

The

Prophecy of

Micah

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Kings of Assyria in Micah's Day

Pul - a Babylonian not mentioned in Assyrian records but mentioned in 2Kings 15:19 in the days of Menahem king of Israel. Also in 1Chron.5:26 together with Tilgathpilneser. Some have claimed Pul was another name for Tiglathpilneser but the fact that both are mentioned as separate identities in the same verse indicates they are not the same person. Babylon was a part of the Assyrian Empire and competed with Nineveh for power. On at least two occasions Babylon led the Empire for a short period.

Tiglathpilneser III - 745 - 727 B.C. (2Kings 15:29; 16:7,10)

Shalmaneser V - 727 - 722 B.C. (began the siege of Samaria)

Sargon II - 722 - 715 B.C. (finished the siege of Samaria 721 B.C.)

Sennacherib - 715 - 681 B.C. - besieged Jerusalem 713 B.C. but fled when the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 Assyrians in one night. He put down a Babylonian revolt and was later assassinated by two of his sons. He was succeeded by his son Esarhaddon.

Micah Chapter 1

Samaria and Jerusalem to be Judged

Micah prophesied in “the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem” (Micah 1:1). He was a Morasthite.

Many names of cities and places to which Micah refers have meanings in keeping with the prophecies being made. The time in which Micah prophesied was a time of great apostasy; idolatry had filled the land and God was about to bring the Assyrian armies into both the Northern kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

In the 6th year of Hezekiah’s reign Samaria fell to the Assyrians after a siege of 3 years. Shallmaneser began the siege of Samaria and Sargon finished it in 721B.C. taking 27,290 captives to Media.

In the 14th year of Hezekiah, Jerusalem was besieged after all the cities of Judah had been captured and Hezekiah attempted to buy deliverance by paying Sennacherib 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold (2Kings 18:14-16). He stripped the gold from the Temple doors and columns to raise the payment but Sennacherib still besieged Jerusalem and mocked the God of Israel. However, when Isaiah and Hezekiah prayed for deliverance the Angel of the Lord slew 185,000 Assyrians in one night and Hezekiah was exalted. He took all the spoils of the Assyrian army and became very rich.

Samaria in the Winepress of God’s Wrath

Micah was a Morasthite which means he came from Moresheth-gath which means “a possession siezed from others” and “winepress”. His name summed up his prophecy that Samaria and Judah would be siezed and be trodden down as grapes in the wine press. The wine press is used to describe the wrath of God elsewhere in Scripture. Joel prophesied of Armageddon:

*“Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for **the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great**” (Joel 3:12-13).*

In the New Testament similar words are used to describe the final conflict before Christ returns:

*“And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it **into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city**, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs” (Rev.14:18-20).*

Gath was a Philistine city and we know from archeological discoveries that the Philistines were great drunkards. Apparently Gath was where winepresses were located.

Don't Blame the Messenger

Chapter 1:2 states that the message was from God:

“Hear, all ye people; ... and let the Lord GOD be witness against you” (Micah 1:2).

Micah's message was not the sentiment of the prophet but the testimony of God Himself! So often the servant of God is accused of being unloving, bitter, and unwise when he speaks the Word of the Lord with boldness but the servant is only conveying a message from God's Word.

Men should hear the Word of the Lord because He is coming to judge the earth:

*“For, behold, **the LORD cometh** forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place” (Micah 1:3-4).*

Paul wrote that Christ will come again in *“flaming fire, taking vengeance”* (2Thess.1:8), and Jude wrote that He would come *“to execute judgment upon all...that are ungodly”* (Jude 1:14-15).

The second advent of Christ will be a fearful time of outpoured wrath accompanied by great ecological upheavals: volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis and meteorite storms.

Leadership Brings Great Responsibility

The transgression of the Northern Kingdom is due to the leadership of Samaria and the transgression of the Southern Kingdom of Judah is attributed to its leadership at Jerusalem.

“For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?” (Micah 1:5).

Those who lead the nation into sin are specially responsible. When a prominent sportsman confessed that he was “gay” he went further by urging young people not to be ashamed of being gay; thus he multiplied his sin before God. Already he had a place of great influence but to use that place to urge others to follow him into sin will bring far greater judgment upon himself.

Political and church leaders have a great responsibility to exert a Godly influence on their followers. If they fail to do so or if they defiantly and brazenly blaspheme God and His law, then they will be the object of great judgment. The sin of Israel is charged to Samaria and the sin of Judah is charged to Jerusalem! The leaders of Samaria had condoned and encouraged idolatry and had spread their false doctrines all the way to the gates of Jerusalem. God said:

*“**THEREFORE** I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof. And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate: for she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot. **THEREFORE** I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls”* (Micah 1:6-8).

The desolation of the city of Samaria can be seen today as a grim testimony to the righteous judgment of God. The city was

destroyed and thrown down and those who lead in the Church today should ponder these words. It is most serious to lead the Church of God into fellowship with false teachers and to break down the standards of separation from apostasy. When leaders in churches join the ecumenical movement and attend ministers fraternals where they fellowship with pastors from cults, such as SDAs, Mormons, idolatrous Catholic priests, and tongues-talking, demon-deceived charismatics, they immediately bring themselves under a Divine sentence. When churches abandon sound doctrinal hymns and turn the worship service into a rowdy concert led by women singing vain, repetitious, choruses, the Holy Spirit is grieved and it becomes impossible to worship in Spirit and in Truth. The ark of God is no longer among God's people and Ichabod is born; the glory of God departs.

Paul described the Church as the Temple of God and warned that *"if any man DEFILE the Temple of God, him shall God destroy"* (1Cor.3:17). God judged Samaria and Jerusalem for their compromise with the false teaching and lies of the surrounding religions and He will do likewise with those who defile the Church of God by compromising with false doctrine today.

Samaria had got her idols from Assyria (by indulging in spiritual harlotry) and the Assyrians would plunder Samaria:

"She gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot" (Micah 1:7).

The longsuffering of God is seen in verse 9:

*"For **her wound is incurable**; for IT is come unto Judah; HE is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem"* (Micah 1:9).

While ever there was a possibility of Israel being restored, God withheld His judgment but Israel had reached the point of no return; her sinful heart was **incurable**. The invading armies would reach even to the Southern Kingdom of Judah and to the gate of Jerusalem. Samaria was destroyed by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. but when Hezekiah sought the Lord the Assyrians were stopped by the Angel of the Lord at the gate of Jerusalem.

The Shame of Apostasy and Judgment

“Declare ye it not at Gath, weep ye not at all: in the house of Aphrah roll thyself in the dust” (Micah.1:10).

Israel had failed and it filled the heart of Micah with sadness but he was concerned about **what the enemies of the Lord would think**: He said, Don’t declare it in Gath or let them see you weep there. Instead go into the house of Aphrah (lit. dust) and roll in the dust of ashes out of sight. Placing dust and ashes on their heads was a sign of great grief.

In times past the nation had followed the Lord and had been a light to the nations, but now she was to be destroyed by the God who they should have obeyed. Micah feared the ungodly nations would gloat over Israel’s fall and God’s name would be blasphemed among the heathen. A similar thought was expressed by David when he heard that King Saul was slain by the Philistines on Mount Gilboa; at that time David said:

*“The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! **Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon**; LEST the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph” (2 Sam.1:20).*

The failure of Christians gives occasion to the ungodly to ridicule the name of our Lord Jesus Christ just as Nathan told David when he sinned in the matter of Bathsheba:

*“Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast **given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme**, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die” (2 Sam.12:14).*

Every Christian; every local church, should jealously guard its testimony lest the behaviour of its members give occasion for the world to blaspheme the precious name of the Lord Jesus. This does not mean that we should cover up evil but rather that evil should be dealt with promptly, judged, and put away. Men will judge the Saviour by what they see in us: if they see inconsistency and hypocrisy the Lord’s name will be maligned. We are to glorify our Father who is in heaven.

From verse 11 to the end of the chapter 1, Micah continues to describe the invading Assyrian army as it spread out through the land of Judah. He states:

“the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem” (Micah 1:12).

This is the second time that Micah mentions the Assyrians coming to **the gate of Jerusalem**. Isaiah prophesied that the Assyrians would overflow the land like a flood until only Jerusalem would survive:

*“Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even **the king of Assyria**, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: And he shall pass through Judah; **he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck**; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel”* (Isa. 8:7-8).

The historical record of this event is told in Isaiah chs. 36 and 37. After Sennacherib had conquered every city in Judah he came up to Jerusalem located on Mount Zion. His army filled the land but in one night the Angel of the Lord slew 185,000 Assyrians and Jerusalem was delivered.

All of the cities named in Micah’s prophecy from ch.1:11 to 16 were cities located in Judah. They were: Saphir, Zaanan, Bethazel, Maroth, Lachish, Moretheshgath, Achzib, Mareshah and Adullam. All were overrun by Sennacherib and only Jerusalem survived.

Micah Chapter 2

The Sins of Israel Catalogued

Having declared what God was going to do to Samaria (Israel) and Jerusalem (Judah), Micah now proceeds to justify the judgment of God on both nations. He catalogues the sins of the nation for which God’s judgment is poured out. We read:

“Woe to them that devise iniquity,... they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house... ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by ...The women of my people have ye cast out from their

pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever” (Micah 2:1-2,8-9).

The people did not want to be rebuked for their sin and said:
“Prophesy ye not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame” (Micah 2:6).

The kind of prophet they wanted was a false prophet:
*“If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will **prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink**; he shall even be the prophet of this people” (Micah 2:11).*

How typical of modern Christianity! There was a time when preachers warned against breaking God’s laws; against immorality, dishonesty, violence, drunkenness but today throughout Christendom many pulpits condone social drinking, homosexuality, and see nothing wrong with divorce. Temperance organizations are defunct today and the greatest excesses of paedophilia are found within Christendom.

Isaiah was prophesying at the same time as Micah and he wrote:
*“This is a rebellious people, lying children, children **that will not hear the law** of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, **speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits**: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us” (Isa.30:9-11).*

Jeremiah wrote:
*“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and **my people love to have it so**” (Jer.. 5:31).*

God’s response was:
*“Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks. **In that day** shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields” (Micah 2:3-4).*

They had unlawfully taken fields and houses from the people and God would take away their fields and houses. God would

gather the people inside the walls of Jerusalem like sheep herded into a fold and the “breaker” would come into the land to break down their walls. The city would be “broken up” and the people led out “through the gate...and their king shall pass before them”. This would be God’s doing.

The “breaker” is no doubt Nebuchadnezzar for when Jeremiah foretold the ultimate destruction of Babylon he wrote:

*“How is **the hammer of the whole earth** cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!”* (Jer.50:23).

When Nebuchadnezzar came the second time against Jerusalem Jehoiachin went out of Jerusalem with his family and surrendered to the Babylonians (2Kings 24:12).

Micah Chapter 3

Jerusalem to be Ploughed as a Field

In the third chapter Micah addresses the Princes who are the heads of the nation, the prophets, and the priests. He addresses them respectfully beginning with, “Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob”, but he is exceedingly bold in what he has to say to them.

“Is it not for you to know judgment? Who hate the good, and love the evil...that abhor judgment, and pervert equity... They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward” (Micah 3:1-2, 9-11).

God’s response was that when they need help,

*“Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but **he will not hear them:** he will even hide his face from them at that time”* (Micah 3:4).

Concerning the prophets and priests he says that they

“make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him...the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.” (Micah 3:5,11).

God’s response was that

“night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine” (Micah 3:6).

The chapter concludes with the remarkable prophecy that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the ground **ploughed over** which prophecy was fulfilled by the Roman Governor of Judea, Turnus Rufus.

“Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest” (Micah 3:12).

The following is an edited account of the fulfilment of the above prophecy taken from Dr Pusey’s commentary on the Book of Micah chapter 3. It traces several destructions of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Destroyed by Babylonians

The prophecy had a first fulfillment at its first capture by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah mourns over it; Because of the mountain of Zion’ which is desolate, foxes walk habitually upon it.

“Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it” (Lam 5:18).

Nehemiah said:

“Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire” (Neh 2:17).

Sanballat *“laughed us to scorn, and despised us” (Neh. 2:19) saying: “What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?” (Neh.4:2).*

Jerusalem Destroyed by Antiochus Epiphanes

In the desolation under Antiochus again it is related;

“they saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned and the gates burned, up, and shrubs growing in the courts, as in a forest or in one of the mountains.”

Jerusalem Destroyed by Romans AD70

In AD70 Jerusalem was again destroyed with the exception of three towers, to exhibit the greatness of Roman prowess

in destroying such and so strong a city. The Jewish historian, Josephus, himself an eyewitness wrote:

“so levelled to the ground the whole circuit of the city, that to a stranger it presented no token of ever having been inhabited”. He said Titus “effaced the rest of the city.”

The elder Pliny soon after, AD77 speaks of it as a city which “had been and was not”. “Where was Jerusalem, far the most renowned city, not of Judah only, but of the East, a funeral pile”.

Jerome (AD420) stated, “relics of the city remained for 50 years until the Emperor Hadrian”. Still it was in utter ruins.

Not Jerusalem only, but well-nigh all Judea was desolated by that war, in which a million perished, beside all who were sold as slaves.

Titus’ expostulation to the Antiochenes, who desired to be rid of the Jews their fellow-citizens.

“Their country to which you would expel them, is destroyed, and there is no place to receive them”

A heathen historian relates how before the destruction by Hadrian,

“many wolves and hyaenas entered their cities howling.”

Titus however, having left above 6,000 Roman soldiers on the spot, a civil population was required to minister to their wants. The Christians who, following our Lord’s warning, had fled to Pella before the siege, returned to Jerusalem, and continued there until the second destruction by Hadrian, under 15 successive Bishops.

Second Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans AD135

A few Jews had been left in Judea after AD70, some very probably returned, since we hear of no prohibition from the Romans, until after the fanatic revolt under Bar Kochba.

Toward the close of Trajan’s reign (AD 98-117) the Jews burst out simultaneously, in one wild frenzy, upon the surrounding heathen. In the subsequent war under Hadrian (AD117-138),

Orosius speaks of them as “laying waste the Province of Palestine, once their own as though they had gained possession of it from without, not by insurrection within it.”

For two years, (as appears from the coins struck by Bar Kochba), they had possession of Jerusalem. It was essential to Bar Kochba’s claim to be a temporal Messiah. He promised at least to “rebuild their Temple and restore their polity”. But they could not fortify Jerusalem. Its siege is just named but the one place that obstinately resisted the Romans was a strong city near Jerusalem named, **Bether**. Probably Bether was one of the strong positions fortified in haste, at the beginning of the war. When Bar Kochbar got the better, he reign $2\frac{1}{2}$ years.

The Jews fulfilled out Lord’s words,

“I am come in My Father’s name and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.”

The Jews assert that in the time of Joshua Ben Chananiah (under Trajan) “the kingdom of wickedness decreed that the Temple should be rebuilt”. If this was so, the massacres toward the end of Trajan’s reign altered the policy of the Empire. A temple was built but it was to Jupiter and not the Lord.

Apparently the Emperors attempted to extinguish the Jewish faith and at other times, the Christian faith. A heathen Author mentions the prohibition of circumcision, keeping the Sabbath and the reading of the Law. Hadrian built the city, Aelia, in place of Jerusalem to efface the memory of Jerusalem.

Jewish losses in the revolt are said to be 580,000 who perished in battle besides an incalculable number by famine and fire, so that all Judea was made well nigh a desert.

The Jews say that “no olives remained in Palestine”. Hadrian destroyed it “making it an utter desolation” and “effacing all remains of it”.

“We read” says Jerome, “the expedition of Aelius Hadrianus against the Jews, who so destroyed Jerusalem and its walls, as, from the fragments and ashes of the city, to build a city named after himself, Aelius”.

Jerusalem Ploughed as a Field

At this time there appears to have been a formal act, whereby the Romans marked the legal annihilation of cities; an act esteemed at this time, one of the most extreme severity. When a city was to be built, its compass was marked with a plough; Hence the saying, "A city with a plough is built, with a plough overthrown".

The city so ploughed forfeited all civil rights. It was counted to have ceased to be. The symbolic act under Hadrian appears to have been directed both against the civil and religious existence of Jerusalem.

The Jews relate that **both their city and the Temple** were ploughed. The ploughing of the city was the last of these mournful memories, which made the month Ab (Av) a time of sorrow.

Jerome says,

" In this (the 5th month) was the Temple at Jerusalem burnt and destroyed, both by Nebuchanezzar, and many years afterward by Titus and Vespasian; the city **Bether**, whither thousands of Jews fled, was taken; **the Temple was ploughed as an insult to the conquered race** by Titus Annius Rufus"

The Gemara says,

"When Turnus, (or Tyrant) **Rufus ploughed the porch of the Temple.** Perhaps Hadrian meant thus to declare the desecration of the site of the Temple, and so to make way for the further desecration by his temple of Jupiter. He would declare the worship of God at an end. The horrible desecration of placing the temple of Ashtaroth over the Holy Sepulchre was probably part of the same policy, to make the Holy city utterly heathen."

St Hilary (AD 300 - 368) who had been banished to the east says, "The Royal city of David, taken by the Babylonians and overthrown, held not its queenly dignity under the rule of the lords; but, taken afterward and burnt by the Romans, it now is not".

Cyril of Jerusalem (AD313 - 386), Bishop of the new town, pointed out to his hearers the fulfilment of the prophecy; "The place (Zion) is now filled with gardens of cucumbers".

It is apparently part of the gradual and increasing fulfillment of God's Word, that the **ploughing of the city** and of the site of the Temple, and the continued cultivation of so large a portion of Zion, are recorded in the last visitation when its iniquity was full. It was literally "*ploughed as a field.*"

As recent as the 19th century Dr Pusey visited Jerusalem and found one part of it supported a crop of barley, another was undergoing the labour of the plough, and the soil, turned up, consisted of stone and lime filled with earth, such as is usually met with in the foundations of ruined cities. It is nearly a mile in circumference" Round to the South the whole declivities are sprinkled with olive trees, which grow luxuriously among the narrow slips of corn."

Micah prophesied:

"Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest" (Micah 3:12).

Micah Chapter 4

Israel to be Blessed in the Last Days

The foregoing information about how Jerusalem was ploughed bears testimony to the fact that the prophecies of Scripture are **literally fulfilled** and therefore demand a literal interpretation. Dr Pusey, in *Barnes' Commentary*, interpretes all references to mount Zion literally when it speaks of judgment on the Jews and the desolation of Jerusalem but in the next chapter 4 where Micah speaks of the ultimate future blessing on Mount Zion in the millennial Kingdom of Christ, he spiritualizes and applies those blessings to the Church. **Such is the inconsistency of the Amillennialists!!!**

The chapter begins with BUT thus indicating that although Jerusalem would be ploughed, and humanly speaking, would

cease to exist, God still had great blessing in store for the nation in the “last days”.

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more”(Micah 4:1-3).

Mountains and hills are used in Scripture to represent kingdoms. In Daniel chapter 2 we read that the Kingdom of Christ will be “a great mountain and fill the whole earth...a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (Dan.2:35,44). In the last days Israel will be exalted above all the nations and the Jews will be a saved nation serving the Lord. They will proclaim the law of the Lord to all nations and God says:

“And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off A STRONG NATION: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem” (Micah 4:7-8).

When Christ reigns in Jerusalem, Israel, Zion, will be the FIRST among the nations as God promised in the Palestinian Covenant:

“And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God” (Deut.28:13).

Today Israel is one of the smallest nations and certainly the most despised nation. Israel has had more censure motions at the UN than any other nation, yet God will make them the head of all the nations. In the kingdom of Christ all nations will

serve Israel and those who refuse will be judged. Isaiah wrote of that day:

*“And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee... For **the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish**; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The sons also of **them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee**; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee; The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel” (Isa.60:10-14).*

Before Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives the disciples asked, *“Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”* (Acts 1:6) but Jesus indicated that the kingdom had been deferred until the Church had preached the Gospel to all nations and finished its testimony. In this Church Age God is taking out from the Gentiles *“a people for his name”* but *“after this,”* He said, *“**I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; ...that the residue of men might seek after the Lord”*** (Acts 15:14-17).

When Christ reigns there will be an end of war, men will dwell securely and every Jew will be regathered to the land. The time of Israel’s chastening will be over.

*“In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and **I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted”*** (Micah 4:6).

Such is Israel’s future but NOW, in the immediate future, Judah is about to be taken captive to Babylon:

*“Now why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? ... Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for NOW shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and **thou shalt go even to Babylon**; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies”* (Micah 4:10).

The 70 years captivity cured the Jews of idolatry and under Cyrus they were restored to the land.

But what of the nations that persecute God's people? The Babylonians despised Israel and mocked them:

*"By the rivers of Babylon, ... there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and **they that wasted us required of us mirth**, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion" (Ps.137:1-3).*

God would judge Babylon:

*"He shall **gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh**, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth" (Micah 4:12-13).*

When Jeremiah was told to prophesy against Babylon he said:

"For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come" (Jer.51:33).

Under the Persian Empire the Jews took vengeance on their enemies but in a future day it will be more so; during the Tribulation. Zechariah wrote after the return of Israel from Babylon and he spoke of a future day when Israel would be under attack from the nations. Israel will have turned to the Lord and God will fight for His people

*"**In that day** will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and **like a torch of fire in a sheaf**; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left... **In that day** shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that **I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem**" (Zech.12:6-9).*

God is waiting for Israel to turn again to Him and then the Lord will fight for them. We know that that time will come in the first half of the Tribulation when Russia and her Islamic confederates invade the land as described in Ezekiel 38 & 39 and Joel 2. That time is surely drawing near!

Micah Chapter 5

Samaria to be Besieged and her Ruler, Hoshea, to be Imprisoned

Micah prophesied during the reign of Hezekiah king of Judah at a time shortly before the destruction of the city of Samaria (AD721) which was the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel; his prophecy concerns both Samaria and Jerusalem. Chapter 5 begins:

“Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek” (Micah 5:1).

The last ruler in Samaria was Hoshea who reigned 9 years. When Shalmaneser came against him the first time Hoshea surrendered and became a vassal king, paying tribute. However, Hoshea conspired with So, King of Egypt, and when Hoshea failed to pay his tribute Shalmaneser took Hoshea captive, bound him, and placed him in prison. Then Shalmaneser came to Samaria and besieged it between 2 and 3 years (Years were reckoned inclusively). Sargon became king, probably by overthrowing Shalmaneser, while the siege was in progress and finally Sargon captured Samaria in the 9th year of Hoshea’s reign.

“And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. THEN the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years” (2 Kings 17:4-5).

Micah’s prophecy that *“the judge of Israel”* would be smitten with a rod *“on the cheek”* may well describe the **imprisonment** of Hoshea, the last king of Samaria. He was not slain but simply silenced (smitten on the cheek), in prison.

It may also refer to Zedekiah who was the last king of Judah for he was also taken captive and his eyes were put out after witnessing the death of all his sons; he was then taken to Babylon where he died in prison. The smiting on the cheek could allude to his eyes being put out.

God's Future Ruler to be Born at Bethlehem

Micah 5:2 is a well known prophecy because it foretold the birthplace of the Lord Jesus:

"Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

When the wise men came to Herod seeking the One who was born King of the Jews, Herod enquired of the priests where Christ would be born and they quoted this prophecy:

"In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel" (Matt.2:5-6).

It is clear that these verses identify Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God who became man and was born at Bethlehem, but what does it have to do with the rest of the chapter? What is the context of the prophecy? It indicates:

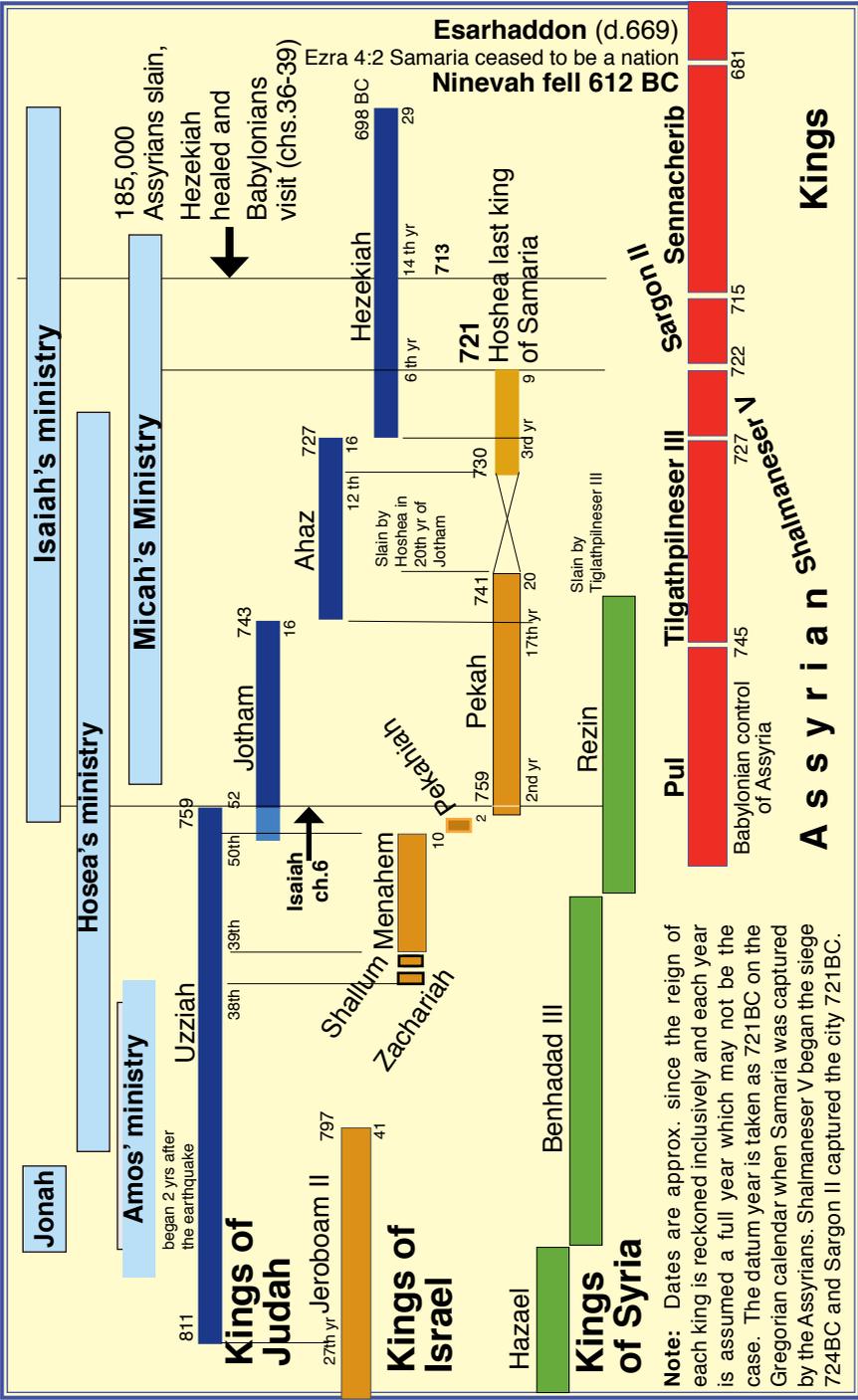
- 1) Hoshea would not be the last ruler of Israel because God was not finished with the nation (Micah 5:3).
- 2) This One who, at a future time, would be born in Bethlehem would destroy the Assyrians and bring peace to the land in the days of Hezekiah (Micah 5:5).
- 3) Ultimately He would be *"GREAT unto the ends of the earth"* (Micah 5:4).

Historical Background

Micah's prophecy was directed to the sinful nation of Israel and in his first chapter he had warned that Samaria would be destroyed:

*"What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem? **Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof**" (Micah 1:5-6).*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO ISAIAH'S PROPHECY



Note: Dates are approx. since the reign of each king is reckoned inclusively and each year is assumed a full year which may not be the case. The datum year is taken as 721BC on the Gregorian calendar when Samaria was captured by the Assyrians. Shalmaneser V began the siege 724BC and Sargon II captured the city 721BC.

A s s y r i a n Kings

The instrument of God's judgment on Samaria would be the Assyrians who had been threatening the Northern kingdom of Israel for years. When Menahem was king in Samaria (767-757 BC), Pul was a Babylonian who had become the King of Assyria, and he invaded the land of Israel when Menahem reigned:

*"And **Pul the king of Assyria** came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand" (2Kings 15:19).*

When Ahaz, the King of Judah (743 - 727BC) was threatened by Rezin, king of Syria, Ahaz paid the next Assyrian king, Tilgathpileser, to attack Damascus and slay Rezin King of Syria.

*"And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. And **the king of Assyria** hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin" (2Kings 16:8-9).*

Later, while Ahaz was still reigning in Jerusalem we read:

*"For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the LORD. And **Tilgathpilneser** king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not. For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the LORD, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: **but he helped him not**" (2Chron.28:19-21).*

It is clear that Assyria was expanding its borders and subduing its neighbours. Scripture records **two more** incursions into Israel and Judah during the reign of Hezekiah King of Judah.

The first was when Samaria fell before the Assyrians in 721BC in the 6th year of Hezekiah's reign at Jerusalem after a three-year siege. Shalmaneser began the siege and Sargon completed it taking 27,290 captives to Media. Micah began to prophesy in

the reign of Jotham, King of Judah (743-759BC) but we do not know which year he prophesied against Samaria.

While the Northern Kingdom was to be judged, a revival would come in the Last Days when the nation repented and **God's ruler took the throne**. This can be none other than the Lord Jesus, the uncreated Son of God, for ever with the Father in the Godhead.

Samaria to be Scattered UNTIL She Returns to the Lord

The Northern Kingdom of Israel would be given up **UNTIL** Israel repented and was restored to the Lord.

"Therefore will he give them up, UNTIL the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: THEN the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel" (Micah 5:3).

God was to judge Israel but He would not abandon her. She would be given up **UNTIL she travailed** and brought forth.

The time of Israel's travail is the time of **her conversion** in the Tribulation. Jesus referred to the first half of the Tribulation as *"the beginning of sorrows"* in Matthew 24:8. The word translated *"sorrows"* is literally *"travail"*. Isaiah wrote:

"Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child (Christ was born). Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God" (Isa.66:7-9).

The Northern Kingdom has been known as the "lost 10 tribes" since the nation was scattered through Central Asia by the Assyrians but God has indicated that He has only given them up **UNTIL they return to the Lord**. The Pathan Tribes located in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Kashmir number 15 million and they trace their genealogy back to Jacob and the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom. These people are Muslims today but will be converted during the Tribulation.

There are going to be surprises when the Lord returns at the end of the Tribulation and regathers His “elect” nation, Israel, from the “four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt.24:31). Isaiah describes this event in Isa.49:20-23.

Ezekiel prophesied that the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah would be joined together in the last days. He wrote:

*“Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: **And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel;** and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all”* (Ezek.37:21-22).

Contrary to the British-Israel Theory, the “lost ten tribes” never trekked across Europe to Britain, nor did the daughters of Judah’s last king, Zedekiah, marry the King of Ireland and inherit the British throne. America is not the tribe of Ephraim and never will be. The fabricated history of the British-Israel Theory is a lie.

The return of Israel **to the Lord** in the last days is prophesied elsewhere in Scripture. Ezekiel clearly indicates it will occur when Israel is invaded by Russia and her Islamic allies in the first half of the Tribulation (Ezek.39:22-29). At the mid-point of the 7-year Tribulation Israel will be a saved nation and will “*keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*” (Rev.12:17). Then at the end of the Tribulation, Christ will come and reign over the entire earth as Micah indicates:

*“And he (Christ) shall stand and feed (His flock-Israel and the “sheep” nations; Matt.25:32) in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide (continue into the kingdom): for NOW **SHALL HE BE GREAT unto the ends of the earth**”* (Micah 5:4).

When Gabriel told Mary that she would be the mother of Messiah he said:

*“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. **HE SHALL BE GREAT,***

and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:31-33).

Christ would Deliver Jerusalem from the Assyrians

In verse 5 the focus is on *“this man”* who would be born at Bethlehem, who is uncreated; *“from everlasting”*, and who will be *“great unto the ends of the earth”* when Israel turns back to the Lord:

“And THIS MAN shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land” (Micah 5:5).

When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, overran the entire land of Judah; *“our land”*, the Lord (*“this man”*- Christ) slew 185,000 Assyrians in one night at Jerusalem and **brought peace** in the time of Hezekiah. (Isa.37:36). Scripture states that

“The angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses” (2Kings19:35).

“The angel of the LORD” is a pre-incarnation title for the uncreated Son of God: Jesus Christ. He is *“this man”* who would be born in Bethlehem to be God’s ruler over the ends of the earth.

When Hezekiah entertained the ambassadors from Babylon and showed them all his treasures, Isaiah told him that these would all be taken to Babylon with his sons. Hezekiah responded:

*“Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For **there shall be PEACE and truth in my days”** (Isa.39:8).*

After Christ, as the Angel of the LORD, destroyed the Assyrians at Jerusalem there was 15 years of peace.

Babylon to be Overthrown by Persia

“The Assyrian” referred to in Micah 5:5, was Sennacherib who trod in *“our palaces”* when he invaded the land of Judah. When Sennacherib returned to Nineveh, Babylon, which had been a

part of the Assyrian Empire since 1300B.C., revolted, but after Sennacherib recovered from the defeat at Jerusalem, he gathered enough forces to destroy the walls of the city and bring Babylon back under Assyrian control. In the days of his son Esarhaddon the walls were rebuilt.

About 450B.C. the historian Herodotus, recorded:

“Assyria possesses a vast number of great cities, whereof the most renowned and **strongest at this time was Babylon**, whither, after the fall of Nineveh, the seat of government had been removed” [*Histories* Book 1: Para.178].

Babylon Overcomes Assyria - Persia Overcomes Babylon

Babylon revolted in the days of Nebuchadnezzar’s father, Nabopolassar, and Nineveh was captured in 612BC after which the Assyrian Empire became the Babylonian Empire. Nebuchadnezzar also trod down Israel’s palaces when he invaded Judah in 606, 597 and 586BC but God raised up the Medes and Persians against Babylon and Cyrus overthrew the Babylonian Empire in 538BC. Micah wrote:

*“When he shall tread in our palaces, **THEN shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men**” (Micah 5:5).*

The Persian Empire was ruled by the heads of **7 families** (Esther 1:14) and the King of Persia was the eighth.

Cyrus was the first King of Persia and Isaiah prophesied that he would be God’s servant to carry out His will and return the Jews to the land after the Babylonian captivity. Cyrus was named long before he was born and God called him *“my shepherd”*:

*“That saith of Cyrus, **He is my shepherd**, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid” (Isa.44:28).*

When Smerdis (called Artaxerxes in Ezra 4:7), with the help of the Magi, usurped the throne of Persia for 8 months after Cambyses (the son of Cyrus) committed suicide on his way back from his Egyptian campaign, the **seven chief men of Persia** put Darius on the throne and he slew Smerdis. Zerrubbabel was one of three bodyguards to Darius according to Jewish Talmud tradition.

During the **Persian Era** the Jews were exalted; Daniel was Prime Minister, Esther was the Queen, Mordecai was Prime minister, Nehemiah was the King's cup-bearer and Haman and all the Jews enemies throughout the entire Empire were wiped out on one day (Esther chs.7&8.)

Jeremiah prophesied about Elam (Persia):

*"And I will set **my throne** in Elam (Persia), and will destroy **from thence** the king (of Babylon) and the princes, saith the LORD."* (Jer.49:38).

The Lord ruled through the Persian Empire. Isaiah prophesied that Cyrus (*My Shepherd*) would destroy Babylon (Isa.44:26-28; 45:1-4) and would decree that the Temple be rebuilt (536BC). Later, Darius confirmed the decree (522BC). Then in 445B.C. Artaxerxes decreed that Jerusalem be rebuilt, which was the start of the "70 weeks" prophecy of Dan.9:24-27. He sent Nehemiah with orders that all the nations must support the Jews. Thus Micah prophesied:

*"And they (Persians) shall waste the **land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod** (Babylon) in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders"* (Micah 5:6).

The Persians under Cyrus and Darius overthrew the land of Assyria and Babylon for **Assyria had merged with Babylon** after the Babylonians conquered Nineveh in 612BC. **The Persians hated idolatry** and destroyed the idols of Babylon. As a consequence, the Persians favoured the Jews after the Jews had been cured of idolatry in the Babylonian captivity:

*"And the **remnant of Jacob** shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men"* (Micah 5:7).

Herodotus (450B.C.) wrote of Babylon's idols:

*"Below, in the same precinct, there is a **second temple, in which is a sitting figure of Jupiter, all of gold.** Before the figure stands a large golden table, and the throne whereon it sits, and the base on which the throne is placed, are likewise*

of gold. The Chaldaeans told me that **all the gold together was eight hundred talents' weight** (1.2 million ounces of gold @\$1300/ounce =\$1.56 billion).

Outside the temple are **two altars**, one of solid gold, on which it is only lawful to offer sucklings; the other a common altar, but of great size, on which the full-grown animals are sacrificed. It is also on the great altar that the Chaldaeans burn the frankincense, which is offered to the amount of **a thousand talents' weight, every year**, at the festival of the God.

In the time of Cyrus there was likewise in this temple **a figure of a man, twelve cubits high, entirely of solid gold (21 feet high)**. I myself did not see this figure, but I relate what the Chaldaeans report concerning it. Darius, the son of Hystaspes, plotted to carry the statue off, but had not the hardihood to lay his hands upon it. Xerxes (*husband of Esther who had great riches - Dan.11:2*), however, the son of **Darius, killed the priest who forbade him to move the statue, and took it away**. Besides the ornaments which I have mentioned, there are a large number of private offerings in this holy precinct" (*Histories*, 1.183).

Isaiah, more than 100 years beforehand, foretold how the idols of Babylon would be taken away:

"Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity. (Isaiah 46:1-2).

During the Persian Era the Jews exercised great authority and their enemies were silenced. Haman and all his family were hanged and throughout the entire Persian Empire, the enemies of the Jews were slain; even in the king's palace 500 enemies were slain! Thus was fulfilled the following prophecy:

"And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through,

*both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be **lifted up upon thine adversaries**, and all thine enemies shall be cut off” (Micah 5:8-9).*

The **Feast of Purim** celebrates the victory of the Jews over their enemies; it is still held on the 14th and 15th of the month Adar on the Jewish calendar.

Finally, Micah describes the destruction of Assyria and Babylon in “*that day*” when Persia ruled. Witchcraft, soothsayers, and graven images would be cut off. The cities, such as Babylon would be thrown down (Micah 5:10-15). God said:

“And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard” (Micah 5:15).

Micah Chapter 6

God Pleads with Israel to Repent

Having warned both Israel and Judah that judgment was imminent because of their sin and having indicated the blessing that awaits the nation when she repents of her evil ways, the final chapters 6 and 7 provide a passionate plea for the people to hearken and seek the Lord. God reasons with the nation and Micah says

“The LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel” (Micah 6:2).

After all that God has done for the nation they had rejected the Lord yet God still desired to bless them. He reminds them that He delivered them from bondage in Egypt and when Balak king of Moab wanted Balaam the false prophet to curse Israel, God put a blessing in his mouth.

“O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me” (Micah 6:5).

The people respond and ask if God wants sacrifices

“Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” (Micah 6:7).

Micah replies:

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8).

Mere religious rituals are worthless for God has made it clear that He wants righteousness and true repentance. The *“treasures of wickedness”* are in the city, dishonesty, violence, lies and deceit are everywhere so judgment is unavoidable:

“Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins” (Micah 6:13).

Judgment was sure because the people had *“kept all the works of the house of Ahab”*, the husband of wicked Jezebel who brought the prophets of Baal and of the groves into Israel.

Micah Chapter 7

Micah Commits Himself to God

Micah bewails the sad condition of the nation:

“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. 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” (Micah 7:1-2).

In view of the prevailing wickedness Micah commits his case unto the Lord

“Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me” (Micah 7:7).

Like all faithful servants of God, Micah was the object of ridicule and he felt the pain of isolation for the Lord’s sake. His recourse was to take the long view in the certain knowledge that God will always have the last say and will vindicate him. God never fails His people and though we may stumble the Lord will pick us up and those, our enemies, will bear the consequences of their sin.

“Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me” (Micah 7:8).

Micah realizes that he too would suffer with the nation when the Assyrians and Babylonians come through the land and he says,

“I will bear the indignation of the Lord” (Micah 7:9).

He consoles himself with the fact that God is merciful and would keep His covenant with Jacob, Abraham and the Patriarchs:

*“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. **He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.** Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old”* (Micah 7:18-20).

Israel’s case was hopeless and judgment was inevitable. There was nothing the prophet could do but resign himself to the prospect that justice must be done. He had fulfilled his mission and events must run their course. His only comfort was found in the knowledge that God is merciful and faithful to His covenants.

There is a lesson here for us today. We too find ourselves in an evil world. Men are bent on wickedness. Violence, deceit, fraud and every type of sin is condoned. The Godly remnant will not be listened to or heeded so we have no alternative but to resign ourselves to the fact that God’s justice will run its course. All we can do is trust in the mercy of God that in the difficult times we will be protected and provided for in the mercy of God.

For the Christian we have the bright prospect that the Rapture will occur **before** the Great Tribulation and that the best lies before us in our eternal home. For Israel there is the prospect of reigning with Christ in His earthly kingdom after He returns to smite the nations.