

1. God Promises to Purify His People and Cut Off Our Iniquities
 - a. The phrase “I will cut off” is repeated and a strong expletive shout from Micah that God is purging evil from the midst of His people, just as He had called them to in Leviticus
 - i. The LORD promises and resolves to annihilate everything within His people that offends Him and harms them
 - ii. So, this passage is about the purification of God’s people by the LORD Himself
 - b. cut off your horses (military power/strength to save yourselves)
 - i. destroy your chariots
 - ii. Military strength as the means of salvation, glory, significance rather than entering by faith into proper relationship with YHWH
 1. The Western Church today still struggles mightily to divorce itself from its dependence upon political and military might as the means to making things the way they’re supposed to be
 2. Not only military might, but technology (chariots) and our reliance upon it to bring about true and lasting change
 - c. cut off the cities of your land (places of refuge/security built by man)
 - i. throw down your strongholds
 1. What are our strongholds that we run to instead of turning to the LORD in prayer and dwelling upon His Word?
 2. Have we not turned to trust in our jobs and our money as our security? Our economic stability and our toys?
 3. We, O Church, still struggle to trust in the Lord as we give evidence that our strongholds of “Christian ghettoism” are firmly set upon the high places of our self-righteousness
 - a. We think that we are “safe” from evil when we avoid worldly people, worldly businesses, basically the world in totality.
 - b. We form “Christian” businesses, with “Christian” people, and “Christian” clubs, which are really not Christian at all, but self-righteous moralist ghettos of same-minded people who trust in our own righteousness rather than humbly boasting in Christ (evidenced by a lack of evangelism).
 - c. God will throw these down when we trust in them rather than in Him!
 - ii. Not “cities” as places of dwelling and community life, but extrapolated further as “strongholds” indicating places of refuge and security
 1. These places has been their trust, rather than YHWH
 - d. cut off sorceries from your hand (manipulation/control of others by means of magic)
 - i. no more fortune tellers
 1. “from your hand” indicates the power or ability to accomplish something
 2. There won’t even be any “diviners” or “brings clouds”
 - a. Seems to indicate those who practice potion-making that created “clouds” in order to speak with the dead
 - b. See Manasseh and the relationship of “fortune-tellers” and idolatry, magic, etc. in 2 Kings 21
 - ii. The means and self-interested efforts of manipulation of people through magic and/or objects (crystals, potions, etc.) and the people who made such godless promises
 1. The truth is that when the Word of God is not taught or trusted, people tend to turn to “spirituality” to ease the anxiety over the future
 2. Isaiah 8:19-20 – “To the teaching and the testimony!”
 3. God created us to take our anxieties to Him through prayer and the testimony of His grace in His Word
 - e. cut off your carved images and pillars from among you (idolatry)

- i. shall not bow down to your own works
 - 1. Materialism and greed, believing that we find joy, satisfaction, and strength through the acquisition of goods/wealth
 - 2. Intellectualism and pride, believing that we will find significance, joy, and strength through the attaining of the knowledge of the universe, man, and divinity apart from the revelation of God in Christ
 - 3. Man-centric humanism, believing that man is the center of the Universe and that all things, even God, exist for man's good and glory
 - ii. root out your Asherah images from you
 - 1. Asherah poles were the fertility idols placed under trees in the ANE, an appeal to the goddess for fertility in field and in the womb
 - 2. Much of the sexual immorality in the OT is linked to the Asherah
 - a. Our cultural idol of sensuality, by which we pursue joy, satisfaction, pleasure apart from the Lord
 - b. Ultimately hollow to the soul, destructive of our ability to truly love others
 - 3. destroy your cities
 - a. we have built economies around sex and sensuality
 - i. Growing media/entertainment sector of global economy is estimated to be valued at \$1.3 TRILLION dollars¹
 - ii. \$3,000 PER SECOND is spent on pornographic materials globally, and the "industry" is considered so important to the US economy that the US government gave the porn industry a \$5 billion bailout in 2008-9²
 - iii. "from among you"
 - 1. Indicates the purpose of sanctification, of purification, of cleansing being done by the LORD
 - 2. This is not mere judgment, but a cleaning out of all that which would stand in the way between God and Man because of sin/self-strength/unbelief in Him
 - f. strong correlation to Isa 2:6-8 which mentions the same things: horses/chariots, fortune-tellers/sorcery, idols/works of their hands
 - i. There is strong indication that these things were the functional saviors of Israel, and God is judging/purifying them of these things in the same "day" of the Ruler's rise.
 - 1. see "cut off" in Isaiah 9:13-16, just after the prophecy of the Prince of Peace, that God would "cut off" the honored man and the lying prophet (head and tail)
 - ii. "cut off" is also strongly indicative of circumcision, of that which sets the people of God apart, here being the circumcision of evil from the community through the circumcision of the heart (Deut 30:6; Rom 2:29)
2. God Will Judge Those Who Are His Enemies with Wrath and Anger
- a. The first section had to do with the LORD's removal of the enemies from within, and is remedial ("from among you")
 - b. This second section, of one stanza, has to do with the LORD's removal of the enemies from without, and is penal
 - i. Note that the LORD HIMSELF will judge those who are against Him with vengeance, anger, and wrath as enemies
 - 1. Romans 12:19 - "leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' says the LORD"
 - 2. Proverbs 20:22 - "Do not say, 'I will repay evil.' Wait for the LORD, He will deliver you."

¹ http://www.ifpi.org/content/section_news/20060622.html

² <http://www.economywatch.com/world-industries/porn-industry.html>

- ii. Note, also, that **GOD WILL JUDGE HIS ENEMIES**, so the Church needs to lift up a prophetic voice of warning to the nations
 - 1. Warning, not self-righteous condemnation
 - 2. The world is already judged, as we were, for being enemies of God and His Kingdom, we announce the hope of being brought in by Christ through repentant faith in Him as Savior/King (John 3:18; 5:24; 20:31)
 - iii. Note also that God devotes multiple stanzas to the enemies within His people and only one to those nations outside His covenant.
 - 1. What does this tell us about what is the most important for the Church to “fight”?
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 5:12-13
 - a. Purge the evil one “from among you!”
 - b. Don’t worry about those outside!
3. There is a “Day” When the LORD Changes Everything
- a. See 4:6
 - i. The day of the Ruler?
 - ii. The day of the Remnant?
 - b. Same "day"?
 - i. Remember the “day” in the OT prophetic narratives did not indicate a 24-hour period, but an epoch of history wherein God’s redemptive plan was furthered and/or fulfilled
 - ii. I believe that this day of God’s grace “has appeared” in the coming of Christ “who gave Himself for us” and the inauguration of His Kingdom with the pouring out of His Spirit to “to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.” (Titus 2:11-14)
 - 1. Therefore, we are to live godly lives now! (v12)
 - 2. Today is the day of God’s working and He is transforming His church into the image of His Son (Eph 4:11-14), which is why He has given gifts of the Spirit to the Church.
 - 3. **Corinthians 3:18** And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,¹ are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
 - c. The day of victory (v9) of "cutting off" of their enemies!
 - i. When is this day?
 - 1. Romans 8:35ff
 - 2. 1 Cor 15:55
 - 3. 1 John 5:4
 - 4. Heb 2:14-15
 - ii. When the people of God are “dew” to the nations, spread out and sprinkled throughout the world bringing the refreshing aroma of Christ, to some the odor of death and to those who are called the aroma of life (2 Cor 2:15-16)
 - iii. When the people of God are “lions” among the beasts, called to fight against evil and injustice with ferocity because the King has overcome!
4. This is Why We are Made to be Dew and Lions to the Nations
- a. Dew that brings life, the refreshing Water of Life to the world
 - i. Hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ
 - ii. Hope to the weary, burdened, guilty soul
 - b. Lions that ferociously attack evil in the world
 - i. The Church of Jesus Christ is to be active against evil and injustice
 - 1. When others are harmed, where is the voice of the Church?
 - 2. The global sex trade? Manipulation of economic forces by the powerful? The devouring of the weak by the strong?

3. WHERE IS THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH?!

- c. The strength to be dew and lions lies in the reality and strength that the LORD will bring about the transformation and purity of His Church!
 - i. These are all promises: “I will cut off!”
 - ii. Because we know that God will accomplish this, we can endeavor and wrestle and fight with great hope and with great determination.
 - 1. God will win this battle in us and among us!
 - 2. God will purify my heart and make us a community the way it’s supposed to be!
 - 3. God will remove threats from within and threats from without!
 - 4. And we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever, the zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.