

# The Eschatological End of Consumerism

by Bryan Anthony

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*The sermon challenges listeners to abandon consumeristic values and abide in God, experiencing the powers of the age to come and living a life of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 4:20, Micah 4:4, Zechariah 3:10, Matthew 26:52, John 15:5

**Topics:** "Eschatology", "Kingdom Living"

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## Description

Bryan Anthony preaches on the eschatological vision of a world set aright by God's judgments and mercies, where righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit prevail. He highlights the contrast between the consumeristic society of today, driven by self-centeredness and consumption, and the Kingdom values of God's future reality as described in Micah 4. Anthony emphasizes the need to turn away from worldly desires and embrace a God-centric lifestyle to experience true peace, humility, and righteousness. By abiding in Christ and allowing His transformative power to discipline our appetites, we can taste the powers of the age to come and live in Kingdom modesty.

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## Transcript

"Every man will sit under his own vine

and under his own fig tree,

and no one will make them afraid,

for the LORD Almighty has spoken." -Mic. 4.4

The picture of the world, after being set aright by the judgments and mercies of God at the end of the age, is one of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Micah 4 is one of the most remarkable statements of that renovated order of reality, when God Himself dwells amongst men, and His ways become the prevailing government.

There is something about our consumeristic society- the pervasive addictions to entertainment and food, the rat races of the corporate world, the machinic and often heartless nature of industry, the radical mixture of truth and untruth in politics, and the overall nature of a me-first, 'take care of number one' culture- that is totally antithetical to the eschatological vision given in the Scriptures.

We are consumers to the hilt, from the nature of our eating and shopping, to the whole tenor of our militaristic endeavors and our political agendas. Everyone is wanting to be seen and recognized as the greatest and biggest, and this is even prevalent in American ministry. We are willing to step on the backs of others to consume what we desire, and to secure a place of prosperity for ourselves. The reality of the cross- and the nature of God's self-sacrificial character- has become 'old hat', and we have fallen under the waves of an all-too-often noisy, glittery, violent, and irreverent culture.

But when at once we are touched by the Spirit of God and brought into contact with His nature, we see that His way and His Kingdom are totally removed from the busy-headed spirit of this age. Everything is calculated to trample the inner-man these days, and if we would come into the rest and sabbath reality of the Gospel, it will require us shutting the door on the world, entering the place of prayer, and "tasting of the powers of the age to come." If we give in to this consumeristic age, we will consume the wine of this world, and consequently, our inner-man will be consumed by the powers of darkness. But if we turn from the crookedness of this age, and abide in the reality of God by the Spirit, we will walk in a transcendent peace, humility, and righteousness. Hear this scholar's description of the age to come as it is set forth in Micah 4; namely, the ending of war and the destruction of consumeristic values:

As a result of disarmament, every individual enjoys the fruit of his own labor in security (4.4). The rewards of righteousness on the international level work themselves out to peace for everyone. Instead of having to flee to the narrow confines of fortified cities as in times of war, in the new era of peace everyone can sit peacefully 'under his own vine and under his own fig tree.' The concrete image depicts the full enjoyment of God's abiding peace and prosperity without fear of danger. The new age will re-experience the joy and happiness of Solomon's golden days (1 Kgs 4.20; 5.5 [4.25]; 1 Macc 14.11-12). Zech 3.10 speaks of neighborly fellowship. In fact, there is a flip side to Micah's vision: by sitting under their own vines and fig trees they show that they have also disciplined their swollen appetites. The dreams of disarmament and of agrarian well-being are inseparable. Those who live by war will die in war (Matt 26.52), and those with 'swollen appetites' cannot anticipate peace. W. Brueggemann wrote: 'The prophecy anticipates lowered economic expectations. It anticipates a modest life-style of not having more than one's produce and therefore a respect for the produce of others.... Thus this radical vision understands that a dismantling of the military machine carries with it a break with consumeristic values.'

(Micah, Bruce Waltke; Eerdman's, 2007; p. 212)

If we are dominated by "swollen appetites", moved by fashion and entertainment, delighting in violence and war, and gripped with fear of danger or poverty, we can be sure that we are failing to "taste of the powers of the age to come." If our hearts have been transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we are abiding in Him and giving Him pre-eminence in all things, the evidence of that reality will be a grace-charged discipline in areas of appetite, a transcendent rest and peace, and a grace to love and forgive enemies. There is a remarkable kind of Kingdom modesty that we are lacking in this sensational age; a modesty in speech, attitude, and ecclesiological paradigm.

The reason the prophets can describe this most beautiful version of the earth is that their visions are yet future. They predict a time when the earth, the remnant of Israel, and the nations have been purged with the fires of judgment, and after the smoke of that time has cleared, all that remains is a wonderfully God-centric existence.

If we have been touched by the "power" of that future age through the Gospel, and we are abiding in a God-centric mode of living, our lives will exhibit the same qualities. It behooves us then to abide in Him, not merely to toss around theories about what the faith is, and what the future age will entail. "Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" have been brought nigh to us by the Blood of the Lamb.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. -Jn. 15.5

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