

Micah 5:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities.

Analysis

And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities. "Groves" (אֲשֶׁרִים, Asherim) were wooden poles or living trees associated with Asherah worship—the Canaanite fertility goddess. These groves often accompanied Baal worship sites. Deuteronomy 16:21 commanded: "Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God." Yet Israel repeatedly erected Asherim (Judges 6:25; 1 Kings 14:23, 16:33). These groves represented syncretism—blending Yahweh worship with pagan fertility religion.

The verb "**pluck up**" (נָתַשׁ, natash) means to uproot, tear away—violent removal. God tolerates no compromise. The parallel phrase "**so will I destroy thy cities**" links idolatry's judgment with military defeat. Why? Because idolatry breaks covenant, forfeiting divine protection. When Israel trusted false gods, they lost Yahweh's defense. Hosea 4:12-13 describes Israel playing the harlot under oaks and poplars because "the shadow thereof is good"—spiritual adultery under pleasant groves. Such apostasy invites judgment.

The New Testament identifies subtler "groves"—anything cultivated to replace God. Jesus warned: "No man can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). James declared friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). The Church must purge syncretism—blending Christianity with cultural idols (materialism, nationalism, sexual immorality). God demands exclusive worship. Revelation 2:14-16 condemns Pergamum church for tolerating Balaamite teaching; Christ

threatens: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

Historical Context

Asherah worship infiltrated Israel through Canaanite influence. These fertility cult practices included ritual prostitution and child sacrifice. King Asa removed the Asherah his grandmother made (1 Kings 15:13). King Josiah demolished Asherah poles and groves (2 Kings 23:4-6, 14-15). Yet the practice persisted. Micah's contemporary Isaiah witnessed similar syncretism (Isaiah 17:8, 27:9). Asherah worship exemplifies the danger of cultural accommodation: Israel justified syncretism as "contextualizing" worship for Canaanite neighbors. But God sees it as spiritual adultery. The Church faces similar temptations: accommodating sexual ethics to cultural norms, softening gospel exclusivity for interfaith dialogue, prioritizing political agendas over biblical fidelity. Faithfulness requires uprooting cultural idols, however pleasant their "shadow."

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What modern "groves" (cultural practices, philosophical assumptions, lifestyle patterns) have you subtly allowed to coexist with Christian faith, compromising exclusive devotion to Christ?
2. How does recognizing the connection between idolatry and loss of divine protection motivate you toward radical purity in worship and life?
3. In what areas might you be guilty of syncretism—blending biblical Christianity with worldly values under the guise of cultural relevance?

Interlinear Text

עֲרֵב: וְהַשְׁמַדָּת ְיַבְּנֵת
And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee so will I destroy
H5428 H842 H7130 H8045 H5892

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 34:13 (Parallel theme): But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves:

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