



Covenant

Then they will cry out to the Lord, but He will not answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time because they have practiced evil deeds.

Micah 3:4

I love how the principles found in the word of God are applicable across the board. The passage we read may be specific to the nation of Israel, but its particulars, its moral and spiritual implications are not confined to Israel but can be applied to any person living. In the book of Micah, the prophet decries the state of social injustice and spiritual adultery within God's chosen people. In this particular verse, he addresses the misconception that their "covenant relationship" superseded everything else, including their evil deeds. They relied on their status as "God's chosen people," fully expecting God to keep His end of the covenant while they dodged around their end.

A covenant has two parts. God took the impossible portion on Himself, that of salvation and restoration, and made huge promises that only He could fulfill. But there were portions that the other party of the covenant bore: to keep themselves pure and holy, set apart for God, to worship God and God alone, to follow the social conduct laid out so specifically for them in Levitical law and reinforced in Deuteronomy. Over and over Moses reminded the people that they must choose God, they must obey Him, they must reserve themselves for Him alone and follow His ways. Moses reminded them again and again in his final messages to the wanderers that before them were laid blessings and curses, life and death, prosperity and adversity, and *they must choose*.

The sad thing is that they chose curses, death, and adversity, but expected blessings, life, and prosperity. The feature verse reminds the people of Israel that it doesn't work that way. The prophet knew adversity, calamity, and death was coming for Israel, spurred by their own actions and choices, and knew that they would cry out to the Lord in that time, demanding that He fulfill His promises to them, but He would not hear them. He would not act on their behalf. They violated God's covenant yet expected Him to maintain the blessings of that covenant.

How often do we conduct ourselves the same way? How often do we live like hell but expect the blessings of a pure and holy God to fall upon us, expect Him to swoop in and save us from our own consequences? While it is not our works that save us but rather our faith in the One who can, we are still called to live holy lives. The New Testament renews the covenant between God and His people, and there are still conditions that we must meet. Search His word, my friends, and follow His precepts. Keep the covenant. Choose life.

Father, we thank You for Your promises to us. We thank You that You are able to fulfill Your promises even in the face of dire circumstances. We ask that You help us examine our hearts and see where we are failing to keep our promises to You. Reserve us for Yourself, O God, and enable us to live holy lives that testify to the transforming power of a Holy God.