whatever the event that's in view, the point is that the enemies of God's people will never ultimately win.

1:12:11

When they think they're going to win, God will rescue and deliver them.

1:12:16

And friends, when's the greatest demonstration of that truth?

1:12:19

It's the cross, isn't it?

1:12:23

It's the cross.

1:12:24

When the devil thinks I've got him, the Son of God, I'm going to put him to death and I'm going to be victorious because I am going to seek to put him to death.

1:12:36

What does Christ do in his death?

1:12:39

He is victorious through his suffering.

1:12:43

Satan is cast down.

1:12:45

The devil thought he had won, but in fact Christ had.

1:12:50

Now the events foretold in verses 9 to 13 could be very specific to Micah's day.

1:12:58

But let's zoom out and as we close, apply the same principle to our troubles.

1:13:06

The troubles in our life can be very hard.

1:13:10

We can experience great pain, we can weep many tears, we can lose many hours of sleep.

1:13:18

We can go through great turmoil.

1:13:21

But what sustains the people of God through their troubles?

1:13:26

What saves us from panic and despair?

1:13:30

Well, it's that we know what the nation's the enemies of God don't know.

1:13:37

We know the thoughts of the Lord and we know something of His plan.

1:13:43

And even though we don't know everything, we know that He has a plan.

1:13:48

We know that He is in control.

1:13:51

We trust that God is in control.

1:13:54

Even though it seems like chaos.

1:13:56

We say, no, it's not.

1:14:00

Our Lord God has a plan.

1:14:04

Our Lord God is governing and ruling over all things.

1:14:08

He's working out His purposes.

1:14:11

The long term future is absolutely secure.

1:14:14

We know that from verses 1 to 8, don't we?

1:14:17

And he will protect his people in the short term, even when it's very hard.

1:14:23

Friends, the message is deliverance will come.

1:14:25

Ultimately, you will not be put to shame.

1:14:28

Ultimately, the key thing is to remember that is that deliverance is coming, suffering will end and ultimately joy will follow.

1:14:43

I was reflecting, I was reminded this week that this picture of suffering and then joy, promise deliverance is perhaps most powerfully pictured in the experience of as an expectant mother through labour.

1:15:02

You know, isn't it surprising we call labour delivery?

1:15:06

Talk about a delivery ward and when remember they're all family and that has a, has a child, you know, remember they, what they do they, they put a piece of paper in A-frame on an easel outside Buckingham Palace.

1:15:19

And what are the words?

1:15:20

It says Her Majesty has been delivered of a son.

1:15:26

And you think that's a really odd phrase as you hear it, but it's deliverance because intense suffering ends with great joy, doesn't it?

1:15:38

Now imagine your eve right back in the Garden of Eden and you knew nothing about labour.

1:15:45

But you're pregnant.

1:15:47

And then you start to have labour.

1:15:49

You haven't seen childbirth, but you start to have labour during it.

1:15:52

What do you think?

1:15:53

What do you think?

1:15:54

This is the worst thing possible.

1:15:57

Is that right?

1:15:57

Ladies have children.

1:15:59

Yeah.

1:16:00

Having watched my wife have children, I think she'd agree.

1:16:03

And I think many those who've had children would agree as well.

1:16:06

It's the worst thing possible, but what great joy there is in the arrival of a child, what deliverance?

1:16:16

And you need to know that that joy, that deliverance is coming so that you can endure the pain because that's what gets you through it.

1:16:29

So Christian, take comfort in your trials that you know something of the thoughts of the Lord.

1:16:38

You know, one of the things that suffering does is it narrows our field of vision and it makes everything immediate.

1:16:48

It make what's an immediate seem.

1:16:50

That's everything.

1:16:52

That pain that can be so hard, those tears that can flow for so long, that turmoil that just seems to never end.

1:17:03

And that's all you can see.

1:17:07

Micah 4 says God says to you this evening.

1:17:12

Zoom out, zoom out, remember the big picture.

1:17:20

Remember, ultimately all will be well.

1:17:24

Remember deliverance is coming and seek to understand what God has revealed of His plan.

1:17:32

And the more you dwell on the purposes of God as He has revealed them in His Word, the more you will have strength and hope to endure.