

Micah Chapter 5

Micah 5:1 "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."

"Judge of Israel", who will be smitten with a "rod upon the cheek," is not a reference to the humiliation of Jesus. The reference is to the deportation of Israel's rulers, perhaps especially King Zedekiah, and to his shameful treatment at the hands of Babylon (2 Kings 25).

"Smite the judge of Israel": A reference to the capture of King Zedekiah at the hands of Babylon (in 586 B.C.; 2 Kings Chapters 24 and 25).

We know that Israel, and Jerusalem in Israel, had been besieged, and had been taken, and had been scattered. They certainly had been humiliated like a slap on the face. Those in authority fell to the same fate as the everyday citizen of the country.

Verses 2-4: This passage looked forward to Christ's First Advent (5:2), an intervening time (5:3a), and beyond to the Second Advent (5:3b, 4).

Micah 5:2 "But thou, Beth-lehem 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."

"Beth-lehem" is distinguished as "Ephratah" in the land of "Judah." It was the hometown of David (1 Sam. 17:12) and the birthplace of Jesus (Matt. 2:5). The name Bethlehem means "house of bread" because the area was a grain producing region in Old Testament times.

The name Ephratah ("fruitful"), differentiates it from the Galilean town by the same name. The town, known for her many vineyards and olive orchards was small in size, but not in honor.

The reaction to the question of the wise men indicates that the Jews believed this prophecy revealed the birthplace of the Messiah.

"Ruler in Israel" is a king from David's line.

"From of old, from everlasting": This speaks of eternal God's incarnation in the person of Jesus Christ. It points to His millennial reign as King of Kings (Isaiah 9:6).

"From everlasting": clearly indicates the eternity of the One who is to be born at Bethlehem. Thus, Micah's prophecy adds to that of his contemporary, Isaiah, for Isaiah predicts the means of the ruler's birth, and Micah predicts the place of His birth.

Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, is just outside of Jerusalem about 5 miles. It is a small village. At the time of the deepest sorrow of God's people (they were under Roman rule), God sent the Savior of the world. He was their Messiah. He was their King. He is our Savior.

Notice, that Jesus is everlasting. He is the Beginning and the End.

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."

Micah 5:3 "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."

"Give them up": A reference to the interval between Messiah's rejection at His First Advent and His Second Advent. During the times of the Gentiles when Israel rejects Christ and is under the domination of enemies. Regathering of the "remainder of His brethren" did not occur at the First Advent but is slated for the Second Advent (Isa. 10:20-22; 11:11-16).

Nor can "return" speak of Gentiles, since it cannot be said that they "returned" to the Lord. Rather, the context of 5:3-4 is millennial and cannot be made to fit the First Advent. Thus, "she who is in labor" must denote the nation of Israel (Rev. 12:1-6).

"She which travaileth hath brought forth" refers to Mary giving birth to the baby Jesus at Bethlehem.

This is saying that God's people will be controlled by others, until the virgin Mary brings forth the Christ child. Christ will bring in His kingdom, and all who will believe (the true family of Abraham), will be His family. This includes those who are spiritual Israel and physical Israel.

Micah 5:4 "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth."

The millennial rule of Christ, sitting upon the throne of David (Isa. 6:13).

Jesus is the Ruler spoken of here, who is their Messiah. Jesus is spoken of as the good Shepherd. He feeds all of His flock. Jesus was not just for the Hebrews.

1 Timothy 4:10 "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."

The feeding here, is speaking of feeding on the Word of the Lord. No one can take the believers away from Jesus. The word "abide" means continually live.

John 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

John 10:27-30 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:" "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand." "My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand." "I and [my] Father are one."

Verses 5-6: "Assyrian": Assyria, God's instrument against Israel (722 B.C.), and Judah (Sennacherib's siege in 701 B.C.), is here used as a representative of enemy nations in opposition to the Lord.

Micah 5:5 "And this [man] shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men."

"The Assyrian", Israel's major foe in Micah's day, is probably best understood as representative of all of Israel's enemies, particularly those of the end times.

"Seven ... eight": An idiom for a full and sufficient number of leaders, more than enough for the task (Eccl. 11:2).

Jesus not only brings peace, but is the King of Peace. He is our peace. The Assyrians here are speaking of the worldly people who come against God's people.

"Seven" means spiritually complete. This then is saying, that the peace that Jesus brings is perfect and complete.

"Eight" means new beginnings and these are some of Jesus' subordinates spoken of here.

Micah 5:6 "And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod 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."

"Nimrod": A reference to Assyria (Gen. 10:11), that could possibly also include Babylon (Genesis 10:10).

The sword that Jesus fights with is the sword of His mouth (the Word of God). "Nimrod and Assyria" here, is speaking generally of the enemies of God's people.

Verses 7-9: Israel's presence in the midst of many peoples would be to some a source of blessing (Zech. 8 chapters 22 and 23). To others, she would be like a lion, a source of fear and destruction (Isa. 11:14; Zech. 12:2-3, 6; 14:14).

Micah 5:7 "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."

Both the remnant, which survived the sacking and burning of their city; and temple and carried captive, live in a scattered condition. As the whole remnant according to the election of grace, whether of Jacob after the flesh or after the Spirit.

The Jews should, on their return from captivity, pour down their influence upon the nations as God-sent showers upon the grass. So, through the dispersion of Jewish Christians on the death of Stephen, the Lord caused the knowledge of the truth with which the Jews were cloud-charged to descend upon many people.

Psalm 72:6 "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth".

It shall be only the work of God. He shall by his immediate hand bless such, as he alone without the help of man, gives dew and showers. As this was fulfilled in the type, before the gospel of the kingdom was preached to all nations. So it hath been and now is, and ever shall be, fulfilled in the ages to come.

This "remnant of Jacob" is speaking of those who have received the Messiah. They actually are the spreaders of Christianity across the lands, as dew would refresh the land.

Most of the apostles of Christ were Hebrews. They carried the gospel message to the known world. The grace of God is a free gift from God poured out to all mankind. It was to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile. All could be refreshed by this grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Micah 5:8 "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."

"And the remnant": For strength and courage, which the beasts of the forest dare not oppose, and cannot resist. This seems to be a prediction of what was to be effected in the times of the Maccabees, and those following them. When the Jewish people gained great advantages over the Idumeans, Moabites, Ammonites, Samaritans, etc.

There is righteous wrath as well as all-embracing mercy with God. Christ, whose graciousness is likened to the dew, and His gentleness to the lamb, is at the same time the Lion of the tribe of Judah. At the opening of the "sixth seal" the kings of the earth and great men are represented as in extreme terror at "the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:16).

“None can deliver”; that dares attempt a rescue; but the prey is left under the lion’s paw, to satisfy the hungry beast. So shall Israel be after their return out of captivity, and while they keep the ways of the Lord. So they were in Esther’s time, against such as would have destroyed them; so in the Maccabees’ time, when they subdued the nations about them.

But the conquering power of the word, the rod of Christ’s strength, doth greater wonders than the sword of the Maccabees ever did. It is the mighty conquering power of the gospel that is here shadowed forth to us.

“And none can deliver”; brings it to the ground at once, tramples upon it, and tears it in pieces as its prey. And none in the flock, or to whom it belongs, can deliver out of his hand.

The Lamb of God (Jesus Christ), is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Jesus is the Judge of all the world. He is strong and protective to those who accept Him. He is also, the destroyer of those who totally reject Him.

Luke 19:27 "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay [them] before me."

Micah 5:9 "Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off."

“All thine enemies”: This absolute and complete peace has never yet been experienced by Israel. This points to the millennial kingdom when the Prince of Peace shall reign, having conquered the nations (verse 15).

Jesus had a gentle, loving, forgiving side of Him. He also had a side that spoke strongly to the money changers in the temple. His righteous indignation drove the money changers out. He is our Savior who forgives and gives us new life, but He is also the King who rules with an iron hand.

1 Corinthians 15:25 "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

Micah 5:10 "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots:"

“In that day”: The future kingdom is in view. Israel had been forbidden the use of cavalry (Deut. 17:16), lest they trust in earthly forces, rather than God (1 Kings 10:26, 28). God will remove all implements in which they trust so the people, stripped of all human resources, rest only on Him. War instruments will have no place in the time of peace.

The day spoken of here, is when Jesus reigns as King. God had never wanted His people to trust in their horses and chariots. There will be no need for them. Jesus has won the war. Victory is in Jesus.

Verses 11-14: "Cut off the cities ... strong holds": Continuing the thought (from verse 10), fortified cities were designed for defense. Their strength tempted people to put their trust in them rather than in God alone (1:13; Psalm 27:1; Hosea 10:13-14). People will live in peace in un-walled villages (Ezek. 38:11).

The cities are also associated with centers of pagan worship (verse 14, Deut. 16:21), the worship of Asherah (Canaanite goddess of fertility and war). All forms of self-reliance in war and idolatrous worship will be removed so that the nation must rely solely on Christ their King for deliverance and worship Him alone.

Micah 5:11 "And I will cut off the cities, of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds:"

Fenced cities and the other paraphernalia of war will be unnecessary in the Messiah's kingdom: "they shall not learn war any more" (Micah 4:3).

Demolish all thy forts, and watch-towers, and frontier guards. These here mentioned are means of defense against enemies' assaults, in which Israel had too much trusted; the others before mentioned. (Micah 5:10), are offensive preparations for annoying the enemy. But in the day of that peace here spoken of, there should be no enemy should invade the people of God to put them on their defense.

Nor should they have any need to attempt upon their enemies. And though these means are lawful to be used, yet shall it be the happiness of God's people not to need them, for their God, their Lord, is their Savior in the midst of them. And he will cut off enemies round about them. So that virtually this is a promise to Israel that their adversaries should be destroyed, and so their fears disappear.

This is speaking of the glory of the cities, and the formalities of government. There will be no threat of war, so there will be no need for strongholds.

Micah 5:12 "And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no [more] soothsayers:"

The very art shall be out of use, and none shall openly, as formerly, consult with them. Or they make profession of foretelling events. Or what a lucky day or hour to set upon an enterprise, or to curse, as Balaam would have done, an enemy to make way for victory. No more of these.

The oracles ceased when Christ was born: much to this purpose (Zech.; 13:2 Mal. 3:5). God will, in mercy to his people, take away these stumbling-blocks, these occasions of sin.

This is some of the things that had misled God's people. Magic and sorcery, witches and warlocks are all part of the witchcraft mentioned here. These things are an abomination to God. Soothsayers were just as bad. In fact, they were about the same. We could possibly add enchanter or mind reader, or hypnotist to that list.

Micah 5:13 "Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands."

The former was such as was made of wood or stone. The latter statues, such as were molten or cast, and made of gold, silver, or brass. Such as the Jews sometimes worshipped, and are now found in the apostate church of Rome; but will have no place in the Christian churches, or those so called, in the latter day.

The Jews indeed have had no idols or idolatrous worship among them since the Babylonish captivity. And the prophet here speaks, not of what would be found among them, and removed at their conversion; but of what was in his time, or had been or would be again. But should not be in future time when they should turn to the Lord, and be like dew among the people. And so we are to understand some following passages.

As not to fall down to idols and worship them. So neither to trust in carnal privileges, ceremonial rites, observances of the traditions of the elders, or any works of righteousness done by them, which they had been prone unto.

Anything you make with your hands, or can see with your physical eye is not God. God is Spirit. Idolatry (worship of images of false gods), is the very thing that had caused separation from God. God Himself, will destroy all of them.

Micah 5:14 "And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities."

The groves where some of them abused in downright idolatrous worship. Others of them used superstitiously, thus beside the word; the other way, quite against the word. But after the return from Babylon, there was a great reformation in this point. And after the appearing of the Messiah there hath been a greater eradication of idolatry.

“Groves ... cities”: The "groves" are the idolatrous symbol of Astarte (Deut. 16:21; 2Ki 21:7). "Cities" being parallel to "groves," must mean cities in or near which such idolatrous groves existed. Compare "city of the house of Baal" (2 Kings 10:25), that is, a portion of the city sacred to Baal.

The groves were some of the places where the worship of false gods went on. Notice, God destroys these places. The cities involved in this are "thy cities" that He destroys.

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

God speaks to our capacity, he will proceed, or act, as the Hebrew word signifies. He is supreme Judge, to whom vengeance belongs, and when he hath passed the sentence, and his instruments execute it, he takes it to himself.

So when the Babylonians avenged the wrongs by the Assyrian done to the Jews, and when Cyrus with his Persians and Medes avenged the injuries of Babylon, this prophecy was partly fulfilled. And in succeeding times it was further fulfilled, and is now fulfilling, and so will be, until the final destruction of the wicked.

Anger and fury is spoken after the manner of man; it includes the greatness of God's just displeasure and the effects of it. Which are resembled to what we do when furiously angry, act with utmost strength, and in the most terrible manner we can. God will, with as great severity and terror as flesh and blood can bear, proceed against these heathens.

Such as they have not heard; with unparalleled terror; and so, they shall be made warning-pieces to others.

This is speaking of the wrath of God, which comes on all who reject Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 1:8 "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:"

This is 3 1/2 years of torment from God on those who totally reject Jesus.

Micah Chapter 5 Questions

1. What things had happened to Israel and Jerusalem that was like a slap in the face?
2. What happened to those in authority?
3. What does "Bethlehem" mean?
4. What does "Ephratah" mean?
5. Where was Bethlehem located?
6. At the time of Jesus, Jerusalem was under the control of the _____.
7. Who was Jesus to the natural Jew?
8. What time is verse 3 speaking of?
9. Who are the true family of Abraham?
10. Jesus is the Ruler spoken of in verse 4. He is spoken of as the good _____.
11. What does "abide" mean?
12. Jesus not only brings peace, but is the _____ of _____.

13. What does "seven" mean?
14. "Eight" means _____.
15. What is the sword Jesus fights with?
16. What are "Nimrod and Assyria" speaking of in verse 6?
17. Who are the "remnant of Jacob" in verse 7?
18. Most of the apostles of Christ were _____.
19. The Lamb of God (Jesus Christ), is the _____ of the tribe of Judah.
20. Jesus' _____ drove the money changers out of the temple.
21. What is verse 10 saying?
22. What would be classified as witchcraft?
23. What are soothsayers?
24. Anything you make with your hand, or can see with your natural eye, is _____.
25. What were the groves?
26. Who will He execute anger and fury upon?