

Title:        **“THE DAY OF THY WATCHMEN”**

Text:        Micah 7:1-4

Subject:     *Living by Faith*

Date:        Tuesday Evening — April 10, 2012

Tape:        *Micah #25*

Readings:  *Bob Duff and Allen Kibby*

Introduction:

You will find the title of my message in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Micah’s prophecy at verse 4 — Micah 7:4. — **“THE DAY OF THY WATCHMEN.”** We will begin our reading at verse 1. Micah 7:1. As we read this portion of Holy Scripture, let us not make the mistake of reading it merely as an ancient prophet speaking to people who lived in bad times long ago.

Yes, Micah’s prophecy was written to Israel. Yes, it was God’s word to a rebel people upon whom he was about to send judgment, providential judgments by which he would punish the reprobate and by which he would both correct and preserve his elect.

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**Yet, this is God’s Word to you and me. Let us read it as such.** It comes to us fresh from the mouth of God this very hour, written out by God’s inspired prophet this very hour, as he was moved by God the Holy Ghost. The ink is barely dry. Hear, now, the Word of the Lord to you.

**“Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: [there is] no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit”** (v. 1). — These are figurative terms. Micah is saying, “Where are the godly? Where can I find someone with whom I can walk in sweet fellowship, with whom I can sing the songs of Zion, someone who will speak to me of God my Savior, someone whose soul is set on Christ and things above, whose life is hid with God in Christ? Where can I find a heaven-born soul?”

**Illustrations:** “*I feel so alone!*”

Young People at Conferences

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A scarcity of godly people is a terrible thing in any society; but a scarcity of godly men throughout the earth is indescribably terrible. And that is the state of this age. Let others talk as foolishly as they dare, you and I know that godliness is more scarce than gold in this generation.

**Micah’s message suits our day well.** Like Isaiah, we justly cry out, “*Who hath believed our report?*” And again, “*O my leanness, my leanness! Woe is me, for there is only as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done*” (Isaiah 24:13,16). God’s people live in isolation, as loners in a crowded city, without companions.

As our Redeemer wept over Jerusalem and Paul’s heart broke for his countrymen, so we ought to realize the sad plight of our own sinful day and the immortal souls running to hell all around us. **Yet, we should not, even by these things, be greatly discouraged. Our Savior’s glory is sure, even now** (Isaiah 49:5-6).

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“And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb [to be] his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, **Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious** in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. 6 And he said, **It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.**” (Isaiah 49:5-6)

We know that this is the meaning of Micah’s words because that is exactly what he says in verse 2.

**“The good [man] is perished out of the earth: and [there is] none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net”** (v. 2). — Yes, the godly are truly scarce.

- Few walk according to the truth of the gospel.
- Few seek the will of God.
- Few seek the glory of Christ.

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- Few are the pilgrims seeking a city whose Builder and Maker is God.

**Yet, this very fact makes this day a blessed day in which to live for and serve the Lord our God.** If ever there was a day in which men and women who worship and serve God might be useful and beneficial to others it is this day! The more wicked the age, the more the godly are needed. The more men forsake God, the more they need someone to tell them about the Savior. — If ever there was a day when a gospel preacher was needed, it is this day! — If ever there was a day when a gospel church was needed, it is this day!

“Brethren, see poor sinners round you,  
Slumbering on the brink of woe!  
Death is coming. Hell is moving.  
Can you bear to let them go?”

**“That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge [asketh] for a reward; and the great [man], he uttereth his**

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**mischievous desire: so they wrap it up**” (v. 3). —  
— In this day when both politicians and prophets can be bought and bribed, when civil rulers and religious leaders work together to do evil, — in this age of self-serving dishonesty, injustice, and debauchery, greed, ambition, and the pursuit of every lust rule the lives of all from their youth up, — let those who do know God do good “*with both hands earnestly!*”

- Preachers!
- Witnesses!
- Teachers!
- Churches!

**“The best of them [is] as a brier: the most upright [is sharper] than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen [and] thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity”** (v. 4). — The best of men, the best of this generation, not the worst but the best, are briars and thorn hedges. Get near them and you are sure to be injured by them. — “*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

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Now, watch the next line in verse 4. In the midst of this woeful lamentation, Micah makes a startling and wonderful declaration. — **“The day of thy watchmen [and] thy visitation cometh!”** For the ungodly, for the reprobate, this shall be (It always has been and always will be.) a time of perplexity. But God has promised, in every age and in every place, to give his church faithful watchmen, pastors after his own heart. — *“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding”* (Jeremiah 3:15).

**Proposition:** When the Lord God visits his church in mercy, he raises up watchmen upon the walls of Zion. — When God sets faithful watchmen upon the walls of Zion, look for him to visit his people graciously.

**Divisions:** Let me talk to you briefly about these two things:

1. Zion’s Watchmen
2. Zion’s Visitation

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**ZION’S WATCHMEN**

Whenever the Lord God visits his people in mercy he raises up and sends faithful, gifted gospel preachers among them (Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7; Isaiah 52:7-10; 62:6-7; John 1:6-8). **Watch the connection between watchmen raised by God and grace bestowed by God.**

**(Ezekiel 3:17)** “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.”

**(Isaiah 52:7-10)** “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! 8 **Thy watchmen** shall lift up the voice; **with the voice together** shall they sing: for they shall **see eye to eye**, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. 9 Break forth into joy,



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sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath **comforted** his people, he hath **redeemed** Jerusalem. 10 The LORD hath **made bare his holy arm** in the eyes of all the nations; and **all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.**”

**(Isaiah 62:6-7)** “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, [which] shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, 7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”

**(John 1:6-8)** “There was a man sent from God, whose name [was] John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all [men] through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light.”

Without question this passage of scripture refers to John the Baptist. The Lord Jesus said of him,

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**“Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist”** (Matthew 11:11). The Master spoke well of him; but John did not speak well of himself and did not have a high opinion of himself. He had a very high opinion of the true Light, the Lord Jesus Christ. John expressed the heart of every true preacher, when he said, **“He must increase, but I must decrease”** (John 3:30).

**The whole purpose for John’s life and ministry was to identify the Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and point sinners to him** (John 1:29, 36). He was sent to bear witness of the true Light, Christ who is and who reveals the true way of salvation in, by, and through the true and living God (2 Corinthians 4:6).

- Those who heard John preach the gospel did not follow John; they followed the Lord Jesus (John 1:37).
- John himself was a sinner in need of the Savior. John was a mercy beggar who plainly told other mercy beggars where he found salvation and peace.

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**What blessing it is to any congregation of sinners to have a man sent from God.** What great a blessing from the hand of our heavenly Father to provide men sent with the gospel message of Christ and him crucified as the only way of salvation (1 Corinthians 2:2).

- Only a man sent from God is willing and able to preach the gospel. — *“How can a man preach except he be sent”* (Romans 10:15)?
- Only a man sent from God will be a blessing to the sheep of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).
- Only a man sent from God has a low opinion of himself and a high and exalted opinion of the Redeemer (Galatians 6:14). — *“We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us”* (2 Corinthians 4:7).
- Only a man sent from God will constantly point sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ who made complete and total atonement for sin and brought in everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:12).

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**One of the greatest blessings God can give to any people, any community, any church is a man sent from God** (Ephesians 4:11-14). **Find a man sent from God, and you have found a man you would be wise to hear.** Find a man sent from God, and you have found a man just like any other man, sinful, weak, and in constant need of grace, and yet a man unlike any man. Find a man sent from God, and you will have found a prophet, a messenger of God to your soul. Find such a man and you would be wise to camp where he is. He has a message from the heart of God to his own heart, for your heart (Jeremiah 23:28-29; 2 Corinthians 4:5-7).

Now, I want you to hear this. I repeat myself deliberately. — **No man can preach the gospel effectually, in the power of God the Holy Spirit, except he be sent of God.** — “*How shall they preach, except they be sent?*” (Romans 10:13-17) I ask you to pray for me and for our brethren around the world that, having been sent of God, we may be sent every time we stand to preach, that we may, like

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those of old, “*be filled with the Holy Ghost and speak as the Spirit gives us utterance.*” As you send your pastor out to do the work of an evangelist, pray for me, “*that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel*” (Ephesians 6:19), “*that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ*” (Colossians 4:3).

**This I know**: — When God is about to visit his people in mercy, love, and grace, he raises up watchmen upon the walls of Zion. — And when God raises up watchmen upon Zion’s walls he is about to visit Zion. — John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Lord Jesus. Even so, wherever you find “*a man sent of God*” the Lord Jesus soon appears!

- Zion’s watchmen faithfully wound (Song 5:7).
- Zion’s watchmen take away your veil and expose you to yourself (Song 5:7).
- And Zion’s watchmen faithfully point you to the Savior (Song 3:3).

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**(Jeremiah 31:3-9)** “The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, [saying], Yea, **I have loved thee with an everlasting love**: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. 4 Again **I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel**: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. 5 Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat [them] as common things. 6 **For there shall be a day, [that] the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.** 7 For **thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob**, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, **O LORD, save thy people**, the remnant of Israel. 8 **Behold, I will bring them** from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, [and] with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall

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return thither. 9 **They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim [is] my firstborn.**” (Jeremiah 31:3-9)

**ZION’S VISITATION**

Now, look at our text again. Be sure you do not miss this. **Micah tells us that “the day of thy watchmen” shall be the day when “thy visitation cometh!”**

“The best of them [is] as a brier: the most upright [is sharper] than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen [and] thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity.” (Micah 7:4)

So, let me tell you just a little about the day of God’s visitation, as it is set before us in Holy Scripture. **There is a day of Divine visitation, when**

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**the sovereign Redeemer is pleased to meet chosen sinners and reveal himself in salvation.**

**Illustration:** *The Adulterous Woman* (John 8)

**I am not talking about a twenty-four hour day!**  
You do not need a calendar to mark the time of your conversion. You do not need to remember a time, or place, or day in which you first met the Lord. In fact, if you have to look back to a given event as the proof that you are saved, you are not saved.

**Illustration:** *Birth Certificate Assurance*

**But you can mark this down:** — There is a day of Divine visitation. There is a time when the living God gives life, repentance, and faith in Christ to his sheep, by the omnipotent mercy and irresistible grace of his Spirit through the preaching of the gospel of his grace. — There is a day appointed when God will meet every chosen, redeemed sinner in saving power and grace (Ezekiel 16:6-8).



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**(Ezekiel 16:6-8)** “And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live. (7) I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: *thy* breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou *wast* naked and bare. (8) Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.”

**Illustrations:** Jacob — Moses — Job  
*Isaiah — Paul*

Isaiah uses the words “**in that day**” to indicate the presence of the Lord and the work of the Lord in redeeming, saving grace. And he tells us **five things** about **the day of Divine visitation**.

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**HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTION**

*First*, in Isaiah 2:11-12 and 17, the prophet shows us that **the day of Divine visitation is a day of Holy Spirit conviction.**

**(Isaiah 2:11-12)** “The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. (12) For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be* upon every *one that is* proud and lofty, and upon every *one that is* lifted up; and he shall be brought low.”

(Isaiah 2:17) “And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.”

**GRACIOUS REVELATION**

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Now turn to Isaiah 11:10 and you will see that **the day of Divine visitation is a day of gracious revelation.**

**(Isaiah 11:10)** “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.”

In order for us to have faith in Christ, Christ must be revealed in us. We cannot trust an unknown, unrevealed Christ. He is revealed to us and in us by his Spirit through the Word.

**Illustration:** *The Woman at the Well* (John 4)  
*Saul of Tarsus* (Acts 9; Galatians 1)

Our Savior is called by many names. He is: — The Root of Jesse, — The Seed of Woman, — That Prophet, — The Priest, — The King, — The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, — The Rose of Sharon, — The Son of David, — The Banner (Ensign) of the People (Isaiah 9:6).

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**(Isaiah 9:6)** “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

**Once he is revealed, we look to him; and looking to him, we find that his rest is glorious!**

- His Rest as Our Mediator. — “*His rest is his glory.*”
- Our Rest in Him. — *Christ our Sabbath* (Matthew 11:28-30)

**SAVING FAITH**

*Third*, in Isaiah 25:9, we see that **the day of Divine visitation is a day of saving faith.** This saving faith, that faith spoken of in the Word of God, true faith is the gift of God, the operation of his grace. **Faith in Christ is the result of Holy Spirit conviction and the revelation of Christ.**

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**(Isaiah 25:9)** “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

**When Christ is revealed in the heart, faith is born in the heart. Faith is born of and rests upon the revelation of Christ in our hearts** (2 Corinthians 4:3-6).

**(2 Corinthians 4:3-6)** “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (4) In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

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**JOYFUL ASSURANCE**

*Fourth*, Isaiah tells us in chapter 26 verses 1-4, that **the day of Divine visitation is a day of joyful assurance.**

**(Isaiah 26:1-4)** “In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will *God* appoint *for* walls and bulwarks. (2) Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. (3) Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee. (4) Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength.”

**In that day of conviction, revelation and faith, God’s elect have a song to sing and a rock upon which to rest, whatever the trial** (2 Timothy 1:12). **It is faith in Christ that gives a joyful assurance to the heart.**

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**(2 Timothy 1:12)** “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

- We have a strong City of Refuge.
- We are surrounded by the Walls of Salvation (Romans 8:28-30).
- We have entered the Gates of Life.
- We are kept in perfect peace by faith in Christ.
- The Lord, Jehovah, is our Rock.

“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness:  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.  
On Christ, the Solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.”

**HEARTFELT PRAISE**

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Once more, in Isaiah 12:1-6, we see that **the day of Divine visitation is a day of heartfelt praise.**

(Isaiah 12) “And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, **thine anger is turned away**, and thou comfortedst me. (2) Behold, **God is my salvation**; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD **JEHOVAH is my strength** and *my* song; he also is become my salvation. (3) **Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.** (4) And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, **declare his doings** among the people, **make mention that his name is exalted.** (5) Sing unto the LORD; for **he hath done excellent things**: this *is* known in all the earth. (6) Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: **for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.**”

When the Lord God visits his elect with saving grace, they praise him with joyful hearts and praise him alone. No flesh will ever glory in his presence. Those



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who know the Lord, those who are visited by the Lord, glory in the Lord (Psalm 115:1; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

**(Psalms 115:1)** “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth’s sake.”

**(1 Corinthians 1:26-31)** “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: (27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: (29) That no flesh should glory in his presence. (30) But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (31) That, according as it is written,

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He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

*“The day of thy watchmen” shall be “the day of thy visitation!” — “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:38).*

**(Micah 7:4)** “The best of them [is] as a brier: the most upright [is sharper] than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen [and] thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity.”

**(Psalms 106:4)** “Remember me, O LORD, with the favour [that thou bearest unto] thy people: O visit me with thy salvation.”

**(Psalms 80:14-19)** “Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; 15 And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch [that] thou madest strong for thyself. 16 [It is] burned with fire, [it is] cut down: they

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perish at the rebuke of thy countenance. 17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man [whom] thou madest strong for thyself. 18 So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. 19 Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”

To the reprobate the day of thy watchmen shall be their perplexity. But to you who are God’s the day of thy watchmen is the day of thy visitation.

Amen.